

WOMEN AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD: THE CASE OF PE IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Vietnam has long endured intrusions by former Chinese dynasties and France, and the Vietnam War caused deterioration of safety and health of the people. Due to the Doi Moi policy in 1980s, Vietnam has excelled tremendously economically and educationally. However, unlike Japan, where the two authors reside, previous studies show that Physical Education in Vietnam has not been promoted strongly especially for female students.

In this presentation, two authors have paid attention to Vietnam's physical education, especially the relationship between women and PE, from the previous studies, from the comments and data of the interview and questionnaire we conducted for this study. Our findings show that PE in Vietnam has much room for improvement including facility, teaching method, and quality of PE teachers. Especially for female physical education, much need to be improved including philosophy behind it.

Key words: PE, women, Vietnam, curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia finally allowed women to participate in their Olympic teams for the first time at the London Olympics of 2012. Though the Olympic games were established as a 'world-wide sport competition', there are still countries in the world where sports are regarded as 'men's activities' and girls and women are denied the right to practice sports (Sankei EX, 2012). In most of the world, we take it for granted that women can participate in any sport. In Japan, for example, where the two authors of this paper reside, the Japanese media had excitedly predicted how many medals Japanese athletes, especially female athletes, could win in the 2012 London Olympics.

When we trace back, though, sports in Western countries were also originally limited to mainly men from the upper classes. For example, it is a well-known fact that the founder of the Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), was a French aristocrat. He believed sports could empower youth with sound minds and bodies and tried to host sports events with participants not only in certain local areas or countries but transnationally. However, we can easily imagine that participants in general were from the upper classes, those who could afford to play sports financially. Hosting large-scale sport events required a large amount of money, which most likely implies that affluent, developed countries only could host the Olympic Games. Moreover, relying on government or establishments for funding suggests sports have been used to raise the prestige and morale of a country or as propaganda (Ohtubo, 2007).

Tracing back in Japan, there are roughly three phases that are related to women and sports. The first phase was in the 1940s when WWII was about to end. During this phase, Japanese women met severe resistance trying to participate in the world of sports that was essentially male-dominated (Itani, Tahara & Raita, 2000). In those days, international competition stimulated the relationship between women and sports, but nevertheless, the events women could participate in were limited to so-called 'feminine' sports, such as tennis. The second phase was from the 1940s to the late 1970s and early 80s when women began to challenge sports that were said to be 'impossible to play for women' (Itani et al., 2000). The third phase started after 1980 when women were encouraged to participate both in sports and policy planning in conjunction with the feminist movement (Itani & others, 2000). In recent years, it is accepted that more and more women are active in various fields, such as political and economic fields, as well as the field of sports.

On the other hand, it was reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) that 'a perceived decline in the position and presence of physical education (PE) in school curricula worldwide was apparent in some countries in the 1970s and 1980s' (Hardman, 2005, p. 1). Also, in many areas in Asia, poor facilities and a lack of qualified teachers, inadequate PE education, and disregarding PE for girls and women are widely reported (Hardman, 2005).

What triggered this study was an association with Vietnamese exchange students in Japan. The two authors realized that Vietnamese women seldom talked about sports and showed little interest in sports. One author, Toshiko Sugino, has long held an interest in Asian women's education, and the other author, Yuki Mimura has long been involved in PE as a master of karate. Together, we formulated the following research questions:

- How is PE conducted in Vietnam?
- Are Vietnamese female students interested in PE?
- Are sports considered to be a source of income?

In order to answer these questions, this paper first discusses the educational system in Vietnam, the characteristics and issues involved in PE in Vietnam, and finally shows the results and a discussion of a questionnaire conducted with 33 Vietnamese people through the Internet. It is hoped that this paper will contribute to empowering Asian girls and women through PE in a globalized world.

1. Educational System in Vietnam

Vietnam, with its long history tracing back 5000-6000 years, has been strongly influenced by Chinese philosophy or 'Confucianism' both directly and indirectly (Kagawa, 2008). For example, studying and education, as well as respecting older people such as parents and teachers, comprise part of their traditional values (Education, 2006).

Under the French colonial regime (1897-1918), the spread of education was limited which resulted in a reduction in the number of schools and students (Nguyen Khac Vien, 2012, p. 152). Though the Vietnamese pressured the colonial administration to open a number of schools, "education was never widespread: 90 percent of children were unable to attend school" (Nguyen Khac Vien, 2012, p. 152). Higher education was conducted in French and as a consequence, 95% of Vietnamese were considered illiterate (Nguyen Khac Vien, 2012, p. 152). As a result, since that time the nation has aimed at raising the literacy rate and at guaranteeing the quality of education (Education, 2006).

During the Vietnam War (1964-1973), while men were engaged in the war, women were supporting production, which influenced later education and women's positions (Kagawa, 2008). In 1975, after the end of the Vietnam War, the government immediately proposed a 12-year curriculum plan, and they printed 20 million textbooks in order to raise the literacy rate (Education 2006).

In the 1980s, with the Doi Moi (New Change) policy and Mo Cua (Open Door) policy, the government launched the opening to the outside world, and as a consequence, these policies exposed Vietnamese society to economic and cultural globalization (Knodel et al., 2004). In 1989, the Ministry of Education and Training changed the curriculum after implementing the nation-wide educational system. However, it was not until 1991 that the Ministry of Education and Training decided to make the first five years of primary education mandatory (JASSO, 2006). The effect of the new education policy was shown in a decrease in the dropout rate in primary education of 6.58% from the period of 1989-1990 to 1990-1994, and in a reduction in the rate of repeaters from 10.6% to 6.18% (Education 2006). At present, the Vietnam education system includes five-year mandatory primary education, four-year basic secondary school, three-year

general secondary school (high school), and higher education that includes universities, colleges and vocational tech schools (JASSO 2006).

The goal of secondary education was established in December 1998 as a system to “comprehensively develop Vietnam’s human resources, with morality, knowledge, good health, and loyal to the idea of national independence and socialism: to develop individual personality and capacity for the building and protection of the country,” (Nguyen Van Trang, 2012, p. 1). To achieve this goal, the basic principal of education is to incorporate theory into practice, to link education with production, and to collaborate with the help of family and community, nurturing students’ creativity, autonomous learning, and abilities to use their knowledge for practical purposes (Nguyen Van Trang 2012).

Vietnam has made impressive strides to implement better education. As of 1994, almost all children in the north attended the first levels of primary school, grades 1-5, while in the south where Ho Chi Minh City is located, children attended school at least to the third grade, although many did not attend beyond this grade because they needed to help support their families by selling goods on the street (Waigandt & Cox, 1994). In 2006, 96% of children aged six to eleven attended primary school, with the government expecting to see the same enrollment rate for lower (basic) secondary education in 2010 (UNICEF, 2007).

However, with regards to vocational technology schools and higher education, the quality and efficiency of education still remains a critical issue (Education, 2006). Moreover, in the case of 53 ethnic minority groups accounting for 13% of the country’s total population of 86 million people with over 100 minority languages, the primary completion rate for these ethnic minority children is only 61%, compared to 86% for the majority Kinh children, since it is hard for them to catch up with mandatory instruction in Vietnamese (GSO 2007, Thao 2010). In addition to minority groups, girls, children with disabilities, and migrants also have lower participation rates in education. UNICEF, together with the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, has helped over 1,100 village kindergartens and 1,000 primary schools improve the quality of their education (UNICEF 2007).

2. Physical Education (PE) in Vietnam

It is commonly known that among many developing African and Asian countries, such as India and Pakistan, there are poorly trained teachers for PE education and a shortage of facilities for PE instruction (Hardman 2005). Girls in local areas in those countries are discouraged to play sports because their physical appearances would become ‘unfeminine’ (Hardman, 2005). Similar sentiment was expressed in Japan in the 50s and 60s when light-skinned, feminine-looking girls were preferred over tanned, sporty-looking girls because the latter were regarded as ‘otoko masari’ or ‘manly’. “Gender inequalities based on religious/cultural grounds, limited opportunities/range of activities for girls, male-dominated or biased curricula and physical education classes and poorly qualified and uninformed teachers are evident” (Hardman, 2005, p. 4).

What about PE in Vietnam? Soccer is the most popular sport in Vietnam followed by volleyball, badminton, and wrestling (Britannica Online). In the Olympic Games, Vietnam has participated in swimming, martial arts, and boating since 1952 (Britannica Online). PE in Vietnam emphasizes team sports, such as soccer, badminton, table tennis, and basketball (Waigandt & Cox 1994).

According to a survey conducted by Mizoroke (2010) in Vietnam, there are 35 hours of PE classes for the first grade of primary school, and 70 hours for other grades. This is compared to 105 hours for grades 1-4 and 90 hours for grades 5-6 in Japan as of 2008 (Mizoroke, 2010).

2.1 Objectives of each PE event in a Vietnamese Junior High School (Hoa Hiep Junior High School, PE Syllabus 2011-

2012)

- a.) Form in lines
Objective: attention, turn counterclockwise, turn clockwise, march in place, report
Target: girls · boys (compulsory)
- b.) Exercises
Objective: do exercises (similar to Japanese stretching exercises for the keep-fit program on the radio)
Target: girls · boys (compulsory)
- c.) Short distance running (6 meters)
Objective: demonstrate leaping into motion instantaneously
Target: girls · boys (compulsory)
- d.) Long distance running
Objective: demonstrate endurance
Target: girls · boys (compulsory, but the distance is shorter for girls)
- e.) Long jump
Objective: long jump
Target: girls · boys (compulsory)
- f.) Throwing balls/shot putting
Objective: throwing a ball or the shot as far as possible
Target: girls · boys (compulsory)
- g.) High jump
Objective: high jump
Target: girls · boys (compulsory)

2.2 Objectives of each PE event in a Vietnamese Senior High School (Thanh Hoa Ministry of Education and Training, PE syllabus 2009-2010)

- a.) Review all the PE events from Junior High School
- b.) Soccer
Objective: Learn the rules and skills of soccer and play games
Target: Male and female students

(Comment from a Vietnamese student) This class is compulsory for boys and for girls it is optional. Most of the time, girls do not actually play but watch the boys play and cheer. Few high schools have a soccer pitch, therefore the number of participants is limited. Since teachers do not have experience playing soccer, students practice by themselves or learn from watching videos.

- d.) Shuttle cock (kick a shuttle cock over a net)
Objective: Learn the rules and skills
Target: Male and female students (elective)

(Comment) Because there is no indoor practice place, students cannot learn full-scale games. Students learn by themselves. Since this event is not regarded highly, it will disappear from the syllabus sooner or later.

- e.) Badminton
Objective: Learn the rules and skills and play games

Target: Male and female students (elective)
 (Comment) Since there is no indoor badminton court, they cannot have a regular badminton class. The majority of the students who take this class are female students.

d.) Swimming

Objective: Learn breaststroke and the crawl or freestyle

Target: Male and female students (elective)

(Comment) Most public schools do not have swimming pools, therefore, they cannot offer regular swimming classes. Female students also seldom choose this class partly due to shyness from wearing a swimming suit.

e.) Volleyball

Objective: Learn the rules and skills and play games

Target: Male and female students (elective)

(Comment) Since there is no indoor volleyball court, they cannot have a regular volleyball class. However tall they may be, not many male students take this class. Female students also usually just watch male students play and cheer for them.

2.3 University PE class

(Dalat University, 2008; Thang Long University, 2005)

a.) Review all the Senior High Education PE classes

b.) Table tennis (Ping-Pong)

Objective: Learn the rules and skills and play games

Target: Male and female students (elective)

(Comment) Overall, the rate of selection for this class is low. Only those who are already good at playing it take this class and since university facilities are not well equipped, students cannot practice enough.

c.) Basketball

Objective: Learn the rules and skills and play games

Target: Male students only (elective)

(Comment) Since it is a vigorous sport, female students do not participate. Also, since most teachers do not have experience playing basketball, they are not enthusiastic in teaching it.

d.) Cheerleading

Objective: Team cheerleading competition

Target: Female students only (elective)

(Comment) Each university forms a cheerleading squad but only a small number of female students take this class.

e.) Flower arrangement

Objective: Learn how to arrange flowers

Target: Male and female students (elective)

(Comment) Normally this class is mostly taken by female students who cannot take vigorous sports such as soccer, basketball and volleyball.

f.) Jumping rope

Objective: Graded on how many times students can jump rope

Target: Female students who do not select soccer, volleyball or basketball (elective)

(Comment) Because it is easy, there is no class per se. Students practice individually.

g.) Sport dance

Objective: Social dance

Target: Male and female students (elective)

(Comment) This class is becoming popular among liberal arts universities. However, only affluent students can take a class like this. It is still a high-level (economic-wise) elective course. It is not offered in general.

Though this is not limited solely to Vietnam, when government funding becomes insufficient, subjects such as PE, Health Education, Arts, and Music tend to be cancelled or dropped from the curriculum (Hardman, 2005). As for sport facilities, quite often schools in Vietnam are not equipped with school grounds and/or gymnasiums with concrete flooring, and so students take PE in courtyards (Mizoroke, 2010). As for sportswear, there is no custom of changing clothes or wearing a PE sportswear uniform, with students playing sports in regular school uniforms, and often in sandals instead of sport shoes. What is taught in PE classes is also often decided by teachers at each school as there are no official Ministry guidelines for the teaching of PE (Mizoroke, 2010).

Although Vietnam's Education Law has affirmed that the goals for secondary education are students' all-round development of their physical bodies and good health, as well as morality and knowledge, PE is progressing very slowly because of the poor educational and public sport facilities and teachers' poor training in techniques (JASSO, 2006). Time allocation also does not reach the necessary requirements, and PE classes are cancelled more regularly than other subjects (Hardman, 2005, p. 2).

One example where PE education could make a real difference in the lives of students, in promoting good health and safety, is swimming. The Mekong River in Vietnam can be deadly if children do not know how to swim, with many children from 4 to 14 years old losing their lives every day from drowning. Each day some forty children are said to die from drowning (Nettleton & Sohn, 2005). However, since almost all the schools in that district have no swimming pools, swimming lessons are offered as a part of a broader, nationwide effort by UNICEF and the Vietnamese government to protect children, with teachers guiding students on how to swim in lakes and rivers, how to create a simple safety net while swimming, and by teaching children a 'child-safe school' concept through 'injury-prevention education' (Nettleton & Sohn 2005).

According to Waigandt & Cox (1994), "teacher training in Vietnam takes one and one-half years after secondary school in one of the teacher training colleges in Hanoi, Danang, Hue, or Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). Only students who do very well on national examinations are accepted to teacher training." Since they have to pass national examinations, PE teachers get paid fairly well (\$200 per month in 2012) compared to Math or Art teachers, though they earn less than English teachers. Interview data obtained for this study with Vietnamese graduate students revealed that PE is one of the subjects required for a teaching certificate, however, not many want to become PE teachers because they cannot earn extra money from teaching PE after school, like language teachers do (interviews conducted April 2012). Since they have to pass such difficult national examinations to become teachers, in reality they look for IT-related jobs.

3. Vietnamese Women and Sports

3.1 Promoting international sports and female players

Through Doi Moi (New Change) policy and Mo Cua (Open Door) policy, many features of family life and the role of women have changed in conjunction with Vietnam's economy and society and the impact of social globalization (Knodel et al., 2004). Vietnamese women have played a central role in independence efforts, and from the initial period of socialist state development, gender equality has been one

of the main slogans. The goal of equalizing relations between men and women extended into family life, but studies by Knodel and others (2004) have found that despite over a half century of socialist policies emphasizing gender equality, gender division within the household, such as child-rearing, housekeeping, and household management, appear to have changed little.

In many countries, sports and exercise are promoted to both the general public as well as top athletes (Ono, 2012). Such campaigns promote a variety of goals, such as keeping healthy, decreasing medical expenses, sending the message that 'sports will make a country better', and 'sports will empower women and do good for women' (Ono, 2012).

Vietnam's first female Judo athlete, Cao Ngoc Phuong Trinh, participated in the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, followed by Tran Hieu Ngan, who won Vietnam's first Olympic medal at the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Women's Tae Kwon Do (Britannica Online Encyclopedia, 2012). Vietnam's women's team has been a formidable competitor at the Asia Games in sepak takraw, a volleyball-like sport (Britannica Online Encyclopedia, 2012). However, the number of total participants in the games, especially women participants, continues to be a small number, especially in comparison to the number from Japan.

3.2 PE for Women

As mentioned earlier, it has been often reported that in many parts of the world, and especially in parts of Asia, girls are discouraged from participating in PE and improving their physical strength (Hardman 2005). "Girls and boys had PE once a week in elementary and junior high school. In high schools, boys play soccer, do long jump and the pole vault, but girls take Home Economics instead of PE", said Mr. Tah in an interview. "Or while boys are playing soccer or volleyball in high school PE, girls watch them play and cheer for them".

In general, girls don't have the same opportunities to gain physical strength and conditioning because there are not many required PE classes for girls, and for elective classes, they tend to choose less vigorous PE classes (Dalat University, 2008). Moreover, not many sport competitions are held every year and as a consequence, there are very few opportunities for sport exchanges between educational institutions (Hanoi University of Science and Technology, 1992 & 2008). There is no system of school sports clubs from junior high to universities, which means there are fewer opportunities for students to participate in sports and only a very limited number of female students engage in playing sports (Dalat University, 2008). Also, another impact factor is that because almost all the PE teachers are male, they do not regard female PE classes as important (Kim Ngan, 2012; Tue Nguyen 2011).

To summarize, Vietnam's educational institutions are lacking in adequate sport facilities, making it difficult to provide the full range and quantity of PE classes, compounded by the fact that PE for women is treated very lightly, where it is considered at all.

4. Problems and Issues of Vietnam's PE system

Vietnamese people do not customarily think of gaining physical strength since they are small, and they continue to think that way when they take higher education, and there is no physical strength test to measure their physical strength (Nguyen Toan & Nguyen Sy Ha, 2004; Thang Long University, 2005). Below are ten salient problems and issues.

1. PE facilities are inadequate. Due to the lack of in-door gyms, swimming pools, and track and field facilities, students are unable to participate in actual games and/or practice (HUY THO 2006). Budget for PE is so inadequate that they cannot provide enough equipment, uniforms, and equipment to guarantee the quality of PE (Hanoi University of Science and Technology, 1992 & 2008).
2. Teaching methods and materials are outdated, and no method to introduce new techniques has been decided (Huy Tho, 2006; Tue Nguyen, 2011). The pole vault provides a relevant example. Although technique has progressed, PE teachers teach in the same techniques every year. Students are demotivated because they do not have a chance to learn new techniques (Huy Tho, 2006; Tue Nguyen, 2011).
3. There is no consistent national syllabus, and each school and university makes its own syllabus. Schools offer PE classes depending on the equipment they have. Moreover, there is no consensus as to a national standard and levels for junior, senior high school, and university (Dalat University, 2008; Thang Long University 2005).
4. There are few college students who want to be PE teachers as PE is not a respected occupation for college graduates. Therefore, in junior and senior high schools, PE classes are often cancelled (Dalat University, 2008).
5. Though the number of PE classes is limited, teachers try to cover as many sports as possible, which burdens students because class time is spent on explanation of rules. As a consequence, in many PE classes, students are tested not on physical skills but on written examinations, and this burdens students with additional examinations and decreases the importance of PE (BAI TAM, 2012; HUY THO 2006; Dalat University, 2008).
6. Despite the number of classes listed, not all the classes are actually offered. It is PE teachers who decide which PE classes are taught (Kim Ngan, 2012; Tue Nguyen).
7. In PE classes, all the students are taught in the same way. There is no system to develop the abilities of talented students, which consequently demotivates students. For example, those who can swim fast and well cannot necessarily take a swimming lesson, and might have to take soccer instead. Budget for human resources is less than other academic subjects (Kim Ngan 2012, Tue Nguyen, 2011).
8. Many accidents occur in PE classes due to a lack of attention to safety. Since health checkups are not conducted, schools do not have an understanding of students' health conditions. Therefore, if some unexpected changes happen to students, they cannot deal with it. Since schools cannot manage control over students' health, students must take care of themselves (Dalat University, 2008). If students play sports vigorously all of a sudden, their health may deteriorate, and in some worst cases, they die from it (Binh B. Chu 2003).
9. Many students complain of a lack of interesting teaching methods. Many think PE classes are 'boring', 'useless', and 'sleepy'. (Kim Ngan 2012; Tue Nguyen, 2011). One of the reasons is that the same PE events are repeated from junior high school to university, and no new events are introduced. Many classes consist of mainly rote learning, or the class is unstructured, and the students feel like it is 'killing time', and that they can do anything they like after roll is called (Huy Tho, 2006).
10. Evaluation of students in PE classes is not appropriately conducted. Students' health conditions and gender differences are not considered, and the rate of make-up test is more than they can handle (Nguyen Toan & Nguyen Sy Ha, 2004).

The Vietnam Ministry of Culture and Science commented that reformation of PE in Vietnam is progressing, but since each university has a limited budget, improvement of the present situation has proven to be difficult.

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Previous studies have shown that PE in Vietnam is not regarded as important, female physical strengthening is not valued, and many students do not consider PE enjoyable. In this questionnaire, we investigated whether these findings would recur.

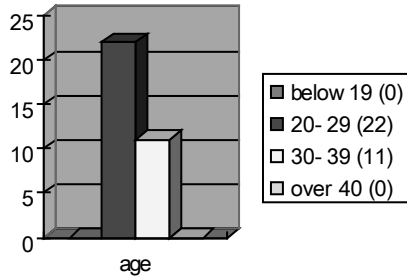
The questions were created and examined by the two researchers and a graduate student who agreed to assist this research (See Appendix 1). The questionnaire was first created in Japanese, then translated to Vietnamese, and then checked for accuracy by a Vietnamese colleague of the graduate student (See Appendix 2). Participants include Vietnamese students who are studying in Japan, Vietnamese students who are studying abroad other than Japan, and Vietnamese in Vietnam.

The graduate student collected data through three Internet methods: Mailing list on Tokyo Institute of Technology Mailing List, Yahoo Message Group, and Facebook. The participants answered in Vietnamese, and later the responses were translated into Japanese, and then into English.

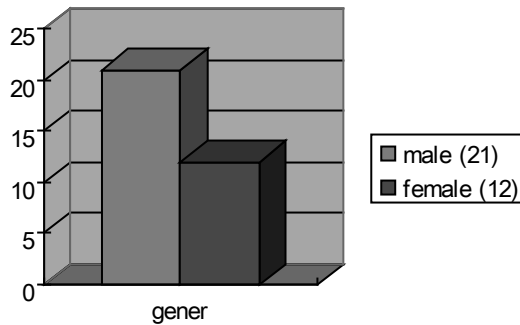
RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1: 33 participants background information

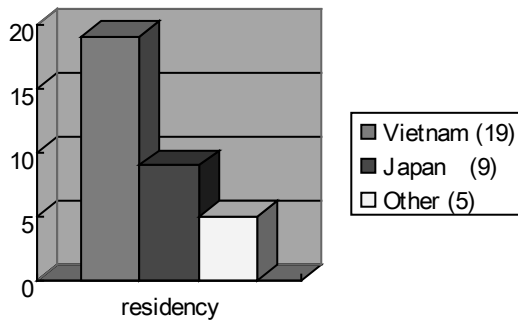
(1) Age



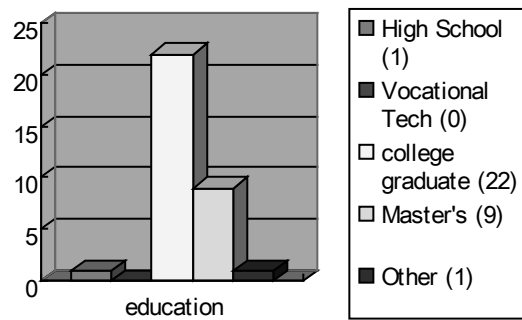
(2) Gender



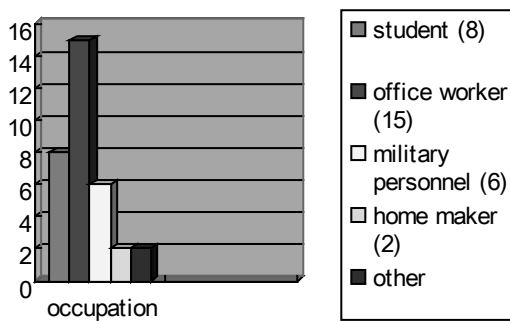
(3) Present residency Other: Residences include U.S., and U.K.



(4) Educational background (33 participants) Other: Includes current students.



(5) Occupation Other: Includes IT developer and sales.



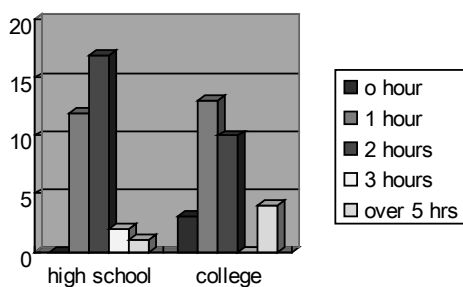
Part 2 (About PE education in Vietnam)

(1) When you were in elementary school, did you go to a sport center or a gym to practice swimming or soccer?

	No (%) N=33
Yes	10 (30%)
No	0 (0%)
No answer	

Those who answered yes, what did you learn and how long?
 Swimming (two months, summer holiday every year, one year)
 Soccer (over a year, one year)
 Martial arts (two years, one year)
 Shooting (one year)

(2) How many hours of PE did you have a week in high school and in college?



In college, four participants answered as 5 hours (1), 6 hours (1), 7 hours (1) and 15 hours (1). They may have been in military training college.

(3) Did you enjoy your PE class?

	No (%) N=33
Enjoyed very much	1 (3%)
Enjoyed it	22 (67)
Not so enjoyable	7 (21)
Not at all	2 (6)

(4) Those who answered 'enjoyed very much' and 'enjoyed', please choose two major reasons (descending order).

	No (%) N=33
Enjoyed exercising (moving my body)	15 (83%)
I like sports	10 (56)
I liked certain professional player	2 (11)
Wanted to be popular with opposite sex	0
Teachers were enthusiastic	0

(5) Those who answered 'not enjoyable' 'didn't enjoy at all', please choose two major reason.

	No (%) N=33
Could not find a sport I wanted to do	4 (44 %)
It was only lectures	4 (44)
Did not like to exercise (move my body)	3 (33)
Equipment was not adequate	2 (22)
Teachers were not enthusiastic	0

(6) Have you ever wanted to be a PE teacher?

	No (%) N=33
Yes	1 (3 %)
No	32 (97)

Reasons for 'Yes': to become healthy

Reasons for 'No':

	No N=33
Does not like PE or sports	7
PE teachers are poor, their salary is low	5
Prefer different occupations to teaching	4
Do not have physical strength or abilities	4
PE teaching is boring	3
Not appropriate	2
Why should I become a PE teacher?	1

(7) Have you ever wanted to become a (professional) sport player?

	No (%) N=33
Yes	2 (6%)
No	30 (91)

Those who said 'Yes', what are the reasons?

- Soccer player because I like soccer.
- Swimmer because I cannot swim.

(8) Do you think sport will connect with Vietnamese women's independence and economic advancement?

Reasons why they do not think so (female 3, male 5)	
Sport is just to keep our physical strength.	(M in Japan)
If there are any women at all, it must be few.	(M in Vietnam)
Sports and economic advancement are not related. Women do not need economic power because families are more important for them.	(M in Vietnam)
Don't agree. Sports makes female strong which eventually leads to healthy and economic steady life.	(F in Vietnam)
Sport makes female healthy but it does not relate to their independence nor economic advancement.	(F in Vietnam)
Just to keep women healthy, not related to economic power.	(M in Japan)
Sport keeps women healthy. It can help decrease stress.	(F in Vietnam)

Reasons for 'Yes' and 'Maybe Yes'.	
Vietnamese do not play sports recently. Since we use computer all the time, it's not healthy. If we play sports, we become healthier and can work better, and eventually it will lead to economic advancement.	(M in Vietnam)
Sport is good for health and reduces stress. It will affect us positively in our life and jobs. Independence and economic advancement is only one effects of sport.	(F in Vietnam)
When we play sports, we can overcome our weakness and can exceed our present abilities, which eventually leads to independence and economic power.	(M in Vietnam).
We do not actually believe it but sport make us healthy. If we are healthy, we can earn money for both men and women.	(M. F. in other countries, M in Japan, M in Vietnam)
If women have abilities in sports, they can become players and participate in national and international competitions, which makes them more confident. They can earn much money and they can be a coach after they retire. Therefore, sports can help women independent socially and economically.	(M in Vietnam)

DISCUSSION

The results of the questionnaire revealed that 97% of 33 participants were college graduates. Of the 33, six were the military personnel. In Vietnam, many military personnel are sent to study overseas, to Japan or other countries, and many of them work at military-operated companies. Therefore, it may have been difficult for them to choose only one occupation from the list.

For question (1) in part 2, 'When you were in elementary school, did you go to a sport center or a gym to practice swimming?' 10 participants (30%) said Yes. This does not match the previous research that revealed that 'Vietnamese people do not customarily think of gaining physical strength ever since they are small and they continue to think that way when they take higher education' (Nguyen Toan & Nguyen Sy Ha, 2004). According to survey by GABA (2010) in Japan, among extracurricular lessons, swimming is most popular among elementary schools students, which accounts for 22.1%. Though the survey number is much smaller, Vietnamese participants took swimming lessons most though the periods were shorter. For question (3) 'Did you enjoy your PE class?', unlike previous research saying many did not find PE class fun, the questionnaire result showed that 23 (70%) out of 33 participants answered 'very fun' and 'fun', and the reasons included 'like to move (my) body' (83%) and 'like sports' (56%). One could suppose that many of the participants had actual PE classes instead of just PE lectures. Nine out of 33 participants answered 'PE class was not so fun' or 'not fun at all' and gave a reason as 'only lectures', 'PE equipment was not adequate'. These results match the previous research.

Question (6) asked whether they wanted to be a PE teacher. Almost all of them said 'No' and the reasons they gave match the previous research, including 'PE teachers do not make enough money' and 'boring'.

For question (7) 'Have you ever wanted to become a (professional) sport player?' almost all the participants said 'No'. In Japan, through Japanese baseball, soccer or golf players who are playing actively overseas, we get the idea or image that sport is connected to economic gain and female players to independence. For example, in surveys asking Japanese elementary and junior high school students what they want to do for their future occupation, the No. 1 answer is 'baseball player', and No. 2 is 'soccer player' (Benesse, 2007). However, to this question, 91% of the Vietnamese respondents in this questionnaire said 'No'. In Vietnam, as it is often remarked that PE teachers do not make enough money, and that the idea that sport is related to economic gain or lifelong occupation is not widely accepted yet.

Finally, for question (8), 'Do you think sport will connect with Vietnamese women's independence and economic advancement?', regardless of gender or the present residency, many answered sports is important for keeping healthy and physical strength. Almost all said 'it is not directly connected to economic gain'.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explored Vietnam's physical education, especially the relationship between women and PE from the previous studies, through the comments gathered through the interview data and questionnaire data. Vietnam has long endured intrusions by China and France, and the Vietnam War caused the deterioration of safety and health of the people. Due to the Doi Moi policy in 1980s, Vietnam has excelled tremendously both economically and educationally. However, in the area of physical education, there is much room for improvement including sports facilities, teaching methods, and the quality of PE teachers. Especially for female physical education, much needs to be improved including the philosophy behind it.

When she was invited to coach the Vietnam karate national team, the author Mimura found that both male and female players of karate were highly capable. She was impressed that young junior players as well as the members on the national team were trying their best to follow her advice. For females in Vietnam, as long as they have access to adequate facilities and teachers, they have a chance to be good at sports, enough to go to the Olympics. If they are active in the Olympics and other international competitions, the nation's overall awareness of sports will be raised and eventually more women will enjoy sports not only for health reasons but also for economic reasons.

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