

Suggestions for a better tertiary physical education experience: insights from students at a rural state university

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the concerns and suggestions of generation Z students in rural communities to improve the newly implemented tertiary physical education (PE) program in the Philippines - physical activity towards health and fitness (PATHFit). Employing a qualitative-ethnographic approach, data were gathered from 20 generation Z students who were selected and participated in purposive interviews using open-ended questions validated by experts. The findings highlighted several themes following the data analysis using the Colaizzi method: PE should be engaging and fun, moving beyond traditional books and materials; a more flexible curriculum is needed, one that does not feel like a rigid prescription; student-centered activities should be prioritized to promote active involvement; lectures should be limited, with a greater focus on interactive, hands-on experiences; access to sports equipment through a borrowing system is crucial for student participation; and high-quality teaching, characterized by clear communication and practical demonstrations, is essential for a more meaningful learning experience. The study concludes and implies that generation Z students in rural communities desire a more engaging, flexible, and interactive PATHFit program that aligns with their interests and needs. Their insights provide valuable direction for enhancing the curriculum, promoting active student involvement, and ensuring that teaching is clear, practical, and engaging.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, born from 1995 to the early 2010s, significantly influenced societal standards, cultural landscapes, and educational frameworks in terms of generational dynamics [1]. Often known as Gen Z, this refers to the first group born in the twenty-first century. They are accustomed to living in a society greatly influenced by the extensive accessibility of information, globalization, and technological progress [2]. Cilliers [3] emphasized the importance of comprehending their beliefs, concerns, and ideas for educators, legislators, and academic leaders dedicated to customizing educational programs to meet this generation's distinct needs and interests.

Researchers from the United States have identified a unique set of values that distinguishes generation Z from earlier generations. This is because they grew up during a time when digital technology, such as cell phones, social media, and rapid connectedness, was the prevailing influence [4]. Their innate technical aptitude has impacted their communication strategies, craving instant access to information,

interactive educational experiences, and a global outlook [5]. Gen Z is distinguished by their pragmatism and tenacity, shaped by their encounters with economic instabilities, geopolitical changes, and a rapidly changing labor market. A deep desire for the inclusion of all persons, fairness, and genuineness characterizes this generation. Their principles are based on a firm conviction in social action, fairness, inclusivity, and ecological sustainability [6].

In addition, the present generation's dependence on digital technology might lead to reduced physical activity and increased sedentary habits among young people. Conventional physical education (PE) programs, mainly consisting of in-person exercises guided by instructors, face difficulties adapting to this situation [7]. Rural communities with low technology and internet access tend to have a higher prevalence of traditional PE techniques, prioritizing outdoor activities, sports, and group exercises. To effectively resolve the difference between generation Z's inclination towards digital platforms and the conventional PE methods in rural areas, it is imperative to introduce inventive strategies that integrate technology-driven educational experiences, including gamification, mobile applications, and online resources [8]. These initiatives aim to encourage physical exercise and improve the well-being of young individuals, taking into account the specific cultural and environmental challenges and recommendations in rural locations.

However, the implementation of PE in many tertiary educational institutions in the Philippines has faced considerable obstacles [9]. The barriers encompass inadequacies in the curriculum, inadequate teacher preparation, and a lack of attention to the subject matter, often seen as having more significant political rather than cultural importance. According to Lynch and Ovens [10], the historical backdrop indicates that issues beyond pedagogical considerations have impacted tertiary PE. The academic discussion on these issues highlights the significance of a thorough improvement strategy. Abbasov and Mavlyanov [11] stressed the crucial importance of improving the quality and effectiveness of PE by allocating additional resources, such as investing in the training of staff and upgrading school infrastructure.

To deal with these crucial matters, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has made it obligatory for all higher education institutions (HEIs) to adopt and offer the new tertiary PE program, physical activity towards health and fitness (PATHFit), as specified in CHED Memorandum Orders (CMO) no. 39, series of 2021. PATHFit is a proactive solution that addresses the need for consistent teaching approaches. It is mainly intended to offer a complete and uniform curriculum. The framework prioritizes holistic development, essential life skills, and physical well-being. Further, the curriculum aligns with the demands of the present educational system by incorporating pioneering approaches that can enhance the overall caliber and efficacy of PE in higher education [12].

The main goal of PATHFit is to exceed traditional frameworks and enhance the state of PE in Philippine higher education. This will be achieved by executing a complete program that combines the cultivation of crucial life skills and physical fitness to tackle long-lasting difficulties [13]. The CMO no. 39 (s. 2021) further explains the curriculum's aim to offer students a thorough educational experience focusing on physical health, teamwork, proficient communication, and holistic growth. PATHFit aims to enhance the caliber and effectiveness of higher education in PE by integrating cutting-edge techniques and adjusting to present educational requirements. This ensures that graduates have the knowledge and skills to participate in societal endeavors and uphold their overall welfare actively.

Numerous studies have explored the landscape of generation Z, examining their activities in several educational and industrial settings. Bhore and Pandita [14] did a comparative analysis of the characteristics and behaviors of generation Z and generation Y. It was shown that social media exerts a significant influence on the professional choices made by individuals belonging to generation Z. Ajmain [15] emphasized the need of establishing efficient communication methods and the impact of technology on the social communication skills of generation Z. Shorey *et al.* [16] conducted a review to determine the learning styles, preferences, and needs of healthcare students belonging to generation Z. The need of integrating technology and self-care practices into the teaching of these students was emphasized. Arkhipova *et al.* [17] found that generation Z students had a favorable view of using technology in school. This suggests that their academic performance may be enhanced by effectively using technology. Giunta [18] highlighted the trust and reliance on social media among college students of generation Z. This emphasizes the necessity for instructors to comprehend and adjust to their students' distinctive problems and preferences.

Furthermore, recent studies conducted in the tertiary PE sector of the Philippines have concentrated on evaluating the effectiveness of the current curriculum [19], instructional approaches [20], and the overall quality of the educational experience. The study examined the influence of technology on PE, teaching methodologies, curriculum development, and student involvement [21]. Panganiban [22] has highlighted the significance of program curriculum adaptation and thorough quality evaluation. Meanwhile, Graciano [23] has identified students' specific preferences and attitudes towards PE to guarantee that it aligns with their needs and interests. Furthermore, Lobo *et al.* [24] underscored the importance of student concerns and ideas, highlighting the necessity for inventive strategies to enhance the teaching process.

Although there have been several studies on generation Z and tertiary PE, there is a notable gap in understanding the concerns and suggestions of generation Z students, particularly in rural communities in the Philippines. Therefore, this study aimed to address this inadequacy by examining the concerns of students in rural areas. This research enhances the broader academic conversation by providing valuable perspectives on educational practices and student involvement. This research aimed to answer a general question: What are these students' concerns and suggestions for improving their PE experience? This presents a novel perspective by focusing specifically on university students' unique problems and suggestions in rural settings. Unlike existing research that often generalizes student experiences, this study highlights localized insights that can inform curriculum development and teaching practices in PE.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically the ethnographic approach. According to Levitt [25], qualitative research is a method that seeks to comprehend human events by thoroughly examining evidence not expressed in numerical form. Ethnographic research is a qualitative research approach where the researchers fully immerse themselves in the natural environment of a specific social group or culture to comprehend and study their behavioral patterns [26]. Ethnographic research seeks a comprehensive understanding of the customs, beliefs, behaviors, and routines of the society being studied by immersing oneself in the culture, conducting interviews, and engaging in participant observation.

Günel *et al.* [27] described this method as involving thorough and detailed on-site research. This approach enables researchers to build a strong relationship with participants, obtain an inside viewpoint, and uncover insights that would not be evident using other methods. The ethnographic study delves into the social connections and symbolic importance inherent in the lives of the persons being researched to have a thorough grasp of culture [28]. This research utilized this method because of its appropriateness for comprehending the concerns and suggestions of the local populace and its capacity to portray the many sorts of students in rural locations comprehensively. This inquiry aimed to improve the implementation of the PATHFit program. To ensure that the curriculum aligns with the distinct educational goals of generation Z students in rural communities, ethnography was employed to comprehend the local concerns and suggestions comprehensively.

2.2. Sampling method (locale, population, and technique)

The study utilized purposive sampling to choose 20 generation Z individuals as the primary data source. As described by Campbell *et al.* [26], purposive sampling is a method of selecting participants based on their relevant experiences and viewpoints. This selection strategy is commonly used in research initiatives that aim to gain a thorough understanding from persons with distinct or specialized skills. This ensures that the selected participants may make essential contributions to the research topic. To qualify for the research, individuals must satisfy specific requirements, including belonging to generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010), currently enrolled in PATHFit classes, and living in rural communities.

The chosen sample size for the research on generation Z students in the Cotabato Province of the Philippines was considered adequate to accurately represent this particular concerns and suggestions. The main objective of qualitative research is to obtain extensive and detailed data from each participant rather than aiming for a broad representation. The selection criteria were precise in targeting individuals with common concerns and recommendations while allowing for some variation within these boundaries. Although the sample size of 20 participants may seem limited, it adequately captures Cotabato's rural generation Z community's many viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds. This aligns with the qualitative character and purpose of the inquiry.

2.3. Research instrument

The primary research instrument in this study was a set of open-ended questions specifically designed to capture the diverse perspectives of generation Z students. These questions allowed participants to freely and thoroughly express their views, enabling an in-depth analysis of their concerns and suggestions. To ensure validity, the open-ended questions underwent a rigorous validation process by subject matter experts, who assessed content relevance and appropriateness.

Supplementary resources, including a camera and voice recorder, were employed to capture verbal expressions, facial cues, and environmental context. These multimedia tools enriched the data quality by holistically portraying the participants' responses. While technical or privacy issues could potentially impact the effectiveness of these tools, measures were taken to mitigate such concerns. All participants were informed of the purpose and handling of multimedia recordings, and written consent was obtained, ensuring both ethical adherence and participant comfort. Furthermore, technical checks and secure data storage

protocols were implemented to prevent data loss and unauthorized access, thereby enhancing the overall data integrity and participant trust in the study.

2.4. Data analysis

The study utilized the Colaizzi method [29] for data analysis and interpretation. This approach entailed careful and systematic data analysis, including reducing, categorizing, and abstracting information to derive meaningful and essential findings from the participants' experiences. The Colaizzi method involves transcribing interviews or data and identifying crucial comments and phrases pertinent to the research inquiries. The following steps entail extracting the meanings and patterns from these statements, categorizing these patterns into groups, and finally creating a thorough representation of the studied topic.

The Colaizzi method was chosen for this study due to its compatibility with the exploratory character of the research, which aims to comprehend the problems and ideas of generation Z students in rural communities. The acquired data was methodically and meticulously analyzed to understand the participants' experiences and viewpoints fully. The method's flexibility enabled the identification of themes derived from participants' views, which is crucial for capturing generation Z students' varied and plentiful insights in rural contexts.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides an organized summary of the insights shared by generation Z students regarding their PE experiences. This outlines the main concerns raised by students, along with their suggestions for improving the PATHFit program to meet their educational and engagement needs better. The table highlights critical areas where students feel the curriculum and teaching approaches could be enhanced by categorizing their feedback into specific themes. It offers a clear perspective on the elements that generation Z students in rural communities consider essential for a more relevant, motivating, and inclusive PE environment.

Table 1. Students' concerns and suggestions for better tertiary PE experience

Themes	Description	Sample transcript
i). Engaging and fun-it should be beyond books and materials)	Emphasizes incorporating interactive and practical activities to make PE more engaging and enjoyable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "...as Gen Z, PE should be fun because it is not restricted to books alone." – "...it should not be boring and should not just engage the mind, ears, and eyes, but the whole body..."
ii). Curriculum that does not feel like a prescription given to us	Advocates for a flexible curriculum that adapts to students' interests rather than feeling like a rigid requirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "...we were academically inclined. So, at some point, we crave things that we enjoy..." – "...it would be great if there were groups where you could choose the activities you want to join..."
iii). More student-centered activities	Focuses on increasing activities tailored to students' preferences and needs to enhance their participation and enjoyment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "...PE should be the subject that helps us escape from books and lectures..." – "...we can put down our phones and play like students, and we enjoy it..."
iv). Limit lectures	Highlights the need to reduce lecture time in favor of more hands-on, practical experiences in PE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "...most of it should be on physical aspects or sports because it is enjoyable..." – "...PATHFit should focus more on practical activities and reduce the lectures..."
v). Students can borrow sports equipment	Supports the availability of sports equipment for students to borrow, facilitating more frequent and varied participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "...it would also be great if students could borrow sports equipment if they want to play..." – "...if I want to play basketball but didn't bring a ball, I should be able to borrow one..."
vi). Quality teaching	Stresses the importance of effective teaching practices that ensure clear explanations and long-term understanding of PE concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "...quality teaching is essential. It should focus on teaching what needs to be learned and ensuring that knowledge is retained..." – "...proper handling and instruction are not provided, which is a factor that makes it difficult for students..."

3.1. Students' concerns and suggestions for better tertiary PE experience

3.1.1. Engaging and fun-it should be beyond books and materials

This theme emphasizes that generation Z students in rural communities believe PE should be more than just theoretical knowledge. They want PE classes to be dynamic and interactive, moving beyond textbooks and materials to include engaging, hands-on activities that involve the whole body. They feel that

making PE fun and participative will help students, especially those struggling with traditional sports skills, find more enjoyment and value in the subject.

“...as Gen Z, PE should be fun and not limited to books alone. It shouldn't be boring; it should engage the whole body, not just the mind, ears, and eyes...” (Bebe)

“...the PE curriculum should be fun because when students see that it is more than just the usual topics, they become more engaged and participative. We must understand the subject's importance, as it benefits us...” (Yan)

This implies that when PE classes include more interactive and hands-on activities, students are likelier to feel excited and involved. This can lead to increased physical activity and better skill development, as students are more engaged in learning through practice rather than just theory. Focusing on fun and active learning also helps create a more positive attitude towards PE, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Further, Sierra-Díaz *et al.* [30] highlighted that PE must be engaging, fun, and extend beyond traditional books because it fosters active participation and enthusiasm in students. When PE is interactive and enjoyable, it motivates students to engage in physical activity, develop lifelong fitness habits, and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle [31]. By incorporating various activities and experiences rather than focusing solely on theoretical knowledge, PE can better address different learning styles, keep students interested, and enhance their overall well-being and social skills [32].

3.1.2. Curriculum that does not feel like a prescription given to us

This theme highlights that generation Z students in rural communities want PE to be more engaging and fun. Participants expressed that PE should go beyond traditional methods of showing materials or using books. They believe PE should engage the mind, ears, and eyes and involve the whole body to make it more enjoyable and participative. By making PE more interactive and practical, students feel that it can help those who are not very sporty or skilled in executing physical skills and enhance their overall learning experience. Based on the research participants:

“...I hope the curriculum isn't one-size-fits-all, like a prescription handed to us. We should have choices in PATHFit activities. Our teachers are considerate-they won't fail you if you do your best, even if you can't meet all the requirements. This understanding is crucial because we're already overwhelmed with tasks from other subjects. PATHFit should be considerate, giving us flexibility and recognizing our time and capabilities...” (Lynn)

This denotes that when the curriculum is flexible and responsive to students' interests and needs, it helps them feel more connected and invested in their learning. This approach can reduce the sense of education as a rigid, one-size-fits-all model and promote a more dynamic and relevant educational environment. As a result, students may experience higher motivation and satisfaction as the learning process becomes more aligned with their personal preferences and goals. Furthermore, PE should go beyond the four corners of the classroom to provide students with diverse, real-world experiences that promote physical health, teamwork, and social interaction [33]. Outdoor and varied settings allow students to engage in different activities that develop their physical skills, expose them to new environments, and break the monotony of indoor learning [34]. This approach makes PE more enjoyable and stimulating and encourages a more holistic understanding of fitness and well-being [35].

3.1.3. More student-centered activities

This theme emphasizes that generation Z students in rural communities want PE to include more student-centered activities. Participants expressed a desire for PE to focus more on activities rather than just lectures, as they find lectures tiring and want PE to offer a break from academic work. They feel that having options to choose between different activities, like dance or sports, and engaging in physical activities that allow them to play and move their bodies would make PE more enjoyable. They also wish for PE to help them reconnect with fun, physical activities that they enjoyed during their childhood but missed out on as they became more focused on academics. According to them:

“...In PE, there should be more physical activities. Lectures are fine, but they should still focus on activities because the whole week is already tiring with lectures from other subjects. PE should be the subject that helps us escape from books and lectures...” (Nica)

“...I hope our PE is synchronized with other activities, allowing us to choose between dance or sports. Those who want to dance can do so, while others focus on sports. I also hope we can experience all sports or, at the very least, be exposed to a variety of them...” (Bryan)

This indicates that when activities are designed with students' interests and preferences, they are more likely to participate actively and enjoy their learning experiences. This approach not only makes PE more enjoyable but also supports better skill development and learning retention. By focusing on student-centered activities, the curriculum can foster a more inclusive and motivating environment, which helps students connect more deeply with the subject and take greater ownership of their learning. Moreover, Kettler and Taliaferro [36] said that PE should use a learner-centered approach because it prioritizes each student's needs, interests, and abilities, making learning more personalized and effective. This method fosters greater engagement and motivation by allowing students to participate actively in their learning process, choose activities that interest them, and set personal fitness goals [37]. A learner-centered approach also accommodates diverse learning styles and paces, encouraging students to develop confidence, autonomy, and a lifelong appreciation for physical activity [38].

3.1.4. Limit lectures

This theme highlights that generation Z students in rural communities prefer PE to minimize lecture time and focus more on practical activities. Participants expressed a desire for PE to emphasize sports, exercises, and hands-on activities rather than spending much time on lectures. They believe PE should engage through direct experience with sports and physical activities rather than just theoretical learning. They feel that limiting lecture time and increasing active participation can make PE more enjoyable and effective. Based on them:

“...PATHFit should prioritize practical activities and reduce lectures. While lectures are important, having more physical activities and ensuring active student engagement in PE is crucial. We need fewer lectures and more activities...” (Jako)

“...PE should be engaging, and we should experience the sports firsthand, not just through printed materials. For example, if there's a lesson on volleyball, there should be minimal lecture time to cover the fundamental rules, followed by actual demonstrations and activities...” (Tamz)

This suggests that students will likely become more involved and enthusiastic about the subject by reducing the time spent on theoretical instruction and increasing hands-on activities. This shift helps to maintain students' interest and motivation by allowing them to directly experience and practice skills rather than passively listening to lectures. As a result, students may develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of PE through practical application and active participation. Additionally, PE should limit lectures and focus on practical experiences because active participation is crucial for developing physical skills and fitness [39]. Practical experiences engage students more effectively, helping them learn by reinforcing skills and concepts better than passive listening [40]. This hands-on approach makes PE more enjoyable and dynamic, fostering a positive attitude towards physical activity and promoting lifelong healthy habits. By prioritizing movement and real-world application, students can better understand the importance and benefits of physical fitness [41].

3.1.5. Students can borrow sports equipment

This theme highlights that generation Z students in rural communities want access to sports equipment to enhance their physical activities. Participants expressed a desire for sports equipment to be available for borrowing so they can enjoy sports or other activities even if they do not have their equipment. They believe that having the option to borrow equipment, like basketballs or other gear, would allow them to participate more freely and have fun during their free time. They also hope for opportunities to focus on activities they are interested in, whether sports or dance, with access to the necessary equipment. As they said:

“...there should be available sports equipment for enjoyment, and if you're interested in something, you should be able to focus on it. For example, if you like sports, you should do sports; if you enjoy dancing, you should dance. It would be great to have groups where you can choose the activities you want to join...” (Andrew)

“...it would also be great if students could borrow sports equipment to play. There should be available equipment for fun and play in our free time. For example, if I want to play basketball but don't bring a ball, I should be able to borrow one...” (Jasmin)

Allowing students to borrow sports equipment can significantly increase their opportunities to engage in physical activities and practice skills. Access to equipment, when needed, can encourage more frequent participation and exploration of different sports or activities, even if students do not own the necessary gear. This availability supports greater inclusivity, ensuring that all students have the resources to participate actively. Also, facilities and equipment are vital in school PE because they provide the resources needed for a diverse and effective PE program [42]. Quality facilities and appropriate equipment ensure that students can safely participate in a wide range of physical activities, which enhances their learning experience and skill development [43]. Well-maintained and varied resources also help to engage students, make activities more enjoyable, and accommodate different fitness levels and interests. This infrastructure supports the delivery of a comprehensive PE curriculum that promotes physical health and well-being [44].

3.1.6. Quality teaching

This theme underscores that generation Z students in rural communities value receiving quality teaching in PE. Participants expressed that effective teaching should include clear explanations and proper instruction rather than just jumping into practical exercises. They believe quality teaching should ensure students understand and retain the knowledge long-term, not just focus on passing exams. Students want to be guided thoroughly and motivated to learn in a way that supports their understanding and development over time. Based on their responses:

“...it should also be important that students are motivated and receive quality teaching. It feels like we go straight into practical exercises without proper explanations. Proper handling and instruction are not provided, which is a factor that makes it difficult for students...” (Christmas)
“...quality teaching is essential. It should focus on teaching what needs to be learned and ensuring that knowledge is retained rather than just helping students pass and get a diploma. The aim should be for students to carry the learning with them in the long term. Quality teaching should be prioritized, ensuring that students are not just left to fend for themselves, but are guided in understanding concepts thoroughly...” (Namikazee)

When teachers provide clear explanations proper guidance, and focus on long-term understanding rather than just passing exams, students are more likely to grasp and retain essential concepts. This approach enhances students' ability to apply what they learn in practical situations and fosters a deeper engagement with the subject. As a result, students can achieve a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of PE, contributing to their overall educational success. Consequently, schools need to ensure quality teaching in PE because it directly influences students' engagement, skill development, and lifelong fitness habits [45]. Effective PE teachers use innovative methods to create enjoyable, inclusive educational experiences catering to diverse learning needs. Quality teaching helps students understand the importance of physical activity, develop essential motor skills, and build confidence [46]. It also fosters positive attitudes toward health and fitness, encouraging students to maintain active lifestyles that contribute to their overall well-being [47].

This research highlights the insights of generation Z students in rural communities regarding their experiences and preferences within the PE curriculum, echoing findings from similar studies that emphasize the importance of engagement and interaction in PE. For instance, studies by Yannier *et al.* [48] indicate that hands-on, interactive methods are more effective at sustaining student interest and participation in PE, particularly among younger generations. This alignment suggests that curricula integrating active learning and experiential approaches better cater to the learning preferences of generation Z, promoting higher levels of motivation and engagement. The practical implications for educational practice include the potential for PE programs that incorporate student-centered and hands-on activities to foster a sense of ownership in students over their learning process. By implementing these methods, educators can enhance learning outcomes and support students' physical well-being beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, providing accessible sports equipment aligns with the work of Roe *et al.* [49], who noted the positive impact of resource availability on students' engagement in physical activity outside school hours. This contribution is particularly relevant in rural settings, where students often have fewer opportunities for extracurricular physical activity. As a methodological contribution, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of utilizing multimedia tools such as cameras and voice recorders to capture verbal and non-verbal feedback despite potential technical and privacy concerns. Addressing these limitations, researchers ensured data accuracy and confidentiality through pre-established agreements and secure data handling protocols, which other researchers might consider when investigating sensitive topics with generation Z or similar demographics.

From a policy perspective, this study offers practical insights for curriculum reform by advocating for more adaptable and flexible PE frameworks in rural tertiary institutions. Similar calls for flexibility are noted in recent policy-oriented research by Aboagye and Dlamini [50], which suggests that rigid, prescriptive curricula are less effective in engaging students with diverse needs. By applying these insights, policymakers can craft PE curricula that reflect students' interests and preferences, supporting broader health and wellness objectives in rural educational contexts. Theoretical contributions include the study's emphasis on the unique learning preferences of generation Z, which foregrounds autonomy and experiential learning, offering curriculum designers a foundation for developing PE models that prioritize dynamic, student-centered learning over traditional lecture-based methods.

3.2. Limitations

The authors acknowledge certain limitations in this study. First, the research focused exclusively on generation Z students from rural communities, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations, such as urban students or those from different educational contexts. Additionally, the study primarily relied on student self-reports, which could be subject to personal biases and may not fully capture all dimensions of their PE experiences. Future research could benefit from incorporating broader, more diverse participant samples and additional data sources, such as teacher perspectives or direct observations, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues raised.

4. CONCLUSION

Generation Z students in rural communities have provided valuable insights on enhancing the PATHFit program to better address their needs and preferences. They suggest a shift towards making PE more engaging and interactive, focusing on hands-on activities rather than relying solely on traditional lectures and materials. They advocate for a flexible curriculum that echoes their interests, moving away from a rigid, prescriptive approach. Increased opportunities for student-centered activities and the availability of sports equipment for borrowing are crucial for fostering greater participation and enjoyment. Also, students emphasize the importance of high-quality teaching characterized by clarity, practical guidance, and genuine engagement.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of implementing the suggested changes to the PE curriculum, particularly in rural communities. Investigating how student-centered approaches and flexible curricula impact student engagement and satisfaction, physical fitness outcomes, and overall academic performance would provide valuable insights. Additionally, studies could focus on the perspectives of educators and policymakers to understand the challenges and strategies involved in integrating these recommendations into existing educational frameworks. Expanding the research to include diverse demographic groups and different geographical contexts would also enrich the understanding of effectively tailoring PE programs to meet the varied needs of students across the Philippines.

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C : Conceptualization

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research related to human use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

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