

# The Situation of Decentralization for Primary Schools in Hanoi, Vietnam – From the Education and Training Department Officers Perspective

Vu Thi Mai Huong\*

Faculty of Educational Management, Hanoi National University of Education, Hanoi, Vietnam

\*Corresponding author: [maihuongqlgd@gmail.com](mailto:maihuongqlgd@gmail.com)

Received March 18, 2018; Revised April 05, 2018; Accepted May 08, 2018

**Abstract** The decentralization of primary schools involves the school being empowered to perform most functions from the central, provincial to district, they are also responsible for the functions assigned. The situation of empowerment of primary schools in Hanoi, Vietnam from the perspective of Education and Training Department officers shows that Vietnam has initially approached the trend of decentralization. Decentralization activities have taken place and legal guidelines have been issued. However, the regulations have been limited the rights of school level. The role of the district level has been high. The schools are still the executing unit and they do not have accountability and responsibility.

**Keywords:** *decentralization, empowerment, accountability and responsibility, school based management, primary management*

**Cite This Article:** Vu Thi Mai Huong, “The Situation of Decentralization for Primary Schools in Hanoi, Vietnam – From the Education and Training Department Officers Perspective.” *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 6, no. 5 (2018): 556-559. doi: 10.12691/education-6-5-30.

## 1. Introduction

The primary education reform in Vietnam has been taking place strongly, especially in mechanisms management. The general trend in management for primary schools has given more accountability and responsibility for schools.

In terms of management functions, District level is responsibility for managing its primary schools. It performs the function of State management over education. Education and Training Department is responsible for advising District People's Committee to execute the functions of state management of education in the district [1,2]. District level is responsibility for developing elementary education in the area. The responsibility consists of contents: the plan of school development, the school establishment and dissolution, personal, financial, infrastructure management, decision making, manual and hosing and implementation subject, documentation and the learning program.

Decentralization is the process which transfers decision-making from higher to lower levels in accordance with responsibilities and accountability; or decentralization is equivalent to the organizational structure in which many individuals or constituent units can make decisions [3].

The decentralization of educational management in Vietnam has been studied in a multidimensional way. However, There have been many authors and researchers

paying more attention to Government/State management, less than problems of each level of education such as the management of the educational department for primary schools [4,5]. The reality shows that the current situation of decentralization is ongoing with many pressing issues, incompatibility between theory and practice, between steering and reality in educational institutions as well as agencies' management [7]. Solutions to effective decentralization are also initially proposed. [8]

There are two forms of decentralization to school level: Decentralization to one or two levels of government (region / state and province / city responsible for school management); School based management [6].

General contents on the basis of SBM, various concepts related to the concept and operation of the school council under SBM focus on improving the quality of education. However, SBM in Vietnam hasnot been launched [11].

In Vietnam, researches on the decentralization of the overall educatinal system, and the direction to build an effective school. However, this is a common model for all levels and types of schools, when Application to elementary schools requires an analysis that is more appropriate to the characteristics of this level [10].

In the second form of education management decentralization, schools are empowered to perform most of their functions from the central, provincial, district, and city governments. They are responsible for the functions being examined [12,13]. School Based Management (SBM) was researched and came from the decentralization process. The aspects were introduced such as: What is

SBM; Summary the new process in the the Europe countries and countries that English language spoken The evaluation of the future school model and the participation of stakeholders [12]. The World Bank (WB) has made a comprehensive synthesis of SBM through its sponsorship and practical researches. The organization has endeavored to provide a brief view of the definition and goals of school-based management. SBM models based on stakeholder involvement at the school level. Whereby there will be weak, moderate, strong, very strong models. The WB also made a link to decision-making in SBM, however, the role of the district level limited [13]. It is believed that teachers, administrators, parents, and communities are the closest ones to their students, identifying strategies that best fit the characteristics of the students [14].

The aim of this study is analysing situations of decentralization process for primary schools in Hanoi, Vietnam through Education and Training Department officers perspective.

## 2. Content

### 2.1. Methods of Analysis

#### \* Methodology

This study employed the descriptive correlational survey research design. A descriptive research design is used when the study focuses on the present condition and the purpose is to find new truth. The survey used the *method* researcher-restructured and researcher-made questionnaires including two parts of the research instrument inquires for officers of Education and Training Departments in Hanoi, Vietnam: The role of district level in educational decentralization and the content of this process.

In this research, there were 30 officers of Education and Training Department taking part in answering the questionnaires.

#### \* Statistical Tools

SPSS is used to analyze and interpret the results.

The following calculations are used for description:

1. Mean and Standard Deviation: These statistical tools were used to answer sub-problem numbers.

2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson  $r$ ) and Regression Analysis: These statistical tools were used to answer sub-problem.

#### \* Processing the results

For the results, the Cronbach's alpha shows the reliability of the quantitative measure: 0.6-0.8: reliable, use; With 0.8 - above 0.9 is better, reliability, high. In this survey, the Cronbach's alpha is from 0.6374 to 0.7635. This is a basic number for possible to determine the suitability of the data base.

#### \* Research location

The study was conducted in the 30 selected officers in the Education and Training Departments in Hanoi, Vietnam. They are responsible for managing primary schools.

## 2.2. Results and Discussion

### 2.2.1. The Role of Educational District Department in Managing Primary School under Empowering Responsibility and Accountability Approach

Education and Training Departments receive the direction and assignment of District People's Committees. They are responsible for managing their primary schools [1,2]. The role is reflected in the function of advising for the District People's Committee on the legal educational field. In the trend of decentralized education in Vietnam, the Education and Training Department should be active in transferring the right and counseling to the primary schools [5,7].

In terms of school level, Education and Training Departments express the management role under the direction of empowerment approach in the following aspects:

- (1) school development plan,
- (2) school operating budget,
- (3) personnel development, school based curriculum development,
- (4) school management under accountability and responsibilities approach including school organization, assignment schedule, school leadership.

The status of the Education and Training Departments in managing their primary schools under accountability and responsibilities approach has been shown in Table 1.

The highest evaluation content was as followed, "Guide primary schools to plan school development strategies, identify mission and vision of their schools, and disseminate those issues to stakeholders." with mean at 2.833.

Factors relate to primary school management were also assessed at high levels. They were: "Education and Training Departments allow the primary schools the right to design organizational structures according to their specific conditions and circumstances so that the primary schools can make their decisions." with mean at 2.7; the same mean at 2.6 was the factors relating to the school management under accountability and responsibility approach. As can be seen, the Department of Education and Training is extremely aware of the importance of the decentralization process for primary schools. It plays an important part in the educational management reform.

The issues which Education and Training Department with a low or no support for elementary schools were financial issues, personnel and preparation for schools willing to change. The average score for these criteria is as followed, "Education and Training Department supports primary schools to adjust the differences in accounting, increasing the result of the use of the fund and support specially for the fields" with mean at 2.367.

"The District governments is the intermediary for transfers budget (programs, projects, special assistance and so on) issued directly by the central and local governments to the primary schools publicly" with mean at 2.4. The two contents have the same average score: "The staff of Education and Training Department are the important force to support the primary school's operations, explain its budget and school program goals, as well as provide technical assistance to the school when primary schools have difficulties" and "Education and Training Department devotes a portion of their budget to improving skills, training profession for people who are involved

in the education reform process” with the same score at 2.433.

According to regulations on accountability and responsibility, primary school personnel and finance are approved by District People's Committee. The Education and Training Department offices play the advisory role. Therefore, the support of this unit is not enough [2]. This is the reason for the decentralization process for the primary school to be limited. They had lower right in decision-making.

In terms of model of school-based management, Vietnamese model is responsible for observing by the principles under the central and local agencies relating to accountability and responsibility. If it is based on power, it is interference between weak authority and moderate authority. The decision-making authority is given by the principals, but is governed by the Educational and Training Department and the District People's Committee [12,13,14].

**Table 1. The role of Education and Training Department in the decentralization process for elementary schools**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.6374	0.6374	30

No	Contents for decentralization	Mean	SD	Level		
				%		
				Often 3	Sometimes 2	Never 1
1	Guide primary schools to plan school development strategies, identify mission and vision of their schools, and disseminate those issues to stakeholders.	2.833	0.4611	86.67	10.00	3.30
2	Education and Training Department recognizes that Primary principals play a particularly important role in management reform at the school level.	2.567	0.6261	63.33	30.00	6.67
3	Education and Training Department plans specifically for empowering the accountability and responsibility for the primary schools.	2.600	0.5632	63.33	33.33	3.33
4	Education and Training Department cooperates with the relevant organizations to help the primary schools overcome difficulties, accelerate the process of decentralization.	2.533	0.6814	63.33	26.67	10.00
5	Education and Training Department allows the primary schools the right to design organizational structures according to their specific conditions and circumstances so that the primary schools can make their decisions.	2.700	0.596	76.67	16.67	6.67
6	Education and Training Department establishes an educational information system on autonomous issues	2.600	0.5632	63.33	33.33	3.33
7	Education and Training Department devotes a portion of their budget to improving skills, training profession for people who are involved in the education reform process.	2.433	0.6789	53.33	36.67	10.00
8	The District Governments are the intermediary for transfer budget (programs, projects, special assistance and so on) issued directly by the central and local governments to the primary schools publicly.	2.400	0.6215	46.67	46.67	6.67
9	Education and Training Department supports primary schools to adjust the differences in accounting, increasing the result of the use of the fund and support specially for the fields.	2.367	0.6687	46.67	43.33	10.00
10	Education and Training Department makes primary schools detect their current fields and have the demand to change.	2.467	0.5713	50.00	46.67	3.33
11	The staff of Education and Training Department is the important force to support the primary school's operations, explain its budget and school program goals, as well as provide technical assistance to the school when primary schools have difficulties.	2.433	0.7279	56.67	30.00	13.33

**2.2.2. Degree of Decentralization in the Management of the Department of Education and Training**

The result in the Table 2 shows that, the issues were evaluated with the highest score consisting of “develop the school curriculum, documentation, teaching plan, and learning field of primary schools” with mean of 2.833; the issue “enrolment, recognition of completion of the program” with mean of 2.7. Vietnam implemented one program and one uniform textbook on which primary schools have to plan their education and teaching plan accordingly. The Department of Education and Training is responsible for evaluating and overseeing the primary school's education plan. Therefore, to some extent, the primary schools plan their own teaching and education activities in general framework.

Regarding to the enrolment and recognition of learning outcomes, the primary schools propose the number of enrolments based on its actual situation. The school annually reviews and evaluates the students’ progress according to the approved plan.

The Department of Education and Training does not interfere with this matter. They only perform supervision

and inspection. In terms of degree of school decentralization and score average, it can be seen that the primary schools are decentralized with strong level. However, the school's rights are strictly controlled according to the general plan. They only follow the rules.

For example, the curriculum has been assigned to each lesson, each activity. The school plans to match with the curriculum being available. Therefore, primary schools do not develop the school curriculum and follow the program being available. The enrolment and recognition plans are also specific and consistent. The school plans are followed Therefore, the degree of autonomy of primary schools is also consistent with the role of the Education and Training Department mentioned above.

The issues “write and use educational initiative” and “give honourable titles to people who have made great contributions to the education” had the least mean with 2.233 and 2.333 [1]. These are two activities that are implemented in accordance with the general regulations, the primary schools only proceed according to the direction rules. That is the reason why the process of decentralization is rated at the lowest level.

Table 2. Assessment on the decentralization contents for primary schools

Cronbach's Alpha		Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items		
0.7635		0.7635		30		
No	Decentralization contents for primary schools	Mean	SD	Level		
				%		
				Strong 3	Moderate 2	Weak 1
1	Develop the school curriculum, documentation, teaching plan, learning field of primary schools	2.833	0.3790	83.33	16.67	0.00
2	Enrolment, recognition of completion of the program	2.700	0.4661	70.00	30.00	0.00
3	Mobilize, manage and use resources	2.533	0.5713	56.67	40.0	3.3
4	Cooperate and link with domestic and foreign social economic organizations, educational organizations, cultural organizations, and technological organizations.	2.400	0.4983	40.00	60.00	0.00
5	Education quality Accreditation	2.533	0.5713	56.67	40.00	3.33
6	Write and use educational initiative	2.233	0.6789	36.67	50.00	13.33
7	Organize the structure of primary schools; recruit, manage, use and reward teachers, officials and employees.	2.433	0.6789	53.33	36.67	10.00
8	Give honorable titles to people who have made great contributions to education	2.333	0.6609	43.33	46.67	10.00
9	Inspect and examine the observance of the legislation on education; settle complaints and denunciations as well as handle acts of violating the legislation on education.	2.533	0.6288	60.00	33.33%	6.67

Activities relating to the management of school resources are rated at moderate level. Public elementary schools are created by the central government. The Government provides resources for the operation of primary schools. The schools have less accountability.

Primary school autonomy is limited. Primary schools are mainly executing units, enforcing them according to general regulations. Primary schools actively plan their own plans. Officers at the Education and Training Department are responsible for linking the District People's Committee with the school level. They are also in charge of the professional side, advising the District People's Committee on the activities of the primary schools.

### 3. Conclusion

Decentralization for the primary schools or school-based management is a common management trend in education through the world. In Vietnam, this process is being studied and applied in reality. However, the legal framework does not facilitate the accountability and responsibility of primary schools. Central government, local management agencies in education still play a great role, influencing decision making of the school importantly. The primary schools themselves are governed by many agencies so the level of initiative is limited. Issues at the school's resources such as personnel, financial resources and educational programs and so on has a very low level of decentralization, still belongs to the central government. The primary school is the executing unit.

### References

- [1] Vietnam Ministry of Education (2010), Circular No. 41/2010 / TT-VME promulgating the Charter of primary schools, Hanoi.
- [2] Vietnam Government (2010), Decree stipulates the responsibility for state management of education, Hanoi.
- [3] Vu Thi Mai Huong (2012), "Factors affect to the effectiveness of school-based management", Magazine Rack, (3), p 8-11 & p 27.
- [4] Mai Huong Vu Thi (2012), "transferring the power and improving responsibility – the path to raising the university education quality in Vietnam, Journal of Teaching and Learning, (9), p 12-p 14.
- [5] Nguyen Tien Hung (2000), Concentration and decentralization research in the Vietnamese system, Ministerial level, Institute for Educational Research and Development, Hanoi.
- [6] Mai Huong (2012), "Management of traditional management and SBM ", Magazine Rack, (9), p 2-p 4.
- [7] Nguyen Tien Hung (2003), Vietnamese educational management decentralization: Current Status and Recommendations, Vietnam Journal of Educational Development, (8) p 14-16,21
- [8] Nguyen Tien Hung (2007), Orientation of state management reform in education, Journal of Education Science (25), p 9-11.
- [9] Nguyen Tien Hung (2014), Management of general education in the context of decentralization for education management, National University Publisher, Hanoi.
- [10] Nguyen Tien Hung (2012), Renovate the management of Vietnamese general education under the direction of efficiency in the context of decentralization of education management, Ministerial level.
- [11] Tran Thi Bich Lieu (2005), School based management – the rout to improve educational quality, Hanoi National University of education Publisher, Hanoi.
- [12] Ibtisam Abu - Duhou (1999), School Based management, The United nations educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization.
- [13] World Bank (2007), *What do we know about School - Based Management?*, Human Development Network, Washington, DC.
- [14] Yin Cheong Cheng (1996), School effectiveness and school Based management: a mechanism for development. The Falmer press. London, Washington. DC.