International Journal of Physical Education, Exercise and Sports
www.physicaleducationjournal.com
Online ISSN: 2664-9896
Received: 28-08-2026, Accepted: 27-09-2026, Published: 12-10-2026
Volume 8, Issue 4, 2026, Page No. 12-17

The current state of the drowning prevention movement for children in Hung My Commune, Vinh Long Province, Vietnam

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Abstract
Drowning is one of the leading causes of death from serious injuries in children. In localities with many rivers, canals, ditches, and ponds, assessing the current state of drowning prevention efforts is crucial in developing appropriate preventive measures. The research objective is to assess the current state of drowning prevention efforts for children in Hung My commune, Vinh Long province. A cross-sectional descriptive study on 120 subjects, including 50 children aged 6–14, 50 parents/citizens, 10 physical education teachers, and 10 Youth Union officials. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed by frequency and percentage. Results: The work of preventing and combating drowning has received attention from the government, schools, and organizations, but training activities and community participation are still limited. 60.0% of Youth Union officials and 40.0% of teachers rated community participation as limited, 60.0% in both groups believed that training sessions were held infrequently, 50.0% of Youth Union officials and 60.0% of teachers stated that the team of volunteers and swimming instructors did not meet the demand. Notably, 62.0% of the surveyed children do not know how to swim, while 92.5% of the participants expressed interest or great interest in drowning prevention efforts. Conclusion: The work of preventing and combating drowning in Hung My commune has achieved initial results but is still limited in terms of human resources, training, community participation, and the percentage of children who can swim. It is necessary to enhance safe swimming instruction, educate on drowning prevention skills, and mobilize community participation.

Keywords: Drowning, drowning prevention, children, safe swimming, Hung My commune, Vinh Long province, Vietnam

Introduction

Drowning is one of the major causes of accidental injury deaths in children and continues to be regarded as a public health issue that needs to be prioritized for prevention. According to the World Health Organization, in 2021 [2], there were approximately 300,000 drowning deaths worldwide, with children and young people being significantly affected groups (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024) [11]. The characteristic of drowning accidents is that they often happen quickly and have serious consequences, but most can be prevented through the management and supervision of children, controlling risk points, equipping knowledge and skills for safety in aquatic environments, organizing safe swimming lessons, and enhancing rescue and first aid capabilities in the community. The urgency increases during the summer vacation when children spend more time playing in ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, canals, ditches, and other water areas, while supervision from families and schools may not be consistently maintained (Pham Khac The, 2026) [7].

In Vietnam, preventing and combating child drowning has been identified as an important task in the work of protecting, caring for, and educating children. Decision No. 1248/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister approved the Program for Preventing and Controlling Child Accidents and Injuries for the period 2021 [1]–2030, which identified key tasks such as reducing drowning deaths, creating safe environments, enhancing communication, educating skills, and implementing preventive measures in the community (Prime Minister, 2021) [8]. In the field of education, the Ministry of Education and Training continues to specify this task through the Child and Student Injury Prevention Program for the period 2021 [1]–2025; educational materials on drowning prevention simultaneously require the enhancement of communication, organization of swimming lessons, and education on water safety skills for children and students (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021a, 2021b, 2022a, 2022b) [1, 3].

Domestic studies show that the risk of child drowning is not simply related to whether children can swim or not but is also influenced by many factors such as knowledge and prevention skills, adult supervision, living environment, infrastructure conditions, media activities, and coordination between families, schools, authorities, and the community. Bui Le Vi Chinh's (2020) [5] study in two districts of Binh Dinh province shows that community-based intervention measures can significantly improve knowledge and practices for drowning prevention; after the intervention, the correct knowledge of the people and healthcare workers, as well as the practices to prevent risk factors, was statistically significantly improved. Notably, the intervention effectiveness for the number of drowning cases reached 51.7%, and for drowning deaths reached 33.3%. This result indicates that drowning prevention needs to be implemented through a comprehensive approach, in which the coordination between families, schools, and communities plays an important role (Bui Le Vi Chinh, 2020) [5].

From the perspective of skill education, Nguyen Duc Ninh and Ha Manh Tam (2023) [6] identified five groups of solutions to enhance the effectiveness of drowning prevention education for elementary school students, including increasing awareness through propaganda;

training and professional development for teachers; equipping drowning prevention skills; enhancing facilities, equipment, and funding; and strengthening the inspection and evaluation of drowning prevention education activities. Experimental results show that the selected solutions have an effect on enhancing the effectiveness of drowning prevention education for students (Nguyen Duc Ninh & Ha Manh Tam, 2023) [6].

However, the reality of drowning prevention skills among children still has its limitations. The study by Vo Minh Hoang and colleagues (2024) [9] on 866 middle school students in Hue City showed that only 38% of students were assessed to have good drowning prevention skills. The authors argue that, although the incidence of drowning during the survey period was not high, the students' practical skills in drowning prevention were still low. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance communication, education, and skill training activities for students (Vo Minh Hoang *et al*., 2024) [9]. This result once again shows that the evaluation of drowning prevention activities should not only rely on the number of accidents that have occurred but also consider the level of awareness, skills, organizational conditions, facilities, and accessibility of swimming instruction and water safety education for children.

On the other hand, existing documents indicate that drowning prevention efforts need to be approached as an interdisciplinary and community-based activity. Factors such as skill education, risk point control, equipping rescue equipment, organizing safe swimming lessons, enhancing first aid capacity, and clearly defining the responsibilities of families, schools, local authorities, and social organizations need to be implemented in a coordinated manner (Pham Khac The, 2026 [7]; WHO, 2017). In that context, the development of a drowning prevention movement at the grassroots level not only contributes to raising awareness but also creates conditions for children to regularly engage in swimming lessons, practice safety skills, and develop self-protection abilities in aquatic environments.

Through the documents provided by the teacher, studies have been conducted in Binh Dinh, Thai Nguyen, Gia Lai, and Hue City, focusing on the current situation of drowning accidents, knowledge, skills, and the effectiveness of some intervention measures. However, there are no documents in the provided sources that systematically reflect the current state of the drowning prevention movement for children in Hung My commune, Vinh Long province. The evaluation of the current status of the movement at the commune level, including propaganda work, organizing swimming and water safety skills training, the guiding team, facilities and equipment, children's participation, as well as the coordination between families, schools, local authorities, and mass organizations, is therefore practically significant in identifying the achieved results, limitations, and issues that need to be prioritized for improvement.

Based on the above issues, the study "Current Status of the Drowning Prevention Movement for Children in Hung My Commune, Vinh Long Province, Vietnam" was conducted to assess the organization and implementation of drowning prevention activities for children in the locality, thereby providing a practical basis for proposing solutions to enhance the effectiveness of the drowning prevention movement for children in the future.

Materials and methods

1. Methods

The study used a cross-sectional descriptive design to assess the current state of drowning prevention efforts for children and related factors in Hung My commune, Vinh Long province. The main research methods include:

Method of referencing and document analysis. The research involves collecting, selecting, and analyzing domestic and international documents related to child drowning, water safety education, swimming instruction, and drowning-prevention activities. The sources of documents include scientific articles, theses, professional documents, texts from the Party, the State, the Ministry of Education and Training, and related guiding documents. The summary content focuses on the causes and risk factors of drowning, swimming skills and water safety, propaganda work, training, human resources, facilities, and community coordination. These documents are used to build the theoretical foundation, determine the survey content, and serve as a basis for discussing the research results. The selection of survey content references guidelines on teaching drowning prevention skills, safe swimming, and enhancing family-school-community coordination in professional documents and current regulations (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021, 2022 [1, 3]; World Health Organization [WHO], 2017) [10].

Sociological survey method using questionnaires. This is the main data collection method of the research. The questionnaire is constructed to suit each target group and focuses on content directly related to the research objectives.

For Youth Union officials and physical education teachers, the questionnaire collects opinions on the development of the drowning situation in the locality; the level of community participation; the frequency of training sessions; the level of interest from local authorities; the effectiveness of drowning prevention programs; the responsiveness of the volunteer and swimming instructor teams; and the main difficulties encountered during implementation.

For children, the survey focused on the current state of swimming knowledge, thereby determining the percentage of children who can swim and those who cannot within the study group.

For residents/parents and community survey respondents, the survey content includes age characteristics, awareness of the danger level of drowning accidents, understanding of drowning prevention, and concern for drowning prevention efforts.

The responses are compiled by each group of subjects and each content area to describe the current state of drowning prevention efforts in the locality. This approach aligns with the requirement to simultaneously assess aspects of awareness, skills, resources, and community participation in preventing child drowning (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021 [1]; WHO, 2017).

Structured questionnaire interview method. For the group of 10 Youth Union officials and 10 physical education teachers, the study used a structured questionnaire to gather opinions on the current status of drowning prevention efforts in the locality. The contents are designed with predetermined response options, helping to standardize information and facilitate the aggregation and comparison of rates between the two groups.

This method is used to clarify issues related to the level of government interest, community participation, training activities, program effectiveness, human resources, and difficulties in the implementation process. In this study, the interview method is not aimed at collecting in-depth qualitative data but is mainly conducted in the form of structured questionnaires.

Statistical method: The data, after being collected, checked, classified, and summarized according to each group of subjects and research content. The study uses descriptive statistical indicators including frequency (n) and percentage (%) to describe the sample characteristics, the current state of swimming knowledge, the level of awareness, the degree of concern, and the evaluation of Youth Union officials and teachers regarding drowning prevention efforts.

2. Participants

The study was conducted on 120 people in Hung My commune, Vinh Long province, Vietnam, including:

Target group	Quantity (n)	Ratio (%)
Children aged 6–14 years	50	41,7
Parents/citizens	50	41,7
Physical education teacher	10	8,3
Youth Union officer	10	8,3
Total	120	100,0

A group of 50 children aged 6–14 was surveyed about their swimming proficiency. A group of 50 parents/citizens participated in providing information about awareness, understanding, and concern regarding drowning prevention efforts. A group of 10 physical education teachers and 10 Youth Union officials were surveyed about the current status of drowning prevention activities, community participation, training efforts, human resources, and the challenges faced during implementation at the local level.

Results

1. The current situation of drowning prevention efforts for children in Hung My commune, Vinh Long province

To assess the current state of drowning prevention efforts for children in Hưng Mỹ commune, the study conducted a survey of 20 individuals directly involved in or related to local activities, including 10 Youth Union officials and 10 teachers. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation of Youth Union officials and teachers on drowning prevention work in Hung My commune (n = 20)

Subject matter	Evaluation approach	Youth Union Officer n (%)	Teacher n (%)
The drowning situation in the local area	Significantly reduced	7 (70,0)	10 (100,0)
	Mitigation	1 (10,0)	0 (0,0)
	No change	2 (20,0)	0 (0,0)
	Increase	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)
Community participation level	Very positive	1 (10,0)	2 (20,0)
	Positive	3 (30,0)	4 (40,0)
	Limitations	6 (60,0)	4 (40,0)
	Very limited	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)
Organize training on drowning prevention	Frequently	2 (20,0)	3 (30,0)
	Infrequently	6 (60,0)	6 (60,0)
	None	2 (20,0)	1 (10,0)
The level of attention of the local government	Very high	1 (10,0)	2 (20,0)
	Quite high	4 (40,0)	5 (50,0)
	Average	5 (50,0)	3 (30,0)
	Low	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)
The effectiveness of drowning prevention programs	Very effective	1 (10,0)	2 (20,0)
	Fairly effective	3 (30,0)	6 (60,0)
	Less effective	4 (40,0)	2 (20,0)
	Ineffective	2 (20,0)	0 (0,0)
Team of volunteer swimming instructors	Meeting the needs well	1 (10,0)	2 (20,0)
	Partially meet	4 (40,0)	2 (20,0)
	Not yet met	5 (50,0)	6 (60,0)
	Severe deficiency	0 (0,0)	0 (0,0)
The biggest difficulty in implementation	Lack of personnel	4 (40,0)	5 (50,0)
	Lack of funds	2 (20,0)	3 (30,0)
	Lack of coordination between departments and sectors	1 (10,0)	1 (10,0)
	The public's awareness is not high.	3 (30,0)	1 (10,0)

Analysis of Table 1. The results show that the assessment of the drowning situation in the locality is positive. 70.0% of the Youth Union officials and 100.0% of the teachers believe that the drowning situation has "significantly reduced"; there were no opinions indicating an increase in the situation. However, these results reflect the opinions of the surveyed individuals and do not represent statistical data on the number of drowning incidents per year; therefore, it can only be concluded that the stakeholders perceive a decreasing trend.

The level of community participation is still limited. 60.0% of Youth Union officials and 40.0% of teachers chose the

"limitations" level, while the percentage rating "very positive" only reached 10.0% and 20.0%, respectively. This result shows that although drowning prevention efforts have been implemented, they have not yet attracted widespread and proactive participation from the community.

Training work is a clear limitation. Only 20.0% of Youth Union officials and 30.0% of teachers believe that training activities are organized regularly; conversely, 60.0% in both groups assess that training is organized infrequently. This shows that activities to enhance knowledge and practical skills in drowning prevention have not been maintained regularly.

Regarding the role of the local government, 50.0% of Youth Union officials and 70.0% of teachers rated the level of attention from "quite high" to "very high"; no one rated it as low. The results show that the local government has shown a certain level of concern, but 50.0% of the Youth Union officials and 30.0% of the teachers still rated it as average.

The effectiveness of the current programs is also not uniform. In the group of Youth Union officials, 60.0% rated the program as "less effective" or "ineffective"; while in the group of teachers, 80.0% rated it as "fairly effective" or "very effective." This result shows that the assessments of the two groups differ and need to be considered in the process of organizing activities at the community and school levels.

Human resources are a noteworthy issue. 50.0% of the Youth Union officials and 60.0% of the teachers believe that the quantity and capacity of the volunteer and swimming teacher team do not meet the requirements. Correspondingly, "lack of personnel" was identified as the biggest challenge, with a rate of 40.0% among youth union officials and 50.0% among teachers, followed by lack of funds.

Thus, the survey results show that the drowning prevention efforts in Hung My commune have received attention and have been initially implemented, but there are still limitations in community participation, training frequency, specialized personnel, and deployment resources. These are also important components emphasized in current drowning prevention programs, where the requirement for coordination between families, schools, and local communities, as well as the enhancement of swimming instruction and water safety education, are identified as key tasks (Ministry of Education and Training, 2022; Prime Minister, 2021) [3, 8].

2. Characteristics of the community survey subjects

Table 2: Age structure of the survey participants (n = 120)

Age group	Quantity	Ratio (%)
Under 18 years old	50	41,7
18–35 years old	54	45,0
36–50 years old	16	13,3
Over 50 years old	0	0,0
Total	120	100,0

The results in Table 2 show that the group aged 18–35 years has the highest percentage, at 45.0%, followed by the group under 18 years with 41.7%. The two groups under 35 years old account for a total of 86.7% of the survey sample. The 36–50 age group accounted for 13.3%, and there were no participants over 50 years old in the survey.

This structure shows that the research sample mainly focuses on children and young people. This is the group directly involved in learning activities, play, and exposure to aquatic environments. However, the fact that the group aged 36 and above only accounts for 13.3% also indicates that the survey results do not fully reflect the opinions of older adult groups and caregivers. Therefore, when interpreting the results, it is necessary to limit them to the characteristics of the study sample.

3. Some factors related to the risk of drowning in children in Hung My commune

3.1 The current state of children's swimming skills

Instead of a chart, the results of the survey of 50 children are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The current state of children's swimming ability surveyed (n = 50)

Swimming ability	Quantity	Ratio (%)
Know how to swim	19	38,0
Not know how to swim	31	62,0
Total	50	100,0

The results show that 62.0% of the surveyed children do not know how to swim, which is 24 percentage points higher than the group that knows how to swim (38.0%). Thus, among the 50 children surveyed, for every 10 children, more than 6 do not know how to swim.

This is a noteworthy result for drowning prevention efforts in the local area. However, from a scientific perspective, the study only identifies the swimming status (know how to swim/not know how to swim) and does not directly assess the ability to swim safely, self-rescue skills, or handling situations in a water environment. Therefore, this result should only be interpreted as a factor that increases the vulnerability of children when exposed to water environments, and it should not be asserted that not knowing how to swim is the direct cause of drowning.

Equipping children with swimming skills and water safety skills is also emphasized in the educational sector's guidelines on drowning prevention. (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021) [1].

3.2 Assessing the level of danger of drowning accidents for children

Table 4: Assessment of the danger level of drowning accidents for children (n = 120)

Level	Quantity	Ratio (%)
Very dangerous	89	74,2
Dangerous	31	25,8
Normal	0	0,0
Not dangerous	0	0,0
Total	120	100,0

According to the provided percentages, 100% of survey participants rated drowning accidents for children as "dangerous" or "very dangerous," with 74.2% choosing the "very dangerous" level. No one rated drowning accidents as normal or not dangerous. The results show that the people and the survey participants are quite aware of the severity of drowning accidents. This is a favorable condition to implement propaganda activities, community mobilization, and organize prevention programs. However, being aware of

the danger does not equate to having sufficient knowledge and practical skills to prevent drowning; therefore, it is necessary to consider both the level of understanding and actual participation simultaneously.

3.3 Level of understanding about drowning prevention

The previously presented data in the chart has been converted into Table 5.

Table 5: The level of understanding of survey participants about drowning prevention (n = 120)

Level of understanding	Ratio (%)
Clear understanding	60,0
Partial understanding	22,0
Very little knowledge or no knowledge at all	18,0
Total	100,0

The results show that 60.0% of the surveyed individuals self-assessed as having a clear understanding of drowning prevention; 22.0% had partial knowledge, and 18.0% had very little or no knowledge. Thus, 82.0% of the participants believe that they have at least a certain level of understanding about drowning prevention.

Although the results reflect the positive aspect of local propaganda activities, nearly 1/5 of the survey samples (18.0%) still have very limited knowledge. This is the group that needs to be reached more through direct propaganda and education activities.

It should also be noted that this indicator reflects the self-assessment level of the respondents, not the knowledge score measured by a standardized questionnaire. Therefore, in the article, the term "self-assessed level of knowledge" should be used, avoiding the direct conclusion that 60.0% of the population "has good knowledge."

3.4 The level of concern regarding drowning prevention efforts

Table 6: The level of concern of the surveyed individuals in drowning prevention (n = 120)

Level of concern	Quantity	Ratio (%)
Very concerned	94	78,3
Concerned	17	14,2
Low level of concern	9	7,5
Do not concern	0	0,0
Total	120	100,0

The results of Table 6 show that 92.5% of survey participants are concerned or very concerned about drowning prevention efforts, with the "very concerned" level accounting for 78.3%. Only 7.5% chose the "concerned" level, and no one was completely unconcerned.

This result shows that the issue of drowning prevention receives high attention in the community. However, when compared with Table 1, a noteworthy point can be observed: while the level of concern is very high, the actual participation level of the community is assessed by the Youth Union officials and teachers as being limited.

Thus, the research results suggest that there is a gap between the level of concern and the level of participation. This is a point that needs to be emphasized when developing local drowning prevention activities: not only raising awareness but also creating conditions for people to directly participate in activities such as teaching and learning to swim, skill training, supervising children, warning about dangerous spots, and supporting preventive activities in the community.

3.5 Overview of risk factors through research results

The synthesis of the research results shows that the risk of drowning among children in Hung My commune is related to multiple factors simultaneously.

First, 62.0% of the surveyed children do not know how to swim, indicating that a large portion of children have limited adaptability to aquatic environments.

Secondly, the drowning prevention training activities are not yet regular; 60.0% of youth union officials and 60.0% of teachers believe that these activities are organized infrequently.

Thirdly, the specialized workforce is still limited, as 50.0% of youth union officials and 60.0% of teachers believe that the team of volunteers and swimming instructors does not meet the demand.

Fourth, although the level of community concern is very high, with 92.5% of respondents being "concerned" or more, the actual level of participation is still not commensurate.

Fifth, according to the actual information from the study, the commune area has a system of rivers, canals, ditches, ponds, and water holes related to agricultural production activities, land excavation, or garden renovation. Some areas are not fully equipped with barriers and safety warnings. These are the environmental conditions that need to be considered when organizing local drowning prevention activities.

From the above results, it can be concluded that the drowning prevention efforts in Hung My commune need to be approached comprehensively in terms of children's skills, professional human resources, training activities, community participation, and risk environment management. This approach aligns with the orientation of the Child Injury and Accident Prevention Program for the 2021 [1]–2030 period and the guiding documents of the Ministry of Education and Training on enhancing drowning prevention skills education for children and students (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021, 2022; Prime Minister, 2021) [1, 3, 8].

Conclusion

The research results show that the work of preventing and combating drowning for children in Hung My commune, Vinh Long province, has received attention from the government, schools, and social organizations, while the community's awareness of the danger level of drowning is relatively high. However, training activities are still not frequent, community participation is uneven, the number of swimming instructors and volunteers is insufficient, and implementation resources are limited.

Notably, 62.0% of the surveyed children do not know how to swim, indicating a limited ability to self-protect in aquatic environments. Therefore, the local authorities need to strengthen the organization of safe swimming lessons, educate on drowning prevention skills, conduct drowning rescue and first aid training, mobilize community participation, and effectively monitor high-risk areas to enhance the effectiveness of drowning prevention for children.

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