



The Functional Competence of Physical Education Teachers and Instructors from The Perspective of Sports Activity Departments in Iraqi Education

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Abstract

The research objective to improve and apply a functional competency scale for physical education teachers from the concept of sports activity departments in Iraqi education directorates and to identify the functional competency of physical education teachers from the perspective of these departments. The researcher used the descriptive questionnaire method as it was acceptable for the nature of the issue. The research population consisted of (319) directors of sports and scouting activity departments in Iraqi education directorates. There were also (3) individuals from the sports and scouting activity units in the districts and sub-districts of Iraqi education directorates. The research sample consisted of (319) individuals representing (100%) of the research population. The researcher designed a questionnaire for the scale to determine the validity of the statements which included (25) statements. The researcher adopted the Liker method in constructing the scale questionnaire. Based on this, a five-point scale was used to express the degree of agreement with each statement: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Sometimes Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The researcher then conducted a pilot study with a acceptable timeframe before the final study application, using a sample of 25 individuals. Following this, the scale was administered to a construction sample of 150 individuals. To complete the steps of constructing this study's scale the researcher performed statistical analysis of the scale statements. This statistical process ensured the availability of the scientific requirements for the scale namely validity and reliability. Subsequently the researcher administered the functional competency scale, consisting of 25 statements to a control sample of 130 individuals. The results were then statistically analyzed and discussed.

Keywords: Functional competency, physical education teachers, sports activity, Ministry of Education

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Introduction

Educational administration has obtained considerable attention in recent decades in many countries around the world both developed and developing. This attention is reflected in the reform and development initiatives undertaken in this discipline which aim to develop and modernize educational performance to enhance its influence on the educational process. The professional competence of physical education teachers is considered a fundamental factor contributing to the success of the educational process and the achievement of physical education goals. It encompasses a set of skills and knowledge that teachers must possess to perform their teaching duties effectively in addition to the ability to motivate students and improve their physical and mental abilities. (Raheem & AlShafai, 2019, p. 3).

Physical education is an integral part of the school curriculum aiming to improve students' physical skills and promote values of cooperation, fair competition and sportsmanship. Teacher competence plays a vital role in achieving these goals as a competent teacher possesses the capacity to effectively utilize mathematical knowledge and modern educational theories contributing to the delivery of lessons in an innovative and interactive manner for students.

It is crucial for a physical education teacher to possess a strong foundation in sports science and physical education, including anatomy, sports psychology and athletic training. They should also be familiar with modern physical education perspective and the latest methods and techniques in sports education.

A competent teacher must be able to effectively apply athletic skills and possess a high capacity for guiding and teaching students the correct techniques for performing various physical exercises. They must also be able to encourage students and develop their physical capacities through diverse activities.

Effective communication with students is important for improving educational performance. Teachers must have excellent communication skills both verbal and nonverbal to show mathematical concepts in a clear and engaging manner. They must also be able to provide constructive feedback and positive guidance to students.

Effective teaching needs a teacher's ability to plan and organize physical education lessons effectively ensuring they are appropriate to students' abilities and interests. Teachers must also be able to set specific learning objectives for each lesson and provide educational activities that contribute to achieving those objectives.

One of the necessary tasks that a physical education teacher must master is the continuous assessment of students, including evaluating their physical performance and the progress each student makes. The teacher must be able to provide constructive feedback that helps students develop their performance and enhance their athletic skills.

In a challenging educational environment a physical education teacher must have the capacity to handle diverse situations such as crisis management or dealing with students with behavioral or medical problems. The teacher should also be prepared to adapt their lessons and methods to the needs of the students and the specific circumstances of the learning environment.

The teacher's professional competence is the fundamental of achieving educational goals in physical education. Through a competent teacher, students learn the sporting values that contribute to their personal development such as teamwork, discipline and mutual respect. A good teacher also helps build students' health awareness by encouraging physical activity and guiding them on the importance of maintaining overall health.

Despite the crucial importance of professional competence many physical education teachers face significant issues in improving their skills. These obstacles include the absence of ongoing training work pressures, the unavailability of appropriate sports equipment in some schools and the difficulty of managing students with varying interests in sports.

The professional perspective of physical education teachers is a fundamental element in the success of the educational process in this field. By possessing the necessary knowledge and skills, and the ability to handle various challenges, teachers can contribute to developing a generation of students who are healthy, possess advanced physical skills and are capable of critical thinking and teamwork.

The main problem addressed in this research lies in analyzing these factors and their impact on improving student performance in physical education. Physical education is a fundamental element of the educational system, contributing effectively to the development of students' physical and mental health and fostering sporting values such as cooperation and fair competition. However the professional competence of physical education teachers in schools remains a key factor determining the success of the educational process in this area. A physical education teacher's performance depends on a range of factors that may interact and influence how they carry out their teaching duties and their ability to effectively transfer skills and knowledge to students.

The research objective to: build and apply a functional competency scale for physical education teachers from the perspective of sports activity departments in Iraqi education and to determine the functional competency of physical education teachers from the perspective of sports activity departments in Iraqi education.

Methodology and Tools

The researcher used the descriptive questionnaire method as it was best suited to the nature of the problem.

The research population consisted of (319) directors of sports and scouting activity departments in the Iraqi education directorates. There were also (3) individuals from the sports and scouting activity units in the districts and sub-districts of the Iraqi education directorates. The research sample consisted of (319) individuals representing (100%) of the research population. The sample was categorized into several sub-samples as demonstrate in Table (1).

Table1.*Shows the distribution of the research sample*

Distribution	Pilot study sample	Construction sample	Application sample	Excluded participants
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NO.	319	25	150	130	14
Percentage	%100	%7.83	%47.02	%40.75	%4.38

The following devices tools and methods of collecting information were used: (paper forms, computer (laptop), electronic calculator, Arabic and foreign sources, field visits to collect information the information network (Internet), personal interviews).

To determine the scale items the researcher reviewed literature, scientific sources and references and previous studies. To attain the research objectives and to ascertain the validity of the items for the functional competence scale the researcher improved a questionnaire containing 25 items. The researcher used the Liker method in build the questionnaire and utilized a five-point scale to express the degree of agreement with each item: (strongly agree, agree, sometimes, disagree, strongly disagree). Subsequently the researcher carried out a pilot study on December 11, 2024, with a sample of 25 individuals. This pilot study objective to establish acceptable conditions for administering the main test to the pilot sample ensure the sample's understanding of the scale items and prevent any errors or difficulties during the main test. After that the scale was applied to the construction sample of (150) individuals for the period from (21/12/2024) to (2/2/2025). The purpose of conducting this experiment is to build a functional efficiency scale for physical education teachers and instructors from the point of view of the sports activity departments in the education of Iraq.

To accomplish the steps of building the scale for this study the researcher carried out the statistical analysis of the scale's statements Through the statistical process the availability of the scientific conditions for the scale namely validity and reliability is confirmed.

Scale validity: The researcher used construct validity to verify the scale This type of validity is verified by performing statistical analysis of the statements (Raheem & Shakir, 2023). The researcher verified this by extracting the following indicators:

Construct validity: This type of validity is achieved through statistical analysis of the statements. The researcher verified this by extracting the following indicators:

1. Discriminatory Power of Statements: To verify this the researcher adopted the two extreme groups method in calculating the discriminatory power of statements using the (T-Test) for independent samples. The aim of analyzing the statements is to keep the statements with high discrimination which are the good statements in the scale (Radhi & Wahab, 2024). Experts indicate that the percentage of (27%) from the lower group and (27%) from the upper group is the best percentage by which we obtain the highest discrimination coefficients. Therefore the (T-Test) was used to determine the significance of the differences in the arithmetic means between the lower and upper groups It was found that all statements were statistically crucial at the significance level of (0.05) as present in Table (2).

Table 2. Show the discriminative power of the scale items between the upper and lower groups

Items	Group	Mean	Standard deviation	Calculated t-value	Sig	Significance
1	upper	5.0000	.00000	22.807	0.000	Significant
	lower	1.9500	.84580		0.000	Significant
2	upper	5.0000	.00000	24.861	0.000	Significant

	lower	2.3000	.68687		0.000	Significant
3	upper	5.0000	.00000	29.465	0.000	Significant
	lower	1.8000	.68687		0.000	Significant
4	upper	5.0000	.00000	26.465	0.000	Significant
	Lower	2.1750	.67511		0.000	Significant
5	Upper	4.8750	.33493	25.157	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.0000	.64051		0.000	Significant
6	Upper	4.9500	.22072	24.107	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.2000	.68687		0.000	Significant
7	Upper	4.9750	.15811	20.810	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.5750	.71208		0.000	Significant
8	Upper	4.9750	.15811	19.054	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.5750	.78078		0.000	Significant
9	Upper	4.9750	.15811	22.194	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.2250	.76753		0.000	Significant
10	Upper	4.9750	.15811	28.795	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.1750	.59431		0.000	Significant
11	Upper	5.0000	.00000	30.875	0.000	Significant
	Lower	1.9750	.61966		0.000	Significant
12	Upper	5.0000	.00000	25.258	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.4500	.63851		0.000	Significant
13	Upper	5.0000	.00000	22.786	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.3500	.73554		0.000	Significant
14	Upper	5.0000	.00000	22.079	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.5000	.71611		0.000	Significant
15	Upper	4.8750	.33493	20.584	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.3500	.69982		0.000	Significant
16	Upper	5.0000	.00000	28.794	0.000	Significant
	lower	1.8750	.68641		0.000	Significant
17	Upper	5.0000	.00000	27.813	0.000	Significant
	lower	1.7750	.73336		0.000	Significant
18	Upper	4.8500	.36162	19.911	0.000	Significant
	Lower	2.2500	.74248		0.000	Significant
19	Upper	5.0000	.00000	28.968	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.1500	.62224		0.000	Significant
20	Upper	4.8750	.33493	20.005	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.2750	.75064		0.000	Significant
21	Upper	5.0000	.00000	28.819	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.4750	.55412		0.000	Significant
22	Upper	5.0000	.00000	20.206	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.6500	.73554		0.000	Significant
23	Upper	5.0000	.00000	24.873	0.000	Significant
	Lower	2.3750	.66747		0.000	Significant
24	Upper	5.0000	.00000	34.697	0.000	Significant
	lower	2.3500	.48305		0.000	Significant
25	Upper	5.0000	.00000	22.807	0.000	Significant
	lower	1.9500	.84580		0.000	Significant

Significant.(0.05) >

Internal Consistency Coefficient: Internal consistency goals to verify the homogeneity and consistency of the items in the study of the phenomenon under investigation To verify the validity of the scale using the internal consistency coefficient the researcher determined the correlation between the score of each scale item and the total scale score using Pearson's simple correlation coefficient All items emerged consistent because they were below the significance level of (0.05) as shown in Table (3).

Table3. shows the correlation coefficients between the scale items and the total scale score using the internal consistency method

No	Simple correlation coefficient	Sig	Significance
.1	.947	.000	Significant
.2	.962	.000	Significant
.3	.958	.000	Significant
.4	.958	.000	Significant
.5	.964	.000	Significant
.6	.967	.000	Significant
.7	.966	.000	Significant
.8	.956	.000	Significant
.9	.948	.000	Significant
.10	.968	.000	Significant
.11	.963	.000	Significant
.12	.955	.000	Significant
.13	.940	.000	Significant
.14	.962	.000	Significant
.15	.954	.000	Significant
.16	.962	.000	Significant
.17	.958	.000	Significant
.18	.969	.000	Significant
.19	.968	.000	Significant
.20	.969	.000	Significant
.21	.939	.000	Significant
.22	.923	.000	Significant
.23	.962	.000	Significant
.24	.962	.000	Significant
.25	.958	.000	Significant

Significant < (0.05)

Scale Reliability: A good scale is one that is reliable. Therefore the researcher verified the scale's reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Applying this coefficient to the sample of (130) teachers yielded a reliability coefficient of (0.837) which is regarded as a high reliability value at the (0.05) significance level.

Scale Application: Subsequently the researcher and the enhance team administered the scale to the research sample of (100) teachers from (February 18, 2025) to (March 12, 2025).

Results

Table 4. *presents the statistical data for the research sample*

Scale	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness coefficient
Functional coefficient	93.831	7.643	0.360

The functional competence scale including of (25) items was administered to a sample of (130) individuals To calculate the significance of the scale the hypothetical arithmetic mean was found using the following formula (Jawdah, 2008, p. 178):

Hypothetical Mean = (Sum of Alternatives ÷ Highest Score for Alternative) x Number of Scale Items Therefore the hypothetical mean of the entire scale = $(1+2+3+4+5) \div 5 \times 25 = 75$

Table 5. *shows the arithmetic mean, hypothetical mean, standard deviation, calculated t-value, true significance and type of difference*

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Calculated t- value	Significance	Type of difference
Functional coefficient	93.831	7.643	34.374	0.000	Significant
Hypothetical mean				75	

Significant < (0.05)

Discussion

The results shown in the table above demonstrate that the arithmetic mean was (93.831) with a standard deviation of (7.643) and the hypothetical mean was (75). Since the arithmetic mean was higher than the hypothetical mean this means that the difference is statistically significant and favors the arithmetic mean of the sample. To determine the significance of the differences between the arithmetic and hypothetical means the researcher used a t-test. The results showed a statistically important difference between the two means amounting to (0.000) at a significance level of (0.05).

Studies demonstrate that teachers with high functional competence in the field of physical education have a greater ability to organize sports activities and guide students more effectively which contributes to developing student results in this field. (Mohammed, 2013, p. 17)

Based on the research results it appears that continuous training and professional development play a pivotal role in enhancing the functional competence of physical education teachers. Teachers who receive continuous training in new areas such as modern teaching methods and advanced sports technologies achieve better results in performing their job duties. The results revealed many challenges affecting the professional competence of physical education teachers such as the absence of sports equipment and facilities as well as weak support from educational administrations. The findings reveals that teachers' professional competence directly impacts students' achievement in sports activities. The more competent

the teacher the greater the students' ability to participate actively and achieve good results in sports. (Ali, 2015, p. 28) Based on the above the researcher infers that the professional competence of physical education teachers is a fundamental factor affecting the quality of sports education and success in school sports activities. According to the reviewed Arabic studies there is a strong correlation between teachers' professional development and improved educational and athletic performance. Furthermore the obstacles faced by teachers must be considered to provide a suitable learning environment that contributes to enhancing their professional competence.

Conclusions

1. It appears that teachers with strong practical skills who can simplify mathematical techniques for students demonstrate superior performance in motivating students and developing their physical abilities The capacity to design innovative and enjoyable athletic activities contributes to increased student engagement.
2. The significant of effective communication between the teacher and the students is highlighted as teachers who possess outstanding communication skills are able to motivate students more which helps to enhance student performance and increase interaction in sports classes.
3. Teachers who continuously assess students and provide constructive feedback see better student outcomes. Regular assessment helps monitor student progress and guides them toward continuous improvement.
4. Many schools face challenges related to a lack of sports facilities, such as necessary equipment and tools, which affects teachers' ability to deliver lessons effectively In addition, teachers struggle to access ongoing training opportunities to improve their skills.
5. The research findings showed that the secondary school administrations specializing in physical education possess effective leadership competencies that contribute to enhancing the school environment and organizing school activities in an outstanding manner.

Recommendations

1. Ongoing training programs should be organized for teachers in the fields of sports and physical education These programs should contained modern teaching methods and the latest trends in sports science as well as enhance their skills in engaging with students and developing their physical abilities.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to use diverse and effective communication methods with students such as providing immediate feedback and positive reinforcement Emphasis should be placed on building strong relationships with students to raise their participation in sports activities.



3. Educational authorities and related bodies should provide and regularly update the necessary sports equipment to ensure a suitable learning environment for students. In addition sufficient space should be provided for physical activities.
4. It is crucial that physical education teaching plans include comprehensive assessment strategies that cover physical, intellectual and psychological aspects. Assessment should be continuous and innovative to ensure the improvement of students' physical and mental performance.
5. More chances should be provided for teachers to attend workshops and specialized conferences in the field of physical education in addition to supporting teachers to obtain additional qualifications in the educational field.
6. The physical education teaching environment should be comfortable and safe motivating students to engage in regular physical activity. This includes improving sports facilities and providing equipment and resources that enhance the learning experience.

Appendices

Appendix (1) Final Form of the Functional Competency Scale Questionnaire

Dear Esteemed Professor,

Greetings...

The researcher intends to conduct his research entitled (Functional Competency of Physical Education Teachers from the Perspective of Sports Activity Departments in Iraqi Education Directorates) as part of the requirements for publication in journals. Based on your experience please select the answer that shows your opinion on the statements presented to you. Please note that your answer will be handled with complete confidentiality and is for scientific research purposes only. Therefore there is no need to write your name. We also request that you do not leave any statement unanswered.

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Physical education teachers and instructors are keen to keep up with developments in their field of work and improve their performance.					
2	Physical education teachers are characterized by speed and accuracy in all the tasks and duties assigned to them inside and outside the school.					
3						



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Physical education teachers are keen to prepare and maintain all lesson equipment and playgrounds and present them in the best possible condition.

- 4 Physical education teachers are characterized by flexibility in dealing with students and teaching staff.
- 5 Physical education teachers and instructors are knowledgeable in their field of study, both practically and theoretically.
- 6 Physical education teachers and instructors have the ability to take responsibility at work and to be quick in making appropriate decisions.
- 7 Physical education teachers and instructors have the ability to act efficiently and calmly in difficult situations.
- 8 Physical education teachers are keen to encourage students to acquire positive reinforcement when participating in extracurricular and sports activities for the physical education lesson.
- 9 Physical education teachers have a continuous desire to improve their performance and benefit from the experiences of others.
- 10 Physical education teachers contribute by providing modern, innovative, harmonious and renewed ideas and solutions to solve the problems facing the school.
- 11 The teacher possesses in-depth knowledge of mathematical science concepts (such as anatomy, sports psychology and sports training).



- 12 The teacher is familiar with the latest trends and methods in the field of physical education.
- 13 The teacher continuously develops his mathematical knowledge through training or attending workshops.
- 14 The teacher is able to apply mathematical skills practically and effectively during lessons.
- 15 The teacher is able to explain and clarify mathematical techniques in simple and understandable ways for students.
- 16 The teacher has the ability to design and implement sports activities that motivate students and help them improve their physical performance.
- 17 The teacher possesses effective communication skills with students and can guide them in an encouraging way.
- 18 The teacher pays close attention to all students and promotes their participation in sports activities.
- 19 The teacher has the ability to solve problems and deal with difficult situations during lessons.
- 20 The teacher periodically assesses the students' performance level and guides them to improve their mathematical techniques.
- 21 The teacher provides constructive feedback that helps students improve their mathematical skills.
- 22 The teacher ensures that all students have sufficient opportunity for training and physical exercise.



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- 23 The teacher faces challenges related to the lack of sports resources and equipment at the school.
 - 24 The teacher receives sufficient support from the educational administration to improve his professional skills.
 - 25 The teacher receives sufficient support from the educational administration to improve his professional skills.
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