



EXTRACURRICULAR SPORTS PARTICIPATION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS OF VIETNAM

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Abstract:

Extracurricular sports are voluntary learner-oriented sports implemented during non-class hours and suited for the student's interests, gender, age, and physical base. This paper was written to provide thorough information about the extracurricular sports engagement of 872 students from 11 high schools in the northern mountainous area of Vietnam. The researchers utilized statistical analysis and sociological surveys to collect such extensive quantitative data. Six criteria were also suggested to evaluate the circumstances. The findings show that the number of students who regularly participate in extracurricular sports accounts for 23.19%, of which males account for 23.92% and females 22.40%, and over 28% of them confirm that they love and are actively involved in playing sports after school. Moreover, all of the schools confirm that they do organize extracurricular sports for their students and most of them are conducted with the guidance of teachers. The most popular contents of extracurricular sports include shuttlecock kicking, football and badminton. In the 2022-2023 school year, there have been 18 intramural sports tournaments and 10 off-campus sports tournaments held with a total of 1392 students attending.

Keywords: current status, extracurricular sports, high school students, northern mountainous areas

1. Introduction

Physical education (PE) is considered a core subject that provides motor skills for its learners. A school sports activity is featured by its voluntariness and correspondence to the majority of students' interests, gender, age and physical foundation [1]. To develop PE work, the government promulgates the *"Master Plan for the Development of Physical*

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Education and School Sports in the period of 2016 – 2020 with orientation to 2025" [2], approving the Vietnam Health Plan to ensure that each student is physically active for at least 60 minutes a day [3]. In addition, the government also approved the School Health Program with five contents and seven solutions to improve health care for young generations [4].

PE of schools includes intra-curricular sports and extracurricular sports. They are a unity of PE work; in other words, both of them coexist and complement each other to fulfil comprehensive education aims. Therefore, it cannot be denied that extracurricular sports play a crucial role in PE [5], [6].

It is widely believed that extracurricular sports are voluntary and organised sports activities that are conducted outside regular school hours and guaranteed to be appropriate to the interests, gender, age and health of students [7]. According to Cole, Rubin, Feild and Giles, 2007, their participation in extracurricular activities has been identified as an important aspect of the educational experience [11]. Rubin, Bommer and Baldwin (2002) also argue that "*extracurricular activities can allow students to develop their interpersonal skills*" [12]. Therefore, it is not surprising when employers usually appreciate those students who are recorded to well engage in extracurricular sports (Rynes, Trank, Lawson and Ilies, 2003), as those activities are proven to have a positive impact on the development of student's leadership and interpersonal skills [10]. Barnett (2007) also described extracurricular activities as "*... sports, academic clubs and special interest groups*" [13], because they enhance not only fitness but also the formation of good sports habits among youngsters [8]. Circular No. 48/2020/QĐ-BGDĐT on the Regulation of sports activities in schools also clearly states the content of organizing sports activities, duties and benefits of PE teachers [9].

Bartkus, K. R., *et al.* (2012) synthesized a number of research results in order to offer the most complete definition of extracurricular sports. The finding showed that the term should be defined as the activities that take place outside of regular school hours, are managed by the school, do not provide academic grades or credits, are either academic or non-academic, and are elective to participants [14]. From the above analysis, it can be inferred that extracurricular sports play certain roles in comprehensive education, namely helping students do exercises, relieve stress, develop physical skills, etc., which contribute to cultivating good characteristics and aptitudes among the learners. This was also a motivation for the authors to conduct research. Their study is based on the current situation of extracurricular sports participation among the students of high schools in the northern mountainous area of Vietnam, thereby proposing solutions to improve the circumstances.

2. Methodology

The study used sociological surveys and interviews to collect the ideas of the students and PE experts respectively, from 11 high schools in Vietnam's northern mountainous

region regarding their habit of participating in extracurricular sports. The responses were collected based on a 5-level Likert scale from 1-"Very unnecessary" to 5-"Very necessary". The results obtained were then analyzed by statistical mathematical methods with Excel software to calculate the sum and ratio of variables.

2.1 Participants

- Surveyees: 872 students from 11 high schools in the northern mountainous region.
- Interviewees: 35 experts, extracurricular sports managers and PE teachers at high schools (8 experts, 6 managers and 21 teachers).

2.2 Ethics in research

The results of the article are excerpted from the topic Science and Technology at ministerial level, code B2021-TDH-01 "Solutions to improve the efficiency of organizing extracurricular sports activities for high school students in Vietnam's northern mountainous areas", written by Assoc. Prof. Duy Nguyen Quyet, and led by Hanoi University of Extracurricular Sports Education.

3. Results

3.1. Criteria for evaluating extracurricular sports activities of high school students in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam

The criteria to evaluate the efficiency of organizing extracurricular sports for high school students in the northern mountainous region were proposed after the authors had conducted document referencing, pedagogical observations and direct surveys with PE teachers and experts. The number of questionnaires emitted was 35, including 8 PE experts, 6 extracurricular sports managers and 21 PE teachers at 11 high schools in the study place.

The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Selection of criteria to evaluate the participation of high school students in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam (n=35)

No.	Criteria	Results					Total	Average
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Percentage of students who regularly participate in extracurricular sports training.	26	5	3	1	0	161	4.60
2	Efficiency of organizing extracurricular sports activities.	25	4	3	3	0	156	4.46
3	Number of sports organized for extracurricular activities.	24	7	3	1	0	159	4.54
4	Number of sports tournaments held.	25	5	3	2	0	158	4.51
5	Number of sports competitions attended.	22	8	4	1	0	156	4.46
6	Number of students participating in sports competitions.	23	6	3	3	0	154	4.40
7	Number of warmup matches held.	7	5	7	16	0	108	3.09

As indicated in Table 1, the study selected 6 out of 7 criteria that achieved the average score of 4.40 points or higher, corresponding to the degrees of “Necessary” and “Very necessary”. Specifically, these include:

- 1) Percentage of students who regularly participate in extracurricular sports training;
- 2) Efficiency of organizing extracurricular sports activities;
- 3) Number of sports organized for extracurricular activities;
- 4) Number of sports tournaments held;
- 5) Number of sports competitions attended;
- 6) Number of students participating in sports competitions.

3.2. Current situation of the extracurricular sports participation of high school students in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam

3.2.1. The students’ frequency of participating in extracurricular sports activities

The study surveyed 872 students in 11 high schools in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam with questionnaires. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: High school students’ participation in extracurricular sports in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam (n=872)

Content		Gender				Total		Order
		Male		Female				
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Frequency	Regular	315	23.92	273	22.40	588	23.19	3
	Sometimes	397	30.14	369	30.27	766	30.21	2
	Never	605	45.94	577	47.33	1182	46.61	1

Table 2 indicates that 23.19% of the students engage in extracurricular sports on a regular basis, while approximately one-third do it sometimes. More notably, nearly half of them do not participate in any extracurricular sports.

The authors also explored the organization activities of extracurricular sports in those high schools, obtaining the results as shown in Table 3. Table 3 shows that, in terms of extracurricular sports, all of the schools state that they do organize extracurricular sports in the form of sports talented teams and sports clubs. Half of them offer extracurricular sports regularly with the supervision of PE teachers, usually for sports clubs. However, 63.64% of the schools confirm that their extracurricular sports do not have instructors. Thus, most schools when organizing extracurricular sports will arrange instructors for students (except for spontaneous extracurricular sports training).

Regarding contents, many schools tend to choose certain sports including shuttlecock kicking (100%), football and badminton (80%), basketball, volleyball, and chess. Notably, these sports are favoured by a large number of students. Thus, it can be seen that schools have paid great attention to the students’ interests when organizing extracurricular sports activities.

Table 3: Organization of extracurricular sports in eleven high schools in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam (n=11 schools)

No.	Content	Number	%
I Forms of organization extracurricular sports			
1	With teachers' guidance and supervision	5	44.45
2	Without teachers' guidance and supervision	7	63.64
3	Sports talented teams	10	90.91
4	Sports clubs	5	44.45
5	No extracurricular sports	0	0.00
II Sports for extracurricular activities			
1	Athletics	2	18.18
2	Martial art	4	36.36
3	Swimming	0	0.00
4	Shuttlecock kicking	10	90.91
5	Chess (king chess, Chinese chess)	6	54.55
6	Gymnastics	4	36.36
7	Football	8	72.73
8	Volleyball (Volleyball and Spike volleyball on steam)	5	44.45
9	Table tennis	3	27.27
10	Basketball	6	54.55
11	Badminton	8	72.73
12	Tug of war	5	44.45
13	Stick pushing	4	36.36
14	Stilt	4	36.36
15	Boat racing	0	0.00
16	Basket shaking	0	0.00
17	Other sports	3	27.27

3.2.2. Sports competitions in the high schools of the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam

The current situation of sports competitions at 11 high schools in the northern mountainous area of Vietnam was explored with questionnaires, and its result is presented in Table 4. Table 4 shows that during the 2022-2023 school year, all of the schools had a total of 18 on-site and 10 off-site sports tournaments with a total of 1392 students participating. Among the sports, football, badminton, and shuttlecock kicking were seen as the most competitive competitions that attracted a large number of students in each match.

Table 4: Sports competitions participated by high school students in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam (2022-2023) (n=11 schools)

No.	Contents	On-site tournaments		Off-site tournaments		Total	
		Number of prizes	Number of participants	Number of prizes	Number of participants	Number of prizes	Number of participants
1	Football	3	256	1	142	4	398
2	Volleyball	1	42	1	87	2	129
3	Table tennis	1	21	1	25	2	46
4	Basketball	1	38	1	33	2	71
5	Badminton	3	52	1	56	4	108
6	Athletics	1	58	1	68	2	126
7	Martial art	2	33	1	52	3	85
8	Shuttlecock kicking	3	65	1	59	4	124
9	Chess	1	35	0	0	1	35
10	Sports festivals	2	87	2	183	4	270
Total		18	687	10	705	28	1392

3.2.3 Students' interest in extracurricular sports at high schools in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam

The study conducted quick surveys with 872 high school students from 11 high schools in the northern mountainous area, including 316 from mountainous areas, 341 from midlands and 215 from towns. The participants were asked to rate their degree of interest in extracurricular sports based on the 4-score scale from "Really like" to "Dislike". The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Students' interest in extracurricular sports at high schools in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam (n=872)

Regions	Really Like		Like		Neutral		Dislike	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Mountainous (n=316)	77	24.37	207	65.51	24	7.59	8	2.53
Midlands (n=341)	91	26.69	214	62.76	26	7.62	10	2.93
Towns (n=215)	91	42.3	104	48.37	8	3.72	12	5.58

Table 5 demonstrates that the majority of high school students in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam like participating in extracurricular sports. Schools shouldn't, however, ignore the small proportion of those who have a neutral attitude or detest extracurricular sports.

To more objectively assess the level of participation in extracurricular sports among high school students in the northern mountainous areas of Vietnam, the researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with 872 students and 21 PE teachers about their engagement and behaviours during PE classes. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Students' behaviours during PE classes (n=872)

Content	Students (n=872)		Teachers (n=21)		Comparison	
	mi	%	mi	%	χ^2	P
The students enjoy and actively participate in training sessions.	307	35.21	6	28.57	2.82	>0.05
The students have neutral attitudes and engagement.	352	40.37	11	52.38		
The students dislike or show boredom during training sessions	156	17.89	3	14.29		
The students appear to oppose during the training sessions.	57	6.54	2	9.52		

Table 6 shows that teachers and students both had relatively similar opinions of extracurricular sports attitudes, which is evidenced by $\chi^2 < \chi^{2_{table}}$ at $P > 0.05$ when comparing the interview results of the two groups. Nearly 20% of students have bad attitudes about extracurricular sports: dislike of training, discouragement, even resistance training or no training. This raises the importance of finding early solutions to help students improve their attitudes towards extracurricular sports, to increase their engagement and effectiveness in sports training.

Table 6 indicates that the teachers and students had fairly similar ideas about the students' attitudes and behaviours during PE classes, as indicated $\chi^2_{calculated} < \chi^2_{table}$ at $P > 0.05$. Over 20% of the students show negative attitudes such as hatred, discouragement, and even resistance to practice. This shows how crucial it is to find solutions as soon as possible to boost their motivation.

4. Conclusion

The study developed 6 criteria to evaluate extracurricular sports participation among high school students in the northern mountainous area of Vietnam. These criteria refer to (1) the percentage of students who regularly participate in extracurricular sports training, (2) efficiency of organizing extracurricular sports activities, (3) number of sports organized for extracurricular activities, (4) number of sports tournaments held, (5) number of sports competitions attended and (6) number of students participating in sports competitions.

The students' participation in extracurricular sports activities in high schools in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam was also reported clearly in the paper. The number of students who practice regularly accounted for 23.19% (boys: 23.92%, girls: 22.40%). Most of them appear to enjoy these activities. Hence, all of the schools attempt to organise sports activities outside of class time and most of them are organised with the guidance of teachers (70%). The favoured sports are shuttlecock kicking, football, badminton, basketball, volleyball and chess. In the 2022-2023 school year, eleven high schools in Vietnam's northern mountainous area organized 18 on-site sports and 10 off-site sports tournaments with a total of 1392 students participating in the competitions.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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