

Educational inequalities when teaching online in Vietnam today

Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa¹

¹(Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Vietnam)

Corresponding author: Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa

This research is funded by Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Vietnam

ABSTRACT : Online education has appeared in Vietnam for a long time and in recent years, there has been a positive and strong change. Online teaching creates some inequality because learners and teachers have different income levels, qualifications and living conditions. To address these inequalities, it is necessary to have the support of the management agencies and the activeness and initiative of each individual.

Keywords -inequality, education, online teaching, Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

Vietnamese education in recent years has witnessed a great change from content to teaching methods. This comes from the needs of practice as well as the drastic and strong direction of the Communist Party of Vietnam. In the "Socio-economic development strategy for 10 years 2021 - 2030" that the Communist Party of Vietnam proposed in the 13th National Congress of the Party (2021) emphasized: "Speed up the implementation of change. fundamentally, comprehensively and improve the quality of education and training, focusing on modernizing and changing education and training methods, especially higher education and vocational education" [1, p. 221]. The change in educational methods is associated with digital transformation to create a breakthrough in teaching quality and effectiveness. Online teaching has appeared in Vietnam for nearly 20 years and has especially flourished in the last 2 years. associated with the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The mass application of online teaching methods brings great benefits to both learners and teachers, but also reveals many disabilities. Within the scope of this article, we focus on some manifestations of inequality in education when teaching online, and at the same time explain the causes and suggest some solutions to overcome the inequalities mentioned above.

I. CONTENT

1.1. General problems of online teaching

The term "online education" (e-learning) is no longer strange to both learners and teachers in recent years. This method of education is associated with the birth and strong development of the internet and computer systems. Learners access the learning content through a device connected to the network to a server in another location where the electronic lectures and necessary software are stored to be able to ask/request/proposing questions for learners. remote online biology. Besides, teachers can transmit images and audio via broadband connection or wireless connection), local network. Accordingly, individuals or organizations can create their own online school (e-school), learners can also access a multitude of online information and learning opportunities in a flexible way. moving, flexible in space, and at the same time saving cost and time [2].

Thus, when participating in online education or training, learners and teachers can interact directly or indirectly. Indirect interaction takes place when learners have access to pre-arranged and stored lectures. Learners can also ask questions and wait for the teacher to answer after a certain amount of time. Along with that, teachers can also update lectures, questions, requests, tests and receive student feedback within the specified time. Live interaction takes place on online teaching platforms, when both learners and teachers are online on online teaching software. Within the scope of this article, we focus on the inequalities in education

when teachers and students interact directly through teaching software and are not limited to a specific level or discipline.

In the past, in Vietnam, online training mainly took place at the university level and to meet the needs of families for private tutoring. According to a published survey, in Vietnam there are up to 32.0% of primary school students attend private tutoring, at the lower secondary and upper secondary levels, the rates are 46.0% and 63.0%, respectively. [3, p.7]. In addition to tutoring in the form of teachers directly tutoring students, learning through ancillary services such as one-on-one interaction with teachers or teaching assistants via social networking sites such as "Facebook", email or online learning forms using online software are also quite common. Online training became popular when the Covid-19 pandemic prevented students from going to school in person. This situation started in the first months of 2020 and still happens quite continuously. Up to now, there has been no conclusion that mass online teaching will end. That means that teachers and students will continue to have to study on online platforms to meet the training time requirements. Online teaching is a formalized and popularized method based on practical situations and normative documents. Most recent, The Ministry of Education and Training has issued Circular No: 09/2021/TT-BGDĐT "Regulating on the management and organization of online teaching in general education institutions and continuing education institutions". In which stipulates: "Online teaching is a teaching activity organized and carried out on an online teaching system" and "Online teaching replacing face-to-face teaching at a general education institution is a form of Online teaching implements the entire content of a lesson or topic in a general education program to replace teaching that lesson or topic directly at a general education institution". Attending online classes is mandatory for students to replace face-to-face learning. Learning outcomes are assessed and recognized as in direct teaching. Pioneering in online teaching is the university system in Vietnam. Unlike other levels of study, students are mainly in the same locality, the system of Vietnamese universities is located mainly in big cities and centers, so when implementing the Directives on social distancing of the Government In Vietnam [5], [6], universities are almost unable to organize face-to-face sessions, online teaching is chosen as the optimal solution.

To carry out online teaching, online learning software plays a decisive role in teaching effectiveness and students' knowledge acquisition. Currently, online teaching in Vietnam does not have specific regulations on which software must be uniformly applied by schools, but depending on the conditions, teachers and students choose the most appropriate tools. According to our observations, currently there are teaching softwares in use including international ones such as: Microsoft Teams Meeting, Zoom Meeting, Google Meets, Skype application, Workplace (Facebook), Camfrog, ... and some Vietnamese teaching software such as: Edubit.vn, VioEdu, AIC Education is, VNPT E-Learning, TranS.... Besides, there are also software created to serve the specific teaching and learning needs of each school. In general, each software has certain advantages, meeting the requirements of learners and teachers in conditions that cannot study directly in class.

1.2. Manifestations of educational inequality when teaching online

When conducting online teaching, the object of direct interaction is the teacher and the student. We mention some manifestations of inequality in both these groups.

Firstly, online teaching is associated with learning devices such as computers, smartphones and internet systems. However, not all families can afford to equip their children with necessary equipment. According to statistics, in Vietnam, the average income of 1 person/month in the whole country in 2020 is about 4.2 million VND [7], while the average price of a computer or smartphone is from 5 million to 15 million VND. 15 million, the average amount of money households have to spend is more than 7.0 million VND for a member who is going to school in 12 months. That means that for a family with 2 workers and 2 members going to school, the money spent on buying equipment to study is a big expense. According to statistics in 2019, although more than 99% of the population has access to electricity, only 30, 7% of households have computers (including desktops and laptops) [7]. Not to mention the fact that due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, the income of workers has been reduced, it is difficult for each student to have an independent learning device. Moreover, the level of expenditure for children to go to school varies between regions and the wealth of families. In urban areas, households spend 10.7 million VND for one member to attend school for 12 months, 2.1 times higher than rural households; The richest group of households spends more than 15.4 million VND/person/12 months. There is a clear difference when observed by region, the region with the highest spending on education and training is the Southeast with more than 11.0 million VND/person/12 months, 3.6 times higher than the Central region. tourism and northern mountainous areas [7]. Thus, the expression of inequality in learning equipment is quite clear. According to our observations, The vast majority of families with children in primary and secondary schools use the family computer or the parents' smartphone. Students are better equipped with personal devices.

Secondly, the use of online teaching software also creates inequality for teachers and students. As we have pointed out above, teachers and students use pre-existing software for teaching and learning. Most of the above software has a free version and a paid version. Most teachers and students use the free version due to limited economic conditions. Some schools have financial ability to buy or support teachers to buy paid

software, but the quantity is not much. Circular No: 09/2021/TT-BGDĐT also only states: “Developing mechanisms and policies to support resources to ensure technical infrastructure to organize online teaching; Allocate funding for training, retraining and training to improve professional qualifications and online teaching skills for teachers and administrators and ensure technical conditions for organizing online teaching.]. Because the regulations are still general, most schools only stop at training and supporting teachers and students in using online teaching software, but there are no specific regulations on the amount of support. support or level of support. Thus, whether teachers use free or paid software depends greatly on support from schools or the government. Because there is no specific regulation, in general, teachers with good economic conditions or good school conditions have the advantage of paid software to support teaching, and face fewer obstacles than their peers. Businesses must use the free versions from the supplier. For students, accessing online teaching software is even more difficult due to lack of equipment and internet connection. Once the teaching software has been installed, Smooth operation is also a big challenge for teachers and students when their computer skills are limited. For teachers and students who are familiar with technology devices and online operations, it is not too difficult. However, for older teachers, in mountainous areas, difficult conditions or for students who are too young, the use of these software is also a big obstacle. According to a survey of 1 district in Thai Nguyen province - the center of the northern mountainous and midland region of Vietnam, only 41% of elementary school students and 76% of junior high and high school students are eligible for online learning. the rest is due to lack of learning aids [8]. The above statistics are in the area that is not the most difficult and does not have a large number of ethnic minorities. Many other provinces in the mountainous and midland areas have a much lower percentage of students participating in online classes than the above figure.

Thirdly, the learning environment and learning space are not guaranteed when teachers and learners mainly work from home instead of going to school. To have a quiet space, to ensure effective study, a separate, dedicated room for studying is necessary. However, this is very difficult to do with the living conditions of Vietnamese people. According to 2019 statistics, about more than one third of households (accounting for 34.4%) live in houses/apartments with a per capita area of 30m²/person or more, 11.7% of households are living in houses. /apartment to rent/borrow. In particular, in densely populated localities with many industrial parks, the percentage of households living in rented/borrowed houses/apartments is higher than in other localities such as Binh Duong (56.5%), Ho Chi Minh City (32.8%), Bac Ninh (27.0%), Hanoi (15.8%). The percentage of households living in rented/borrowed houses in urban areas is nearly 3.5 times higher than in rural areas. [7]. It can be seen that, with the city area, with good infrastructure conditions, learners are under pressure because the space is narrow and not quiet enough. In rural areas, although households have large houses, they lack equipment. Maintaining online teaching for a long time is a challenge for both learners, teachers as well as students' parents. Not to mention the situation when studying at home, students will have to do housework and look after younger siblings for their parents if their parents don't want to quit their jobs to stay at home to look after their children. On the teacher's side, the teaching environment is also limited due to the lack of visual tools, the interaction is mainly through the screen, so it is not possible to convey all the emotions and enthusiasm when teaching.

1.3. Causes of educational inequality when teaching online

There are many causes of inequality in online teaching in Vietnam. We list some of the main causes below:

The first is limited in economic conditions and economic gap between households and regions. As we have pointed out above, the income and expenditure levels of families are quite different. Although the infrastructure of the telecommunications network and the Internet continues to be strongly invested and developed, covering most of the provinces and cities across the country, not all families are eligible to purchase equipment. study and pay monthly network usage. For low-income families, the cost of using the internet is still quite high. This is the main reason why many students cannot continue their studies or keep up with the curriculum when the school adopts online learning methods instead of traditional educational methods.

Secondly, the level of information technology is also a big barrier to teaching and learning through online software. It is easy to see that teachers in big cities are more familiar with electronic devices and online educational software, so when they change teaching methods, they do not face too many difficulties. However, in rural and mountainous areas, teachers face more difficulties in updating and manipulating these software. The same goes for students in the city and other areas. With the rate of 36.8% of the population living in urban areas and 63.2% of the population living in rural areas [7], although the State has taken many measures to support areas with difficulties and limitations in terms of level of information technology, but in a short time, this gap is not easily eliminated.

Thirdly, Vietnamese culture and internet usage habits are also the cause of difficulties in learning with online software. According to data announced by the Ministry of Information and Communications, nationwide, there are more than 31.2 million Internet users, reaching a density of 35.5%. According to statistics of the Vietnam Internet Center, Vietnam ranks 18th out of 20 countries with the largest number of Internet users in the

world, 8th in Asia and 3rd in Southeast Asia. . However, internet use is mainly for viewing online news, accessing portal homepages and using search engines [10]. According to statistics of Coc Coc (a browser for the Vietnamese market), on average, Vietnamese people make over 80 clicks every day while surfing the web and open about 5 new tabs. The above figure does not include the process of using the browser on a handheld smart device, a product line where users now spend more time with computers. According to the 2018 report of We are Social, Vietnamese people use the Internet 7 hours a day, of which 2.5 hours are for social networks. Facebook and YouTube are the two most used services, accounting for 61% and 59% respectively [11]. The conclusion is that Vietnamese people spend most of their time connecting to the Internet to use social networks and watch videos. When applying online teaching, if learners are children, they need the guidance of their parents, it is difficult to ensure that parents have enough understanding to accompany their children in the learning process. For high school students and students, learning without the direct control of teachers easily leads to opening learning software for teachers to take attendance.

1.4. Some solutions

For management work, the Ministry of Education and Training is an agency of the Government of Vietnam, performing the state management function of preschool education, general education, pedagogical intermediate education, pedagogical colleges, and higher education. and other educational institutions about: educational objectives, programs, and contents; regulations on examination, enrollment and diplomas and certificates; developing a contingent of teachers and educational administrators; school facilities and equipment; quality assurance, education quality accreditation; State management of public non-business services within the scope of state management of the Ministry [12]. With the above function, in recent time, the Ministry has issued official documents and timely instructions for schools to adapt to online teaching instead of traditional teaching.

For schools: need flexibly apply online teaching methods for each student. In order to be suitable for the age of students and the conditions of families, in addition to teaching with online software, schools need to provide links to online lectures for parents to arrange a suitable time for their children. study and complete assignments. Questions from students or problems that teachers need to answer more deeply, are done through direct interaction on zalo, messenger software, etc. This requires a great deal of effort and time from teachers. The school also needs to create conditions for funding so that teachers can confidently teach in the new form.

For teachers and learners: The above solutions will not be promoted without the initiative, active integration and overcoming on the part of teachers and learners. Teaching habits, traditional interactions, inadequacies in technology and teaching software have a great influence on teachers and students. Therefore, teachers need to actively improve their level of information technology, change their thinking and teaching methods to suit new teaching conditions. Students also need to have a high degree of independence and self-discipline to keep up with lectures when there is no direct supervision of teachers and schools.

II. CONCLUSION

Switching from the traditional training model to online training is the development trend of modern education. Under the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, this shift was accelerated and strongly in Vietnam. With the expansion of the scale and level as well as the duration of online training, online teaching on teaching software is the best way to complete teaching tasks during the pandemic. This is also an opportunity for learners and teachers to change their thinking about online training and approach this form more effectively. The adoption of online teaching will create some inequality due to differences in income, geographical location and qualifications of each individual. If these inequalities can be overcome, online education will be an effective solution to improve the quality of education, while opening up lifelong learning opportunities for people in a practical and effective way.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Communist Party of Vietnam, *Documents of the 13th National Congress of Deputies, Volume I*, National Political Publishing House Truth, Hanoi, 2021.
- [2]. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_Education accessed on 3/8/2021
- [3]. Asian Development Bank (ADB), *Out-of-school education, Private tutoring and its implications for policymakers in Asia*, 2012.
- [4]. Ministry of Education and Training, Circular No: 09/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated March 30, 2021 "Regulations on management and organization of online teaching in general education institutions and regular educational institutions" regularly", Hanoi, 2021.
- [5]. Prime Minister, Directive No. 15/CT-TTg dated March 27, 2020 "On drastically implementing the peak period of COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control", Hanoi, 2021.
- [6]. Prime Minister, Directive No. 16/CT-TTg dated March 31, 2020 "On the implementation of urgent measures to prevent and control the COVID-19 epidemic", Hanoi, 2021.
- [7]. Source: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/> accessed on 6/8/2021

- [8]. Source: <https://moet.gov.vn/giadicquocdan/tang-cuong-ung-dung-cntt/Pages/Default.aspx?ItemID=7235> accessed on July 28, 2021
- [9]. Source: <http://www.vtctelecom.com.vn/tin-cong-nghe/viet-nam-xep-1820-quoc-gia-co-nguoi-dung-internet-lon-nhat-the-gioi/307/662> accessed on July 23, 2021.
- [10]. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_at_Vietnam_Vietnam accessed on 6/8/2021.
- [11]. Source: <https://vnexpress.net/nguoi-viet-luot-web-2-tieng-moi-ngay-tren-may-tinh-3898030.html> accessed on July 28, 2021.
- [12]. Source: <https://moet.gov.vn> accessed on 3/6/2021.

**Corresponding author: Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa*
¹(Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Vietnam)