

English Learning Motivation Among Southern Vietnamese Physical Education Students

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Abstract:

Understanding learners' motivation is essential for improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. However, limited research has examined English learning motivation among Physical Education (PE) students in Vietnam. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, this study aimed to develop and validate a motivation scale and examine the motivational characteristics of PE students in Southern Vietnam. Data were collected from 603 students at six universities. Exploratory factor analysis supported a four-factor structure consisting of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation. The final 18-item scale demonstrated satisfactory reliability and construct validity. Descriptive results showed that autonomous motivations, intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.75$) and identified regulation ($M = 3.69$), were more prominent than controlled motivations. Independent t-tests and ANOVA indicated no statistically significant differences in motivation across gender or academic year. However, differences across universities were observed in controlled forms of motivation, particularly external regulation and introjected regulation. These findings suggest that PE students demonstrate relatively strong autonomous motivation for learning English, highlighting the importance of instructional approaches that enhance intrinsic engagement and connect English learning with sport-related professional contexts.

Keywords: *English learning motivation; Self-Determination Theory; physical education students.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, digital transformation in education, and increasing international integration, English proficiency has become an essential component of higher education quality. In Vietnam, this orientation has been consistently articulated in major policy documents on education and training. Resolution No.29-NQ/TW emphasizes the need for fundamental and comprehensive educational reform in response to industrialization,

modernization, and international integration. Subsequently, conclusion No.91-KL/TW reaffirmed the imperative to further improve training quality in the new stage of development. In the field of foreign language education, Decision No.2080/QĐ-TTg clearly defines foreign languages as an essential tool for enhancing learners' academic, professional, and integrative capacities, while circular No.17/2021/TT-BGDĐT further specifies requirements for graduate outcomes and career adaptability in higher education [1], [2], [3].

For students majoring in PE, the role of English is even more evident. This group of learners requires not only disciplinary knowledge and professional skills, but also the ability to access international academic materials, acquire updated knowledge in coaching, teaching, and sport science, and adapt to increasingly interdisciplinary and globally connected professional environments. In contemporary higher education, English is no longer merely a supporting subject; rather, it is becoming a medium for learning, research, and the expansion of career opportunities. From the perspective of learning motivation, a substantial body of research has shown that motivation in foreign language learning is closely associated with learners' effort, persistence, and academic achievement [4], [5]. More specifically, Self-Determination Theory suggests that when learners perceive learning as meaningful and relevant to their personal development, they are more likely to engage in learning actively and sustain that engagement over time [4].

However, in practice, English competence and readiness to learn English among sport-major students remain limited. Compared with many other student groups, learners in this field often face weak foreign language foundations, insufficiently supportive learning environments, English instruction that remains overly general and insufficiently connected to disciplinary contexts, as well as psychological, strategic, and career-related barriers. Studies in Vietnam have shown that students' English learning motivation is influenced by their perceived value of the subject, teaching methods, classroom environment, and the extent to which course content aligns with practical needs [6], [7], [8]. Conversely, constraints related to learning resources, foreign language anxiety, and the lack of connection between instructional content and real-world application may reduce learners' interest and learning effectiveness [9], [10].

Although English learning motivation has received considerable attention in foreign language education research, the existing literature still reveals several notable gaps. First, most previous studies have focused on non-English majors in general or on students in economics-related fields, whereas sport-major students remain underexamined as a distinct group [7], [8]. Second, in the Vietnamese context, research on English learning motivation has often adopted a broad perspective or emphasized classroom-related factors, without sufficiently examining the motivational characteristics of learners in professionally oriented fields such as sport. Third, although preliminary research has explored students' needs and motivation for English learning in sport-related settings in southern Vietnam, the available evidence remains limited and insufficient to provide a systematic account of the motivational profiles of this student population [11].

Against this backdrop, the present study was conducted to examine the English learning motivation of sport-major students at several universities in southern Vietnam. Specifically, the study aims to identify the motivational characteristics of these learners, clarify the practical foundations of English learning in sport education contexts, and provide an empirical basis for proposing directions to improve the teaching and learning of English for this student group. In doing so, the study is expected to contribute to enhancing the quality of sport human resource training in the context of international integration, where foreign language competence is becoming increasingly important for academic learning, professional practice, and long-term career development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design consisting of two closely connected phases: (1) the development and validation of a scale measuring English learning motivation among sport-major students, and (2) an official survey to identify the level of English learning motivation among students at higher education institutions in southern Vietnam. The research process was conducted sequentially through several steps: reviewing the theoretical background and relevant measurement scales; translation and contextual adaptation; expert validation; pilot testing; official data collection for scale validation; and, finally, the assessment of the current status of English learning

motivation among sport-major students. This approach ensured both the theoretical grounding of the measurement instrument and its contextual suitability for the sport education setting in Vietnam.

Participants

The participants were sport-major students enrolled at universities in southern Vietnam offering programs in PE. Convenience sampling was employed in this study. The official survey was conducted from March to May 2024 using two modes of administration: face-to-face distribution and an online Google Form. In both formats, participants received the same instructions and were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and be used solely for research purposes.

In the phase measuring the current status of English learning motivation, the questionnaire was distributed to students from nine universities in southern Vietnam. A total of 712 responses were collected. After screening, invalid questionnaires with substantial missing data or repetitive response patterns were removed, resulting in 603 valid responses, equivalent to a usable response rate of 84.7%. Valid data were ultimately obtained from six institutions. Of the 603 participants, 69.0% were male and 31.0% were female. In terms of academic year, first-year students accounted for the largest proportion (46.3%), followed by third-year students and final-year students (both 21.1%), while second-year students represented the smallest proportion (10.6%). This distribution broadly reflects the actual enrollment structure and student composition across the participating institutions during the survey period.

Research Instrument and Scale Development

The research instrument was a self-administered questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was developed based on a synthesis of previously published scales measuring foreign language learning motivation, with particular emphasis on the Self-Determination Theory framework. Through a systematic review of relevant studies indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ProQuest, representative measurement scales were identified and used as the foundation for constructing an initial set of items appropriate for sport-major students.

Items adapted from international sources were translated following a forward–backward translation procedure. The translated items were then refined in terms of wording and contextual relevance to ensure semantic equivalence and suitability for the target population. The preliminary scale was subsequently evaluated by five experts in PE, applied linguistics, and educational measurement and evaluation. Items that did not achieve at least 80% agreement among the experts were revised or removed. After this stage, the preliminary scale consisted of 30 observed variables, which were included in a pilot survey conducted with 50 sport-major students. The pilot results indicated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.961, and all items demonstrated item–total correlation coefficients greater than 0.30, suggesting that the scale was appropriate for further validation using a larger sample.

In the official survey phase, the collected data were used to examine the reliability of the scale and to conduct exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results indicated an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.842. Twelve items that did not meet the required criteria were removed, resulting in a final set of 18 observed variables. EFA was conducted using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis extracted four factors, with a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of 0.764 and a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$). The total variance explained reached 69.346%. Based on these results, the final scale consisted of 18 observed variables representing four dimensions of motivation: intrinsic motivation, external motivation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation.

Data Analysis

Prior to analysis, the dataset was screened and cleaned by removing questionnaires with excessive missing values or response patterns indicating inattentive answering. Descriptive statistics were then used to identify the characteristics of the sample and to examine the levels of English learning motivation among sport-major students. Mean values and standard deviations were calculated to describe the central tendency and dispersion of each motivational dimension. During the scale development stage, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients and item–total correlations. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was subsequently conducted using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation to determine the underlying factor structure of the scale. In the stage examining the current status of motivation, inferential statistical analyses were employed.

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to examine differences in motivation by gender, while one-way ANOVA combined with Welch’s test was used to assess differences across groups by academic year and institution. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Identifying English Learning Motivation among PE Students

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that the mean values of all four dimensions of English learning motivation among physical education students were higher than the midpoint of the scale, suggesting that students generally demonstrate a relatively positive level of motivation toward learning English. Among the four motivational dimensions, intrinsic motivation recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.75 \pm 0.84$), followed by identified regulation ($M = 3.69 \pm 0.84$), introjected regulation ($M = 3.52 \pm 0.66$), and external motivation ($M = 3.49 \pm 0.80$), which showed the lowest mean value. These findings suggest that English learning among PE students is primarily driven by personal interest and by their recognition of the practical value and benefits of learning English. In contrast, motivations associated with social pressure or external influences, although still present, do not play a dominant role in shaping students’ engagement with English learning.

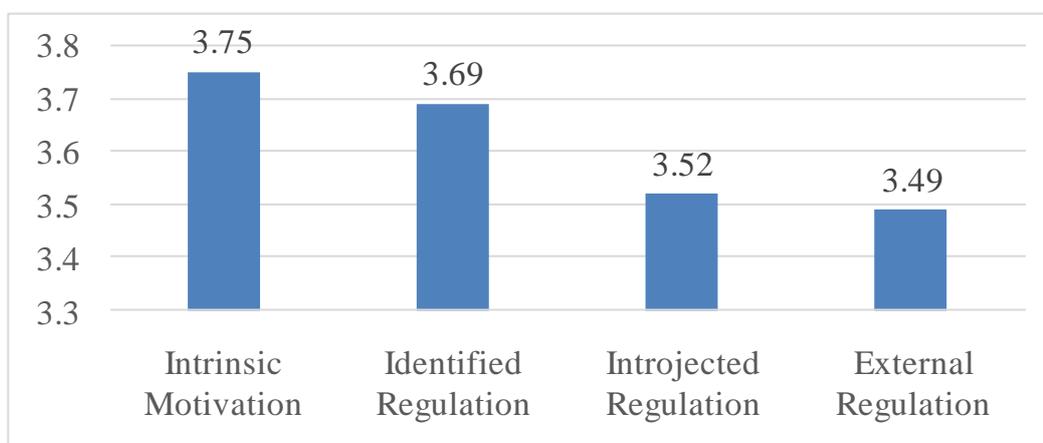


Figure 1. English Learning Motivation of PE Students.

Intrinsic Motivation

Within the intrinsic motivation dimension, the mean scores of the observed variables ranged from 3.43 to 3.96. The item with the highest mean value was AMM5: “I find it interesting to participate in English learning activities” ($M = 3.96 \pm 0.95$), indicating that enjoyment during the learning process plays a particularly important role for students. This was followed by AMM2: “I want to broaden my knowledge through learning English” ($M = 3.81 \pm 1.00$), AMM1: “I find it interesting to explore different aspects of English” ($M = 3.79 \pm 0.98$), and AMM6: “Learning English gives me many positive feelings” ($M = 3.76 \pm 1.02$). In contrast, the lowest mean score in this dimension was observed for AMM3: “I want to prove to myself that I can learn English well” ($M = 3.43 \pm 1.07$). Overall, these findings suggest that intrinsic motivation among PE students is mainly shaped by personal interest, curiosity, and positive emotional experiences in learning English, rather than by a desire for self-validation.

Identified Regulation

For the identified regulation dimension, the mean scores of the observed variables ranged from 3.58 to 3.75. The highest mean value was found for AMR1: “I learn English because I believe it is beneficial for my personal development” ($M = 3.75 \pm 0.90$). Two other items also achieved relatively high scores: AMR4: “I learn English because I believe it is important for my career” ($M = 3.71 \pm 0.95$) and AMR2: “It helps me participate in academic, social, and professional activities with people from different cultures” ($M = 3.71 \pm 0.94$). The lowest mean score within this dimension was AMR3: “I learn English because I value the benefits it provides” ($M = 3.58 \pm 0.96$). These results indicate that PE students clearly recognize the personal development, professional, and intercultural benefits

associated with English proficiency. In other words, beyond personal interest, students are motivated to learn English because they acknowledge its importance for their future academic and career pathways.

Introjected Regulation

In the introjected regulation dimension, the mean scores of the observed variables ranged from 3.16 to 3.69. The highest mean value was observed for CMI3: “People around me will respect me more if I am good at English” ($M = 3.69 \pm 0.86$). This was followed by CMI6: “I feel pressure from people around me (teachers, friends, parents) to learn English” ($M = 3.65 \pm 0.91$) and CMI2: “I learn English because I want to prove that I am capable” ($M = 3.65 \pm 0.89$). The item CMI1: “I would feel guilty if I did not understand English” recorded a mean of 3.44 ± 0.99 , while the lowest score was found for CMI5: “People around me would think I am a failure if I could not speak English” ($M = 3.16 \pm 1.05$). These findings suggest that PE students are still influenced to some extent by external evaluations, the desire for social recognition, and perceived social pressure. However, the influence of this motivational dimension appears weaker than that of intrinsic motivation and identified regulation.

External Motivation

Finally, for the external motivation dimension, the mean scores of the observed variables ranged from 3.38 to 3.57. The highest mean value was observed for CME2: “I want to achieve higher grades in my English course” ($M = 3.57 \pm 0.98$), followed by CME1: “English helps me obtain a good job” ($M = 3.53 \pm 0.94$) and CME8: “There will be negative consequences if I fail to learn English” ($M = 3.49 \pm 0.99$). The lowest mean score was found for CME3: “English is a compulsory subject at university” ($M = 3.38 \pm 0.99$). These results indicate that external factors such as grades, career requirements, and potential negative consequences of not learning English still influence students’ motivation. However, these factors do not appear to be the dominant sources of motivation for English learning among PE students.

Differences in English Learning Motivation among PE Students

Gender

The analysis results indicate differences in mean scores between male and female students across all four dimensions of English learning motivation. Specifically, the intrinsic motivation of male students ($M = 3.79 \pm 0.83$) was higher than that of female students ($M = 3.67 \pm 0.86$). Similarly, identified regulation among male students ($M = 3.72 \pm 0.86$) was also higher than that of female students ($M = 3.61 \pm 0.79$). In the dimension of introjected regulation, male students recorded a mean score of 3.54 ± 0.67 compared with 3.47 ± 0.64 for female students. Finally, external regulation among male students ($M = 3.50 \pm 0.82$) was slightly higher than that of female students ($M = 3.48 \pm 0.78$).

Table 1. Differences in English Learning Motivation by Gender

Group	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Intrinsic Motivation	Male	416	3.79	0.83	0.293	0.109
	Female	187	3.67	0.86		
Identified Regulation	Male	416	3.72	0.86	0.699	0.138
	Female	187	3.61	0.79		
Introjected Regulation	Male	416	3.54	0.67	0.485	0.245
	Female	187	3.47	0.64		
External Regulation	Male	416	3.50	0.82	0.752	0.755
	Female	187	3.48	0.78		

However, the results of the independent-samples *t*-test indicate that these differences are not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Specifically, no significant differences were found for intrinsic motivation ($t = 1.607, p > 0.05$), identified regulation ($t = 1.484, p > 0.05$), introjected regulation ($t = 1.164, p > 0.05$), or external regulation ($t = 0.313, p > 0.05$). These findings confirm that there are no statistically significant gender differences in English learning motivation among PE students.

Academic Year

The analysis results indicate differences in the mean scores of English learning motivation among students across different academic years, although the magnitude of these differences is relatively small. Specifically, intrinsic motivation was highest among third-year students ($M = 3.84 \pm 0.74$), followed by final-year students ($M = 3.75 \pm 0.84$), second-year students ($M = 3.77 \pm 0.76$), and lowest among first-year students ($M = 3.66 \pm 0.94$). For identified regulation, third-year students also recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.76 \pm 0.75$), followed by final-year students ($M = 3.71 \pm 0.80$), second-year students ($M = 3.66 \pm 0.83$), and first-year students with the lowest mean score ($M = 3.60 \pm 0.91$). In the dimension of introjected regulation, the mean scores ranged from 3.45 to 3.56, with second-year students showing the highest level ($M = 3.56 \pm 0.65$) and first-year students the lowest ($M = 3.45 \pm 0.68$). Finally, external regulation showed a relatively similar distribution across academic years, with the highest mean score among third-year students ($M = 3.57 \pm 0.77$) and the lowest among final-year students ($M = 3.43 \pm 0.86$).

Table 2. Differences in English Learning Motivation by Academic Year

Group	Academic Year	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Intrinsic Motivation	First year	155	3.66	0.94	1.247	0.292
	Second year	141	3.76	0.83		
	Third year	158	3.84	0.74		
	Final year	149	3.75	0.84		
Identified Regulation	First year	155	3.60	0.91	1.049	0.370
	Second year	141	3.68	0.80		
	Third year	158	3.76	0.75		
	Final year	149	3.72	0.88		
Introjected Regulation	First year	155	3.56	0.65	1.011	0.387
	Second year	141	3.45	0.63		
	Third year	158	3.56	0.69		
	Final year	149	3.49	0.67		
External Regulation	First year	155	3.53	0.77	1.178	0.318
	Second year	141	3.43	0.81		
	Third year	158	3.57	0.80		
	Final year	149	3.43	0.83		

The results of the one-way ANOVA test indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in English learning motivation among students across academic years at the 95% confidence level. Specifically, intrinsic motivation ($F(3, 599) = 1.247$; $p > 0.05$), identified regulation ($F(3, 599) = 1.049$; $p > 0.05$), introjected regulation ($F(3, 599) = 1.011$; $p > 0.05$), and external regulation ($F(3, 599) = 1.178$; $p > 0.05$) all showed non-significant differences. The results of the Welch test also confirmed that these differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences in English learning motivation among PE students across different academic years.

Training Institution

The analysis results indicate that the mean scores of English learning motivation among students differ across universities. For intrinsic motivation, students from Dong Thap University recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.92 \pm 0.78$), while students from Quy Nhon University had the lowest ($M = 3.58 \pm 0.94$). Regarding identified regulation, students from Dong Thap University again showed the highest mean score ($M = 3.87 \pm 0.77$), whereas students from Quy Nhon University had the lowest ($M = 3.51 \pm 0.89$). For introjected regulation, students from Ho Chi Minh City University of Education reported the highest mean score ($M = 3.57 \pm 0.61$), while those from Quy Nhon University had the lowest ($M = 3.27 \pm 0.59$). Finally, in terms of external regulation, students from Ho Chi Minh City University of PE and Sports obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.60 \pm 0.87$), whereas students from Quy Nhon University again recorded the lowest ($M = 3.05 \pm 0.63$).

Table 3. Differences in English Learning Motivation by University

Group	University	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Intrinsic Motivation	Ho Chi Minh City University of Education	51	3.66	1.09	1.155	0.330
	University of Sport Ho Chi Minh City	62	3.77	0.75		
	Tay Nguyen University	59	3.77	0.86		
	Quy Nhon University	26	3.58	0.94		
	Dong Thap University	43	3.92	0.78		
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Physical Education and Sport	362	3.76	0.77		
Identified Regulation	Ho Chi Minh City University of Education	51	3.61	1.06	1.446	0.206
	University of Sport Ho Chi Minh City	62	3.74	0.78		
	Tay Nguyen University	59	3.72	0.79		
	Quy Nhon University	26	3.51	0.89		
	Dong Thap University	43	3.87	0.77		
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Physical Education and Sport	362	3.64	0.83		
Introjected Regulation	Ho Chi Minh City University of Education	51	3.57	0.61	1.942	0.086
	University of Sport Ho Chi Minh City	62	3.55	0.65		
	Tay Nguyen University	59	3.52	0.69		
	Quy Nhon University	26	3.27	0.59		
	Dong Thap University	43	3.54	0.60		
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Physical Education and Sport	362	3.55	0.71		
External Regulation	Ho Chi Minh City University of Education	51	3.53	0.80	4.392	0.001
	University of Sport Ho Chi Minh City	62	3.52	0.77		
	Tay Nguyen University	59	3.54	0.81		
	Quy Nhon University	26	3.05	0.63		
	Dong Thap University	43	3.46	0.75		
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Physical Education and Sport	362	3.60	0.87		

The results of the one-way ANOVA test indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level for intrinsic motivation ($F(5, 597) = 1.155; p > 0.05$) and identified regulation ($F(5, 597) = 1.446; p > 0.05$). For introjected regulation, the ANOVA results also show no statistically significant differences among universities ($F(5, 597) = 1.942; p > 0.05$). However, the Welch test indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that variations among institutions may exist when the assumption of homogeneity of variance is relaxed. For external regulation, both the ANOVA test ($F(5, 597) = 4.392; p < 0.05$) and the Welch test ($p < .001$) reveal statistically significant differences among universities. Overall, the findings indicate that external regulation and introjected regulation (based on the Welch test) differ significantly among PE students across universities, whereas intrinsic motivation and identified regulation do not show statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that PE students demonstrate a relatively positive level of motivation for learning English. Among the four motivational dimensions, intrinsic motivation and identified regulation were more prominent than introjected regulation and external regulation. This result is consistent with previous studies suggesting that foreign language learning motivation is not a single construct but rather a multidimensional structure,

in which more autonomous forms of motivation are often associated with more sustained learning engagement. Previous research on language learning motivation frequently highlights components such as intrinsic motivation, perceived value, external regulation, and introjected pressure, while also emphasizing that autonomous motivation tends to be more strongly associated with positive learning outcomes than controlled forms of motivation.

The findings of this study are also consistent with recent evidence from the Vietnamese context, where English learning motivation among university students has been found to be strongly influenced by learners' perceptions of the usefulness of English, their learning attitudes, interest in the subject, and career orientation. Several studies conducted in Vietnam have similarly reported that perceptions of personal and professional benefits play a significant role in shaping students' motivation to learn English. In this sense, the results of the present study reinforce the view that, for PE students, English is increasingly perceived not only as a compulsory subject but also as a valuable resource for personal and professional development. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, these findings can be interpreted as indicating that when learners perceive English learning as interesting, meaningful, and practically useful, their motivation tends to shift toward more autonomous forms, particularly intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. In the present study, the highest mean score observed for intrinsic motivation suggests that students still experience a certain level of enjoyment and engagement in English learning activities. At the same time, the relatively high level of identified regulation indicates that students recognize the usefulness of English for personal growth, academic engagement, and future career opportunities. In other words, students are not only learning English because they are required to do so, but also because they perceive it as worthwhile.

Conversely, the lower levels of external regulation and introjected regulation suggest that factors such as grades, course requirements, social expectations, or external pressure do not play a dominant role in driving students' motivation. This can be considered a positive sign, as Self-Determination Theory suggests that controlled forms of motivation are often less sustainable in the long term if they are not supported by more autonomous motivations. Nevertheless, the results also indicate that introjected regulation is not negligible. This suggests that PE students may still be influenced by social evaluation, the desire for recognition, or the pressure to demonstrate competence. In other words, the motivational structure observed in this study reflects a combination of autonomous and controlled motivations, with autonomous forms becoming more prominent but not completely replacing pressure-related motives.

Regarding group comparisons, the results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in English learning motivation by gender or academic year. However, significant differences were observed across universities, particularly in external regulation and introjected regulation. These findings suggest that English learning motivation among PE students may not be strongly determined by basic demographic characteristics, but rather influenced by the specific educational context in which students study. Previous studies have also noted that English learning within PE programs is often influenced by learning environments that may not fully support language development, where English courses remain relatively general and are not strongly connected with sports-related professional content. Within this context, the differences observed across universities may reflect variations in institutional environments, including differences in curriculum design, the emphasis placed on language learning outcomes, teaching approaches, the level of instructional support provided by lecturers, and the extent to which English learning is integrated with sports-related professional knowledge. In other words, institutional differences may not necessarily reflect differences in students themselves, but rather differences in the educational ecosystems in which they participate.

The findings of this study also have important implications for sports education. First, English learning for PE students should be approached as a professional competence rather than merely a foundational course. PE students increasingly require English to access international academic materials, participate in research activities, and enhance their professional integration in a globalized sports environment. In this regard, the relatively high levels of intrinsic motivation and identified regulation provide a favorable basis for developing English teaching models that are more closely linked to sports-related professional contexts. Second, since significant differences were observed across institutions, strategies aimed at enhancing English learning motivation should not be applied uniformly across all universities. Instead, they should consider the specific educational conditions and institutional characteristics of each training institution. Third, from the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, fostering sustainable learning

motivation requires creating learning environments that enhance students' sense of interest, perceived value, and autonomy in learning. This is particularly important for PE students, who often prioritize practical activities and may lose motivation if English learning content lacks clear professional relevance.

CONCLUSION

This study identified that PE students at universities in southern Vietnam demonstrate a relatively positive level of motivation for learning English. Four main types of motivation were identified: intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation. Among these, intrinsic motivation and identified regulation were the most prominent, indicating that students primarily learn English due to personal interest and their recognition of the benefits of English for personal development, academic engagement, and future career opportunities. In contrast, motivations associated with social pressure or external requirements were present but less influential. Regarding group differences, the findings show that there are no statistically significant differences in English learning motivation by gender or academic year. However, significant differences were observed across universities, particularly in the controlled motivational components of external regulation and introjected regulation. This finding suggests that English learning motivation among PE students tends to remain relatively stable at the individual level, but may be influenced more strongly by institutional environments and teaching conditions across different universities.

Based on these findings, several practical implications can be drawn. First, English language instruction for PE students should aim to strengthen autonomous motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, rather than relying primarily on grade pressure, graduation requirements, or compulsory course structures. Second, English course content should be more closely connected with the professional context of sports education. This may include the use of sport-specific learning materials, professional scenarios, academic communication activities, and learning tasks related to coaching, teaching, competition, and sports research. In addition, universities should focus on creating supportive learning environments in which instructors not only deliver knowledge but also encourage, guide, and facilitate students' engagement with English learning in meaningful and achievable ways. Finally, given that differences in motivation were observed across institutions, strategies for enhancing English learning motivation should be implemented flexibly and adapted to the specific conditions of each university rather than applying a uniform model across all institutions.

Overall, this study contributes empirical evidence on English learning motivation among PE students in the Vietnamese context and provides a scientific basis for improving English curricula, teaching content, and instructional approaches in ways that better align with the characteristics of sports education and the increasing demands of professional integration in the global sports environment.

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