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Physical activities toward health and fitness and gender factors: an analysis of students' physical activity and attitudes toward Physical Education

Actividades físicas para la salud y la aptitud física y factores de género: un análisis de la actividad física y las actitudes de los estudiantes hacia la Educación Física

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Abstract
With lifestyle changes brought by modern advancements, understanding students' physical activity and attitudes toward Physical Education is vital for promoting lifelong health and well-being. Thus, this study investigated the levels of physical activity and attitudes toward Physical Education among 880 Physical Activities Toward Health and Fitness students in the first semester of AY 2024-2025 across gender groups and Physical Activities Toward Health and Fitness course offerings, using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. The validated researcher-made questionnaire, patterned after the Global Physical Activity Questionnaire and Ishee and Smith's attitudinal instrument, was used to gather the quantitative data. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected through a focus group discussion. The study's results revealed a high level of physical activity and positive attitudes toward Physical Education across all gender groups and course offerings, with males having a slightly higher mean score than females. The results also revealed a significant relationship between physical activity and attitude across all dimensions ($p < .001$). Significant differences were observed between male and female students in both physical activity and attitudes toward Physical Education across all Physical Activities Toward Health and Fitness courses. Qualitative findings highlighted themes of lifestyle movement, social influences, gendered preferences, barriers, and the value of the Physical Activities Toward Health and Fitness courses. The findings emphasize the necessity of inclusive, diverse, and student-centered physical education curricula.
Keywords: attitude; physical activity; physical education; physical activities toward health and fitness; gender

Resumen
Con los cambios en el estilo de vida que traen los avances modernos, comprender la actividad física y las actitudes de los estudiantes hacia la Educación Física es vital para promover la salud y el bienestar de por vida. Por lo tanto, este estudio investigó los niveles de actividad física y las actitudes hacia la Educación Física entre 880 estudiantes de Actividades Físicas para la Salud y la Aptitud Física en el primer semestre del año académico 2024-2025 en todos los grupos de género y ofertas de cursos de Actividades Físicas para la Salud y la Aptitud Física, utilizando un diseño de métodos mixtos explicativo secuencial. El cuestionario validado elaborado por el investigador, basado en el Cuestionario Global de Actividad Física y el instrumento de actitud de Ishee y Smith, se utilizó para recopilar los datos cuantitativos. Por otro lado, los datos cualitativos se recopilaron a través de una discusión de grupo focal. Los resultados del estudio revelaron un alto nivel de actividad física y actitudes positivas hacia la Educación Física en todos los grupos de género y ofertas de cursos, con los hombres con una puntuación media ligeramente más alta que las mujeres. Los resultados también revelaron una relación significativa entre la actividad física y la actitud en todas las dimensiones ($p < .001$). Se observaron diferencias significativas entre estudiantes hombres y mujeres, tanto en actividad física como en actitudes hacia la Educación Física, en todos los cursos de Actividades Físicas para la Salud y la Condición Física. Los hallazgos cualitativos destacaron temas como el movimiento en el estilo de vida, las influencias sociales, las preferencias de género, las barreras y el valor de los cursos de Actividades Físicas para la

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Salud y la Condición Física. Los hallazgos enfatizan la necesidad de currículos de educación física inclusivos, diversos y centrados en el estudiante.

Palabras clave: actitud; actividad física; educación física; actividades físicas para la salud y la aptitud física; género

Introduction

Physical Activity (PA) is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone of holistic well-being, playing a significant role in the promotion of health (Ahmed & Al Salim, 2024; Gatchalian & Limbo, 2021). PA refers to any bodily movement that requires energy expenditure, ranging from light-intensity daily activities such as walking and household chores to moderate-to-vigorous forms like sports, exercise, and recreational play (Smith et al., 2020; Gulanes, 2025). Participation in any PA has been consistently shown to improve mental health, prevent lifestyle diseases, and enhance overall quality of life (da Silveira et al., 2021; Ozemek et al., 2019; Guerrero et al., 2025).

However, physical inactivity continues to rank as one of the leading risk factors for death worldwide, including in Southeast Asia (Marcaida et al., 2022). 81% of teenagers and one in four adults do not engage in the recommended amounts of physical activity (Ávalos-Ramos et al., 2024). This report has been made worse by the pandemic, which led to a 41% decrease in physical activity, amplifying inequalities in participation, particularly among girls and children with disabilities (Oberg et al.,2022). University students, in particular, also struggle to maintain adequate physical activity, as many institutions do not actively promote participation in physical activities (Ahmed & Al Salim, 2024). The link between higher education and declining PA levels raises concerns about the long-term impact on students' well-being and fitness levels. Moreover, the growing prevalence of physical inactivity has become a critical issue that directly aligns with the global public health agenda (Ahmed & Al Salim, 2024; Smith et al., 2020).

Several factors have contributed to this alarming trend. Economic development has introduced conveniences that reduce the need for manual labor and active transport, while rapid technological advancement has encouraged screen-based recreation and sedentary behaviors. These influences collectively foster an environment where sedentary lifestyles

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prevail, especially among young adults and students. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions within educational settings, particularly in universities, to promote active lifestyles.

As a structured means of promoting PA, PE shapes lifelong fitness habits among students, which extend from preschool to tertiary education (Bukvić et al., 2021; Casado-Robles et al., 2025). PE is important for producing graduates who lead an active life through participation in physical activity (Viva & Limbo, 2021). Beyond its physical benefits, PE contributes to cognitive, emotional, and social development by fostering teamwork, discipline, and self-confidence (Marcaida et al., 2022). However, perceptions of PE vary widely among students. While students often enjoy PE, they may not perceive it as academically significant. This ambivalence raises concerns about the long-term impact of PE on students' engagement in PA outside the classroom (Wang et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, PE is a mandated subject in higher education institutions, designed to encourage movement for active living and holistic development (Perez et al., 2022), as mandated by CMO No. 39, series of 2021. This PE curriculum, known as PATHFit (Physical Activities Toward Health and Fitness), emphasizes health and fitness over athletic achievement. The ultimate goal of the PATHFit courses is to develop an active and healthy citizenry that will lead a life of fitness and wellness through a diverse range of courses, including movement enhancement, sports, dance, martial arts, and outdoor recreation, among others. Students are expected to learn to move and move to learn.

On the other hand, attitudes toward PE are crucial in influencing participation in physical activity. In social psychology, attitude is a key psychological term that influences behavioral intention (Kong, 2021). According to the theory of planned behavior, individuals with positive attitudes toward a particular activity are more likely to engage in it (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2021). In the context of PE, students who value and enjoy the subject are expected to participate more actively in PAs both within and outside school. However, research on the direct relationship between students' attitudes toward PE and their physical activity behaviors remains inconclusive. Although studies have shown a significant correlation between PA and students' positive attitude toward PE (Wang et al., 2024), Mercier et al. (2021)found no significant relationship between these variables.

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These contradicting results underscore the need for further investigation, especially in diverse educational settings.

Furthermore, the role of gender differences and PATHFit course offerings in shaping students' physical activity levels and attitudes toward PE (Wang et al., 2024) also needs further explanation. Existing research suggests that there are gender differences between men and women in physical activity participation, with men generally engaging in more active PA than women, influenced by social expectations and self-efficacy (Smit et al., 2024). Males tend to have a strong perceived competence, enjoy physical activities, and have self-assessed abilities (Ahmed & Al Salim, 2024). Thus, there is a need to increase female participation in PA, as this will positively impact self-perceived competence and enhance PA satisfaction. On the other hand, different PATHFit courses are also essential in forming students' attitudes and encouraging their participation in physical activity (Viva & Limbo, 2021). Understanding how these new PATHFit courses can provide valuable inputs into making PE programs more inclusive for learners from diverse backgrounds needs to be explained.

Recognizing the existing gaps in understanding, this study looked into how students engage in physical activity (PA) and how they feel about physical education (PE), taking into account their gender and the specific PATHFit courses they are enrolled in. The goal was to provide practical, evidence-based insights that could help improve PE programs, making them more inclusive and supportive of students' lifelong participation in physical activity. In doing so, the study aimed to describe the students' levels of physical activity and their attitudes toward PE across gender groups and PATHFit course offerings. It also sought to determine whether there is a significant relationship between students' PA levels and their attitudes toward PE, as well as to identify any significant differences that may exist based on gender and course type. Beyond the quantitative aspects, the research also explored students' personal experiences, how they view, engage in, and make sense of their physical activity routines and participation in PE classes within the context of their gender and PATHFit course.

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Methods

Study Design

This study utilized the Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design to determine the relationship between students' PA and attitudes toward PE across gender groups and PATHFit course offerings conducted in two separate stages: quantitative and qualitative phases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The purpose of the qualitative data is to provide further explanation for the quantitative findings.

Respondents and Sampling

A total of Eight Hundred Eighty (880) college students from the eight (8) colleges of one State University in the Philippines enrolled in four (4) PATHFit course offerings during the 1st semester of AY 2024-2025, were the respondents of this study. To ensure representativeness, the sample size was determined using a proportional stratified random sampling technique. The strata are the respondents' colleges, and the sample size for each stratum was calculated using a stratified sampling calculator.

Table No.1. Sample Size

College	Total Population	Total Sample Size	Sample Size Female	Sample Size Male
Arts and Sciences	855	149	75	74
Education	864	150	75	75
Agriculture and Food Sciences	1096	191	96	95
Engineering and Technology	857	149	75	74
Management and Economics	799	139	70	69
Forestry and Environmental Sciences	282	49	25	24
Nursing	197	34	17	17
Veterinary Medicine	110	19	10	9
Total	**5060**	**880**	**443**	**437**

Study Organization

Before conducting this study, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University Human Ethics Review Committee (HERC) under approval code 2024-57-IHKf, as well as informed consent, to ensure that respondents understood the study's objectives, their rights as respondents, and the confidentiality of their responses. Quantitative data were collected over five months, either through a Google form created by the researcher or via paper format distributed to the participants. Qualitative data were likewise collected through a focus group discussion.

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Study Instruments

This study employed two research tools: a focus group discussion guide questionnaire and a researcher-made survey questionnaire based on the Global Physical Activity Questionnaire and Ishee and Smith's attitudinal questionnaire (Viva & Limbo, 2021). Three physical education specialists validated the researcher-made survey questionnaire. Additionally, 30 respondents participated in a pilot study to evaluate its reliability (Bujang et al., 2024). With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83, PA items are considered a reliable measure, while the attitudes toward PE section demonstrated strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. Experts also reviewed the focus group discussion (FGD) guide to ensure the validity of the content.

Statistical Analysis

The data gathered from this study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. To determine the students' level of PA and attitudes toward PE, descriptive statistics, specifically, mean and standard deviation, were used, and the following scoring and interpretation table was utilized:

Table No. 2. Interpretation of 4-point Likert Scale

Point Value	Scoring	Interpretation
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very High
3	2.51 – 3.25	High
2	1.76 – 2.50	Low
1	1.00– 1.75	Very Low

Source: Viva & Limbo (2021)

For the inferential statistics, the Spearman-Rho correlation análysis was used to determine the significant relationship between students' levels of physical activity (PA) and attitudes toward PE. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to determine if there were any significant differences in PA levels and PE attitudes between the two gender groups. In the meantime, significant differences in the same variables across various PATHFit course offerings were evaluated using the Kruskal-Wallis H Test.

For the qualitative phase, data from focus group discussions (FGDs) with selected students were analyzed using thematic análysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

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Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents the level of PA among students, categorized by gender. The data show that both female and male students exhibit a high level of physical activity, as indicated by their mean scores falling within the range of 2.51–3.25. Specifically, female students have a mean score of 2.564 (SD = 0.471), while male students have a slightly higher mean score of 2.719 (SD = 0.492). Notably, male students report a marginally higher level of physical activity compared to female students.

Table 3 further reveals that students across all PATHFit course offerings demonstrated high levels of physical activity (PA), as reflected in the computed mean scores. Among the four courses assessed, PATHFIT 3 (Team Sports) recorded the highest mean PA level (M = 2.716, SD = 0.485). Following closely are PATHFIT 3 (Dance) (M = 2.699, SD = 0.458) and Recreational Sports (M = 2.618, SD = 0.507), both of which also promote active movement and skill execution through rhythmic or game-based formats. Interestingly, PATHFIT 1 (Movement Enhancement), a course typically focusing on posture, mobility, and foundational movements, recorded the lowest mean (M = 2.530, SD = 0.478); nevertheless, it was still classified as having a "High" interpretation category.

Table No.3. Students' level of physical activity across gender groups and course offerings

Physical Activity		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Gender	Female	443	2.564	0.471	High
	Male	437	2.719	0.492	High
Course Offerings	PATHFIT 1 Movement Enhancement	220	2.530	0.478	High
	PATHFIT 3 Dance	220	2.699	0.458	High
	PATHFIT 3 Recreational Sport	220	2.618	0.507	High
	PATHFIT 3 Team Sports	220	2.716	0.485	High

Table 4 shows that both female and male students exhibit high levels of positive attitude toward Physical Education (PE) across all measured dimensions, physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual, as well as in their overall attitude. This consistent rating of “High” indicates that students, regardless of gender, maintain favorable perceptions of PE as part of their educational experience.

When comparing groups, males consistently reported slightly higher mean scores than females across all dimensions. The largest difference was observed in the physical aspect, where males obtained a mean score of 3.129 compared to females’ 2.959. The

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smallest difference occurred in the mental aspect, with males posting a mean of 3.198 and females 3.133, showing near-identical perceptions in terms of the mental contributions of PE, such as focus, concentration, and problem-solving.

Finally, the overall attitude reflects this general trend, with females obtaining a mean of 2.893 (SD = 0.454) and males slightly higher at 3.022 (SD = 0.488). Although the differences between male and female students are minimal, the results consistently demonstrate that both groups place a high value on PE across multiple dimensions of student growth and development.

Table No.4. Students' level of attitude toward Physical Education across gender groups

Attitude	**Gender**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Interpretation**
Physical Aspects	Female	443	2.959	0.398	High
	Male	437	3.129	0.437	High
Mental Aspects	Female	443	3.133	0.574	High
	Male	437	3.198	0.585	High
Social Aspects	Female	443	2.696	0.418	High
	Male	437	2.841	0.509	High
Emotional Aspects	Female	443	2.797	0.513	High
	Male	437	2.922	0.532	High
Spiritual Aspects	Female	443	2.880	0.620	High
	Male	437	3.021	0.651	High
Overall Attitude	Female	443	2.893	0.454	High
	Male	437	3.022	0.488	High

Table 5 shows that students exhibited a consistently high level of attitude toward PE, regardless of the specific PATHFIT course they were enrolled in. Among the four offerings, PATHFIT 3 (Team Sports) registered the highest mean attitude score (M = 3.016, SD = 0.436), closely followed by PATHFIT 3 (Dance) (M = 3.008, SD = 0.523). These findings suggest that activities involving teamwork, rhythm, and performance may be more enjoyable or engaging for students, likely due to their social and interactive nature.

Meanwhile, PATHFIT 1 (Movement Enhancement) (M = 2.913, SD = 0.462) and PATHFIT 3 (Recreational Sports) (M = 2.891, SD = 0.467) also showed high attitude levels, though slightly lower compared to their counterparts. This may be due to the technical, repetitive, or less familiar nature of the activities in these courses, which might not appeal equally to all students. Despite these slight differences, the interpretation for

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all offerings still falls under the "high" category, indicating an overall favorable attitude toward PE among the students.

Table No.5. Students' level of attitude toward Physical Education across course offerings

Variable	PATHFit Course Offerings	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Overall Attitude	PATHFIT 1 Movement Enhancement	220	2.913	0.462	High
	PATHFIT 3 Dance	220	3.008	0.523	High
	PATHFIT 3 Recreational Sports	220	2.891	0.467	High
	PATHFIT 3 Team Sports	220	3.016	0.436	High

Spearman's correlation analysis (as shown in Table 6) revealed statistically significant positive relationships between students' levels of PA and their attitudes toward PE across all dimensions ($p < .001$). Among the specific attitude aspects, spiritual aspects showed the strongest correlation with physical activity ($\rho = 0.304$), followed closely by emotional ($\rho = 0.277$) and mental aspects ($\rho = 0.272$). Social ($\rho = 0.219$) and physical aspects ($\rho = 0.208$) also demonstrated significant but comparatively weaker relationships.

Overall, the general attitude toward PE was correlated with physical activity ($\rho = 0.314$, $p < .001$), suggesting that students with more positive attitudes, particularly in terms of emotional, spiritual, and mental engagement, tend to be more physically active. This finding supports the notion that fostering favorable attitudes across multiple psychosocial domains may contribute to increased participation in physical activities.

Table No.6. Relationship between students' physical activity and attitude toward PE

Physical Activity		Attitude Aspect	Spearman's ρ	*p*-value
Physical Activity	-	Physical Aspects	0.208***	< .001
Physical Activity	-	Mental Aspects	0.272***	< .001
Physical Activity	-	Social Aspects	0.219***	< .001
Physical Activity	-	Emotional Aspects	0.277***	< .001
Physical Activity	-	Spiritual Aspects	0.304***	< .001
Physical Activity	-	Overall Attitude	0.314***	< .001

Note: ***Significant at $p < .001$

The findings in Table 7 revealed a significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students toward physical education and their levels of physical activity. For physical activity, the results revealed a U value of 76374.500 with a p-value of <.001, demonstrating a statistically significant difference between the groups. The rank-biserial correlation was -0.211 (SE = 0.039), indicating a small to moderate effect size and suggesting that male students reported higher levels of physical activity than female

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students. Similarly, for the attitude toward physical education, the U value was 81624.000, with a p-value of<.001, also indicating a significant difference. The rank-biserial correlation of -0.157 (SE = 0.039) reflects a small effect size, with male students exhibiting more positive attitudes toward physical education compared to female students. Overall, these findings indicate significant gender differences in attitudes toward physical education, favoring male students.

Table No.7. Significant differences in students' physical activity levels and attitudes toward PE based on gender

	W	p	Rank-Biserial Correlation	SE Rank-Biserial Correlation
Physical Activity	76374.500	< .001***	-0.211	0.039
Attitudes toward PE	81624.000	< .001***	-0.157	0.039

Note: ***Significant at p<.001

The Kruskal-Wallis H test (as shown in Table 8) was used to examine whether students' overall physical activity levels and attitudes toward physical education differed significantly across various PATHFit course offerings. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in physical activity across the PATHFit courses, H(3) = 23.965, p < .001**,** suggesting that at least one course group differed in terms of students' engagement in physical activity. Similarly, a significant difference was also found in students' attitudes toward PE**,** H(3) = 9.787, p = .020 since the p value is less than the p value <.05**,** indicating that students' attitudes were influenced by the type of PATHFit course they were enrolled in. These findings highlight that both physical activity levels and attitudes toward PE may vary depending on the specific course offerings provided.

Table No.8. Significant Differences in Students' Physical Activity Levels and Attitudes toward PE based on PATHFit Course Offerings

Variables	Statistic (H)	df	p
Overall PA- PE Course Offerings	23.965	3	<.001*
Overall Attitude- PE Course Offerings	9.787	3	0.020*

Note: *Significant at p<.05

The Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis of the conducted focus group discussions revealed five major themes that describe students' experiences and

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perceptions regarding physical activity and PATHFit courses. These themes are as follows:

Theme 1. Routine Movement as Lifestyle

Students commonly reported engaging in unstructured yet consistent forms of physical activity, such as walking, household chores, and commuting. These routine movements are often integrated into their daily lives, particularly within the school setting. For example, walking from the dormitory to class, participating in barangay clean-ups, or simply navigating the expansive campus on foot were frequently mentioned as activities that students enjoyed. These forms of activity, while not part of formal exercise routines, contribute meaningfully to students' overall physical activity engagement.

"I usually walk almost every day, especially going to school or doing errands." -SP01

"My typical week includes walking around campus and doing chores in the dorm." -SP07

Theme 2. Personal Choice and Social Dynamics

Personal preferences, social connections, and convenience largely influence physical activity choices. Many students expressed that they engage in physical activity when it is enjoyable, aligned with their interests, or done in the company of friends. Peer influence played a crucial motivational role in sustaining participation in activities like jogging, volleyball, and swimming.

"If I have time after schoolwork, I play badminton with my friends." -SP07

"I usually jog or swim, especially if I am doing it with someone." -SP02

Theme 3. Barriers to Structured Activity

Despite their interest in being physically active, students identified several barriers that hindered their participation in more structured forms of physical activity. The cited obstacles included academic workload, lack of time, low energy levels, and limited access to equipment or facilities. Some students expressed frustration over these constraints, noting their desire to be more active but feeling overwhelmed by other responsibilities.

"I want to do more, but with classes and assignments, I barely have time."- SP010

"I am too tired most of the time. I end up skipping exercise even if I want to." SP01

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Theme 4. Gendered Tendencies and Perceptions

While some students rejected the idea that gender dictates physical ability, many acknowledged observable differences in activity preferences between male and female students. Males were often associated with competitive and high-intensity sports, such as basketball or weightlifting. At the same time, females were perceived as favoring moderate, rhythmic, or low-impact activities, like dance, walking, or yoga. These preferences were often linked to social norms, media influence, or self-perceived physical capabilities.

"Boys usually go for basketball or lifting weights. Girls mostly prefer dance or Zumba." SP03

"I think it is how we are raised and what is expected from us." SP05

Theme 5. Perceived Value of PATHFit Courses

Students viewed PE, particularly the PATHFit program, in a positive light. They recognized their value in promoting physical wellness, relieving academic stress, and fostering life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and confidence. Many appreciated the diversity of activities offered, though some expressed a desire for more autonomy in selecting the type of physical activity that best matched their interests and abilities.

"I like PE because it helps me stay active and manage stress from academics." SP04

"I just hope we can choose what activity to focus on more freely." SP010

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that both male and female students reported high levels of physical activity, with males exhibiting slightly higher PA. This finding aligns with a study by Romero-Parra et al. (2023), which revealed that female university students practiced physical activity at lower levels than their male counterparts. This gender disparity aligns with global patterns, indicating that adolescent males generally participate more in moderate-to-vigorous PA than females (Woodforde et al., 2024; Araujo et al., 2024; Antonio, 2025). The qualitative theme of Gendered Tendencies and Perceptions supports the quantitative findings, which illustrate a preference among males for competitive and high-intensity sports. At the same time, females tend to favor moderate and rhythmic activities.

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Moreover, Team Sports and Dance courses have the highest levels of physical activity and positive attitudes, probably due to their inherently social, dynamic, and enjoyable nature. These outcomes align with existing literature indicating that team-based and rhythmic activities enhance enjoyment in physical activity among youth and children (Cachón-Zagalaz et al., 2023). Furthermore, the Movement Enhancement course, which focuses on foundational and lower-intensity movements, exhibited slightly lower activity levels compared to team sports and dance. This aligns with the recent findings that intensity and enjoyment are key drivers of physical activity participation in school PE settings (Sevil-Serrano et al., 2022; Domville et al., 2019). The qualitative themes of Personal Choice and Social Dynamics, alongside the Perceived Value of PATHFit Courses, also support the quantitative results by highlighting enjoyment, peer interaction, and perceived benefits as important determinants of student physical activity. These insights align with current demands for student-centered PE curricula that accommodate diverse interests and abilities of students to maximize engagement (Silva et al., 2024).

Moreover, students exhibited high levels of positive attitudes toward PE, with males scoring slightly higher again. This pattern aligns with contemporary evidence linking positive attitudes to increased participation in PA and social support (Chen et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025). The positive correlations between PA and emotional, spiritual, and mental dimensions of attitudes reflect the multidimensional nature of engagement, which supports the view that psychosocial factors are central motivators in adolescent physical activity (Biddle et al., 2019). The Barriers to Structured Activity theme in the qualitative findings highlights constraints, such as academic pressure and fatigue, that can dampen physical activity despite favorable attitudes. This aligns with recent literature identifying time management challenges and competing demands as prevalent obstacles to youth participation in PA (Ávalos-Ramos et al., 2024).

The findings of this study revealed the importance of PE programs offering variety, social support, and autonomy to accommodate students' interests. Similarly, Silva et al. (2024) concluded that incorporating student voice in activity selection could boost the students' interest (Sevil-Serrano et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2024). Furthermore, addressing gender-specific preferences and challenging stereotypes remains essential for promoting equitable participation and enjoyment (Stewart et al., 2021).

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In summary, the study's findings noted that a diverse and inclusive PE curricula play a significant role in increasing students' physical activity levels and fostering more positive attitudes toward PE. The results also revealed notable gender differences, suggesting the need for more responsive and adaptive teaching strategies, such as offering a variety of activity options, ensuring equitable participation, and improving students' motivation.

Study Limitations

The participants were limited to 880 PATHFit students from a single State University during one academic year, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other institutions, regions, or cultural contexts. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design with data collected at a single point in time; therefore, while relationships between variables could be identified, causal inferences and changes over time could not be determined. Additionally, physical activity levels and attitudes toward Physical Education were measured through self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias. Although significant gender differences were found, the study did not thoroughly explore the sociocultural factors underlying these disparities, leaving the reasons for such differences insufficiently examined.

Conclusion

This study concluded that PATHFit students exhibit high levels of physical activity (PA) and positive attitudes toward Physical Education (PE) across gender groups and course offerings. Physical activity and attitudes toward PE are significantly correlated, with notable differences observed across gender and PATHFit courses. These findings emphasize the importance of developing inclusive and diverse PE curricula that address gender differences, promote greater female participation, encourage the integration of movement into daily life, and recognize the value of social support and personal choice in sustaining active lifestyles.

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