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An Investigation into the Factors Influencing the Quality of Training Programs at University of Sciences – Thai Nguyen University



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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the factors influencing the quality of training programs at the University of Sciences – Thai Nguyen University (TNUS) by conducting a survey among final-year students to obtain feedback on their experiences. Data was collected from 242 TNUS students in Course 18 (cohort 2020-2024) and analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software. The findings identify six key factors impacting training quality at TNUS: (1) objectives, program learning outcomes, and training program contents; (2) teaching activities in the course; (3) assessment of learning outcomes; (4) student consulting and support services; (5) learning materials and facilities; and (6) General assessment of the course. These factors collectively affect the quality of graduates. Based on these results, the article offers recommendations for enhancing training programs to better meet current societal needs.

KEYWORDS: Training programs, quality, survey, feedback, final-year students

I. INTRODUCTION

Education and training are the top national policies and a collective endeavor of the Party, the State, and the entire population. Investment in education is prioritized within socio-economic development programs and plans as it is considered an investment in development. To align with the goal of education and training innovation, it is essential to clearly define and publicize the goals and program outcomes for each educational level, subject, program, industry, and major. This transparency serves as a commitment to ensuring the quality of the entire system and each educational institution, providing a foundation for monitoring and evaluating education and training quality. There is a need to innovate the mechanisms for receiving and processing information in education and training management, enabling mechanisms for learners to evaluate educational activities, teachers to assess administrators, and educational institutions to evaluate state management agencies [1]. Within this context, universities play a crucial role in training highly qualified human resources, fostering talents, and developing learners' qualities and capacities for self-study, knowledge acquisition, and creativity. To fulfill this role, universities must clearly define the development orientation of their higher education programs.

The project to reform Vietnam's Higher Education for the period 2006-2020, issued under Resolution No. 14/2005/NQ-CP, mandates the classification of Vietnamese universities into two groups: research-oriented and career-application-oriented [2]. This reform includes measures to regularly monitor and enhance the quality and efficiency of higher education activities, ensuring that all applicable standards and criteria are met by higher education institutions by 2025. Accountability for the quality and effectiveness of higher education activities is to be maintained through adherence to the established standards, with reporting to learners, state management agencies, and other relevant parties [3]. The specific goals include the development of both research-oriented and career-application-oriented higher education programs. Understanding and measuring factors that influence student satisfaction has been a longstanding concern for educational officials (Nguyen Hoang Diem Huong, 2014) [17].

In contemporary Vietnam, the overall quality of higher education at colleges and universities exhibits numerous deficiencies. Unlike in other countries where students are regarded as the primary and most crucial customers of higher education (Hill, 1995) [19], many Vietnamese institutions have yet to recognize themselves as service providers or customer-focused organizations. The quality of educational services can be evaluated through five dimensions: superiority (or excellence), perfection (flawless outcomes), fitness for purpose (meeting customer needs), value for money (assessment of investment), and transformation (transition from one state to another) (Green, 1993) [16]. Customer satisfaction reflects the extent to which an individual's feelings about a product or service result from comparing their expectations to the actual outcomes. When a customer feels satisfied with a product, it indicates that the actual satisfaction derived from using the product meets or exceeds their expected satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is determined

by the disparity between actual and expected satisfaction; a larger gap results in higher satisfaction or dissatisfaction and vice versa (Philip Kotler, 2001) [19]. According to a World Bank survey assessing the quality of human resources in 12 Asian countries in 2014, Vietnam scored 3.79 points on a 10-point scale, ranking 11th. In comparison, Korea scored 6.91 points, India 5.76 points, and Malaysia 5.59 points (Vu Xuan Hung, 2016) [3]. The survey report indicates that countries with high scores in human resource quality tend to have made significant advances in educational development, offering many prestigious and high-quality training programs. The education systems in these high-ranking countries consistently prioritize the evaluation and improvement of training programs to adapt to societal needs and the context of global integration [3].

The quality of an educational institution refers to its ability to meet its established goals, adhere to the educational objectives outlined in the Law on Higher Education, and align with the requirements for training human resources to support local and national socioeconomic development. Evaluation on the quality of an educational institution involves collecting and processing information and making judgments based on assessment standards for all institutional activities. This includes quality assurance in strategy, system quality, implementation functions, and operational outcomes of the institution [25]. According to Goldstein (1993), evaluating a training program is the process of systematically collecting descriptive and evaluative information to make informed decisions regarding the program. This includes selecting and applying, bringing value to the program, and making modifications during implementation to ensure its effectiveness. [5] According to the OECD (2009), program evaluation is a systematic and targeted assessment of ongoing or completed programs, considering three perspectives: program building, program implementation, and program results. The purpose of program evaluation is to determine the extent to which objectives have been achieved, the effectiveness of the program, and the level of its impact and sustainability [5]. Sanders and Worthen (2004) emphasize that training program evaluation must be conducted systematically and objectively to collect, analyze, and evaluate information related to the training program. McNamara (2000) describes training program evaluation as the process of gathering and documenting information about a specific program to assist in making informed decisions for each aspect of the training program. According to Posavac and Carey (2007), evaluating a training program involves selecting assessment methods and skills to determine if the program meets its objectives, is being implemented as intended, and is priced appropriately in line with customer needs. Scriven (1967) distinguishes between two levels of training program evaluation: formative and summative. Formative evaluation occurs continuously throughout the development and implementation stages of the training program, while summative evaluation takes place after the program has been fully developed and executed.

In essence, training program evaluation is an ongoing process aimed at measuring the achievement of the program's goals, enhancing implementation effectiveness, providing accountability to stakeholders, and supporting planning and decision-making processes related to the program.

Several widely recognized training program evaluation models are used globally today: CIPP Model (Context – Input – Process – Product), Kirkpatrick Model, and Kaufman's 5-level model. Introduced by Stufflebean in 1983, the CIPP model aims to provide evaluators with the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding the evaluation process. This model is highly popular because it assesses training programs at various stages, from design and implementation to post-completion [9]. (Stufflebean, 1983). Another well-known model for evaluating training programs is the Kirkpatrick model, introduced in 1959. This model assesses the effectiveness of training programs across four levels: Learner feedback (Reaction), learners' knowledge and skills (Learning), changes in behavior (Behaviour), and overall outcomes (Result) [8]. (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Kaufman's 5-level training program evaluation model, developed from Kirkpatrick's 4-level model, introduces a division of Kirkpatrick's first level into two distinct stages: input and process. Kaufman's model emphasizes evaluating the impact of the training program on society, particularly regarding learners' contributions to society after completing the program. [7]

International integration has facilitated Vietnam's economic and social development, fostering the exchange of knowledge, the transfer of science and technology, and the sharing of experiences. In recent years, many Vietnamese universities have increasingly focused on enhancing their management, planning, design, teaching, and research capabilities. These efforts aim to improve the quality of training to meet the demands of both domestic and international human resources (Nguyen Thi Bao Chau, 2013) [13].

A training program at a specific level of a major encompasses several components: objectives, program learning outcomes; training contents, methods and activities; facility conditions; organizational structure; functions and tasks; and academic activities of the unit responsible for implementing training in that field of study [25]. University of Sciences consistently prioritizes enhancing the quality of training and services to create sustainable value for the community. Its training programs, research projects, and services are developed based on practical needs to best serve the community. The university has concentrated on enhancing its facilities and teaching staff to further improve the quality of its training programs at TNUS. In the context of training quality, students are considered both the customers and the primary "product" of the training process. Therefore, student feedback on their satisfaction with the training programs is crucial. This feedback serves as a scientific basis for the university to make appropriate adjustments to better meet the needs of of both students and society.

II. RESULTS

2.1. Survey Overview

- Survey Implementation Time duration: May 2024
- Survey Subjects: Final year full-time university students
- Scope of Survey: Students of course 18
- Total Survey Questionnaires Received: 242
- Survey Contents: The survey includes six main contents with a total of 39 criteria and one open-ended question: Objectives, Program learning outcomes, and Training Program Content (09 criteria); Teaching Activities in the Course (08 criteria); Assessment of Learning Outcomes (07 criteria); Student Consultation and Support (08 criteria); Materials and Facilities for Learning (05 criteria); General Assessment of the Course (02 criteria). In addition to the 39 criteria, there is an open-ended question allowing students to express their wishes or opinions to improve the quality of the university's training programs. [20][21]....[26]
- The survey instrument: A pre-designed questionnaire based on the quality assessment standards of the Ministry of Education and Training. This design ensured the validity, reliability, and logical coherence of the collected information. The criteria were evaluated on a 5-level scale, with level 1 being the lowest rating and level 5 being the highest rating, specifically: 1 Very dissatisfied; 2 Not satisfied; 3 Neutral; 4 Satisfied; 5 Very satisfied.

After data collection, the information was processed using SPSS 22.0 and Microsoft Excel for statistical analysis.

The total number of feedback forms received from students at the end of the course was 242. The feedback rate from students from various faculties/ divisions is as follows:

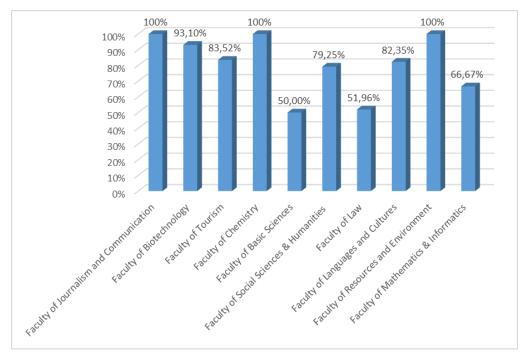


Figure 1: Feedback rate of final year students of Faculties/Divisions

According to the evaluation criteria, where the scale ranges from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), a rating of 4 or above is considered positive feedback from learners.

The overall feedback from 242 final-year students on the quality of the training program was deemed satisfactory, with an average score of 4.19 and 177 positive feedback responses, accounting for 73.14%. The detailed content evaluation scores closely matched the overall assessment, indicating that final-year students across all faculties and divisions responded relatively positively to the course. The highest ratings were given by students from the Faculty of Languages and Cultures (4.31) and the Faculty of Chemistry (4.27) while the lowest rating was from students of the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics (3.50). However, due to the low number of graduates in this faculty, this value is not considered reliable.

Table 2: Summary of student feedback results for each content

	Content 1:	Content 2:	Content 3:	Content 4:	Content 5:	Content 6:	
	Objectives,	Teaching	Assessment	Student	Materials	General	
	program	activities	of learning	Consultation	and	assessment	Average
	outcomes	in the	outcomes	and Support	facilities	of the course	value
	and training	course			for learning		
	program content						
FACULTY OF							
JOURNALISM AND	4,36	4,16	4,18	4,13	3,93	4,26	4,17
COMMUNICATION							
FACULTY OF	3,78	3,75	3,77	3,75	3,84	3,85	2.70
BIOTECHNOLOGY	3,76	3,73	3,77	3,73	3,04	3,03	3,79
FACULTY OF	4,2	4,21	4,27	4,18	4,16	4,18	4,20
TOURISM	4,2	4,21	4,27	4,10	4,10	4,10	4,20
FACULTY OF	4,26	4,58	4,43	4,04	4,27	4,03	4,27
CHEMISTRY	4,20	4,56	4,43	4,04	4,27	4,03	4,27
FACULTY OF	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
BASIC SCIENCES	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00
FACULTY OF							
SOCIAL SCIENCES	4,34	4,29	4,27	4,06	4,11	4,10	4,20
AND HUMANITIES							
FACULTY OF LAW	4,21	4,21	4,15	4,13	4,22	4,24	4,19
FACULTY OF							
LANGUAGES AND	4,15	4,41	4,45	4,25	4,26	4,32	4,31
CULTURES							
FACULTY OF							
NATURAL	4,08	4,00	4,00	4,19	3,90	4,00	4.02
RESOURCES AND	4,08	4,00	4,00	4,17	3,90	4,00	4,03
ENVIRONMENT							
FACULTY OF							
MATHEMATICS &	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50
INFORMATICS							
AVERAGE VALUE	4,09	4,11	4,10	4,02	4,02	4,05	

The results collected from students at the end of the course indicate that, overall, students from the different faculties and divisions rated the school's criteria as meeting their requirements, with scores of 1.00 or higher. Notably, certain contents, such as "Teaching activities in the course" and "Assessment of learning outcomes," received particularly high ratings, with average values of 4.00 and 4.10, respectively. The others also had average scores above 4.10.

* Specific Results

Student feedback for this content had an average score of 4.09. Within this category, the criteria "Materials and facilities for learning" and "Student consultation and support" received the lowest ratings (4.02), which is close to the positive feedback threshold (4.00). This suggests that there is a need for the university to invest more in learning materials and facilities. Additionally, student counseling and support from staff and lecturers also require improvement across the university.

⁺ Content 1: Objectives, Program learning outcomes, and training program Contents (9 criteria)

Table 3. Summary of student feedback on content 1

	1. T	`he	2. The	3. The	4.	5.	6. The	7. The	8. The	9. The
	objectives	of	program	PLOs	Lecturers	Student	modules	modules in	modules in	training
	the traini	ng	learning	cover	introduce,	s can	in the	the training	the training	program
	program a	are	outcome	both	disseminat	easily	curriculu	program	program	ensures a
	clearly		s (PLOs)	general	e, and	access	m	are	are	balanced
	defined a	nd	are	and	guide	the	determin	structured	arranged	ratio
	disseminate	ed	clearly	specific	students in	curricul	e	to ensure	reasonably	between
	to students		defined,	requirem	using the	um	appropri	cohesion	(Prerequisi	general
			publicize	ents that		descript	ate	and	te modules;	knowled
			d, and	students	syllabi	ion and	teaching	continuity	duration	ge,
			dissemin	need to		course	and	between	for each	specializ
Evaluation			ated to	achieve		syllabi	learning	general,	module;	ed
Criteria			students.	after			methods	fundametal	time/semes	knowled
Criteria				completi			and	ly	ter of	ge, and
				ng the			assessme	specialized	implement	soft
				program			nt	, and	ation).	skills.
							methods	specialized		
							to ensure	modules,		
							the	helping the		
							achieve	training		
							ment of	program		
							PLOs	become a		
								unified		
								block.		
Average value	4.27		4.14	4.23	4.26	4.01	4.11	4.13	4.11	4.26

⁺ Content 2: Teaching activities in the course (9 criteria)

Table 4: Summary of student feedback on content 2

	10. Teaching	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16. Learning	17.
	and learning	Students	Teaching	Lecturers	Lecturers	Lecturers	activities such	Teaching
	activities	are	and	guide	use	and	as projects,	and
	promote the	satisfied	learning	students in	diverse	students	practical	learning
	development	with the	activities	developing	teaching	have	internships,	activities
	of students'	teaching	designed	learning	methods	effective	practical	have an
	skills to meet	and	to	strategies	througho	interactio	exercises, and	effective
	PLOs.	learning	achieve	that clearly	ut the	ns on	professional	impact on
Evaluation		methods	PLOs are	demonstrat	teaching	teaching	practice at	improving
Criteria		used in the	clearly	e learning	process.	and	local	students'
Criteria		training	shown in	activities		learning	organizations	lifelong
		program.	the	aimed at		methods	and high	learning
			syllabi	achieving		to	schools are	abilities.
			and	PLOs.		achieve	effectively	
			dissemin			PLOs.	designed and	
			ated to				implemented	
			students.				within the	
							training	
							program.	
Average value	4.15	4.06	4.22	4.06	4.08	3.91	4.19	4.21

The average value for the two criteria in this content was rated by students at 4.11. The highest-rated criterion was "Teaching and learning activities to achieve program learning outcomes (PLOs) are clearly shown in the syllabi and disseminated to students" with an average value of 4.22. Additionally, the criterion "Teaching and learning activities have an effective impact on improving for students' lifelong learning abilities" received a rating of 2.21. The lowest-rated criterion was "Lecturers and students have effective interactions on teaching and learning methods to achieve PLOs" with an average value of 3.91.

+ Content 3: Assessment of learning outcomes (7 criteria)

Table 5. Summary of student feedback on content 3

	18. Student	19. Testing	20.	21. Lecturers	22. Testing	23.	24.
	testing and	and evaluating	Regulations	use different	and	Student	
	assessment	student	on exam	methods to	assessment	s have	Students
	include	learning	time	evaluate	ensure	their	are fully informed
	continuous	outcomes are	allowance,	student	fairness and	academ	
	evaluation	conducted	exam	learning	objectivity.	ic	
	during the	using various	formats,	outcomes,		results	regulations
Evaluation	learning	methods that	evaluation	such as group		announ	and
Criteria	process,	are compatible	criteria, and	work, major		ced on	procedures for
	formative tests,	and consistent	score	assignments,		time.	reviewing
	and summative	with PLOs.	weights are	presentations			their
	exams designed		specifically	, seminars,			academic
	in accordance		and clearly	and on-site			results
	with the level of		described in	evaluations.			
	achievement of		the syllabi.				after each
	PLOs.						semester.
Average	4.29	4.08	4.19	3.93	4.22	4.09	4.21
value							

The overall results indicate that the content "Assessment of learning outcomes" has met learners' requirements relatively well. However, the criterion "Testing and evaluating student learning outcomes is carried out using many methods that are compatible and consistent with the learning outcomes" was rated the lowest at 3.93. This suggests that specialized faculties and lecturers need to diversify testing and assessment methods.

+ Content 4: Students consultation and support (8 criteria)

Table 6. Summary of student feedback on content 4

	25. Academic	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.	31. The	32. Youth
	consulting	Employment	Students	Faculty/	University	Regulatio	Universi	Union and
	activities,	support	learn in a	Division	administra	ns	ty	Student
	extracurricula	activities for	comfortab	staff and	tive	regarding	effective	Association
	r activities,	students	le	academi	officers	student	ly meets	activities
	competitions,	(practical	psycholog	c	and staff	regimes	students'	within the
	and other	internships,	ical,	advisors	maintain a	and	needs for	School are
	support	collaboration	social, and	_	courteous	policies	cultural,	practical and
Evaluation	services are	with	environme	homeroo	attitude,	are	artistic,	positively
Criteria	provided to	businesses	ntal	m	listen to,	addressed	physical	impact
	enhance	and	setting	teachers	and	in a timely	educatio	students'
	student	employers,	with	actively	address	manner.	n, and	learning
	learning.	and the	adequate	support	students'		sports	activities
		enhancement	support	and	legitimate		activities	and soft
		of soft skills)	for	guide	requests			skills
		are offered to	learning	students	in a timely			development
		meet students'	and	in their	manner.			
		needs.	research.	studies.				
Average value	4.17	4.04	4.10	3.99	3.97	3.95	4.03	4.08

The student feedback results reveal that the average value of the eight criteria is 3.04. The criteria "Regulations regarding student regimes and policies are addressed in a timely manner" and "University administrative officers and staff maintain a courteous attitude, listen to, and address students' legitimate requests in a timely manner" received the lowest ratings, at 3.95 and 3.97 respectively. Consequently, the school and relevant units need to ensure that student regimes and policies are implemented promptly and in accordance with regulations. Additionally, functional departments and centers should focus on improving the quality of service and the courteous behavior of staff to better handle student concerns.

+ Content 5: Materials and Facilities for Learning (5 criteria)

This content encompasses criteria related to classrooms, laboratories, libraries, information technology systems, and standards for the environment, landscape, health, and security. Most criteria for materials and facilities are rated as relatively good and meet learners' needs. However, the criterion "The library has appropriate learning resources to support training and research activities" received the lowest rating of 3.85, indicating that library learning resources require more attention and improvement. The results are clearly illustrated in the data table below:

Table 7. Summary of Student Feedback on Content 5

	33. Classrooms	34. Laboratories	35. The	36. An information	37. Environmental,
	have appropriate	and practice	library has	technology system	health, and safety
	facilities to	facilities are	appropriate	(including computer	standards are defined
Evaluatio	support training	equipped and	learning	systems, hardware,	and implemented,
	and research	updated to meet	resources to	software, communication	taking into account the
n Criteria	activities.	the needs of	support	networks, online meeting	specific needs of people
		students.	training and	rooms, websites, etc.) is	with disabilities.
			research	suitable to support the	
			activities.	training programs.	
Average	3.97	4.08	3.86	4.13	4.05
value	3.91	4.00	3.00	4.13	4.05

⁺ Content 6: General assessment of the course (2 criteria)

Table 8. Summary of Student Feedback on Content 6

Evaluation Criteria	38. Graduates have sufficient knowledge and skills for the profession.	39. Students are satisfied with the training quality of the course.
Average value	4.20	4.22

The student feedback results show that both criteria are rated highly, with scores of 4.20 and 4.22, indicating that students respond positively to the training quality of the course.

2.2. Recommendations

The feedback results suggest that the criteria established in the final year student survey largely reflect the university's activities. When used appropriately, the scale provides results that fairly represent the reality of the school's overall operations. Feedback on the six main content areas shows that the majority of students are satisfied with their training programs. However, there are areas for improvement. The university needs to upgrade and invest in suitable facilities and equipment to better support students' learning, training, and research activities. Additionally, it is essential to enhance the role of homeroom teachers and academic advisors, who act as intermediaries to help students easily communicate their thoughts and aspirations regarding their studies. This support can encourage students' learning spirit and contribute to improving the university's training quality.

- Objectives, Program learning outcomes, and Training Program Contents: The university needs to review the training plan for final-year students to ensure they have enough credits to be considered for scholarships; Supplement, review, and update practical training programs to improve students' foreign language skills and soft skills; Increase the number of internship and practical credits to provide students with opportunities to enhance their knowledge; Regularly update training programs, especially by incorporating advanced training programs from foreign universities; develop training programs that align with learner requirements and meet the demands of the labor market and society; Organize training in specialized knowledge corresponding to each specialized division of the faculty and university, and develop a scientific timetable. What is more, the university should establish relationships with external businesses, creating opportunities for students to visit, practice, and interact with real-world environments. This relationship

will also help the university understand employer needs and design learning programs that closely match the actual requirements of businesses.

- Teaching Activities and Assessment of Learning outcomes: Establish regulations or announcements specifying the times for disclosing exam scores and incorporating scientific research scores into student assessments. Lecturers should regularly innovate and apply engaging, effective, and scientific teaching methods to enhance students' autonomy in learning and research; implement lectures in interactive formats such as games and role-playing to improve lesson comprehension, maximize creativity, and develop soft skills during the learning process. Besides, they should maintain a close and friendly relationship with students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide tailored support to improve their learning outcomes.
- Materials and Facilities for Learning: Upgrade and invest in appropriate facilities to support students' learning, training, and research activities; Increase the availability of relevant learning resources to support students' academic and research needs; Invest effectively in facilities for practice classrooms in line with standards for specific majors; Regularly update and supplement textbooks and materials to enhance teaching and students' self-research experiences.
- *Student Consultation and Support:* The university should provide timely notifications regarding the resolution of policies, regimes, and social benefits for students; The Youth Union and Student Association should organize numerous practical activities to foster a healthy living environment for students. Furthermore, it is crucial to offer short-term courses focused on teaching and training essential communication skills. Besides, it is beneficial to increase the number of extracurricular activities and create diverse recreational spaces to help students develop teamwork, organizational, planning, communication, and problem-solving skills.

III. CONCLUSION

This research, grounded in theories of satisfaction and practical studies related to training program quality, developed an evaluation model for end-of-course student assessments at TNUS. The study, based on surveys of 242 students, identified six key factors influencing the training program. These factors were rigorously tested using statistical tools to ensure research reliability.

The strength of this evaluation model lies in its simplicity and ease of use, which provides evaluators with valuable insights to support decision-making regarding training programs. The model helps ensure effective implementation and high-quality delivery of the programs. The findings offer critical recommendations and form a foundation for developing solutions to enhance TNUS's training program quality. These insights also contribute to improving the quality of teaching and providing targeted, practical solutions to further elevate the quality of the School's training programs.

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