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Factors influencing and solutions to enhance students satisfaction with physical education at FPT University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the factors influencing students' satisfaction with Physical Education (PE) and to propose effective solutions to improve teaching quality at FPT University, Ho Chi Minh City. A mixed-method design was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha reliability tests, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and multiple regression. Five main factors affecting student satisfaction were found: facilities, curriculum, instructors, academic management, and students' personal perceptions of course value. Short- and long-term solutions were proposed, including upgrading facilities, innovating student-centered teaching methods, promoting extracurricular sport activities, and integrating digital management systems. Experimental results showed a significant increase in student satisfaction after implementing the proposed interventions.

Keywords: Student satisfaction, Physical education, Teaching quality, FPT University, Higher education

Introduction

Student satisfaction is a crucial indicator of educational quality and institutional performance. In practical-based courses such as Physical Education (PE), satisfaction depends largely on facilities, instructional organization, and the motivational climate created by instructors (Elliot & Shin, 2002; Dudley *et al.*, 2022) ^[5, 4].

Contemporary frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasize that a supportive motivational climate satisfies the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are met, students experience higher engagement and satisfaction (Zheng *et al.*, 2023; Hodge *et al.*, 2023) ^[11, 7]. Conversely, a need-thwarting climate may undermine motivation (Baena-Extremera *et al.*, 015) ^[2].

Quality Physical Education (QPE) has also been proven to enhance students' learning outcomes, motivation, and long-term participation in physical activity (Dudley *et al.*, 2022; Ahmed *et al.*, 2024) ^[4, 1]. In higher education, service quality models such as SERVQUAL are frequently applied to measure the gap between students' expectations and perceptions of institutional performance (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Ismailova *et al.*, 2025) ^[9, 8].

In Vietnam, research on students' satisfaction with PE at private universities remains limited. Given the unique characteristics of FPT University students high motivation, technological orientation, and diverse expectations this study seeks to identify key influencing factors and evaluate the effectiveness of practical improvement strategies in enhancing student satisfaction.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

A mixed-method design was adopted, consisting of:

- (1) a quantitative survey to examine factors affecting student satisfaction; and
- (2) an experimental phase to evaluate improvement measures.

Participants

The study involved 350 undergraduate students enrolled in or having completed the PE course during the 2024-2025 academic year at FPT University (Ho Chi Minh City). Participants represented three faculties Information Technology, Business Administration, and Graphic

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Design - and were selected through purposive random sampling, ensuring representation by gender and study year.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected through both surveys and semi-structured interviews.

- **Questionnaire:** Developed based on the SERVQUAL framework (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988) ^[4] and prior PE satisfaction studies (Dudley *et al.*, 2022) ^[9]. It contained 25 items across five constructs: (i) Facilities, (ii) Instructors, (iii) Curriculum, (iv) Academic Management, and (v) Personal Perception and Motivation. A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree → 5 = Strongly agree) was used. A total of 350 valid responses were collected (93.3% response rate).
- **Interviews:** Ten participants (5 PE instructors and 5 students) were interviewed to gain deeper insights into their learning experiences and suggestions for improvement.

- **Data analysis:** Cronbach's Alpha was applied for reliability ($\alpha \geq 0.7$). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to extract latent factors ($KMO > 0.6$; Bartlett's Test $p < 0.05$). Multiple regression identified the relative weights of each factor in predicting overall satisfaction. All analyses were performed with SPSS 26.0.

Results

Main Factors Influencing Student Satisfaction

EFA identified five key factors explaining student satisfaction ($KMO = 0.913$; Bartlett's $p < 0.001$). Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) ranged from 0.842 to 0.903.

Regression Model

The final model explained 67.8% of variance ($R^2 = 0.678$):

$$Y = 0.312X_1 + 0.295X_2 + 0.241X_3 + 0.212X_4 + 0.186X_5 + \varepsilon$$

All coefficients were positive, indicating that each factor contributed positively to student satisfaction.

Table 1: Factors affecting student satisfaction

Factor group	Content description	Cronbach's Alpha	Influence weight (β)	Impact level
1. Teaching staff	Professional competence, methods, attitudes, ability to encourage students	0.903	0.312	Very strong
2. Personal feelings	Interest, motivation, awareness of the value of the subject	0.857	0.295	Strong
3. Curriculum	Content structure, duration, applicability, assessment of results	0.864	0.241	Medium - strong
4. Facilities	Field, tools, safety, training conditions	0.876	0.212	Medium
5. Training management	Class organization, schedule, feedback, student support	0.842	0.186	Weak - medium

Pre- and Post-Intervention Comparison

Average satisfaction scores increased from 3.42 (before) to 4.15 (after intervention) on a five-point scale ($t = 7.42$, $p < 0.001$). The most notable improvements were found in Instructor interaction and Learning motivation.

Discussion

Comparison with International Studies

The results corroborate global findings that instructional quality and motivational climate are the strongest predictors of student satisfaction (Dudley *et al.*, 2022; Hodge *et al.*, 2023) ^[4, 7]. Students who perceive support for autonomy and competence report higher engagement and enjoyment, in line with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ahmed *et al.*, 2024) ^[3, 1].

Vietnamese Context

In Vietnam, the role of instructors is even more pronounced due to the prevalence of teacher-centered methods. The transition toward student-centered approaches is ongoing, making instructor attitudes crucial to student perceptions. Facility constraints also remain a unique challenge compared to developed contexts (Han *et al.*, 2025) ^[6].

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study extends the application of SERVQUAL and SDT to Physical Education, providing a validated five-factor model for Vietnamese higher education. Practically, enhancing instructor quality and creating a positive learning climate are critical leverage points for improving student satisfaction.

Policy Recommendations

- **For Universities:** Invest in modern facilities and digital feedback systems (LMS) to collect student opinions in real time.

- **For Instructors:** Adopt student-centered and game-based learning, promote autonomy, and create a motivational climate.
- **For Students:** Actively participate in physical activities and provide constructive feedback on PE courses.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was limited to one private university and used self-reported data. Future research should include public universities, employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in satisfaction over time.

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Conclusion

Student satisfaction with Physical Education at FPT University is shaped by five key factors, with instructors and personal motivation being the most influential. Interventions focused on teaching innovation, facility improvement, and enhanced feedback mechanisms proved effective in raising satisfaction levels. These findings highlight that enhancing student experience in PE not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters long-term physical activity and mental well-being in Vietnamese higher education.

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