

THE AWARENESS OF EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION ORIENTATION IN RURAL VIETNAM: THE CASE OF HÒA PHÚ COMMUNE, CHÂU THÀNH DISTRICT, LONG AN PROVINCE

LA CONCIENTIZACIÓN SOBRE LA EDUCACIÓN Y EL PAPEL DE LA ORIENTACIÓN EDUCATIVA EN EL VIETNAM RURAL: EL CASO DE LA COMUNA DE HÒA PHÚ, DISTRITO CHÂU THÀNH, PROVINCIA DE LONG AN

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Información del artículo:

Artículo original

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33975/riuuq.vol35n1.1038>

Recibido: 6 diciembre 2022; Aceptado: 19 abril 2023

ABSTRACT

The study is to investigate and analyse the perception of parents in Hòa Phú Commune about education and their guidance toward their children's career education orientation in the current period. The study is based on ethnographical fieldwork methodology with 29 in-depth interviews across all five hamlets (cluster sampling) and several observation journeys. The authors spent 3 years working at the research site. The child's continuing education depends largely on his or her own wishes. In fact, there is an interaction between the internal factors (parents' wishes, expectations and needs) and external factors (economic, cultural and social circumstances) of the educational orientation of children in rural families. In many cases, there is a gap between what parents think and what they act about their children's education. Local families rationally choose to guide and invest in their children's education. The research shows how contemporary Vietnamese rural residents view and position their children's education, especially the future vocational education.

Keywords: consciousness; education; family; rational choice; Long An Province.

Cómo citar: Lam-Ha, Truong Thi. (2023). The awareness of education and the role of education orientation in rural Vietnam: the case of Hòa Phú Commune, Châu Thành District, Long An Province. *Revista de Investigaciones Universidad del Quindío*, 35(1), 285-297. <https://doi.org/10.33975/riuuq.vol35n1.1038>

ISSN: 1794-631X e-ISSN: 2500-5782

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RESUMEN

El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar y analizar la percepción de los padres de la comuna de Hòà Phú sobre la educación y su orientación hacia la orientación de la educación profesional de sus hijos en el período actual. El estudio se basa en una metodología de trabajo de campo etnográfico con 29 entrevistas en profundidad en las cinco aldeas (muestreo por conglomerados) y varios viajes de observación. Los autores pasaron 3 años trabajando en el sitio de investigación. La educación continua del niño depende en gran medida de sus propios deseos. De hecho, existe una interacción entre los factores internos (deseos, expectativas y necesidades de los padres) y factores externos (circunstancias económicas, culturales y sociales) de la orientación educativa de los hijos de familias rurales. En muchos casos, existe una brecha entre lo que piensan y actúan los padres sobre la educación de sus hijos. Las familias locales eligen racionalmente orientar e invertir en la educación de sus hijos. La investigación muestra cómo los residentes rurales vietnamitas contemporáneos ven y posicionan la educación de sus hijos, especialmente la futura educación vocacional.

Palabras clave: conciencia; educación; familia; elección racional; provincia de Long An.

INTRODUCTION

Education is usually referred to as a social process or social system, which plays a decisive role in promoting social integration (Macionis, 2004: 170). In addition to viewing education as the dissemination of knowledge and experience, some studies also view education as the transmission of values and a close relationship with culture (Peterson, 2000: 222). Therefore, in a broad sense, education can be seen as a process of changing people's concepts through the transmission of values. In family education, in addition to the task of educating social values (cultural traditions, customs, traditions, community identity...), the education of personal values (ethics, knowledge, skills...) is particularly important, especially for children's current educational background. Intellectual education through educational channels helps families demonstrate the role of positioning, setting educational goals (aspirations and expectations), and supporting children in achieving their goals.

The Mekong Delta is widely regarded as an underdeveloped region of education in Vietnam. According to recent statistics, the proportions of the population who have never attended school (18.4%) and who have not completed primary school (34.6%). These numbers are higher than the average range of the whole country (respectively, 9.8% and 21.4%). At the same time, the proportion of the population who graduate from secondary school, high school and university is much lower than the national average point [1]. The author believes that the above indicators are not only related to school education, but also the result of the direct or indirect influence of family education. Considering that Long An is located in the Mekong Delta region and is adjacent to Ho Chi Minh City, my research explores families' perceptions of educational value and educational orientation under the influence of objective and subjective factors.

Many studies have shown that not only schools but also families play an important role in education. Feinstein, Duckworth, Sabates (2008) showed in their research that it is the family that drives differences in educational outcomes. Families have varying levels of support for their children's goals based on their willingness and ability to take advantage of educational opportunities (Feinstein et al., 2008).

When Crawford, Dearden, Micklewright and Vignoles studied the family background and university success of British college students, they also discovered the relationship between family background and their children's academic success. Normally, children from wealthy families go to college more often than children from poor families (Crawford et al., 2016). Brighthouse and Swift (2014) also highlighted the fact that children born in different families face unequal prospects. In China, Fengshu Liu's research explained the phenomenon of student dropouts in two rural communities, Chengzi and Bailou, Weichang district, Hebei province, PRC. The research results show that the opinions and decisions on whether their children to continue to go to secondary school are based on the calculation of the costs and benefits of students and families, rather than legal obligations or sense of responsibility (Liu, 2004). In Vietnam, Lê Thi (1994), Behrman and Knowles (1999), Đặng Thị Hoa (2008), Nguyễn Hồng Hà (2012), Hà Thúc Dũng và Nguyễn Ngọc Anh (2012), Trần Thị Kim Xuyên (2014), Nguyễn Khánh Trung (2016), Nguyễn Văn Tiệp (2017)... and other authors' research also paid attention to the influence of parents' economic factors and educational level determine whether to send their children to further studies or not. Among them, Nguyễn Văn Tiệp used rational choice theory to explain the choice of families in the Mekong Delta region for their children's future education. Nguyễn Văn Tiệp believes that family financial ability has the greatest impact on children's education (Nguyễn Văn Tiệp, 2017, p.88).

This research shows that the important role of the economy affects the education of Vietnamese families. The author believes that, taking the rural areas of Long An province as an example, families not only invest in their children's education according to their inherent economic capabilities but they also have a rational choice to invest in their children's education to obtain long-term benefits. This view may explain why low-income families can still send their children to higher education. In addition, the author is also interested in how children's abilities and efforts can play a role in improving their educational achievement. Therefore, in addition to the influence of economic factors, I pay attention to the parents' educational level (cultural capital) and personal efforts, and each person's rational choice explains the necessity of children to go to school or drop out. Halfway through the family, especially those with lower cultural and economic capital.

Based on Pierre Bourdieu's view of cultural capital (1977), each social class has its own cultural meaning or structure and is attracted by the socialisation of the family from the beginning, since this habit hides perceptions, thoughts, tastes, evaluations, and behaviors (Bilton et al., 1993: 300). According to Bourdieu, the habitus characterizes each social group. Habitus do not naturally arise, but are formed in the process of socialization in different environments. These environments include: home environment, school environment, and social environment. This difference can be explained from the accumulation process of the types of capital that individuals learn and receive in each social group through education (Bourdieu, 1986). I assume that every social group will have views and behaviors about children's education. Especially, the families with higher academic qualifications tend to invest more in their children. Furthermore, based on Barth's rational choice theory, that each individual derives from rational motivation to choose the action that brings the greatest benefit (Barth, 1966), the authors found differences in the choice of educational actions. Families consider more when choosing to invest in their children's education as a profitable investment. Among them, more educated families understand the benefits of long-term education and accept long-term investments in their children's education than less educated families. It seems that pure farmers are more inclined to rational choices and are more susceptible to external factors, while more educated families have

a clearer investment strategy for their children's education. However, because they are all affected by natural and social environmental conditions, the cognition of educational values partially reflects the local cultural characteristics. The author analyses the problem through two themes, namely (1) the cognition of educational value and the factors affecting education; (2) the desire and direction of family education in Hòa Phú Commune.

METHODOLOGY

Combining the scope of the topic, I start from the parents' perception of the value of education and the positioning of the child's educational path, taking the Hòa Phú commune in the Châu Thành district of Long An province as an example. The author uses qualitative data as the main research source, and further uses in-depth interviews, retrospective interviews, narrative research and other methods to understand parents' cognition of children's educational value. Based on results of the analysis, the author understands the parents' desire and direction for their children's education. The author conducted a total of 29 in-depth interviews. Correspondents were selected according to different criteria such as family type, education level, occupation, age, economy, religion and gender. In terms of quantitative research, I used systematic random sampling to survey 150 households in all 5 villages of Hòa Phú commune. These quantitative studies aim to compare the views of children in different social groups on the value and direction of education [2].

DISCUSSION

Family's cognition of educational value and the factors that affect educational level

Hòa Phú commune is a newly-built rural commune located in Châu Thành district, which is also known as the "dragon fruit capital" of Long An province. According to statistics in 2020, Hòa Phú Commune now has 1,797 households in 5 hamlets, of which 95% of the population is engaged in agricultural production. In terms of education, Hòa Phú commune has 1 kindergarten (6 classes) and 1 primary school (13 classes), but no secondary and high schools. Lack of public secondary schools creates difficulties for students due to long travel times and difficult parental management. At present, in order to continue secondary schools, Hòa Phú students must enroll in schools adjacent to the communes in the district, such as Vĩnh Công secondary school (Vĩnh Công commune), Nguyễn Văn Thẳng secondary school (Bình Quới commune) and the secondary schools in Tân An City.

According to the statistics of commune education in 2019, the proportion of commune students completing primary education is 100%, and secondary education is 95%. The proportion of high school graduates entering grade 10 (high school), supplementary education school, vocational high school, and vocational training institutions reached 95.89% [4]. The graduation rate of high school and vocational high school for teenagers aged 18-21 is about 87.22% [3]. Hòa Phú commune has implemented popular primary education for the appropriate age, and the universality of junior high school education reached level 3 [5] in October 2019. From the statistics of commune student enrollment, dropout and graduation rates, it can be seen that the high enrollment, graduation and dropout rates of secondary and high schools in 2019 are relatively low. Sadly, there are currently no statistics on the commune's college students and graduation rates.

When considering the level of education, it is obvious not only from the role of the school, but also from the role of the family in guiding children's educational orientation. Families are places where trust and encouragement are built to facilitate children's learning paths. According to Douglas (1967), parents' interest in education is a key factor that affects children's pursuit of academic opportunities (Bilton et al., 1993: 297). Linking the actual results of improving children's education with family roles, I assume that the stronger parents' perception of the value of education, the better their children's chances of receiving higher education. According to Douglas' analysis, the more parents care about and the more aware of the value of education, the more motivated they are to promote their children's learning. However, the cognitive role is not unique, it is everything. From perception to result, there is also a process that is affected by internal and external factors. It can be seen that in order to improve the level of education, in addition to subjective conditions (cognition of educational values, parents' spiritual care, children's abilities and desires), objective conditions (economic, social, and cultural influence) must also be met.

Previously, according to Thạch Phương, in pre-modern Vietnamese society, only a small number of people attended school due to economic downturn and political restrictions. At that time, teachers were extremely respected by everyone (Thạch Phương & Lưu Quang Tuyền (eds), 1989: 574-575). Especially the Long An people respect not only teachers but also educated people, (Nguyễn Công Bình et al., 1990: 224). However, in reality the Vietnamese in the Mekong Delta have not received higher education (compared to the average point of the country). There are many reasons for the general lack of education in the local community, such as the abandonment of school due to war (quoted from Huỳnh Minh, 1971: 48), "low economy" (Thạch Phương & Lưu Quang Tuyền (eds.), 1989: 574), favorable natural conditions and the imperial government's open policy have prompted the local people to develop the concept of "self-reliance" and 'it doesn't matter if you don't study to become an official' (see Choi, 2011: 15). Many families in the old time "didn't accept children leaving home for school" (Nghê Văn Lương, 1972: 204). Most of these reasons are external factors rather than cognition that does not value learning. Yet, with so much dominance, people put learning behind other priorities.

Through our retrospective interviews, the author can learn that natural conditions (the land is fertile), the economy (more care about the food and clothing of the family than higher education for their children), transportation (inconvenient transportation), and consciousness issues (less expectations for educational outcomes) are key factors that affect the children's further education. Among them, we can first see that under the direct influence of the natural environment, people consciously choose what they need. If life is easy and they feel that what they have is enough, then they don't consciously work hard. Many people think that even if their children don't go to higher education, they still have a "good" life.

An old man in Hòa Phú said: *"I can say that they have available land, fields and gardens, and if they don't study, they also have food to eat. In the old time, if people went to school and became literate, they could become an officer. But now, it is not always possible to go to school to be an official, and not easy to find a job"* (Mr. N.V.B, 80 years old, farming).

Favored nature and liberal/open-minded personality (see Thạch Phương & Đoàn Tú (cb), 2001: 1011), (Wook, 2011: 15, 167) (Trần Ngọc Thêm, 2018: 792)) as well as the easy-going mindset of

local people in Southern Vietnam (Duy Minh Thị, 1872: 9) also cause the lack of higher education. Another old man in Hoa Phú said:

“In the past, it was easy to to make a living due to the blessed natural environment, so people’s temperament was generous and free and easy. They can’t stand the shackles of going to school every day. They are unable to follow the school’s routines such as attending school, listening lectures, doing homework, so school dropout has become a common phenomenon” (Mr. T.A.T, retired teacher, 67 years old).

Not all families have the financial means to invest in their children’s education despite living in their favorite nature. The factor related to education investment earlier mentioned by previous researchers is economic impact. Đặng Thị Hoa (2008), Phan Thị Yến Tuyết (2016), and Nguyễn Văn Tiệp (2017) used survey data from the Mekong Delta provinces to study the education of school-age children, and they all believed that Economic factors play an important role in influencing parents’ education and thus their choice of children’s education. “Parents’ decision to invest in their children’s education still largely depends on the financial situation of the family” (Đặng Thị Hoa, 2008: 131). “Economic conditions are also the reason why many students drop out of school” (Phan Thị Yến Tuyết, 2016: 111), “The decision to ensure that children receive education is a family factor, especially economic factors” (Nguyễn Văn Tiệp, 2017: 88).

In my observation, the economy does not dominate all aspects of family education, but it has an important influence on education, especially in the previous periods. For a long time, for families without financial strength, the choice of education has been placed after food and clothing. Faced with difficulties, people are forced to choose whether to go to school (higher education) or go to work early to ensure life. An old woman said:

“At that time, it was really difficult in many ways. Everyone must work very hard to take care of food and clothing, so the education of children becomes secondary. My husband and I are both teachers. We still have 5 hectares but still feel difficult. Children must also help their parents make a living so that they can learn as much as possible. At that time, the local people did not have a clear understanding of the benefits of studying” (Ms. L.T.Y.N, retired teacher, 68 years old).

Therefore, if family members do not have a high determination to study, it is easy to give up. A local man said: *“Now, there are fewer dropouts this time around and longer periods of time between dropouts. At that time, the local family conditions were poor and the transportation was inconvenient. This road is the edge of the rice field, and it is easy to fall, but there is not even an ox cart. There are no bicycles at home, but now every household has at least one motorcycle, which was the hardest around 1985”* (Mr. L.V.H, 77 years old, farming).

It can be seen from the analysis that the difficulties and advantages of nature and society affect the educational needs of families. A good natural environment makes it easy for people to earn a living. No need to study to find a job. In addition, the family is mainly engaged in agriculture and does not require a high degree of education. Both are reasons why families do not consciously strive for higher education. In addition, inconvenient road traffic in the past, coupled with financial difficulties, made it a reasonable choice for families to drop out of school.

However, things are different now. In terms of universal education, economic and mobility difficulties

have been overcome. The advantage disappears when the difficulty is overcome. In the current situation, people are uneducated, unemployed, or engaged in strenuous manual labor without high incomes. Therefore, in the current context, the family no longer thinks and calculates as before, but has to choose another way to meet the needs of society. In the current perception of wealthy families, the results of in-depth interviews show that higher education is not only beneficial for material well-being, but also for high-paid mental workers, but higher education also has spiritual benefits, that is, good mentality, good behavior, higher status in the community, and better social relationships, and better promotion in career.

Therefore, it is a rational choice for the Hòa Phú family to send their children to higher education and invest in career education. Therefore, families must weigh the pros and cons to choose whether to continue their children's studies. Some poor families believe that if they have no money or property for their children, they will try their best to let their children master knowledge and give them a stable career in the future. It can be seen that in families where parents attach great importance to education, both rich and poor are trying to raise their children to adults. The survey results showed that 82% of respondents said they would send their children to complete college. Moreover, low-income families (less than 200 USD/month), the choice of children to complete college is still the highest choice (56.6%) in comparison with the choice of children to complete high school (18.1%), complete secondary school (3.6%). Therefore, for low-income families, education is a "mental asset" that parents can give their children. An old woman said:

"At that time, I taught my children that our family was very poor, so you must have studied hard. But at that time, I was working from early morning until night, not teaching him at home. At that time, it was very hard here.[...] I did not go to high school, I can only tell my children: Mom works hard, and the children stay at home to take care of their studies. There is a future by studying hard. Obviously, you see that people who study have a happy future, and you see some children who don't go to school, who are now bricklayers and doing heavy work" (Mrs. N.T.N, housewife, 65 years old).

In addition, people's knowledge has been improved, and everyone is watching each other and fighting for their children to be "equality with friends". Therefore, in addition to natural conditions, social conditions, economic conditions and other factors that affect parents' educational awareness, we also clearly see the role of surrounding communities. Mr. T.A.T said:

"At present, due to the large number of schools and convenient transportation, people in the village also visit each other, learn from each other, and send their children to school" (Mr. T.A.T, retired teacher, 67 years old).

Most Hòa Phú households realise the value of education in a specific way: education offers the knowledge needed for future life and work. This shows that the value of learning has brought a very real result in people's cognition, rather than they want to be "admired by everyone" aloof. This view is proved by survey results of people's perception of the value of higher education in my research site. According to our survey results, on the general value scale, most people think that the value of higher education is to have a stable job (74%). This is followed by high-income jobs (9.3%), good knowledge, lifestyle and behavior (8.7%), and the lowest percentage of social status (8.0%). Family education investment is related to parents' awareness of children's education. Through in-depth interviews, the author found that the educational level of families mainly engaged in agricultural production is low;

however, compared with the past, their views on children’s education have changed a lot. In their view, learning is gradually occupying an important and highly practical position, and learning is no longer about literacy, but about acquiring knowledge and a stable job. In addition, to go further, learning is to meet the higher needs of everyone. From the perspective of educational values, families with low levels of education have focused on stable job (87.5% of families with primary school education and 81.1% of families with high school education), while the high education ones have focused on the knowledge, morality and social status that benefits of education than having a stable job.

Table 1: Correlation between learning values and parents’ educational level

THE VALUE OF LEARNING	PARENTS’ EDUCATION LEVEL					
	DON’T GO TO SCHOOL	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE	POSTGRADUATE
Having a higher status in society	0.0%	5%	1.9%	13.2%	13.3%	66.7%
Having a stable job	100%	87.5%	81.1%	71.1%	33.3%	0.0%
Having a high-paid job	0.0%	7.5%	9.4%	10.5%	13.3%	0.0%
Having knowledgeable and ethical standards	0.0%	0.0%	7.5%	5.3%	40.0%	33.3%

Source: Author’s survey data, February 2021.

Therefore, the influence of the natural and social environment on the family’s perception of children’s education can be confirmed. Social changes have led to gradual changes in people’s ideas. In the past, family education attached great importance to moral education. At present, the content of education in the family is richer and more diverse, depending on the specific goals of each family... In particular, the value of education has been realised by people in a practical way: through learning, people gain knowledge, acquire skills, and especially gain a stable career in the future.

The aspirations and educational orientation of families in Hòa Phú

The 2019 commune student enrollment and graduation rate statistics prove that education levels have improved. The survey data also reflects the growing desire for education of children from commune families. The survey results show that 54.7% of parents want their children to finish college, 18% to graduate from high school, 6% to complete college education, and 2.7% secondary school graduation. In addition, 18.7% of informants hesitated to answer. More parents than ever want their children to go to college. The survey shows that 100% of parents with postgraduate degrees want their children to have at least a college/university degree, 86.6% of parents with a college or university degree want their children to have a college/university degree. The rate is 71.1% for parents with high school education, 58.5% for parents with secondary school education, and 22.5% for parents with elementary school education. This shows that parents’ desire for their children’s education is directly proportional to their parents’ educational level.

Table 2: Correlation between parents' educational level and children's willingness to pursue higher education

WHAT IS THE EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE CHILD'S PARENTS WANT?	PARENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL					
	DON'T GO TO SCHOOL	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE	POSTGRADUATE
Graduation primary school	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Graduated from secondary school	0.0%	5.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Graduated from high school	0.0%	27.5%	17.0%	13.2%	13.3%	0.0%
Graduate from university	100.0%	22.5%	58.5%	71.1%	73.3%	100.0%
Graduated from postgraduate	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	13.2%	13.3%	0.0%
No answer	0.0%	45.0%	17.0%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Author's survey data, February 2021

Further observing the correlation between parents' educational level and their children's educational willingness, the author found that many parents with lower educational level are hesitant due to lack of educational experience (45% in primary schools, 17% in secondary schools). This shows that most parents with a lower level of education do not have a clear direction and goal for sending their children to higher education. Although they realise the value of learning and consciously strive for higher education; however, they value stable careers more than advanced degrees, so they will not pursue higher education for their children. As a result, social group perceptions and expectations of education are not similar. Most parents who do manual labor only want their children to have a stable life and work, regardless of social status. Ms. T.T.L. stated:

"I like my children to go to school and work when they grow up. Just settle down and live a normal and comfortable life. As long as he can learn, I will try to let him learn. Learn to have a stable, leisurely job. It's very hard to do business like me" (Ms. T.T.L, trader, 42 years old).

Similarly, Mrs. N.T.N. said: *"Our grandson has a plan to go to college. He will study for about two and a half years. After graduation, he has a job to support himself. I don't need higher education. I also let him take the university entrance examination, but if he fails, we will send him to a vocational college so that he can have a stable career. Later, he takes care of his future, but parents cannot raise children for life. His father cannot live to feed him forever"* (Mrs. N.T.N, housewife, 65 years old).

In addition, through our survey, the majority of parents want to send their children to college; however, the proportion of parents who hope their children complete high school is not small. For families who want their children to finish high school, they think that their children will finish high school and go to factories or work in occupations that require the minimum level of high school education. Therefore, if a child graduates from high school, going to college is not the only choice for all families. Although the higher the awareness of learning, the better, but from the perspective of the relationship between

needs and abilities, reality shows that if a child cannot afford to go to school, the family can choose to let the child finish secondary school, then let your children learn a craft or complete high school, but don't force them to receive higher education at all costs. Mr. T.V.T. said:

“Because the child doesn't like it, no matter how hard the parents force it, it won't work. If he doesn't like it, then forcing the parents will not work. In fact, when children go to school, their studies are not as good as their friends, and they will get bored” (Mr. T.V.T, 74 years old, farmer)

Other farmers have similar viewpoint. Ms. N.T.N.N said: *“If my children like to learn, let them learn, if they don't like learning, they like to learn a craft, we must respect but they must complete the ninth grade”* (Ms. N.T.N.N, 45 years old, housewife). Mr. P.M.D also confirmed: *“If your child likes to learn, let him learn according to his own ability, but if he is not able, he can finish all the universal education and then give him an apprentice instead of forcing him to learn according to his parents' wishes”* (Mr. P.M.D , 28 years old, carpenter).

Therefore, in addition to parents creating conditions for children's learning, children (with their own interests and abilities) also play an important role. In fact, many families need to send their children to higher education, but they cannot realise their wishes due to their limited abilities. Phan Thị Yến Tuyết found in a long-term study of 600 households in coastal Vietnam that there are many reasons why rural students drop out of school. *“The learning ability factor is relatively significant (because the students cannot follow the curriculum)”* (Phan Thị Yến Tuyết, 2016: 111). Of course, in addition to children's abilities, economic factors are important. In explaining the decisive role of the material environment, Halsey, Heath, and Rich compared the educational influence of the family environment (cultural capital, values, and parental encouragement) with the influence of the family material environment in their analysis, showing the decisive role of the family environment. In addition, the influence of family environment and material environment on family education is also prominent (see Bilton et al., 1993: 301).

As for the situation of Hoà Phú Commune, as the author analysed, if the economy used to be a factor hindering the commune's people from receiving higher education in the past, the situation has now changed. The income of Hoà Phú family has increased due to changes in crop structure (approximately USD 3,000/person/year in 2021, a little bit higher than the national average income). Data on 2019 show that the structure of poor households has dropped significantly. Currently, the commune has only 2 social security households and 12 near-poor households (1,797 households in total). Through my survey, apart from children who cannot afford to study, there are very few cases where parents do not want to send their children to higher education due to financial or family reasons. Mrs. N.T.N.N continued: *“My child is in college but he wants to study higher, I create conditions for him, because that is his dream and his future”* (Mrs. N.T.N.N, 45 years old, housewife). Many families, although the economic conditions are not very good, are still willing to send their children to school if they can afford it. As for tuition fees, generally speaking, education fees are now higher than they used to be. However, through the survey, most families believe that the tuition problem (especially high school and below) does not bring too much pressure to the family. Especially families with sufficient financial resources, it is easier to set goals for their children's learning positioning.

Therefore, in the current case of Hoà Phú Commune, economic factors are only a side effect. The

main factor affecting children's continuing education is parents' awareness of meeting their children's needs, desires and abilities.

Although compared with the past, the family's desire for children's education level has undergone positive changes; however, the educational orientation of children in Hòa Phú community families has a characteristic, that is, the recognition of education level, which represents a kind of desire. Rather than a realistic expectation. The family believes that education is necessary, and does not expect too much from their child. They will not force their children to obey the wishes of their parents. However, in our view, the fact that parents stop at desire (to some extent) can also be considered an advancement in the cognitive process. Because the process of recognizing and shaping the goals of parents should also be considered from the starting point and the goal gap (between the parents' educational reality and the children's educational expectations). Because in Pierre Bourdieu's view, an mission should not be measured by its end point (ultimate intention), but by the size of the gap between the starting point and the goal. (Bilton et al., 1993: 298).

On the other hand, when examining the relationship between low- and high-educated parents, parents' wishes and expectations for their children are different. A stable rate of career choice is a goal for low-educated parents. This percentage drops when parents are highly educated. When parents are highly educated, they have higher expectations for their children. They also see value in learning beyond. Learning not only leads to immediate, tangible results (career, income, status...), but also to long-term appreciation of long-term results, invisibly bringing value to knowledge, ethics, and social relations.

It is worth noting that in the education and family education of Hòa Phú Commune, the active role of children in their own learning path is very obvious. The will of the parents is only one lever to facilitate children's learning. Parents influence their children's cognition, helping them understand the value of education and motivating them to learn more. I realise that the improvement of education level requires a process, and the survey shows that the education level of the last three generations is gradually improving. This process is needed to bridge the gap between reality and desired goals.

The findings suggest that Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'cultural capital' fails to explain why poor and uneducated families still insist on sending their children to school. Therefore, the choice of children to pursue higher education and the investment in children's education are not completely influenced by family culture and intellectual capital, but also depend on everyone's efforts and rational choices. Taking into account the educational culture of Hòa Phú Commune families, the survey shows that the attitude of commune families to educate their children is open, not compulsory. The parents focus on the child's self-determination factors and consider the child's role as an active participant in the educational process. Therefore, in addition to the influence of family behavior and social background of different social groups analysed by Pierre Bourdieu's theory of family education, the efforts of individuals (as active participants) also play an important role. In fact, families with the same cultural capital, economic capital, and social capital...just have different outcomes of education. This reflects the rational choice of parents when positioning and investing in their children's education. Furthermore, the study shows the role of individuals and individual effort in choosing higher education despite lower cultural and economic capital. Therefore, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of behavior does not adequately explain the consequences of family awareness and educational practice in Hòa Phú,

since educational outcomes also clearly represent the highest value and benefit of parents' investment choices.

CONCLUSION

By investigating the views of families on education, the author found that the main characteristics of families in rural areas of Long An Province (take Hoà Phú commune in Châu Thành district, Long An province as an example) are as follows:

- (1) Families have greater awareness and clarity about the value of education; however, different family groups have different investment options for their children's continuing education. This difference is the result of rational choice by parents;
- (2) In the past, economic factors had an impact on a child's need to learn, but now it has little effect; and
- (3) A child's learning ability plays an important role in a child's higher education.

The findings of this case study are certainly not representative of the entire Mekong Delta region. In order to delve deeper into the issue, it is necessary to expand the research object (current qualitative research only focuses on the perceptions of parents, not children). In addition, the project also needs to clarify the differences in educational behavior of different social groups (gender, age, occupation, income...). However, the author's findings suggest that families' perceptions of educational values and respect for children's educational abilities and aspirations have changed. This is the basis for guiding children's future learning. The problem is that orientation comes not only from awareness, but from further enhancing the role of parents in fulfilling wishes. Today's industrialised society has a high degree of specialisation, which is suitable for guiding children to learn higher-level and more in-depth majors. However, the family-oriented process also requires the time and effort of both the educational subject and the educational object.

Conflict of interest: The author declares the non-existence of conflicts of interest.

Contribution by author: The author is responsible for all components of this work.

Funding or funds: No financial support was provided.

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Notes

1. Results of the 2019 population and housing census (GSO).
2. Data from the project “Changes in the educational values of Vietnamese families in rural areas of Long An Province under the influence of industrialisation (the case of Hòa Phú commune, Châu Thành district, Long An province), chaired by Trương Thị Lam Hà. This research is funded by University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University HoChiMinh City (VNU-HCM) under grant number code “T2020-02”.
3. According to the implementation process and results report of the People’s Committee of Hoà Phú commune in 2019 on the implementation of universal education literacy.
4. According to statistics on the proportion of high school graduates, the graduation rate in Long An Province was very low 10 years ago (the high school graduation rate in Long An province reached 88% in the 2010-2011 academic year, and the graduation rate in the Mekong Delta is 91.28%, the national graduation rate is 95.72%). However, in the later stage, the graduation rate of Long An is similar to that of the Mekong Delta and even the whole country (the 2016-2017 school year, Long An’s graduation rate reached 98.56%, the graduation rate of the Mekong Delta was 98,35%, and the national graduation rate was 97.94%) (According to the 2019 Statistical Yearbook).
5. According to Article 16 of Decree No. 20/2014/ND-CP, the criteria for determining a commune to meet the standard of universal lower secondary education at level 3 are: secondary education graduation rate of at least 95% between the aged of 15 and 18 years; at least 80% of youth and adolescents between the aged of 15 and 18 are enrolled in general or continuing or vocational education at the high school level.