



INVESTIGATING THE REALITY OF QUALITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AT LOWER-SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN MIDLANDS OF VIETNAM

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Abstract:

The national strategy has identified developing, educating and training high-quality human resources meeting requirements for the 4th Industrial Revolution and international integration as one of its central missions. This study aims to determine criteria for assessing the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands of Vietnam. Participants included 45 professors, associate professors, and PhDs in physical education at institutions of physical training and sports; 500 teachers and 100 employers and managers from lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands. Based on literature synthesis, an interview, and a reliability test of items in the research scale using Cronbach's Alpha, the study identified 19 criteria for evaluating the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands. The criteria were divided into three clusters: (1) Knowledge: 5 criteria; (2) Skills: 10 criteria; (3) Attitudes: 4 criteria. Results of the evaluation on the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands showed that 08/19 of the criteria were deemed "Good", 05/19 were deemed "Rather", and 06 of them were deemed "Average".

Keywords: quality, physical education teachers, lower-secondary schools, northern Midlands of Vietnam

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1. Introduction

Education is the basis of knowledge, training laborers with high qualifications and competencies. Resolution No. 29/NQ-TW dated November 04, 2023, of the 8th Plenum of the 11th Party Central Committee on the fundamental and comprehensive reform of education serving industrialization and modernization in a socialist-oriented market economy during international integration mentioned: *“The quality, quantity, and ratio of educators and education administrative officers are still unreasonable, some of them fail to meet the requirements for innovation and development of education, lack dedication, and even violate the code of professional ethics.”* Enhancing the teacher quality is key to the education strategy of each nation as teachers play a decisive role in education quality, which is the only source of human resources capable of realizing future plans, especially in the 21st century of information technology, communication and intellectual economics. Therefore, enhancing teacher quality is a core mission in the fundamental and comprehensive reform of education.

Implementing Resolution No. 29/NQ-TW, in the past years, the Government has issued documents to direct teacher education, such as Decree No. 116/2020/NĐ-CP on the support for tuition fees and living stipend for pedagogical students and Decree No. 71/2020/NĐ-CP on the roadmap for raising qualification standards for teachers. Thanks to the supporting policies of the Government, pedagogical universities, as “leaders” of the education system, is strongly innovating their targets, contents, methodologies, and assessments of learning outcomes of teachers and education administrators to meet the requirements for improving the quality, responsibilities, ethics, and professional competencies according to the mission of developing teachers and administrators qualified for education and training reform in Resolution No. 29/NQ-TW.

On December 26th, 2018, the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training issued the new General Education Curriculum accompanied by Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT. This curriculum specifies the target of general education, helping students master general education knowledge, be able to apply the acquired knowledge and skills effectively to real life and lifelong learning, have an orientation for professional decision, be able to build and develop social relationships harmoniously, have a rich mental life and personality, thereby reaching the meaning of life and contributing to the country's and human development.

Physical education is a mandatory subject in general education for Grade 1 to Grade 12. Physical education has supported to achieve the target of developing the student's personalities and competencies, with a focus on providing students with knowledge and skills for taking care of their health and physical activities, forming the habit of doing exercises and the ability to select an appropriate sport to increase their physical strength and health. On that account, students will be aware of and responsible for their health and that of their family and the community, adapting to the living conditions to and live happily and get on well with others.

The teacher is the subject of education. The quality of physical education teachers is a crucial basis for enhancing education quality in general and physical education in particular. The required characteristics of physical education teachers include education philosophy, knowledge structure, pedagogical skills, and passion for the profession. The quality of physical education teachers is the synthesis of the psychological qualities that the teachers express during their teaching. Teacher quality determines the effectiveness of education and teaching, explicitly and considerably impacting the students' physical and mental development. On the basis of the significance of this issue, we have conducted the research: "Investigating the Reality of Quality of Physical Education Teachers at Lower-Secondary Schools in the Northern Midlands of Vietnam".

2. Methods and Materials

2.1 Methods

To address the research topic, the following methods were employed:

- *Literature synthesis* was to review the literature on the research topic through books, research and published articles, etc. Its results were used to establish the theoretical framework and hypothesis, determine the research purpose and analysis, and to discuss the results of the selected criteria for evaluating physical education teachers.
- *The interview* was aimed at gaining specialists' and experts' insights into the selection of criteria for assessing physical education teachers. The research administered a questionnaire based on the degree of agreement (i.e., Totally agree: 5; Agree: 4; Neutral: 3; Disagree: 2; Totally disagree: 1) to these specialists and experts for their perspectives.
- *Statistics* was utilized to analyze the collected data with the support of SPSS 22.0 software. Results were reported using descriptive statistics, the test of reliability with Cronbach's Alpha, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) through KMO validation.

2.2 Participants

The participants selected, based on the criteria for the evaluation of physical education teachers, included 45 experts who were professors, associate professors, and PhDs in the field of physical education at institutions of physical training and sports.

The participants assessing the quality of physical education teachers included:

- 500 lower-secondary school teachers in 04 provinces of Bac Giang, Phu Tho, Thai Nguyen, and Vinh Phuc in Vietnam.
- 100 employers and administrators at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands.

2.3 Research ethics

This article is extracted from the Science and Technology research project at the Ministry of Education and Training level (2023-2024): “*Giải pháp nâng cao chất lượng đội ngũ giáo viên giáo dục thể chất ở các trường trung học cơ sở khu vực Trung du Bắc Bộ đáp ứng yêu cầu của chương trình phổ thông mới*” (translated as *Solutions to Enhancing the Quality of Physical Education Teachers at Lower-Secondary Schools in the Northern Midlands according to the Requirements of the New General Education Curriculum*). Principal investigator: Dr. Pham Anh Tuan.

3. Results

3.1 Identifying criteria evaluating the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands

Based on the required standards for the general education of the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, through the literature review and interviews with experts, this study synthesized and identified 16 criteria for evaluating the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands. To determine criteria for evaluating the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands, the study administered a questionnaire to 45 experts who were professors, associate professors, and PhDs in the field of physical education at institutions of physical training and sports.

The answers were to rate 5 degrees of agreement: Totally agree: 5, Agree: 4, Neutral: 3, Disagree: 2, and Totally disagree: 1

Only criteria reaching 80% or higher in total were qualified to evaluate the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands. The results of the questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 revealed that all 19 suggested criteria obtained 80% or higher, qualifying for evaluating the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands.

In parallel with the descriptive statistics, we examined the internal correlation of the questionnaire using Cronbach’s Alpha and the validity of the theoretical framework in practice using KMO. The results showed that the criteria were appropriate for evaluating physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands. The criteria were divided into three clusters:

- 1) Knowledge: 5 criteria,
- 2) Skills: 10 criteria,
- 3) Attitudes: 4 criteria.

Table 1: Results of selected criteria for evaluating the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands

No.	Criteria (TC)	Results	
		Total	%
Knowledge			
1	TC1.1. Knowledge of physical education in the new general education curriculum	201	89.33
2	TC1.2. Pedagogical knowledge	199	88.44
3	TC1.3. Knowledge of theories and techniques in sports according to the new general education curriculum	192	85.33
4	TC1.4. Knowledge of management, operation, laws, and environment protection relating to physical education	187	83.11
5	TC1.5. Foundation knowledge of physical education and ability to study at a higher level	191	84.89
Skills			
6	TC2.1. Skills in delivering and organizing the teaching of physical education, according to the new general education curriculum	192	85.33
7	TC2.2. Skills of practicing sports according to the new general education curriculum	193	85.78
8	TC2.3. Skills in organizing, planning and refereeing competitions in extracurricular physical training and sport activities	196	87.11
9	TC2.4. Foreign language skills for expressing and solving common specialized issues	192	85.33
10	TC2.5. Fundamental computer skills	193	85.78
11	TC2.6. Skills of self-orientation and adaptation in different working conditions	199	88.44
12	TC2.7. Skills of learning and accumulating experiences to advance professional knowledge	201	89.33
13	TC2.8. Skills of engaging, communicating, and encouraging students to do exercises	195	86.67
14	TC2.9. Academic records of students in physical education	196	87.11
15	TC2.10. Results of the classification of the student's physical strength according to physical training standards prescribed by MOET	195	86.67
Attitudes			
16	TC3.1. Independence, autonomy, and creativeness	199	88.44
17	TC3.2. Solidarity, friendliness, cooperation with colleagues and students	192	85.33
18	TC3.3. Seriousness at work	182	80.89
19	TC3.4. Compliance with the directions, laws, and regulations of the Government and the affiliation	189	84.00

3.2 Evaluating the reality of quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands

To evaluate the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands of Vietnam, the present study employed the criteria selected above on three aspects: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes.

Each aspect is viewed through 2 lens: (1) the evaluation of managers of education institutions (hereinafter employers) and (2) of colleagues in education institutions (hereinafter laborers).

In terms of employers, the research administered the questionnaire to 500 lower-secondary schools in 4 provinces of Bac Giang, Phu Tho, Thai Nguyen, and Vinh Phuc. Regarding laborers, the questionnaire was delivered to 100 managers of lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands.

Table 2: Evaluation of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands

No.	Criteria	Group 1 (n = 500)		Group 2 (n = 100)		Total	
		Mean	Evaluation	Mean	Evaluation	Mean	Evaluation
Knowledge							
1	Knowledge of physical education in the new general education curriculum	4.34	Good	4.38	Good	4.36	Good
2	Pedagogical knowledge	3.56	Rather	3.58	Rather	3.57	Rather
3	Knowledge of theories and techniques in sports according to the new general education curriculum	3.62	Rather	3.82	Rather	3.72	Rather
4	Knowledge of management, operation, laws, and environmental protection relating to physical education	3.58	Rather	3.60	Rather	3.59	Rather
5	Foundation knowledge of physical education and ability to study at a higher level	4.34	Good	4.38	Good	4.36	Good
Skills							
6	Skills of delivering and organizing the teaching of physical education according to the new general education curriculum	2.89	Average	2.69	Average	2.79	Average
7	Skills of practicing sports according to the new general education curriculum	4.20	Good	4.36	Good	4.28	Good
8	Skills of organizing, planning and refereeing competitions in extracurricular physical training and sport activities	2.95	Average	3.17	Average	3.06	Average
9	Foreign language skills for expressing and solving common specialized issues	3.12	Average	3.20	Average	3.16	Average
10	Fundamental computer skills	3.34	Average	3.28	Average	3.31	Average
11	Skills of self-orientation and adaptation in different working conditions	3.34	Average	3.26	Average	3.30	Average
12	Skills of learning and accumulating experiences to advance professional knowledge	3.56	Rather	3.58	Rather	3.57	Rather

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13	Skills of engaging, communicating, and encouraging students to do exercises	3.62	Rather	3.82	Rather	3.72	Rather
14	Academic records of students on physical education	4.37	Good	4.53	Good	4.45	Good
15	Results of the classification of the student's physical strength according to physical training standards prescribed by MOET	4.32	Good	4.60	Good	4.46	Good
Attitudes							
16	Independence, autonomy, and creativeness	3.50	Rather	3.04	Average	3.27	Average
17	Solidarity, friendliness, cooperation with colleagues and students	4.37	Good	4.53	Good	4.45	Good
18	Seriousness at work	4.35	Good	4.39	Good	4.37	Good
19	Compliance with the direction, laws, and regulations of the Government and the affiliation	4.32	Good	4.60	Good	4.46	Good

Table 2 indicated that:

Regarding knowledge, 3 criteria were deemed "rather" or above by both two groups, including "Pedagogical knowledge", "Knowledge of theories and techniques in sports according to the new general education curriculum", and "Knowledge of management, operation, laws, and environmental protection relating to physical education". 2 criteria were evaluated "good", comprising "Knowledge of physical education in the new general education curriculum" and "Foundation knowledge of physical education and ability to study at a higher level".

Concerning skills, 3 criteria gauged "good" were "Academic records of students on physical education", "Results of the classification of the student's physical strength according to physical training standards prescribed by MOET", and "Skills of practicing sports according to the new general education curriculum". 2 criteria gauged "Rather" were "Skills of learning and accumulating experiences to advance professional knowledge" and "Skills of engaging, communicating, and encouraging students to do exercises". 5 criteria evaluated "Average" included "Skills of delivering and organizing the teaching of physical education according to the new general education curriculum", "Skills of organizing, planning and refereeing competitions in extracurricular physical training and sports activities", "Foreign language skills for expressing and solving common specialized issues", "Fundamental computer skills", and "Skills of self-orientation and adaptation in different working conditions".

With regard to attitudes, the suggested criteria were basically agreed to be "Good" by both two groups, except for "Independence, autonomy, and creativeness" being deemed "Average".

Findings on the evaluation of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands unveiled that education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands had pedagogical knowledge, were aware of theories

and techniques in sports according to the new general education curriculum, had knowledge of management, operation, laws, and environmental protection relating to physical education, foundation knowledge of physical education and ability to study at a higher level, skills of practicing sports according to the new general education curriculum, skills of learning and accumulating experiences to advance professional knowledge, skills of engaging, communicating, and encouraging students to do exercises, skills of delivering and organizing the teaching of physical education according to the new general education curriculum; skills of organizing, planning and refereeing competitions in extracurricular physical training and sport activities, foreign language skills for expressing and solving common specialized issues, fundamental computer skills, and skills of self-orientation and adaptation in different working conditions. They also had the spirit of solidarity, friendliness, cooperation with colleagues and students, seriousness at work, complied with the direction, laws, and regulations of the Government and the affiliation; and had a sense of independence, autonomy, and creativeness.

4. Conclusion

The current study identified 19 criteria appropriate for evaluating physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands. These criteria were divided into 3 clusters:

- Knowledge: 5 criteria,
- Skills: 10 criteria,
- Attitudes: 4 criteria.

Findings on the evaluation of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands showed that 08/19 of the criteria were deemed "Good", 05/19 were deemed "Rather", and 06 of them were deemed "Average". Based on these results, the study suggests that advancing the quality of physical education teachers at lower-secondary schools in the Northern Midlands to meet the requirements of the new general education curriculum by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training is a crucial task in the current period.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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