

The Meaning of Physical Competence in Online Arnis Learning Among College Students

Kristine Angela¹, Kelvin De Dios², Joshua Dela Cruz³, John Kobe Elamparo⁴, Angel Graneta⁵,
Charmyne Jallorina⁶, Carlo Luis Pelayo⁷

Central Luzon State University

Abstract: This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences and meaning of physical competence among ten college students learning Arnis asynchronously online. Data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. Three themes emerged: experiences and challenges in online Arnis learning, perceptions and development of physical competence, and recommended instructional practices. Participants developed skills through repeated practice and instructional videos but faced challenges such as limited feedback, practice space, and self-regulation. Physical competence was understood as the ability to perform Arnis skills safely, accurately, and confidently with proper form, balance, timing, and control. The findings suggest that online Arnis can develop physical competence when supported by clear demonstrations, timely feedback, and structured progress monitoring.

Keywords: Arnis, physical competence, online learning, physical education, phenomenology, asynchronous instruction

1. Introduction

Arnis is the national martial art and sport of the Philippines under Republic Act No. 9850 and is recognized for developing coordination, balance, agility, discipline, and cultural identity. Traditionally taught through demonstrations, partner drills, and immediate instructor feedback, Arnis instruction shifted to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting hands-on practice and direct correction. Dresser and Potane (2022) noted that although self-learning modules support independent study, students may struggle to assess their performance without guidance. Similarly, digital demonstrations can help learners observe techniques but do not fully replace instructor feedback.

Physical competence in Arnis involves the ability to perform strikes, blocks, footwork, and other movements with proper form, balance, coordination, timing, control, and confidence. Digital tools and instructional videos can support skill development by allowing repeated observation and practice; however, learners remain responsible for monitoring their own execution when direct supervision is unavailable. Research on online Physical Education also highlights challenges related to limited practice space, connectivity, motivation, and feedback (Yang et al., 2018; Santos et al., 2022; Hasanuddin et al., 2025).

Despite growing research on online Physical Education, limited studies have examined how college students personally experience and understand physical competence when learning Arnis asynchronously. This gap is important because online skills-based learning requires students to develop not only physical skills but also self-discipline, adaptability, and confidence. Therefore, this study explores the lived experiences and meaning

of physical competence among college students learning Arnis online, with particular attention to their challenges, skill development, and recommended instructional practices.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study will use a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is appropriate because the study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences and meanings of physical competence as perceived by college students in online Arnis learning. According to the study of Peralta (2025), to gain in-depth insights into instructors' experiences, a qualitative research design was used, which included Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Through in-depth interviews, the researcher seeks to describe the essence of how students experience, interpret, and make meaning of their physical competence despite the limitations of online instruction.

Participants

The participants in this study will be college students who are currently taking an Arnis subject through online classes for at least one semester. They must be official college students and must have actual experience learning Arnis through an online setup. They should also be willing to share their experiences, thoughts, and challenges honestly and voluntarily. The researcher will use purposive sampling, which means that the participants will be carefully chosen because they meet the requirements of the study and have relevant experiences to share. Around 8–10 students will be interviewed, and the interviews will continue until the researcher no longer receives new or different information from the participants. The final number of participants may be adjusted depending on the amount and quality of information gathered during the interviews.

Data Collection

Data will be collected through semi-structured individual interviews with college students who completed Arnis classes under asynchronous online learning, using an interview guide with open-ended questions to explore their experiences, perceptions, and personal understanding of physical competence in terms of skill execution, confidence, challenges, independent practice, and appreciation of Arnis as Filipino cultural heritage. Following informed consent, all interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' explicit permission to ensure accuracy, while follow-up probing questions will be used to clarify responses and gain deeper insights into how students perceive their own physical competence without direct face-to-face guidance; interviews will be conducted via accessible online platforms at convenient times, lasting approximately 20 to 40 minutes, with supplementary field notes recorded as needed and all data kept confidential and used solely for this study.

Data Analysis

The study employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework: 1. Familiarization with the data

2. Generation of initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Interview transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to identify meaningful patterns and recurring concepts, with codes grouped into categories and ultimately organized into overarching themes that represented the participants' lived experiences.

Ethical Consideration

To ensure integrity and protect participants, this study strictly complies to established ethical guidelines throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, formal institutional authorization will be secured to confirm that all safety, fairness, and privacy standards are met. Joining the study is entirely voluntary, and participants will receive a detailed overview of the research objectives to grant informed consent via an online

form before any interviews take place; they also retain the right to withdraw at any stage without facing negative consequences. The study presents no foreseeable risks, ensuring all respondents are treated equally, respectfully, and ethically. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms or coded identities, with all collected information stored in secure files restricted solely to the primary researcher. Finally, in full alignment with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all audio recordings and individual responses will be permanently erased upon completion of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

This study explored the experiences of college students learning Arnis through asynchronous online instruction, with particular attention to the development and meaning of physical competence. Analysis of the interviews revealed three major themes: (1) experiences and challenges in learning Arnis online, (2) perceptions of physical competence and its development, and (3) recommended instructional practices for improving online Arnis learning. The findings indicate that although students encountered limitations associated with remote instruction, they were able to develop physical competence through repeated practice, self-discipline, instructional videos, and self-assessment. However, the participants also emphasized the importance of instructor guidance and timely feedback in ensuring correct and safe movement execution.

Theme 1: Experiences and Challenges in Learning Arnis Online

Overall Learning Experiences

Participants generally described online Arnis learning as challenging but manageable. Instructional videos allowed students to observe and repeat basic strikes, blocks, footwork, and other movements; however, the absence of direct instructor supervision made it difficult for them to determine whether their execution was correct. One participant stated:

"It was enjoyable at first... but it is difficult to know whether your form and movements are correct or not when you are the only one observing yourself." -P9

Similarly, P10 and P4 explained:

"You are not sure if what you are doing is correct... because no one is personally checking on you."

These experiences are consistent with Santos et al. (2022), who examined online Arnis instruction among 346 college students and found that perceived physical competence increased from the pre-test to the post-test despite the online learning environment. Their findings demonstrate that online instruction can support the development of perceived physical competence, although the present qualitative findings show that students may still experience uncertainty regarding the accuracy of their movement execution.

The participants' experiences also extend the findings of Dresser and Potane (2022), who examined Arnis self-learning modules and emphasized the value of self-directed learning while recognizing difficulties associated with performance tasks that require learners to assess their own execution. Thus, although online materials can provide access to instruction, physical skills such as Arnis remain challenging to master when students cannot immediately receive corrective guidance.

Practice Strategies at Home

Despite these difficulties, participants developed strategies to continue practicing. Most repeatedly watched instructional videos while performing basic strikes, blocks, and footwork. P1 and P2 stated:

"I repeated the basic strikes, blocks, and footwork... I watched the video again while practicing."

Other participants practiced sinawali drills to improve coordination. P4, P7, and P9 noted that these activities helped them develop hand-eye coordination.

The use of repeated video viewing suggests that asynchronous learning can encourage students to become more responsible for their own learning. This is consistent with Martin et al. (2016), who found that perceived physical competence was related to physical activity participation among Filipino college students. Their study

also reported moderate perceived physical competence among the participants, suggesting that students' perceptions of their abilities may be relevant to their engagement in physical activity.

Similarly, Martin et al. (2017) found that motivation-related factors, including achievement orientation and self-determination, were associated with physical activity participation among college students. In the present study, students' willingness to repeatedly practice movements independently indicates the importance of motivation and personal responsibility in sustaining participation in an online physical education course.

Key Challenges Encountered

Three major challenges were consistently identified: lack of immediate feedback, limited practice space, and difficulties with motivation, time management, and access.

The lack of immediate feedback was the most frequently identified concern. Participants stated:

"I did not know whether my posture, timing, or execution was correct." - P1

"When there was an error in stance or movement, I sometimes did not notice it right away." -P2

"There was no guidance from the professor... so my forms were sometimes incorrect." -P5

These findings highlight an important limitation of asynchronous skills-based instruction. Students can observe demonstrations and repeat movements, but without an instructor's immediate correction, errors may remain unnoticed. This supports the findings of Santos et al. (2022), whose study demonstrated that online Arnis instruction can influence perceived physical competence but did not eliminate the challenges associated with learning physical skills remotely.

Limited space was another concern. Participants explained that practicing at home sometimes restricted their movement and required additional caution. This finding is consistent with Martin and Santos (2015), who identified lack of time and other practical barriers as factors associated with physical activity among college students. Although their study focused on walking rather than Arnis, it demonstrates that participation in physical activity can be influenced by environmental and practical constraints.

Motivation and self-regulation were also important. P5 admitted:

"There were many ways to become lazy... I was not very engaged."

This finding is relevant to Martin et al. (2017), who examined motivation profiles as predictors of physical activity participation and highlighted the role of motivational characteristics in students' engagement in physical activity.

Therefore, online Arnis learning requires students not only to perform physical movements but also to regulate their time, motivation, practice habits, and learning behavior.

Theme 2: Perceptions of Physical Competence and Its Development

Meaning of Physical Competence in Arnis

Participants defined physical competence as more than physical strength or speed. They described it as the ability to perform Arnis movements correctly, safely, and confidently while demonstrating proper form, balance, coordination, timing, control, and discipline.

P1 stated:

"It is not just about strength. You also need proper stance, balance, coordination, timing, and control."

Similarly, P9 explained:

"The ability to perform footwork, strikes, blocks, and other Arnis movements correctly... with sufficient control, timing, coordination, and discipline."

This finding closely corresponds with Martin and Santos (2019), who investigated perceived physical competence and cultural appreciation among 233 Philippine junior high school students participating in Arnis.

Their findings showed that perceived physical competence was significantly related to cultural appreciation of Arnis.

The present study extends this quantitative evidence by showing how students themselves describe physical competence. Rather than viewing competence simply as physical ability, participants associated it with technical accuracy, control, confidence, discipline, and consistency. This suggests that physical competence in Arnis has both physical and psychological dimensions.

The findings are also strongly related to Santos et al. (2022), who specifically examined perceived physical competence in online Arnis learning. Their study found an increase in perceived physical competence following online instruction, while cultural appreciation remained moderately high. The present findings provide qualitative support for this relationship by demonstrating that students' developing competence was accompanied by greater confidence and appreciation of their ability to perform Arnis movements.

Self-Assessment of Progress

All participants reported improvements in their ability to perform basic strikes, blocks, and footwork. They described becoming more familiar with the movements and experiencing less hesitation during practice. However, they also recognized limitations in their progress.

P4, P10, and P9 explained:

"My movements have become better... but I know there is still much to improve because it was learned online."

Participants attributed their improvement primarily to consistent practice, while remaining limitations were associated with the absence of direct instructor feedback.

This finding reinforces Santos et al. (2022), who reported an increase in perceived physical competence among college students following online Arnis instruction. The quantitative findings of that study provide evidence that online instruction can support competence development, while the present study explains the process from the learners' perspective: repeated practice and access to demonstrations contributed to improvement, but uncertainty about correct execution remained when feedback was unavailable.

Meaning and Impact of Achieving Competence Online

Participants viewed the development of physical competence despite online learning as a meaningful personal achievement. P1 stated:

"This means that even though I learned Arnis online, I was still able to learn it... through practice and consistency."

P2 similarly explained:

"I learned to be disciplined and responsible for my own improvement."

These accounts indicate that online Arnis learning required students to take greater responsibility for their own progress. The development of competence was therefore associated not only with physical skill but also with discipline, persistence, and personal accountability.

Participants also connected competence with confidence. P1, P9, and P10 explained that knowing they were performing the movements correctly increased their confidence. This finding is consistent with Martin et al. (2016), whose study examined perceived physical competence in relation to physical activity participation among Filipino college students. It also corresponds with the findings of Pestaño et al. (2025), who reported an association between participative coaching, self-confidence, and self-efficacy among student-athletes. Although Pestaño et al. focused on coaching rather than online Arnis instruction, both studies indicate that perceptions of competence and confidence are important psychological dimensions of participation in physical activity and sport.

The present findings therefore suggest that physical competence may reinforce confidence: as students become more capable of performing movements correctly, they become more willing to perform and practice those movements.

Theme 3: Recommended Instructional Practices for Online Arnis Learning

Clear, Detailed, and Multi-Angle Demonstration Videos

Participants strongly recommended the use of detailed instructional videos. They preferred demonstrations that were slow-paced, step-by-step, and recorded from multiple angles. P3 and P8 explained that it would be more helpful if the instructor personally demonstrated the movements.

These recommendations are consistent with the findings of Santos et al. (2022), which demonstrate that online Arnis instruction can support perceived physical competence. The participants in the present study, however, provide additional insight into how online instruction could be improved. They specifically identified the need for demonstrations that allow learners to clearly observe stance, hand position, footwork, body alignment, and movement direction.

The use of repeated demonstrations is particularly important in asynchronous learning because students cannot immediately ask the instructor to repeat or clarify a movement. High-quality instructional videos can therefore function as a primary reference during independent practice.

Regular, Specific, and Timely Feedback

Personalized feedback was identified by nearly all participants as one of the most important improvements needed in online Arnis instruction. P2 stated:

"It would be more helpful to receive specific feedback... stating exactly where you are making mistakes."

P7 similarly recommended:

"Formative feedback... explaining errors and providing clear solutions."

This finding emphasizes that video demonstrations alone may not be sufficient for skills-based Physical Education. Students also need information about whether their own performance meets the expected standard.

The importance of feedback is particularly relevant because participants repeatedly reported uncertainty regarding their form, timing, posture, and execution. Allowing students to submit practice videos for instructor review may provide an effective means of partially replacing the immediate corrective feedback available in face-to-face instruction.

Structured Monitoring and Encouragement

Participants also recommended systematic monitoring of their progress. They suggested comparing performance over time and recognizing effort in addition to technical improvement. P5 stated:

"I hope the effort being put in is also acknowledged."

This finding highlights the importance of motivation in maintaining participation in online Physical Education. Martin et al. (2016) demonstrated the relevance of motivational and competence-related factors to physical activity participation among Filipino college students, while Martin et al. (2017) further examined motivation profiles as predictors of participation.

The participants' recommendations therefore suggest that online Arnis instruction should combine technical instruction with motivational support. Progress tracking, constructive feedback, encouragement, and recognition of effort may help students remain engaged in independent practice.

4. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that physical competence in online Arnis learning is understood by college students as more than simply being physically strong or capable of performing the movements. It involves the ability to execute Arnis skills correctly, safely, and confidently through proper form, balance, coordination, timing, control, discipline, and consistent practice. Although online learning presented challenges, particularly

the lack of immediate instructor feedback, limited practice space, motivation difficulties, and access to learning resources, students were still able to develop their skills through repeated practice, self-assessment, and the use of instructional videos.

The participants' experiences further showed that developing physical competence through online learning requires a high level of self-discipline and personal responsibility. While students recognized improvements in their strikes, blocks, footwork, coordination, and confidence, they also acknowledged that their development could be limited without direct guidance and correction. This indicates that physical competence can be developed in an online setting, but its effectiveness depends greatly on the quality of instruction, opportunities for practice, and the availability of meaningful feedback.

Online Arnis learning can support the development of physical competence when appropriate instructional strategies are provided. Clear and detailed demonstration videos, multiple viewing angles, timely and specific feedback, structured monitoring, and encouragement can help address the limitations of online instruction. More importantly, achieving physical competence through online Arnis learning gives students a sense of confidence, discipline, and accomplishment. Thus, physical competence in online Arnis learning is not only about mastering physical skills but also about developing the confidence, responsibility, and discipline needed to continue improving despite the limitations of the learning environment.

5. Recommendation

Based on the findings, online Arnis learning can help students develop physical competence, but they need proper guidance, feedback, and motivation to improve their skills effectively. The school should provide better support for online Physical Education classes by ensuring access to reliable internet, learning materials, and useful digital platforms. Teachers may also benefit from training and clear instructional videos to make practical subjects like Arnis easier to teach and learn. The instructors should give regular and specific feedback. Students often struggled to know whether they were performing the techniques correctly. Allowing students to submit practice videos and receive comments on their form, timing, and execution can help prevent mistakes from becoming habits. Future researchers may involve more participants and different schools to gain broader results. They can also compare online, face-to-face, and blended learning and explore how feedback, instructional videos, motivation, and technology affect students' learning in Arnis and other Physical Education activities.

6. References

1. Anacleto, A. P., & Edaño, L. B. (2025). The art of movement: Anyo training videos and Arnis performance of Grade 7 learners. *Aloysian Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, Education, and Allied Fields*, 1(5), 318–338. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15522992>.
2. Arifin, S. R. M. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars*, 1(2), 30–33. <https://doi.org/10.31436/ijcs.v1i2.82>.
3. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
4. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
5. Daw-as, D. M. (2025). Beyond the mats: How combative sports instructors thrive in online arena. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 23(1), 4513–4525. <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2025-23.1.00357>.
6. Dresser, J. F., & Potane, J. D. (2022). Fundamentals of Arnis self-learning module: Experts' validation and learners' feedback. *Canadian Journal of Educational and Social Studies*, 2(2), 41–54. <https://doi.org/10.53103/cjess.v2i2.27>.

7. Giorgi, A., Giorgi, B., & Morley, J. (2017). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. In C. Willig & W. S. Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555.n11>.
8. Hasanuddin, I., Zainuddin, F., & Haruna, H. (2025). Challenges and effectiveness of online physical education: Assessing student engagement, physical activity, and learning outcomes. *Journal Physical Education and Outdoor Activity*, 1(1), 46–65. <https://doi.org/10.36312/jpeoa.v1i1.5>.
9. Labio, A. P., Jr., & Edaño, L. B. (2025). The art of movement: Anyo training videos and Arnis performance of Grade 7 learners. *Aloysian Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, Education, and Allied Fields*, 1(5), 318–338. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15522992>.
10. Martin, J. T., De Jesus, J., Fernandez, M., Fuentes, M., Sicat, D. K., Dela Cruz, N., Afan, M., Salazar, N., Villanueva, A. V., Manalad, E., Agaton, J., Pestaño, R., Miller, J., & Santos, M. (2023). Factors related to the competition success of student-athletes towards a framework for successful performance. *International Journal of Human Movement and Sports Sciences*, 11(5), 939–946. <https://doi.org/10.13189/saj.2023.110501>.
11. Martin, J. T., Santos, M. E., & Tubera, J. G. (2017). Students' motivation profiles as predictors of physical activity participation. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Sports Science, Health and Physical Education (ICSSHPE 2017)* (Vol. 1, pp. 349–353). SciTePress. <https://doi.org/10.5220/0007060903490353>.
12. Martin, J. T., & Santos, M. E. (2015). Perceived barriers to walking activity of college students. *Asia Life Sciences*, 24(1), 207–218.
13. Martin, J. T., & Santos, M. E. (2019). Correlates for Arnis participation of Philippine junior high school students. *Ido Movement for Culture: Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology*, 19(2), 36–40. <https://doi.org/10.14589/ido.19.2.6>.
14. Martin, J. T., Tubera, J. G., Monta, V. D., Naguiat, E. S., Yambao, M. J. C., Tullao, M., & Baligad, R. A. (2016). Motivation and physical activity participation of Filipino college students. *Asia Life Sciences*, 25(1), 245–254.
15. Pestaño, R. D., Salazar, N. L., De Jesus, J. T., Martin, J. T., Santos, M. E., Miller, J. C., Manalad, E. P., Fernandez, M. M., Villanueva, A. V. M., Narciso, H. A. A., Fuentes, M. B., Roque, A. R. Y., Soriano, P. B., Dela Cruz, J. E., & Pestaño, J. V. (2025). Fostering sustainable development in sports: The role of participative coaching on self-confidence and self-efficacy of student-athletes. *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review*, 5(2), Article e03073. <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n02.pe03073>.
16. Peralta, P. L. (2025). Unveiling the digital gym: A phenomenological dive into online physical education pedagogy. *Physical Education and Sports: Studies and Research*, 4(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.56003/pessr.v4i1.474>.
17. Santos, M. (2024). Development and preliminary validation of a questionnaire for assessing fitness centers. *Jurnal SPORTIF: Jurnal Penelitian Pembelajaran*, 10(1), 157–170. https://doi.org/10.29407/js_unpgri.v10i1.22124.
18. Santos, M. (2026). Investigating aggression control in combat training among college physical education students. *SPORT TK-EuroAmerican Journal of Sport Sciences*, 15, Article 14. <https://doi.org/10.6018/sportk.621791>.
19. Santos, M., Martin, J., Sigua, E. M., & Manuel, S. (2022). Effects of online teaching on perceived physical competence and cultural appreciation of the Philippine martial arts “Arnis.” *Ido Movement for Culture: Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology*, 22(5), 48–54. <https://doi.org/10.14589/ido.22.5.3>.
20. Yang, Q., Hwang, G.-J., & Sung, H.-Y. (2018). Trends and research issues of mobile learning studies in physical education: A review of academic journal publications. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 28(4), 419–437. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2018.15334784>.

INFO

Corresponding Author: [Joshua Dela Cruz](#), Central Luzon State University.

How to cite/reference this article: [Kristine Angela](#), [Kelvin De Dios](#), [Joshua Dela Cruz](#), [John Kobe Elamparo](#), [Angel Graneta](#), [Charmyne Jallorina](#), [Carlo Luis Pelayo](#), The Meaning of Physical Competence in Online Arnis Learning Among College Students, Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech. 2026; 8(5): 135-143.