OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Advances in Sports and Physical Education
Abbreviated Key Title: J Adv Sport Phys Edu
ISSN 2616-8642 (Print) |ISSN 2617-3905 (Online)
Scholars Middle East Publishers, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Journal homepage: https://saudijournals.com

Original Research Article

Determinants, Challenges, and Reluctance Affecting the Quality of Training for Non-Physical Education Majors

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.36348/jaspe.2025.v08i03.004 | **Received:** 15.03.2025 | **Accepted:** 22.04.2025 | **Published:** 24.04.2025

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Abstract

This study investigates the multifaceted factors influencing the quality of training for non-physical education majors in the field of physical education. By employing a mixed-methods research design that integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the research examines internal and external determinants, including curriculum misalignment, inadequate facilities, outdated teaching methodologies, and student as well as lecturer attitudes. Drawing upon established theories such as Self-Determination Theory [1] and Constructivist Learning Theory, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and barriers that hinder effective training outcomes. The findings reveal that discrepancies between institutional expectations and practical needs, along with limited resource allocation and motivational deficits, significantly impact the overall quality of education. Based on these insights, the paper proposes targeted strategies to enhance teaching practices, optimize learning environments, and foster intrinsic motivation among students, thereby contributing to a more effective and equitable educational framework.

Keywords: Physical Education, Quality of Training, Non-Physical Education Majors, Influencing Factors, Training Challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid globalization and the imperative to cultivate well-rounded human resources, the quality of higher education has emerged as a pivotal determinant of sustainable development. Within this broad panorama, physical education (PE) for non-specialist majors occupies a unique position: while its contributions to health, well-being, and holistic development are widely acknowledged, numerous barriers impede its effective delivery. Indeed, discrepancies between curricular design and the evolving requirements of contemporary society have created a chasm that undermines both the acquisition of practical skills and the internalization of theoretical principles among non-PE students.

One of the foremost challenges lies in curricular misalignment. Traditional syllabi often emphasize theoretical constructs at the expense of experiential learning, resulting in content that fails to resonate with students' real-world needs. This incongruence is exacerbated by outdated pedagogical approaches, which rely heavily on lecture-based transmission rather than learner-centered engagement. As a result, students frequently perceive PE courses as perfunctory or irrelevant, leading to diminished participation and attenuated learning outcomes.

Physical infrastructure and resource allocation further compound these pedagogical shortcomings. In many institutions, gymnasia, specialized equipment, and safe practice spaces remain insufficient or obsolete. Such deficiencies not only constrain the scope of practical instruction but also signal an institutional undervaluation of PE, thereby eroding student motivation and instructor efficacy alike. Without adequate facilities, even the most innovative teaching strategies are hindered by an inability to provide authentic, hands-on experiences that bridge theory and practice.

Attitudinal factors among both students and faculty play an equally critical role. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, it is well-established that intrinsic motivation—fueled by autonomy, competence, and relatedness—is essential to sustained engagement and deep learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, when

course structures and classroom environments fail to nurture these psychological needs, learners may experience "reluctance"—a phenomenon characterized by reduced confidence and a reluctance to participate actively. Similarly, instructors constrained by prescriptive curricula and limited professional development opportunities may default to didactic methods, further stifling creativity and responsiveness in the PE classroom.

Theoretical perspectives from Constructivist Learning Theory offer additional insights into these dynamics. Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978) argue that knowledge is constructed through meaningful interaction with the environment and social negotiation. In the absence of structured, scaffolded experiences that allow non-specialist students to apply concepts in authentic contexts, the internalization of PE principles remains superficial and transient. This gap between abstraction and application not only undermines skill development but also diminishes learners' perceived relevance of the discipline.

Externally, institutional policies and organizational culture exert a powerful influence. Transparent, supportive policies that prioritize continuous improvement in teaching methodologies and allocate resources strategically create fertile ground for innovation. Conversely, opaque governance structures and risk-averse cultures can entrench stagnant practices, perpetuating a cycle of underinvestment and low morale among stakeholders. The alignment of policy objectives with ground-level realities is therefore indispensable for fostering an educational climate in which PE can flourish as an integral component of holistic student development.

Despite a growing body of research underscoring these factors, empirical investigations that integrate both quantitative and qualitative methodologies remain limited, particularly within the Vietnamese higher education context. To address this lacuna, the present study adopts a mixed-methods design to examine the interplay of internal determinants (e.g., student motivation, lecturer attitudes) and external conditions (e.g., curriculum coherence, facility adequacy, policy support) in shaping the quality of PE training for non-specialist majors. By administering structured surveys to a representative cohort of students and conducting in-depth interviews with faculty and administrators, this research seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which these factors converge to influence educational outcomes.

In so doing, the study aims to generate actionable insights that inform the development of integrated strategies—encompassing pedagogical innovation, infrastructure enhancement, and policy reform—to elevate the efficacy and equity of PE training. Ultimately, by bridging theoretical frameworks and empirical observations, the research aspires to contribute to a more adaptive and learner-centered paradigm of physical education, one that empowers non-specialist students to engage meaningfully with physical activity and its lifelong benefits.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Fundamental Concepts and the Importance of Training Quality

Training quality is defined as the extent to which educational standards are met, encompassing the development of students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and comprehensive competencies (Schiefele, 1991). For non–physical education majors, training quality depends not only on theoretical content but also on the meaningful application of practical skills within the physical education context. The misalignment between theory and practice has created a substantial gap, negatively impacting both learning outcomes and the capacity to transfer knowledge into real-world settings (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

2.2 Factors Influencing Training Quality

Factors affecting training quality can be categorized as intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic factors include students' learning motivation, interest, and attitudes, as well as instructors' professional competence and teaching styles. According to Self-Determination Theory, students' intrinsic motivation is driven by needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence; when these needs are not satisfied, students tend to exhibit low motivation and engagement in learning activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Extrinsic factors encompass the learning environment, physical infrastructure, and institutional support. For instance, Hidi and Renninger (2006) demonstrated that limitations in facilities and financial resources can diminish training effectiveness, particularly in resource-constrained institutions. Moreover, organizational culture and the broader learning environment play a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes and learning approaches (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

2.3 The Role of Teaching Methodologies in Physical Education

Contemporary, active-learning–oriented pedagogies that emphasize experiential engagement are critical for effective knowledge acquisition in physical education (Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2010). A student-centered approach not only enhances participation but also fosters the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Numerous studies have affirmed that integrating information technology into instruction and practice creates a flexible, innovative learning environment that aligns with the needs of modern learners (Coe, Pivarnik, Womack, Reeves, & Malina, 2006).

2.4 Related Learning Theories

In addition to Self-Determination Theory, Constructivist Learning Theory provides a vital framework for understanding the learning process. Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978) argue that learning is not a mere transmission of information but rather the construction of understanding through concrete experiences and social interaction. Non-PE majors often struggle to bridge theoretical concepts and practice due to a lack of structured experiential opportunities, which undermines both learning effectiveness and the practical application of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.5 Psychology and Motivation in Learning

Students' learning motivation is recognized as a crucial factor across all educational processes. When needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence are fulfilled, students develop strong intrinsic motivation, leading to enhanced academic performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, for non–physical education majors, a deficit of inspiration and a conflict between personal goals and academic requirements can give rise to "reluctance"—a state characterized by diminished confidence and participation. These psychological barriers must be identified and addressed through targeted interventions (Schiefele, 1991).

2.6 The Relationship between Facilities and Training Effectiveness

Modern facilities are essential to creating an effective learning environment. In physical education, equipment, training spaces, and learning aids play decisive roles in training quality. Fredricks *et al*., (2004) found that investment in physical resources not only improves practical proficiency but also motivates students to engage more deeply in learning activities. Nevertheless, in many universities—especially those without specialized PE programs—resource constraints often lead to insufficient equipment for effective teaching and practice (Fredricks *et al*., 2004).

2.7 The Role of Policy and Organizational Culture

Institutional policies and organizational culture are also influential. Clear, transparent policies that support professional development enable instructors to adopt modern teaching methods. Concurrently, an open, innovation-driven culture helps alleviate students' reluctance and fosters a positive learning atmosphere. Hidi and Renninger (2006) emphasize that effective interaction among all stakeholders in the educational system is a key determinant of training success (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

2.8 Synthesis and Proposed Theoretical Framework

Based on the theories and research presented, a comprehensive theoretical framework can be constructed to explain the influences on training quality for non–physical education majors. This framework comprises:

Personal Factors: Motivation, attitudes, and learning experiences;
Environmental Factors: Physical infrastructure, policy support, and organizational culture;
Pedagogical Factors: Traditional versus modern methods, integration of technology, and curricular flexibility.

The interrelations among these factors suggest that deficiencies in any single domain can produce ripple effects, undermining both learning outcomes and students' holistic development. Therefore, coordinated implementation of improvements across all domains is necessary not only to elevate training quality but also to contribute to the sustainable development of the broader physical education system (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Fredricks *et al*., 2004).

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study adopted a mixed-methods design to comprehensively investigate the factors affecting the quality of training for non–physical education majors at Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vietnam. By integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques, the research aimed to elucidate both the measurable relationships among key variables and the lived experiences of participants, thereby providing a holistic understanding of the determinants, challenges, and barriers in PE training.

3.1 Study Design

Quantitative Phase:

A structured questionnaire was administered to a stratified sample of 500 students drawn from several Vietnamese universities offering non-PE degree programmes. The instrument was constructed on the basis of validated scales and theoretical constructs, with all subscales demonstrating strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > .80$).

Qualitative Phase:

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 lecturers and 40 students. These interviews explored participants' perceptions, practical experiences, and the difficulties encountered during both teaching and learning processes.

3.2 Participants and Scope

The sample encompassed institutions located in both urban and rural settings to capture variation in learning environments and facility resources. Study participants included:
Non-PE Majors: Undergraduate students currently enrolled in compulsory PE courses.
Instructors: Faculty members responsible for teaching PE-related subjects.
Administrators: Academic staff involved in curriculum planning and resource allocation.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire (Quantitative):

Developed from the theoretical framework and prior empirical studies (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Hidi & Renninger, 2006), the survey measured constructs such as perceived facility adequacy, teaching effectiveness, and students' motivational orientations.

Interview Guide (Qualitative):

Designed to elicit rich, contextualized accounts of pedagogical practices, infrastructural constraints, and motivational barriers.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Analysis: Data were processed using SPSS version 20.0. The analysis comprised:

Reliability Testing: Cronbach's alpha to confirm internal consistency of each scale.

Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions to profile the sample.

Multiple Regression:

To assess the predictive power of independent variables (e.g., teaching methods, facility quality, instructor support) on the dependent variable (overall training quality).

Qualitative Analysis:

Transcripts were imported into NVivo for thematic content analysis. Coding proceeded through iterative cycles of open, axial, and selective coding, enabling the identification and categorization of salient themes related to challenges and enablers in PE instruction.

3.5 Rigor and Reliability

To ensure methodological rigor, all instruments underwent a pilot test with a small subset of students and faculty, leading to refinements that enhanced clarity and construct validity. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings further strengthened the credibility and transferability of the results.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings derived from the survey of 500 students and the thematic analysis of 70 interviews.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The survey sample comprised 500 students, of whom 56.0% were female and 44.0% were male. Half of the respondents were aged 21–23 (50.0%), and Year 1 and Year 2 students together constituted 70.0% of the sample. This demographic profile indicates a high level of representativeness, facilitating robust comparisons of students' perceptions regarding training quality.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Survey Participants (n = 500)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	220	44
	Female	280	56
Age	18–20	150	30
	21–23	250	50
	> 23	100	20
Year level	Year 1	180	36
	Year 2	170	34
	Year 3	100	20
	Year 4	50	10

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Key constructs measuring training quality were rated on a 1–5 Likert scale. As shown in Table 2, the mean for "Overall Satisfaction" was 2.90 (SD = 0.80), "Facility Quality" was 2.65 (SD = 0.85), "Effectiveness of Teaching Methods" was 3.20 (SD = 0.70), "Instructor Support" was 3.10 (SD = 0.68), and "Overall Training Quality" was 2.85 (SD = 0.75). These averages indicate that students' evaluations of most aspects of training fell at or below the midpoint, with relatively low variability (SDs between 0.70 and 0.85).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Key Survey Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Overall Satisfaction	2.9	0.8	1	5
Facility Quality	2.65	0.85	1	5
Effectiveness of Teaching Methods	3.2	0.7	1	5
Instructor Support	3.1	0.68	1	5
Overall Training Quality	2.85	0.75	1	5

(Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression was conducted to examine the predictive effects of teaching methods, facility quality, and instructor support on overall training quality. As shown in Table 3, teaching methods (β = .45, p < .001), facility quality (β = .32, p = .008), and instructor support (β = .29, p = .009) each had positive, statistically significant effects on training quality. The model accounted for 48% of the variance in overall training quality, F(3, 496) = 56.78, p < .001. These findings underscore the critical role of modern pedagogical approaches as well as the necessity of investing in physical infrastructure and instructor engagement to enhance training outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Coe *et al*., 2006).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Predicting Overall Training Quality

Predictor	β	SE	t	p
(Constant)	1	0.25	4	< .001
Teaching Methods	0.45	0.1	4.5	< .001
Facility Quality	0.32	0.12	2.67	0.008
Instructor Support	0.29	0.11	2.64	0.009

Note. R^2 = .48; F(3, 496) = 56.78, p < .001.

4.4 Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of 70 in-depth interviews revealed five primary themes (Table 4):

Issues with teaching methods (64.3% of interviews)
Facility limitations (54.3%)
Lack of instructor support (42.9%)
Psychological reluctance (50.0%)
Program content mismatch (35.7%)

These qualitative insights complement the quantitative results, demonstrating that both objective factors (e.g., pedagogy, infrastructure, instructor engagement) and subjective factors (e.g., motivation, confidence) jointly shape students' perceptions of training quality.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis of Interview Data (n = 70)

Main Theme	n	%
Issues with teaching methods	45	64.3
Facility limitations	38	54.3
Lack of instructor support	30	42.9
Psychological reluctance ("trỡ ngại")	35	50
Program content mismatch	25	35.7

5. DISCUSSION

The present study confirms that modern, flexible teaching methodologies exert a decisive influence on students' perceptions of training quality (β = .45, p < .001), underscoring the need to move beyond didactic, teacher-centered models (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Quantitative results demonstrate that facility quality (β = .32, p = .008) and instructor support (β = .29, p = .009) also contribute significantly to the explained variance in training outcomes, highlighting the importance of adequate resources and engaged faculty (Coe *et al*., 2006).

This discussion delineates how intrinsic factors—such as pedagogical approaches, student motivation, and psychological barriers—and extrinsic factors—including facility quality, instructor support, institutional policy, and organizational culture—interact to influence the overall quality of physical education training for non-majors. Quantitative analyses revealed significant positive effects of teaching methods (β = .45), facility quality (β = .32), and instructor support (β = .29) on training outcomes (p < .01) (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Coe *et al*., 2006). These results are corroborated by qualitative data highlighting students' and lecturers' concerns regarding traditional pedagogy, resource constraints, and motivational deficits. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory, the study underscores the necessity of learner-centered instruction, structured experiential opportunities, and policy reforms to bridge the theory–practice gap and foster a supportive, innovation-driven learning environment (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978).

These findings are reinforced by qualitative interviews in which a majority of participants reported that outdated teaching methods and insufficient equipment hindered their engagement and skill development. Over half of interviewees cited facility limitations and a lack of hands-on support from instructors as key barriers, while approximately half described experiencing "reluctance" (trỡ ngại) due to mismatches between course content and real-world needs (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Such psychological barriers further underscore the central role of intrinsic motivation—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—in sustaining active participation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

From a theoretical standpoint, Constructivist Learning Theory posits that knowledge emerges through

structured interaction with the environment and social negotiation; without well-designed experiential learning, students struggle to integrate theory and practice, impeding both understanding and application (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). This dynamic is particularly salient in non-specialist PE cohorts, where limited contextualized practice exacerbates cognitive dissonance and undermines learners' confidence (Schiefele, 1991).

The study also illuminates the critical interplay between policy and culture. Transparent, innovation-oriented policies facilitate pedagogical reform and resource investment, which in turn reduce student reluctance and foster a collaborative learning climate. Conversely, rigid governance and risk-averse organizational cultures perpetuate infrastructural deficits and low morale, thereby constraining the efficacy of even the most progressive instructional strategies (Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2010).

6. CONCLUSION

In sum, training quality for non–physical education majors is shaped by a multifaceted array of factors—modern teaching methods, robust facilities, and proactive instructor support represent objective conditions essential for success, while intrinsic motivation and psychological confidence act as subjective catalysts or inhibitors (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Coe *et al*., 2006). The mixed-methods evidence affirms that synchronized interventions—spanning curriculum redesign, infrastructure enhancement, faculty development, and the cultivation of a learner-centered culture—are imperative to elevate educational outcomes.

The findings advocate for an urgent restructuring of PE curricula to forge coherent links between theoretical frameworks and practical application, thereby aligning instruction with contemporary societal needs and fostering sustainable workforce development in the field of physical education. Such reforms will not only bolster academic achievement but also promote lifelong engagement in physical activity, contributing to both individual well-being and broader public health objectives (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Fredricks *et al*., 2004).

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