

Education Policy Formation for School Improvement Practices at Lower Secondary Level in Hanoi, Vietnam - New Quality Issue after the Law on Residence in 2006

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Abstract: This study investigates the Vietnam government and Hanoi local governing body's efforts to improve lower secondary education after the law on Residence in 2006. The law on Residence adopted by the National Assembly of Vietnam in 2006 ensures the freedom of temporary residence and relaxes the rule for shifting to permanent registration. The enforcement of the law in 2007 made Hanoi population increase from 3,751,000 (2000) to 5,276,000 (2015) and caused a bloated lower secondary education. The researcher conducted the field research twice in both central and rural areas of Hanoi from December 13, 2013 to December 25, 2013 and from December 27, 2014 to January 2, 2015. The research data were obtained from interviews and documents collected from teachers, city education officers and other researchers. The research outcome shows three points. First, improvement policies rely on teacher competition and community donation due to lack of budget in the public sector. The policies are enforced in both central and rural areas. Second, the children of migrants to Hanoi were refused from top level public schools in central Hanoi despite of the improvement policies. Moreover, rich households were sending their children to expensive private English medium schools which had recently been established. Third, the improvement policies, on the one hand, gave a better impact on the quality of education in top level schools in central Hanoi; but on the other hand, they lost their substance in rural Hanoi.

Keywords: Education policy, school improvement, lower secondary level, Hanoi, residence law.

1. Problem statement

This study tries to investigate how the Vietnam government and Hanoi local governing body have been tried to improve quality of lower secondary education after the law on Residence in 2006.

From 1986, the *Doi Moi* policy has undertaken mainly in economy field. Although this policy influenced not only to economic

field but also to various fields. For example, the *Doi Moi* were including the change of household registration regime, because peoples' freedom of movement from an outside to Hanoi city and Ho Chi Minh city were limited before the policy. Such a limitation of freedom of movement was one of the shackles for economic development. This recognition lead that the National Assembly of Vietnam adopted the law on Residence in 2006 which ensured the freedom of temporary residence and the

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relaxation of the rule of shifting permanent registration.

Hanoi citizen increased from 3,751,000 (2000) to 5,276,000 (2015) due to the enforcement of the law in 2007. The enforcement of the law resulted the emergence of the bloated lower secondary education. Logically, those increasing of number of students in schools in Hanoi invited decline of quality of education. And there has been no study that tried to analyze such a balance change due to increasing the number of students from outside of Hanoi. That's why, this study tackles following two research questions.

(1) How the government and schools responded above critical situation in education as a result of dilemma between population increasing and quality decreasing?

(2) Particularly, how those policies and practices effected to school or classroom level activities?

Throughout investigation of above questions, I'd like to depict Vietnamese characteristics of its school improvement style. Moreover, for theoretical and practical contribution, this study adopts an internal comparative analysis between semi-urban setting and urban setting, because the phenomena itself is observed in some other developing countries. In particular, the comparison between Hanoi city and Hun Yen district. The reason why I adopt this internal comparative methodology is that there must be huge gap between a capital city and a peripheral area. Throughout this comparative analysis, we could be recognized problematic situation in a peripheral area and policy recommendations for the area clearly. The analysis also includes some suggestions to school improvement practices in other developing countries where are struggling with same type of dilemma between population increasing and quality decreasing. Already the author discussed as for the education issue in Vietnam aftermath of the law on Residence 2006(Kusakabe 2015). In the context of school improvement, there is a case

study of from the perspective of lesson study for learning community (Saito et al. 2008, 2010, 2011).

2. Methodology of field work: The interview research to educators as for the situation of increasing tendency of students and decreasing tendency of quality of education

The research methodology is formulated mainly by field work for responding to above two research questions. The research works were conducted in central Hanoi and one of the rural area of Hun Yen district on 13th Dec 2013-25th Dec 2013, and 27th Dec 2014-2nd Jan 2015. The author did interview research and documents collection from secondary school teachers, city education officers and researchers. For translation from Vietnamese to English and also to discuss about interpretation of interview result, I accompanied an associate professor of Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU, Hanoi) in the research work.

First, the interview research focused on how the principals or head teachers at ten secondary schools are recognizing recent increasing tendency the number of students to know about influence of the law on Residence in 2006. As mentioned, it was possible to have a hypothesis that the quality of education may be declined due to lack of number of teachers and their skill to educate increased students logically. The research focused on how the policy makers and schools responded the situation of increasing tendency of students and decreasing tendency of quality of education. Additionally, the research got some cooperation for considering and getting insights from Prof. Phạm Thị Thanh Hải of Vietnam National University, Hanoi. Second, a class room observation was conducted during research period. I checked class room environment include teaching materials and equipment such as PC, projector, TV and so on. Then, also checked teachers' teaching style, speaking speed and level of contents.



Photo1. Secondary class room in Hanoi.



Photo2. Secondary class room in Hung Yen.

Later, I confirmed their rating of the class with professors of VNU, Hanoi.

Third, I interviewed local education officers to know about their recognition of the status quo in secondary school education and education improvement policies for them. Additionally, I collected documents and books of the schools, policies and general knowledge of Vietnam education.

3. Law on Residence 2006

Vietnam has the citizen registration system calling as “*ho khau thuong tru*”. Ministry of Police is in charge of the registration. The system has been worked within the country from 1955. In the system, the people who registered the system had a proof to get governmental services such as education, health

care, financial loan and so on. On the other, the system required if once they shifted to other place as a temporary resident, must be lost the right to access to social services. Due to the requirement, many people were in difficulty to transfer to other place for working at once.

However in November 2006, Law on Residence 2006 was amended and started to allow temporary residence in Hanoi without any time frame. This law aimed to use the people for vibrant economy as work force who transferred from outside of Ha Noi or Ho Chi Minh. Although, the “*ho khau thuong tru*” was remained and the system is still a proof to get social and medical services. Even after the law, following four categories have remained which means that people in lower categories cannot get social services.

KT1: KT1 citizen means a resident (including both non-migrant and migrant) with permanent household registration at place of current residence. The KT1 citizen could be purchased and sold land and housing and have land/house ownership certificates, and have accessibility to public facilities and social services, formal financial loans and employment at current place of residence. On the other hand, there are obstacles that KT1 people could be access to public social services including education and health care only within their district of residence

KT2: KT2 citizen means an intra-district migrant who have permanent household registration in the province/city of current residence. The KT2 citizen could be purchased and sold land and housing and have land/house ownership certificates as same as KT1. Furthermore, KT2 people could be access to public facilities, social services and employment. As same as KT1, there are same obstacles that education and health care only within the district where they are registered. Additionally, there are lack of access to financial loans/formal financial services in KT2 category.

KT3: KT3 citizen means a migrant who do not have permanent registration at the place of

current residence but have temporary registration for 6-12 months with the possibility of extension. KT3 people have access to public facilities and social services. However there is lack of access to legal housing. KT3 children could be accessed public schools only when the schools have enough capacity, it means if KT1 and KT2 children. If the schools are overcrowded, KT3 children have to go to private schools, where they have to pay higher school fees. As same as KT2, there are lack of access to financial loans/formal financial services.

KT4: KT4 citizen means a migrant who do not have permanent registration at their place of current residence, but have temporary registration for 1-6 months. Their disadvantages are lack of the right to purchase land and access to public social services and financial loans.

Non-registered residents: This means that those who do not belong to any of the above category. They do not have the right to purchase land and access to public social services and financial loans.

Particularly, KT3, KT4 and Non-registered residents in Ha Noi have disadvantage even after the law in terms of social services. However so many people tried to enter to the schools in Ha Noi. Those situation resulted severe quality deterioration in education due to more children registered as students. For this situation Ha Noi municipality couldn't respond those disruption include quality deterioration because of wider area and larger population than before.

4. Overcrowded class room in Ha Noi schools

According to Doi Moi and Residential Law 2006, Ha Noi city started socio-economic transfiguration. Number of Ha Noi citizen increased from 3,751,000 (2000) to 7,090,000 (2015) (GSOV 2016) due to the enforcement of the law in 2007. Moreover, Ha Noi city area expanded about 3.6 times bigger than before 2007 (3,324.5 km²) in 2008. In behind of the

migration policy reform, National Action Plan Education for All (2003-2015) also been developed the education system. EFA aimed to create equal opportunities and quality education for all children, to meet the basic learning needs of every member of society. On the other hand, the government couldn't accelerate proliferation of public schools which is based on a financially sound proposal. Because each local government couldn't buy land for schools due to rising land prices in Ha Noi.

That's why, EFA created educational disparities for everyone, enabling the development of individuals and communities. Particularly students who belong to K3 category rushed to public schools in Ha Noi because they have the right to education in their temporary resident place. The EFA and enforcement of the Residential law 2006, resulted the emergence of the bloated school education system. Depends on the bloating number of students, the richest class parents demanded their own school system which is carefully organized and established as English medium education. Needless to say, they collect huge amount of tuition fee from the parents. Such movement of richer class in recent Vietnam have been created top level private schools.

During the top level private schools were mushrooming recently, while top level public schools and middle level public schools were trying to keep their performance level. Many K3 people wanted to send their children to public schools after the law. However Top level public and middle level public schools didn't accept their applications, their reason why that were there are no capacity to accept furthermore students. As a result of above phenomena, K3 people rushed to normal level public schools. Finally the new hierarchy of school level were newly emerged in recent Vietnam (Figure1).

In a sense of school improvement, it can be understood as school improvement practices by their self-purification ironically.

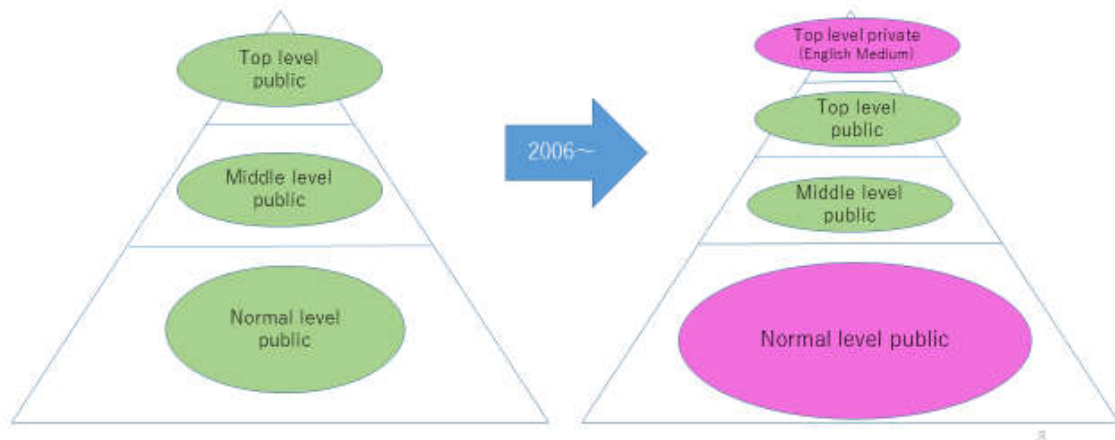


Figure 1. Transformation of hierarchy of school level in Hanoi city.

5. School improvement policies by the government

The government include local level try to improve school education. From primary to secondary, teacher competition hold once a year, it is divided in district level, province level and national level. A several winners are given little awards (certificate and small prize money, less than 20USD). Winners of the competition supposed to have hidden privileges to choose elite school or test school as place of work. Student competition or mathematics and science Olympic hold once a year too. The winners supposed to have a privilege of extra points at entrance exam to higher secondary schools. Additionally, school inspectors are checking up four times a year within their catchment area.

These competitions work for protecting quality of education in the top level public schools. Several winners could be get small amount of money, but a true privilege is that those winners would be given a priority when they choose a next school. Needless to say almost of winners try to choose top level public schools. So those schools would be succeeded high quality teachers in stable condition. In

other words, low level public schools cannot be secured high quality teachers.

6. School improvement practices at lower secondary level

The author visited several secondary schools in Ha Noi and Hun Yen district to find what the schools have good practices with originality for school improvement. There are commonality in terms of school improvement practices because which lead by the guideline of the government to some extent. First, they were conducting “socialization” as donation program in each school. For instance the concept of “socialization” is donation to schools from parents or a community. By this donation, all of the target schools were procuring air conditioner, fan, PC, interactive white board, projector, extra salary to teachers and other school facilities. Higher level schools were well organized socialization, compared with lower level. Second, the target schools were formulating subject-specific groups within a school. They have weekly or monthly meeting for improvement.

Those common activities were working to keep school quality, while some schools were

having some original activities. One school was conducting utilization of retired teachers for advising current teachers. And one school set up the trial period to new teachers. In the system, if a teacher are judged as less ability as a teacher, he or she supposed to be fired. Also some middle level schools were screening children who came from outside Ha Noi, whether they accept as students or not.

In individual level, many teachers in Ha Noi were continuing their education study at university. Basically Ha Noi people respect dedication to learning, so each school encourage teachers to get a degree for better education. This opportunity motivated to increase teachers' professional identity.

The research results show us that three points. First, improvement policies rely on teacher competition and community donation due to lack of the budget in public sector. The policies are enforced both central and rural areas.

7. Comparative analysis between Ha Noi and Hung Yen district

From comparative study between Ha Noi as an urban setting and Hung Yen as a rural setting, the enforced school improvement activities such as the competition of teachers and students and the socialization as donation through school management committee, functioned in mainly Ha Noi city area. In Hung Yen also, the school improvement activities were conducted too. However, the activities didn't well functioned in classroom level compared with Ha Noi. Second, the children of migrants from outside of Hanoi were refused from top level public schools in central Ha Noi in behind of the improvement policies. Moreover, so far it was observed only in Ha Noi that many richer households were sending their children to expensive private English medium schools which have been established recently. Third, the improvement policies gave

better impact to the quality of education in top level school in central Hanoi. On the other, the policy lost its substance in the Hung Yen district.

8. Conclusion

As a result of the research work, it can be said the government tried to avoid school improvement by education policy package such as teacher competition and student competition without using huge budget. As mentioned above, the policy package mainly worked for top level schools. The system was structured that better teachers tend to go top level public schools. And socialization worked well in top level public too. Notably, top level schools were screening K3 students at an entrance step. Such school improvement system provided top level schools comparatively stable education environment.

On the other, many K3 students who spoiled from top or middle level public schools, rushed to low level schools in Ha Noi. Of course those schools are joining some competitions and conduct socialization, but its performance was not very much because their students were diversified as K1 to K3 students and teacher student ratio expanded. In the sense of school improvement, those low level public school come up against such bloated inclusive problem.

Furthermore, according to above comparative analysis, even there are many students who shifted from outside of Ha Noi, it seems like secondary schools in Hanoi have advantage in terms of education environment and teaching methodology.

In all over the analysis, the study found that the top level and middle level schools were successfully established to avoid decline of their quality education. However low level schools were bloating rapidly and had serious inclusive problems.

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Xây dựng chính sách giáo dục cho các hoạt động cải thiện trường trung học cơ sở (THCS) tại Hà Nội, Việt Nam - Vấn đề mới về chất lượng sau luật cư trú ban hành năm 2006

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu nhằm tìm hiểu việc chính phủ Việt Nam và cơ quan quản lý Thành phố Hà Nội thực hiện cải thiện trong giáo dục trung học cơ sở (THCS) sau khi ban hành Luật cư trú năm 2006. Chính sách đổi mới bao gồm sự thay đổi trong việc đăng ký hộ khẩu. Quốc hội Việt Nam đã thông qua Luật Cư trú năm 2006 nhằm đảm bảo quyền tự do cư trú tạm thời và nới lỏng các quy tắc trong việc chuyển đổi đăng ký thường trú. Dân số Hà Nội tăng từ 3.751.000 (2000) đến 5.276.000 (2015) do việc thi hành pháp luật vào năm 2007. Việc thi hành luật đã dẫn đến việc giáo dục trung học cơ sở đã tăng đột biến. Các nhà nghiên cứu đã tiến hành nghiên cứu thực địa hai lần tại khu vực trung tâm và nông thôn của Hà Nội vào ngày 13/12-15/12/2013, và ngày 27/ 12/2014 đến 01/01/2015. Các nội dung nghiên cứu gồm nghiên cứu phỏng vấn và thu thập tài liệu từ các giáo viên, cán bộ giáo dục thành phố và các nhà nghiên cứu. Các kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy ba điểm. Thứ nhất, chính sách cải thiện dựa trên cạnh tranh giáo viên và đóng góp cộng đồng do thiếu ngân sách trong lĩnh vực công. Chính sách được thi hành ở cả khu vực trung tâm và nông thôn. Thứ hai, đăng sau các chính sách thì trẻ em từ gia đình nhập cư bên ngoài Hà Nội đã bị từ chối tại các trường điểm (công lập) ở trung tâm Hà Nội. Hơn nữa, các hộ gia đình có điều kiện gửi con đến trường tư thực học phí cao giảng dạy bằng tiếng Anh, được thành lập gần đây. Thứ ba, các chính sách cải thiện đã tác động tốt hơn đến chất lượng giáo dục ở trường điểm tại khu vực trung tâm Hà Nội. Mặt khác, chính sách bị mất căn bản ở các vùng nông thôn ngoài Hà Nội.

Từ khóa: Chính sách giáo dục; cải thiện nhà trường; THCS; Hà Nội; luật cư trú.