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Planning and Budgeting System*

*Applying the theory of planned behavior to  
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# GENDER MAINSTREAMING INTO VIETNAM'S PLANNING AND BUDGETING SYSTEM

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**Abstract:** The Constitution of Vietnam over various periods has affirmed women's equal rights with men in spheres of politics, economy, culture, society and family. In an effort to concretize the provisions of the Constitution and internalize relevant international conventions and instruments to which Vietnam is a member, the gender equality (GE) contents have been increasingly specified in laws and codes governing all spheres of social life. Recently, Vietnam Prime Minister has issued Decision 622/QĐ-TTg dated 10/05/2017 to announce the National Action Plan on Implementation of UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. In that Action Plan, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) is among the most challenging goals.

In an attempt to assist countries in formulating fiscal policies that ensure the realization of national priorities and the operation of sustainable development agenda at the national level, the UN proposed a new tool, the Integrated National Financing Frameworks. This paper is an effort to apply the Framework in assessing the readiness of the planning and budgeting system to mainstream GEWE objectives and proposing practical solutions to increase the readiness and transform it into actions.

**Keywords:** Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), gender responsive budgeting (GRB), Vietnam Sustainable Development Goals (VSDG), public finance management (PFM)

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## 1. Introduction

Vietnam is also among countries actively participating in many international commitments related to strengthening gender equality (GE) and quickly translating that principle into many important legal documents and policies including the Law on GE, the Labor Code, the State Budget Law and sub-law guiding decrees and circulars. Vietnam is also a signatory to implement the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development via issuance of the National Action Plan

(Decision 622/QĐ-TTg dated 10/05/2017), in which the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been localized to be Vietnam Sustainable Development Goals (VSDG) with VSDG 5 relating to GE and empowerment for women and girls. In fact, Vietnam is fully aware of importance of GE in socio-economic development, considering it one of the important conditions to ensure sustainable development.

However, in practice, the struggle for GE and women's empowerment (GEWE) still faces

many challenges, typically the lack of concrete commitments on the allocation of financial resources to this sphere. Gender-responsible budgeting (GRB) is still a new concept that has not yet clearly expressed in legal documents governing state budget preparation, execution, and reporting. Therefore, there is still absence of an official and unified system for identifying, labeling, recording and reporting GRB on a systematic, transparent and verifiable manner. The linkage between planning, policy making and budgeting for more effectively use of public resources aligned with development priorities, including GE, has become increasingly necessary.

This paper aims to assess how gender issue is mainstreaming in the current planning and budgeting process in Vietnam and propose a roadmap for gradual introduction of GRB in the system. This effort will support the nation to fulfill his commitment to implement 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **2. Research methods and analytical framework**

### **2.1. Research methods**

To achieve research objective, the paper mainly uses a method of analyzing available desk reviews combined with expert opinions on planning and public finance management (PFM) in Vietnam. To keep the research in focus, the paper analyzes the planning and budgeting processes and review key plan and budget documents/policies at the national level. Specifically,

(1). The process of formulating socio-economic development strategy (SEDS), plans (SEDP) and financial strategy and plans. The corresponding strategic documents in the period of 2021-2030 includes: SEDS 2021-2030, 5-year SEDP for the period 2021-2025, Financial Strategy, 5-year financial plan 2021-2025 are also reviewed.

(2). The process of medium-term and annual budget planning (Medium-Term Public Investment Plan (MTIP) 2021-2025), the three-year Financial and Budgetary Plan (FBP), annual public investment plan (APIP) and the Annual State Budget Plan (ASBP).

(3). The National Target Program (NTP) – a tool to put SEDP's and budget plan's objectives into action. The NTP for socio-economic development in ethnic minority areas (NTP-EMs) in 2021-2030 period is used as an example.

### **2.2. Analytical framework**

The assessment of whether Vietnam has system to track budget allocations for gender or not is based on the SDG Indicator 5.c.1 assessment framework “Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for GEWE.” This indicator measures government's efforts to track budget allocations for GE throughout the PFM cycle and to make these allocations publicly available. It links national budgeting systems with implementation of legislation and policies for GEWE (SDG target 5.c).

The indicator measures three criteria. The first criterion is “Which of the following aspects of public expenditure are reflected in programs and its resource allocations? (in the last completed fiscal year)”. It focuses on the intent of a government to address GEWE by identifying if a country has gender responsive policies/programs and corresponding resource allocations to support their implementation.

The second criterion is “To what extent does the PFM system promote gender-related or gender-responsive goals? (In the last completed fiscal year). It assesses if a government has mechanisms to track resource allocations for GEWE throughout the PFM cycle – from introduction of the budget through to evaluation of impact of expenditures.

The third criterion is “Are allocations for GEWE made public? (In the last completed fiscal year). The criterion focuses on transparency by identifying if a government has made information publicly available on allocations for GEWE.

A country will be considered to satisfy criterion 1 if it answers “Yes” to 2 out of the 3 questions under this criterion. Criterion 2 is met if “Yes” to 4 out of the 7 questions under this criterion. And criterion 3 is satisfied if “Yes” to 2 out of the 3 questions in response to this criterion. When a country satisfies all criteria it will be classified as ‘fully meets requirements’. When a country satisfies one or two criteria it will be classified as ‘approaches requirements’. When a country does not satisfy any criteria, it will be classified as ‘does not meet requirements’.

## **3. Research results and discussion**

### **3.1. Overview of Vietnam's planning and budgeting system**

In Vietnam, the planning and budgeting system ranging from the long-term one – also known as the Strategy to the medium-term and annual one is

derived from the general guiding framework of the Party and the government. These general guidelines are often demonstrated through international commitments that Vietnam is a signatory, the 5-year resolutions of the National Party Congress, the stipulations in legal documents and codes, resolutions of the National Assembly, and the Government.

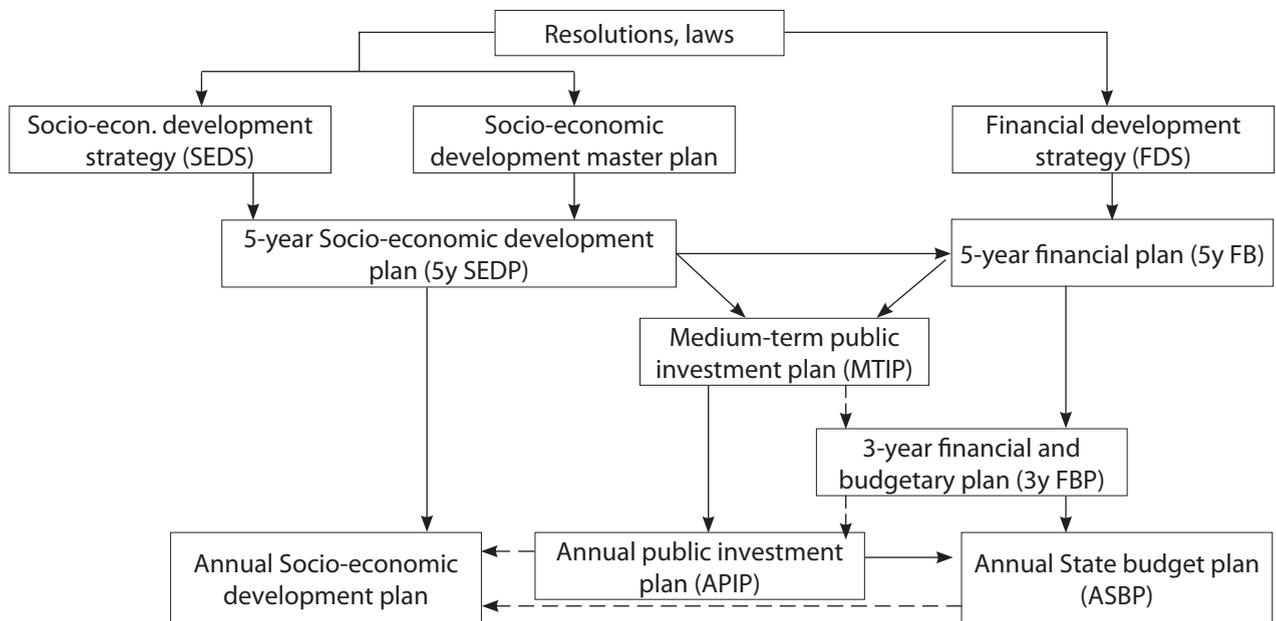
With a view to implementing the overall guiding documents on the above requirements and principles, a development planning system at the national level has been in operation (hereinafter collectively referred to as the *development planning system*), initiated from these long-term strategic documents (such as the National SEDS, sectoral development master planning and strategies, or integrated regional and local SED master planning), medium-term orientative SEDPs (5y SEDPs) and annual SEDPs. Formulation of these strategies and plans follows the principle that the lower-level plans must be submissive or conforming to the higher-level plans and must specify the overall objectives of the higher-level plans into detailed specific objectives by sector, sphere, territory. Down to the lowest

planning level (annual SEDPs), it is considered the step-by-step implementation plans to ensure that after 5 years, the objectives and targets of the 5y SEDP will be achieved.

Parallel to the development planning system is the financial and budgetary planning system. Like the development planning system, the financial and budgetary planning system is also composed of various documents ranging from the long-term strategic orientation (top level), or financial development strategies, to medium-term strategic orientation plans (or the 5-year financial plan – 5y FP), and below that are the medium-term or annual executive plans (MTIPs, 3-year financial and budgetary plan – 3y FBPs, APIP, and ASBPs)<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, in principle, the SED system sets development objectives and targets, and to realize those objectives, specific directions and resource allocation plans are needed. Therefore, only when a clear and logical connection is present between these two systems can resources be secured to realize the objectives of the development plans. This relationship is visualized in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Development planning and financial and budgetary planning system in Vietnam



**Notes:**  
 ———> Perpetuated actual effects  
 - - -> Effects that should be perpetuated but not actually met in practice

<sup>1</sup> Currently, this classification is for comfortability of this study. Someone may argue that a MTIP or a 3-year FBP should be classified as an indicative fiscal plan because it is effective over a period of more than 1 year. However, since these plans all contain specific budget allocation plans, in this Report, they are classified as executive (implementation) plans, not indicative ones.

In the development planning system, a 5y SEDP is considered the central plan to concretize the national, sectoral, and local SEDS into a series of 5y SED priorities and tasks. It defines the SED orientations and tasks in each 5-year-plan period of the country, sectors, and localities. Every year, the Government issues a directive requesting all levels and sectors to formulate annual SEDP to translate the five-year development objectives and tasks into objectives and activities of the annual SEDP. Therefore, the annual SEDP can be seen as a tool to implement the 5y SEDP. Simultaneously, the financial-state budget planning system defines revenue assignments, allocation, and utilization of the state budget as an effort to achieve selected SED orientations and tasks in 5-year period while ensuring fiscal sustainability.

In addition to these holistic planning tools, depending on its specific tasks, in each sector, sectoral strategy or action plan can be formulated to address some of its specific objectives. However, in principle, only SEDS/SEDP have obvious linkage to resource allocation. Therefore, sectoral strategies or action plans must be mainstreamed into the national development planning system for the likelihood to be funded by state budget.

From the perspective of financial-budgetary planning, the highest orientating document is the Financial Development Strategy (FDS), and this strategy is also devised to ensure the implementation of a national SEDS. To implement FDS and for conformity with 5-year SEDP, since 2016, a 5y FP has been formulated for the national and provincial levels. Based on assigned targets on state budget revenue, expenditure, deficit, and public debts as stated in the fiscal balancing framework under the 5y FP, the availability of budget funding for public investment within 5 years will be determined, serving as the basis for building the 5y MTIP.

If the 5y FP only sets forth major targets and directions as an attempt to formulate a framework for management and administration of state budget activities, the “sub” plans of the 5y FP including the 5y MTIP, the national 3y FBP, the APIP and the ASBP are the translation of those targets and directions into specific budget allocation alternatives for investment programs, projects, and recurrent spending activities in each corresponding period.

A national MTIP is a portfolio of public investment programs and projects that are expected to be executed over a five-year period in order to realize the objectives of SEDPs and is within the budget limits established by the 5y FP. Therefore, MTIP can be considered the longest-term plan that transmitting planned development objectives into specific costed investment activities. However, as indicated in the name of this document, this plan only reflects a part of the medium-term budget expenditures, which is the capital budget. The MTIP is formulated for a fixed 5-year period. At the end of each 5-year period, the planning agencies will take the lead in summarizing and reviewing/evaluating the implementation of the last MTIP, forwarding ongoing public investment programs and projects to new MTIP for the next 5 years, coupled with proposal for new public investment programs and projects. The newest national MTIP is for the 2021-2025 period, which was approved by the National Assembly’s Resolution No. 29/2021/QH15 dated July 28, 2021. In this MTIP, the NTPs for the 2021-2025 period such as the NTP on New Rural Development, Comprehensive Poverty Reduction NTP, and NTP-EMs for the 2021-2030 period are incorporated in the portfolio and costed.

In summary, both the 5y FP and the 5y MTIP are formulated for a “fixed” 5-year time frame, so they are too rigid to respond to socio-economic fluctuations that are likely to occur during the 5-year-plan period, given unreliability of five-year forecasts of major macro variables. Thus, it is crucial to have a more flexible medium-term financial and budgetary planning tool to serve as a bridge between the 5y FB and the ASBP. That comes to the role of the 3y FBP.

It should be noted that, while the 5y FP is built as per a static time frame (a fixed 5-year period), the 3y FBP is built in a rolling fashion. Thanks to the flexibility of the rolling principle, the 3y FBP allows continuous updates of macroeconomic indicators and variables, thereby supplementing and adjusting revenue forecasts in line with the actual conditions.

To increase the strategic vision and predictability in the allocation and use of the state budget, the State Budget Law 2015 stipulates that the central level, the provincial level, and level-1 budget estimating units<sup>2</sup> (to which budgets are directly allocated to

from the Prime Minister or People's Committees at all levels) must formulate a 3y FBP as stated above. Although the 3y FBP provides a basis for preparing annual state budget estimates, it is still a tool to direct the allocation and use of the state budget in the medium term only, helping to strengthen the ability to analyze and forecast to set priorities for state budget allocation, contributing to the best realization of development objectives. However, the plan itself is not a substitute for annual budget plan. Therefore, the 3y FBP is formulated and submitted to the National Assembly or the Provincial People's Council for reference when the decision on an annual budget plan is made, but the national and provincial legislatures do not approve this 3y FBP, which is seen as a limitation on the enforcement of this document.

Annual budgeting system involves an equalization mechanism between the central and the subnational government levels in Vietnam. Subordinate budgets receive additional funding from superior budgets in two types of transfers: balancing transfer and targeted transfer. The basis for this additional budget is the allocation criteria and norms, but mainly based on input factors, not closely associated with development outcomes. Different from other countries in the world, Vietnam's state budget system is "integrated" among budget levels, whereby the National Assembly decides the state budget, including the central budget and the subnational budget, which consists of provincial, district and commune budgets. The amount of the central budget granting to the local budget in the form of balancing transfer is determined by the gap between locally collected revenue and its expenditure assignments. Revenue targets are assigned by the central government to each province, while expenditure assignments are determined based on the allocation norms, which varies with population

and geographical areas. Meanwhile, targeted transfers are earmarked grants to subnational governments to implement the central government's target programs and NTPs in their territories.

From the analysis of the development planning system and the financial planning system - the state budget as above, it is possible to draw some important comments as follows:

Firstly, the system of development planning and budget planning in Vietnam is built in a whole country, in a top-down direction, meaning that the planning documents at the lower level must comply with the objectives, orienting even higher-level documents, at the same time, gradually concretize those objectives into action (intervention and detailed budget allocation) for implementation. Therefore, for any other sectoral strategy or plan, including GE-related strategy or action plan, if you really want to be allocated a formal budget, must be integrated into the SEDP and thereby reflected in the MTIP and/or the annual state budget estimate.

Secondly, the difference between 3y FBP and other medium-term plans is that this plan is built on rolling principle and serves only as reference for the National Assembly and Provincial People's Council when they approve ASBPs. In principle, if it is possible to consolidate capital and recurrent expenditure estimates into a single 3y FBP, the latter will be the most comprehensive medium-term document that fully reflects both important types of public expenditures. However, due to mismatches in functional classification of capital and recurrent expenditures in a dual budget system, capital expenditure has not been integrated into 3y FBP, the usefulness of this plan has been greatly reduced.

Thirdly, as seen in Figure 1, although in principle, the relationship between these two systems is expressed by both the vertical relationship (the hierarchical relationship within each system) and the horizontal relationship (the relationship between the development planning documents and the financial plan - the state budget of the same level), but in reality, vertical relationship is much stronger than horizontal one. In other words, most of Vietnam's development planning documents stop at setting principles, objectives, and major tasks without committed funding. Consequently, the relationship is quite loose.

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<sup>2</sup> Is a budget estimating unit assigned by the Prime Minister or a People's Committee to prepare budget estimates (pursuant to Clause 9 Article 4 of the SBL 2015). The following agencies are referred to as level-1 budget estimating units: (1) Line ministries and equivalent organizations at the central level; (2) Line departments, agencies, and equivalent units at the provincial level; (3) Office/Divisional-level units and equivalent units at the district level that are required to prepare and submit consolidated financial statements to a finance management agency and the State Treasury of the same level as prescribed.

Fourthly, although not shown in Figure 1, the planning system is accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation system. Currently, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan is carried out through series of annual performance reports and targets set for the next years. Particularly, performance assessment is based on the comparison of actual achievement against planned targets. Data source of data comes mainly from official statistics provided by statistical agencies or internal reports submitted by planning units in subordinate agencies.

Finally, the current PFM system has only focused on recording on-budget activities. Off-budget expenditures of extrabudgetary funds have not been systematically monitored, nor integrated into the

tracking software as mentioned above. Therefore, even if it is possible to extract information about GRB from the software, it is not yet the comprehensive picture. More efforts will be needed to integrate off-budget spending into these formal systems.

### 3.2. The extent to which GE is actually integrated in the planning and budgeting system

Based on the Technical Guidance Note: Mainstreaming GE in Integrated National Financing Frameworks developed by UN Women, from the perspective of analyzing documents on national financial strategies and plans, the report will choose to analyze the mainstreaming of GE in a number of important documents (as shown in the framework diagram in Figure 1) below:

**Table 1.** List of analyzed and evaluated strategic documents

Strategic levels	Development planning	Financial-budgetary planning
Strategies	10-year SEDS for 2021-2030 period	FDS towards year 2030
Medium-term orientative plans	5y SEDP for 2021-2025 period, adopted under Resolution No. 16/2021/QH15 dated July 27, 2021	National 5y FB for the 2021-2025 period adopted under Resolution No. 23/2021/QH15 dated July 28, 2021
		National MTIP period 2021-2025
		3y FBP period 2022-2024
Action plans, programs, projects	NTP-EMs for the 2021-2030 period, promulgated under the Prime Minister's Decision 1719/QĐ-TTg dated October 14, 2021.	

#### 3.2.1. Gender integration into the national development planning system

**10-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2021-2030.** The SEDS places an emphasis on fostering cultural values of Vietnamese people, in which the camaraderie, compassion, and gestures of compatriots to support disadvantaged groups are an outstanding beauty. Therefore, although GE issues are not directly addressed here, it can be seen that striving to advance GE and the advancement of women will be a pivotal part in the focus of the Strategy. From the analysis of the National SEDS for 2021-2030 period, some comments can be drawn from a gender lens:

Regarding GE, there are two main strengths in this SEDS. Firstly, the Strategy has determined to elevate the cultural values and strength of the Vietnamese people. This message is reiterated in most of the contents of the Strategy, from Part II to Part V. In essence, GE is an integral part of cultural and human values; therefore, the successful implementation

of the Strategy will also exert certain impacts on gradually narrowing gender gaps, especially among disadvantaged groups. Secondly, the strategy clearly identifies that reducing the gender gaps in all aspects is a part of the solution for socio-cultural development and guarantee of social justice.

However, the SEDS also prevails several weaknesses. GE has only been referred to in the Strategy as part of the solution, not yet an objective to be fulfilled similarly to other SED objectives. Although it can be said that GE is mainstreamed in the human development objectives of the Strategy, the SEDS does not explicitly and specifically address gender while the 17 SDGs already have a separate goal on this. It indicates that gender issues have not been equally addressed as other socio-economic goals by Vietnamese strategic planners. In addition, lack of attention to GE objectives is also reflected in the fact that the set of targets under the Strategy has no disaggregation by sex, even with the most relevant social targets. Various targets including

average life expectancy or proportion of formally trained workers can be easily disaggregated by sex. It will create a natural interest in gender issues from the Strategy implementing agencies (government agencies) and in monitoring the implementation of the Strategy (the National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels). It also can serve as a basis for gradually increasing gender information in national socio-economic databases.

**Five-year socio-economic development plan for 2021-2025.** The 5y SEDP 2021-2025 period has similar structure as the SEDS, with four basic components: (1) Overall objective; (2) Key targets; (3) Main tasks and solutions; (4) implementation arrangement.

Regarding development targets, the 5y SEDP sets out 21 targets, of which 7 are economic targets, 9 are social and 5 are environmental targets, including number of targets like those of the SEDS and some additions. However, none of them has sex disaggregation.

Among the main tasks and solutions, the 5y SEDP for 2021-2025 period has set forth 12 groups of solutions. However, there is no solution that directly addresses the GE issue. Against the backdrop when gender has not yet become a natural concern of state agencies, the request for key solutions only without mentioning GE will exacerbate the neglect or omission of policy solutions with "dual goals", such as narrowing the gap in cultural enjoyment, the disparity between the rich and the poor, the gap in access to services and employment among population groups in general while narrowing gender inequality by prioritizing to close the gap between groups of women and girls compared to other groups. Regarding budget constraints, prioritizing such dual-goal policies would demonstrate a more efficient use of the budget.

In summary, the SEDP 2021-2025 is not really a step to concretize the objectives and solutions of the Strategy into more specific solutions and tasks for the 2021-2025 period, but in fact, the SEDP is only the "repetition" of the contents of the Strategy, but with a shorter timeframe. In addition, the target system under the SEDP itself does not completely match with that of the Strategy, nor does it show the causal effect relationship between these targets (to ensure that the successful realization of the targets

under the SEDP will contribute to the achievement of the targets/objectives at a higher level in the chain of outcomes under SEDS). Finally, from a gender perspective, the 5y SEDP 2021-2025 is a step backwards from the SEDS. This Plan repeats the limitation of the Strategy in that it has neither a specific objective and target for GE issue nor sex-disaggregated targets. It also does not provide a solution to reiterate (let alone concretizing) the solutions on GE of the Strategy into more specific actions and policies.

**Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of planned targets.** The M&E of plan implementation in Vietnam is implemented mainly through: (1) reports in the system of integrated planning agencies, compiled from the bottom up according to decentralization; (2) specialized reporting data systems and (3) official statistical systems provided by statistical authorities at all levels.

Generally assessed, the development planning system in Viet Nam has only recognized GE issue as an integrated or mainstreamed content in development goals for people, not really as a priority to be address in the immediate future. Although a wide range of gender-related indicators can be disaggregated from the original survey data, the official monitoring and evaluation and indicator systems have not realized the need for sex-disaggregated information in the consolidated socio-economic indicators. Therefore, this requirement has not been reflected in implementation reports.

Mainstreaming GE into the current system of official indicators means that ministries, sectors and localities need to exert more efforts on collecting, processing and disaggregating information by sex. Therefore, if it does not become a mandatory reporting requirement, if there is no specific guidance on concepts, methods of calculation, etc., there will be no grounds for the requirement to promote GE to be substantively implemented.

3.2.2. *Gender integration in strategic documents, financial plans, national budgets*

**Financial Development Strategy.** An FDS is a sectoral strategic document aimed at introducing orientations for the development of the finance-budgetary sector in the 10-year period, serving the objectives of the SEDS. The FDS for 2021-2030 period has recently issued via Prime Minister's Decision

368/QD-TTg dated 21/03/2022. The Strategy defines seven major tasks on revenue generation, expenditure management, public debt management and control of deficit, transparent and holistic development of the financial market and financial services, facilitation of financial management mechanism reform for public service delivery units, promotion of market-based pricing mechanism, and application of information technology in national finance modernization. Three breakthroughs include institutional reform, development of human resources, science and technology, and innovation in the financial sector, and strong emphasis on funding infrastructure development. The FDS is a highly technical document, in which no single word concerning GE has been mentioned.

**5-year financial and loan and repayment plan for 2021-2025 (5y FP).** The National 5y FP for the 2021-2025 period consists of 5 articles, starting from the overall objective of the Plan to specific objectives, orientations for national financial work, tasks and implementation solutions to implementation arrangement.

With respect to the overall objective, the 5-year financial plan refers to the big goals of effectively mobilizing, allocating and using national resources (mainly public financial sources) to realize the macroeconomic goals while ensuring the principles of effective and efficient PFM. This objective is highly technical without addressing GE issue.

Similarly, the specific objectives of the 5-year financial plan refer to the indicators of the national fiscal balance framework such as: budget revenue, budget expenditure (in which the objectives on investment expenditure and recurrent expenditure are broken down or disaggregated), budget deficit ratio, total loan amount and limits, as well as public debt adequacy indicators. Therefore, the specific objectives are also technical and do not address GE issue.

Regarding the orientations of the national financial work, it also basically refers to the restructuring of public finance sector without indicating breakthrough priorities in the structure of expenditures for specific sectors and spheres, including even the GE issue.

Regarding the tasks and implementation solutions, the 5-year financial plan also focuses mainly on execution and management of budget revenue and expenditure in the direction of reinforcing the PFM

disciplines, making maximum use of revenue sources, restructuring budget expenditure to reserve resources for development investment spending. The priority areas in the 5-year financial plan are: environmental protection, climate change adaptation, information technology and telecommunication infrastructure development, national database connection, creation of a platform for digital transformation. Thus, just like the SEDP 2021-2025, GE has not been mentioned as a priority area for resource allocation. If yes, GE issues can only be mainstreamed in the traditional priority areas according to the National Assembly's Resolutions such as education and training, science and technology and innovation.

**Medium-term public investment plan for the period 2021-2025.** Despite being in the same financial planning and budget allocation system, the procedures for formulating the MTIPs are relatively separate from the normal budgeting process. That is because the formulation of the public investment plan is in compliance with the Public Investment Law 2019, which is taken lead by the planning agency, and is only pertinent to public investment capital, of which the largest proportion is made up of development investment capital sourced from the state budget. APIPs will be concretized from the MTIP, depending on the capacity to allocate annual investment capital and the quality of project proposals. After an APIP has been formulated, this part of the plan will be combined with the recurrent expenditure budget estimate to become a comprehensive annual budget.

Reviewing the contents of MTIP and APIPs shows that investment spending on GE can be completely intertwined in spending on 13 sectors and detailed contents in economic activities. However, it is impossible to extract information from the total investment capital for GE-related projects. The list of projects included in MTIP does not present any single project in the social sphere, and therefore very little to do with GE.

**Three year financial and budget plan for 2022-2024.** The 3y FBP for 2022-2024 period has a structure that is in conformity with Decree 45/2017/ND-CP, and is divided into two major parts: (1) Review of the implementation of 3y FBP 2019-2021; and (2) proposal of 3y FBP 2022-2024. In the latter, the Plan begins with a projection for the

background of 3 years between 2022-2024, narrates the basis for formulation of the 3y FBP 2022-2024, sets out the objectives for this plan, presents the 3y State budget revenue and expenditure statement for 2022-2024 whilst pointing out difficulties and challenges in the implementation of the Plan and some remedial solutions.

Thus, the national 3y FBP is essentially in the sense that it indicates a fiscal balance framework over the course of three years, which serve as a fiscal corridor for formulation of ASBPs, rather than presenting specific allocation estimates of the state budget to sectors and functions as in the case of annual budgets. The solutions mentioned in this plan are also purely technical solutions, so there is no directional implication for GRB.

**Annual State budget plans.** Gender is a cross-cutting issue in activities of all sectors and spheres. Currently, no legal guideline or checklist is available for relevant ministries and localities to assess whether national gender objectives has been considered and/or reflected in budgeting exercise or not, as well as for the consolidating/aggregating agencies such as the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Investment to review whether gender issues have been taken into account in the planning process and how these gender issues have been reflected in the budgeting of the spending units.

The process also shows that, at present, there is no requirement for provision of any information on any benefit that women receive as compared with men from budget expenditures to be used for weighting in budgeting. As a result, there is no requirement for submission any documentation, such as a gender-sensitive balance sheet which may include budget performance records/documents, impact analysis and assessment of GRB to support budget compliance reporting.

**National Target Programs.** Investment expenditure programs/projects and activities using recurrent expenditures from the state budget are the lowest level linking the proposed objectives to the budget allocation. The specific analysis of the content of a program, project or an activity using recurrent expenditure allows the assessment of the extent to which gender issues are mainstreamed in the design and implementation of these expenditure activities of the State. In the

period 2021-2022, three NTPs were approved and included in the National MTPIP, namely the NTP for New Rural Development, the NTP for Comprehensive Poverty Reduction, and the NTP-EMs period 2021-2030, in which phase 1 is from 2021-2025.<sup>3</sup> Of these three NTPs, the first two Programs have been implemented since 2011-2016 and have continued to be implemented in the 2021-2025 period. Only the NTP-EMs is a brand-new program, and the content is specifically pertinent to GE issues. Therefore, in this section, the NTP-EMs was selected for analysis.

Examining the NTP-EMs shows that GE issue is clearly reflected in the NTP's objectives and basic targets. In addition, the NTP also has a project (Project 8) dedicated to the GE objective in conjunction with multiple sub-projects that prioritize women and girls as beneficiaries. This NTP itself is building a monitoring system with the ambition of being able to collect information from the grassroots level (villages and commune) to be connected into a system based on digital technology. Therefore, this could be a breakthrough to include GRB and tracking of spending on GE objectives within the framework of this Program.

### 3.2.3. *Monitoring and assessing the implementation of financial and budget plans*

Compared to the development planning system, the monitoring and evaluation of the state budget expenditure situation is stricter and has regular supervision from external agencies and organizations. Specifically, the reporting and supervision of the implementation of the budget plan is carried out through the following channels: the supervision of the National Assembly, the State Audit, the State Treasury and the people/community.

The competence of the National Assembly, agencies under the National Assembly and National Assembly deputies to oversee the state budget is specified and detailed in the Constitution, the Law on Organization of the National Assembly, the Law on Oversight Activities of the National Assembly, the State Budget Law 2015 and other legal documents. At present, the competence to oversee the state budget is specified in line with the State Budget Law 2015 (Table 2).

<sup>3</sup> See Decision-1719 NTP on Ethnic Minorities.pdf

**Table 2.** The oversight competence of the NA and the NA’s deputies

No.	Agencies	Oversight competence
1	The National Assembly	Overseeing the budget execution, implementation of key public finance related policies and the National Assembly’s Resolution on State budget.
2	National Assembly Standing Committee (NASC)	Overseeing the implementation of laws and resolutions of the National Assembly, ordinances and resolutions of the NASC in the finance - budget sphere.
3	Committee for Financial – Budgetary Affairs (CFBA)	Overseeing the implementation of Laws and Resolutions of the National Assembly, ordinances and resolutions of the NASC in the finance - budget sphere; overseeing the implementation of the state budget and financial-budgetary policies Overseeing legal normative documents of the government, the Prime Minister, Ministers, Heads of ministerial-level agencies, joint legal normative documents among central competent agencies in the finance – budget sphere.
4	Ethnic Council, Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs Committee (PCSA) and other Committees of the National Assembly	Overseeing the implementation of Laws and Resolutions of the National Assembly, ordinances and resolutions of the NASC on finance - budget, overseeing the implementation of the State budget and financial - budgetary policies in the spheres under their management.
5	People’s Councils at all levels	Overseeing the implementation of the budgets decided by the People’s Council

Source: Articles 19-22 and Article 30, the State Budget Law 2015

The Law also defines basic forms of oversight conducted by the National Assembly and its agencies, including verification or legal review of government performance reports, questioning of relevant subjects, and thematic oversight. Because GE is not a defined area or function for budget appropriation in the ASBP, the National Assembly’s oversight over the implementation of this content is mainly through thematic oversight. However, this method requires the clear identification of the subjects to be overseen and the oversight activities must be incorporated in the annual oversight scheme of the National Assembly. This is an important form of oversight, but it is not of a continual nature. And only when gender issues emerge as a “hot” issue, can it be selected for incorporation in the annual oversight scheme, which is already quite dense of the NA.

#### **Report of the State Audit Office of Vietnam**

So far, the State Audit’s activities have been mainly limited to financial audits and compliance audits, with very few performance audits were conducted and the contents of performance audits did not fully cover all the issues related to the results of tasks performed by organizations and units. Therefore, for GE issues, if audited, the State Audit will only focus on auditing a specific target program or project that encompass direct objectives on GE, but the audit will not be able to be conducted on the level or extent of realizing GE objectives as committed by the government.

#### **Expenditure controlled by the State Treasury**

In addition to other functions and tasks, the State Treasury conducts control and payment of state budget expenditures and other assigned capital sources as prescribed by law. To perform this function and the State budget accounting function,

the State Treasury uses the TABMIS to fully record all information, about each transaction, corresponding to the transaction codes by chapters, categories, and items already specified in the Budget Catalogue. As a result, in the annual budget execution report, it is in principle possible to extract detailed information on actual expenditures to compare with detailed budget allocation estimates.

However, as GE is a cross-cutting issue, the current Budget Catalogue does not have a separate code that allows to aggregate all transactions related to GE. In an effort to try to code budget expenditures for GE, in Circular 104/2014/TT-BTC stipulating the supplement to the State budget Catalogue, the MOF has added the program code 0920: GE activities and the advancement of women and project code 0921: GE activities and the advancement of women for GE specific programs, projects and schemes. In 2016, the MOF issued a new Circular No. 324/2016/TT-BTC dated December 21, 2016 stipulating that a new system of State budget Catalogue should be consistent with the SBL 2015. However, codes for Programs, schemes and projects on GEWE remain unchanged as stipulated in Circular 104. In addition, the scope of funding for gender identified in the updated budget catalog system is still too narrow to reflect the actual size of the gender responsive public financing in Vietnam.

Moreover, apart from the expenditure management in the budget balance, many revenue and expenditure activities that are considered extrabudgetary expenditures. While they are still budgeted, reported, disclosed, and audited annually, they follow a different process. While several closely related funds, such as the Fund for Poor Women Support under the Vietnam Women's Union, are actively contributing to the GE promotion, their funding has yet recorded in TABMIS. The lack of a coordinated monitoring system to track off-budget expenditures means that it is not possible to have a holistic picture of GE expenditure from extrabudgetary sources.

#### **4. Findings and recommendations**

##### ***4.1. Assessing GEWE in planning and budgeting system in Vietnam in accordance with UN's framework***

As mentioned earlier, the UN has guidelines for assessing the extent to which it is permissible to track budget allocation for GE and the advancement of women in countries' PFM systems. Based on the UN guideline framework, the extent to which GEWE is mainstreamed into the planning and budgeting system in Vietnam is reflected in Table 3.

In summary, assessment done in alignment with the UN's assessment framework shows that regarding the overall orientation or ways forwards, the government has demonstrated a very high commitment to pursuing the objectives of GEWE, and in fact the government has also enacted various policies, programs or activities to foster GE. In this regard, the Criterion 1 is satisfied.

However, gaps persist in the current budget planning and development planning system, so it has not facilitated GRB or fully and comprehensively tracking and recording on budget expenditures for these objectives. From the perception of stakeholders to the feasible and effective requirements from policy documents to make the GE objectives a naturally mainstreamed content into plans and budgets, and ultimately into budget allocation, monitoring and evaluation over the impacts of budget performance on the promotion of GEWE always needs a holistic adjustment to truly reflect the government's commitments to SDGs, including GE-related goals. Therefore, both Criterion 2 and 3 have yet met the required standards.

In conclusion, the planning and budgeting system in Vietnam has APPROACHED REQUIREMENTS. Intensive efforts are needed to make GEWE objectives operationalized in the public sector in Vietnam.

#### **4.2. Recommendations**

The above analysis shows that the current legal institutional system and practice of development planning and budgeting in Vietnam has not yet created an conducive environment for GRB. Therefore, the gradual introduction of gender mainstreaming requirements into this system requires specific steps in line with a strategy of picking up lower hanging fruits first before scaling up to pick up higher hanging ones.

**Table 3.** Assessment of the permissible extent to track budget allocation for objectives on GEWE

Criteria	Questions	Answers	Evidence
Which of the following aspects in public expenditure are reflected in programs and their allocation of resources?	Has there been any government policy and/or program designed to address the explicit objective on GE (even if GE is not a primary objective but actions are incorporated to close the gender gap?	Yes	Example: Realizing that women often encounter more difficulties than men when entering the labor market, a big reason of which is that they have to stay at home to look after their young children if affordable child care services are not available, Decree 105/2020/ND-CP dated September 8, 2020 stipulating early childhood education development policies contains a large number of policies to support lunch costs for kindergarten children, allowance/subsidy for preschool children who are workers' and employees' children working in industrial zones (both with a minimum of 160,000 VND/child/month), in addition to other policies. This can be considered a typical policy aimed at advancing GE and women's empowerment.
	Have adequate budgetary resources been allocated to these policies and/or programs to meet both the overall objective and the objective on GE of each policy?	Yes	The minimum subsidy level of 160,000 VND/child/month will be guaranteed by the central budget. Depending on the local budget affordability, provinces can upward (but not downward) adjust the level of subsidy. The specific subsidy level must be promulgated in the Resolution of the Provincial People's Council. To date, more than 40 provinces have issued these Resolutions.
	Is there a process to make sure the actual budget has been allocated in strict accordance with the budget estimate?	Yes	With a policy with clear regulations on target beneficiaries and spending norms, the State Budget Law 2015 requires that sufficient budget for execution of policies must be secured. If the policy is issued by the central government, in principle funding should be guaranteed by the central budget (unless there are specific cost sharing arrangements between government tiers).
The degree of attention to gender objectives and gender responsiveness in the national PFM system.	Has the MoF issued any specific circular guiding gender-responsive budget allocation?	No	On May 15, the Prime Minister issued a Directive on formulation of SEDP and ASBP for the budget year. On June 10, the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Finance issued guiding Circulars. Most recently, Ministry of Finance's guiding Circular 61/2021/TT-BTC dated July 26, 2021 providing instruction for formulation of the 2022 ASBP and the 3y FBP 2022-2024. The Circular requires ministries, provinces, and cities to formulate their ASBPs in which budget performance in 2021 is assessed, and the State budget revenue and expenditure is estimated for 2022, but there is no guideline on GRB or gender mainstreaming.
	Is gender impact assessment conducted on the key policies and programs proposed for inclusion in the budget prior to issuance?	Yes	In principle, as prescribed in Clause 2, Article 35 of the 2015 Law on Issuance of Legal Documents 2015, "The regulatory impact assessment of each policy proposal in drafted law/ordinance formulation must clearly identify problems to be solved; policy objectives; solutions for policy implementation; positive and negative impacts of the policy; costs and benefits of solutions; comparison between costs and benefits of solutions; selection of solutions by agencies or organizations and reasons for such selection; impact assessment of administrative procedures, gender impact (if any)". Thus, there is always a requirement for gender impact assessment before promulgating a policy. However, in reality, the quality of the assessment before its promulgation is often poor without strong evidence base and solid impact assessment methods, but mainly based on subjective opinions of experts or stakeholders.

	Are sex-disaggregated statistics and data used to inform in key policies and programs to support budget-related policy decisions?	Uncertain	The formulation of an ASBP must be based on certain macroeconomic parameters such as GDP growth rate, inflation rate, growth rate of import and export turnover, average crude oil prices and mining outputs, but not based on other statistics disaggregated by sex. However, for policies that directly have effects on GE, as prescribed in the 2015 Law on Laws, the proposing agency is required to calculate the budgetary impacts of these policy proposals. In that case, sex-disaggregated statistics may be used.
	When allocating budgets, does the government state clearly about gender objectives (such as regulations on gender budget reporting or GRB reporting)?	No	There is no clear gender objective in general budget allocation. Therefore, there is no regulation on gender budget reporting or GRB reporting.
	Is the budget allocation “tagged” by budget classification criteria, to reflect the linkages to GE objectives?	No	As analyzed, the expenditure on GE objectives is currently masked behind expenditure activities of other sectors and functions and has not been extracted or “tagged” as being related to GE. Only programs, projects and schemes directly related to GE (in the very narrow sense as analyzed above) are assigned with code 0921. Only when they have their own code will the expenditures spent on GE is allowed to be traced in the TABMIS system of the State Treasury.
	Is gender impact assessment conducted on key policies and programs after they have been implemented?	No	Basically, ex-post policy impact assessment has not been carried out in Viet Nam, so gender impact assessment is no exception.
	Is the overall budget independently audited to assess the extent to which gender-responsive policies are promoted in budgeting?	No	Annual budget final settlement reports are independently audited by the SAV before being submitted to the National Assembly for approval. However, for expenditure, the main job of an audit mission is to perform reconciliation and compliance review. The audit is based on previous work performed in ministries, sectors, and localities to learn about the emergence/existence, accuracy, and adequacy of expenditures. The audit missions have not mentioned the extent of promoting gender-responsive policies in the State Budget Outturn Report.
Public access to information on budgetary allocations for GE and women’s empowerment.	Is the budget allocation data for GE publicly available?	No	The State Budget Law 2015 has supplemented the regulations on timely disclosure of budget documents, including: draft ASBPs to be submitted to the National Assembly, ASBPs approved by the National Assembly, quarterly and annual budget performance reports, audited budget final settlement reports. This is a basic requirement and an opportunity for citizens to participate in the budgeting process; The citizens’ budget document presents State budget policies in an easily comprehensible way for the people. However, the budget allocation data are made public in conformity to the pre-specified form, in which there is no gender-responsive budget form or template.
	If published, are these data accessible on the website of the Ministry of Finance and/or relevant official writings/bulletins or gazettes and other public means?	No	The Ministry of Finance’s public portal was launched in 2020 and is used as a platform to publicize all budget information under the one-stop-shop mechanism. In addition, a lot of budget information are posted on the e-portal of the Office of the Government, the Official Gazette, etc. However, there is no content on the gender budgeting (as analyzed above).
	If yes, has the disclosure been timely?	No	Basically, the disclosure or publicity of information have met the requirements of the State Budget Law 2015 but is still behind the international standards.

#### 4.2.1. Medium-term solutions

*Incorporating gender targets as official planning targets in the Resolutions on SEDPs of the National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels.* It is crucial to select some of the most basic targets to be incorporated into the official target system of the SEDPs at all levels, assigned by the legislatures to government agencies and local authorities to implement through resolutions of the legislatures. By doing so, it will generate a habit to make it mandatory for executive agencies to pay attention to the progress made in achieving these targets so that they can report back to the legislative agencies on plan implementation progress. Over the years, a good practice will be formed to mainstream gender issues into policy making process.

*Linking GE objectives and targets with budget allocation at the specific program and project level.* GRB can be started at a specific program or project level because each program or project has its own objectives, resources, and implementation mechanism to achieve those objectives within a certain time frame. Currently, the NTP-EMs is a new program, which embraces a great number of objectives, projects and sub-projects that directly address the GEWE. This is a large-scale NTP, with a duration of at least until 2030, so if this mainstreaming is successfully carried out, it will be likely to create significant impacts on policy making agencies to recognize the importance of integrating gender issues into their decision-making process. In addition, it is possible to study and pilot similar GRB in appropriate component projects of other NTPs such as the NTP on Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2021-2025 or the NTP on New Rural Development 2021-2025.

#### 4.2.2. Long-term solutions

*Making gender targeting or gender impact assessment a mandatory and self-conscious requirement in policy making and in proposals of development investment programs and projects.* Although gender impact assessment has become a mandatory requirement when proposing new policies and regulations as prescribed in the Law on Issuance of Legal Documents, specific technical guidelines are still missing on how to assess those impacts. Technical assistance from international organizations to formulate Circulars guiding how to

conduct these impact assessments, while expanding the engagement of international organizations or universities, research institutes or non-governmental organizations in the providing appraisal, assessment, and social feedback on gender impact assessment results before promulgation of policies will enable the formulation of policies that are more gender responsive.

Similarly, discussions are needed between the planning and investment agency and the finance management agency to include additional requirements for gender analysis in investment policy proposals or expenditure schemes of ministries, sectors, and localities, considering it a required criterion for these proposals to be accepted and funded. Similar to requiring the proposals to mandatorily have an environmental impact assessment, if gender impact assessment also becomes a mandatory content, it will force investors and expenditure proposing agencies to pay more attention to data collection and gender analysis. By that time, actual needs for sex-disaggregated information and data will be formed as a basis for requesting the planning agency to develop sex-disaggregated development targets and statistical offices must collect the similar statistics.

*Step by step build a system of tracing, tracking, identifying, or coding the level of contribution to the GE objectives in State budget expenditure activities.* Given that the current budget planning system is not likely to immediately transition to GRB, it is possible to start by setting forth the requirement to trace, record and track gender-responsive expenditures in the budget expenditures of ministries, sectors and localities.

*Finally, GRB reports should be developed.* Currently, the reporting on the State budget is still conducted mainly to meet the requirements of the administration agencies. The citizens' budget report - a simplified presentation of the ASBP so that people can access, understand and participate in monitoring - is also based solely on the available format of this plan. Therefore, if stakeholders are in need of being explained about the state budget in alignment with SDGs that Viet Nam has committed to, there will be no information. To do so, it is necessary to start with policy advocacy activities, raising awareness about gender-responsive state

budget reporting and accountability, whilst increasing support for the Ministry of Finance in the preparation of GRB reports. book, for National Assembly agencies to ask gender-appropriate questions, organize public hearings and conduct oversights. The Ministry of Finance's experience in

formulating a citizens' budget can be applicable for GRB. The very successful experience in persistently developing GRB reports has significantly sensitized government agencies and public interest in the importance of gender elements in policy and budgeting decision making.

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# APPLYING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR TO ANALYZE THE IMPACT OF PERSONAL INNOVATIVENESS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ON THE INTENTION OF VIETNAMESE CRYPTOCURRENCIES INVESTOR

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**Abstract:** This research examines the influence of some independent variables in the Theory of Planned behavior and innovative capacity on intention to invest in cryptocurrencies in Vietnam. The analysis of data collected from 334 respondents from customer lists of the banks, financial institutions, and investor groups indicated that attitude and perceived behavior control significantly associated with intention to search for cryptocurrencies. In which, the effect of the Perceived Behavior Control on the intention to search for cryptocurrency was greater than that of the attitude variable. In addition, personal innovativeness in information technology (PIIT) moderated the relationship between attitude, perceived behavior control and intention to search for cryptocurrencies.

**Keywords:** Theory of Planned Behavior, Personal Innovativeness in Information Technology (PIIT), Cryptocurrency

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## 1. Introduction

In the previous decade, cryptocurrency was an academic concept and has not been widely known yet. However, this issue has been changed since 2009 with the introduction of Bitcoin, which is known as the world's first cryptocurrency. The cryptocurrency market continues to gain traction in many different investment aspects, such as governments, businesses, and individuals, especially in the last five years; starting from 2017, when Bitcoin reached \$20,000/coin, more and more investors are paying attention to this

investment channel. Despite of not widely accepted as conventional currencies or legally recognized in many countries, the cryptocurrency exchange market has expanded in recent years. The world cryptocurrency market capitalization is predicted to grow from \$1.6 billion in 2021 to \$2.2 billion in 2026, with a CARG of around 7.1 % (Research & Market, 2021).

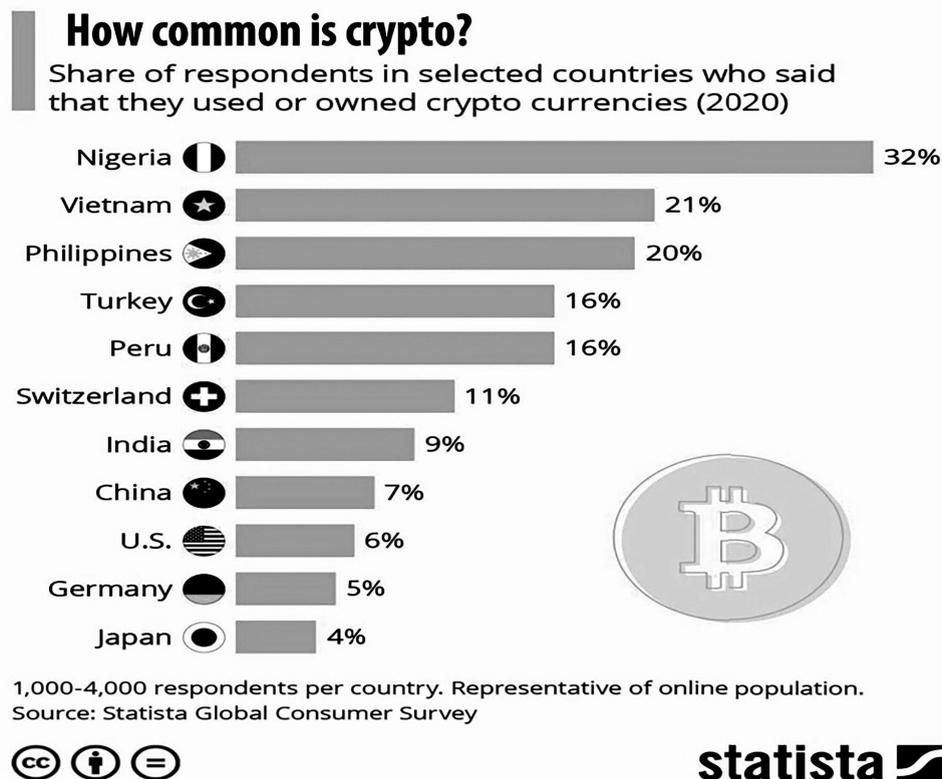
Financial markets witness an increase of individual investors in recent years (Calvet et al., 2016). Many investors have recently been interested in investment types such as securities, real estate,

and products related to renewable energy. Although there have been studies on attitudes and behaviors in financial investment, the main focus has been on stock investing. The authors realized that cryptocurrencies are still a new investment channel in Vietnam and even the world, so more research related to this topic is needed to understand it better. However, because cryptocurrencies still need to be universally recognized in many countries worldwide, research on the intention to learn and invest in cryptocurrencies is still limited.

In Vietnam, in 2017, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1255/QĐ-TTg to approve the project to complete the legal framework for managing assets, cryptocurrencies, and e-currencies. This decision has created the foundation for developing and researching a legal corridor for crypto-related issues in Vietnam. A particular working group on virtual assets and cryptocurrencies has also been

established by the Ministry of Finance (Decision No. 664/QĐ-BTC of April 2020) to conduct research and regulatory proposals related to cryptocurrencies. Statistics from the Department of Cyber Security and High-Tech Crime Prevention showed that the number of people using cryptocurrencies in Vietnam is increasing, estimated to have about 1 million people owning and participating in transactions amounting to several hundred billion VND. The popularity of cryptocurrencies in Vietnam has also been reflected in Statista; statistics indicate that 21% of respondents in Vietnam in 2020 said that they used or owned cryptocurrencies, ranked second after Nigeria (32%). Although departments have also researched and explored new methods of managing this new currency, it has yet to be officially recognized by Vietnamese law. Vietnamese law does not currently have a definition of cryptocurrency.

**Figure 1.** Statistical results of the cryptocurrencies' popularity in some countries in 2020



Source: Statista, 2021

To contribute to the improvement of theory and supplement the foundation to practical activities,

multidimensional, comprehensive research with modern approach methods to the intention to

search for cryptocurrencies about cryptocurrency of individual investors in Vietnam should be carried out. Vietnamese individual investors' intention to search for cryptocurrencies depends on many factors. It needs considerable research to understand those factors and their impact on individual investors' intention to search for cryptocurrencies in Vietnam.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

TPB Theory (Ajzen, 1991) is an evolution and extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). According to TRA and TPB, the intention to perform a specific behavior is the best predictor of behavior because the more substantial the intention to engage in a behavior, the higher the likelihood of doing it (Ajzen, 2002). Armitage & Conner (2001) reported that TPB accounted for 27% and 39% variance in behavior and intention after observing more than 150 independent studies. Compared to other models, such as TRA, TPB is proposed to answer some limitations in TRA because it assumes that actions are completely under opinion control. For the intention to search for cryptocurrencies, in specific contexts, Chang et al. (2009) suggest that TPB (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) explains the intention to search for cryptocurrencies information better than TRA because cognitive behavioral control factors are thought to be powerful determinant which influences on intention.

The TPB model helps to predict a powerful impact on behavioral intention; specifically, in this study is the intention to search for cryptocurrencies. Several studies involving financial products have used the intention to search for cryptocurrencies as a dependent variable to measure (Ali, 2011; Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2017; Vuk et al., 2017; Akhtar & Das, 2019). In investment, East (1993) applied TPB to make investment decisions in certain stocks. Hofmann et al. (2008) also selected TPB and several other models to explain the impact on bidding behavior in socially responsible investment. Glanz et al. (2008) argued that TPB theory is appropriate for empirical studies in identifying important factors to propose policies and solutions. Therefore, in this study, we use TPB as a model to predict intentions, particularly in the intention to search for cryptocurrencies for cryptocurrency products.

The TPB model consists of the following factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior

control. Attitude is the first important determinant of behavioral intention, which refers to the extent to which a person has an evaluation or a favorable or unfavorable assessment of the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes generate from a more specific, more prominent set of behavioral beliefs that reflect the cognition outcomes of the targeted behavior. Ajzen (1991) has explained that positive or negative attitudes are directly proportional to behavioral thinking about a possible result of action derived from the predictive value model. Attitudes that directly impact the intention to search for cryptocurrencies are examined in the following studies (Schmidt, 2010; Phan & Zhou, 2014; Gazali et al., 2018; Yee et al., 2022). From the above analysis, we proposed the following hypothesis:

**H1:** *Attitude has a direct positive impact on the intention to search for cryptocurrencies of individual investors in Vietnam*

Subjective norm is defined as the normative human belief that a behavior accepted, encouraged, and promoted by those around them has an effect on them. However, after the potential impact of this variable in some cases, plus the unclear nature of availability, no specific hypothesis has been put forward (Ajzen, 1991). The subjective norm refers to an individual's perception of social pressure to consider whether or not to perform the behavior, influenced by the judgment of other significant people (parents, spouses, friends, teachers...). However, in some studies, subjective norm has been repeatedly identified as the least effective predictor for TPB (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Overview of research on intention to search for cryptocurrencies, the results of studies also concluded that subjective norm is a decisive factor in the formulation of individuals' intention to search for cryptocurrencies (Phan & Zhou, 2014; Pahlevi & Oktaviani, 2018; Akhtar & Das, 2019; Lai, 2019; Nugraha & Rahadi, 2021; Yee et al., 2022) or in the field of cryptocurrency investment (Gazali et al., 2018). From the above overview results, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** *Subjective norm has a direct positive impact on the intention to search for cryptocurrencies for cryptocurrencies of individual investors in Vietnam*

The success of TPB is attributed to the discovery that behavior is not entirely voluntary and not always manageable; therefore, perceived behavior control (PBC) was added to the model. PBC is the perception

of how easy or difficult a person may encounter when performing a particular behavior. In TPB, subjective norm is considered to express the increase of cognitive behavioral control through the perception of opportunity. At the same time, it reflects beliefs about access to the resources and opportunities necessary to facilitate a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). By adding this variable to traditional models of behavior attitudes, significant improvements in predicting intentions have been created (Ajzen, 1991). Individuals can follow the initial intent and lead to specific behaviors when there is sufficient control. However, depending on the specific context, the ability to control actions is low and possibly diminished, and intention is not enough to predict behavior (Ajzen, 1991). As a result of the growth of markets such as stocks, real estate, and cryptocurrency investment is increasing, previous financial investment-related research has concluded that perceived behavior control has a direct impact on individuals' intention to search for cryptocurrencies (Mo & Mak, 2009; Mak & Davis, 2014; Raut et al., 2020). Since cryptocurrency investment is a new product in the field of financial investment, the authors expect that perceived behavior control will have the same impact on intention to search for cryptocurrencies as previous financial investment products and propose to test the hypothesis:

**H3:** *Perceived Behavior Control has a direct positive impact on the intention to search for cryptocurrencies of individual investors in Vietnam*

In addition to the familiar variables in the TPB model that are believed to powerfully impact the intention to search for cryptocurrencies in many studies, PIIT is one of the variables that influence those effects. Research by Lu et al. (2005) has also shown that people with high PIIT are more willing to use or likely to try new technologies. Moreover, cryptocurrencies are digital tokens created as the product of new technology, tokens that use encrypted data chains called blockchain (ASIC by Cho, 2018). Especially when technology becomes an inevitable part of modern life, technology knowledge also determines whether investors are willing to search for technology products. Therefore, PIIT will undoubtedly have a significant influence on investors' Perceived Behavior Control, attitudes, and intention to search for cryptocurrency-related products and services. PIIT, inherited from the study of Agarwal & Prasad (1998),

is still a relatively new variable in the exploration and investment in virtual assets. However, this variable is quite commonly studied in other areas.

The scholars who researched this variable also suggest that its positive and significant moderation can only be observed with the relationship between the perceptions of IT adopters and their behavioral intentions. Hence, PIIT's moderate capabilities are worth exploring. PIIT has also been included in earlier studies as a moderated variable in some specific areas, such as tourism (Goldsmith, 2000), consumption (Joeng et al., 2009), education (Cheng, 2014), green innovation (Iranmanesh et al., 2017). Still, the current amount of research on the moderate impact of this variable in the cryptocurrency-related and investment fields is relatively modest. Those who use personal innovativeness in adopting new technologies can act as a leader to change the opinions of others (Lestari, 2019). Recently, individual innovativeness also showed a positive and moderate impact on the relationships between perceived risk, reward sensitivity, and intention to move to the cryptocurrency market in Sun et al. (2020) study. In the context of this study, cryptocurrencies are a product of new technology. Therefore, PIIT will undeniably influence the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavior, and intentions about products and services related to this currency. Therefore, added this variable to the TPB original model to consider its impact on Vietnamese individual investors' intention to search for cryptocurrencies products.

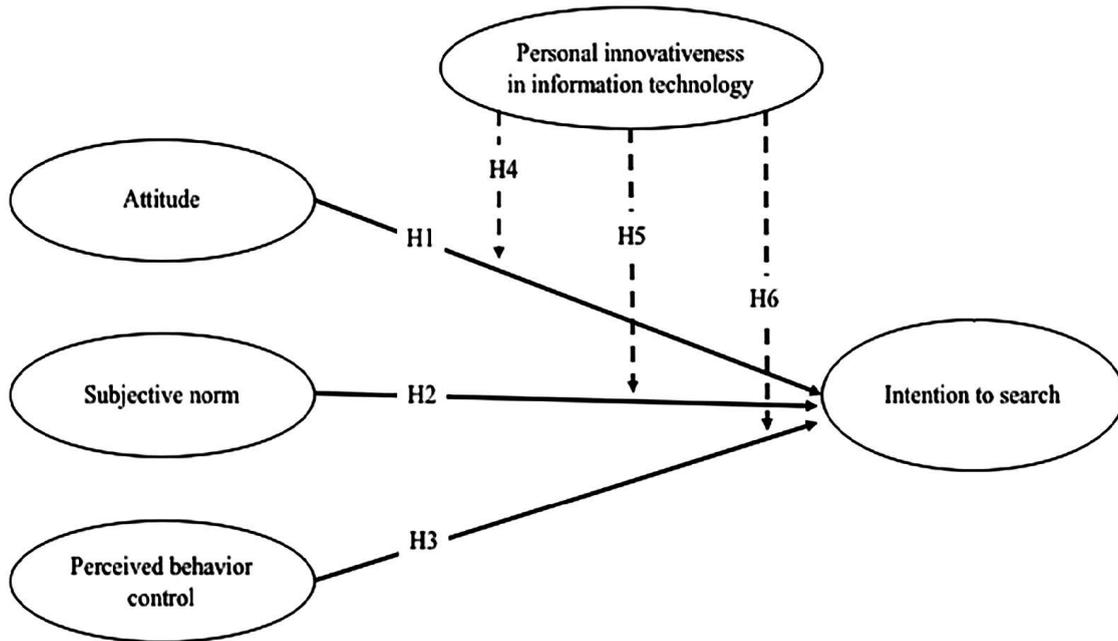
**H4:** *PIIT positively moderates the relationship between attitude and intention to search for cryptocurrencies*

**H5:** *PIIT positively moderates the relationship between subjective norms and intention to search for cryptocurrencies*

**H6:** *PIIT positively moderates the relationship between Perceived Behavior Control and intention to search for cryptocurrencies*

From the above findings and literature review, the authors focus this study on the intention to search for cryptocurrencies products of Vietnam individual investors. Personal innovativeness in information technology (PIIT) is included in this research to examine its moderating impact on the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 2.** Research model



**3. Research methodology**

The target audience in this research is Vietnamese individual investors. Due to limited time and cost, as

well as social distancing methods in 2021, the authors managed our survey via the use of Google Forms and the internet by using email lists of banks, investment funds, and investment groups on different channels such as Facebook, Zalo... The team collected 368 responses, of which 334 answers (90.8% of the collected responses) qualified for analysis. Some responses were removed since respondents declared they had no idea about virtual currencies.

The research scales were inherited from published studies in reputable international journals with high citations and are widely applied in many different areas of behavioral intention, but yet in intention to search for cryptocurrencies. In particular, the variables of the TPB model’s scales were inherited from its own author Ajzen (1991), and personal innovativeness in

information technology (PIIT) was inherited from the first scientists who defined it - Agarwal & Prasad (1998). The questionnaire was translated from English to Vietnamese to suit Vietnamese better. A back translation procedure was used to minimize any potential loss in translation. A pilot study was conducted with 30 financial experts and cryptocurrency investors for comments on the clarity and understandability of the questionnaire. Some wording adjustments were made after the pilot study to improve the final questionnaire further. This study uses Cronbach’s Alpha to test the scale’s reliability in data analysis. Assess the discriminant and convergence validity using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and then test the degree of correlation using Pearson’s correlation. Finally, the research hypotheses are tested using hierarchical regression.

**Table 1.** Inherited scales

Variable	Number of observations	Authors
Intention to search for cryptocurrencies	I plan to search for cryptocurrency information.	Ajzen (1991)
	I decided to search for crypto when I qualified.	
	I will convince people to search for cryptocurrencies.	
Subjective norm	My influencers support me in searching for cryptocurrency information.	
	My influencers expect me to search for crypto more than other investment instruments.	
	I will convince people to search for cryptocurrencies.	

Variable	Number of observations	Authors
Perceived Behavior Control	It will be easy for me to use crypto for my investments.	Ajzen (1991)
	I can control my crypto-related investments.	
	I have the resources, knowledge & ability to search for cryptocurrencies.	
Attitude (with adjustment of the bipolar scale to adapt to the cryptocurrency context)	For me, the option to learn and search for crypto is: (choose from 1 – Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree)	
	1. Does not affect the future - Affects the future	
	2. Unattractive – Attractive	
	3. Difficulty – Easy	
	4. Disadvantages – Advantage	
	5. Risk – No Risk	
Personal innovativeness in information technology	I love testing new investment instruments	Agarwal & Prasad (1998)
	If I hear about a new investment tool, I will find a way to test it.	
	I am often the first to try new investment tools among my friends.	
	Overall, I hesitate to try a new investment tool.	

Source: Authors' work

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics showed that the number of women participating in the survey accounted for 63.5%, while fewer men participated (36.5%). Besides, the age of investors participating in the survey is mainly from 18-30 (57.8%), followed

by 31 to 45 years old (38.6%); the remaining age groups account for a negligible proportion. Regarding education, the group with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees dominates, with corresponding ratios of 75.7% and 14.7%; the total percentage of remaining education level is no more than 10%.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Gender	334	100.0	
South	122	36.5	36.5
Female	212	63.5	100.0
Age range	334	100.0	
Age 18-30	3	.9	.9
Ages 31-45	29	8.7	9.6
46-60 years old	253	75.7	85.3
>60 years old	49	14.7	100.0
Education	334	100.0	
Under High School	3	.9	.9
High School, Intermediate	29	8.7	9.6
Colleges and Universities	253	75.7	85.3
Postgraduate	49	14.7	100.0
Major	334	100.0	
Economic	108	32.3	32.3
Technique	61	18.3	50.6
Law	7	2.1	52.7
Service	9	2.7	55.4
Art	7	2.1	57.5
Army	14	4.2	61.7
Education	104	31.1	92.8
Health	8	2.4	95.2
Different	16	4.8	100.0
Income	334	100.0	
Less than 5 million	164	49.1	49.1
5-25million	158	47.3	96.4
25-50million	6	1.8	98.2
>50M	6	1.8	100.0

Source: Calculated result from SPSS

Regarding the major of study, the highest proportion is the economic group, with 32.3%. This was followed by education major, with 31.1%. The third highest major is engineering, with 18.3%. The remaining major groups accounted for relatively modest numbers, below 5%. Descriptive statistical results show a differential distribution in the income of survey participants. Income under VND 5 million accounted for the most trend (49.1%) and ranked second in the income group from 5 to 15 million VND (47.3%). The other two groups with fewer incomes of 25 to 50 million and incomes over 50 million both accounted for 1.8%.

#### 4.2. Reliability testing

The smallest Cronbach's Alpha belongs to the Subjective Norm variable (0.656) but is still higher than the required standard of 0.6, and no corrected item-total correlation lower than 0.3, so no items were excluded. The remaining scales' Cronbach's Alpha are all greater than 0.9 (Perceived Behavior Control) or 0.8 (PIIT, Attitude, Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment) thus these scales' reliability is good. There are minor concerns for PIIT4 and AT1 since the deletion of these items would increase the respective scale's reliability. However, such increases are not significant and the related corrected item-total correlations are still greater than

0.3 so the items are kept for further investigation in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) step.

EFA was conducted twice in this research to test for the convergence and discriminant validity. The 1<sup>st</sup> EFA saw satisfactory in  $0 < KMO < 1$ , Barlett's sig.=0.000 < 0.05, and the factor loadings of accepted items are greater than 0.5, except AT5 being rejected due to unsatisfactory in convergence and discriminant validity because AT5 did not converged with the other 5 items (AT1 to AT4, and AT6) of attitude. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> run, after AT5 was deleted, EFA is satisfactory with  $0 < KMO = 0.876 < 1$ , Barlett's sig. < 0.05, total variance explained > 50%, all factor loadings > 0.5 and all items satisfy the convergence and discriminant validity. The remaining items are now ready for Pearson correlation and hierarchical regression analysis.

The results of Pearson analysis found no signs of multilinear phenomena. Most relationships are statistically significant, with r between -1 and 1 and sig. < 0.05. However, Pearson analysis result also hinted that there is no evidence of any relationship between Subjective Norm and Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment. A hierarchical regression analysis will followed to formally conclude the strength and direction of all relationships in the research model.

**Table 3.** Results of Reliability and validity testing

Variable	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if observations are deleted	Factor loading
Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment: 0.865			
INS1	.829	.729	-
INS2	.717	.836	-
INS3	.690	.858	-
Subjective Norm: 0.656			
SN1	.442	.591	.759
SN2	.543	.460	.829
SN3	.422	.626	.724
Perceived Behavior Control: 0.901			
PBC1	.814	.849	.783
PBC2	.827	.837	.788
PBC3	.769	.886	.806
Attitude: 0.852			
AT1	.464	.860	.638
AT2	.649	.825	.689
AT3	.679	.819	.783

Variable	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if observations are deleted	Factor loading
AT4	.777	.801	.854
AT5	.569	.840	Eliminated at EFA
AT6	.711	.814	.745
PIIT: 0.830			
PIIT1	.713	.760	.813
PIIT2	.754	.743	.845
PIIT3	.655	.787	.705
PIIT4	.520	.844	.654

Source: Calculated result from SPSS

### 4.3. Hypothesis testing using hierarchical regression

The hierarchical process is performed to test research hypotheses in 3 steps. Step 1 involves testing the impact of control variables. Step 2 tests the direct relationship in the research model with all independent variables. Step 3 focuses on the moderation impacts.

In this research, results show that control variables can explain 9.3% while independent variables (including Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavior Control) can explain 55.7% of

the change in Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment. Amongst the direct impact, the influence of PBC on Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment appears to be the strongest ( $\beta = 0.560$ , sig.  $<0.05$ ), followed by Attitude ( $\beta = 0.228$ , sig.  $<0.05$ ). However, Subjective Norm does not impact Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment due to Sig.  $>0.05$ . In addition, all VIFs are less than 2 thus there is no multicollinearity phenomenon. In short, H1 and H3 are accepted while H2 is rejected.

**Table 4.** Hierarchical regression results

Variable	Adjusted R squared	ANOVA F	Standardized coefficient $\beta$	Sig.	VIF
Gender	.093	4.147	.018	.765	1.318
Age range			-.223	.000	1.370
Education			.109	.061	1.204
Major			-.107	.072	1.249
Income			.072	.241	1.354
Gender	.557	36.815	.014	.540	1.325
Age range			-.085	.067	1.450
Education			.012	.207	1.231
Major			-.072	.068	1.259
Income			.052	.979	1.364
Attitude			.228	.000	1.551
Subjective Norm	.596	39.464	-.002	.958	1.051
Perceived Behavior Control			.560	.000	1.494
PIITx Attitude			.431	.000	4.764
PIITx Subjective Norm	.604	40.885	.331	.000	2.312
PIITx Perceived Behavior Control	.591	38.625	.470	.000	6.551

Source: Calculated results from SPSS

In moderation hypotheses, research results showed that the moderation of PIIT on the relationship between Attitude and Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment can further explain 3.9% (from 55.7% to 59.6%) of the dependant variable's change and 3.4% (from 55.7% to 59.1%) on the relationship between PBC and Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment. On the other hand, there is no moderation effect of PIIT on the relationship between Subjective Norms with Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment since the direct relationship never existed between these two. Although both have moderate effects, the impact of PIIT on the relationship of Attitude - Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment relationship ( $\beta = 0.431$ ) is weaker than that on the PBC - Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment relationship ( $\beta = 0.470$ ) In short, H4 and H6 are accepted, while H5 is rejected.

### 5. Conclusions and implications

From the results of the study, the direct impact on the Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment only valid for Attitude and PBC but not for Subjective norms. In particular, PBC has a stronger impact than Attitudes. These results are predictable and in line with the majority of previous research because the TPB model has shown a rather consistent results despite being applied in different empirical research of different contexts, times and objectives (Shim et al., 2001; Mo & Mak, 2009; Schmidt, 2010; Ali, 2011; Mak & Davis, 2014; Phan & Zhou, 2014; Gazali et al., 2018; Lai, 2019; Raut et al., 2020; Huang & Ells, 2021; Yee et al., 2022).

However, Subjective Norms in this research did not stay in line with previous studies and did not impact the Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment. This result was beyond the authors' expectations but still had similarities to the study of Bohon et al. (2016), when they concluded that subjective norms did not affect the intentions of individuals. This lead to no moderation impact of PIIT on the relationship between Subjective Norms and Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment. The results of this research also depicted that PIIT had a positive moderating effect on the

relationships of Attitude – Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment and PBC - Intention to search for cryptocurrency investment. These result are consistent with some previous scholars' conclusion of the moderating effects of PIIT (Chiu et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2007; Fang et al., 2009).

The reason for this will be explained in the following points. *Firstly*, there are not many expert in Vietnam in cryptocurrency and given the young history of cryptocurrency, most important persons to a Vietnamese investor wouldn't know enough about the subject to make valid and influential comments. The reason might be most cryptocurrency documents are published in English, thus limiting the access and understanding of Vietnamese general public and investors. This may explain why Subjective norms did not matter in this research context. *Secondly*, Vietnamese media has dedicated programs that teach and analyze the stock exchange and real estate investment markets but similar program about cryptocurrency was not develop or online with low coverage, thereby limiting the accessibility and awareness of individual investors who also do not understand this investment product that well. This, in turns, will minimize the influence of public Subjective norms from the media to the investors. *Thirdly*, cryptocurrencies are not legalized in Vietnam. Hence, investors are still concerned about the high risks and validity of this new investment medium.

From the research results and a review of practical experience in some countries, the authors propose some recommendations in the context of Vietnam as follows:

*Firstly*, the Civil Code of 2005 and 2015 does not have a specific concept for virtual assets, including digital currencies and cryptocurrencies. Therefore, it is necessary to study relevant regulations of other countries in order to come up with a clear definition of cryptocurrency in these legislations and clearly define a legal position for cryptocurrency in our country's economy.

*Secondly*, setting a goal to propagate and raise awareness about cryptocurrencies for investors from the beginning will help strengthen the ability

to avoid the risks and minimize consequences of conducting illegal business in cryptocurrencies.

Thirdly, if the Government is looking at legalizing cryptocurrencies, it is necessary to have a well-planned roadmap to build a system of

legal documents in order to ensure the existence and management of cryptocurrencies. This will make investors and stakeholders feel less risky, apprehensive, and more secure when investing and trading this currency.

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# THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON ENSURING SOCIAL SECURITY IN VIETNAM

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**Abstract:** The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a health crisis, degrading the socio-economies of all countries in the world in general, and Vietnam in particular. The negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on most areas of social life poses an urgent requirement to implement social security to recover people's lives, develop the socio-economy of the country. On the basis of using the annual data of the General Statistics Office, the research has shown the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Vietnamese labor market: increasing unemployment rate, reducing laborers' income, increasing the number of poor households and near-poor households; increasing the number of people in need of social assistance; affecting the assurance of some basic social services for people, especially education and health care, etc. By synthesizing and assessing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on ensuring social security in Vietnam, the article proposes some solutions to ensure social security against the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic in the new situation.

**Keywords:** Ensuring social security, COVID-19 pandemic, Vietnam

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## 1. Introduction

In the process of the country's modernization and development of the socialist-oriented market economy, the assurance of social security has always been paid special attention by the Party and State in order to stabilize socio-political system and sustainable development, showing the good nature of the socialist regime. Our Party affirms: "We must pay attention to guaranteeing the social security and taking care of people's material and spiritual life" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011). Simultaneously, the guarantee of social security is a key part of social policy; is a regular and important

task of the Party, the State, the whole political system and the whole society.

Currently, the Covid-19 pandemic - a global disease, has a strong impact on most countries in the world. According to experts, this pandemic caused the world economic crisis, made businesses go bankrupt on a large scale, increased unemployment, declined the growth of the world economy, created a burden on countries in solving social problems, etc. In Vietnam, the impacts of the Covid-19 epidemic have negatively affected all socio-economic fields, especially the guarantee of social security for people, leading to an increase in unemployment

rate; hindering the implementation of sustainable poverty reduction goals; increasing the number of people in need of social assistance; education and health have been heavily affected, etc. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the urgent need for social development to build a prosperous, inclusive, equal, fair, safe and humane society. Therefore, the assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on guaranteeing social security is to develop policies and solutions to protect people's lives is essential.

## 2. Literature review

There have been many studies on ensuring social security in many different aspects and scopes. These studies have certain scientific values, providing a basic theoretical system, assessing situations, proposing solutions to ensure social security especially, in the context of COVID-19 in Vietnam.

According to Phuc (2012), "Social security in Vietnam towards 2020", said that social security policy is a system of intervention policies of the State (social insurance, social assistance,...) and institutional or private support (non-statutory regimes) to reduce poverty and vulnerability, improve the self-protection capacity for people and community against risks or threats of reducing or losing income, ensuring stability, development and social justice. The above concept considers that ensuring social security is a policy of the State to reduce poverty and protect people against risks. In a study by Son (2013), "Experience in economic development associated with ensuring social security in Vietnam", ensuring social security is guaranteeing a peaceful and happy life for all classes of people in the society, avoiding unhappiness and risks in their lives. This concept emphasizes that the purpose of ensuring social security is to ensure a peaceful and happy life for people, but does not point out the subject, contents and measures to ensure social security.

Thu (2020), "Ensuring social security: issues raised in sustainable development", assessed the important achievements that Vietnam had achieved in ensuring social security: there are more and more types of beneficiaries of social security policies, the level of support has been increased, the material and spiritual lives of people, especially the poor, and ethnic minorities have been improved. However, in the context of globalization, Vietnam's

further integration into the world economy has posed problems that need to be resolved to ensure social security towards sustainable development. That is coverage of social security is still narrow; social insurance policies are still limited, lack of synchronization and have not caught up with new development trends and requirements of life; poverty reduction is fast but not really sustainable, especially in remote and ethnic minority areas poverty reduction is slow, the risk of falling back into poverty is high... Therefore, the author proposed 7 solutions to develop and complete the social security system in the coming time.

Dung (2022) in a study of "Ensuring social security in the context of safe, flexible adaptation and effective control of the COVID-19 epidemic" affirmed the important role of the social security system in ensuring safety for people in the context of socio-economic fluctuations, preparing resources to ensure a number of basic social services to avoid risks and creating equal opportunities for the entire population. On that basis, the author outlined the key solutions that the Ministry of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs has been focusing on implementing.

Ninh & Huong (2022), "Ensuring social security in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic", the article outlined the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of Vietnamese workers. On the basis of affirming the role of social security in Vietnam in the context of the pandemic, the author proposed solutions to be implemented in the coming time.

Lam (2022), "Social Security Policy in Response to the Pandemic COVID-19: A Case Study from Vietnam". The article affirmed that a stable social security system is a priority for the Government of Vietnam because it lays a strong foundation for the vulnerable, who are not expected to overcome the pandemic based on their low level of "resistance". Thereby, the author provides examples, illustrating Vietnam's social security strategies and interventions in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic, based on which he draws some experiences for reference in the implementation of Social Security witnessed from the reality of Vietnam.

## 3. Research methodology

The authors conducted a literature review on the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on ensuring social security in Vietnam at present. The study

used the method of document synthesis to analyze the data collected from many different sources, in which, it searched for and used information from the data reported on the socio-economic situation by the General Statistics Office (GSO). The data was checked based on the criteria of accuracy, relevance and up-to-date to the research topic. On that basis, the article summarized, analyzed and evaluated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on ensuring social security based on data that reflects the analytical content with high reliability and clearly cited sources.

#### **4. Guaranteeing social security in Vietnam and the current situation of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on ensuring social security in Vietnam at present**

##### **4.1. Ensuring social security in Vietnam**

According to the World Labor Organization (ILO): social security is the protection that the society provides to its members through a number of widely adopted measures to cope with difficulties, economic and social shocks resulting in severe loss or reduction of income due to illness, maternity, work-related injury, loss of work capacity or death. Providing medical care and subsidies to victims' families with children (Christina & Quynh, 2018).

In Vietnam, social security is paid attention by the Party and State to develop a socialist-oriented market economy in order to bring a warm and happy life to all people. The Document of the 12th Party Congress identifies the guarantee of social security as one of the general tasks of developing the country in the next 5 years: "Good management of social development; ensuring social security, improving social welfare etc" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016) The Document of the 13th Party Congress affirmed that it is necessary to continue: "implementing social policies well, ensuring social security and welfare, human security, creating strong changes in social development management, making progress and social justice, improving people's quality of life and happiness" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). This confirmed that social security is identified as a cross-cutting factor in the development of the country in the coming time. Thus, ensuring social security is one of the basic rights of citizens, and is one of the important undertakings and policies to protect people's lives, and helps all members of society to overcome difficulties or risks in life in order

to build a society of "rich people, powerful country, democracy, justice and civilization" in our country.

On that basis, it can be understood that ensuring social security is an activity of the State and the whole society by means of socio-economic measures in order to improve the material and spiritual life of the people, make progress and social justice in economic development through redistribution of national income.

Ensuring social security plays an important role in building and defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. It shows the good nature of the socialist regime that brings a prosperous, happy, equal, fair and safe life to all members regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, etc. At the same time, it also shows the good tradition of our nation that is the spirit of solidarity, mutual help, "The leaves protect tattered ones". That tradition creates the Vietnamese culture to help our nation overcome all challenges, defeat all enemies, preserve and protect the national independence. Ensuring social security contributes to promoting socio-economic development, ensuring the stability of people's lives, and realizing social progress and justice in developing a socialist-oriented market economy in our country. In addition, ensuring social security contributes to maintaining political stability, strengthening national defense and security, and enhancing Vietnam's position.

Ensuring social security in our country is expressed in four aspects: Employment, Income, Poverty reduction, Social insurance; providing social assistance to people in particularly difficult circumstances; ensuring a minimum level of some basic social services for the people, especially the poor, people in difficult circumstances and ethnic minorities.

##### **4.2. The current situation of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on ensuring social security in Vietnam at present**

The impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic on ensuring social security in Vietnam at present:

*Firstly, the COVID-19 epidemic increases the unemployment rate and reduces the income of workers.*

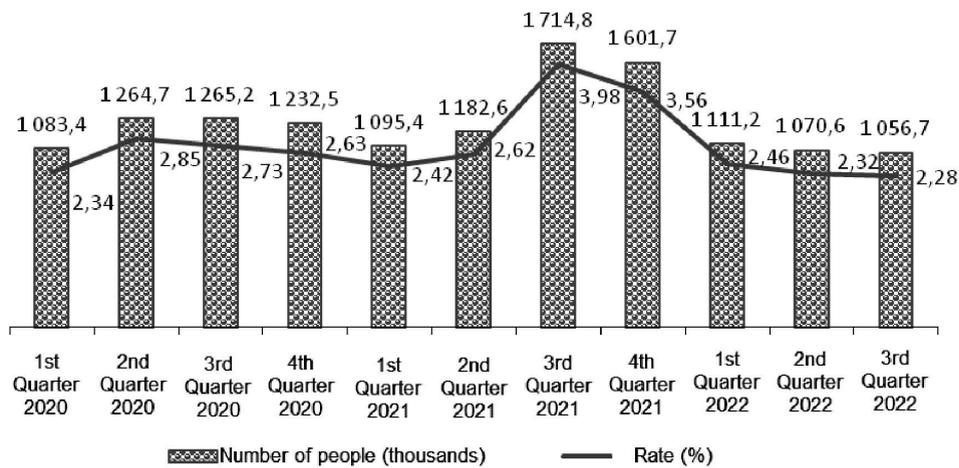
In fact, the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market has caused many families to lose their income and even their livelihood, which leads to fluctuations in the labor market and influence on the society.

According to a survey by the GSO on the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on businesses' production and business activities, up to 85.7% of businesses in the survey said that they were negatively affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. The labor and employment situation in the second quarter of 2022 continued to maintain recovery momentum, the labor force, the number of working people, the average monthly income increased as compared to the previous quarter and the same period last year. Although the rates of unemployment and underemployment among working age people decreased as compared to the previous quarter and the same period last year those rates were still high. Specifically, in 6 months of 2022, the unemployment rate of general working age population was estimated at 2.39%, of which

the unemployment rate in urban areas was 2.93%; the rural area was 2.05%. The youth unemployment rate (from 15-24 years old) was estimated at 7.78%, of which this rate in the urban area was 9.21% while in the rural area it was 7.01% (GSO, 2022). The high unemployment rate has led to a decrease in the income of workers.

According to the GSO, in the labor and employment situation in the third quarter and nine months of 2022, the unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years old in the third quarter of 2022 was 8.02%, increasing 0.39 percentage points as compared to the previous quarter and decreasing 0.87 percentage points over the same period last year. The youth unemployment rate in urban areas was 10.54%, 3.84 percentage points higher than in rural areas.

**Figure 1.** Number of people and unemployment rate in working age by quarter, 2020-2022



Source: GSO

Secondly, the COVID-19 epidemic may increase the percentage of poor and near-poor households.

Statistics submitted by localities to the Ministry of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs show that there are 1.3 million poor households and 1.23 million near-poor households with a total of nearly 10 million people. Implementing the National target program on sustainable poverty reduction, poverty reduction work in our country has achieved important results.

According to the GSO in the fourth quarter of 2020, the multidimensional poverty rate in 2020 was estimated at 4.7%, decreased by 1% compared to 2019 (GSO, 2020). However, the COVID-19

epidemic has had a significant impact on the implementation of our country's poverty reduction goal. Because the poor are low-income people who have no savings, they will face more difficulties when affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. According to statistics during the 4th outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, nearly 30,000 poor and near-poor households in urban areas were severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, of which there were over 4,400 households in Hanoi; over 3,100 households in Ho Chi Minh City; over 3,100 households in Binh Duong province and over 3,700 households in Dong Nai province... (according to the local poverty line

in the period 2021 - 2022). Social security work is concerned by all levels from the central to local levels. According to local reports, the value of allowance for social protection beneficiaries from the state budget and socialization is nearly 1.7 trillion VND; the value of money, gifts and supports for poor and near-poor households is more than 1.4 trillion VND; the value of money and gifts for preferential subjects who are people with meritorious services, relatives of people with meritorious services to the revolution is nearly 2.4 trillion VND; support for people affected by sudden and unusual events (natural disasters, storms, floods, etc.) in the locality is more than 4.3 trillion VND. However, the number of households that have just escaped poverty are now facing the risk of falling back into poverty due to unemployment and job loss. Especially, the near-poor households in urban areas, self-employed, migrant workers, are likely to be affected the most.

*Thirdly, the COVID-19 epidemic has increased the number of people in need of social assistance.*

With the goal of “leave no one behind”, Vietnam has researched, developed and promulgated a system of documents stipulating the social assistance regime in order to ensure a minimum standard of living for people, especially those in difficult circumstances. Facing the strong impact of the COVID-19 epidemic to stabilize people’s lives, the Government issued Resolution No. 42/NQ-CP dated April 9, 2020 “on measures to support people facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic”, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 15/2020/QĐ-TTg, dated April 24, 2020, “Regulating on the implementation of policies to support people facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic” with a social security package of 62 trillion VND to support more than 20,000 people, with seven groups of beneficiaries, Resolution No. 116/NQ-CP dated September 24, 2021 on policies to support employees and employers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. This is a timely and unexpected social assistance policy of our Party and State to ensure people’s lives.

According to the report of the GSO, as of June 15, 2022, the support package stipulated by the Resolution No. 68/NQ-CP dated July 1, 2021 and Resolution No. 126/NQ-CP dated October 8, 2021 with more than 43.5 trillion VND has

been deployed for 36.7 million employees and nearly 381.7 thousand business units/households using labor; The support package stipulated by the Resolution No. 116/NQ-CP dated September 24, 2021 with a total support of nearly 38.4 trillion VND for nearly 13 million laborers and nearly 346.7 thousand business units/households using labor has been implemented; the support package under Resolution No. 11/NQ-CP dated January 30, 2022 with a support level of 14.1 billion VND has been deployed for 25,660 employees of 487 employers. Nearly 28.7 million health insurance cards, books, cards for free medical examination and treatment were distributed and donated to policy beneficiaries nationwide (GSO, 2022).

The Government has issued Decree No. 20/2021/ND-CP stipulating social assistance policies for social protection beneficiaries. Among the increasing social assistance beneficiaries, orphans who lost their parents due to COVID-19 were cared for and supported with 5 million VND/child and 124 newborn babies who are children of the women infected with COVID-19 were supported with 1 million VND/child from the Vietnam Children’s Fund.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all basic social services to ensure a minimum life standard for people, especially education and health care.

Regarding the guarantee of minimum education, since the outbreak of the epidemic, public, non-public and private schools and educational institutions had to stop direct teaching and learning. The Ministry of Education and Training rearranged the plan of exams and quality assessment for all levels of education. Accordingly, the Ministry had to issue a Decision amending and supplementing the school year time plan framework for preschool education, general education and continuing education. The system of domestic and non-public educational institutions had to actively implement online teaching and training, and E-learning to reduce crowding and limit the spread of disease in the community. Some training institutions had to reduce tuition fees by 15-20% for all students to share the burden with the learners, contribute to solving social problems, reduce difficulties for students and parents.

**Figure 2.** The Government's policies to support people and business affected by COVID-19

SUPPORT POLICY	BUDGET (billion VND)	TYPES OF SUPPORT AND BENEFICIARIES
Financial packages to support businesses	180.000	Tax deferral and deferral of land use tax and rent... for affected businesses in more than 30 manufacturing and service sub-industries
Zero-interest loans to pay workers	236 - 1.000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enterprises with 100 employees or more, at least 30% of employees must take cumulative leave for 1 month or more.</li> <li>Enterprises that are dissolved and go bankrupt need to borrow capital to pay wages to employees.</li> <li>Enterprises with 50 employees or more and at least 10% quit; or there is no financial source to pay the employee's salary and must terminate the labor contract with the employee</li> </ul>
Social protection package	61.580	Cash help for 3 months (April, May and June 2020); people with meritorious services to the revolution, poor and near-poor households, formal workers who have lost their jobs but are not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, informal workers (for some types of non-agricultural jobs) job loss; Business households with annual revenue of less than 100 million pay to stop operating...
Electricity price reduction	11.000	10% discount on electricity prices (April - June 2020) for all households and businesses
Lower interest rates on bank loans		Banks reduce interest rates, waive and reduce transaction service fees. Businesses providing essential goods and services are eligible to borrow at an interest rate of 4.5% - 5%/year (lower than the deposit interest rate).
Credit packages of commercial banks	285.000	Loans to businesses that are least affected or least affected but need capital to grow after the COVID-19 pandemic, in the areas of: aquaculture, agriculture, healthcare services and electricity... Severely affected businesses can also borrow if they can prove their ability to repay

Source: UNDP và UN WOMEN (2020)

Fourthly, the COVID-19 epidemic affects the assurance of some basic social services for the people.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all basic social services to ensure a minimum life standard for people, especially education and health care.

Regarding the guarantee of minimum education, since the outbreak of the epidemic, public, non-public and private schools and educational institutions had to stop direct teaching and learning. The Ministry of Education and Training rearranged the plan of exams and quality assessment for all levels of education. Accordingly, the Ministry had to issue a Decision amending and supplementing the school year time plan framework for preschool education, general education and continuing education. The system of domestic and non-public educational institutions had to actively implement online teaching and training, and E-learning to reduce crowding and limit the spread of disease in the community. Some training institutions had to reduce tuition fees by 15-20% for all students to share the burden with the learners, contribute to solving social problems, reduce difficulties for students and parents.

Regarding minimum health insurance, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic showed the strengths of the Vietnamese health system in terms of a relatively strong preventive health system, public health system, a team of experts presenting high altitude, unified

direction, quick response, relatively efficient. However, it also revealed limitations and difficulties in prevention, limited medical resources and unpotential, inadequate facilities and equipment. Due to ensuring regular medical examination and treatment, and Covid-19 disease prevention and control, epidemic surveillance, support at all levels, isolation of infected and suspected people, treatment of infected people, support epidemic prevention and control, etc., some medical facilities had a prolonged overload and were easy to be infected. Many medical facilities had to work overtime to serve medical examination, treatment, screening, isolation, monitoring and treatment of patients infected and suspected with Covid-19. The Covid-19 epidemic has caused great pressure, difficulties in ensuring the continuity of activities of the preventive health system, inadequate human resources for epidemic investigations, conducting test samples, organizing isolation centers with a large scale and protecting environment in a short time. At the same time, that led to a shortage of medical equipment, supplies, drugs, protective and personal equipment for medical staff, etc. In fact, the recent COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control has revealed many shortcomings and limitations in the state management of grassroots and preventive health system. Specifically, in fact, when the COVID-19 epidemic broke out, some localities were not active and lacked the ability to prevent

and control the epidemic, unable to respond to the “super-contagious” scenario. There was almost no locality able to resolve the COVID-19 without support from the Government and other localities. The number of grassroots health workforce was quite few, health policies still had many shortcomings and overlaps, the resolution of the Covid 19 was still confused, increasing corruption and interest groups. For example, the Viet A case clearly showed the gaps in the process of implementing legal policies on epidemic prevention and control.

*Causes of the above effects:*

- Lack of awareness of Party committees, authorities, socio-political organizations, cadres, party members and people about the role of social security and the impacts of the Covid-19, they considered it as the responsibility of the State. Therefore, the work of ensuring social security has not received the proper attention of the state management agencies in the locality, while the mindset of waiting, relying on the actions of the State and Government, mechanisms and policies led to lack of initiative in building mechanisms and policies specific to local characteristics. In addition, the attention is not enough paid to the subjects like farmers, ethnic minority areas, employers and employees in enterprises. A part of people and businesses are not aware of the meaning of humanity, and the sharing responsibility in the community. So the development of mechanisms and policies to ensure social security is not high and mobilizing resources for ensuring social security is still limited.

- The capacity to develop social security policies and improve the effectiveness of social security after the COVID-19 pandemic is still limited. The propaganda and dissemination of policies and laws, and the inspection of the implementation of ensuring social security policies have not been paid due attention. The inspection and examination of the implementation of mechanisms and policies to ensure social security have not been regular, especially for labor-using units and non-regular medical examination and treatment facilities; sanctions for violations of the law on social insurance, health insurance, etc., are not enough strong, so some businesses still deliberately delay paying debts, paying social insurance and health insurance for employees.

The state management of social security and ensuring social security is not really good due to the promulgation of many policies for many different

subjects, leading to lack of systematicity, causing difficulties for policy management and policy beneficiaries. The fields of ensuring social security are wide, related to many different socio-economic fields, so there is still a lack of synchronization and overlap in the development of mechanisms and policies to ensure social security against the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The heterogeneity in employment policies and social security policies to solve the great challenge of a large proportion of employees (54.6% of employment; 68.1% of agricultural workers) the informal sector and this is often not covered by social security policies, especially social insurance and social assistance policies in case of risk, health, or employment and income as well as other problems that cause people to fall into unemployment, poverty, etc.

- The implementation of policies on economic recovery and development to create a material basis for ensuring social security is still limited. Resources for policy implementation are limited, the level of support from the state budget is still low.

- Resources have not been effectively mobilized for ensuring social security, especially the participation of the community (organizations, businesses and people).

- Lack of supportive policies to encourage and create conditions for people to improve their ability to ensure their own security, and the poor to lift themselves out of poverty in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**5. Some solutions to ensure social security in Vietnam against the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the near future**

Currently, Vietnam’s economy is still quite stable, the Covid-19 epidemic is under control, the activities of production and business have returned to normal as before the epidemic. Agencies at the central and local levels have adapted safely and flexibly to effectively prevent and control the Covid-19 epidemic, and the high rate of vaccine coverage for the people is one of the important conditions for a quick and sustainable socio-economic recovery. Although the Covid-19 epidemic has been basically controlled in Vietnam, even new variations, the epidemic is still complicated in the world. Therefore, Vietnam’s economy in the last 6 months of 2022 continues to face many difficulties. In order to achieve the growth targets, control inflation and ensure the people’s life, it is necessary to have the joint efforts and consensus of the Party, the National Assembly, the Government, businesses and people of our country.

To limit the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, ensuring social security for people it is essential to implement some basic solutions as follows:

*Firstly, enhance the responsibilities of the Party committees, authorities, socio-political organizations, and people's participation in ensuring social security after the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Party organizations at all levels thoroughly grasp and take the initiative to play the key role; strengthen coordination between sectors and localities; promote the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, the participation of officials, party members and people in order to ensure social security for people after the COVID-19 epidemic.

- Enhance the responsibilities of Party committees at all levels for ensuring social security to protect people's lives.

Party committees at all levels should closely adhere to the viewpoints, guidelines and strategies of the Communist Party of Vietnam in formulating Resolutions, ensuring the implementation of social security in accordance with the actual conditions of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic in each locality; organize the inspection and supervision of the implementation of ensuring social security; attach the task of ensuring social security with the task of socio-economic development in each policy and direction. Party committees at all levels should regularly study and firmly grasp the reality of the process of ensuring social security, set goals and tasks, determine action plans to ensure social security, and promptly detect problems arising in ensuring social security for the people "Leave no one behind" after the pandemic.

- Enhance the responsibility of the Government and authorities at all levels in directing and organizing the implementation of ensuring social security

On the basis of the Party's leadership resolutions, the Government's direction and administration, and the actual situation of ensuring social security of each locality, authorities at all levels need to have appropriate measures of operation and management. reforming administrative procedures to strengthen the effectiveness of state management over ensuring social security; strengthen the responsibilities of all levels and branches in solving and handling jobs, gradually eliminating complex procedures, simplifying administrative procedures related to social security policies for people. Ensuring people's access to policies on employment, poverty reduction, social insurance,

social assistance, etc., step by step increase income to ensure people's living standards.

- Promote the role of socio-political organizations, especially the Fatherland Front at all levels to ensure social security.

It is necessary to further promote the role of the Veterans Association, Farmers' Union, Women's Union, Youth Union, etc., poverty reduction, economic development, job creation to generate more income after the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, it is necessary to promote the role of the Fatherland Front at all levels in mobilizing the resources of the society together with the State to ensure social security, especially the issue of hunger eradication and poverty reduction, health care for the disadvantaged in the society. In the Document of the XIII National Congress, our Party orients: "Develop a comprehensive and progressive social security system that covers the entire population with policies to prevent, reduce and overcome risks for migrant fishermen, protect people, ensure support for disadvantaged groups" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). The Fatherland Front at all levels has raised an important voice to detect limitations, shortcomings and injustices in ensuring social security of the State and localities, making social security policies truly effective, practical, ensuring a minimum living standard for the disadvantaged.

- Enhance the responsibility of enterprises to ensure social security in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic

This is the commitment of enterprises to have ethical behavior and contribute to economic development; to improve the living quality of workers and their families as well as of local community and the society. It is necessary to promote communication and have policies to encourage enterprises to participate in ensuring social security to protect the lives of workers after the COVID-19 epidemic, improve their social responsibility for the market and consumers; their responsibility for environmental protection; responsibility for employees (vocational training, employment, salary, social insurance, health insurance, occupational safety, housing, etc); responsibility for participating in charity activities to help people in difficult circumstances (the poor, the elderly, the disabled, protect children,...), help victims of storms, floods, natural disasters or accidents, contribute to the Gratitude Fund, actively respond to the emulation movement "The whole country joins hands for the

poor - Leave no one behind” and the movement “The whole country joins hands to build new countryside”. Consistently implement the motto “Living safely with the Covid-19 epidemic”; actively implement timely, safe and effective vaccination.

*Secondly, continue to improve mechanisms and policies and improve the effectiveness of ensuring social security after the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Regarding job creation and income assurance: Developing a healthy, synchronous, modern and integrated labor market; decent employment development, accelerating the formalization of the informal sector. Focusing on training skilled and high-quality human resources; enhancing the role and responsibility of enterprises in training. Strengthening the building of harmonious, stable and progressive labor relations. Effectively implementing supportive policies to ensure income for workers affected by the COVID-19 epidemic.

On sustainable poverty reduction: implementing poverty reduction according to multi-dimensional approach, especially in ethnic minority areas; effectively implementing the National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction in the 2021-2025 period in a comprehensive and inclusive manner, ensuring that “Leave no one behind”; supporting people with sustainable livelihoods to minimize negative impacts from the COVID-19 epidemic. Promulgating regulations on career channels after finishing secondary schools, high schools and the connection between vocational education and university education. Having policies to train and re-train workers to meet the requirements of the industrial revolution 4.0; strengthening the connection of vocational education with the labor market and sustainable employment.

Regarding social insurance and health insurance: Accelerating the effective implementation, ensuring quality and progress in accordance with the Government’s Action Plan to implement Resolution No. 28-NQ/TW, dated 23/5/2018, of the 7th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee, “On reforming social insurance policies”. Speeding up the roadmap of implementing universal health insurance, expanding the coverage of social insurance and unemployment insurance to stabilize workers’ lives as affected by the COVID-19 epidemic.

Regarding social assistance for people in extremely difficult circumstances, those who were affected by

the COVID-19 epidemic: Designing supportive programs in a flexible way, meeting the basic needs of people at risks and communities after natural disasters; ensuring timely support for disadvantaged people, disadvantaged groups and communities at risks from epidemics and natural disasters; preventing and combating violence and abuse to women and children. Paying more attention to the areas of ethnic minorities, mountainous areas, and the areas affected by natural disasters and climate change.

About ensuring some basic social services: developing professional social services. Pay more attention to the quality of primary and preventive medical system in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. Completing the national education system in an open direction, building a learning society, and improving the quality of education universalization; having a plan to adjust the appropriate study time to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on education.

*Thirdly, develop policies for economic recovery and development to create material resources for ensuring social security*

This is a fundamental long-term solution, which is decisive to the work of ensuring social security after the COVID-19 epidemic. Because, ensuring social security is an economic guarantee for those who are guided by social security policies. Socio-economic development will create conditions and material resources for ensuring social security. Therefore, in the coming time, the Government needs to come up with strong solutions to remove difficulties, recover and develop the economy after the COVID-19 epidemic.

- Focusing on accelerating the process of economic restructuring. Supporting the development of potential industries and fields with deep participation in value chains through preferential policies on - state finance budget, credit and other supportive policies, restoring and stabilizing agricultural production, ensuring national food security and exporting appropriately, effectively, and adapting to the new situation; consolidating and improving capacity for disease prevention and control. Focus on recovering and developing new supply chains and value chains; diversifying, avoiding depending on one market for both export and import; increasing exports.

- The Government, all levels, sectors and localities, need to speed up the implementation of the solutions and continue to propose more practical solutions

so that these solutions become the driving force for enterprises to overcome difficulties, restore, stabilize and develop production and business.

- There are policies to support credit, tax exemption and reduction for businesses

The State needs to have a policy to reduce loan interest rates and delay current loans for businesses that are facing difficulties due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic. Supporting enterprises with preferential loans of 0% interest rate or partial support for labor costs so that the enterprises can maintain their existing personnel apparatus, retain skilled and qualified workers; The State Bank needs to identify and evaluate the banks that have supported businesses before applying lower operating interest rates.

Implementing the solutions on taxes, fees and charges: cutting a number of taxes, fees and infrastructure fees: traffic fees, tolls and yards; deploying the application of corporate income tax reduction to a number of specific industries on the list of supporting industries; continuing to accelerate the implementation of tax and land rent exemption and reduction; reducing the rental price of production and business premises.

*Fourth, effectively mobilize resources for social security.*

Due to the state limited budget, the needs for ensuring social security due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic increased more so it is necessary to diversify resources for social security. In fact, during the recent COVID-19 epidemic, the country has mobilized resources from socio-political organizations, businesses, people etc, to spend on epidemic prevention and control and ensuring social security for the people. Focusing on solutions to ensuring social security, comprehensive and sustainable poverty reduction. Improving the effectiveness of social assistance work, continuing to expanding beneficiaries with appropriate forms of support; gradually raising the regular social allowance level, promulgating policies to support the elderly and people in extremely difficult circumstances. Promoting the movements of "Gratitude", improving the quality of care for revolution contributors, etc., Mobilizing all resources for poverty reduction according to the poverty line with the multi-dimensional approach.

In the coming time, in order to limit the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, it is necessary to maximize all resources of individuals, communities and the whole society with activities to ensure social security. The State should create favorable mechanisms

and policies for mass organizations, enterprises, communities, society and individuals to participate in ensuring social security; there are mechanisms and policies to encourage diverse development, models of social security assurance, charity activities, community-based volunteering, support for the development of community groups (organizations, religious groups, families, etc.) to become resources for the poor, near-poor households, disadvantaged groups in the society; to encourage the society's investment in the development of the service system, such as investment in the development of the education, health care, clean water, and environmental sanitation systems, to provide basic social services to the people.

*Fifth, develop supportive policies for people to thrive on their own to ensure social security in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Ensuring social security is not only the role of the State, but also the efforts of people to strive for protecting their own lives. However, to let people thrive on their own to ensure social security in the context of strong impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic, there should be the State's support. The Government and localities need to have policies so that people, especially farmers, the poor and people with disabilities can access the "input" factors of production for economic development; infrastructure development, public services; renovating mechanisms and policies, creating an equal business environment, supporting the development of small and medium enterprises, diversifying economic forms such as farm economy, cooperatives, household economy, especially in ethnic minority areas and mountainous areas.

Solving poverty and hunger problems must come from production, business, and employment, agricultural production and services, especially the programs that have been deployed to focus on low-income areas. In the immediate future, providing timely support for people to repair their damaged houses, support food, medicine, prevent people from being homeless, starving, sickness, diseases especially the COVID-19 at present.

It is necessary to create conditions for people to be more active, dynamic, capable and motivated, to be more autonomy in the implementation of poverty reduction models from building and implementing policies.

Adopting supportive policies for people to understand the market and products to improve competitiveness, on that basis to increase values and income for people; strengthening market information and trade promotion for the people to consume products. In addition, it is necessary to continue the implementation of Resolution No. 42/NQ-CP (Government, 2020) and Decision No. 15/2020/QĐ-TTg dated April 24, 2020 of the Prime Minister, ensuring the right beneficiaries, strictly handling cases of payment to the wrong subjects, and corruption.

## 6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused considerable damage to the world in general and Vietnam in particular. To control this pandemic, it is necessary to join hands of all people, as the General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong affirmed: Solidarity and global action are the certain basis for

the world's final victory against this pandemic, and each country also needs to have a post-COVID-19 recovery strategy soon.

Currently, Vietnam has successfully controlled the COVID-19 epidemic. The victory in disease prevention up to this point is very important and significant, affirming the determination and consensus in the actions of the Party, the army the people of the whole country in prevention and control of the epidemic. However, the COVID-19 epidemic is still complicated with new variants, which have had a strong impact on the Vietnamese economy and caused great pressure to solve social problems, especially the pressure on the work of ensuring social security to guarantee people's lives due to the decrease or loss of income. To ensure social security against the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, it is necessary to carry out many synchronous solutions, focusing on implementing the above basic solutions.

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# FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE EMPLOYEES' ATTACHMENT TO GARMENT ENTERPRISES IN HANOI

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**Abstract:** This study aims to identify and evaluate the factors affecting the employees' attachment to garment enterprises. Subjects selected for the study are workers who are working at some garment enterprises in Hanoi. By surveying the opinions of 295 employees and using SPSS statistical software to verify the database based on the SEM linear structural model with 5 groups of factors affecting employees' attachment, the results have shown that there are 4/5 groups of factors affecting the employees' attachment with garment enterprises. The factors include employees' income; working environment and conditions; relationships at work; evaluation of job performance. The analysis and assessment of factors affecting the employees' attachment to garment enterprises contribute to limiting the employees' absenteeism and job abandonment, and at the same time, improving job satisfaction in the garment industry employees' work, creating work motivation, and bringing higher labor productivity.

**Keywords:** *Employees' attachment; satisfaction; factor analysis; job satisfaction; garment enterprises; human resources management*

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## 1. Introduction

For enterprises in the garment industry, which is considered to be labor intensive, human resources are always a decisive factor for the existence and development of enterprises. However, Vietnam's garment enterprises are facing the problem of large labor fluctuations due to the lack of attachment between workers and businesses. With its labor-intensive nature, employee retention and personnel stability are the top concerns of businesses. When employees are satisfied with their work, they

will love their work, attach to the business, and maximize their capacity and enthusiasm for the business. From there, the efficiency and effectiveness of employees will be higher, helping businesses not only exist but also develop in an increasingly competitive environment. So why is there a state of workers or layoffs? How to make employees more attached to the business? Which factors affect the employees' attachment to garment enterprises? How does each factor influence? What factors can motivate employees to work better and more passionately?

In the article, the authors have studied the basis of the employees' attachment to the organization, built a research model and questionnaire to collect employees' opinions, used SPSS software and SEM linear structural model to analyze the factors affecting the employees' attachment to the garment enterprise, thereby proposing some solutions to enhance the employees' attachment with businesses. This is also the basis for managers at garment enterprises to adjust human resource management policies, stabilize personnel and improve the competitiveness of enterprises in the period of international economic integration.

## **2. Theoretical basis, research model, and hypotheses**

### **2.1. Theoretical basis**

#### *2.1.1. Employees' attachment to the organization*

According to Porter et al. (1974), organizational attachment is a strong belief and acceptance of the organization's goals, a willingness to make their best effort for the organization, and a desire to remain a member of the organization. Organizational attachment is the willingness to be a member of the organization, the willingness to work for the organization and to support the goals and values of the organization.

Research by Mowday et al. (1979) mentioned the concept "Organizational attachment is the relative strength of employees' identification with the organization and the active participation of employees in an organization. According to Mowday's opinion, engagement includes identification, effort, and loyalty. It represents a positive relationship between employees and the organization that makes employees always willing to make efforts to improve their performance and contribute to the success and development of the organization.

According to Nhut and Trang (2015), the employees' attachment to the organization is seen as a result of the exchange relationship between the individual and the organization. Attachment is the personal relationship between employees and employers - the organization consists of 3 main components of organizational commitment, which are strong belief and acceptance of the organization's goals, willingness to try their best for the organization, and wish to remain a member of the organization.

Vuong and Chau (2020) believe that employees'

attachment to the organization is a psychological state that shows an individual's attachment to an organization, to a profession; it is the employees' loyalty and work enthusiasm for the organization; It is the willingness to try our best for the organization, always putting the interests of the organization above our own.

*Thus, it can be said that the employees' attachment to the organization is the state of willingness to stay for a long time as a member of the organization, willing to make efforts for the organization and to support the goals organization's values.*

#### *2.1.2. Factors affecting employees' attachment to the organization*

Hien (2012) did research on employees' attachment with a model consisting of 6 influencing factors: (1) job characteristics, (2) training and development opportunities, (3) empowerment, (4) pay and fairness, (5) reward and recognition of achievement, (6) support from superiors and peers, organizational standards.

Anh and Dao (2013), researching human resource management and employee attachment to the enterprise, tested four factors that affect employee attachment to the organization, including (1) Career development opportunities, (2) Performance evaluation, (3) Compensation and benefits, (4) Updated job description system.

Research by Thuy (2015) has shown that 7 factors affect employee attachment to the organization, including (1) Leadership, (2) Compensation - Welfare, (3) Training creation and promotion, (4) Colleagues, (5) Brand and supporting activities, (6) Nature of work, (7) Work pressure.

Research by Vuong & Chau (2020) examines the employee attachment to the enterprise based on 7 influencing factors, including (1) Income; (2) Reward and welfare; (3) Working environment; (4) Colleagues; (5) Direct manager; (6) promotion opportunities; (7) Organizational culture. Among these 7 factors, Income is the most influential factor, followed by reward and welfare, direct manager, working environment, colleagues, organizational culture, and finally, training and advancement.

Research by Hiep (2021) shows that there are 6 factors affecting employees' attachment to the organization, including (1) Income and fairness; (2) Training and development; (3) Empowerment;

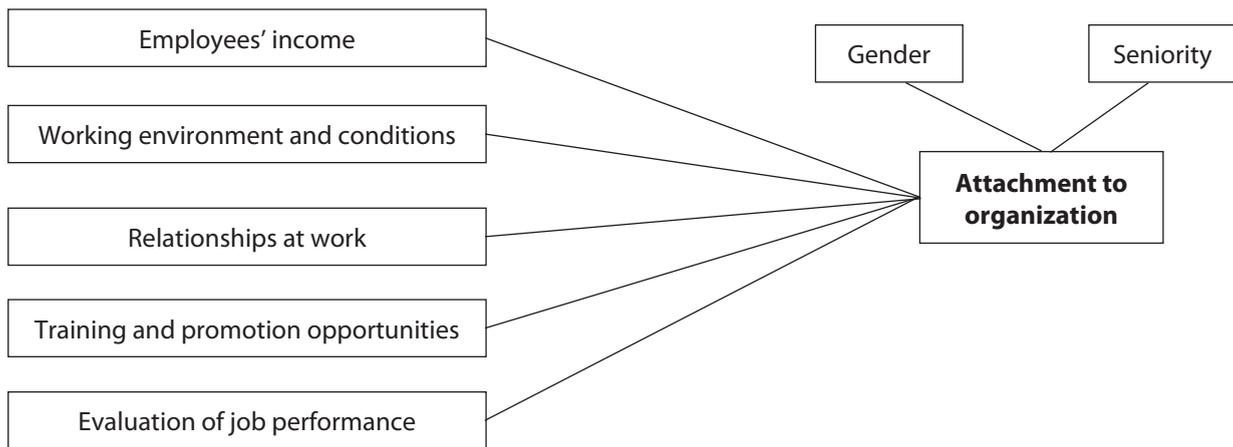
(4) Recognition; (5) Leadership style; (6) Working environment. The working environment has the strongest impact, followed by leadership style and empowerment, and the lowest influencing factors are income and fairness.

**2.2. Research model and hypothesis**

Inheriting and selecting a number of theoretical bases and studying the factor scales of previous studies with adjustments to suit the research objectives,

with the specific characteristics of the garment industry, the research model is designed. The design is based on a combination of factors measuring the willingness of employees to attach to enterprises in the garment industry, including (1) Employee income; (2) Working environment and conditions; (3) Relationships at work; (4) Training and promotion opportunities; (5) Evaluation of job performance. The research model is diagrammed as follows:

**Figure 1.** Proposed research model



Source: Proposal of the research team

*Hypotheses for the proposed research model include:*

H1: Employee income has a positive influence on employees' attachment to garment enterprises.

H2: Working environment and conditions have a positive influence on employee attachment to garment enterprises.

H3: Relationships at work have a positive influence on employee attachment to garment enterprises.

H4: Training and promotion opportunities have a positive influence on employee attachment to garment enterprises.

H5: Performance evaluation has a positive influence on employee attachment to garment enterprises.

H6: Employees of different genders will have different levels of attachment to garment enterprises

H7: Employees with different seniority will have different levels of commitment to the enterprise

**2.3. Research scale**

On the basis of the synthesis of previous studies on the factors affecting employee attachment to the enterprise and the proposed research model, the research team built scales (observed variables) for representative factors.

**Table 1.** Summary of research scales

Representative factors	Coded	Observed variables	References
Employees' income (TN)	TN1	The income of employees in the company ensures an average standard of living.	Pham The Anh, Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013). Doan Thi Trang Hien (2012) Bui Nhat Vuong & Pham Ngoc Chau (2020)
	TN2	The salary level is decided on the basis of the employees' abilities.	
	TN3	The level of income of employees depends on specific work results.	
	TN4	The employees' income level is determined and paid fairly and on time.	

Representative factors	Coded	Observed variables	References
Working environment and conditions (MT)	MT1	You are not under too high work pressure during working time.	Nguyen Hoang Ngoc Thuy (2015) Nguyen Thi Kim Hiep (2021)
	MT2	The workplace is hygienic, clean, and cool.	
	MT3	Working equipment is adequate and suitable and ensures labor productivity.	
	MT4	The workplace ensures good working safety conditions.	
	MT5	Rules and regulations are clear and strict and ensure fairness between different job positions.	
Relationships at workplace (QH)	QH1	Colleagues are always friendly, open, and united	Pham The Anh, Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013). Bui Nhat Vuong & Pham Ngoc Chau (2020)
	QH2	Colleagues are willing to support each other at work.	
	QH3	The superiors are always willing to support employees in their work.	
	QH4	The superiors treat employees in friendly and fairly in different positions.	
	QH5	Leaders encourage employees to make decisions related to joint operations.	
Training and promotion opportunities (DT)	DT1	You have the opportunity to participate in training courses to improve your skills annually.	Doan Thi Trang Hien (2012) Nguyen Hoang Ngoc Thuy (2015) Bui Nhat Vuong & Pham Ngoc Chau (2020)
	DT2	The company regularly pays attention to training and fostering skills for employees.	
	DT3	The company always creates opportunities for employees to strive for promotion.	
	DT4	The company's promotion policy is fair to all employees.	
	DT5	You are satisfied with the company's training and promotion policy.	
Working performance evaluation (DG)	DG1	The company has a system of job descriptions that is regularly updated.	Pham The Anh, Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013) Nguyen Thi Kim Hiep (2021)
	DG2	The duties of each job are clearly identified.	
	DG3	Employee performance is evaluated based on specific criteria.	
	DG4	The performance evaluation system operates fairly and accurately.	
The attachment to enterprises (SGB)	SGB1	You will stay with the company even though there are other places with relatively more attractive salary offers.	Mowday et al. (1979) Pham The Anh, Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013);
	SGB2	You are glad to choose this company to work for.	
	SGB3	You are willing to sacrifice personal interests when necessary to help the company grow.	
	SGB4	You intend to stay with the company for a long time.	

Source: Synthesis of the research team

### 3. Research methods

#### 3.1. Measure variables and select research samples

The research is conducted on the basis of a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. In the first step, the qualitative research method was used to conduct preliminary research; the author discussed 2 groups of employees, each group of 5 people working in distinct positions in 2 garment enterprises. Discuss using

a set of preliminary scales referenced from previous studies with factors affecting employees' attachment to the organization. The participants in the discussion were free to give their opinions on the aspects of the commitment to the enterprise raised. The preliminary study sample size is 10 ( $n = 10$ ). Preliminary research results are used to complete the research questionnaire and research model.

Based on preliminary research results, the research team completed the questionnaire with 5-level Likert-scale questions to collect employees' opinions on the level of attachment to the enterprise. The surveyed subjects are workers working at a number of relatively large-scale garment enterprises in Hanoi, including My Anh Garment Company (Hoai Duc District); Viettex Garment Company (Dan Phuong District); Duc Giang Garment Company (Long Bien District); Chien Thang Garment Company (Ba Dinh District); Thanh Tri Garment Joint Stock Company (Thanh Tri District). The survey period is from January 2022 to May 2022, after Hanoi applies new normal conditions after the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the brief survey time, the research team used a convenient sampling method. The sample size was determined according to the rule of Comrey and Lee (1992) and also refers to the rule of Hoang Trong & Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2005). With 27 parameters (observed variables) to conduct factor analysis, the minimum number of samples needed is  $27 \times 5 = 135$  observed samples. In view of collecting as many observed samples as possible to ensure the stability of the impact, based on the ability to collect samples, the research team decided to choose the number of observed samples as  $n = 300$ , and each enterprise is selected to take a minimum of 60-70 samples. To ensure the sample size, the author issued 310 survey questionnaires; the number of votes collected was 302 votes, of which 295 valid votes were included in the analysis.

### **3.2. Research data analysis**

Research data after collected will be cleaned and analyzed with the support of SPSS 20.0 software with analytical techniques:

**Descriptive statistics:** Describe the characteristics of the research sample according to predefined distinguishing signs.

**Check the reliability of the scale (Cronbach's Alpha):** This method evaluates the reliability of the scale by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and eliminates inappropriate variables. Variables with a total correlation coefficient of less than 0.3 will be excluded. Scales with Cronbach's Alpha from above 0.6 are usable.

**EFA exploratory factor analysis:** EFA factor analysis allows the reduction of many interrelated variables into representative factors. Using the test method (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett to

measure the compatibility of the surveyed sample. Factor analysis is significant when the KMO value  $> 0.5$  and the sig value  $< 0.05$ ; Factor loading factors must be  $> 0.5$ ; In case the observable variable loads on both factors, the loading coefficients must differ  $> 0.3$  and this observable variable is included in the factor that it uploads the highest with the condition that the factor loading  $> 0.5$  is satisfied.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):** The purpose is to assess the fit of the model with research data, thereby providing convincing evidence of convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the theoretical structure through the Model Fit indexes. According to Hair et al. (2010), Multivariate Data Analysis, 7th edition indicators considered to evaluate Model Fit include:

CMIN/df 3 is good, CMIN/df 5 is acceptable

CFI  $\geq 0.9$  is good, CFI  $\geq 0.95$  is very good, CFI  $\geq 0.8$  is acceptable

RMSEA 0.08 is good, RMSEA 0.03 is very good

**Analysis of linear structural model SEM:** The SEM model combines all techniques, such as multivariate regression, factor analysis, and correlation analysis, allowing us to examine the complex relationship in the model. The SEM model allows us to simultaneously estimate the elements in the overall model, estimate the causal relationship between the latent concepts through indicators that combine both measurement and structure of the theoretical model stable (recursive) and non-recursive relationships, measure direct and indirect effects, including measurement error and residual correlation. With the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) technique, the SEM model allows the flexibility to find the most suitable model in the proposed models. Similar to the CFA model, the SEM model also evaluates the linear structure through the Model Fit indexes.

**Testing the differential impact of qualitative factors:** using the Independence-Sample T-test and One-Way ANOVA test to examine the differential impact of qualitative factors such as gender, working seniority to the employees' attachment to the enterprises.

## **4. Research results**

### **4.1. Introduction of the research sample**

The subjects of the survey are employees who are working at a number of enterprises in the garment

industry in Hanoi. These businesses have different operating scales, but they are all long-time businesses in the garment industry. With 310 ballots sent out,

302 votes were collected, of which 295 valid votes were used for analysis. Some sample features are described as follows:

**Table 2.** Description of the study sample

		Quantity	Proportion (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	68	23.1
	Female	227	76.9
<b>Seniority</b>	Less than 3 years	46	15.6
	From 3 to 5 years	113	38.3
	From 5 to 10 years	94	31.9
	More than 10 years	42	14.2

Source: Survey results of the research team

Classification by gender shows that there is a large disparity between males and females due to the specificity of the garment industry. Of these, 23.1% are male, and 76.9% are female. Working time in the enterprise, the number of employees with a working time of 3-5 years accounted for 38.3%, from 5-10 years accounted for 31.9,% and over 10 years of working seniority was only 14.2 %

#### 4.2. Testing the research's reliability scale

Testing results of the scale of reliability by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient show that the coefficients are all more than 0.7 (Table 2), and the correlation coefficients of the total variables of the observed variables in the factor are all more than 0.3. That shows that the study is relevant and reliable. In 6 factor groups with the initial number of observed variables  $X_m = 27$  variables, no variables were excluded from the model.

**Table 3.** Testing results of the scale of reliability

Factors and coded	Number of observation variables			Cronbach's Alpha coefficient
	Before testing	After testing	Number of excluded variables	
Employees' income (TN)	4	4	0	0.830
Workplace (MT)	5	5	0	0.827
Relationships at workplace (QH)	5	5	0	0.812
Training and promotion opportunities (DT)	5	5	0	0.825
Working performance evaluation (DG)	4	4	0	0.813
The attachment to enterprises (SGB)	4	4	0	0.871
Total	27	27	0	

Sources: Testing results of the research team

#### 4.3. EFA factor analysis

EFA analysis results, at Eigenvalue value greater than 1 with the variance extracted Principal Components and Promax rotation, factor analysis extracted 6 factors from 27 observed variables with the extracted variance of 63.5 % (greater than 50%)

meets the requirements. The KMO coefficient has a value of 0.890 (>0.5), meaning the analysis is significant. The value sig = 0.000 < 0.05 shows that the observed variables are correlated with each other in the population, and EFA factor analysis is appropriate.

**Table 4.** EFA factor analysis results

Pattern Matrix <sup>a</sup>						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
MT2	.804					
MT1	.764					
MT4	.760					
MT3	.735					
MT5	.732					
DT3		.800				
DT2		.797				
DT4		.772				
DT5		.754				
DT1		.707				
QH1			.801			
QH3			.790			
QH2			.751			
QH4			.696			
QH5			.687			
SGB4				.882		
SGB3				.848		
SGB1				.819		
SGB2				.814		
TN2					.831	
TN4					.830	
TN1					.791	
TN3					.759	
DG4						.850
DG1						.789
DG2						.788
DG3						.773

Source: EFA test result of the research team

Thus, in the factor analysis process with the Eigenvalues of 1,552 (>1), 27 initially observed variables are converted into 6 groups of factors: Employees' income (TN); Working environment (MT); Relationships at Workplace (QH); Training and Promotion opportunities (DT); Performance Evaluation (DG); Attachment to business (SGB) with the total variance extracted is 63.5% (> 50%), i.e., 63.5% variation of the data is explained by these factors.

#### 4.4. Analyzing CFA confirmatory factor

The CFA test aims to determine the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the theoretical structure through the Model Fit indexes.

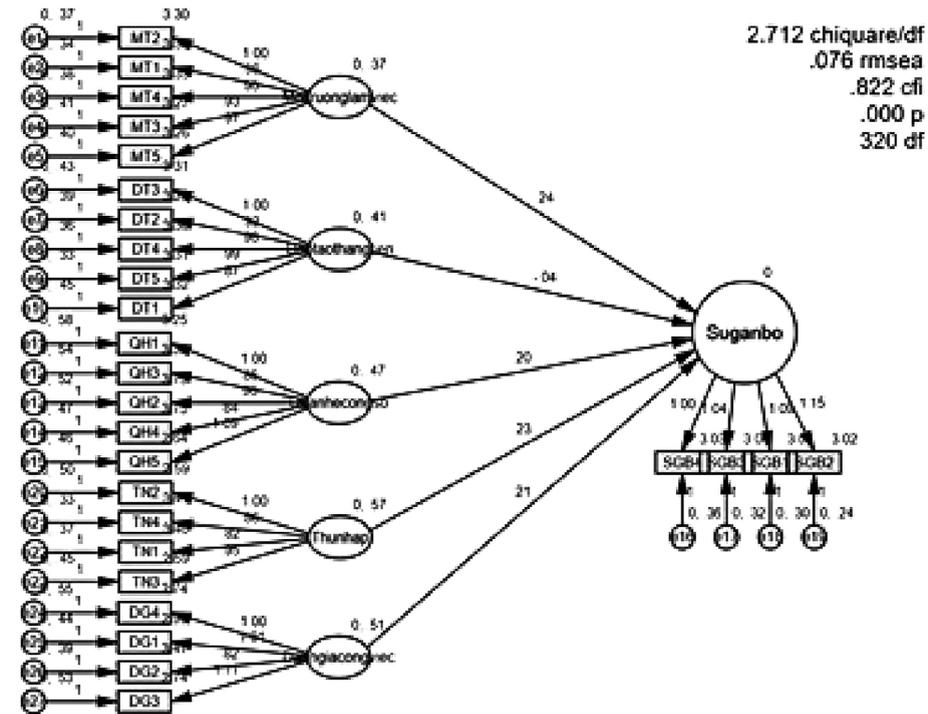
According to the test results,  $CMIN/df = 1.052 \leq 3$

is good,  $CFI = 0.995 > 0.8$  is good and  $RMSEA = 0.013 \leq 0.03$  is very good. Thus, it can be seen that the observed variables have convergent validity on the representative variables, and at the same time, all variables have discriminant values; there is no autocorrelation phenomenon.

#### 4.5. Tested by linear structural model SEM

Based on the results of the CFA confirmatory factor analysis, the research team builds a linear structural model SEM and performs verification steps. The SEM model test results show that the index  $CMIN/df = 2.712 \leq 3$  is good, the index  $CFI = 0.822 > 0.8$  is acceptable, and the index  $RMSEA = 0.076 \leq 0.08$  is acceptable. SEM structural modeling is significant.

Figure 2. SEM structural testing results



Source: The testing result of the research team

Determining that the SEM structural model is significant, the research team continues to consider the significance level for the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Table 5). The results show that the training and promotion factor has a P value = 0.197 > 0.05, so it can be concluded

that there is not enough statistical basis to show that the training and promotion factor has an impact on the employees' attachment to the enterprise; hypothesis H4 is rejected. The remaining factors all have p-value < 0.05, showing that the impact of these factors on the dependent factor is statistically significant.

Table 5. Identifying the significance level of the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P value
Suganbo	<---	Moitruonglamviec	.238	.043	5.536	***
Suganbo	<---	Daotaothangtien	-.037	.029	-1.290	.197
Suganbo	<---	Quanhecongso	.197	.038	5.246	***
Suganbo	<---	Thunhap	.229	.038	6.020	***
Suganbo	<---	Danhgiacongviac	.207	.038	5.522	***

Source: The testing result of the research team

Considering the significant level of impact of independent factors on the employees' attachment to the enterprise by the standardized regression coefficient (Table 6), it shows that the employees' income factor has a positive impact on the employees' attachment to the enterprise with an impact of + 0.57; Environmental factors and working conditions have a positive impact on the employees'

attachment to the company with an impact level of + 0.48; The factor of relationships at work has a positive impact on the employees' attachment to the company with an impact level of + 0.447; The job performance evaluation factor has a positive impact on the employees' attachment to the company with an impact level of + 0.489; Hypotheses H1; H2; H3; H5 is accepted.

**Table 6.** Identifying the level of impact of factors

			Level of impact	The hypothesis is accepted.
Suganbo	<---	Thunhap	.570	H1
Suganbo	<---	Moitruonglamviac	.480	H2
Suganbo	<---	Quanhecongso	.447	H3
Suganbo	<---	Danhgiacongviac	.489	H5

Source: The testing result of the research team

### 5. Testing the differential impact of individual factors

Testing the difference of the gender factor: Since this is a factor with only 2 values, the Independence-Sample T-test can be used. The test results show that: The Sig value at Levene's Test = 0.186 > 0.05 shows that the variance between the 2 genders: Male

and Female, is the same; you can use the sig T-Test value in the Equal variances assumed row. At Equal variances, the assumed value Sig = 0.921 > 0.05, so it can be concluded: There is no statistically significant difference in the attachment to the business of employees of different genders; Hypothesis H6 was rejected.

**Table 7.** Independence-Sample T-test Testing result

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SGB	Equal variances assumed	1.757	.186	.099	293	.921	.008	.082	-.153	.170
	Equal variances not assumed			.109	128.376	.914	.008	.075	-.140	.156

Source: The testing result of the research team

Testing the different effects between groups of employees with different working seniority on job satisfaction using the One-Way ANOVA test. In the test results, considering the value at the Test of Homogeneity of Variances table, the sig value of Levene Statistic = 0.777 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference in the attachment to business occupations of workers with different seniority; Hypothesis H7 is rejected.

### 6. Comments and recommendations

#### 6.1. Comments

The research results show that the employees' attachment to the business in garment enterprises is affected by 4 factors: (1) Employees' income; (2) Working environment and conditions; (3) Relationships at work; (4) Evaluation of job performance.

The employees' income factor has a positive impact on the attachment to the enterprise, with an impact level of + 0.57. When the employees' income changes by 1 unit, the employees' attachment will change in the same direction by 0.57 units. This result is consistent with the research of Bui Nhat Vuong and Pham Ngoc Chau (2020), that income is the factor that has the strongest impact on employees' attachment to the business. Interviewing some workers at the garment company also shows that. Most of the interviewed workers have the first concern that their monthly income, including salary, allowance, and bonus, is how much; if the salary is high, they are willing to work long-term with the enterprise.

Next, the job performance evaluation factor has a positive impact on the employees' attachment to the enterprise, with an impact level of +0.489. This is the second level of impact among the research factors

and shows that when the job performance evaluation changes by 1 unit, the employees' attachment will change in the same direction by 0.489 units. This result is consistent with the research results of Hiep (2021) that the organization's recognition of the employees' work results has a positive impact on the employees' attachment behavior. The opinions of some interviewed workers also said that they would be satisfied and secure in their work when the results of their work were valued in a fair, democratic, and objective manner.

Environmental factors and working conditions have a positive impact on employees' attachment to the company, with an impact level of + 0.48. When the environment and working conditions change by 1 unit, the employees' attachment will change in the same direction by 0.48 units. This result is consistent with the research results of Nguyen Thi Kim Hiep (2021). The working environment and conditions have the strongest impact on the factors affecting the employees' attachment behavior. However, with the characteristics of the garment industry, the environment and working conditions are quite safe. Most workers do not have to work outdoors, but the work pressure is great, and they often have to work overtime, so in this study, environmental factors and working conditions are not the most influential factors.

The factor of relationships at work has a positive impact on the employees' attachment to the enterprise, with an impact level of +0.447. When relationships in the workplace change by 1 unit, employee attachment will change in the same direction by 0.447 units. This result is consistent with the research of Vuong and Chau (2020); the relationship with the direct manager and with colleagues is the factor that affects the employees' attachment to the enterprise. Interviewing some employees also shows that the time they spend at work is more than the time at home, so the relationship with their superiors and colleagues has a certain influence on the working psychology and motivation of employees.

The factor of training and promotion is not statistically significant in this study, which is also consistent with the research of Vuong and Chau (2020) and, in fact, the specifics of the garment industry. Most workers at garment companies are only trained as craftsmen. They are trained at vocational training institutions or directly at garment

enterprises and will become workers after training and being officially recruited. The opportunity to be trained and fostered to have the opportunity to advance in the working process is exceedingly difficult for them. Therefore, the survey answers are quite scattered and not statistically significant enough to consider.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

The first characteristic of the garment industry is that it is labor intensive; Workers are not too demanding in terms of qualifications, but the issue of income is genuinely concerning. Therefore, in terms of salary and welfare regime, enterprises need to arrange and use workers appropriately, clearly define the level of workers and the complexity of the job to assign the right people, the right jobs for evaluating job performance, and paying accurate and fair wages according to labor results. At the same time, it further expands the welfare policy for employees.

The second is about performance evaluation activities, with the characteristics of the garment industry as tangible products that can be measured in order to accurately ensure the company needs to build clear and reasonable labor productivity norms, thereby quantifying and evaluating the work results of employees fairly and accurately. Allow workers to participate in self-assessment and the process of evaluating their own work performance so that they are properly and fully aware of the results of their own work.

Third, in terms of working environment and conditions, garment workers always have to work long hours and overtime in a dusty environment with many noisy machinery and equipment. Therefore, enterprises need to renew equipment or replace old, broken, or outdated equipment and working facilities so that employees can easily use and improve working efficiency. Only use overtime to work overtime in really necessary conditions and must comply with the law on overtime and overtime. Raise workers' awareness of law observance and internal regulations on occupational safety and hygiene to increase labor productivity, increase working capacity and ensure health and safety for workers and employees.

The fourth, regarding relationships at work, the company needs to develop and implement a democratic regulation at the unit, establish a reporting channel and enhance information exchange so that employees can easily share, promptly report, and

receive the attention and assistance of superiors to solve the work quickly as well as without difficulties in communicating and exchanging with the superiors. Regularly organize cultural, artistic, and sports exchanges between units and departments, thereby enhancing the solidarity and cohesion among employees while bringing a refreshing spirit, health, and better physical condition for workers. Build a friendly and cooperative working atmosphere among employees.

Fifth, in terms of training activities and promotion opportunities, with a labor-intensive industry like the garment industry, businesses need to focus on training and improving skills for workers. It is a fact that workers spend too much time on work but lack training activities to improve their skills. Creating conditions for capable workers to participate in promotion, clear and reasonable promotion policy, ensuring fairness among workers.

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# IDENTIFYING DIFFICULTIES OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN EMOTION, COGNITIVENESS, BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY AT THE VIETNAM NATIONAL CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL

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**Abstract:** Children with autism spectrum disorder “are people under the age of 16 with a distinct symptom of neuro developmental disorder caused by impairments in social interaction and communication, express shaped behavior and have one of restricted functions in their lives”. Based on the list of children’s developmental behavioral disorders applied at the National Children’s Hospital, the article focuses on 3 main groups of difficulties of children with autism spectrum disorder, including emotion, cognitiveness - behavior and social communication. The scale includes 4 difficult levels: 1 = Absolutely not difficult; 2 = A little difficult; 3 = Quite difficult; and 4 = Very difficult. The survey of 250 cases of autistic children who received treatment at the National Children’s Hospital from June 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 to June 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 showed that the children were facing different levels of difficulty, with the most difficult level of social communication

**Keywords:** *Autism spectrum disorder, children, social communication difficulties*

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## 1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in children is a type of developmental disorder which tends to be more popular, stronger and has become a social problem.

Various studies have shown different viewpoints and explanations. According to Leo (1943), ASD “is a form of disease” which is lack of ability to establish social relationships with other people as well as the ability to respond to daily situations in early living stages of children”.

The US Law on Education for Persons with Disabilities in 1997 stated that “Autism is a developmental disorder that severely affects verbal and non-verbal communication, social interaction and usually begins before the age of 3, that has a negative impact on children’s learning ability.” (IDEA, 1997).

The French National Institute for Health and Medical Research in 2007 also stated that “Autism is a disorder of a child from infancy to adulthood without an ability to interact socially and normally and etc.” (Brigitte, 2015).

Based on DSM - 5, a study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States in 2014 reported that about 1% of the world’s population had ASD (CDC, 2014). In Vietnam, statistics in 2019 also showed that there were about 1 million people having ASD, on an average one out of every 100 children was born with this syndrome (GSO, 2020).

When getting ASD, children often have different difficulties, including (1) emotional instability, (2) cognitiveness and behavior, (3) social communication. These difficulties were identified and analyzed through cases of children diagnosed with ASD at the National Children’s Hospital.

In this study, children with ASD were understood as “people under 16 years old with the symptom of distinct neuro developmental disorder caused by impairments in social interaction and communication, having shaped behavior and one of restricted functions” (Ha et al., 2022).

## 2. Literature review

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in children is an attractive topic for researchers in the 1970s of the twentieth century like Leo Kanner, Eric Schopler, Ivan Lovass, Carol Gray, Lorna Wing, or Bryna Seigel. According to scientists ASD includes autism disorder, Asperger syndrome, childhood disintegration disorder, and Rett syndrome and etc. (Ha and Giang, 2010).

In the study of Leo (1943) “Autistic disturbances of affective contact - emotional communication in autistic people”, he identified and pointed out children with ASD often lacked emotional contact, formed habits and repetitive behavior, could not use a language or used an abnormal language, and had difficulties in learning or playing games.

Research by Buno Bettlhem (1967) showed that ASD was caused by the family’s neglect, improper care and poor nurturing, way of living with more focus on mind than love, distant and hostile attitude, neglect. Therefore, this group of children often had difficulties in the expression of emotion, cognitiveness, behavior, and social interactions.

Research by Robert Rosine Le Eost also indicated that children with ASD often lived in their own world that was called a self-destructive world, so they rejected the world around, treated everyone in the real world as objects. The children did not use the common language but their own language. They wanted to live apart from the common world and often felt that their own world was invaded by the society (Ha and Giang, 2010).

Similarly, studies in Vietnam also showed ASD’s symptoms included impairments in social communication, expression of repetitive, stereotyped, ensconced behavior (Ministry of Health, 2015), playing alone; children with ASD are unable to speak or speak only a few simple words, use a weird language; do not respond to name, do not make eye contact; unable to use non-verbal communication such as extending arms, crossing arms to show respect, nodding head or shaking head; unable to play imaginary games or make friends; often watch moving stuff; stack toys in rows; mess objects. They often have stereotyped moves such as walking on tiptoes, spinning around, looking at hands, seeing on one side, swaying, spinning toys; have a rigid way of thinking and greetings, repeat the words of others; have very tight and persistent attachment to an object; have sense disorders at different levels (Uy et al., 2019; Thang et al., 2022)

### Limitations of the study

The above literature shows a comprehensive picture of children with autism spectrum disorder with difficulties in stereotyped behavior, emotion, cognitiveness, and social communication. But this study did not yet go deep into difficult levels that

the children faced in their families. Therefore, this article focuses on their parents' evaluation through a 4 measurement scale. 1 = Absolutely not difficult; 2 = A little difficult; 3 = Quite difficult; and 4 = Very difficult.

### 3. Methods

The article used research results on children with ASD published from 2015 to 2022. Along with this, the article also used the results of the research "Individual social work intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder at the National Children's Hospital" implemented by Dr. Nguyen Thu Ha in 2022. Specifically:

- By non-probability sampling method, the study included the survey questionnaire of 250 cases of children with ASD who had treatments at the National Children's Hospital. After the completion of the survey, the research team dissolved.
- Similarly, by this sampling method, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 15 cases of parents whose children have ASD.
- Social groups participating in this questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews were selected randomly, conveniently and introduced by doctors.
- When participating in the survey activities, these social groups were given detail information and had the right to refusing to provide information that may influence their private lives and received part of the remuneration for replies.

- Survey period: from June 1, 2022 to June 8, 2022.

### 4. Results

Based on the "List of developmental behavioral disorders in children" applied at the National Children's Hospital, the research team grouped the similar indicators and established a 4 level scale of difficulties in stabilizing emotion, cognitiveness, behavior and social communication as follows:

- 1 = Absolutely not difficult
- 2 = A little difficult
- 3 = Quite difficult
- 4 = Very difficult

The survey results showed that based on the given indicators the rate of children with ASD who were absolutely not difficult or a little difficult accounted for a small portion, the majority of the surveyed children had certain difficulties, some children were rated at "very difficult" level.

#### 4.1. Difficulty in emotional stability

Many studies agreed with the statement that children with ASD could experience different types of emotional difficulties. Based on the "List of developmental and behavioral disorders in children" at the National Children's Hospital, the study mentioned 12 specific types of difficulties which were classified into 3 groups with quite similar indicators.

From the symptoms of the children, parents had corresponding assessment.

**Table 1.** Emotional difficulties in group 1

	<b>Absolutely not</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Quite</b>	<b>Very</b>
Easy to get angry	10,4	31,6	40,4	17,6
Easy to throw a tantrum	16,8	33,6	37,2	12,4
Easy to cry	16,8	36,0	34,0	13,2
Aggressive (hitting others, throwing things...)	28,8	29,2	29,6	12,4
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>18,2</b>	<b>32,6</b>	<b>35,3</b>	<b>13,9</b>

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

The survey results showed the rate of children in group 1 who were "absolutely not difficult" was low. That means most children have difficulties, over 35.3% in the group was "quite difficult" to stabilize their emotion and 13.9% was very difficult. The highest level focuses on the emotion of "easy to get angry". When negative emotion arises, children can have different ways of reaction, such as crying, screaming, or performing adverse behavior. "He is fastidious, cries, always gets angry, insists on what he wants, screams

loudly; My child is easily irritable, angry, demands, always tears books,paper at school. When he's angry, he will lay down and cry on the floor, regardless of whether it's dirty or clean. He is demanding, irritable, throwing things around, hitting people nearby such as parents, grandparents, or his friends. I let him participate in the intervention for 20 months but in the covid period he was completely off, during this time, his emotions were easily irritated, explosive, hostile and had undesirable behavior" (A quote from in-depth interview 1, 2, 5, 6, 8).

**Table 2.** Emotional difficulties in group 2

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>A little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very much difficult</b>
Panic	33,2	27,6	25,2	14,0
Anxiety	29,6	36,8	24,0	9,6
Restlessness	37,6	27,2	24,8	10,4
Insecurity	43,6	24,4	18,4	13,6
Sadness	41,2	30,8	18,0	10,0
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>37,0</b>	<b>29,4</b>	<b>22,1</b>	<b>11,5</b>

Source: survey results of the topic, 2022

The survey results in emotional stability in group 2 showed that the percentage of children who were “absolutely not difficult” increased a bit, which reflected the level of the children’s emotional expression such as panic, anxiety, restlessness,

insecurity or sadness was lower than that of anger, crying and aggressiveness. But the survey results also showed that some parents admitted their children were quite difficult (about 22%), in some cases they were very difficult (approximately 12%).

**Table 3.** Emotional difficulties in group 3

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>A little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very difficult</b>
Indifference, not showing affection to people	35,6	23,2	18,0	23,2
Repeating the same behavior over and over (e.g., fidgeting things, or hold on to a collar, hold a fixed object in hand ... )	20,8	32,0	33,2	14
Difficult to accept changes (e.g. cry when going to strange places , or constantly running around...)	25,2	32,8	29,6	12,4
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>27,2</b>	<b>29,3</b>	<b>26,9</b>	<b>16,5</b>

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

Similarly, the survey results showed that difficulties in the 3rd group of children were very clear with 26.9% falling to the “quite difficult” level and 16.5% falling to the “very difficult” level. The emotions such as “indifference, not showing affection to people” were recognized at the highest level. The results of in-depth interviews showed that the children’s emotional expressions were crying, clinging to parents, worried, restless, losing a temper or unable to sit still. “My child is always crying when going out in public, clinging to her father and unable to hold back; her emotions are often unstable if she

is in different environments, strange places like my work place, amusement parks, or hospitals, she is nervous and confused and I feel that she feels insecure. My child calms down when she gets home; My child is always screaming, talking loudly, restless and can’t wait for anything. She sits restlessly all the time. It’s hard for her to sit still in a chair, she is always moving to mess things around. (A quote from in-depth interviews 3, 5, 15).

#### **4.2. Cognitive difficulties**

The cognitive difficulties of children with ASD were divided into two similar groups.

**Table 4.** Cognitive difficulties in group 1

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>A little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very difficult</b>
Don’t know how to point with the index finger	35,6	20,4	32,8	11,2
Do not recognize familiar objects (fans, lights, cars ... )	35,2	22,0	32,0	10,8
Do not recognize familiar animals (chickens, pigs, dogs, cats ... )	36,4	20,4	33,6	9,6
Do not recognize body parts	35,2	17,2	36,8	10,8
Do not recognize family members	37,6	19,2	32,4	10,8

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>A little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very difficult</b>
Do not how to serve themselves (self-catering, drink, go to the toilet by themselves, change clothes by themselves, etc.)	22,8	22,4	34,4	20,4
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>33,8</b>	<b>20,3</b>	<b>33,7</b>	<b>12,3</b>

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

Table 4 showed the rate of children who were assessed at “absolutely not difficult” level accounted for about 1/3. Meanwhile, up to 33.7% and 12.3% were rated at the level of “Quite difficult” and “Very difficult” respectively. Particularly, the children “are unable to serve themselves (self-feeding, toileting, self-service, changing clothes)”, according to the results of in-depth interviews, do not have normal movement such as holding and grasping objects, can not distinguish tidiness and dirtiness, can not go to the toilet on their own. “My child’s move is very poor. At home, his grandparents do everything

for him such as feeding food, helping him wear clothes and etc. so my child rarely uses his hands he does not have an ability to grasp things, he can’t hold a pen to draw; My child can’t distinguish what’s his own and what is others, he can’t keep his stuff and constantly loses them. My child can not match words, can not write or read; He is also very afraid of pooping or going to the toilet. He can’t distinguish dirtiness and tidiness so he can’t feel bad smell so he makes his pants dirty. I teach my child a lot but I don’t understand why he can not go to the toilet normally” (A quote from in-depth interview 12, 13, 14).

**Table 5.** Cognitive difficulties in group 2

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>A little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very difficult</b>
Unable to talk the normal language	20,0	22,0	35,2	22,8
Not clear pronunciation	15,2	20,0	39,2	25,6
Speaking many nonsense sounds	16,0	23,2	38,0	22,8
Speaking very few meaningful words (1-2 single words)	20,4	26,0	36,0	17,6
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>17,9</b>	<b>22,8</b>	<b>37,1</b>	<b>22,2</b>

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

The assessment of cognitive difficulties in group 2 also showed that more than 37.1% of children rated at the level of “quite difficult” and 22.2% at the level of “very difficult”. A quote from the in-depth interview 4 illustrates this type

of difficulty: “Our child can not speak and often screams “.

#### **4.3. Behavioral difficulties**

In terms of behavioral difficulties of children with ASD there are 2 groups in Tables 6 and 7 below.

**Table 6.** Behavioral difficulties in group 1

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>Little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very difficult</b>
Being attracted to 1-2 toys (strings, sticks, leaves ...)	22,4	32,4	33,2	12,0
Often walking on tiptoes or spinning, or shaking their head, or looking at their hands	24,8	40,4	24,0	10,8
Often knocking, kicking or spinning objects around	28,4	42,4	19,6	9,6
Often smelling, tasting or licking things	41,2	32,4	20,8	5,6
Staring at a light or air conditioner, spinning fan	39,6	29,2	21,6	9,6
Often turning on and off lights continuously	39,6	29,6	19,2	11,6
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>32,7</b>	<b>34,4</b>	<b>23,1</b>	<b>9,9</b>

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

According to table 6, on average, 9.9% of children listed in group 1 had many difficulties. For example, “Only attracted to 1-2 toys (strings, sticks, leaves), “Often turning on and off lights continuously”, “Often walking on tiptoes or spinning, or shaking their heads, or looking at their hands”. The children ran, jumped a lot without a purpose, climbed, and performed behavior that disturbed other people: “My child runs a lot, he runs around the house in a circle,

*he runs from one side to the other of the house or jump continuously, once he climbed up the front door and jumped down he scared me; He is very fond of typing toys and can't do anything gently, he does everything loudly. In addition, he loves to constantly open the door which causes a headache for other people. He also often turns lights on and off and turns the fan on and off and also watches the air conditioner “ (A quote from in-depth interview 3, 7, 9).*

**Table 7.** Behavioral difficulties in group 2

	Absolutely not difficult	Little difficult	Quite difficult	Very difficult
Often biting other people or biting himself	38,8	33,2	16,4	11,6
Often laughing without a reason	37,2	32,8	20,0	10,0
Often sitting still in one place	33,2	24,8	21,2	20,8
Often wandering aimlessly	36,0	26,8	24,4	12,8
Disliking being hugged by other people	38,0	24,8	16,8	20,4
Overall average	36,6	28,5	19,8	15,1

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

Regarding behavior difficulty in group 2, the percentage of children rated at the level of “very difficult” was 15.1%, which is 6.2% higher than the rate in group 1. Behavior difficulty included “often sitting still in one place” or “disliking being hugged by other people”. The Quote from in-depth 6, 7, 9 below further demonstrated this kind of difficulty: “My child just entered grade 1 in this school year, he studied at school for about 2 hours and then came back, he still hadn't played with his friends. His teacher complained a lot, she complained that my child often walked freely in class, he did not sit still to study and took things from his friends, tore his books and others; I am most worried that he can climb over the gate and get lost because he doesn't know

*much about roads and he can't talk, if he get lost, he can't find the way back home himself. Besides, around the house, there are many fish ponds, I'm worried that he can fall down; My child's teacher is mostly afraid that he went to the yard a few times, played in the school yard, sometimes he went to the school gate, she couldn't keep her eyes on him because she was teaching, so we must have someone to watch my child at the school gate, the teacher is afraid that my child goes to school and run away without safety”.*

#### 4.4. Social communication difficulty

The assessment of mental retardation of the children with ASD also reflected that they faced the risk of withdrawal into themselves, reducing social interactions.

**Table 8.** Social communication difficulties in group 1

	Absolutely not difficult	Alittle Little difficult	Quite difficult	Very difficult
Talking nonsense	11,6	22,0	37,2	29,2
Repeating a word or phrase over and over	19,2	24,8	38,4	17,6
Mimicking other people	34,8	22,0	26,8	16,4
Whispering or speaking with a high voice	23,2	28,4	29,6	18,8
Talking alone or speaking with imagination	22,4	20,0	35,2	22,4
Unable to make a conversation	24,0	20,0	35,6	20,4
Unable to understand normal communication situations	16,4	21,2	34,8	27,6
Unable to understand figurative sense when talking with other people	15,2	14,4	33,6	36,8
Overall average	20,9	21,6	33,9	23,7

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

Regarding the above-mentioned social communication difficulties in group 1, the children encountered the most difficulty of being “unable to understand figurative meaning when talking with other people”, “Talking nonsense” and “Mimicking other people”. However, the rate of 23.7% of the children in group 1 at “very difficult level” who need to be resolved to help enhance their ability to integrate into social life “My child doesn’t know how to talk to his friends in class, how to play with his friends; his language and communication are very poor, he can only speak a few short sentences which is not enough to communicate with others, so that hinders him from going to school normally with his friends; My child loves speaking English, it is because he watches Youtube

a lot but sometimes he makes messy words because he is not sure what to say, sometimes, he speaks clearly in English like blue, red, triangle and etc, but not for normal communication to understand other people or to be understood. My child has not distinguished people yet, he needs to call a person is aunt, but just rushes out to call her as sister; Normally, he has a difficulty in playing with friends, he doesn’t know how to talk with them, or how to use the language to communicate, he does not understand what people say; in the class, the teacher teaches very slowly but my child can only understand a little. In a special class, he can play more; he uses very messy words like calling mommy as sister, and can’t distinguish a stranger with an acquaintance” (A quote from in-depth interview 4, 9, 12).

**Table 9.** Social communication difficulties in group 2

	<b>Absolutely not difficult</b>	<b>Little difficult</b>	<b>Quite difficult</b>	<b>Very difficult</b>
Like playing with older or younger friends, don't like playing with friends at the same age	28,8	29,6	30,4	11,2
Like standing close to other people	43,6	26,4	20,8	9,2
Feel scared when other people approach	32,4	28,8	20,8	18,0
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>34,9</b>	<b>28,3</b>	<b>24,0</b>	<b>12,8</b>

Source: survey results of the study, 2022

As compared with the social communication difficulties in group 1 above, the level of difficulty in social communication of group 2 is lower. Only about 12.8% of children had these symptoms at the level of “very difficult”. The following quote from parents of the children further demonstrated this kind of difficulty: “My child had difficulties in playing with friends, the child often did not know how to talk to friends”. To help children gradually adapt to the society, these are also the indicators that need attention to minimize the children’s problems.

### 5. Discussion

Theoretically, the above findings are completely similar to many different studies (Leo, 1943; IDEA, 1997; Ha and Giang, 2010). In this regard, early and active intervention activities that many studies conducted will contribute to reduce difficulties in emotional, cognitive, behavioral and emotional stability for children. But the ignorance, lack of interest or inappropriate concerns from the family will now become the main reasons why children find it is difficult or impossible to adapt to the social life

that leads to an isolated life in which they live alone in the world of their own.

In practical terms, the above findings indicated the different levels of difficulties in children’s emotional stability, cognitiveness, behavior and social communication, some children were not absolutely difficult or had some difficulties measured by the given scale, but some others were very difficult (Ministry of Health, 2015). These signs and indicators are positive information, that allow social workers to have appropriate, timely and correct interventions in the right way, identify the right level of difficulties and development of children (Uy et al., 2019).

The findings also indicated the interventions that social workers perform in helping children reduce difficulties and integrate into the society need to be diverse and various for each case. Although the rate of the children who were very difficult to do social communication was very high, interventions rely on the emotion, cognitiveness and behavior of the children in each period (Thang et al., 2022).

The study of 4 aspects including emotion, cognitiveness, behavior and social communication is practical and significant for determining the nature and intervention measures to help children integrate into the society.

## 6. Conclusion

Children with ASD often coped with many difficulties, but the main ones identified were emotion, cognitiveness, behavior and social communication. Based on the List of “children’s developmental behavioral disorders” applied at the National Children’s Hospital, children’s emotional, cognitive-behavioral and social communication difficulties were grouped according to similar indicators. Accordingly, the children met

fewer difficulties in emotional expression than in cognitiveness and behavior, but those expressions could also become a barrier to limit their ability to communicate with other people and integrate into the society. Therefore, the most common difficulty of children with ASD is social communication such as talking nonsense, being unable to talk much, unable to use or understand the meaning of a language, unable to understand common communication situations, unable to play with friends, “feeling fear when other people approach”. These indicators are the signs for children in need of supports to adapt and gradually integrate into the social life, thereby reduce the risk of being isolated by the society.

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