



## CHARACTERISTICS OF 7<sup>th</sup> GRADERS IN THAI NGUYEN CITY (VIETNAM) FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DIFFERENTIAL LEARNERS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

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### Abstract:

Differentiated-oriented physical education (PE) helps learners to participate in learning activities with content and form suitable to their individual characteristics. Capturing the individual characteristics of learners is of great significance in the process of physical education. Through document research, interviews, pedagogical observations and examination, the research assesses the characteristics of 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Thai Nguyen City from the perspective of differential learners in Physical Education. This is an important basis for organizing physical education activities in the direction of differentiation for 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Thai Nguyen City.

**Keywords:** differentiation in education, physical education, individual characteristics, secondary school students

### 1. Introduction

Differentiation in education is an educational perspective that focuses on the design of educational programs derived from individual characteristics of learners as well as educational institutions, etc. Therefrom, building content, forms and methods of education suitable for different learners, ensuring equal rights to learning opportunities for each learner, is an inevitable trend of education. Physical education is no exception to this trend. In physical education, the point of differentiation needs to be expressed more clearly than in any other field of learning [3], [4], [5].

Physical education in the direction of a differentiated approach is carried out through health classification, practitioner level combined with the selection of content

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and form of exercise suitable to the conditions of the educational institution. Thereby, learners can choose the content and form of exercise suitable to their individual characteristics. [1], [2].

In order to organize PE activities with high efficiency, it is necessary to learn about the characteristics of students to identify the differences in sports level, health and training needs of students [1], [2].

Within the scope of this topic, we find out the characteristics of 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Thai Nguyen City as a basis for proposing measures to organize physical education activities in the direction of differentiating students' levels.

## 2. Research methodology

In the research process, the researchers used the following research methods: Documentary research; Pedagogical Observation; Pedagogical Test; Seminar Interview; Mathematical statistics.

## 3. Finding and discussion

The topic surveys the characteristics of students in the subject of physical education and sports activities. From there, analyze and evaluate the difference in awareness, characteristics of participation in physical education and sports activities as well as the general physical fitness level and learning results of 650 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Thai Nguyen city at the beginning of the school year 2022 - 2023.

### 3.1 Students' perception of the effects of physical education and sports activities

The survey results summarized in Table 1 show that all students surveyed are aware of the effects of physical education and sports activities on physical development, motor skills and physical balance.

**Table 1:** Survey results on students' awareness of the effects of physical education and communication (n = 650)

No.	The effects of physical education and sports on humans	Hight effect		Normal effect		Little effect		No effect	
		No. of people	%	No. of people	%	No. of people	%	No. of people	%
1	Physical development	635	97.69%	15	2.31%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
2	The development of motor skills	633	97.38%	17	2.62%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
3	Fitness	581	89.38%	69	10.62%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
4	Disease prevention and control	334	51.38%	201	30.92%	107	16.46%	8	1.23%
5	Entertainment and relaxation	253	38.92%	192	29.54%	165	25.38%	40	6.15%

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6	The improvement spirit and adaptability to life	151	23.23%	164	25.23%	257	39.54%	78	12.00%
7	The improvement of memory, thinking and confidence	62	9.54%	88	13.54%	328	50.46%	172	26.46%
8	The expansion of social relations	80	12.31%	149	22.92%	294	45.23%	127	19.54%

However, other values of physical education and sport are not yet fully realized by many students. The percentage of students who highly appreciated the value of physical education and sports for disease prevention is not much. Only 51.38% of students surveyed said that physical education and sports have "High effects" in disease prevention and control; Up to 16.46% said that "Little effect".

The value of physical education and sports activities for entertainment, relaxation and adaptability to life is not appreciated by many students. Only 23.23% to 38.92% of students rated it as "High effective"; from 25.38% to 39.54% rated "Little effect"; and from 6.15% to 12.00% rated "No effect".

Many students are not aware of the meaning and effects of physical education and sports on the development of memory, thinking, confidence and social relations. Between 19.54% and 26.46% of the students surveyed said that "No effect"; from 45.23% to 50.46% consider it "Little effect".

The above results show that students' perceptions of the meaning and effects of physical education and sports are not equal. Most are not fully aware of the impact of physical education and sport.

### 3.2 Student's interest in PE and sports activities

Student's interest in PE and sports activities is assessed by students' interest in activities during regular PE classes, extracurricular sports activities and television programs

**Table 2:** The results of the survey on level of students' interest in physical education and sports activities (n = 650)

No.	Content	Levels	No. of people	Percent %
1	Activities in PE classes	High interest	55	8.46%
		Interest	167	25.69%
		No interest	428	65.85%
2	Extracurricular sports activities organized by the school	High interest	75	11.54%
		Interest	245	37.69%
		No interest	330	50.77%
3	Sports TV Shows	High interest	51	7.85%
		Interest	212	32.62%
		No interest	387	59.54%

The survey results summarized in Table 2 show that the percentage of students who love PE lessons and extracurricular sports activities is not high. Only 7.85% to 11.54% of students chose the "High interest" level; from 25.69% to 37.69% selected "interest" level; and from 50.77% to 65.85% answered "No interest".

### 3.3 The level of completion of the tasks during the PE lesson

The level of completion of the tasks during the PE lesson is assessed by the students' comments about the exercises in the PE class and the difficulty of the tests and exams. The survey results in Table 3 show that students' opinions are very different.

Students' responses about the performance of motor tasks during PE lessons show a clear differentiation. 19.54% of students were asked to "Only complete a few" of assignments; Up to 44.92% "Failed" to perform difficult exercises; 20.46% of students have to work hard to complete all the exercises. In contrast, 15.08% of students easily performed exercises during PE lessons.

**Table 3:** The results of the survey of students' opinions about the tasks in the PE lesson (n = 650)

No.	Content	Level	No. of people	Percent %
1	The performance of motor tasks during the PE class time	Only a few completed	127	19.54%
		Failed to perform difficult exercises	292	44.92%
		Only try hard to complete	133	20.46%
		Easy implementation	98	15.08%
2	Difficulty of tests and exams	Very difficult	131	20.15%
		Difficult	295	45.38%
		Moderate	135	20.77%
		Very easy	89	13.69%

The division is also reflected in the results of the synthesis of students' assessments of the difficulty of tests and exams. 20.15% of students rated the content of the test and exam as "Very difficult"; 45.38% said that it is "difficult"; 20.77% consider it "normal" and 13.69% consider it as "too easy".

### 3.4 Student's level sport and health status

Student's level sport and health status are assessed by surveying their participation in sports teams, medical condition and health status at the time of the survey.

The topic initially assesses the sports level of students by surveying the levels of sports teams that students have been participating in. The results in Table 4 show that many students have been participating in sports teams at the grassroots level. Specifically: there are 4.31% of the students asked who have participated in the sports team of high schools in communes and wards; 1.38% have been participating in the district and city teams; 0.92% participated in the provincial team.

Regarding the medical condition related to disability and circulatory, respiratory and neurological diseases, 6.31% of the surveyed students had a medical condition at the

level of "mild" level, with little impact on movement; and 1.69% at the level of "highly affecting movement".

Regarding health status: at the time of the survey, the majority (90.15%) of the students had normal health status. However, up to 5.38% of students are in a state of injury and 4.46% of students are ill to a degree that affects movement.

**Table 4:** Information about students' athletic performance, pathology and health status (n = 650)

No.	Content	Level	No. of people	Percent %
1	The highest level sports team has been participating	Primary School, Commune, Ward	28	4.31%
		Districts, cities	9	1.38%
		Province	6	0.92%
2	Current medical condition	Normal	598	92.00%
		Disability, having mild circulatory, respiratory and neurological diseases, with little impact on movement	41	6.31%
		Disability, circulatory, respiratory and neurological diseases at a degree that greatly affects movement	11	1.69%
3	Current health condition	Normal	586	90.15%
		Injury (affecting movement)	35	5.38%
		Being sick (affecting movement)	29	4.46%

### 3.5 The general physical level of students

The general physical level of students (450 students): tested, compared, collated and evaluated according to the standard table specified in Decision No. 53/2008/QĐ-BGDĐT. Due to limited research conditions, the topic only conducted a survey on the general physical level of 450 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in Thai Nguyen city at the beginning of the school year 2022-2023 (provided by direct teachers). The results are summarized in Table 5. By comparing the results of the general physical level test with the prescribed assessment standards, it shows that the physical level of students is a clear difference.

The best results were in the tests of speed (30-meter running with high straight point), strength (long jump) and motor coordination ability (Shuttle running 4x10m). There are from 28.89% to 36.67% of good grade; from 48.44% to 57.78% at "Passed"; and only from 13.33% to 14.89% "Faile" the standard.

**Table 5:** Summary of the results of the physical fitness test of 7<sup>th</sup> graders (n = 450)

No.	Content	Evaluation					
		Good		Passed		Failed	
		SL	%	SL	%	SL	%
1	Long jump	165	36.67%	218	48.44%	67	14.89%
2	30-meter running with high straight point	130	28.89%	260	57.78%	60	13.33%
3	Shuttle running 4x10m	147	32.67%	242	53.78%	61	13.56%
4	5 minutes free running	71	15.78%	259	57.56%	120	26.67%
5	<b>Overall evaluation</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>20.22%</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>51.56%</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>28.22%</b>

Endurance test results are the worst when compared with evaluation and grading standards. Only 15.78% of the “good” category; 57.56% “pass” category; and up to 26.67% “fail”

The results of the combined assessment also show that the students' physical fitness levels are uneven, with 28.22% "failing" the general fitness level by age, although the achievement in each content has many satisfactory results. "Good".

### 3.6 Overall assessment of students on the subject of physical education

Overall assessment of students on the subject of physical education (studied in the previous school year): conducted through a survey by questionnaire at the beginning of the school year 2022 - 2023 on the following contents: Comments on requirements, tasks, and contents and form of learning; Knowledge and skills are equipped; Satisfaction and love (Table 6).

Besides the knowledge and skills that learners are equipped with, the satisfaction and love of learners is also a factor to evaluate the success of the course. In this respect, physical education activities for students have not achieved the desired results. This is reflected in the survey results of 450 7<sup>th</sup> graders at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year about the PE activities they participated in in the previous school year.

**Table 6:** Summary of opinions of 7<sup>th</sup> graders on the subject of PE (n = 450)

No.	Subject assessment	Agree		Confused		Disagree	
		No of people	Percent %	No of people	Percent %	No of people	Percent%
1	Understanding individual characteristics in sports activities	77	17.11%	128	28.44%	245	54.44%
2	Requirements, learning tasks suitable for yourself	124	27.56%	120	26.67%	206	45.78%
3	Diverse and flexible learning content and suitable forms to reality	130	28.89%	136	30.22%	184	40.89%
4	Equipped with basic knowledge of sports and subjects	382	84.89%	39	8.67%	28	6.22%

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5	Finding out more learning resources and learning how to practice after school	125	27.78%	158	35.11%	167	37.11%
6	Satisfied with the content and form of learning	132	29.33%	158	35.11%	160	35.56%
7	Love, self-motivated and actively with the activities of the subject	124	27.56%	139	30.89%	187	41.56%

Only 17.11% of students were asked “agree” that through PE lessons it helps them “Understand personal characteristics in sports activities”; 28.44% of students "confused"; and 54.44% "disagree".

Regarding requirements, tasks, content and learning methods: Up to 45.78% and 40.89% of students rated the content, requirements, and forms of learning as "not yet diverse, flexible and suitable" for students. and practice.

The PE lessons have not paid much attention to providing resources and guiding students to "know how to practice on their own" outside of school hours. Only 27.78% of students answered that they were guided to access extensive resources and know how to practice on their own outside of school hours; 35.11% “confused”; and up to 37.11% of students do not know how to practice by themselves.

Only from 27.56% to 29.33% of students answered that they were "satisfied, interested, positive, proactive" with the content and learning forms of the PE class, while from 35.56% to 41.56% answered is not “satisfied, interested, positive” with class activities.

The content with the most positive reviews is "equipped with basic knowledge of sports and subjects". There are 84.89% of students asked “agree” with this statement.

#### 4. Conclusions

Physical education in the direction of a differentiated approach is carried out through the classification of students' levels combined with the selection of contents and forms of exercise suitable to the conditions of the educational institution. Thereby, learners can choose the content and form of exercise suitable to their individual characteristics.

From the perspective of differentiation in physical education, it shows that 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Thai Nguyen City (Vietnam) have basic differences in terms of awareness, favourite level and degree. Students' assessments of the PE lessons are also different.

This result shows that it is necessary to apply differentiated views in organizing physical education activities for 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Thai Nguyen City.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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