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Teacher Stress of Lower Secondary School Teachers during the Implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, and Teacher Stress Reduction Measures for Educational Administrators

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Abstract:

Teacher stress is defined as unfavorable factors, causing difficulties and stress for teachers. This article is based on a survey of 458 lower secondary school teachers nationwide who are teaching under the 2018 general education curriculum. The main objective is to clarify the professional work pressures that Vietnamese teachers are currently facing, and simultaneously, through teachers' self-assessment of measures to reduce pressure on teachers that the Vietnamese government has adopted. This will help the government see more clearly the picture of labor pressure that teachers are facing to have a more appropriate adjustment direction. Four key stresses related to teacher stress were selected by the research team based on the suitability for the implementation of the 2018 general education curriculum in Vietnam to conduct the study, including: 1) individual stresses; 2) student-related stresses; 3) work-related stresses; 4) stresses related to other factors. The survey findings reveal that teachers are under significant stress from: professional development requirements; teaching methodology to meet the goals of the curriculum; students' academic achievements. Additionally, the measures put in place by educational administrators have not truly met the needs of teachers. The study's findings offer helpful resources that can enable educational administrators to enhance the current policy for teachers. The research results show the current situation of professional work pressure on high school teachers and the status of teachers' satisfaction with job policies. The results of this study are used by education authorities, researchers and teachers to better improve the problem of teachers' professional pressure in the future. Additionally, scholars can use this research as a source of reference to expand to other related studies. The novelty of this study contributes to the practice of solving problems of professional pressure of teachers during the period of Vietnam implementing educational reform.

Keywords: lower secondary school teachers, Vietnamese teachers, teacher stress, 2018 general education curriculum.

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2018年通识教育课程实施过程中初中教师的师资压力及教育行政人员减轻师资压力的措施

摘要:

教师压力被定义为不利因素，给教师造成困难和压力。本文基于对全国 458 名在 2018 年通识教育课程下任教的初中教师的调查。主要目的是明确越南教师目前面临的专业工作压力，同时通过教师自我评估越南政府采取的减轻教师压力的措施。这将有助于政府更清楚地看到教师面临的劳动压力，从而有更合适的调整方向。研究团队根据越南 2018 年通识教育课程实施的适宜性，选择了四种与教师压力相关的关键压力进行研究，包括：1) 个体压力；2) 与学生有关的压力；3) 与工作相关的压力；4) 与其他因素有关的压力。调查结果显示，教师承受着来自以下方面的巨大压力：专业发展要求；满足课程目标的教学方法；学生的学业成绩。此外，教育行政人员采取的措施并没有真正满足教师的需求。该研究的结果提供了有用的资源，可以使教育管理者加强现行的教师政策。研究结果揭示了高中教师专业工作压力的现状和教师对工作政策的满意度状况。这项研究的结果被教育当局、研究人员和教师用来更好地改善未来教师专业压力的问题。此外，学者们可以以此研究为参考，扩展到其他相关研究。本研究的新颖性有助于解决越南实施教育改革期间教师职业压力问题的实践。

关键词: 初中教师，越南教师，教师压力，2018 年通识教育课程。

1. Introduction

The 2018 general education curriculum (from now on – 2018 GEC) was issued by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam on December 26, 2018 according as Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT (Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, 2018). 2018 GEC delivers a momentous change in educational goals (shifting from knowledge-based to problem-solving competency-based learning for students). This change entails a change in teaching content and methods, requiring teachers teaching under this curriculum to regularly update new knowledge, find suitable teaching methods, and adapt to ensure the quality of learning. The curriculum can be considered an renovation in Vietnam's education reform toward competency-based approach for students. This change entails a series of requirements on teaching capacity, capacity to meet the curriculum, new teaching methods, effective teaching knowledge, etc., so that teachers can meet curriculum goals.

Teachers are now considered a key element to bring the 2018 GEC to success. As a result, teachers are under an enormous stress for various subjective and objective reasons (Oanh, 2019). Many recent studies indicate that although the 2018 GEC has reduced the workload related to administrative procedures for teachers to some extent, other stresses have increased (teaching methods, professional development requirements, the number of students in the classroom, facilities that do not meet the requirements, teaching capacity to meet the curriculum, etc.) (Nguyen Thi Kieu Oanh, 2019). How will these factors change when the 2018 GEC goes into effect? To what extent are teachers currently under teacher stress? What measures have education administrators taken to reduce teacher stress? How

effective are these measures? This study will examine the current situation of the above problems when implementing the 2018 GEC, and the findings of the study will be a valuable reference for managers, as a basis for effective stress reduction measures for teachers.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study was conducted to answer 2 questions:

- What are the stress levels of teacher teaching under the new 2018 GEC?
- What measures have been taken by school leaders and principals to reduce the stress on teachers and to what extent are the effectiveness of these measures evaluated by teachers?

Answering these questions is to help the Ministry of Education of Vietnam find a way to improve policies for teachers in the current period.

1.2. Research Participants

This research's participants are lower secondary school teachers who are teaching under the 2018 GEC, focusing on difficulties that teachers face in the teaching process. The number of teachers participating in the survey is 458, divided equally among 2 cities/provinces (Hanoi and Can Tho) in 2 economic regions of North and South of Vietnam.

Information about the sample study is shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Research sample information

Research sample information	Quantity	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	431
	Female	27
Education level	Upper secondary education	29
	Higher education	421

Continuation of Table 1			
	Postgraduate education	8	1.7
Age	Under 30	91	19.9
	31-40	120	26.2
	41-50	192	41.9
	Over 50	55	12.0
Seniority	Under 10 years	130	28.4
	From 11 to 20 years	200	43.7
	Over 20 years	128	27.9

1.3. Research Methodology

1.3.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaire that the research team made based on the scale due to “professional work stress for teachers” by De Nobile and McCormick (2005). The research team use the questionnaire to conduct a survey on the current state of teacher stress of Vietnamese lower secondary school teachers. Out of 470 questionnaires distributed, 458 were collected to be used in the data analysis with SPSS. Before conducting the survey, the research team instructed and explained the terminology so that the teacher could most accurately assess the problems that the research team would raise.

1.3.2. Survey Timeline

October and November of the 2021-2022 school year.

1.3.3. Evaluation Level

A Likert scale with 5 different levels has been used for teachers to evaluate based on their opinions, prescribed as follows: level 1 "Nostress"; level 2 "Mild stress"; level 3 "Moderate stress"; level 4 "Much stress"; level 5 "Extreme stress".

1.3.4. In-Depth Interview

This method is used to interview teachers to clarify the stresses and difficult issues in their teaching process. Additionally, it is also used to clarify the effectiveness of stress-reduction measures of administrators.

1.3.5. Secondary Research

The existing data and research is closely related to the professional work pressure of teachers, and attaches more importance to research results during the time Vietnam implemented the 2018 GEC.

1.3.6. Mathematical Statistics

The survey results are analyzed using SPSS 22 software. The software is also used to assess the reliability and validity of the scale in the questionnaire.

1.4. Overview

There haven't been many studies on teacher stress during Vietnam's implementation of the 2018 GEC, the primary reason is that the implementation for the lower secondary level only

began in the 2020-2021 school year, leaving insufficient time for full-fledged and rigorous study (Pham et al, 2022). Few studies on teacher stress in the implementation period of the 2018 GEC are incorporated in other studies such as Phung Thi Thu Trang (2020), Pham Thi Hong Tham (2022), Nguyen Thi Kieu Oanh (2019), etc. Much of the research literature focuses primarily on a number of aspects such as: causes of teacher stress, current current situation of teacher stress, recommendations to reduce teacher stress, requirements for teachers in the implementation period of 2018 GEC, etc. Most research findings suggest that the teacher stress have two sides: on the positive side, mild stress can form a motivation to help teachers improve work quality and efficiency. On the negative side, high levels of stress can cause mental and physical exhaustion, deterioration of health, greatly affecting teaching activities and the quality of education. Additionally, studies have also shown that when implementing the 2018 GEC, the stress regarding administrative work have decreased, but teachers face other stress such as the requirements of professional knowledge, capacity and teaching methods, etc.

Thus, it can be seen that the study on teacher stress during the implementation of the 2018 GEC in Vietnam is currently not extensive, rigorous, and the scale is unrepresentative enough.

1.5. What's New in This Study

The study of teacher stress is not a new direction of educational science. However, research on teacher stress related to the implementation phase of the 2018 GEC reveals a considerable gap in the literature. Vietnam is entering a period of educational transition from a knowledge-based to competency-based education, so this study results provide a completely new set of data and conclusions in this period of educational renovation. The research results will be an important reference for education administrators to serve as a basis for improving policies for current teachers. Additionally, the research will contribute to the practice of solving problems of professional pressure of teachers in the period when Vietnam implements educational reform.

2. Contents

2.1. Rationale

2.1.1. Psychological Stress

According to (Adelman, 1993), human behavior is not only determined by the inherent psychological factors, but by the environment as well. According to him, the pressure of factors from the surrounding environment, which is perceived by the individual, would create the necessary capacity that motivates the individual to function. On the other hand, Freud (1972)

was particularly concerned with the instinctive needs of the individual. When satisfaction is not met due to obstacles on the part of the environment, it leads to repressed stress and anxiety. According to this research direction, stress acts as a negative factor affecting the psychology and behavior of individuals, causing deviations, anxiety, and disorders. Both research directions affirm that for an individual to operate in any field, it is necessary to use "force" to a certain extent. The utilization of "force" to the certain threshold will achieve optimal operational efficiency; in contrast, if the stress is too low or too high, the performance will be low. If the usage of "force" is prolonged or at a high intensity, it will create excessive stress in the individual, leading to psychological and behavioral deviations (distress, depression, anxiety, etc.).

Nguyen Thi Nhung (2002) said: "Psychological stress is the factors that create stress to people, causing people to have psychological tensions, inhibiting life activities and affecting the quality of life and health of individuals." Nguyen Thi Nguyet and Nguyen Minh Ngoc (2018) said that learner's psychological stress is the feeling of individuals when subjected to impacts and pressures on their own learning activities, leading to neurological, psychological stress, which has positive or negative effects on the body, cognition, attitudes and behaviors of individuals.

Thus, researchers believe that the psychological stress of the individual comes from the pressures and impacts from the surrounding environment that cause physical and mental effects to the individual. Some individuals are capable of turning psychological stress into motivation, overcoming their own limits to achieve the desired results. On the other hand, individuals who are under the influence by psychological stress may experience negative effects that cause psychological stress, anxiety, affecting all their life activities.

In this study, psychological stress can be understood as a psychological process that occurs when individuals are subjected to environmental influences that pressure people in their life activities, creating obstacles, affecting physical and mental well-being to a certain extent.

2.1.2. Professional Work of Teachers

According to Klimov (2004): "Occupation is a usage of human physical and mental power to a certain extent that is necessary for society (due to the social division of labor). It provides every human being with the capacity to use the means necessary for survival and development." According to Nguyen Huu Do (2019): "Occupation as a form of labor is both social (social assignment) and personal (self-needs) in which people act as active subjects seeking to satisfy certain needs of society and individuals". From some of the above-mentioned definitions, it can be concisely understood that occupation is a form of labor that requires people to

undergo a specialized training process, acquiring certain knowledge, skills and professional techniques, having qualities and ethics suitable to the requirements of the corresponding form of labor. Thanks to the process of professional activities, people can create products that satisfy the material and spiritual needs of individuals and society.

2.1.3. Occupational Stress of Teachers

There are many definitions of (occupational) stress of teachers. Kyriacou (2001) suggests that stress is the unpleasant, negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, tension, anger or frustration because of some part of their profession as a teacher. Lambert, McCarthy, O'Donnell and Wang (2009) define it because of unmet expectations and needs, leading to depression, loss of motivation and negative thinking. From the above concepts, it can be seen that the occupational stress of teachers is the experience of teachers of negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, anger, depression, etc., rooted in teaching. Stress is understood in the sense of objective, unfavorable effects, causing difficulties and tensions both physically and mentally to teachers.

During the implementation of the current educational reform in Viet Nam, we classify the stress for Vietnamese general education teachers into 4 main categories as follows: 1) Stress related to individual factors (Teaching methods that meet teaching curriculum goals; Capacity to update information and improve teaching level; Professional development requirements according to professional standards); 2) Stress related to student factors (overcrowded classrooms; Students have many unreasonable demands; Students do not achieve the desired results); 3) Stress related to other factors (Stress from the education management mechanism; Stress from social needs; Stress from social relationships); 4) Stress related to work (Stress in teaching and educating students under the new curriculum; Stress from facilities; Stress from administrative work; Stress from the curriculum's renovation requirements). This division of stress may be subjective, but it partly reflects how teachers describe stress in their teaching process. In fact, this classification is relative, there is a crossover between the elements of categories, and teachers must learn how to handle many stresses simultaneously, in addition to addressing the requirements of teaching situations.

2.2. Research Results

2.2.1. Current Situation of Teacher Stress of General Education Teachers during the Implementation of the 2018 GEC

The 2018 GEC officially came into effect for lower secondary school level starting from the school year 2020-2021, after more than 2 years of piloting, teachers

have also experienced some difficulties and advantages of teaching under the new curriculum, and discovered their own strengths and weakness in the process of professional activity.

2.2.2. *Stress Related to Personal Factors*

Individual factors are identified as the capacity to meet the new teaching curriculum such as teaching capacity, information update capacity, professional

factors. The change of the 2018 GEC entailed a series of requirements on teacher capacity to meet the curriculum goals. Therefore, during this time, teachers faced many difficulties that need to be overcome, thus requiring leaders to find solutions (Tham, 2022).

The figure below shows the levels of stress associated with the individual factors that teachers were experiencing.

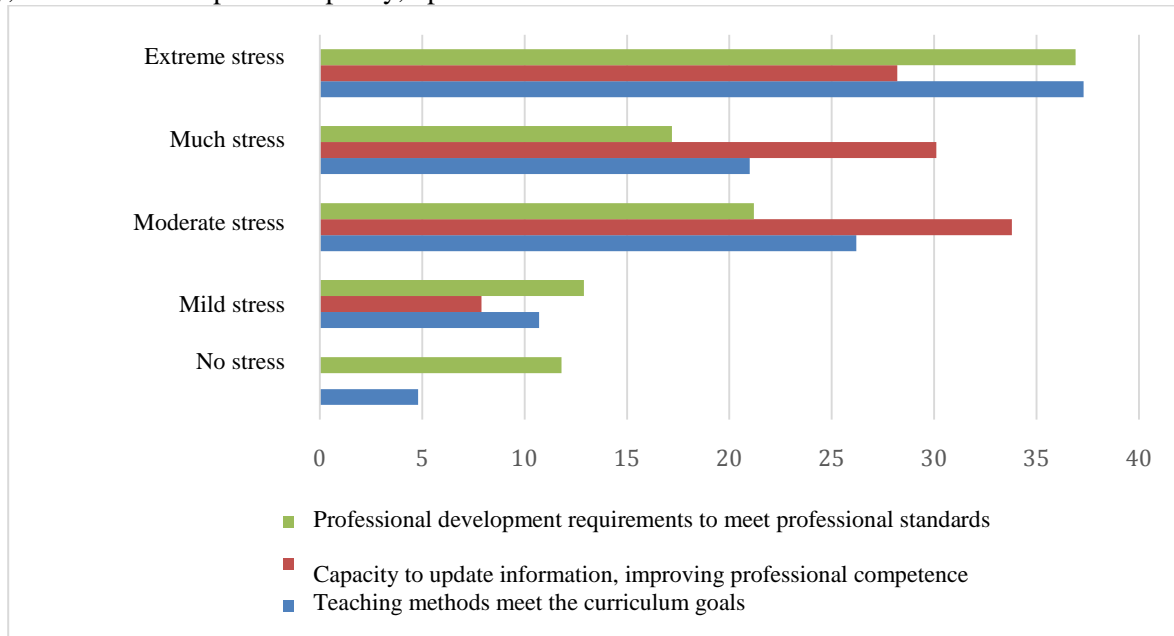


Figure 1. Stress related to individual factors

Figure 1 shows that the “extreme stress” level of teachers is dominant in all three factors, in which "teaching methods meet the curriculum goals" many teachers rated the highest level of stress (37.3%) and "Professional development requirements to meet professional standards" took 2nd place (36.9%).

About teaching methods: The 2018 GEC focuses on generating enthusiasm, encouraging students to explore knowledge, effectively apply the knowledge they have learned into real life and develop independent thinking, opinion, and autonomy. Accordingly, each teacher should have a mindset is able change and update to new teaching methods. For a long time, Vietnamese teachers have been accustomed to the traditional teaching style, so in a short time teachers may not be able to adapt. “Changing teaching methods to match the 2018 GEC also caused many difficulties for us, many teachers are so used to the old teaching method that in a short time requiring our teachers to change, it is not easy. Moreover, we train to meet the curriculum online, so it is even more difficult” (ID77-Can Tho). Moreover, the teaching training under the 2018 GEC was implemented online during the complicated Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the update of new teaching methods of teachers is limited. To improve this, we need time for teachers to get familiar with and do their best teaching. Additionally, another factor that requires consideration is the regulation of teaching and learning achievements.

The way students are evaluated under the 2018 GEC has changed, but the requirements for teaching achievements of teachers during this period have not changed. Therefore, teachers “feel stressed when they want to change their methods to suit the goals of the educational curriculum but are constrained by teaching achievements” (ID05-Hanoi). Therefore, many teachers choose the safe option of unchanged to ensure their teaching achievements.

Regarding professional development requirements according to professional standards: (including criteria such as: Personal professional development, development of teaching and education plans towards the development of student qualities and competencies; Use teaching and education methods toward developing student qualities and capabilities; Testing and evaluating toward developing students' qualities and competencies; Student counseling and support). According to these criteria, 39.6% felt "extreme stress", 17.2% of teachers felt "much stress", 21.2% felt "moderate stress", 12.9% of teachers felt "mild stress" and only 11.8% felt "no stress". Thus, it can be seen that with this requirement, the teacher is feeling very difficult, the average score of this factor is 3.54/5 points, and the score is quite high, showing the stress level of teacher quite a lot. In fact, during the implementation of the 2018 GEC, the outbreak of Covid-19 has greatly limited the professional development conditions for

teachers, especially in the use of teaching methods toward the development of students' competencies. In this period, although MOET is trying to implement activities to develop expertise for teachers, the efficiency is still not high (Pham et al, 2022).

Therefore, to reduce the stress on teachers in this period, the Ministry of Education must take specific measures to create favorable conditions for teachers to maximize their potential and improve their personal

capacity to help implement the 2018 GEC successfully.

2.2.3. Stress Related to Students

Teaching is one of the most difficult occupations (Than, 2019). The difficulties come from all sides such as society, parents, principals, colleagues, etc., however, the difficulty from students is greatest that teachers face every day. Figure 2 below how teachers feel about the stress from students?

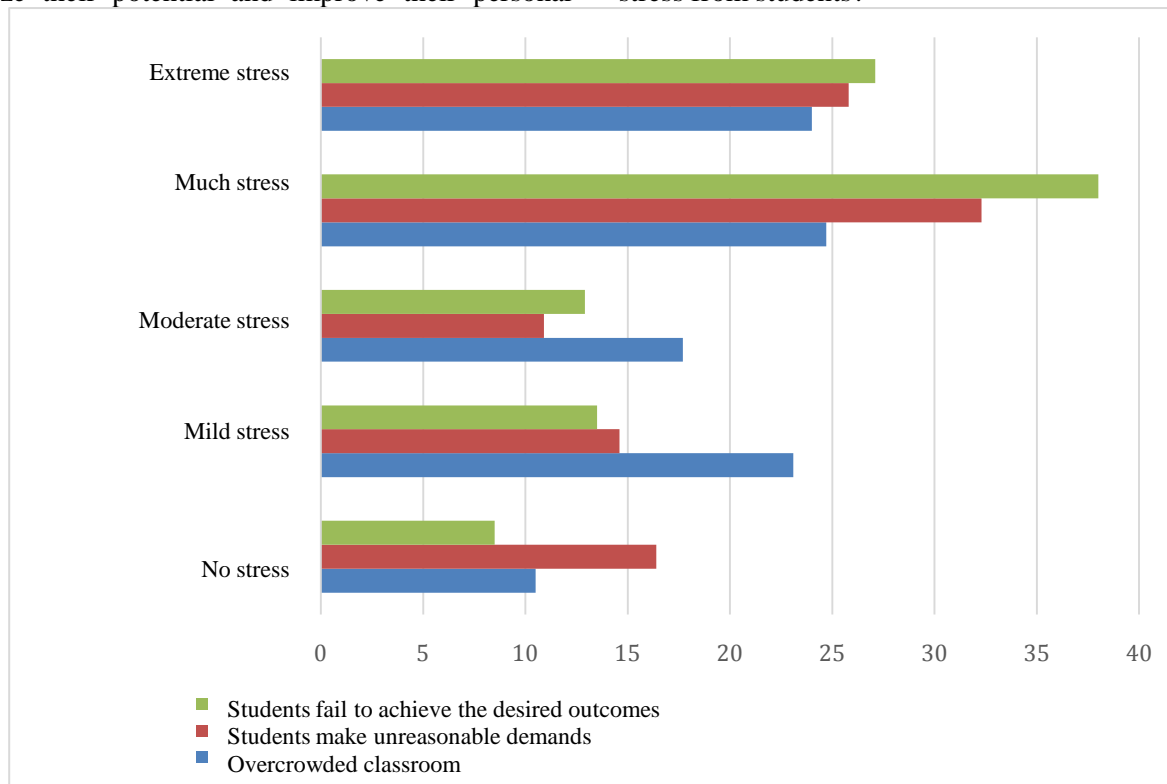


Figure 2. Stresses related to students

Through Figure 2, it can be seen that the level of "extremestress" in factors related to students has decreased compared to factors related to individuals. However, the level of "Much stress" increased, the highest was "students fail to achieve the desired results" with 38%.

Regarding the number of students in the class: according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training, each class is not more than 45 students, but in fact, each class currently has a place of about 60 students per class (Nguyet & Ngoc, 2018). This causes significant difficulties for teachers and affects the quality of teaching and learning.

Regulations on achievements: according to regulations, teachers should ensure targets such as: 100% of students go to class, the quality of subjects reaches 99%, the target of regular attendance rate reaches 98%, etc. are the numbers that cause great difficulties for teachers. Additionally, there are many other regulations on performance indicators such as: "Excellent teacher" titles at all levels, competitions, requirements for foreign language certificates, professional certificates, etc., are all factors that put pressure on teachers in the

process of implementing educational work.

Additionally, according to the Regulations on disciplinary rewards: Circular 32/2020/TT-BGDĐT on the charter of secondary and high schools stipulates: Teachers and employees must not offend honor and dignity, or physically infringe on students and colleagues (Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, 2018). Thus, in any form, teachers are not allowed to use corporal punishment. Meanwhile, "students are increasingly unruly, lazy to learn, if teachers do not use strong measures, it will be difficult to educate them" (teacher-ID17-Hanoi).

Regarding the factor "Students fail to achieve the desired outcomes" receives a relatively high level of stress. In this regard, considering that in the period of educational renovation, educational issues are still in the "inception" stage, while the credit-driven habit is still deeply ingrained in the minds of every parent, each teacher, and each student. This invisible contradiction puts teachers in a difficult position, both to get familiar to the curriculum and to ensure the academic achievement of students.

Thus, it can be seen that the stresses related to

students is enormous for teachers today. To solve this problem requires the participation of leaders, educational management agencies and the whole society.

2.2.4. Stress Related to Work

Work-related stress are understood as the requirements for teachers in teaching and educating students under the new 2018 GEC, the conditions of facilities to serve teaching under the new curriculum, administrative tasks, methods and modes of teaching,

etc.

It can be said that the change in the 2018 GEC is a form of "overhaul" that has changed the entire general education staff. In fact, many teachers have had to go to upskill classes to be able to teach under the new curriculum, they do not even have time to spend with their families, 91.5% of teachers feel stressed in the process of working (Phung Thi Thu Trang, 2020). Figure 3 shows the work-related stress after 2 years of implementing the 2018 GEC.

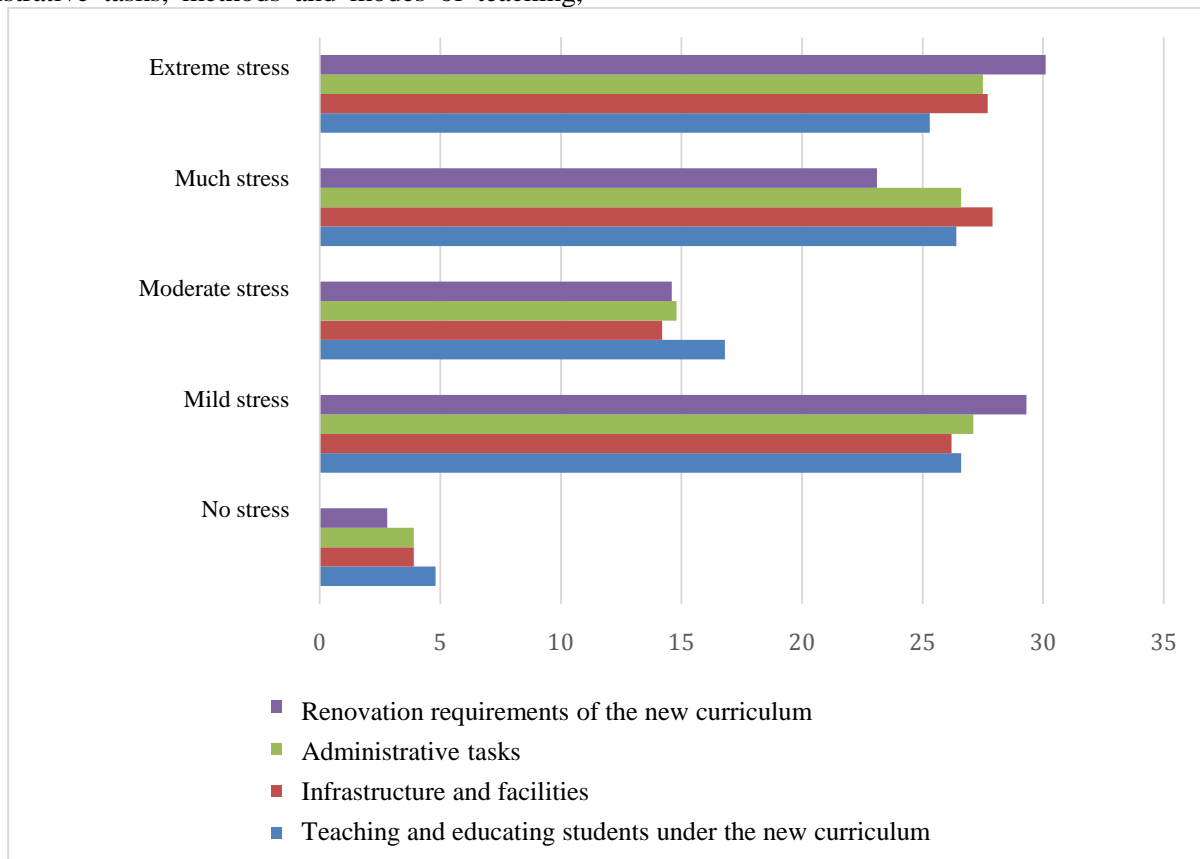


Figure 3. Stresses related to work

Figure 3 shows that stress from the curriculum's renovation requirements is the most difficult factor for teachers with the rate of 30.1%. When the curriculum changes, it means that teachers also must change to meet the educational goals. Teaching so that students can "do" something is completely different from teaching so that students can simply "remember", or "know"; the advent of common and specific competencies also require teachers to spend a lot of time to study and learn on how to teach such competencies. The changes in the textbook regarding theme-based planning (compared to lesson-based planning) require teachers to have general knowledge, creativity, and initiative in teaching to achieve desirable results. This makes it difficult for teachers who are accustomed to the old teaching style to adapt, without the initiative to learn and support from leaders, it will cause great stress for teachers.

Factors from facilities also cause significant stress

for teachers. In recent times, although school facilities have been invested a lot by the state, in many schools, the equipment is available but cannot be used due to the lack of internet conditions, old and broken equipment, etc., or "Our schools are in economically disadvantaged areas, teaching equipment is very inadequate, many teachers must use personal devices to ensure the quality of teaching. However, there are not many teachers who have the conditions to do this" (Teacher-ID56-Can Tho).

Stresses from administrative work: "Although compared to the past, administrative tasks have decreased a lot, in fact tasks such as "excellent teacher" competitions, certification exams, professional knowledge tests, etc., are causing us headaches and fatigue" (Teacher-ID152-Hanoi).

Thus, it can be seen that the stresses related to work are now relatively high. The 2018 GEC launched in the early stages may still have unresolved confusions, unanswered questions, so teachers feel even more

stressed. Hopefully, in the coming time, when the curriculum has become established, the difficulties of teachers will also decrease, accordingly, the stress of teachers will also decrease.

2.2.5. Stress Related to Other Factors

Other factors identified are issues related to management mechanisms, social needs, parental demands, relationships with colleagues, leadership, etc. how these factors will affect teacher stress in the current period. Let's take a look at Figure 4.

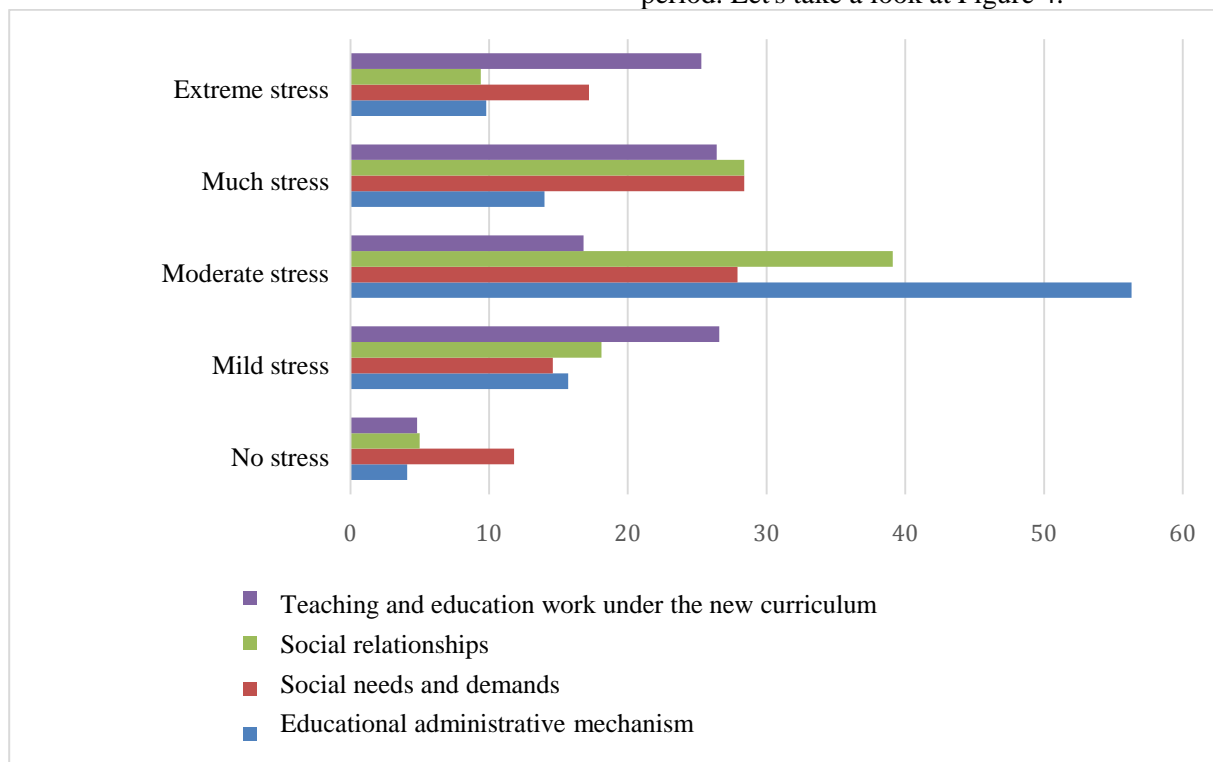


Figure 4. Stresses related to other factors

Figure 4 shows us that 24.9% of teachers were at the "Extremestress" level, 27.5% at the "Much stress" level, 11.6% at the "Moderate stress" level, 14.6% of teachers at the "Mildstress" level, and 21.4% at the "Mild stress" level.

The results of surveys from smaller items showed that teachers were relatively satisfied with the relationship with their colleagues - they thought that colleagues were friendly and always ready to help them in any situation, followed by satisfaction with the principal, they thought that the principal was the one who always treated everyone fairly, a visionary and caring person who cares about his employees. However, the relationship of teachers with parents is not completely fine, only about 50% of teachers feel a normal relationship with parents, about more than 30% of parents ask teachers to follow their demands for their children, "Many parents they are difficult, they ask us to be like this, to be like that with their children, while we have many other students, we cannot care about their children alone" (ID118-Hanoi). It can also be affirmed that currently being a teacher profession is one of the most unsecure professions (Le Van Than, 2019), many teachers are threatened by parents if they accidentally make mistakes, are reprimanded, disciplined, even fired by school principals or leaders. Therefore, teachers now always "feel unsecure" and to

ensure their safety, they choose the safe option of only imparting knowledge and not interfering in conflicts among students. However, this contradicts educational goals and social needs. Therefore, the stress of teachers in this field is highly significant.

To solve this problem, the Ministry of Education should strengthen the role and position of teachers for students, parents and the whole society.

2.2.6. The Effectiveness of Measures Aimed at Reducing the Stress on Teachers by Administrators

It is important to examine the effectiveness of measures to reduce the teacher stress, from which leaders and educational administrators make adjustments to suit the needs of teachers. The research team based the questionnaire on the policies issued by the Ministry of Education of Vietnam for current education professionals to make an evaluation. The results of teachers' evaluation are an important basis for the Ministry of Education to adjust policies to suit the needs of teachers. The levels of "necessary:", "slightly necessary:" and "not necessary" were designated by the research team to evaluate.

The policies and teachers' evaluation results are described below.

2.2.7. Honoring Teachers

The policy of honoring teachers is reflected in activities such as: awarding certificates of merit to teachers who are dedicated to the profession, rewarding teachers who have made many contributions to the

cause of education, honoring exemplary teachers, etc. These activities are very meaningful. The table below shows teachers' viewpoint on whether it is really necessary or not.

Table 2. The need to honor teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Slightly necessary	32	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Necessary	426	93.0	93.0	100.0
	Total	458	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 93% of teachers think the measure is necessary, only 7% think it is "slightly necessary" and no teacher thinks it is "not slightly". Honoring teachers with the aim of recognizing the contributions of teachers to the education sector, to the cause of "fostering people" of the country. Each honored teacher has special meaning to them because "it is the recognition of society for the teacher. Through each such event, we feel more proud, love our profession more and want to contribute more to education" (Teacher-ID56-Can Tho).

In Vietnam, every year, these activities are solemnly organized by the state on Vietnamese Teachers' Day (20/11). These activities receive the attention of the whole education sector and the whole society. Thus, it can be seen that with the policy of honoring teachers, the relatively high consensus of teachers has been

reached. This policy needs to be maintained and further promoted its effectiveness to create motivation for teachers.

2.2.8. Professional Development for Teachers

Professional development is a necessary activity for all professions, this activity helps employees gain more knowledge and confidence in professional activities.

In the education sector, when implementing the 2018 GEC, leaders have organized training sessions, seminars, professional exchanges, etc., to supplement the knowledge, skills and techniques of teachers. The professional development for teachers is also activity that is carried out annually and organized by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. These activities improve the teaching capacity of teachers. Table 2 shows us how teachers perceive this issue.

Table 3. Professional development for teachers

Degree		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not necessary	219	47.8	47.8	47.8
	Slightly necessary	74	16.2	16.2	64.0
	Necessary	165	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	458	100.0	100.0	

Through Table 3, it can be seen that up to 47.8% of teachers said that this activity is "not necessary". 36% of teachers said it was "necessary" and 16.2% of teachers said it was "slightly necessary". The problem is that professional development for teachers is activity of great significance, which is necessary for each teacher.

Research by Pham Thi Hong Tham (2022) suggests that training sessions are like short-term "vacation" in which teachers participate without a focus on learning. Therefore, the effectiveness of these trainings is not high. Therefore, teachers said that the Ministry of Education should limit training sessions. In the open question on this issue, many teachers believe that the form of training should be changed such as: Teachers are reporters, experts provide topics and teachers discuss, etc. This creates proactivity, promoting active

participation of teachers instead of passive listening to experts. Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Training should also organize many seminars for teachers to share practical experiences.

2.2.9. Raise Salaries or Financial Aid for Teachers

It can be said that the teacher salary is currently the most "persistent" issue in the whole education industry. A study by Nguyen Thi Binh (2012) showed that many teachers were living below the average standard. Pham's research (2022) also shows that 82% of teachers were living with middle or low income (less than 10 million VND/month – equivalent to about 400 USD), 18% of teachers live at above-decent level, and no teacher is living at a decent level (over 30 million/month – equivalent to 1200\$).

Table 4. Assessing the need for salary increases or financial support for teachers

Degree		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Slightly necessary	25	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Necessary	433	94.5	94.5	100.0
	Total	458	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that up to 94.5% of teachers believe that increasing salaries and financial support for teachers is a necessary undertaking for the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam.

Decree 38/2022/ND-CP was issued on increasing the minimum wage for employees and will come into effect starting from July 7, 2023. In different regions there will be different minimum wages. With such a prescribed rate, according to the government's salary calculation formula (Teacher salary = Base salary * Salary coefficient + Preferential compensation rate + Seniority compensation rate - Social insurance contribution rate), the salary of newly graduated teachers will be: $1,800,000 * 2.34 + 10\% - 8\% \Leftrightarrow 5,000,000$ VND (equivalent to 200\$). According to the residential living standard survey report of the Vietnam Statistics Office in 2021, the average Vietnamese have an income of 4,200,000 VND (equivalent to \$ 169/month).

The question is, is this enough for teachers to live on

such an income? If a person spends this amount of income for one-person household (i.e. oneself), a teacher will live at the "minimum living standard" level, but it's clearly not enough for a multiple-person household (e.g. parents, children, etc.).

Therefore, the number of teachers who think that increasing salaries or financial support for teachers is necessary during this period. Doing this will help teachers feel more secure when doing professional activities.

2.2.10. Reducing Workload

According to the regulations of the 2018 GEC, in addition to teaching classes for students, teachers now only must do 3 simple administrative tasks. This workload reduction helps teachers focus more on teaching and improving the quality of education. The results of this workload reduction evaluated by teachers are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Teachers' evaluation about reducing the workload

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not necessary	8	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Slightly necessary	136	29.7	29.7	31.4
	Necessary	314	68.6	68.6	100.0
	Total	458	100.0	100.0	

In table 5, 68.6% of teachers said that reducing the workload was necessary, 29.7% of teachers said it was "slightly necessary" and 1.7% of teachers said it was "not necessary".

Reducing the workload is a completely beneficial for teachers, giving them more time to rest, but 29.7% of teachers rated this as "slightly necessary" and 1.7% of teachers think it is not necessary? According to the results of Pham's research (2022), a teacher said that "...teachers will only maintain this situation for the next few years, and then all will have to do things the old ways" (citing teachers with ID172). In fact, teachers who are heads of professional teams or homeroom teachers also have to do a series of other administrative tasks such as: periodic reports, developing plans, developing lessons for the professional team, monthly evaluation, classroom observations, regular and unscheduled meetings, etc. These tasks take up a lot of the teacher's time.

Thus, although it is assumed that the workload for teachers would be reduced, in fact, teachers still have to do a series of other unrecognized administrative tasks, which teachers cannot help participating in. Therefore, the opinion on reducing the workload does not receive the attention of teachers.

3. Conclusion

The results of the survey on the current state of teachers are based on four types of occupational stress

of teachers: 1) Stress related to personal factors; 2) Stress related to students; 3) Stress related to work; 4) Stress related to other factors shows that: The four occupational stress groups of teachers all have certain high and low levels in each group, clearly reflecting the current situation of the surveyed teachers. Through the results of this survey, it can be seen that:

- Teachers are under a lot of stress from: Professional development requirements according to professional standards, teaching methods to meet the goals of the teaching curriculum; Students' academic achievements. These stressors receive relatively high attention by teachers.

- Although the measures to reduce the stress are of great significance to teachers, their effectiveness is still not very high, many teachers still believe that these measures need to be implemented more effectively.

- The Ministry of Education needs to base on the current situation of teacher stress to make more effective stress relief measures for teachers.

The research results have provided a theoretical basis and an important set of data on the professional work pressure of Vietnamese teachers during the period of Vietnam's educational reform. These results can be used by policy makers, educational administrators or teachers themselves to reduce the pressure in the future. Additionally, the results of this study can serve as a basis for proposing more specific and feasible measures to reduce the professional work pressure of teachers,

aiming to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools popular in Vietnam.

The results of this research can be implemented in research directions on professional happiness for teachers, capacity building for teachers, policies for teachers, etc.

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