

The Current Situation of Professional Work Pressure of Junior High School Teachers during the Implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum

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Abstract:

Vietnam is in the process of educational innovation, the educational goal changes from knowledge content approach to learners' ability approaches. This transformation requires teachers to be prepared in all aspects. The article is the result of an investigation into the current situation of 508 junior high school teachers who are teaching under The 2018 General Education Curriculum according to the following 4 evaluation factors: 1) The current situation of professional work pressure from the teacher's labor intensity; 2) The current situation of occupational pressure from professional requirements to meet The 2018 General Education Curriculum; 3) The current situation of teachers' pressure from students' perspective; 4) The current situation of teachers' pressure from teachers self evaluation. The main objective of this study is to clarify the pressures that Vietnamese teachers are facing today; in addition, the article will suggest some solutions to help teachers reduce some of their working pressure. The results of this study can be used by educational administrators, policy makers, teachers, pedagogical students, and other interested persons. In addition, researchers can use this result to continue to develop more studies in other research directions such as career happiness, educational policy, teacher development, etc. This is the application of research results in practice to solve the problems of teachers' work pressure, and is also an important reference source for managers to adjust and develop policies for teachers. The survey was conducted in the 2022–2023 school year after Vietnam is actively implementing education curriculum reform.

Keywords: pressure, labor pressure, middle school teachers, Vietnamese teachers.

2018 年通识教育课程实施期间初中教师专业工作压力现状

摘要:

越南正处于教育创新过程中,教育目标从知识内容途径转向学习者能力途径。这种转变需要教师在各方面做好准备。本文是根据以下 4 个评价因素,对 2018 年通识教育课程中 508 名初中教师的现状进行调查的结果:1) 教师劳动强度带来的专业工作压力现状;2) 满足 2018 年通识教育课程专业要求的职业压力现状;3) 学生视角下教师压力现状;4) 教师自我评价压力的现状。这项研究的主要目的是澄清越南教师今天面临的压力;此外,本文将提出一些解决方案,帮助教师减轻一些工作压力。这项研究的结果可供教育管理者、政策制定者、教师、师范生和其他感兴趣的人使用。此外,研究人员还可以利用这一成果继续开展更多其他研究方向的研究,如职业幸福感、教育政策、教师发展等。这是研究成果在实践中的应用,解决教师工作压力的问题,也是管理者调整和制定教师政策的重要参考来源。该调查是在越南积极实施教育课程改革后的 2022–2023 学年进行的。

关键词: 压力, 劳动压力, 中学教师, 越南教师。

1. Introduction

The world is gradually transforming into a flat world without distance for people. Accordingly, the economic, social, cultural, and political sectors have also undergone certain changes, and education is not an exception to that cycle. For the education sector, Vietnam's Sustainable Development Goals to 2030 and Vision to 2045 are "Ensuring quality, equitable, inclusive education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for everyone". Accordingly, starting from the 2020–2021 school year, the 2018 General Education Curriculum was officially implemented in junior high schools, marking the transition of education to approaching learners' competencies. Along with those changes, teachers are the team that is most directly affected.

During this period, teachers are in the process of adapting to the new educational curriculum; therefore, they may face many difficulties in teaching, educating students, and achieving goals in professional activities. Recent studies show that teachers are under a lot of pressure (Oanh, 2019; Trang, 2020; Tham et al., 2022a; Tham et al., 2022b) and these pressures which are not removed will cause serious consequences such as teachers quitting their jobs (Trang, 2020; Tham et al., 2022a).

Researching the current situation of teachers' professional work pressure is to determine the problems and difficulties of teachers to help them overcome this period, bringing Vietnamese education to a new level.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study was conducted to address the following issues:

- What is the current situation of professional work pressure of teachers?
- Which problems do teachers find most difficult?
- What can be done to help teachers achieve their goals in professional activities?

Clarifying these issues helps educational administrators have a more accurate view of the new education curriculum so that they can have more reasonable policies for teachers. At the same time, it also makes teachers aware of their own problems more clearly so that they can overcome them more easily.

2. Research Method

The research team implemented the following methods:

- *Theoretical research:* The study will refer to the research results of domestic and foreign scientists. Issues related to work pressure will be more focused by the research team to serve this research result.

- *Survey method by questionnaire:* The questionnaire is designed based on the combination of the occupational stress scale of John J. De Nobile & John McCormick (2005) and the pressures at work scale of Robert A. Roe and Fred R.H. Zijlstra (2009). The questionnaire consists of two parts: Part 1 is general information related to the respondents; Part 2 focuses on exploiting factors causing labor pressure for teachers. In addition to closed questions, the research team designed open-ended questions to extract more information about the research results.

- *The in-depth interview method:* interviews with teachers, principals, and educational managers at all levels of the Departments and Ministry of Education. This method is implemented to clarify the pressure that teachers are currently facing

- *Methods of mathematical statistics:* SPSS 22 software was used to analyze the research results.

Evaluation level: evaluating 5 levels so that teachers can choose the best options for themselves. The rating scale according to the Likert scale is specified as follows: level 1 "Very great pressure"; level 2 "Great pressure"; level 3 "normal pressure"; level 4 "Little pressure"; level 5 "No pressure".

Survey time: November 2022.

2.1. Survey Subjects

The research conducted a survey with 508 junior high school teachers who are teaching under the 2018 General Education Curriculum in 102 junior high schools across Vietnam. The schools with teachers participating in the survey were divided equally by the research team by geographical location (Northern - Central - Southern region of Vietnam), represented by the provinces of Hanoi, Nghe An, and Can Tho, and by school characteristics, represented by schools located in economically developed areas, rural areas and disadvantaged areas.

Table 1. Research sample information

Research sample information		Quantity	Proportion (%)
Gender	Female	479	94.3
	Male	29	5.7
Education level	Upper secondary education	33	6.5
	Higher education	465	91.5
	Postgraduate education	10	2.0
Age	Under 30	107	21.0
	31-40	131	25.8
	41-50	214	42.2
	Over 50	56	11.0
Teaching experience	Under 10 years	152	30.0
	From 11 to 20 years	215	42.3
	Over 20 years	141	27.7
Area	City	286	56.3
	Rural areas and economically disadvantaged areas	222	43.7

3. Literature Review

Research on professional labor pressure for Vietnamese teachers is still limited and lacks systematic studies. In general, there are only a few small projects, presentations on scientific conference proceedings or reflections in the press and media researching overloaded status related to teaching and educational activities. Research on pressure on teachers in education mainly focuses on several aspects such as: causes of professional pressure, current situation of professional pressure, solutions to reduce working pressure for teachers, and requirements for teachers of the 21st century.

Occupational pressure for teachers is studied mainly on two aspects: subjective and objective causes.

For the subjective causes, studies pointed out that pressure for teachers stemmed from different issues during the working process, such as professional requirements, workload, professional knowledge and skills, or students (Oanh, 2019; Anh, 2018a; Anh, 2018b; Dan, 2018; Huong, 2018; Lien, 2018a; Thao, 2018).

In terms of professional requirements, the fact that education curriculum changes while the capacity of teachers has many problems is one of the leading causes

of pressure on teachers (Oanh, 2019). In addition, learning the contents of the curriculum and textbooks to turn them into effective teaching activities, implementing innovation in teaching methods and forms, collecting evidences for student evaluation, completing the documents and records and changing the way of learning to meet the exam policy and enrollment policy have also become factors that put pressure on teachers, especially junior high school teachers at present (Oanh, 2019; Dan, 2018; Huong, 2018).

The current labor intensity also puts a lot of pressure on teachers. During a school year, teachers have to be under the professional management and direction of the local Department of Education and Training and the schools in terms of expertise; teachers also face pressure from principles, inspectors, documents and records, professional training, contests, etc. Moreover, teachers also have to participate in many contests: good teachers at school level, good teachers at district and department levels; contests in Children's Law, Traffic Law, Elearning; good homeroom teacher contest, charming and talent teacher contest; or guide students to participate in contests in many aspects like science and technology, presentation, writing, drawing, excellent students, etc. (Truong, 2019; Anh, 2018a; Anh, 2018b). On the other hand, in terms of professional requirements, today's teachers are highly demanded in terms of competence and quality. In terms of the remuneration regime, the importance of the position of teachers in society, the training of teachers in the society, etc, there are still a lot of shortcomings. All these causes become sources of pressure for teachers. Moreover, in the context of the trend of considering education as a service, pressure coming from students is also a concern of many teachers when students are increasingly having more demands from teachers, including unreasonable demands, and the number of students per class is bigger than the specified one. Some teachers are not experienced enough in dealing with pedagogical situations, leading to pressure in work and life (Oanh, 2019; Anh, 2018a; Anh, 2018b; Dieu & Lan, 2014).

On the subjective side, teachers may experience pressure from the fact that the teachers themselves are not qualified enough to teach; the teachers themselves find it difficult to control situations or they have not been trained and fostered on how to cope with pressures from many sides; overload in teaching and education. (Oanh, 2019; Dan, 2018; Anh, 2018b).

Thus, in terms of factors that cause professional work pressure for teachers, current studies have focused on external causes of pressure for high school teachers in general. The causes on the subjective side have not been analyzed and evaluated much. The available research only stops at description and discussion from the theoretical basis and some typical practices.

3.1. Novelty

Research on teachers' professional work pressure is not a new direction; it is carried out regularly with different subjects, levels, and scopes. However, this study was conducted during educational reform in Vietnam, so the results of this study are a valuable reference that is completely different from previous research results. It serves to adjust the policy for teachers in the current period.

4. Research Results

4.1. Definitions

4.1.1. Professional Labor of Teachers

According to researchers on vocational education, "trade/occupation" is the division of labor for each person. Through working in the field assigned by society, they work to contribute to society and to support themselves and their families (Hac, 2013). Put in the professional role of the teacher, the professional labor of the teacher is the division of social labor for the teacher. The teacher contributes to society by teaching and feeds himself/herself and his/her family by this profession. Teachers are the ones who not only pass on to learners ancient experiences, impart new and modern knowledge to learners, but also form in learners the qualities and abilities that can help them adapt to current social life. In other words, the teaching profession is the training profession, forming the personality of new people.

4.1.2. Teachers' Professional Work Pressure

Lambert et al. (2009) define it as a result of unmet expectations and needs, leading to depression, loss of motivation, and negative thinking. Chris Kyriacou (2001) considers it to be an unpleasant negative emotion such as anxiety, depression, pressure, anger, or frustration that teachers receive from some aspects of their teaching work. Thus, it can be understood that the teacher's professional work pressure comes from teaching work and it is a negative emotional experience, it comes from subjective and objective causes.

The pressures of teachers during Vietnam's implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum are divided into four main groups as follows:

- Occupational labor pressure in terms of teacher labor intensity (pressure with daily workload (files, books, ...); pressure on time to complete work; pressure from responsibility for solving problems of teaching and educating students; pressure from competitions (Excellent Teacher Competition; Excellent Homeroom Teacher Contest and Science and Technology Competition).

- Occupational labor pressure in terms of professional requirements to meet Pressure (Pressure

from innovating teaching content; Pressure from innovating teaching methods; Pressure from changing the way students are assessed Pressure in teaching and educating students).

- Pressure on teachers from students (The number of students in the class is too large; Students have unreasonable demands on teachers; The level of students' demands on teachers is increasing; Students are not active in learning).

- Pressure of teachers from teachers themselves (Pressure on professional knowledge to meet Pressure; Pressure on adaptability to new teaching methods or information technology capacity to meet the objectives of the 2018 General Education Curriculum).

4.2. Results of the Current Survey

4.2.1. Actual Situation of Professional Work Pressure in Terms of Teachers' Labor Intensities

Labor intensity is a measure of how much labor is wasted in a unit of time. Labor intensity shows the urgency, arduousness, or pressure of the labor process.

Many previous studies have shown that teachers have to work with the highest intensity because in a short time they have to both ensure the amount of knowledge imparted to learners and complete dozens of tasks in class, both to train themselves to become exemplary teachers and to solve problems caused by students (Anh, 2018a).

So far, when implementing the 2018 General Education Curriculum, how has the pressure on teachers' labor intensity changed? Figure 1 shows this.

"Pressure with daily workload (files, books, etc)": 15.7% of teachers say that they have "very great pressure"; 21.9% of teachers say that they have "great pressure"; 31.7% of teachers did not give opinions; 19.5% of teachers believe that they have "little pressure" on this issue and 11.2% of teachers feel "no stress".

"Pressure on time to complete work": 11.4% of teachers say that they have "very great pressure"; 14.4% of teachers say that they have "great pressure"; 26.4% of teachers did not give opinions; 29.5% of teachers believe that they have "little pressure" on this issue and 18.3% of teachers feel "no stress".

"Pressure from responsibility for solving problems of teaching and educating students": 5.7% of teachers say that they have "very great pressure"; 16.3% of teachers say that they have "great pressure"; 40.7% of teachers did not give opinions; 27.8% of teachers believe that they have "little pressure" on this issue and 9.4% of teachers feel "no stress".

"Pressure from competitions (Excellent Teacher Competitions)": of teachers say that they have "very great pressure"; 27.4% of teachers say that they have "great pressure"; 15.4% of teachers did not give opinions; 25.2% of teachers believe that they have

“little pressure” on this issue and 27.4% of teachers feel “no stress”.

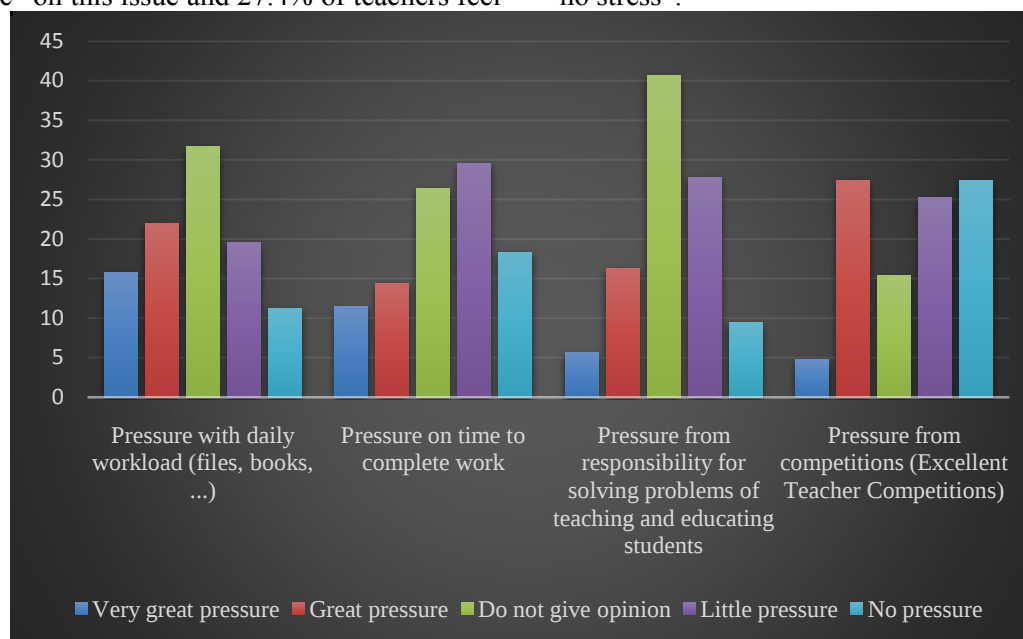


Figure 1. Pressure from labor intensity

From the experience when implementing the 2006 General Education Curriculum, the 2018 General Education Curriculum has significantly reduced the number of teachers' daily tasks that need to be completed. However, in this survey, with pressure from daily workload, about 37.6% felt pressure at high levels (“Very great pressured” and “Great pressure”). 30.7% of teachers felt pressure at a low level (Little pressure). In fact, in addition to the tasks that teachers must do according to regulations, there are many other unnamed ones such as regular, periodic, and unscheduled meetings, professional group meetings and many other activities that teachers are required to participate in. In fact, each teacher in addition to the daily work of preparing lesson plans in class, they also have to complete the grading, test questions, write daily student evaluations, professional and periodic meetings, participate in contests, and organize activities for students. In Vietnam, each teacher not only teaches for 1 class but also maybe up to 3-4 classes. The number of students also increases accordingly, increasing the workload. The increased workload means that teachers have to get the job done at a faster rate. Thus, although according to the provisions of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, teachers have to do very little work have to do multiple other tasks.

A new point in the 2018 General Education Curriculum in Vietnam is that teachers need skills to advise and educate students. So how is this problem assessed by the teacher? According to the results of interviews with some teachers, regarding this problem, teachers “have not been trained in professional knowledge but mainly solved by practical experience” (Teacher-ID05-Nghe An). In recent years, although the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam has been implementing projects on fostering the consulting

capacity of teachers, this has not yet met the daily needs of teachers. Because “each school appoints only 1-2 teachers to participate in the consulting capacity training and the number of these teachers is really not enough to be responsible for thousands of students in one school. Moreover, it is not only these teachers who can solve the problems of students, but sometimes it must be the homeroom teachers or teachers that students feel confident in” (Teacher-ID11-Hanoi).

Thus, regarding the problem of pressure on the labor intensity of teachers today, although in theory, teachers only need to complete 3 tasks: Education plan (by school year); Lesson plan (curriculum); Notebooks for monitoring and evaluating students, in reality, teachers have to deal with a lot of other tasks. To solve this problem, it is thought that school principals and policy makers should take more specific measures to reduce the pressure on teachers.

4.2.2. Actual Situation of Occupational Pressure from Professional Requirements to Meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum

The professional requirements for the 2018 General Education Curriculum were determined by the research team from factors such as: teaching and educating students, changing the way students are assessed, renovating teaching methods, and renovating teaching content. It can be said that the professional requirements to meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum can be said to be the most difficult question to answer by managers and teachers. Each teacher has different teaching abilities, over time, they have different teaching experiences. Young teachers often have access to the 2018 General Education Curriculum since they were students, while long-time teachers have almost only been able to access the program during

implementation of this program. So how is the response of teachers to the 2018 General Education Curriculum

different? Figure 2 shows the statistics.

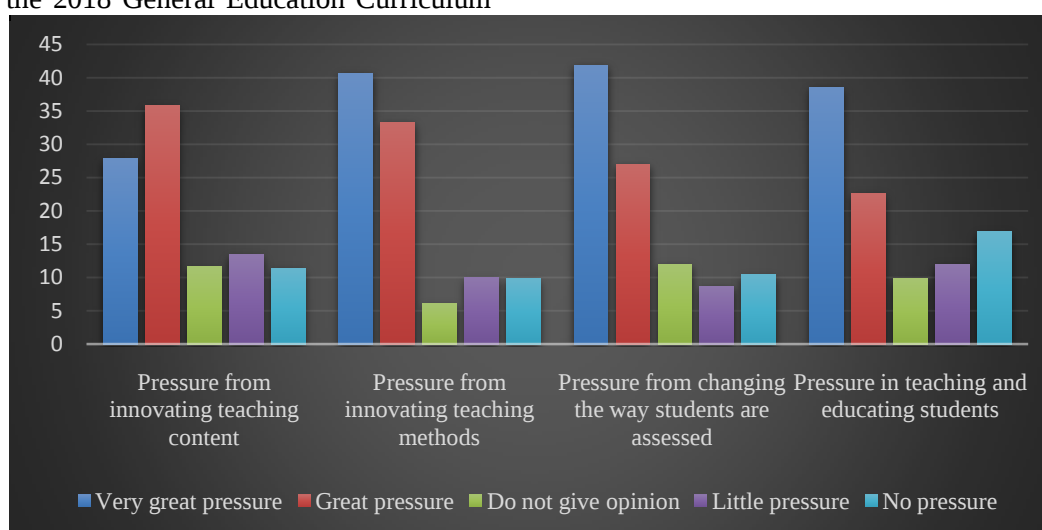


Figure 2. Pressure from professional requirements

“Pressure from innovating teaching content”: 27.8% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 35.8% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 11.6% of teachers did not give opinions; 13.4% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue and 11.4% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

“Pressure from innovating teaching methods”: 40.7% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 33.3% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 6.1% of teachers did not give opinions; 10% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue and 9.8% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

“Pressure from changing the way students are assessed”: 41.9% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 27% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 12% of teachers did not give opinions; 8.7% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue and 10.4% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

“Pressure in teaching and educating students”: 38.6% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 22.6% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 9.8% of teachers did not give opinions; 12% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue and 16.9% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

From Figure 2, it can be seen that there is very clear decentralization of occupational labor pressure from professional requirements to meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum. It can be clearly seen that the level of “very great pressure” dominates more than the other levels. In which the factor “Pressure from changing the way students are assessed” accounted for the highest rate (41.9%), followed by “Pressure from innovating teaching methods”, accounting for 40.7% of teachers surveyed, followed by “Pressure in teaching and educating students”, accounting for 38.6% of teachers participating in the survey, and finally “Pressure from innovating teaching content”, accounted for 27.8% of teachers surveyed.

Meeting The 2018 General Education Curriculum is a completely new requirement for teachers in the period when Vietnam implements curriculum innovation. For new teachers who have just graduated from college, the trained knowledge will be relatively close to the goals of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, however, for teachers who have worked for a long time, there will be a lot of pressure. The result comparison of the survey showed that teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience were less pressured than teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience, and especially teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience had to bare greater pressure. The survey results of Phung Thi Thu Trang (2020) showed that teachers with 1 to 5 years of working experience bared less pressure than teachers with 11 to 20 years of working experience. Teachers who have worked for 16 to 20 years are under more pressure than teachers who have worked for 21 to 30 years. Other age groups have no difference according to seniority in other age groups. To address this issue, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has conducted training for teachers to address immediate needs and conducted research to address long-term needs. However, “effectiveness is still not really high”, and many teachers consider training to improve teaching capacity as “short-term breaks” (Pham et al, 2022). The assessment of students under the 2018 General Education Curriculum is changed to the goal of assessing the progress of learners, evaluating by commenting on some subjects, and removing the way of calculating the average score of all subjects. The evaluation is carried out using different methods, forms, techniques, and tools, combining regular assessment and periodic evaluation. This makes teachers once again have to adapt to new working methods, combined with changing teaching methods, teaching content, and regularly solving problems of teaching and educating

students, "making teachers always feel pressured" (Teacher-ID08-Hanoi). In fact, the simultaneous change of many contents in the educational process makes teachers "not able to adapt and find effective solutions" (Teacher-ID19-Hanoi).

Practice shows that the capacity of high school teachers still has certain limitations. For example, in the document "Training cadres and lecturers of high school teacher training institutions on developing training program" issued in 2015, the overall capacity of nearly 200 high school teachers in Vietnam was evaluated. 12 subjects (not based on degree): "Satisfactory: 75.3%; unsatisfactory: 16.6% and difficult to assess is 8.0%". Thus, about 25% of teachers do not meet the requirements of teaching and educational capacity according to the current program (Anh, 2016). In addition, with the requirement of effective teaching, the pressure of urban teachers is 83.3%, rural teachers is 74.0% (Oanh, 2019).

The cause of professional pressure is due to the change of teaching content that causes teachers to "do it all over again", and the preparation to meet the requirements of innovation also takes a lot of time for teachers. According to current regulations, high school teachers teach 17 lessons per week. In terms of class time, many people believe that teachers have less working time than other professions. However, professional activities for teaching in class take a lot of time and put pressure on teachers. Almost every year, teachers have to take training courses and add different methods and integrated knowledge, prepare lesson

plans for different subjects, prepare integrated lesson plans, and thematics. Besides, things like grading, implementation of other plans of subject groups, schools, classes, and educational departments take up a lot of time of teachers (Anh, 2018a; Dan, 2018).

Therefore, it can be seen that the pressure from professional requirements to meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum is weighing heavily on the psychology of teachers today. Asking teachers to meet so many requests at the same time makes it difficult for them. To solve this, it requires a lot of support from leaders, principals, colleagues, and the whole society.

4.2.3. The Current Situation of Teachers' Pressure from Students

The pressure from students identified by the research team includes: 1. The number of students in the class is too large; 2. Students have unreasonable demands on teachers; 3. The level of students' demands on teachers is increasing; 4. Students are not active in learning. Teachers are those who are in regular contact with students on a daily basis, the object of the teacher's work is also the student, and the product of the teacher's labor is also their students. Thus, students are a relatively large factor affecting the emotions, attitude, and behaviors of teachers. When implementing the 2018 General Education Curriculum, whether teachers are under pressure from students and whether that pressure is large or small, Figure 3 shows the survey results below.

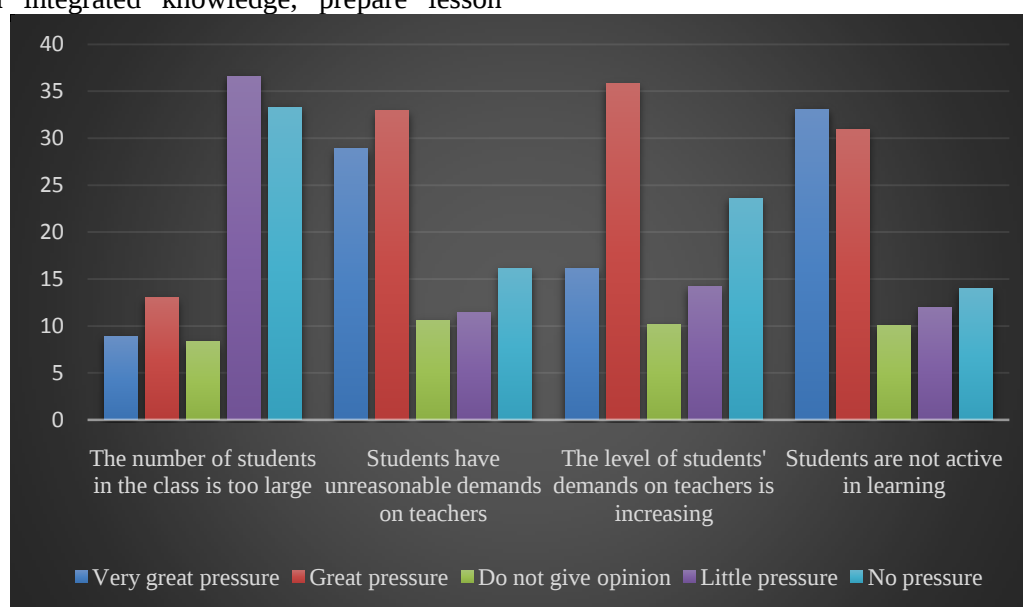


Figure 3. Pressure from students

"The number of students in the class is too large": 8.9% of teachers say that they have "very great pressure"; 13% of teachers say that they have "great pressure"; 8.3% of teachers did not give opinions; 36.6% of teachers believe that they have "little pressure" on this issue and 33.3% of teachers feel "no pressure".

"Students have unreasonable demands on teachers": 28.9% of teachers say that they have "very great pressure"; 32.9% of teachers say that they have "great pressure"; 10.6% of teachers did not give opinions; 11.4% of teachers believe that they have "little pressure" on this issue and 16.1% of teachers feel "no pressure".

“The level of students' demands on teachers is increasing”: 16.1% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 35.8% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 10.2% of teachers did not give opinions; 14.2% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue and 23.6% of teachers feel “no pressure” regarding this issue.

“Students are not active in learning”: 33.1% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 30.9% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 10.0% of teachers did not give opinions; 12.0% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue and 14% of teachers feel “no pressure” regarding this issue.

Figure 3 shows us that teachers are under relatively great pressure from the student side. The levels of “very great pressure” and “great pressure” are more dominant than other levels (except for the factor “The number of students in the class is too large”)

“Students are not active in learning” is a problem that has received a lot of attention from the whole society. Many studies show that today's students are increasingly lazy to study, even when their classroom assignments are not completed (Thuc, 2019). In the context that the goal of the 2018 General Education Curriculum is to give students more “freedom” in seeking knowledge students need to be active in learning to achieve their goals in teaching and education. “This situation really makes us feel extremely worried because if students are not active in learning, the educational goals will not be achieved, which means that we do not complete the task” (Teacher-ID03-Hanoi). Moreover, the reality is that in some areas the number of classes exceeds the prescribed one, causing teachers headaches in class management and teaching quality assurance. According to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training, each class under the 2018 General Education Curriculum includes 45 students. However, in many regions, there is a lack of facilities and, so there are many classes with 60-70 students. Many teachers shared that “just managing to keep the class in order also takes teachers a lot of time, we don't have enough time to organize activities as required by The 2018 General Education Curriculum, which makes us worried about not achieving the goal in teaching” (Teacher-ID03-Hanoi). Vietnam is integrating with the world, and students also learn from different cultures, creating different personalities and behaviors in society. In psychology, the stage of people between the ages of 12 and 15 is the most receptive to all problems and has not yet made the correct choices. Psychologists also say that at this stage, students are the most rebellious and

always have a lot of demands on people around them. In addition, although receiving knowledge from different cultures helps students improve their own knowledge, this fact also has the opposite effect for teachers as teachers have to improve their own knowledge and skills to better meet the requirements of students. These factors also increase the pressure on teachers in the current period.

In addition, this surplus and shortage situation is now localized in some subjects, grades, and localities, such as literature and mathematics; there is a shortage of teachers to teach specific subjects such as Informatics, English, and Art. Based on the regulations on the number of teachers/class, there is an excess of 4,688 teachers at the lower secondary level in subjects such as literature, mathematics, but at the same time, there is a shortage of 14,653 teachers in particular subjects (Ministry of Education and Training, 2022). The surplus and shortage of teachers also occurs within a school due to the mobilization and recruitment of teachers, but it is not clear which schools and subjects lack teachers, leading to the problem of a shortage of local teachers (Truong, 2019). This puts great pressure on teachers when they have to teach concurrently other subjects or switch to teach at other levels without professional training.

It can be seen that the pressure from students on teachers is also extremely large. In the current transition of educational goals, teachers need to be exemplary, need to learn and improve themselves to know how to guide learners to achieve their learning goals. In this period, more than ever, the whole society and the entire education sector need to join hands to help teachers so that they can fulfill their noble educational tasks well.

4.2.4. The Reality of Teachers' Pressure from Themselves

Each person's ability is an important factor for them to overcome difficulties or create pressure. When a person has good work capacity, all difficulties will be solved, which can again form motivation to work. For those with weak working capacity, when facing difficulties, it will form a factor that prevents employees from continuing to work and inadvertently creates pressure for that person. In the current period of Vietnam's educational reform, teachers are the people who are most affected, the role of teachers in this period is the “determiner” of the success or failure of The 2018 General Education Curriculum. So what is the pressure from the current teachers themselves? In other words, how is the teacher's capacity to meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum? Figure 4 shows this.

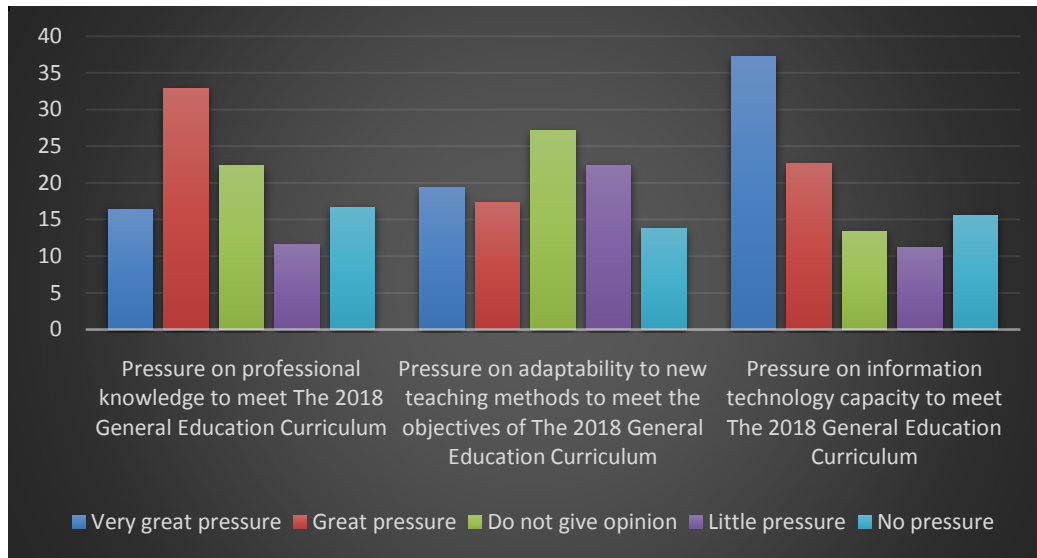


Figure 4. Occupational labor pressure from teachers themselves

Regarding “professional knowledge to meet The 2018 General Education Curriculum” 37.2% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 22.6% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 13.4% of teachers did not give opinions; 11.2% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue; and 15.6% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

Regarding “Pressure on adaptability to new teaching methods to meet the objectives of The 2018 General Education Curriculum” 19.3% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 17.3% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 27.2% of teachers did not give opinions; 22.4% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue; and 13.8% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

Regarding “Pressure on information technology capacity to meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum” 16.3% of teachers say that they have “very great pressure”; 32.9% of teachers say that they have “great pressure”; 22.4% of teachers did not give opinions; 11.6% of teachers believe that they have “little pressure” on this issue; and 16.7% of teachers feel “no pressure”.

Looking at Figure 4, it can be seen that the most prominent level of pressure for teachers is “Pressure on professional knowledge to meet The 2018 General Education Curriculum”. The change in the 2018 General Education Curriculum is considered a turning point for those standing on the podium. The transformation of some subjects and changes in teaching content while teachers were not well prepared for this change made most of the teaching staff feel pressured. The preparation of teachers by the Ministry of Education and Training to help them be ready to participate in teaching under the 2018 General Education Curriculum has been not enough (Tham et al., 2022a). Another factor that also needs to be considered is “the ability of information technology to

meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum” which is also creating great pressure on teachers. For a long time, Vietnamese teachers have been used to traditional teaching methods, like the teacher is the leader of the class and the one who transmits knowledge to students through writing on the board. Teachers rarely use technology equipment. In addition, another important factor is that the current technological equipment in Vietnam is almost very old and outdated, and many devices are almost unusable (Pham et al, 2020). After 2 years of implementation, the 2018 General Education Curriculum comes into practice, and it requires teachers to use technology to teach, “it’s really a big problem to be solved while the Vietnamese government has not provided and prepared enough equipment for teaching and learning to meet the 2018 General Education Curriculum, teachers ourselves face many difficulties in teaching” (Teacher-ID11-Nghe An). According to the requirements of professional competence and technological ability in teaching, “the ability to adapt to new teaching methods to meet the goals of The 2018 General Education Curriculum” is also causing certain difficulties for teachers. In this regard, although the teacher assessed that the pressure was not as heavy as the above two problems (shown in the number of teachers choosing the levels of “no pressure” and “little pressure” takes a higher percentage than the other levels of pressure), the difference among levels of pressure is not too big. More specifically, 36.6% of teachers rated this factor at high levels (including “very great pressure” and “great pressure”). Changing teaching methods means changing daily teaching habits, which can be said to be a challenge for teachers. In this regard, according to the research of Dang Thi Thu Hue (2022): “Teachers are somewhat subjective and evaluate themselves at a higher level than the actual competence achieved by themselves”.

In conclusion, through the survey results, it can be

seen that the professional work pressure of secondary school teachers during the implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum is relatively high. To solve this problem, we need all levels of management system, the whole society, and teachers themselves to get involved.

4.3. Discussing Solutions to Reduce Pressure on Teachers

Any change will cause certain pressures. The 2018 General Education Curriculum is a program that has a lot of new points compared to the 2006 General Education Curriculum, like a "make over" for Vietnamese education. During this period, teachers who do not respond or do not adapt will be eliminated. Therefore, to help teachers in this difficult period, the Ministry of Education and Training and all educational administrators, teachers, students, and parents join hands to help teachers overcome this difficult period. The measures proposed by the research team are as follows:

First, enhancing knowledge and skills for teachers by "liberating" resources and data warehouses from libraries across the country. Libraries in Vietnam today can be said to almost "freeze" the sources of documents, and readers can hardly use the internet to search, look up, and read the documents they want. This can be said to be a huge limitation in the current rapidly developing digital technology era.

Second, reducing administrative procedures and the number of contests for teachers. It is a fact that teachers cannot be better when they are recognized as good teachers, but teachers' excellence is their own efforts, training, and daily self-study. There is no evidence that can confirm that just through "a good teacher certificate", teachers automatically become good ones. Recent surveys show that up to 95% of teachers agree that they do not want to participate in competitions for good teachers at all levels because they take a lot of time to prepare, their CV is still the same after the exam, and the quality of teaching has also not improved. For them, the contests only mean "additional records" to meet the criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Training.

Third, teachers need to be provided with modern teaching equipment. In the context of the current booming scientific and technological revolution, Vietnamese teachers should also be able to use modern and advanced equipment to do their jobs. This is necessary because the future generation of students needs to be exposed to, know, understand, and use these technology devices well to serve their own lives. Teachers also need technology devices to make their lectures livelier and attractive.

Fourth, teachers should also know how to adjust themselves. Self-regulation here is the sense of self-consciously updating knowledge to meet the

requirements of teaching in today's era. All human excellence is not outside self-discipline, no one can bring good to someone if they do not know how to grasp it by themselves. In any situation, self-awareness is always a prerequisite to help us overcome all difficulties. Therefore, in the context of many difficulties that arise when teachers teach according to the 2018 General Education Curriculum, as long as our teachers know how to overcome them, and join hands with the government and the Ministry of Education and Training, it is certain that the 2018 General Education Curriculum will achieve the targets.

5. Conclusion

Through the above survey results, it can be seen that teachers are currently facing a lot of pressure, in which pressure on changing assessment methods, pressure from innovating teaching methods, and pressure in teaching and educating students are said to be the biggest pressures for teachers at this stage. In addition, the problem of students' involuntary learning also makes teachers feel anxious and insecure. In addition, teachers are also very worried about their professional knowledge to meet the teaching content in the 2018 General Education Curriculum. However, teachers are relatively confident in their own teaching ability, and this confidence is assessed as higher than the actual level. Based on the results of this survey, the authors came to the following conclusions:

- During the implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, Vietnamese junior high school teachers are facing a lot of pressures, mainly pressures coming from internal factors or in other words, teachers' capacity is not enough to meet the target of The 2018 General Education Curriculum.

- Factors that come from outside also cause teachers certain pressures in which students are the object that causes the most difficulties for teachers.

- To thoroughly solve the current difficulties that teachers are facing, the whole education sector should step in and join hands with teachers.

The results of this study have provided an important set of data on the current situation of pressure in the work of teachers during the period when Vietnam is making changes to its educational program. This will help education administrators in making educational policies for teachers and changes in management. In addition, for teachers, they can refer to measures to reduce pressure to help them feel more comfortable in the process of doing work, thereby improving the quality of teaching.

Finally, it can be seen that although pressure is a seemingly simple word, it is something that causes extremely serious consequences. If current Vietnamese teachers cannot remove difficulties, and cannot relieve labor pressures, the consequences will be that the goal of the 2018 General Education Curriculum is not

achieved, leading to a huge waste of Vietnamese education.

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