STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPETENCY LEVEL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN FAITH-BASED SECONDARY SCHOOLS AS PERCEIVED

Goldwyn V. Burce*[1], Jessmar C. Sauza,
Prince Royd S. Manguera, and Jeremiah C. Fameronag
Adventist University of the Philippines
jcfameronag@aup.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to assess the competency levels of Physical Education (PE) teachers in faith-based secondary schools in Luzon, using the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) as a framework. The research sought to identify areas for improvement and develop targeted in-service training programs, aiming to enhance the quality of PE instruction and support holistic student development. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, collecting data through surveys from 101 students. This approach evaluated teacher competencies comprehensively across seven PPST domains, including Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. The findings revealed high competency levels across PPST domains, with notable strengths in Community Linkages and Professional Engagement. However, areas such as (1) communication with parents/guardians, (2) integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching practices, and (3) professional collaboration were identified as needing improvement. The study recommends in-service training programs focusing on these areas, including workshops on effective communication strategies, ICT integration, and fostering professional collaboration among teachers. By addressing these gaps, the overall competency of PE teachers can be improved, ensuring high-quality education and supporting the holistic development of students in faith-based secondary schools.

Keywords: *Teacher Competency, In-Service Training Programs, Holistic Development*

INTRODUCTION

Physical education (PE) teachers play a pivotal role in the development and well-being of students. They are vital in delivering quality PE programs; their effectiveness as teachers directly impacts how well the kids perform in school (Arban et al., 2023). Understanding the professional development requirements of PE teachers within the faith-based academy system is key to effective education.

To ensure the effectiveness of physical education programs, it is crucial to assess the competency level of these teachers (Guan, 2023). However, a concerning gap exists in assessing the competency level of PE teachers, specifically within faith-based institutions.

According to Jorilla and Bual (2021), numerous studies in the Philippines have explored teacher competence in public schools (Abulon, 2014), universities (Daguplo, 2013; Gavino, 2013), and even Catholic schools (Petalla & Madrigal, 2017; Roberto & Madrigal, 2018; Queroda & Nama, 2018). Unfortunately, there's a lack of research focusing on PE teachers operating in the unique environment of faith-based schools. This lack of research is particularly concerning compared to the national focus on teacher quality improvement initiatives.

Addressing this gap becomes even more critical when considering the potential differences in curriculum, resources, and student demographics between faith-based schools and other educational settings. Understanding the specific competencies and development needs of PE teachers within these unique institutions is essential for ensuring effective PE program delivery and, ultimately, promoting holistic student development in faith-based secondary schools.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An innovative approach in education, the competency-based theory is an output of evolving theories that emphasize the importance of assessing competencies (Holubnycha, Shchokina, Soroka, Besarab, 2022). The heart of this theory is the concept of *competence,* which is defined as the ability to perform tasks in various contexts.

Zhang et al. (2024) argue that competency-based education in physical education is crucial for enhancing the skills and knowledge areas essential for effective teaching. They emphasize the importance of proficiency in designing and implementing developmentally appropriate physical activities, assessing student learning and progress, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment, and promoting lifelong physical fitness and wellness. Integrating Competency-Based Education theory with a focus on physical education ensures that the specific needs and challenges of physical education teachers are addressed, leading to more targeted and relevant training programs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The competency level of physical education (PE) teachers in faith-based secondary schools, particularly within the faith-based educational framework, must be more adequately understood, creating a gap in targeted professional development initiatives. This study seeks to address this gap by finding out the competency levels of PE teachers based on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) across various domains, including: a) content knowledge and pedagogy; b) learning environment; c) diversity of learners; d) curriculum and planning; e) assessment and reporting; f) community linkages; and g) professional engagement, and personal growth and professional development.

The result of the study provided specific elements and topics that could be incorporated into an in-service training program for physical education teachers in faith-based secondary schools. This in-service training program would enhance their competency in teaching physical education classes effectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) through Department Order No. 42, S.2017 (*DO 42, S. 2017 – National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers | Department of Education*, 2017b), established the PPST policy to elucidate the national standards for teacher excellence. This policy outlined then expectations for teachers' practice and professional development. The policy specifically states four primary goals that clearly describe the status and practices expected of teachers throughout a defined phase of career advancement, from beginning teachers to distinguished teachers. This policy is also serves as reference in assessing teacher performance. The policy states that it "shall be used as a basis for all learning and development programs for teachers to ensure that teachers are properly equipped to implement the K to 12 Program**." Career Stages**

DepEd Order No. 42, s.2017 defined career stages as the phases of a teacher's professional development as outlined by the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). These stages represent the progression of a teacher's skills, knowledge, and responsibilities throughout their career. The career stages provide a clear pathway for teachers' professional growth and development. By defining specific competencies and expectations at each stage, PPST helps teachers understand the progression of their careers and identify areas for improvement. This structure supports targeted professional development, ensuring that teachers continue to grow and enhance their effectiveness throughout their careers.

DepEd Order No. 42, s.2017 outlined and explained the four (4) teacher stages in PPST: *distinguished teachers, highly proficient teachers, proficient teachers,* and *beginning teachers*. Distinguished teachers practice the highest teaching standards grounded on global best practices (Gepilla, 2020). They constantly demonstrate outstanding leadership and educational techniques (Lovett, 2023). These teachers are praised for their deep knowledge and creative approaches to teaching that not only improve student learning but also establish standards for their colleagues. Wright (2020) stressed that by utilizing their extensive knowledge and expertise, distinguished teachers can promote systemic changes in the educational environment and encourage a culture of excellence and ongoing professional development among their peers.

On the other hand, *highly proficient teachers,* have an enhanced ability in successfully integrating instructional practices and information (Channa & Sahito, 2022). They usually take on leadership positions within their schools and are skilled at developing stimulating and productive learning environments. A combination of leadership and excellent instruction highlights their crucial role in educational growth as they integrate advanced knowledge and pedagogical strategies effectively (Willis et al., 2021). Abakah (2023) also further describes that highly proficient teachers are committed to continuous professional development and lifelong learning.

Proficient teachers, as described by Sancar et al. (2021), possess the foundational skills for effective instruction and classroom management but still require targeted professional development to refine their instructional strategies and subject knowledge. Phillips (2023) notes that while these educators can independently deliver high-quality education, the proficient stage is a critical period for further growth, requiring ongoing mentorship and

training to reach higher competency levels. Zajda (2021) highlights that proficient teachers engage students and foster academic success through clear instructional goals, effective classroom management, formative assessments, and diverse instructional strategies, including integrating technology and differentiated learning. These practices not only address diverse student needs but also boost overall engagement and achievement.

Beginning teachers are in the early stages of their professions and are concentrated on gaining the fundamental information and abilities needed to teach (Feng et al., 2023). Because of their inexperience, they frequently struggle with lesson planning, classroom management, and student involvement. To help them gain competence and confidence at this stage, mentorship programs, professional development courses, and peer collaboration are essential. Karlberg and Bezzina (2020) added that good mentorship can offer direction, constructive criticism, and useful tactics all of which are essential for assisting these educators in moving to new skill levels and guaranteeing a successful teaching career. Since reflective practice in developing professional expertise is important (Adakwah, 2021), beginning teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their teaching experiences, identify areas for improvement, and seek feedback from mentors and colleagues to refine their practices and enhance their instructional effectiveness. **Content Knowledge and Pedagogy**

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) underscores the importance of alignment between pedagogical approaches appropriate for students' developmental stages and being grounded in subject expertise, emphasizing the interplay between teachers' content knowledge and their understanding of students' learning needs, which is very crucial for learning (Demchenko et al., 2021). Backman et al. (2020) emphasized that teachers with mastery of the content knowledge are adept in facilitating student learning since they know how to convey complex concepts in accessible ways.

According to Hanemann (2020), teachers have an important role in determining the extent of students' learning and overall achievement. In addition, Kim and Ko (2020) mention that students who are taught by teachers with higher levels of content expertise achieved higher performance outcomes compared to students taught by teachers with lower levels of expertise.

In one study, Backman et al. (2020) stressed the value of the pedagogical expertise and subject-matter expertise of PE teachers in promoting students' physical literacy and participation in physical activities. Researchers discovered that comprehensive physical education was more successfully promoted by teachers who could connect physical education subject to other academic subjects and used research-based teaching practices. On the other hand, Koh et al. (2022) highlighted the effect of including information and communication technology (ICT) in physical education programs. They discovered that by offering dynamic and interesting content, efficient use of ICT can improve learning. **Learning Environment**

One of the most important things in encouraging student motivation, engagement, and academic performance is the learning environment. To promote student learning and well-being, it is critical to establish a good and encouraging classroom environment (Xie & Derakshan,. 2021). This entails laying out precise guidelines, giving students chances to participate and collaborate.

Research by Arifin et al. (2024) underscores the significance of teacher-student relationships in shaping the learning environment. Positive relationships characterized by trust,

respect, and empathy contribute to a sense of psychological safety and belongingness among students, which in turn promotes engagement and academic achievement. Overall, this emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive, inclusive, and stimulating learning environment that fosters student learning, motivation, and well-being.

Franklin et al. (2019) carried out research on how classroom management techniques affect students' participation in physical education. The results show how important good classroom management is to encourage student engagement and preserve a positive learning environment. They discovered that students were more likely to engage in active participation, maintain focus during classes, and display good behaviors when teachers used clear, consistent, and fair management techniques. These tactics include creating a classroom setting that is both structured and flexible, employing positive reinforcement, and clearly outlining expectations and norms.

Sökmen (2019) conducted a similar study that investigates the function of self-efficacy in the connection between student involvement and the learning environment. According to this study, self-efficacy is fostered by a pleasant and encouraging learning environment, which greatly increases student motivation and involvement. Several essential elements, including the physical layout of the classroom, classroom management, and the interactions between the teacher and students influence a successful learning environment. Additionally, he believed that teachers who foster a safe and orderly learning environment would boost students' confidence in their abilities, which would benefit both their academic achievement and overall wellbeing.

Diversity of Learners

According to Corsino (2021), diversity of learning encompasses a wide spectrum of factors, including but not limited to, cultural backgrounds, linguistic differences, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, and cognitive needs. In physical education, teachers must be aware of these diverse characteristics and adapt their instructional strategies to cater to the individual needs of each student. For instance, in a study by Daniel (2023), it was found that incorporating various teaching methods, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches, facilitated greater engagement and comprehension among students with diverse learning styles.

Furthermore, teachers can assist students facing challenging circumstances in developing resilience and succeeding academically by creating a rapport to the students by supporting them and giving them access to resources (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020). Giving students a say and a choice in physical education activities can help them take charge of their education, which will increase their motivation and engagement (Conner, 2022). It is crucial for teachers to recognize and integrate these diverse aspects into their teaching approaches and curriculum design.

Furthermore, Sanger (2020) highlights that teachers' cultural awareness means understanding and respecting the diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences of students and families. It helps create inclusive classrooms where everyone feels valued and can learn effectively. Additionally, a study conducted by Tipan et al, (2020) that talks about cultural awareness. The findings showed that the participants demonstrate cultural awareness concerning curriculum and teaching methods, professional growth opportunities, and school
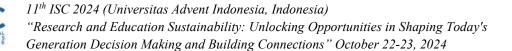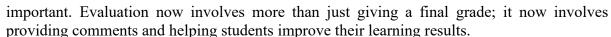
policies. Despite the result it suggested that the proposed actions be implemented to improve teachers' understanding of cultural diversity. **Curriculum and Planning.** According to Gheyssens et al. (2023), a key component of good lesson planning is considering the varied needs, interests, and skill levels of your students. Differentiated instruction strategies should be used by teachers to adjust the process, material, and final outcomes according to the interests, learning profiles, and readiness of their students. Teachers should use a variety of teaching pedagogies, materials, and exercises to encourage inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and active learning. In addition, Kharbach (2024) stressed that lessons that are well-planned, that relate academic material to real-world circumstances and experiences are meaningful, interesting, and relevant to students.

In accordance with Francisco and Celon (2020) to assist students, teachers must employ instructional tactics that develop students into more resourceful and autonomous learners. These techniques develop into successful learning techniques when the students have the liberty to select the best instructions that the teacher suggests. To improve educational results, research by Tomlison et al. (2023) highlights the significance of a successful curriculum and lesson planning design. According to the study, lessons that are carefully thought out, considering the different requirements, interests, and ability levels of the students are crucial for creating memorable and interesting learning experiences. Teachers may customize the approach, material, and results based on the preparedness and learning profiles of their students by utilizing differentiated education strategies. The study also discovered that making connections between academic content and real-world events and circumstances makes learning more engaging and relevant for students, which promotes deeper comprehension and engagement. A well-designed curriculum and preparation are essential for enhancing student results.

In addition, Howson et al. (2021) studied the impact of strategic curriculum design on secondary school student participation and performance. According to the study, when teachers employ developmentally sequenced sessions and set clear, attainable learning goals, students are more likely to be engaged and achieve academic success. **Assessment and Reporting.** Faith-based schools strongly emphasize holistic assessment, considering students' social, moral, and spiritual growth and academic performance (Stożek, 2020). Competent PE teachers should be thoroughly aware of the concepts and procedures related to assessment; they should recognize the significance of assessment validity and reliability and be able to create and administer tests that accurately gauge students' learning objectives and offer insightful feedback for development. They create tests that are in line with the goals of the curriculum and yield reliable, consistent results (Cañadas et al. 2020).

A type of assessment PE teachers should be familiar with is the formative assessment. Formative assessment procedures are continuous, in-progress evaluations that give teachers and students feedback to direct instruction (Akoyt, 2023). Namoun et. al (2023) found out from their study that formative assessment gives teachers and students valuable feedback that helps them adjust their lesson plans and learning techniques. Through formative assessments, teachers can more successfully discover student misconceptions, modify their lessons, and scaffold learning with the aid of formative assessment strategies including questioning, observation, and feedback. In our classrooms, formative evaluation is becoming more and more

important. Evaluation now involves more than just giving a final grade; it now involves providing comments and helping students improve their learning results.
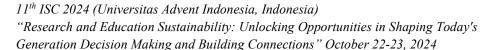
There are other assessment and evaluation techniques PE teachers must be competent in. Maki (2023) conducted a relevant study examining how different evaluation techniques might enhance student learning results. The study highlights the importance of well-designed tests in providing useful data on student learning, enabling educators to pinpoint areas of student proficiency and those needing development. Combining summative tests, which evaluate student learning after a lesson, with diagnostic tests, which determine students' existing knowledge and abilities before instruction starts. ***Community Linkages and Professional Engagement.*** Community involvement is crucial to physical education (Webster et al., 2022). Physical education teachers who actively worked with community activities and programs such as such as peer mentoring, workshops, and conferences, reported greater job satisfaction, improved teaching practices, and enhanced student outcomes (Parker et al, 2022) and saw improvements in their students' motivation, engagement in physical activity, and general well-being (Webster et al, 2022). These results highlight how important it is to build solid community links to supplement classroom instruction and give pupils various learning opportunities.

A study by Thornberg et al, (2021) examined how student-teacher interactions are affected by a teacher's professionalism. They discovered that when educators conduct themselves in a professional manner, pupils are more likely to feel appreciated and inspired, which improves behavioral and academic results. This is consistent with the high competency rating for item 28, which asked students to rate how professionally their PE teachers handled them. The excellent competency ratings that are consistently seen in both questions demonstrate how successful PE teachers are at upholding professional standards and guaranteeing adherence to school policies. This skill is essential for creating a disciplined, supportive learning atmosphere where students feel valued and realize how important it is to follow the rules.

Additional study by Prenger et al. (2020) examined the effects of professional cooperation and networking on the professional growth of physical education teachers. As a result of participating in collaborative activities like conferences, seminars, and peer mentorship, teachers report higher levels of job satisfaction, better teaching methods, and improved student results. To continuously enhance the quality of instruction and student learning, professional engagement is required among educators to promote information exchange, skill development, and mutual support.

Personal Growth and Professional Development. Kim, et al. (2019) emphasized that the teaching profession is dynamic and constantly evolving, requiring teachers to continuously learn to keep pace with changing educational paradigms, technologies, and student needs. Continued development enables teachers to adapt to new challenges, refine their pedagogical approaches, and remain effective. Engaging in ongoing learning activities helps teachers stay current with the latest research, best practices, and educational innovations (Boonstra et al., 2021). This ensures they can incorporate evidence-based strategies into their teaching, resulting

in better student outcomes. They also emphasize the positive correlation between teachers' engagement in professional development activities and their effectiveness in the classroom.

Professional development programs that provide opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and skill enhancement contribute to improved instructional practices and student learning outcomes. Padillo et al. (2021) underscore that by demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning, teachers serve as positive role models for their students. Henderson (2024) added that they will instill a culture of curiosity, inquiry, and self-improvement, inspiring students to become lifelong learners themselves.

A study by Huang et al. (2023) highlights that personal development enhances teachers' personal growth by improving their skills, knowledge, and adaptability, leading to increased confidence, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in the classroom. It fosters a stronger professional identity and prepares teachers for leadership roles, contributing to better student outcomes and overall educational improvement. Additionally, personal development promotes well-being, reducing the likelihood of burnout and benefiting both teachers and their students.
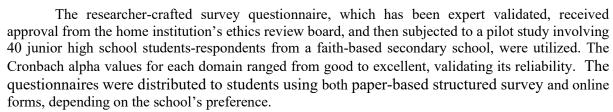
Moreover, a study by Forde et al (2019) shows that experienced educators who pursue continuous professional development can improve both their skill set and level of job satisfaction. Their study highlights the value of reflective pedagogical approaches, collaborative teaching practices, and professional learning communities in preserving experienced educators' high levels of professional contentment and career longevity. **In-Service Training.** In-service training programs are instrumental in enhancing the competencies of physical education teachers (Phillips et al., 2020). These programs address specific gaps and provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction. They (in-service programs) also provide teachers with the competencies they need to successfully integrate modern technologies, create engaging lesson plans, and cater to the individual requirements of each of their students (Baena-Morales et al., 2021). Further, these programs also support continuous professional development by allowing teachers to assess their teaching, collaborate with peers, and implement innovative techniques that improve student outcomes.

Topics covered in such programs may include curriculum development, pedagogical approaches, technology integration, and classroom management. Identifying the specific needs and areas for improvement among physical education teachers is critical for tailoring their competency. By participating in frequent in-service training, PE teachers can ensure that they will gain high-quality education that supports the mental, emotional, and physical health of their students (Van Der Westhuizen et al., 2023). Ultimately, this will support the student's success in and out of the classroom.

METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design to comprehensively profile teacher competencies. This approach, as advocated by Tomaszewski et al. (2020), is suitable for delineating group characteristics and providing a clear snapshot of the current state of affairs. By employing this design, the researchers aimed to identify patterns, trends, and potential areas for development among teachers.

The researcher-crafted survey questionnaire, which has been expert validated, received approval from the home institution's ethics review board, and then subjected to a pilot study involving 40 junior high school students-respondents from a faith-based secondary school, were utilized. The Cronbach alpha values for each domain ranged from good to excellent, validating its reliability. The questionnaires were distributed to students using both paper-based structured survey and online forms, depending on the school's preference.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive methods, such as mean and standard deviation, to summarize the central tendency and variability of the competency scores within each domain. Frequency distribution helped to understand the distribution of responses across different demographic groups. According to Pallant (2020), these statistical methods are essential for identifying patterns and making data-driven decisions in educational research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the levels of teachers' competency in content knowledge and pedagogy. It reveals a grand mean of *2.67 (SD=0.759)*, indicating a verbal interpretation of *high competency*. Among the items, item 7, which states, "*Uses classroom verbal and nonverbal communication strategies effectively to help us understand, participate, and be engaged*," has the *highest mean of 2.96 (SD=0.937)*, reflecting a *high competency level*. This suggests that students perceive their PE teachers as particularly adept at using communication strategies to facilitate engagement and understanding.

On the other hand, item 1, "*Relates our topics in PE class with other topics in other subjects like mathematics, science, English, etc.,*" has the *lowest mean of 2.27 (SD=1.019)*, which corresponds to a *moderate competency level*. This indicates that students perceive less integration of PE with other academic subjects.

Teachers must integrate PE concepts with other academic subjects. Doing this can benefit students (Guan Y, 2023; Carcamo-Oyarzun, Wydra, Hernandez-Mosqueiera, Pena-Troncoso, & Martinez-Salazar, 2020). Afterall, broad personal and social skills, derived from PE are also applicable to numerous discplines (Ikbat, Kausar, & Khan, 2022). A physical education instructor, for example, may discuss the mechanics of a basketball shot or the arithmetic behind calculating a batting average. This method allows learners to realize the importance of PE in their overall education, making studying more interesting and meaningful. This multi-concept integration, however, is only applicable if teachers have a thorough grasp of their topic (Backman et al., 2020) in order to connect PE teachings to other disciplines, such as math or science.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy *My PE teacher…*	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI[1]

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[1] VI = Verbal Interpretation

	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI
1. Relates our topics in PE class with other topics in other subjects	2.27	1.019	*Sometimes*	*Moderate*
2. Applies research-based knowledge/principles in teaching us.	2.80	1.010	*Often*	*High*
3. Uses ICT effectively to facilitate your learning.	2.44	0.994	*Sometimes*	*Moderate*
4. Uses different strategies that promote our understanding of	2.59	1.041	*Often*	*High*
5. Uses different strategies that help us to think critically and creatively.	2.78	1.006	*Often*	*High*
6. Uses the prescribed medium of instruction proficiently.	2.83	0.928	*Often*	*High*
7. Uses classroom verbal and communication strategies effectively to help us understand, participate, and be engaged.	2.96	0.937	*Often*	*High*
GRAND MEAN	**2.67**	**0.759**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*

Table 2 reveals that the *Learning Environment* domain has a grand mean of *2.92 (SD=0.844),* indicating a verbal interpretation of *high competency*. This suggests that students perceive their PE teachers as highly competent in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment. Among the individual items, item 8, which states *"Employs policies/guidelines/ procedures that make us feel safe and secured,"* has the highest mean of 3.07 (SD=1.022), reflecting a *high competency level*.

This indicates that students perceive them particularly safe and secure due to the policies and guidelines implemented by their PE teachers. Conversely, item 9, *"Uses effective classroom management strategies that encourage us to actively participate and be engaged in our lessons,"* has the *lowest mean of 2.79 (SD=1.080)*. Despite being the lowest, this score still falls within the *high competency* range, suggesting that students recognize the effectiveness of their teachers' classroom management strategies in promoting engagement and active participation.

One of the fundamental aspects of effective education is cultivating a conducive learning environment that is stimulating and conducive, where students feel safe and comfortable to actively participate, cooperate, and collaborate remain squarely with the student and the teacher (Franklin & Harrington, 2019).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Learning Environment

Learning Environment *My PE teacher…*	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI
8. Employs policies/guidelines /procedures that make us feel safe and secured.	3.07	1.022	*Often*	*High*

9. Uses effective classroom management strategies that encourage us to actively participate and be engaged in our lessons.	2.79	1.080	*Often*	*High*
10. Maintains a supportive competency learning environment that inspires us to participate, cooperate, and collaborate with each other.	2.89	0.937	*Often*	*High*
11. Motivates us to work productively and assumes responsibility for our own learning.	2.81	0.967	*Often*	*High*
12. Employs positive discipline strategies that maintains a learning-focused environment.	2.95	0.931	*Often*	*High*
13. Adjusts PE lessons to fit our needs, strengths, interests, and needs, strengths, interests, and experiences.	3.02	1.010	*Often*	*High*
GRAND MEAN	**2.92**	**0.844**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*

Franklin and Harrington's (2019) research discovered that students were more likely to engage in active participation, maintain focus during classes, and display good behaviors when teachers used clear, consistent, and fair management techniques. These tactics included creating a classroom setting that was both structured and flexible, employing positive reinforcement, and clearly outlining expectations and norms.

Sökmen (2019) conducted a similar study and proposed that several essential elements, including the physical layout of the classroom, classroom management, and the interactions between the teacher and students influence a successful learning environment. Additionally, he believed that teachers who foster a safe and orderly learning environment would boost students' confidence in their abilities, which would benefit both their academic achievement and overall wellbeing.

Franklin et al. (2019) and Sökmen (2019) found that competent classroom management and a supportive environment are critical for increasing student involvement and self-confidence. These findings indicate that a comprehensive strategy to improve the learning environment, with an emphasis on safety, management approaches, and teacher-student interactions, might greatly enhance PE results.

Table 3 reveals that *Diversity for Learners* has a grand mean of 2.85 (SD=0.830) with a verbal interpretation of high competency. Item 15 which states "*Utilizes teaching strategies that are applicable even to my classmates with disabilities, giftedness, and talents*." has the highest mean of 2.91(SD=1.011) and a verbal interpretation of high competency, while item 17 which states "*Provides additional support or guidance outside the classroom*." has the lowest mean of 2.75 (SD=0.932). However, all the items in the table are verbally interpreted with a high competency level.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Diversity of Learners

Diversity of Learners *My PE teacher…*	**Mean**	**SD**	**Scale Response**	**VI**

14. Considers our (students') backgrounds in the way he/she teaches us.	2.85	0.942	*Often*	*High*
15. Utilizes teaching strategies that are applicable even to my classmates with disabilities, giftedness, and talents.	2.91	1.011	*Often*	*High*
16. Provides additional support or guidance outside the classroom.	2.87	1.046	*Often*	*High*
17. Utilizes culturally-appropriate teaching methods that address our needs as learners.	2.75	0.932	*Often*	*High*
Grand mean	**2.85**	**0.830**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*

In essence, the study is a call to action for educators, schools, and policymakers to prioritize and strengthen efforts toward enhancing cultural awareness and inclusivity in education. This approach not only supports academic achievement but also nurtures a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all students.

The findings show that, while teachers display cultural awareness in curriculum, instructional techniques, and school rules, there is still room for further growth in comprehending cultural diversity. By recognizing and integrating diverse aspects into their teaching approaches and curriculum design, educators can create inclusive classrooms where all students feel valued. Rowan et al. (2020) mention that this not only fosters a supportive environment but also equips students with essential skills like critical thinking and problem-solving, which are crucial in today's interconnected world. It is crucial for teachers to recognize and integrate these diverse aspects into their teaching approaches and curriculum design.

Furthermore, Sanger (2020) highlights that teachers' cultural awareness means understanding and respecting the diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences of students and families. It helps create inclusive classrooms where everyone feels valued and can learn effectively. Additionally, Tipan et al, (2020) that talks about cultural awareness. The findings showed that the participants demonstrate cultural awareness concerning curriculum and teaching methods, professional growth opportunities, and school policies. Despite the result it suggested that the proposed actions be implemented to improve teachers' understanding of cultural diversity.

Table 4 reveals that *Curriculum and Planning* has a grand mean of 2.72 (SD=0.791) with a verbal interpretation of high competency. Item 19 which states "*Sets learning outcomes that are achievable and appropriate to the topic.*" has the *highest mean of 2.99 (SD=1.866)* and a verbal interpretation of high competency while. However, it is evident that in terms of the utilization of ICT as an instructional tool item 22 which states "*Uses appropriate teaching and learning resources, including ICT, so we can learn.*" has the *lowest mean of 2.49 (SD=1.006)* interpreted *Moderate competency*.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Curriculum and Planning

Curriculum and Planning *My PE teacher…*	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI
18. Implements developmentally-sequenced teaching (starts with basic to advance).	2.83	0.949	*Often*	*High*
19. Sets learning outcomes that are achievable and appropriate to the topic.	2.99	0.866	*Often*	*High*
20. Implements learning programs that respond to our needs as learners.	2.69	0.946	*Often*	*High*
21. Participates in collegial discussions so he/she can enrich his/her teaching practice	2.62	0.988	*Often*	*High*
22. Uses appropriate teaching and learning resources, including ICT, so we can learn.	2.49	1.006	*Sometimes*	*Moderate*
Grand mean	**2.72**	**0.791**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*

The result of the study implies that although teachers are excellent at creating curriculum and establishing goals, especially when setting realistic learning outcomes, teachers need help with incorporating ICT into the classroom. This suggests that instructors' use of technology is uneven and at different competency levels. Access to sufficient technical resources focused on professional development in ICT integration and a welcoming atmosphere for experimenting with new teaching tools are required to solve this.

ICT can enhance the quality of teaching and learning by facilitating an engaging and interactive lesson that meets the students' multiple learning styles and preferences (Titus, 2020; Michailidis et al, 2020) thus, teachers' ICT competency should be developed. It is also imperative that the most significant hurdles teachers face related to ICT competency such as time taken away from work for exercise, insufficient resources, the need to invest time and training, wrong use of equipment, not knowing enough, and problems with technology (Villalba et al., 2017), should be addressed.

Table 5 reveals that *Assessment and Reporting* has a grand mean of 2.51 (SD=0.853) with a verbal interpretation of high competency. Item 24 which states "*Monitors learners' progress by recording our performance during assessments*." has the highest mean of 2.79 (SD=1.061) and a verbal interpretation of high competency, while item 26 which states "*Promptly informs our parents/guardians of our class standing/progress*" has the lowest mean of 2.07 (SD=1.098). The rest of the items in the table are verbally interpreted with a high level of competency.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and Reporting *My PE teacher…*	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI
23. Implements different ways of checking our understanding of the lesson.	2.60	1.040	*Often*	*High*
24. Monitors our learning progress by recording our scores regularly.	2.79	1.061	*Often*	*High*
25. Gives us feedback of our progress/standing in class.	2.51	1.064	*Often*	*High*
26. Promptly informs our parents/guardians of our class standing/progress	2.07	1.098	*Sometimes*	*Moderate*
27. Adjusts his/her strategies based on our scores in our tests/outputs.	2.58	0.983	*Often*	*High*
Grand mean	**2.51**	**.0853**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*

These results imply that, although the school shows good skill in tracking students' development through frequent assessment (item 24), there is a significant need to enhance parent/guardian communication on students' class standings (item 26). By addressing this, parental participation and providing students with more effective academic support can be improved.

It is teachers' moral and ethical responsibility to inform parents of their students' academic and overall performance. Doing so is not only due to obligation but also to ensure quality teaching and learning. A study showed that the involvement of parents with their kids in academic activities is a determining factor in motivating and realizing academic achievements of the students (Nofriza, et al, 2020). Several studies (Latif, 2021; Naite, 2021) supported Nofriza et al.'s claim and revealed a strong correlation between parents' interest in their children's education and the student's academic performance leading to better academic performance.

Table 6 reveals that *Community Linkages and Professional Engagement* has a grand mean of 3.01 (SD=0.900) with a verbal interpretation of high competency. Item 29, which states *"Implements the school policies (like uniform, attendance, etc.),"* has the highest mean of 3.22 (SD=0.912) and a verbal interpretation of high competency, while item 28, which states *"Deals with us (students) professionally,"* has a mean of 2.80 (SD=1.086). Moreover, the rest of the items in the table are verbally interpreted with high competency.

This implies that PE teachers in faith-based secondary schools are effective in their professional interactions with students and in implementing school policies, fostering a positive educational environment, and ensuring adherence to institutional standards. *Community Linkages and Professional Engagement* is perceived as highly competent, although there are specific aspects within this construct that vary in stakeholder perception.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics for Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Community Linkages and Professional Engagement *My PE teacher…*	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI
28. Deals with us (students) professionally.	2.80	1.086	*Often*	*High*
29. Implements the school policies (like uniform, attendance, etc).	3.22	0.912	*Often*	*High*
Grand Mean	**3.01**	**0.900**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*

Interacting with students professionally creates a conducive learning environment and trust and respect, contributing to students' well-being (Black et al, 2020; Odinokaya et al, 2019). Thornberg et al, (2021) study also revealed that when educators professionally conduct themselves, pupils are more likely to feel appreciated and inspired, which improves behavioral and academic results. This is consistent with the high competency rating for item 28, which asked students to rate how professionally their PE teachers handled them. The excellent competency ratings in both questions demonstrate how successful PE teachers are at upholding professional standards and guaranteeing adherence to school policies. This skill is essential for creating a disciplined, supportive learning atmosphere where students feel valued and realize the importance of following the rules.

Table 7 reveals that *Personal Growth* has a grand mean of 2.75 (SD=0.852) with a verbal interpretation of *high competency*. Item 31, which states *". Shows that he/she genuinely cares about his/her learners,"* has the highest mean of 3.06 (SD=1.038) and a verbal interpretation of *high competency*, while item 32, which states *"Collaborates with other PE professionals by attending workshops, fora, and training." has the lowest mean of 2.29 (SD=1.003).* Moreover, the rest of the items in the table are verbally interpreted with *high competency*. This implies that while overall personal growth and professional development are perceived positively (high competency), there is variability in specific behaviors. Item 31 stands out as particularly strong, indicating a genuine concern for learners, whereas Item 32 suggests a potential area for improvement in collaboration with peers through professional activities.

Huang et al. (2023) highlights that personal development enhances teachers' personal growth by improving their skills, knowledge, and adaptability, leading to increased confidence, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in the classroom. It fosters a stronger professional identity and prepares teachers for leadership roles, contributing to better student outcomes and overall educational improvement. Additionally, personal development promotes well-being, reducing the likelihood of burnout and benefiting both teachers and their students.

Nevertheless, Madina et al. (2022) stress the value of reflection even more for career advancement. Programs that promote self-reflection, teamwork, and skill development result in more effective teaching strategies and higher student learning results. Fundamentally,

educators who consistently engage in self-reflection and learning establish themselves as formidable role models for their pupils, cultivating a passion for education and a growth mindset in both parties. This emphasizes how crucial it is for educational institutions to give professional development opportunities for teacher's top priority and funding.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics for Personal Growth and Professional Development

Personal Growth	Mean	SD	Scale Response	VI
30. Teaches in a student-centered way	2.83	0.949	*Often*	*High*
31. Shows that he/she genuinely cares about his/her learners	3.06	1.038	*Often*	*High*
32. Collaborates with other PE professionals by attending workshops, fora, and training.	2.29	1.003	*Sometimes*	*Moderate*
33. Shares his/her professional plans, based on personal reflections, so that s/he can improve him/herself	2.83	1.049	*Often*	*High*
Grand Mean	**2.75**	**0.852**	**Often**	**High**

Legend: *3.50-4:00 Very High | 2.50-3.49 High | 1.50 – 2.49 Moderate | 1.00 – 1.49 Low*
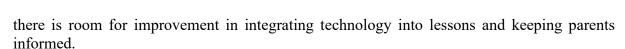
Forde et al, (2019) shows that experienced educators who pursue continuous professional development can improve both their skill set and level of job satisfaction. Their study highlights the value of reflective pedagogical approaches, collaborative teaching practices, and professional learning communities in preserving experienced educators' high levels of professional contentment and career longevity.

Huang et al. (2023), Madina et al. (2022), and Forde et al. (2019) collectively emphasize the significant impact of personal development and reflection on teachers' professional growth. They argue that educators who engage in self-reflection and learning serve as role models, fostering a growth mindset in themselves and their students. maintaining high levels of professional contentment and career longevity. Collectively, these studies underscore the critical need for educational institutions to prioritize and fund professional development opportunities for teachers.

Proposed In-service Training Program

This study investigating PE teachers' competency in the Philippines revealed generally positive results, with a high average score in the *Curriculum and Planning* domain. However, there were variations within the domain. Teachers excelled at setting achievable learning goals but showed lower competency in utilizing a variety of teaching resources, including technology. Similarly, the Assessment and Reporting domain scored well overall, but there was a significant weakness in promptly communicating student progress to parents. These findings suggest that while PE teachers demonstrate strong curriculum planning and assessment skills,

there is room for improvement in integrating technology into lessons and keeping parents informed.

By assessing teachers' competencies across different domains, such as content knowledge, pedagogy, and the learning environment, the study identifies areas of strength and areas that require improvement. These findings are to ensure that PE teachers possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver their lessons and manage their classrooms. If certain domains show lower competency levels, it indicates a need for targeted professional development in those areas. The findings thus provide actionable insights for designing in-service training programs and other support mechanisms to elevate the overall quality of physical education in faith-based secondary schools.

Given these findings, it is essential to implement a targeted in-service training program to address the identified gaps and enhance the overall competency levels of PE teachers in faith-based secondary schools. The proposed in-service training program will focus on several key areas to ensure comprehensive professional development. The program is designed to address the specific needs of PE teachers at different career stages: early-career(1-3 years), mid-career teachers (4-6 years), and seasoned teachers (7 years and above). The training will cover all Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) domains and will be conducted over five days. The training will focus on enhancing pedagogical skills, updating subject knowledge, improving classroom management, integrating faith-based principles, and fostering professional growth.

CONCLUSION

Teacher competency is a factor contributing to quality teaching and learning. This study has shown that faith-based institution students perceived their PE teachers to have high competency in all domains under PPST but excelled most in *Community Linkages and Professional Engagements, Learning Environment,* and *Diversity of Learners*. This can be attributed to faith-based institutions' embedded culture of community service and fellowship gatherings combined with adherence to the faith-based principle of the mighty triad of education: home, school, and church.

However, faith-based PE teachers' competency levels can be improved more by providing professional development interventions in the areas of: 1) updating parents or guardians on students' achievement; 2) relating PE concepts with other academic subjects; 3) collaborating with other PE teachers through attendance in fora, conferences, and seminars; 4) using teaching resources especially ICT; and 5) using culturally-appropriate teaching methods to address students needs as learners.

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