Improving the effectiveness of socialisation work in the field of education: A case study in Vietnam for the period of 1997–2021

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Abstract

From a country that subsidises all areas of social life, non-state actors are not allowed to participate in providing social services. However, after 1986, Vietnam entered the innovative period, and all sectors were able to participate in social services, including education. Socialisation in the field of education, which is a major policy of the state of Vietnam, initially achieved certain results in mobilising social resources to meet the increasing needs of the people. However, in fact, this field still has many limitations and obstacles; one of the basic and important reasons is that the awareness of socialisation in the field of education still has inconsistent content transparency at all levels and sectors, as well as the whole society. Using qualitative research methods, this article will briefly outline the entire socialisation work in the education sector in Vietnam, from which there are suggestions to promote the effectiveness of this work.

Keywords: Socialisation; education; policy; Vietnam; Effectiveness
1. Introduction and Rationale

Implementing the policy of educational socialisation is a major policy of the state in the innovative period. The VIII Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (the only ruling party in Vietnam) stated: ‘Social policy issues are resolved in the spirit of socialisation’. The state plays a pivotal role and at the same time encourages every citizen, business, organisation in the society, foreign individuals and organisations to participate in solving social problems. Along with the process of renewing thinking in various fields, Vietnam has had a reformation in thinking in the fields of society, education and culture.

Concretising the resolution of the VIII National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (2013), on 21 August 1997, the Government of Vietnam issued Decree No. 90/CP on the direction and policy of socialising educational activities, health and culture, in which specific regulations on the socialisation of social activities, including education, are laid down, creating a legal basis for implementing Vietnam’s views on this issue, creating unity from within awareness of the actions of the whole society. Accordingly, socialisation is understood as mobilising and organising the broad participation of the people and the whole society. Building a community is the responsibility of organisations, authorities, unions, economic organisations, businesses and people for creating and improving a healthy and favourable economic and social environment for educational, medical and cultural activities by expanding investment sources and exploiting the potentials of human, material and financial resources in the society.

According to Decree No. 90/CP, the content of socialisation in the field of education includes creating a deep learning movement in the whole society in many forms; mobilising the entire population, first of all those of working age, to implement lifelong learning to make our society a learning society; mobilising the entire people to take care of the young generation, create a healthy educational environment and closely coordinate education in schools with education at home and education in the society; strengthening the responsibility of the government, mass organisations and businesses for the cause of education; and raising the sense of responsibility and participation of all the people in education in order to consolidate and enhance the effectiveness of the education system to better serve the people learning.

Continuing the policy of the VIII National Congress, the resolution of the IX Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (2013) affirmed that social policies are conducted in the spirit of socialisation by upholding the responsibility of governments at all levels, mobilising resources among the people and participating in mass organisations and social organisations. The X, XI and XII congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam continued to affirm the promotion of democracy promoting socialisation and mobilising material and intellectual resources of the society to take care of the cause of education. Close coordination between the education sector, other departments, branches and sociopolitical organisations were seen in the following aspects: mobilising resources in the society; promoting the supervisory role of the community; encouraging learning and talent promotion activities; building a learning society; creating conditions for people to have lifelong learning; and focusing on building a learning society and lifelong learning.

On 10 May 2017, the government issued resolution no. 40/NQ-CP on the Government’s Action Programme to implement the Politburo’s Notice of Conclusions on the Project ‘Innovation of the operating mechanism of administrative units, public non-business service, promoting the socialisation of some types of public non-business services’. On 14 June 2019, the National Assembly passed the Education Law No. 43/2019/QH14, which contains a separate provision on the implementation of the socialisation mechanism in the education sector. Education Law No. 43/2019/QH14 is an important legal basis for perfecting mechanisms and policies to mobilise the participation and contributions of society in education.

Resolution no. 35/NQ-CP, dated 4 June 2019 of the government on strengthening social resources for investment in education in the period of 2019–2025, sets the goal of developing non-public educational institutions to achieve the rate of 8.75% and 8.9% of learners by 2020 and the rate of 13.5% and 16% of learners by 2025. This resolution emphasises that social resources are very important and should be attractive. Accordingly, the mobilisation of social resources for education and training is not a substitute but an important supplement to the state budget, contributing to an increase in total investment
resources for education and training. Therefore, socialisation of education and training should be considered an indicator in the socio-economic development orientation.

Duggan (2001), in Vietnam, stated that the increased involvement of the private sector has provided greater flexibility for improving and strengthening the country’s education system. In light of Vietnam’s transition to a market economy, education planners have had to consider strategies to make the education system more responsive to current and future labour needs. The issue of socialisation in the field of education has been concerned since 1990. The author’s thesis is that a programme of educational change and innovation in Vietnam is actually a cautious reform programme based on selectively targeting specific student groups, in this case, populations in large cities, economic priority zones and urban areas.

Hayden and Thiep (2007), in the process of educational innovation that has completely transformed the higher education system, stated that the Government of Vietnam has allowed universities and colleges to be autonomous, especially in attracting social resources participate in educational and training activities. However, existing institutional support measures for higher education autonomy need to be addressed. In particular, it is necessary to reform laws and regulations, establish appropriate accountability relationships, develop leadership and management capacities at the institutional level and build trust and confidence among stakeholders in the institutional self-governance process.

Hamano’s (2008) goal was to improve the quality, in line with the globalisation movement in the field of education. The focus of education reform is to improve the quality of teachers, affirming that teachers must change the teaching methods and teaching content. In order to improve the capacity of teachers, Vietnam is ready to receive support from the World Bank and support from developed countries such as Japan, Belgium etc. This is an issue in the educational socialisation of Vietnam.

Pham (2015), from the analysis of the practice of educational socialisation in Vietnam, proposes a number of solutions to improve the quality of educational socialisation: awareness, diversification of the types of education and training, attracting investment to management, inspection, supervision and strengthening international cooperation.

Pham’s (2017) book explains and clarifies a number of theoretical issues about educational socialisation, such as the concept of educational socialisation, the content of educational socialisation and the necessity to implement educational socialisation in Vietnam. It analyses the current situation and explains the problems posed in the process of educational socialisation in Vietnam in recent years. It determines the direction and proposes and explains some solutions to continue effectively implementing the socialisation of education in Vietnam in the current period.

Dung (2021) stated that after 35 years of comprehensive renovation, Vietnam has had agreements with other countries and international organisations in various fields of social life. It is these effective co-operations that have contributed to the socialisation in the field of education with more resources from international funding and resources from advanced science and technology in the world.

Nguyễn’s (2018) article presents socialisation in Vietnam, thereby giving the Vietnamese state’s view on socialisation, including the privatisation of social services, considering it the responsibility of the whole society. The author argues that socialisation involves not only the mobilisation of resources, but also the production of an optimistic and inspired moral subject to help others, self-managing and not being controlled by others country. When it comes to socialisation, the article also mentions socialisation in the field of education, affirming that this is an important issue in socialisation in Vietnam.

Dang’s (2020) article analysed the documents of the state of Vietnam and public opinion on the media about reform in the field of education. It affirmed the determination of the state of Vietnam on attracting social resources to participate in education and training activities, gradually shifting some activities from privatisation, in which socialisation is the main focus. However, there are still many controversies about its meaning and impact.

Nguyen (2021) puts his point of view on the socialisation of education: Education for all; everyone for the cause of education, i.e., to bring education associated with society and the community; and education to serve social goals, to serve the community ... to promote the full effectiveness of the process of
socialisation of education, depending on many factors, such as people, resources etc. Especially, the role of the state is very important to this trend.

In this study, we use qualitative research methods, specifically the case study method. The case study method allows for a comprehensive and in-depth study and assessment of the research object. The object of research in this article is the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Vietnam (the only ruling party in Vietnam) and the policy of the Vietnamese state on the issue of socialisation in the field of education. Based on observations and document analysis, we collected information from 1997 to 2021. The research results will answer the following questions:

Question 1: What is the basic content of socialisation in the field of education in Vietnam today?

Question 2: What results has Vietnam achieved and what are the limitations and inadequacies in the issue of socialisation in the field of education over the past time?

Question 3: What does Vietnam need to do to improve the quality of socialisation in the field of education?

2. Basic content of socialisation in the field of education in Vietnam

In Vietnam, the socialisation of education was officially introduced and implemented from the government’s resolution no. 90-CP, dated 21 August 1997 on the direction and policy of the socialisation of educational activities, health and culture, which clearly states that socialisation of educational, medical and cultural activities is mobilising and organising the broad participation of the people and the whole society in development. These jobs are aimed at gradually increasing the people’s enjoyment of education, healthcare, culture and physical and mental development. Socialisation is building a community of people that is responsible for creating and improving a healthy and favourable socio-economic environment for educational, medical and cultural activities in each area. This is the responsibility of the community of all levels of government, mass organisations, economic organisations, businesses and individual people.

Socialisation of educational activities is mobilising and exploiting social resources to diversify forms of providing education and training services and mobilising the entire population to take care of the young generation, create a healthy and self-disciplined educational environment, protect the environment etc., while creating conditions to expand the beneficiaries of educational services, especially key beneficiaries policy to the poor, and contributing to ensuring social justice in contributing to and enjoying education and training services.

From the perspective of exploiting and promoting resources, socialising educational activities is to arouse and mobilise human, material and financial potentials in society, to build a responsible community in education. This is an activity of contributing and paying for educational services; creating study promotion funds; supporting tuition and hospital fees for pupils, students, the unemployed and the poor; and effectively exploiting the resources of foreign partners and international organisations. From the perspective of service beneficiaries, the socialisation of educational activities must create conditions for them to participate in the management of educational activities, develop mechanisms and policies and supervise the provision of services to meet and select educational services to create high quality, at the same time creating intellectual resources and skills to meet the requirements of society.

From the perspective of the person directly providing the service, the education and training staff is guaranteed the right to freedom in professional activities in accordance with the law; they are allowed to promote all their creative abilities in order to diversify the forms of service provision such as public, non-public, formal, informal, supplementary, in-service, remote, contributing to satisfying the diverse needs and increasing the number of classes of the people.

Socialise educational activities and strengthen the role of the state in ensuring the organisation and provision of educational services in order to improve the efficiency and quality of service to the
people. Promoting the socialisation of educational activities is a method of developing the educational cause of the party and state of Vietnam in the context of market economy development, building and perfecting a socialist rule of law for the state. This action aims to contribute to increasing the participation and contribution of the people.

With high determination to carry out socialisation work in the field of education, the Government of Vietnam has synchronously implemented a number of solutions, including (1) perfecting the institution in the direction of shifting from support for educational institutions to direct support for policy beneficiaries and from support to educational institutions. For educational institutions, to switch from the average contracting mechanism to the state-ordering mechanism; (2) reforming and simplifying administrative procedures during the establishment and operation of non-public educational institutions; (3) equal treatment and creating an equal and transparent competitive environment, regardless of public and non-public educational institutions; and (4) promoting autonomy for public educational institutions and encouraging financial autonomy for public educational institutions.

From the above solutions, socialisation in the field of education in Vietnam has achieved some high results, but there are still some limitations that need to be overcome.

3. Achievements and limitations in the implementation of socialisation in the field of education in Vietnam

3.1. Achievements

3.1.1. Actively promulgating policies to mobilise socialisation resources in the field of education

Vietnam has actively reviewed and promulgated mechanisms and policies to mobilise investment resources and encourage socialisation in the field of education and training, concentrating and strengthening the society’s resources to invest in the field of education and training in the context of difficult state budget.

Funds mobilised by organisations and individuals include capital from investors in establishing semi-public and private educational and training institutions; tuition and fees from cooperation activities in scientific research, technology transfer, sponsorship and gifts of agencies, units, enterprises and individuals. The capital mobilised by foreign organisations and individuals is mainly direct investment capital to establish education and training institutions with 100% foreign capital: capital of joint ventures and links between domestic and foreign establishments; non-refundable capital, grant capital, sponsorship in different forms of international organisations, governments, non-governmental organisations or companies, economic groups and foreign individuals. Vietnam manages about 10 programmes and projects implemented for the period of 2015–2020 with a total investment of 17,986,760 million VND.

Some localities, such as Tra Vinh, Tien Giang, Tay Ninh, Ninh Thuan, Long An, Nghe An and Phu Tho provinces, have issued policies to encourage and promote socialisation in the province, such as preferential policies for land rent exemption and reduction; financial support for infrastructure investment; support site clearance costs; and supporting interest rates for commercial loans.

The implementation of policies to encourage socialisation has contributed to increasing investment resources in building material foundations for the entire education sector. Developing non-public educational institutions not only better meets the increasing learning needs with high quality of high-income people in society, but also contributes to increasing access to and enjoyment of educational institutions.

Most reputable non-public educational institutions have been implementing policies to support students in difficult circumstances, i.e., children of war invalids, martyrs and students from poor households, so that they can feel secure going to school.

3.1.2. The educational programme ensures consistency and flexibility

The new general education programme is implemented in accordance with the conditions of Vietnam and the trend of the world. For the first time, the overall general education programme is
methodically built, internationally approached, according to a strict process, from the master programme to the subject programme at all levels and classes.

In advocating a programme, many sets of textbooks to encourage creativity in teaching and learning of teachers have had initial successes. Vietnam has promulgated a document system to organise the compilation of textbooks to serve the implementation of new programmes, such as regulations on standards, the process of compiling and editing textbooks; standards of organisations and individuals compiling textbooks; organisation and operation of the National Council for Textbook Appraisal; and promoting the socialisation of textbook compilation. At the end of 2019, Vietnam approved 5 sets of grade 1 textbooks, with a total of 46 titles of 9 subjects and educational activities to use for the 2020–2021 school year. This is the first time in the history of Vietnam that this policy has been implemented and there have been encouraging initial results. It can be said that this policy has broken the monopoly of compilation and distribution, creating competition to improve the quality of textbooks. This is a premise and an important step forward in the teaching and learning innovation at the high school level.

The Education Law 2019 posed the problem: ‘Education programmes must ensure scientific and practicality; inheritance and connection between education levels and training levels; create conditions for streamlining and switching between training levels, disciplines and forms of education in the national education system so that localities and educational institutions can proactively deploy appropriate education plans; meet gender equality goals and international integration requirements. The educational programme is the basis for ensuring the quality of comprehensive education’. With this content, the educational programme is unified without any distinction or division between public and non-public schools. However, with the requirements of reality when competing, non-public schools have been ‘creative’ in implementing the programme with many new learning models, reflecting the dynamism of thinking, assessing and evaluating complex problem situations in the life of society. These activities, more or less, have formed the quality and capacity of solving problems in accordance with reality, bringing real results to life, making traditional educational methods facing many challenges competitive by placing pressure on both teachers and learners. This has created certain social benefits when the beneficiaries are learners. Some non-public institutions, when put into operation, immediately established a number of core values, such as personality, intelligence, emotions, passion, energy etc., as the basis for building programmes and teaching methods to suitable.

3.1.3. University autonomy is promote and the quality of higher education has many positive changes

University autonomy is promoted, creating breakthroughs in university governance. Previously, only two national universities were granted high autonomy, now there are 23 higher education institutions that have been piloted to implement a relatively comprehensive autonomy mechanism according to resolution no. 77 of the government. The university governance model has undergone a drastic change, enhancing the initiative and accountability of training institutions in all areas of their activities. Together with the two national universities, most of the autonomous pilot schools have made strong breakthroughs in training and research, contributing to creating a new face for the Vietnamese higher education system.

In 2019, the Vietnamese higher education system ranked 68 out of 196 countries in the world, up 12 places compared to 2018. For the first time, Vietnam has 4 higher education institutions ranked among 1,000 top universities in the world; there are 11 Vietnamese higher education institutions in the list of top 500 universities in Asia.

3.1.4. Actively integrating and improving the effectiveness of international cooperation in education and training

Vietnam has established educational cooperation relations with more than 100 countries and territories. Over the past 7 years, international cooperation in education and training has been strengthened, contributing to improving the efficiency of international cooperation and enhancing Vietnam’s position in the world. In the period 2013–2017, 68 international agreements and 23 international treaties were signed; an increase of 15% in the number of signed documents compared to the same period in previous years. In particular, in the 2019–2020 school year, Vietnam signed 21
international cooperation documents (including 6 government-level documents) and signed diploma recognition agreements to promote the transition of students to countries in the region and around the world.

Cooperation between the Government of Vietnam and the governments of other countries has also brought thousands of scholarships each year for Vietnamese citizens to study abroad (nearly 20 countries). The number of scholarships granted by foreign governments to the Government of Vietnam has increased from about 400 scholarships per year (in 2013) to 1,400 scholarships per year (in 2019). Currently, there are 22 countries and territories with 147 investors participating in direct investment in the field of education and training in Vietnam.

With the constantly improving quality of education, attractive study and living costs and a safe living environment, in recent years, Vietnam has become a destination chosen by many international students. As of the 2019–2020 school year, there are more than 21,000 international students from 67 countries around the world in which there are 14,400 students enrolled in training programmes from university or higher (Nha, 2021).

3.1.5. The system of non-public schools is constantly expanding

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training, by 2020 there were nearly 42,500 educational institutions in kindergartens, preschools, primary schools, junior high schools, high schools and higher education institutions. Among these, the proportion of non-public educational institutions accounts for 9.19%. The university sector has the highest percentage of non-public educational institutions (27.7%), followed by preschool, high school, primary school and junior high school.

The localities have strengthened the work of educational socialisation to mobilise many resources of the society, in order to develop the cause of education and training in the locality and implement regulations on land incentives, tax and credit policies to support non-public educational institutions. According to data reported by 57/63 localities, in the past 10 years, there have been nearly 3,200 projects participating in educational socialisation with a registered capital of about 103,000 billion VND. The development of the non-public school system has contributed to meeting the diverse learning needs of students (Nhat, 2020).

3.2. Limitations and shortcomings

Education activities in Vietnam consist of two systems: Public and non-public schools. Although they share the same goal of training high human resources to serve the country, the students of these two school systems do not have equality in terms of support policies of the state. For example, public students have state tuition support policies, while non-public students do not. This creates inequality for learners in the two school systems.

It is necessary to eliminate the psychology of non-public treatment. The state should consider non-public schools as an important part of the system and have investment incentives; take care of the teaching staff, consider public teachers as non-public, have policies to support investment in scientific research, incentives for land, taxes, loan support and enhancement of rights autonomy for non-public schools, publicity and transparency of training quality.

Non-public schools in Vietnam play an increasingly important role in educational development, each with its own mission and participation in the education and training system, providing human resources for different segments. However, at present, the role and position of non-public schools have not been properly recognised and evaluated, so there are no policies, mechanisms, environment and conditions for their existence and sustainable development. Therefore, the number of students attending non-public schools is still low (Phuong, 2019).

The construction and development of non-public schools currently face many difficulties, obstacles in terms of mechanisms and policies, the binding of a number of legal documents and by-laws; circular guidance is lacking and unreasonable. The documentation and procedures in licensing the establishment of a school are considered a ‘difficult’ journey for investors. Administrative procedures for
licensing establishment have been prescribed in the Law on Investment, the Law on Enterprises and the Law on Education, but in essence the regulations are still in the form of a ‘framework law’; therefore, in order to enforce it, the locality has issued its own regulations. Those separate regulations have made the picture of licensing procedures for setting up non-public schools inconsistent among localities. This has increased compliance costs and increased barriers to entry into the education market/education business for investors. The barriers of cumbersome and complicated administrative procedures have discouraged some investors who even withdrew from the market.

In addition, most of the non-public schools are small; the staff of highly qualified teachers is still low; the facilities are poor; and the main source of income is from tuition fees. Enrollment is increasingly difficult, leading to unsatisfactory construction investment.

4. Proposing some solutions to improve the efficiency of socialisation in the field of education in Vietnam

4.1. First, promoting the role of the state in formulating mechanisms and policies

Stemming from the role and characteristics of educational services, the state is not only responsible for promulgating mechanisms, policies and regulations on standards, norms, quality, prices, tuition fees and education, but must ensure the provision of basic educational services, such as universalisation. Education meets the basic and essential needs of society. Therefore, the socialisation of education requires the effective exploitation, promotion and use of social resources, while continuing to increase and effectively use the state budget invested in education; strengthening the inspection and examination responsibilities of state agencies in order to overcome limitations, weaknesses and negatives; and contributing to improving the quality of education services to better meet the needs of all classes.

The promotion and development of educational socialisation must be associated with the renewal of educational management mechanisms and policies in order to create a healthy political and social space for the development of educational services: renovating the objectives, methods, structure and sources of investment capital of the state in the direction of focusing on priority national goals and programmes; supporting deep-lying, remote and ethnic minority areas; giving preferential treatment to policy beneficiaries; and assisting the poor on the basis of reforming the tuition fee exemption and reduction regime in the direction of publicity, reasonableness and direct granting to beneficiaries.

4.2. Second, strengthening the transformation of the mechanism and improving the autonomy of educational institutions

To strongly transform public educational institutions operating under the administrative-subsidised non-business mechanism into an autonomous and self-responsible mechanism and a number of public service providers into self-financed or private entities, we should encourage organisations and individuals to contribute capital to invest in the development of educational service establishments; create conditions for non-public educational institutions to be established and develop in both size and quality; develop a mechanism for service beneficiaries to choose service providers, regardless of public or private, in order to create a healthy competitive environment among different types of service providers; determine the system of standards, quality norms, price brackets, fees etc. of various services; review economic and technical norms to research; amend and supplement a number of standards and norms in the field of education as a basis for non-business units to exercise their autonomy and self-responsibility; strengthen inspection and examination activities by state agencies; and promptly and strictly handle violations in order to ensure the quantity and quality of educational services provided to the people. We should research and promulgate a regulation on supervision and social criticism to facilitate the promotion of the role of mass organisations and mass organisations, especially professional associations in participating in social consultation, criticism and assessment association policies and laws related to the educational development of the country. At the same time, we should also encourage people and social organisations to participate in supervising professional activities, in order to improve the quality of educational services.

4.3. Third, ensuring that the social responsibility of educational institutions comes to life
The role of the state is not limited to ensuring the delivery of educational services, but extends to ensuring that this particular commodity is provided honestly and of quality, not only to responsible schools but also promote responsible schools and other stakeholders. The state needs to perfect institutions and policies on the responsibilities of stakeholders, especially the state and schools. In particular, it should ensure equality policy among all types of schools, including schools with foreign elements. It is necessary to focus on reviewing and promulgating regulations and procedures for licensing the establishment of schools, opening majors and requiring mandatory field inspection.

4.4. Fourth, ensuring orientation in education

Education and training have the mission of raising people’s knowledge, developing human resources, fostering talents, making an important contribution to the development of the country and building the culture and people of Vietnam. Developing education and training together with science and technology development is the leading national policy; investment in education and training is investment in development. To fundamentally and comprehensively renovate education and training according to the development needs of society we need to improve the quality according to the requirements of standardisation, modernisation, socialisation, democratisation and international integration, effectively serving the cause of national construction and defence. We should also promote the building of a learning society, creating opportunities and conditions for all citizens to have lifelong learning.

The state’s role in market orientation and coordination is carried out through activities such as designing the market, setting principles and protecting the market order; mediating conflict resolution ensures fairness and effective competition among interest groups related to the provision and use of education; regulating ensures the health of the market; competition of education service providers; long-term development planning; and limits the short-sighted behaviour of the market.

5. Conclusion

Socialisation in the field of education is a new factor that has been promoting its strength in the cause of education development, training quality human resources for the cause of industrialisation and modernisation of the country. It is socialisation in the field of education that has facilitated and created new factors in the ascent of the educational movement. Experiences are drawn from the practical implementation of socialisation in the field of education, improving educational thinking and promptly solving problems posed by the cause of educational development. Socialisation in the field of education is one of the major policies and strategic ideas to develop Vietnam’s education, meeting the development and integration requirements of the country. Socialisation in the field of education is the process of mobilising all resources of the community to join the state in building and developing a sustainable education in order to ensure democracy, equality in learning and receiving education, contributing to improving people’s knowledge and training resources for the country.

References


