



SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE TABLE TENNIS MOVEMENT AMONG OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES AT SAIGON UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

Mass sports activities refer to the practice and competition in sports by the general public, with the purpose of improving physical fitness, enhancing health, and directly serving work, study, production labor, as well as readiness for military combat, treatment, and recreational rest for individuals ranging from preschool children to the elderly. This study aims to identify solutions to promote table tennis movement among officials and employees at Saigon University, Vietnam. The research employed methods such as document review, interviews, and statistical analysis to address the research objectives. The study sample consisted of 361 officials and employees at Saigon University. Based on legal foundations, practical conditions, and principles for selecting appropriate solutions, the study identified 06 solutions to develop the table tennis movement. Specific content for each solution was then developed to be implemented, with the goal of fostering the growth of table tennis activities among the university's officials and employees at Saigon University.

Keywords: solutions; table tennis movement; officials and employees; Saigon University

1. Introduction

Physical education and sports are indispensable components of human culture, contributing to human development with the concept that movement is health, and health is life. Physical education and sports foster the comprehensive development of

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individuals: *"Morally upright, spiritually enriched, and physically fit"* [1]. In recent years, the national sports movement in Vietnam has made remarkable progress, both in professional sports and mass participation. These achievements are thanks to the attention and leadership of the Party and the State, as well as the efforts of the entire physical education and sports sector. The Party and the State's guidelines and policies on sports have always been applied flexibly and creatively, closely linked to the campaign *"All people take exercise following the example of the Great - Uncle Ho"* [2], [3].

The goals of physical education and sports include enhancing health, improving physical fitness, increasing life expectancy and quality of life, and meeting the needs for exercise, recreation, and cultural exchange among individuals and organizations in society. This also contributes to the training of human resources for the cause of industrialization and modernization of the country, guided by the principle *"A strong people means a prosperous nation"* and the slogan *"Exercise for building and defending the nation."* According to Ho Chi Minh President: *"To work, produce, study, and perform well, one needs to be healthy. To be healthy, regular physical training is necessary. Therefore, we should promote a widespread sports movement."*

The 11th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam clearly stated: *"It is necessary to vigorously develop the public sports movement to enhance public health, improve human resources, and increase the life expectancy of Vietnamese people ..."* [4], [5].

Saigon University is a public higher education institution under the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City and is managed by the Ministry of Education and Training. The university has a staff of approximately 1,000 officials and employees working across various departments, faculties, and centers. In recent years, physical education and sports activities in general - and table tennis in particular - at Saigon University have been developing steadily, receiving dedicated support from the university leadership and the grassroots Trade Union. This has created favorable conditions for officials and employees to participate in sports activities, contributing to better health, a healthy lifestyle, and enhanced cultural and spiritual life within the university. However, the number of officials and employees members participating in table tennis training is still relatively small compared to the total number of officials and employees. Therefore, to attract more participants and improve the quality of training, especially in terms of technique and movement development, we propose several solutions to further develop the table tennis movement among officials and employees at Saigon University [6].

In addition, the university's grassroots Trade Union annually organizes an annual traditional sports event for officials and employees, which includes table tennis, attracting broad participation. Notably, the university's table tennis team actively trains and competes in tournaments organized by the education sector, friendly competitions, and inter-unit contests. Thus, developing the table tennis movement is essential - not only to provide a recreational playground for officials and employees but also to improve technical skills and serve as a source for discovering and nurturing new talent to join the university's team, contributing to future success in educational sports competitions.

The purpose of this article is to provide information on selecting several solutions for developing the table tennis movement. These will serve as the foundation for the university's leadership, the grassroots Trade Union Executive Committee, and the Department of Physical Education to build and implement a roadmap for developing sports activities in general, and the table tennis movement in particular, among officials and employees at Saigon University.

2. Methods

2.1. Research methods

2.1.1 Document synthesis and analysis method

This method aims to collect and systematize knowledge related to the research area, helping to build the theoretical basis for the study, select appropriate research methods, and identify solutions to promote physical training and sports activities among officials and employees at Saigon University. The documents include legal regulations, the Party and the State's guidelines on mass sports, official documents, decisions, circulars, and the Law on Physical Training and Sports, which are relevant to mass sports activities.

2.1.2 Interview method

This method involves using questionnaires, direct interviews, and discussions. It aims to gather opinions from experts, professionals, unit leaders, officials and employees at Saigon University to select appropriate solutions for developing the table tennis movement among officials and employees at the university.

2.1.3 Statistical mathematics method

The statistical mathematics method was applied to process the collected data. The software SPSS 22.0 was used for data analysis.

2.2. Research subjects

2.2.1 Survey participants for current situation analysis

361 officials and employees at Saigon University were selected using random and convenient sampling methods. Among them, 109 participated in table tennis activities, and 252 did not.

2.2.2 Survey participants for solution selection

12 experts and sports management officials and 15 physical education lecturers at Saigon University were selected using convenient sampling.

2.2.3 Survey participants for solution feasibility assessment

6 sports management officials at Saigon University were selected using convenient sampling.

3. Research results

3.1 Legal basis for proposing solutions

The legal basis for proposing solutions is grounded in the Party's and State's policies and orientations on the development of school sports, as outlined in official documents, directives, and resolutions. Additionally, it relies on circulars, decisions, and documents issued by the Ministry of Education and Training regarding school sports.

3.2 Practical basis for proposing solutions

- The current demand for participating in table tennis movement among officials and employees at Saigon University is assessed to be generally satisfactory in terms of facilities, equipment, coaches, and activity organization. However, the number of training areas is only rated as average.
- Regarding obstacles to developing the table tennis movement at Saigon University, officials and employees rated conditions and organization as not difficult. However, the individual factors were rated below average, with common issues including lack of motivation, lack of time, and lack of knowledge on how to play table tennis. In terms of competition activities, officials and employees rated facilities, equipment, courts, and personal engagement as not difficult.
- Facilities and equipment for table tennis activities for officials and employees at Saigon University include 1 training room and 2 table tennis areas with 6 tables, 200 balls, and 6 nets.
- Training formats for officials and employees at the university mostly involve group or class-based training and self-practice. There is no official instructor; training duration ranges from 30 minutes to 2 hours; with more than 3 sessions per week, typically held on campus, in the afternoon after working hours, or during free time.
- Teaching and coaching formats involve lecturers and coaches organizing training by group, class, team, or club. Training sessions typically last more than 2 hours, with more than 3 sessions per week, often held in the afternoon after work.

A statistical summary of the purposes of table tennis practice among 109 officials and employees participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Statistical results on the purposes of officials and employees participating in table tennis practice at Saigon University (n = 109)

Ordinal	Content	Survey Results	
		Quantity	Ratio (%)
1	Improving physical health	84	77.1
2	Expanding communication	6	5.5
3	Supporting work	2	1.8
4	Participating in competitions	4	3.7
5	Entertainment	13	11.9
	Total	109	100.0

The data in Table 1 shows that the highest motivation for officials and employees of Saigon University to participate in table tennis training is to improve their health (77.1%), while the lowest is work-related support (1.8%). Other reasons include recreation (11.9%), expanding social interactions (5.5%), and participating in sports competitions (3.7%).

The statistics on the current reasons why personnel at all levels at Saigon University do not participate in table tennis training, based on a survey of 252 staff and employees who do not take part in the activity, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Statistical results on the reasons why officials and employees do not participate in table tennis practice at Saigon University (n = 252)

Ordinal	Content	Survey Results	
		Quantity	Ratio (%)
1	No time for training	77	30.6
2	No financial support for training	4	1.6
3	Not physically fit for training	6	2.4
4	Lack of motivation to participate in training	52	20.6
5	Do not know how to play table tennis	113	44.8
	Total	252	100.0

According to the data in Table 2, the most common reason why officials and employees at Saigon University do not participate in table tennis practice is that they do not know how to play (44.8%), while the least common reason is the lack of training funds (1.6%). Other reasons include lack of time for practice (30.6%), lack of motivation to participate (20.6%), and poor health (2.4%).

A survey on the leadership's attention to the development of table tennis activities at Saigon University was conducted among 361 officials and employees, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Statistics on the leadership's attention to activities promoting table tennis practice at Saigon University

Ordinal	Content	Survey Results	
		\bar{X}	S
1	School board	4.56	.550
2	Leadership of the department where the teacher is working	4.35	.615
3	Chairman of the union at the department where the teacher is working	4.36	.613
	\bar{X}	4.42	

The data in Table 3 shows that the leadership pays considerable attention to the development of table tennis activities at Saigon University. The University Board of Rectors, unit leaders, and trade union chairpersons all demonstrate a high level of concern (average score = 4.42); among them, the Board of Rectors shows the highest level of attention (average score = 4.56), while unit leaders show the lowest (average score = 4.35), followed closely by the trade union chairpersons (average score = 4.36).

The results of the survey assessing officials' and employees' opinions on the development of table tennis activities at Saigon University are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Survey results of officials and employees at Saigon University evaluating activities promoting table tennis practice (n = 361)

Ordinal	Content	Survey Results	
		\bar{X}	S
Facilities and Equipment for Organizing Table Tennis Development Activities at the University			
1	Number of courts	3.35	.681
2	Quality of courts	3.96	.604
3	Number of equipment and tools	3.90	.659
4	Quality of equipment and tools	3.98	.705
5	Hygiene and Safety of Facilities, Equipment, and Tools	4.15	.673
	\bar{X}	3.87	
Table Tennis Coaches and Instructors			
1	Coaching/Instruction Methods	4.27	.633
2	Qualifications	4.29	.675
3	Pedagogical Skills	4.43	.633
	\bar{X}	4.33	
Content and Organization of Activities			
1	Variety and diversity of content	4.05	.654
2	Diverse forms of organization (groups, clubs, teams, etc.)	4.07	.689
3	Reasonable Training Schedule	4.10	.657
4	Financial Suitability for officials and employees at the School	4.09	.631
	\bar{X}	4.08	

The data in Table 4 shows the evaluation of officials and employees at Saigon University regarding the activities aimed at developing the table tennis movement, as follows:

- **Regarding facilities and equipment for organizing table tennis development activities at the University:** The results show that officials and employees rated this aspect at a fairly good level on average (Mean = 3.87); among them, the item "Hygiene and Safety of Facilities, Equipment, and Tools" received the highest rating at the fairly good level (Mean = 4.15), while the lowest was "Number of courts" rated at an average level (Mean = 3.35). All other items, including "Quality of courts," "Quality of equipment and tools," and "Number of equipment and tools" were rated at a fairly good level.
- **Regarding the team of table tennis coaches and instructors:** The results show that the average rating given by officials and employees was at a good level (Mean = 4.33); all items were evaluated at the good level. Among them, "Pedagogical Skills" received the highest rating (Mean = 4.43), followed by "Qualifications" (Mean = 4.29), and the lowest was "Coaching/instruction methods" (Mean = 4.27).
- **Regarding the content and forms of organizing activities:** The average evaluation by officials and employees was at a fairly good level (Mean = 4.08); all items were

rated at a fairly good level. "Reasonable Training schedule" received the highest score (Mean = 4.10), while the lowest was "Variety and diversity of content" (Mean = 4.05), followed by "Financial Suitability for officials and employees at the School" (Mean = 4.09), and "Diverse forms of organization (groups, clubs, representative teams, etc.)" (Mean = 4.07).

The study synthesized practical solutions for developing sports movements from previous research works such as: Nguyễn Văn Sơn (2016) [3], Lê Thiết Can (2012) [5], Nguyễn Huỳnh Vũ Khoa (2016) [7], Nguyễn Kiều Oanh (2016) [8], and Cô Thu Thủy (2017) [9].

3.3. Principles for Proposing Solutions

To align with the State's policies on innovation and improving the quality of education, and to selectively adopt solutions to develop the table tennis movement among officials and employees at Saigon University, the selection of proposed solutions is based on core characteristics such as: goal-oriented, systematic, synchronized, inheritable and complementary, practical, and feasible.

3.4. Selection of Solutions for Developing Table Tennis Activities among officials and employees at Saigon University

Based on legal grounds, practical foundations, and the aforementioned principles, the research gradually completed and refined a system of selected solutions to promote the table tennis movement among officials and employees at Saigon University. These include six solution groups:

- Organizational structure;
- Policy mechanism;
- Information and communication;
- Human resources;
- Professional expertise;
- Facilities, equipment, and training grounds.

A questionnaire was developed and interviews were conducted with 16 managerial staff (Board of Rectors, department heads/deputies, union officials, table tennis teachers/coaches, and administrators from the Department of National Defense & Physical Education) at Saigon University, twice, one month apart. The same evaluation system, content structure, and target group were used. Responses followed a 5-point scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (for two related samples) was used to determine whether there was any significant difference between the two interview rounds. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Interview results on proposed solutions to promote table tennis practice among officials and employees at Saigon University (n = 16)

Ordinal	Solutions	First (n = 16)		Second (n = 16)		Comparison	
		ean	td.	ean	td.	Standard deviation unit - Z	Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Organizational Structure Solution	.93	252	.00	000	-1.732 ^b	0.083
2	Policy Mechanism Solution	.93	252	.96	208	-.577 ^b	0.564
3	Information and Communication Solution	.91	288	.93	252	-.378 ^b	0.705
4	Team Solution	.91	288	.89	318	-.378 ^d	0.705
5	Professional Solution	.87	344	.82	387	-.632 ^d	0.527
6	Infrastructure, Equipment, and Facilities Solution	.89	318	.87	344	-.333 ^d	0.739

The results in Table 5 show that the observed significance levels (Sig > 0.05) for all items answered by the management staff and lecturers in this test indicate no statistically significant difference. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no difference between the two rounds of interviews, and the results are equivalent.

The interview results selecting the proposed solutions had an average total score per item above the agreed level (> 3.40) across both interview rounds. As a result, we selected six solutions to develop table tennis activities among officials and employees at Saigon University, including:

- ❖ **Solution 1:** Organizational Structure,
- ❖ **Solution 2:** Policy Mechanisms,
- ❖ **Solution 3:** Information and Communication,
- ❖ **Solution 4:** Human Resources,
- ❖ **Solution 5:** Professional Expertise,
- ❖ **Solution 6:** Facilities, Equipment, and Venues.

Based on these 6 selected solutions, the research project developed specific content and implementation plans for each:

❖ **Solution 1: Organizational Structure**

- **Purpose of the solution:** To promote potential, enhance effectiveness and efficiency in management, and contribute to organizing and implementing general sports movements, particularly table tennis, within the university.
- **Content:** Establish and refine a unified management system; organize and improve coordination mechanisms between departments; assign responsibilities for sports activities based on practical conditions.
- **Coordinating units:** Party committees, University Board of Rectors, and the Trade Union Executive Committee direct the implementation; the Inspection and Legal Affairs Department and the Department of Physical Education coordinate and supervise execution.

- **Implementation measures:**

- The school's Trade Union manages, organizes, and operates sports activities, including table tennis, for officials and employees in accordance with the Party and State's policies, under the leadership of the Party Committee.
- The Propaganda Committee of the Trade Union is responsible for communication and promotion. The Arts & Sports Committee of the Trade Union works with the Physical Education Department on professional matters.
- The Executive Committees of subordinate Trade Union units are responsible for implementation.

❖ **Solution 2: On Policy Mechanisms**

- **Purpose of the solution:** To create a favorable legal basis for the management, organization, and implementation of sports and physical training (SPT) activities; to provide good physical and mental conditions for physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors in fulfilling their roles in training and organizing movement-based activities; and to help officials and employees access the best environment for SPT practice.
- **Content of the solution:** Identify the contents, methods, regulatory documents, and supporting documents for managing, organizing, and implementing SPT movements issued by the Party, the Government, the Ministry of Education and Training, and the Vietnam Education Trade Union. Develop proposals for the issuance of supporting documents to assist physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors in effectively promoting the SPT movement.
- **Coordinating units:** The Party Committees at all levels, the Board of Rectors, and the Executive Committee of the Trade Union will direct the implementation; the Inspection and Legal Affairs Unit and the Department of Physical Education will coordinate and monitor the implementation.
- **Implementation measures:** Thoroughly grasp the Resolutions and policies of the Party and the State; Circulars, Decisions, and documents from the Ministry of Education and Training and the Vietnam Education Trade Union regarding school sports. From there, specific measures and plans will be implemented, including:
 - Develop a system of detailed regulations and guidelines on roles and responsibilities related to the development of the SPT movement among officials and employees.
 - Develop and issue documents on policy regimes for physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors participating in SPT activities at the university.
 - Develop plans, orientations, and annual budget estimates for SPT activities suitable to the actual conditions of the university.
 - Establish and issue specific and detailed evaluation criteria for commendation and reward of officials and employees participating in general SPT movements and table tennis in particular.

- Call for support from units and individuals inside and outside the university to supplement funding, aiming to increase allowances and rewards for athletes participating in training and competitions at various levels of the university sports festival.

❖ **Solution 3: Information and Communication**

- **Purpose of the solution:** To raise awareness among officials and employees about the role, purpose, significance, and basic knowledge of physical education and sports.
- **Content of the solution:**
 - Ensure that officials and employees have a correct understanding of the role and objectives of physical education and sports.
 - Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to help officials and employees recognize the importance and value of physical training, create opportunities for them to exchange, learn, and enhance their awareness, motivation, and positive attitude toward participating in physical activities within the institution. This, in turn, fosters a regular practice habit in sports in general and table tennis in particular. Encourage and facilitate the strengthening of cultural, artistic, and sports activities across the institution.
- **Coordinating units:** The Party Committee, School Board of Management, and the Executive Committee of the Trade Union shall direct the implementation; the Trade Union's Propaganda Committee shall take the lead in execution.
- **Implementation measures:** Organize and deploy a variety of communication methods through mass media, group activities, and especially through sports competitions with the following specific measures:
 - Regularly promote the purpose, significance, importance, and benefits of physical education and sports during group meetings, sports festivals, etc., via various media such as loudspeakers, flyers, banners, union bulletin boards, and on the school's website. In particular, the section on physical education and sports on the school union's website and bulletin should be regularly updated and made engaging.
 - Periodically organize sports festivals, seminars, and contests related to knowledge of physical education, as well as community sports activities (e.g., walkathons, cross-country races) for officials and employees.
 - Host exchange events with outstanding athletes and high-achieving sports teams; promptly commend and reward collectives and individuals with excellent achievements in sports activities in general, and table tennis in particular.
 - Encourage school leaders and trade union leaders to actively and exemplarily participate in regular physical training and table tennis practice.
 - Promote the campaign *"All people practice physical training following the great Uncle Ho's example"* and launch the emulation movement *"Healthy to build and*

defend the country” by organizing sports festivals, open tournaments, and community sports activities (walkathons, cross-country races, etc.) for officials and employees.

❖ **Solution 4: Human Resources**

- **Purpose of the Solution:** To standardize and develop the team of administrators, physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors in terms of quantity, structural balance, and qualification levels in accordance with regulations, thereby effectively meeting the demands of organizing sports activities within the university.
- **Content of the Solution:** Recruitment, planning, training, and professional development of administrators, physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors to ensure sufficient numbers, structural consistency, and standardized qualifications as per regulations. This contributes to the overall enhancement of physical education and sports activities, with particular emphasis on table tennis within the institution.
- **Coordinating Units:** The Board of Rectors shall provide direction for implementation. The Personnel Department and the Executive Committee of the University Trade Union shall be responsible for execution.
- **Implementation Measures:**
 - Develop a recruitment and development plan for the team of administrators, physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors, ensuring adequacy in quantity, structural balance, and standardized qualifications, in alignment with current regulations and the university’s practical conditions.
 - Design training programs to improve the professional qualifications of the above-mentioned personnel.
 - Regularly organize professional training courses in physical education for administrators, lecturers, coaches, and instructors. Cooperate with the Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and local Sports Centers to facilitate lecturers’ participation in specialized activities such as refereeing sports competitions, attending coaching courses, and more.

❖ **Solution 5: Professional Expertise**

- **Purpose of the solution:** To encourage and motivate civil servants, officials and employees to actively and voluntarily participate in physical training and sports in general, and in table tennis in particular; to help them develop a regular habit of exercising, improve their health in accordance with regulations, and prepare a team to participate in sports competitions organized by the education sector.
- **Content of the Solution:**
 - Based on the needs, interests, and available facilities, the university's physical education lecturers, coaches, and instructors will select appropriate sports activities suitable for the officials and employees.

- Establish additional sports clubs and groups that practice in the afternoons, with instructors to attract officials and employees to participate in training.
- Form and maintain regular training for sports talent teams in each discipline to serve as the core of physical training and sports activities in general, and table tennis in particular.
- Organize annual sports competitions, including general sports and specifically table tennis tournaments, and regularly hold friendly sports exchanges with other units.
- **Coordinating Units:** The University Board of Rectors and the Executive Committee of the University's Trade Union will direct the implementation; the University's Trade Union's Division of Culture, Sports, and Arts will supervise the execution; the Physical Education Department will take the lead in implementation.
- **Implementation Measures:**
 - Annually, the Physical Education Department will develop a plan for sports activities within the university (training, competition, organizing sports events), to be approved by the Board of Rectors and relevant units.
 - Physical education lecturers will create training plans for sports teams and clubs to ensure regular physical training in general and table tennis in particular for officials and employees, as well as select those with talent to join the university's sports teams.
 - The Trade Union's Division of Culture, Sports, and Arts will coordinate with the Physical Education Department to organize general and table tennis-specific sports events.
 - Promote socialization and mobilize sponsors to regularly organize sports competitions within the university and participate in city-level and national-level sports events.
 - Diversify activities by maintaining the traditional sports festival, forming various teams and sports clubs, promoting community-based sports events, and coordinating with internal and external units to organize large-scale open sports tournaments.

❖ **Solution 6: Facilities, Equipment, and Venues**

- **Purpose of the Solution:** To invest in, upgrade, build, and renovate facilities, sports grounds, and training equipment to ensure the necessary conditions for physical education and sports activities in general, and for table tennis in particular, within the university.
- **Content of the Solution:**
 - Renovate and upgrade training facilities, including courts, training halls, and equipment, to maximize the use of the university's existing infrastructure for sports activities in general and table tennis in particular.

- Develop a usage plan for sports grounds and training halls according to different target groups, along with regulations for the use of equipment and tools.
- Repair and procure new equipment and tools for general sports activities and specifically for table tennis, ensuring adequate quantity and quality standards.
- **Coordinating Units:** The Board of Rectors oversees and approves the plan; The Equipment Department organizes implementation upon approval; The Trade Union's Culture and Sports Committee is responsible for management, use, and implementation planning.
- **Implementation Measures:**
 - Develop a comprehensive plan and mobilize social investment to upgrade and expand training grounds, thereby diversifying the curriculum and better meeting the training needs of officials and employees.
 - Conduct regular maintenance and servicing to ensure the safety and hygiene of the facilities, grounds, and equipment used for physical training activities in general, and table tennis in particular, for officials and employees.
 - Gradually provide sufficient, new, and modern equipment and training tools for various sports suitable for officials and employees.

4. Conclusion

The research has identified six solutions to promote table tennis activities among the officials and employees at Saigon University, including: Solution 1: Organizational structure; Solution 2: Policy mechanisms; Solution 3: Information and communication; Solution 4: Human resources; Solution 5: Professional expertise; Solution 6: Facilities, equipment, and venues.

A roadmap has been developed for the University's Board of Rectors, the Executive Committee of the Trade Union, and the Department of Physical Education to implement these solutions for promoting table tennis activities among the officials and employees at Saigon University. In addition, experts, administrators, and physical education lecturers highly evaluated the feasibility of these proposed solutions.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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