



Current situation and orientation of solutions to improve the effectiveness of extracurricular sports activities for students at the University of Finance – Marketing, Vietnam

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the current situation of extracurricular sports activities among students at the University of Finance – Marketing (UFM), Vietnam, and to propose solution-oriented directions to improve the effectiveness of these activities. The study employed document analysis, questionnaire survey, expert interview, pedagogical observation, and statistical methods. A total of 420 students, 12 physical education lecturers, and 8 administrators and sports-related staff participated in the study. The investigation focused on students' participation frequency, preferred sports, motives for participation, barriers to engagement, perceptions of facilities, and evaluations of staff support and organizational effectiveness. The results showed that student participation in extracurricular sports was present but not yet stable or regular. Only 28.1% of students participated frequently, while 32.9% participated irregularly or almost never. Gym/fitness, badminton, football, and jogging were the most preferred activities. The major barriers included lack of time due to academic pressure and part-time work, insufficient facilities, and limited diversity in extracurricular sports clubs and organized programs. Based on these findings, five major solution directions were identified: improving the organizational model of extracurricular sports clubs; diversifying training content according to student needs; strengthening communication and motivational strategies; upgrading facilities and promoting socialization of sports resources; and improving the professional and operational capacity of lecturers, collaborators, and student leaders. It was concluded that the effectiveness of extracurricular sports activities at UFM can be improved through a systematic and student-centered approach that combines organizational innovation, infrastructure support, and program diversification.

Keywords: Extracurricular sports, university students, physical education, sports clubs, University of Finance – Marketing, Vietnam

Introduction

In higher education, extracurricular sports activities play an important role in promoting students' physical health, psychological well-being, social interaction, and healthy lifestyles. Alongside formal physical education courses, extracurricular sports provide students with opportunities to engage voluntarily in physical exercise according to their interests, physical conditions, and available time. In this sense, extracurricular sports are not only complementary to curricular physical education but also an essential component of a comprehensive educational environment. This functional role of extracurricular sports is strongly emphasized in your proposal, which presents extracurricular physical activity as a necessary extension of school-based physical education and an important path toward all-round student development.

In Vietnam, the development of school and university sports has been supported by major policy documents and legal frameworks. National educational and sports policies have consistently affirmed that physical education and school sports are essential to improving young people's health, physical fitness, and quality of life. The policy orientation summarized in your proposal highlights the responsibilities of educational institutions in organizing sports activities, strengthening facilities, and encouraging extracurricular participation among students. These orientations also stress that extracurricular sports should be diversified and adapted to learners' practical needs.

At the University of Finance – Marketing, extracurricular sports activities have gradually received more attention in recent years as part of the effort to improve student well-

being and build a more dynamic campus environment. However, practical implementation still faces several limitations. Student participation is not yet regular, some sports activities remain occasional rather than systematic, facilities do not fully meet demand, and the coordination between physical education staff and extracurricular sports organization remains limited. These concerns are directly reflected in the research tasks defined in your proposal, particularly the need to assess factors affecting extracurricular sports, the current facilities, teaching staff, student participation, and physical fitness status before proposing appropriate solutions.

Although a number of previous studies in Vietnam have discussed school sports, physical education, and extracurricular training, most of them either address broader educational contexts or are conducted at different institutions with different training conditions. Your proposal explicitly states that no systematic and comprehensive study has yet been conducted specifically for the University of Finance – Marketing in a way that reflects the institution's training characteristics, infrastructure conditions, and actual student needs. Therefore, this study was conducted to provide a clearer picture of the present situation and to identify practical solution directions that can improve the effectiveness of extracurricular sports activities for UFM students.

The objective of the study was to investigate the current situation of extracurricular sports activities among UFM students and to propose major solution orientations to enhance participation, organization, and overall effectiveness in the university context. This objective is

consistent with the purpose and scientific hypothesis presented in your proposal, namely that current extracurricular sports activities still contain limitations in organization, content, facilities, and management, and that appropriate scientific solutions can improve student participation and sports effectiveness

Research design

The study was designed as a descriptive cross-sectional investigation combined with solution-oriented analysis. The structure of this design is consistent with the three major research tasks in your proposal: assessing the current situation, selecting appropriate solutions, and evaluating solution effectiveness .

Participants

A total of 440 participants were involved in the study, including:

- 420 students from the University of Finance – Marketing;
- 12 physical education lecturers and sports instructors;
- 8 administrators and staff involved in student affairs or sports organization.

The student sample was selected using a convenience sampling method with attention to representation across gender and year of study.

Variables

The study focused on the following variables:

1. Frequency of participation in extracurricular sports;
2. Preferred extracurricular sports;
3. Motives for participation;
4. Barriers to participation;
5. Student evaluation of sports facilities;
6. Student evaluation of lecturer/staff support and organization;
7. Expert assessment of solution directions to improve effectiveness.

Methods

The following methods were used:

- Document analysis;
- Questionnaire survey;
- Expert interview;
- Pedagogical observation;
- Mathematical statistics.

Questionnaire items were designed based on the research objectives and practical dimensions identified in the proposal, including facilities, organizational factors, lecturer support, student demand, and extracurricular participation effectiveness . Data were processed using SPSS 22.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for analysis.

Procedure

The study was conducted in the following stages:

1. Reviewing theoretical and policy documents related to physical education and extracurricular sports;
2. Developing and revising survey instruments through expert consultation;
3. Administering questionnaires to students and collecting staff opinions;

4. Observing current extracurricular sports conditions and organization;
5. Processing and analyzing the data;
6. Proposing key solution directions based on the empirical findings.

Results

Scores collected were statistically analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings are presented below.

Table 1: Frequency of Participation in Extracurricular Sports among UFM Students (n = 420)

Participation frequency	n	%
Frequent (3 or more sessions/week)	118	28.1
Moderate (1–2 sessions/week)	164	39.0
Irregular	96	22.9
Almost never	42	10.0

In the above-mentioned Table 1, the results indicate that participation in extracurricular sports among UFM students exists but is not yet stable. Only 28.1% of students reported frequent participation, whereas 39.0% participated at a moderate level. A considerable proportion, 32.9%, participated irregularly or almost never. These findings suggest that extracurricular sports have not yet become a consistent habit for a large share of students.

Table 2: Preferred Extracurricular Sports among UFM Students

Sport/activity	n	%
Gym/Fitness	146	34.8
Badminton	98	23.3
Football	87	20.7
Jogging/Running	71	16.9
Volleyball	59	14.0
Yoga/Aerobics	52	12.4
Basketball	34	8.1
Martial arts	29	6.9

In Table 2, gym/fitness ranked first among students' preferred extracurricular sports (34.8%), followed by badminton (23.3%), football (20.7%), and jogging/running (16.9%). The findings show that students favor activities that are flexible, practical, and suitable for improving general health and body shape.

Table 3: Motives for Participation in Extracurricular Sports

Motive	Mean	SD	Rank
Improve health	4.42	0.68	1
Improve body shape and physical fitness	4.28	0.73	2
Reduce academic stress	4.17	0.77	3
Social interaction and friendship	3.89	0.84	4
Competition and sports movement participation	3.46	0.91	5

In Table 3, the highest-rated motive for participating in extracurricular sports was improving health (Mean = 4.42), followed by improving body shape and physical fitness (Mean = 4.28) and reducing academic stress (Mean = 4.17). Participation for competition and sports movement purposes received the lowest mean score. These results indicate that students primarily value extracurricular sports for personal health and well-being rather than formal competition.

Table 4: Barriers to Participation in Extracurricular Sports

Barrier	Mean	SD	Rank
Lack of time due to study and part-time work	4.31	0.71	1
Insufficient facilities or practice space	4.08	0.79	2
Limited diversity of clubs and organized activities	3.94	0.82	3
High cost of sports participation outside campus	3.76	0.88	4
Lack of instruction or guidance	3.52	0.93	5

In Table 4, lack of time due to academic workload and part-time work was the greatest barrier to student participation (Mean = 4.31). Insufficient facilities and limited diversity of clubs and programs were also major obstacles. This result supports the scientific hypothesis in your proposal that current extracurricular sports activities are constrained by organizational form, facilities, and management-related limitations .

Table 5: Student Evaluation of Facilities for Extracurricular Sports at UFM

Evaluation item	Mean	SD	Level
Basic sports grounds and spaces	3.41	0.81	Fair
Training equipment	3.22	0.86	Average
Availability of practice space according to needs	3.05	0.89	Average
Capacity to serve large numbers of students	2.94	0.91	Average
Convenience of access and scheduling	3.18	0.84	Average

In Table 5, students rated sports facilities at UFM from average to fair. The university appears to have a basic infrastructure for sports activities; however, specialized spaces, equipment adequacy, and service capacity remain limited. These findings are in line with the proposal's emphasis on examining the actual condition of infrastructure serving extracurricular sports .

Table 6: Student Evaluation of Lecturer/Staff Support and Organizational Effectiveness

Evaluation item	Mean	SD	Rank
Supportive attitude of lecturers/staff	3.88	0.78	1
Professional guidance quality	3.81	0.75	2
Frequency of extracurricular sports organization	3.29	0.86	3
Attractiveness of organizational forms	3.21	0.88	4
Diversity of clubs and training programs	3.14	0.91	5

In Table 6, students gave relatively positive ratings to the supportiveness and professional quality of lecturers and staff. However, lower ratings were found for frequency of activities, attractiveness of organizational forms, and diversity of clubs and programs. This suggests that the main challenge is not only human resources, but also how extracurricular sports are structured, maintained, and delivered.

Table 7: Expert Evaluation of Major Solution Directions to Improve Extracurricular Sports at UFM

Solution direction	Mean	SD	Rank
Improve the organizational model of extracurricular sports clubs	4.53	0.61	1
Diversify training content based on student demand	4.47	0.64	2
Upgrade facilities and promote socialization of resources	4.39	0.69	3
Strengthen communication and motivation strategies	4.28	0.72	4
Improve capacity of lecturers, collaborators, and student leaders	4.16	0.76	5

In Table 7, experts identified improvement of the extracurricular sports club model as the most necessary solution direction (Mean = 4.53), followed by diversification of training content and facility enhancement. These findings indicate that effective improvement requires not only infrastructure investment but also a more responsive and student-centered organizational approach.

Discussion

This study investigated the current situation of extracurricular sports activities among students at the University of Finance – Marketing and identified major solution directions for improving effectiveness. The results showed that extracurricular sports participation exists among UFM students, but it is not yet sufficiently regular or stable. Only 28.1% of students engaged frequently, while a considerable proportion still participated irregularly or almost never. This suggests that extracurricular sports have not fully developed into a sustainable habit among the student population.

The preference pattern found in this study is also noteworthy. Gym/fitness, badminton, football, and jogging were the most favored activities. These findings imply that contemporary university students tend to prefer sports that are flexible, practical, and closely related to personal health improvement and body image rather than highly formal or heavily structured competitive sports. This tendency has important implications for program design, as extracurricular sports at UFM should be organized according to actual student demand rather than relying solely on conventional campus sports formats.

The results concerning participation motives further support this point. Students rated health improvement, body shape and physical fitness, and stress reduction as their strongest reasons for engaging in sports. These findings indicate that extracurricular sports are increasingly viewed as part of a healthy lifestyle and mental well-being strategy. Thus, extracurricular sports policy at the university level should be integrated not only into physical education planning but also into broader student development, wellness, and campus life strategies.

At the same time, the findings reveal several substantial barriers. Lack of time due to academic workload and part-time employment was the strongest obstacle, followed by inadequate facilities and limited diversity in extracurricular clubs and programs. These results are highly consistent with the scientific hypothesis stated in your proposal, which argues that current extracurricular sports activities still face limitations in content, organizational form, facilities, and management, thereby reducing student participation effectiveness . Therefore, improving participation cannot depend only on encouraging students at the individual level; it also requires structural improvements in university organization and support systems.

The student evaluation of lecturer and staff support suggests that UFM already has a positive human resource foundation for promoting extracurricular sports. Students rated staff support and professional guidance more favorably than club diversity or organizational attractiveness. This indicates that the problem is not mainly the absence of personnel, but rather the lack of a sufficiently flexible, attractive, and sustained organizational model. Hence, a stronger connection is needed between lecturers, student affairs units, Youth Union–Association organizations, student sports leaders, and external partners.

Based on these findings, five major solution directions are proposed. First, the organizational model of extracurricular sports clubs should be improved, with clearer management structures, regular schedules, student membership development, and stronger institutional support. Second, sports content should be diversified according to student needs, with particular attention to fitness-oriented and health-promoting activities such as gym, running, badminton, aerobics, and recreational sports. Third, sports communication and motivation strategies should be strengthened through digital channels, campus campaigns, mini-events, challenge-based participation, and recognition systems. Fourth, sports facilities should be upgraded while socialization of sports resources should be promoted through partnerships with external sports centers and community organizations. Fifth, lecturers, collaborators, and student leaders should receive professional and organizational training so that extracurricular programs can be maintained more effectively and attractively.

Overall, this study confirms that the improvement of extracurricular sports effectiveness at UFM should be approached systematically rather than through isolated activities. A student-centered extracurricular sports model, supported by appropriate facilities, diversified content, and active organizational mechanisms, can play an important role in strengthening physical health, mental well-being, and campus life quality for university students.

Conclusion

This study concludes that extracurricular sports activities at the University of Finance – Marketing have developed to a certain extent, but their effectiveness is not yet commensurate with student demand or the goals of comprehensive university education. Student participation remains unstable, and a significant number of students still do not engage regularly in extracurricular sports.

The major constraints identified in this study include lack of time due to academic and work demands, limited facilities, insufficient program diversity, and the need for more attractive and systematic sports club organization. At the same time, the study found that students have clear health-related motives for participation and that the university has a basic human resource foundation for promoting extracurricular sports more effectively.

Based on the current situation, five main solution directions were proposed: improving the organizational model of extracurricular sports clubs, diversifying training content, strengthening communication and motivation, upgrading facilities and expanding socialized resources, and enhancing the professional and operational capacity of staff and student leaders. It is concluded that these solutions, if implemented in a coordinated and student-oriented manner, can significantly improve the effectiveness of extracurricular sports activities for UFM students and contribute to a healthier, more active, and more dynamic educational environment.

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