



Satisfaction of High School Students in Hanoi with the New English Program

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to assess high school students' satisfaction with the new English program at in Hanoi. Results from the survey of 314 students in 8 high schools in Hanoi and the in-depth interview of 11 people (included 2 teachers, 3 parents and 6 students) shows that students satisfied with the new English program at medium level. Those students tend to be more satisfied with learning environment. In contrast, they have the lowest level of satisfaction with teaching methods, and English speaking skills (especially the pronunciation) of teachers. This study also recommended the schools to create encouraging environment by organizing extra activities and improving facilities quality. Besides, the Ministry of Education and Training should improve the textbook' contents and English teacher's expertise to increase students' satisfaction.

Keywords: Student satisfaction, Teaching English, High school.



1. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language and is an important subject for all levels of education, especially high school because high school students will be the key labor source of the country in the near future.

In Vietnam, English is an important subject in the university entrance exams and the knowledge in this exam is also encapsulated within traditional English textbooks. Therefore, most teachers and students in high schools still stick to the traditional content, curriculum, and methods of teaching-learning. Teachers and parents, students are mainly concerned with the results of exams. Therefore, the new program has not been accepted widely by teachers, students, and parents.

According to the newly announced high school education program, the duration for English subject at primary and secondary schools is 140 lessons/year, high school level is 105 lessons/year (total is 1295 lessons) while the English subject in the current program is a 7-year program (from grades 6 to 12) with a period of 3 lessons/week.

The new English program was conducted in 2011, the successful of this program is very important to improve the English level of Vietnamese student. To evaluate this program, we have to assess the attitude, recognition, and satisfaction of students (direct learners) for this new English program. However, there is very little research on high school student satisfaction related to the English program, and no research has been done to assess student satisfaction in Hanoi. With the aforementioned reasons, the research team decided to conduct a study "Satisfaction of high school students in Hanoi with the new English program" to have a better understanding of students' assessment of the new English program and to offer recommendations and solutions to improve the quality of English learning in this context.

The overall purpose of the study is to assess students' satisfaction with the new English learning program through student comments and evaluation on factors: Learning environment, lesson content, and teacher quality, teaching methods. Thereby, the research team will propose suitable solutions to improve students' satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH MODEL

The new English program for high school students

The new English program for high school level was piloted since 2012 in Hanoi has shown many innovations. Regarding the number of lessons, the duration of the traditional English program was 5 classes a week and studied within 35 weeks. As for the new program, students will study 8 teaching periods of 45 minutes per week. The study time has been greatly improved compared to the old ones. Regarding the content of the subject, the new textbooks are designed according to each topic and focus comprehensively on all 4 skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing instead of focusing heavily on vocabulary and grammar as before. In each topic, students will be divided into a group to complete a project assigned in the textbook. The new program emphasizes the initiative of students. Which means teachers instead of providing all the knowledge now only support, answer questions and make comments. Finally, the new program focuses on developing communication skills, different from other traditional methods such as doing grammar exercises without the opportunity to practice.



The basic goal of English in the new curriculum is to help students build and develop their communication skills through practicing listening, speaking, reading, writing and language knowledge, such as Phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar; thereby helping them reach level 3 when they finish high school according to the 6-level foreign language competency framework for Vietnam.

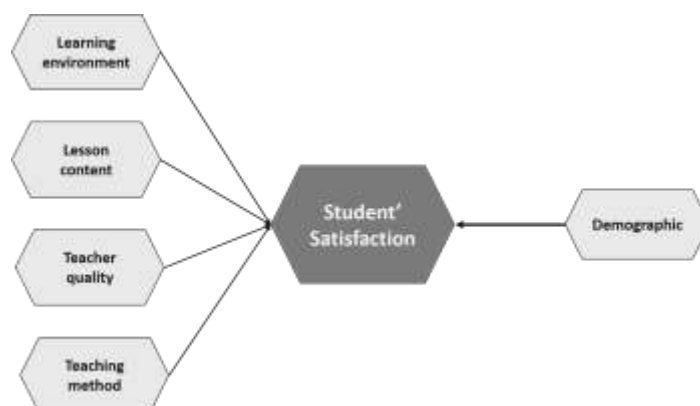
Student satisfaction

Student satisfaction is defined as a short-term attitude of a student when assessing his or her educational experience (Athiyaman, 1997). Students are satisfied when the actual experience meets or exceeds students' expectations (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). According to Moore (2009), defining student satisfaction is "Students succeed and enjoy their educational experience". A similar definition given by Sweeney and Ingram (2001) states that the concept of satisfaction is "awareness of joy and achievement in the educational environment". Puzziferro (2008) stated that "If students feel satisfied, they seem to be more successful, that satisfaction is directly related to student learning outcomes". Satisfaction shows how new learning methods are accepted and valued and they are evidence of quality learning. Maintaining and improving student satisfaction has been considered an important goal of education and higher education (Orpen, 1990), with the assumption that student satisfaction signifies organizational performance. (Barton, 1978). Sinclair (2011) gave three reasons why educational institutions need to care about student satisfaction. First, it reflects the learner's appreciation of the quality of all aspects of the educational program (Sloan, 2011). Besides, there is evidence that "student satisfaction is positively related to maintaining and deciding to take one or more additional courses" (Booker & Rebman, 2005).

Factors affecting student satisfaction

There are many authors studying student satisfaction in various educational contexts. Many factors that influence student satisfaction have been pointed out, in general, some factors tend to appear consistently in those studies such as "Teacher quality" (Mai (2005), Mavondo et al. (2004), Pop et al. (2008), Rogers-Freindenberg (2008), Thomas and Galambos (2004), Wiers-Jensenn et al. (2002), and Mark (2000)), "Lesson content" (Martirosyan, (2015); Thanh (2015)), "Teaching materials" (Arambewela et al. (2005); Mai (2005); Mavondo et al. (2004); Petruzzellis et al. (2006)), "Interaction" (Johnston et al., (2005); Pituch & Lee, (2006); Moore (1989); Zhao et al., (2005); Swan (2001)), "Learning environment" (Pituch & Lee (2006); Moore (1989); Zhao et al., (2005); Swan (2001); Prieto & Revilla (2006); Chou & Liu (2005); Johnston et al., (2005); Martirosyan (2015)), "Teaching method" (Dean and Gibbs (2015); Abou Naaj, Nachouki and Ankit (2012) and Thanh (2015)) The research model includes 4 independent variables "Learning environment", "Lesson content", "Teacher quality" and "Teaching method". These are the factors that appear most frequently in student satisfaction studies, which are also directly related to the nature of the program. Also, "Teaching materials" is included in the factor "Lesson content", and "Learning environment" factor also covered questions about "Interaction".

Research model



Learning environment

The learning environment is defined by both the physical and mental environment. Firstly, the physical environment includes facilities and support materials. For instance, the internet, learning materials, and libraries, etc. Those materials play an important role in the "learning outcomes" of students. Numerous studies have shown the relationship between learning facilities and satisfaction (Arambewela et al., 2005; Mai, 2005; Mavondo et al., 2004; Petruzzellis et al., 2006; Thomas and Galambos, 2004; Wiers-Jensenn et al., 2002). The technology used in the blended teaching method enriches the academic experience of students (Smart & Cappel, 2006). Besides, students without adequate technical support also show high levels of dissatisfaction in the integrated learning environment (Hara & Kling, 2003).

Secondly, the mental environment is known as the atmosphere and emotions in the classroom. A fair, unbiased learning environment among students helps increase satisfaction (Martirosyan, 2015). A positive learning environment that encourages and stimulates the exchange of ideas, opinions, information, and knowledge within the organization will lead to better learning (Prieto & Revilla, 2006). Pituch & Lee (2006) show that such social interaction has a direct impact on student evaluation. Moore (1989); Zhao et al., (2005) and Swan (2001) emphasize students' desire to interact with their teachers and classmates.

Lesson content

"Lesson content" is one of the biggest differences between the new English program and the old ones. The new textbook has significant differences from the old books, both in form and in content. This factor is also chosen based on Thanh (2015). "Lesson content" is defined by the knowledge students will gain after the learning process. Lesson content includes vocabulary, grammatical structures, and all other knowledge provided in the subject. The more interesting and useful the knowledge that is taught, the greater the student's satisfaction with the subject.



Teaching method

Along with the "lesson content," the "teaching method" is also one of the major changes in the new English program. Teaching methods are defined by the teacher's different approach to the lesson content. With the same lesson content, different teachers can have different ways to help students understand the lesson as well as gain knowledge. This could be approached by organizing games, working in groups, or giving different tasks to students to do. This factor is consolidated by the research of Dean and Gibbs (2015); Abou Naaj, Nachouki and Ankit (2012) and Thanh (2015). Those studies showed the same result that the Teaching Method has a positive impact on student satisfaction. Students who appreciate the teacher's teaching method also tend to be more satisfied with the overall curriculum. Teachers have diverse, engaging teaching methods that will make students more interested in learning.

Teacher quality

Teacher quality can be defined by qualifications, teaching capacity, specialized knowledge, and other pedagogical skills. One of the greatest intangible assets of any educational institution is the quality of its teaching staff. Marks (2000) noted that there is a great deal of disagreement between studies regarding student satisfaction regarding the quality and effectiveness of instruction. "One of the goals of measuring student satisfaction in higher education is to assess the quality of the program provided" (Mai, 2005). Some researchers such as "Mai (2005), Mavondo et al. (2004), Pop et al. (2008), Rogers-Freindenberg (2008), Thomas and Galambos (2004) and Wiers-Jensenn et al. (2002) examined whether the service quality of an institution is a factor affecting student "satisfaction". Some relevant aspects can be mentioned such as "effectiveness of teaching", "quality of teaching", "preparation of educational institutions" and "teaching expertise". In 2008, Pop et al. conducted an experimental study on 490 students at Cluj-Napoca University (Romania). The relationship between "teaching quality" and "student satisfaction" is also one of the variables explored by Wiers-Jensenn et al. (2002). Analysis of the dataset from the national survey of student satisfaction with Norwegian higher education also revealed a significant relationship between the "teaching quality" and "student satisfaction". Mai (2005) identified the impression that "teacher quality" is the most important factor in predicting student satisfaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was based on secondary and primary data. The literature, including the theories and previous studies related to the topic, helped the team build a theoretical framework and a scale of satisfaction. Documents about the New English program was also aggregated for the qualitative analysis process. Primary data, including surveys and in-depth interviews, used to analyze students' satisfaction according to the learning environment, lesson content, teacher quality, and teaching methods. In-depth interviews were conducted with 11 people (3 teachers, 2 parents, and 6 students), and 387 students from 8 typical high schools in Hanoi (including 314 valid responses) were surveyed. Qualitative data has been analyzed according to content, and quantitative data have been analyzed by descriptive statistics. Differences in overall satisfaction with the program were analyzed historic it to age, gender and GPA and other characteristics. SPSS 22 software was used to analyse quantitative data.

The questionnaire were tested in January 2019 and survey was conducted over a 2 months period from February to March 2019.



Instruments

The questionnaire consists of 38 questions divided into 3 main parts: student classification question, program evaluation, and personal information. The personal information section includes 5 questions about gender, school, age, GPA and selection of English subject for the university entrance exam. The program evaluation section includes 32 questions related to 4 factors affecting the satisfaction of high school students for the New English program. The questionnaires were designed based on references to previous studies and were revised after the 20-student pilot survey, combined with in-depth interviews to bring out the formal survey.

Five-Likert scale were used. The responses for the five-point scale were: (1) Very disagree (2) Disagree, (3) Normal, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree. The higher the scale score, the higher the satisfaction of high school students for the question variables.

The reliability test was executed for each dimension and the results indicated that the questions measured each factor have consistency and can be acknowledged to be reliable and qualify for further analysis. Cronbach's alpha of each factor is shown in the far right most column of Table 1. These indexes are at 0.7, indicating that the measurement model achieved the reliability (Hair et al., 1988).

Table 1: The reliability analysis of the scale

	Factors	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Learning environment	7	0.766
2	Lesson content	6	0.709
3	Teacher quality	6	0.799
4	Teaching method	6	0.796
5	Overall satisfaction	4	0.737

4. FINDINGS

The analysis of the satisfaction of high school students in Hanoi with new English program show that students were satisfied most with learning environment (Mean 3.42), then with teacher quality (Mean 3.34), level of satisfaction with lesson content is lower (Mean 3.32), teaching methods is lowest (Mean 3.18), About “Learning environment”, while variable “Talking to my colleagues at my site who were taking this course helped me learn” have the highest Mean (3.545), “The atmosphere in English class is very encouraging” is the lowest average (3.229)



Table 2: Student satisfaction with learning environment

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
I feel comfortable asking questions during class.	3.325	0.9405
The atmosphere in English class is very encouraging	3.229	1.0260
It is easy for me to discuss with other students questions about the course content	3.459	.9919
Talking to my colleagues at my site who were taking this course helped me learn.	3.545	.9723
Teachers are enthusiastic, friendly and fair in evaluating students	3.290	1.0432
Feedback on evaluation of tests and other assignments was given in a timely manner.	3.331	1.0385
All assignments were returned with useful feedback from the instructor.	3.338	1.0115
General assessment of the classroom environment	3.42	

In the variable “lesson content”, while “English textbooks are designed with diverse topics” made high school students feel satisfied with the lowest level (3.2), “The vocabulary provided in the book is very useful and diversified” is received highly satisfaction by high school students (3.45) due to the effectiveness of new English textbooks.

Table 3: Students' satisfaction with lesson content

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
English textbooks are designed with diverse topics	3.2	0.99
The content recorded on the CD included with the book has a natural, standard voice	3.44	0.95
The vocabulary provided in the books is very useful and diversified	3.45	0.98
I learned many useful grammatical structures when studying English at school	3.29	1.01
I gained different knowledge in the learning process (for example: culture, history ...)	3.21	1.08



The amount of knowledge in a English class is reasonable (suitable for my English level)	3.36	1.02
General assessment of the lesson content	3.32	

In term of "teaching quality", while students rated at a fairly good level (Mean 3.34), variable "The teacher has good English speaking skills" is evaluated under average rating (Mean 2.71). It can be seen that the pronunciation skills of teachers at the surveyed schools did not meet students' expectations.

Table 4: Students' Satisfaction with Teacher Quality

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
The teacher has good English speaking skills (good pronunciation, good voice,...)	2.71	1.09
Teacher's English listening skills is good	3.43	0.85
Teacher's English reading skills is good	3.42	0.93
Teacher's English listening skills is good	3.48	0.95
The teacher have good knowledge and experiences	3.24	1.01
Teachers make good use of information technology facilities to support teaching	3.14	1.04
General assessment of teaching quality	3.34	

"Teaching methods" has the lowest average (Mean 3.18) proving that there are many problems in English teaching method which did not meet student's expectations. The two variables received the lowest score are: "Teachers have flexibility in teaching methods / There are many different approaches to lesson content" (Mean 2.91) and "I am satisfied with the activities in class (group work, presentation, ...) (Mean 2.91)

Table 5: Student satisfaction with teaching methods

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teachers have flexibility in teaching methods / There are many different approaches to lesson content	2.91	1.09
Teacher's way of communicating is easy to	3.36	0.97



understand and attract		
The teacher encourages students to participate actively in the lesson	3.40	1.07
Some lessons with the participation of foreign teachers are very effective	3.04	1.11
I practice many skills in the learning process (Listening, speaking, reading and writing)	3.29	1.10
I am encouraged to actively search for relevant information	3.26	1.06
I am satisfied with the activities in class (group work, presentation, ...)	2.91	1.09
General assessment of teaching method	3.18	

Generally, high school students in Ha Noi satisfied with new English program at medium level. Particularly, high school students tend to be more satisfied with learning environment than other factors. In contrast, high school students have the lowest level of satisfaction with teachers' quality and teaching methods.

Table 6: Overall satisfaction with the New English program

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overall, I'm satisfied with the New English program	3.443	0.8258
I am willing to introduce the English program at school to my family and friends	3.239	0.9544
Learning English at school is effective	3.239	0.8921
Learning English at school is interesting	3.232	0.9725
Overall satisfaction	3.29	



When conducting satisfaction analysis of high school students according to demographic factors, the result showed that there is a significant difference in the satisfaction of the student groups. In particular, the female students tend to have lower satisfaction than the male group. Female student often like learning English more than male student so maybe they expected higher than male students.

Regarding the selection of English for university entrance exams, the analysis results show that there is no significant difference between the group of students who choose English for university entrance exams and those who do not choose English for university entrance exams. Generally, students who do not choose English for university exams tend to be more satisfied than students who use English for university exams because they are not under the pressure of studying English grammar for university entrance exams.

In terms of GPA, students with high English average scores were significantly more satisfied. Based on the results, the team found that the GPA was directly proportional to student satisfaction.

In terms of age, grade 11 students had the highest satisfaction with the program, while students over 18 years old (graduated) and especially grade 12 students had the lowest evaluation. Finally, regarding the group of schools, the research results show that students in group 1 (top schools in Hanoi) have lower satisfaction than students in group 3 (those with lower input scores and lower output scores than groups 1 and 2).

Table 6: Difference in overall satisfaction according to age, gender, GPA, and the selection for university entrance exam

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Gender	Male	142	3.6	0.65	0.00
	Female	172	3.1	0.62	
Choosing English for university entrance exams	Yes	182	3.2	0.67	0.01
	No	132	3.4	0.69	
GPA	5 - <6	5	2.4	0.29	0.00
	6.5 - <8	114	2.9	0.59	
	8 - <9	135	3.5	0.56	



	9 - 10	60	3.8	0.53	
Age	16 (Grade 10)	42	3.4	0.73	0.005
	17 (Grade 11)	55	3.6	0.62	
	18 (Grade 12)	119	3.2	0.67	
	> 18 (Graduated)	98	3.2	0.67	

5. DISCUSSIONS

In summary, the results showed that Hanoi high school students tend to be more satisfied with learning environment than other factors (Mean 3.42). In contrast, they have the lowest level of satisfaction with teaching methods (Mean 3.18), and English speaking skills of teacher (Mean 2.71). Below are explanations based on findings from in depth interviews:

Factors made high school students in Hanoi satisfied with the new English program

The new English program has solved many inadequacies of the old program and has received relatively positive feedback from students and parents. Firstly, regarding textbooks, there have been many improvements in terms of appearance, more beautiful, lively and eye-catching forms. The vocabulary and knowledge provided are varied and useful. At the same time, the new book also adds a CD to help students practice their listening skills at home. Secondly, thanks to the increased interaction between students and lecturers, the new program has made the environment in new English lessons more exciting than before. Thirdly, many students have shown marked improvement in their English skills, especially listening and speaking skills as they are practiced regularly in class. Finally, they are actively involved in the lecture, actively seeking information and contributing to the lecture content through presentation activities. This allows them to practice their skills and to memorize the knowledge in class.

Factors made high school students in Hanoi unsatisfied with the new English program and reasons

As can be seen from the results of qualitative and quantitative of analysis, the level of satisfaction of high school students in Hanoi for the new English program is generally low. There are many reasons for this situation.

The teacher's expertise is not high, especially the pronunciation skills are not standard. Teachers don't apply practical connection on lessons and lack of flexibility in approaches to lectures, different teaching methods. Especially in some schools, teachers still teach students only for doing exams. Teachers still use Vietnamese to teach English, making it difficult to create an environment that encourages students to develop listening and speaking skills. Class activities such as presentations and project work are not well organized. The frequency of these activities is not



balanced, putting pressure on students. Besides, support facilities such as projectors, speakers have not been regularly used in the lessons and facilities are poor, no practice room provided.

The new English program is very good that teach 4 skills for students, however there is no consistency on how to test and evaluate, especially in the university exam, so many students focus only on what are tested in the exams instead of practicing all skills (Despite learning all 4 skills, only reading and writing skills are tested). The topics in the textbooks have been diversified, however, they have not focused on the topics that students are interested in.

At lower levels of education, because learning English has not focused on two listening and speaking skills, some students are not confident when communicating in English, afraid to speak, afraid to be wrong. The new program requires students to listen and speak more, which makes them more likely to feel pressured which made satisfaction level reduced.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To successfully implement educational innovation and improve the new English program for high school students, the Ministry of Education & Training should improve both the lesson content and the expertise of high school English teachers, and the high school's headmasters should organize activities increase students' overall learning motivation. Below are detailed of our recommendations:

Improving the lesson content

Regarding the amount of knowledge, some students commented that the frequency of project's presentation is too high for high school students. It is the reason why the Ministry of Education should adjust the frequency of group activities as well as reduce irrelevant content to reduce pressure for teachers and students.

Regarding the content of textbooks, they need to pay attention to topics that high school student interest such as idols, music, school life, or close topics in life for students to be interested in. This topic would make students get more motivation for the lesson.

Improving the expertise of high school English teachers

In the short term, the Ministry of Education and Training should establish more organizations, seminars as well as a professional training course to create an environment for teachers to exchange necessary experiences when teaching new English program. Besides, they should issue many attractive policies and incentives to attract highly qualified teachers. Some aspects of workload also should be the focus. Indeed, the Ministry of Education and Training should consider issuing appropriate policies to increase teacher satisfaction that address the current shortage of teacher force. Besides, the Ministry of Education and Training should set a target of medium high-performing and students can take international English certificates such as IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC then submits to the school to convert the corresponding score. Nowadays, many students learn new English program at school but still have to study English at the center. This solution has helped to alleviate the pressure due to lack of teachers.



In the long term, raising the requirements for English teachers is necessary. The Ministry of Education and Training should improve the requirements for English language teachers at high schools such as setting requirements for certificates of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to help achieve the goals of the innovation program. Along with that is the focus on training English pedagogical students at many universities. This is because students of English pedagogy are quality and complementary resources for the shortage of English teachers' workforce currently.

Organizing activities to support students increase their overall learning motivation

Creating student excitement of learning would positively influence attitudes through classroom learning activities. Besides, the teaching method of teachers also makes an important contribution to the motivation of students to study English lessons. The school should focus on organizing activities to support students increase their overall learning motivation so that they are satisfied with the programs. In addition, regular assessments help schools provide timely solutions to problems that students and teachers encounter during the learning of the new program. The school should consult students' evaluation on a monthly or 3-month basis in the form of ballots. This recommendation helps the school and teachers understand the needs and expectations of students to adjust the teaching method accordingly. Also, class tests should incorporate a variety of forms of tests, namely assessments of teachers, self-assessment students and friends to evaluate each other to make the most objective view of learning situations.

7. CONCLUSION

During the international integration period, English is an important and necessary language to develop and integrate with the world. Educating students in English is the foundation to help the country grow and globalize. The new English program of the Ministry of Education and Training is launched with specific strategic goals and aims to formulate, develop the subject's specific competence especially communicative competence. This program helps learners to develop comprehension skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and language knowledge, phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar.

This is the first study about high school students' satisfaction with the new English program in Hanoi. The study results gave an overview of high school students' satisfaction with the new English program in Hanoi at medium level. Students are dissatisfied the most with the pronunciation of teachers and teaching methods (which was not interesting and flexible). The group also recommends some solutions from the school level to the Ministry of Education and Training to improve student satisfaction with the new English program. For the school, high schools in Hanoi should create an encouraging environment by organizing extra activities, improving facilities quality. Also, the assessment should be focused to give a timely understanding about the satisfaction of students. For the Ministry of Education and Training, the group proposed solutions related to the content of the textbooks and the expertise of English teachers. In addition, the professional requirements of teachers should be supplemented with English certificates such as IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC, ... with teaching experiences and some methods to improve teachers' satisfaction. Members with the new program. Innovation is an important factor to promote the development of education and English is an important language in the process of globalization, so the English innovation program is very important and should be invested in. Knowledge about how



students value the new English program will help effective implement the educational reform in Vietnam.

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