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Original Research Article

Some Management Solutions for Educational Change in High Schools in Vietnam

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Abstract: This paper focuses on managing change in teaching and learning activities at high schools in the North Central region of Vietnam in the context of implementing the 2018 General Education Curriculum and digital transformation. Based on theoretical analysis, field surveys, and references to national education policies, the paper proposes a system of coherent and feasible management measures. These include: strategic vision planning aligned with the local context; developing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); integrating digital transformation across the entire teaching–learning process; fostering teachers' creative capacities; establishing adaptive monitoring–feedback systems; and cultivating an organizational culture oriented toward sustainable innovation. These measures contribute to improving teaching quality, strengthening schools' internal capacity for innovation, and laying a solid foundation for sustainable development of general education in the integration era.

Keywords: Educational Management, Teaching Innovation, Digital Transformation, Professional Learning Community, Sustainable Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internationally, general education is facing demands for profound reforms to meet the challenges of the 21st century, especially in the context of globalization, the knowledge economy, and digital transformation. Change management models such as those of Fullan (2007) and Kotter (1996) emphasize the central role of teachers, learning communities, and organizational culture as decisive factors for successful reform. UNESCO (2021) also calls on education systems to move toward competency development, innovation in pedagogy, and the creation of sustainable learning environments.

In Vietnam, the reform process has been clearly shaped by Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW (2013) on fundamental and comprehensive renovation of education and training, together with the implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum. At the same time, Resolution No. 52-NQ/TW (2019) affirms digital transformation as a driving force for education. However, practical implementation in schools has revealed many difficulties: teachers' awareness and readiness for change vary, school leaders' organizational capacity is limited, facilities are not uniform, and effective monitoring–feedback mechanisms are lacking.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on several key theoretical frameworks for change management in education and organizations. First, Fullan's (2007) model of educational change emphasizes that successful reform must stem from teachers' awareness and commitment, supported by professional learning communities and enabling policies. According to Fullan, change is a long-term process requiring persistence and interaction among multiple factors: goals, content, methods, and organizational culture.

Meanwhile, Kotter (1996) proposed eight steps for managing organizational change, from creating a sense of urgency, forming a guiding coalition, and building a strategic vision to consolidating gains and embedding change into organizational culture. This framework provides a foundation for analyzing the roles of leadership and management in initiating, sustaining, and institutionalizing school change. Complementing these two models, Deming's PDCA cycle (1986) – Plan, Do, Check, Act – offers a cyclical management approach that emphasizes systematic, continuous improvement. PDCA is particularly suited to the general education context, where innovation activities must be regularly planned, implemented, monitored, and adjusted to fit practical realities. The integration of these three

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frameworks enables the study not only to identify specific reform measures but also to explain how change management unfolds as a systemic process—combining strategic vision with coordinated implementation and sustainable improvement. This is the basis for formulating six management measures for teaching–learning change in high schools in Vietnam's North Central region. International research has consistently affirmed that change management is a decisive factor in education reform. Fullan (2007, 2020) argues that school change only succeeds when teachers act as proactive agents, supported by Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) emphasize the concept of "professional capital," highlighting the development of teachers' innovative capacities as the foundation of sustainable reform. Stoll *et al*., (2006) also confirm that PLCs foster a culture of collaboration and continuous learning, thereby enhancing teaching quality. From an organizational perspective, Kotter (1996, 2014) demonstrates that effective leadership can drive change by setting strategic visions and gradually embedding reforms into sustainable culture. Later studies by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) affirm the importance of distributed leadership in managing change, granting teachers greater autonomy in innovation. Reports by OECD (2019, 2021) and UNESCO (2021) further underscore the roles of digital transformation and monitoring–feedback systems in enabling education systems to adapt more rapidly to global contexts.

In Vietnam, many studies have discussed general education reform, but most focus on curriculum content and teaching methods. Nguyễn Hữu Châu (2016) and Nguyễn Thị Bình (2019) address educational reform in the context of international integration but do not delve deeply into change management as a systemic process. Nguyễn Đức Chính (2018) and Phan Văn Kha (2018) begin to analyze the necessity of managing change in general education, emphasizing leadership and teacher communities. However, these studies remain largely theoretical or general in analysis, without large-scale surveys to validate specific measures. More recent works, such as Trần Thị Bích Liễu (2021), focus on teachers' digital competence in the context of digital transformation, while Vũ Quốc Chung (2022) proposes PDCA-based change management in high school teaching. Yet these studies remain fragmented, failing to fully integrate international frameworks or simultaneously survey both school leaders and teachers. Thus, the current research gap lies in the lack of large-scale empirical studies that both draw on international theoretical frameworks and reflect local practical realities, especially in regions with significant disparities such as the North Central area. This study therefore makes a meaningful contribution by surveying 434 participants, testing the necessity, feasibility, and practical effectiveness of six change management measures in teaching and learning, thereby providing scientific evidence and concrete policy recommendations for Vietnam's education system.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this paper is built on the combination of theoretical and empirical studies. First, the author analyzed and synthesized directive documents of the Party, the State, and the Ministry of Education and Training (Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW, Resolution No. 52-NQ/TW, and the 2018 General Education Curriculum), along with domestic and international scholarly works related to educational change management, thereby establishing the theoretical foundation for the proposed measures. Next, the paper employed empirical research methods at several high schools in the North Central region of Vietnam through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations to collect data on the current status of managing teaching–learning reforms. Statistical, comparative, and analytical methods were then applied to identify strengths, limitations, and urgent requirements. On this basis, the author proposed a system of feasible management measures oriented toward sustainable innovation, aligned with the current context.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Some Solutions

Solution 1: Strategic Vision Planning Based on Contextual Analysis Tailored to the Reality of Each High School

This solution aims to help each high school define long-term goals linked to practical realities and educational reform orientations. A strategic vision serves not only as a guiding principle for all teaching–learning activities but also as a driving force to avoid superficial or movement-driven reforms. In the context of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, which emphasizes competency-based education, a scientific vision will enable schools to organize teaching activities effectively, coherently, and sustainably. The core of this solution is to analyze both internal and external contexts in order to build a suitable vision. Key factors include teacher quality, student capacity, facilities, school traditions, educational policies, digital transformation, local labor market demands, and socio-economic characteristics. Based on this, schools should set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). The process involves: surveying – SWOT analysis – drafting – discussion – finalization – public dissemination. The participation of teachers, parents, students, and the community is a crucial condition to ensure democracy and consensus. The principal plays the role of a "change leader," guiding and monitoring implementation while making adjustments as contexts shift. Vision planning must also rely on reliable data, the legal framework of the Ministry of Education and Training, and the orientations from Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW and Resolution No. 52-NQ/TW. A strategic vision not only shapes development goals, aligning national directions with local realities, but also provides

the foundation for subsequent reforms, strengthens parent and community trust, enhances leadership credibility, and promotes sustainable school development.

Solution 2: Developing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the Process of Teaching–Learning Change at High Schools

This solution seeks to build a collaborative environment where teachers learn, support, and share experiences with one another, rather than pursuing isolated innovations. PLCs enhance teaching capacity, bridge competency gaps, spread the spirit of cooperation, and transform innovation into a sustainable collective strength. The essence of PLCs is to create opportunities for teachers to co-design and analyze lessons, exchange experiences in technology use, discuss competency-based assessment methods, or conduct group-based lesson studies. PLCs are not confined to subject groups but may extend across subjects or even schools, forming knowledge-sharing networks. In the North Central region, PLC content should be flexibly adapted, focusing on supporting teachers in disadvantaged areas and spreading initiatives from model schools. For effective implementation, the principal must define objectives, issue operational regulations, allocate time and facilities, and encourage voluntary teacher participation. PLC outcomes and innovations should be recognized and rewarded. The commitment of school leaders, facilitation skills of subject group heads, and supportive policies from education authorities are key factors for success. PLCs not only enhance professional competence and overcome isolation but also create a culture of collaboration, enabling teachers to be confident, proactive, and agents of change, thereby fostering equitable and sustainable educational quality.

Solution 3: Integrating Digital Transformation into the Entire Teaching–Learning Process

This solution aims to make digital technology a consistent driving force to improve quality, efficiency, and equity in education. The focus is on establishing a coherent process from design, implementation, assessment, to feedback, in which teachers act as "digital leaders" rather than passive recipients. This ensures proactivity, creativity, and alignment with the requirements of digital competence development under the 2018 General Education Curriculum and Resolution No. 52-NQ/TW. The core lies in integrating technology into every stage of teaching–learning. Schools may use Learning Management Systems (LMS) to design and store lessons, utilize digital resources, virtual experiments, and simulation software to enhance instruction; apply online assessment tools, adaptive learning systems, and data analytics to track student progress. Online platforms also strengthen connections among teachers, students, and parents, forming a closed digital-based cycle. Implementation requires detailed planning, sufficient technological infrastructure, and digital skills training for teachers. Principals and subject groups should encourage experimentation, share effective models, and establish monitoring and timely support mechanisms. Incentive policies are also needed to help teachers view digital transformation as an opportunity for innovation, accompanied by the engagement of parents, students, and technology enterprises. This measure modernizes education, reduces regional disparities, enhances teachers' status, and builds a creative school culture ready for integration in the 4.0 era.

Solution 4: Capacity Building for Teachers' Innovative Competence in High Schools

This solution focuses on strengthening professional competence and fostering teachers' creativity—the direct agents of educational change. In the context of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, which emphasizes the development of students' qualities and competencies, teachers need training to design active learning activities, apply technology, conduct competency-based assessments, and reflect on pedagogical practice. This is not only an immediate requirement but also builds a workforce capable of long-term adaptation to educational change in the digital era. Training content revolves around three pillars: (1) consolidating subject knowledge and curriculum understanding; (2) strengthening innovative skills such as integrated lesson design, project-based learning, differentiation, and digital technology application; (3) fostering professional attitudes, encouraging openness, readiness to experiment, and continuous learning. Suitable forms include lesson study, action research, and professional workshops oriented toward sharing and peer feedback. For implementation, schools need to collaborate with training institutions, education departments, and professional organizations to organize training courses, workshops, or online programs combining theory and practice. Resource support, incentives for teacher participation, and linking training outcomes with evaluation and career advancement are essential. This solution enables teachers to become confident and creative change agents, contributing to the formation of a new professional culture where innovation becomes the norm.

Solution 5: Establishing an Adaptive Monitoring and Feedback System for Teaching–Learning Change in High Schools

This solution aims to ensure that reforms in teaching–learning at high schools proceed in the right direction, effectively and sustainably. Unlike traditional administrative inspection, this mechanism focuses on supporting teachers in improving their expertise, adjusting shortcomings, and creating a transparent, fair environment that encourages innovation. The system consists of two components: monitoring and feedback. Monitoring occurs at multiple levels: teaching plan supervision, classroom observation, and analysis of learning data via digital platforms. Feedback flows both ways: from management to teachers, and from teachers,

students, and parents back to management. Adaptiveness lies in the ability to adjust based on real data, enabling schools to promptly address issues and avoid superficial reforms. Implementation requires schools to develop monitoring criteria aligned with the 2018 General Education Curriculum; combine observation, learning outcome analysis, surveys, and online tools. Feedback processes must be timely, specific, and practical, through seminars, professional meetings, or online forums. This solution demands that managers possess data analysis skills, modern ICT, and foster a culture of trust. When teachers feel safe receiving feedback, they become open to sharing, thereby improving teaching quality, strengthening democracy and trust, and building an organizational learning culture.

Solution 6: Building an Organizational Culture Oriented Toward Sustainable Innovation in High Schools

This solution aims to transform innovation from short-term movements into a core value of high schools, ensuring that change processes are continuous, stable, and long-term. Such a culture creates an environment where teachers, students, and school leaders share the belief that reform is essential for improving educational quality. The culture of innovation includes values, norms, and behaviors shared throughout the school, reflected in collaboration, willingness to experiment, respect for diversity, and transparency in management. At the same time, teachers' and students' initiatives are recognized and encouraged. In the North Central region, building such a culture also helps overcome exam-oriented mindsets, moving toward holistic competency development. To implement this, principals must set an example and act as "change leaders." Schools should define core values such as creativity, collaboration, and responsibility, then communicate and actualize them through activities: innovation festivals, experience-sharing forums, and teaching-method competitions. More importantly, they must maintain open feedback mechanisms that nurture trust and motivation. This solution fosters endogenous motivation, ensures the sustainability of reforms, helps schools adapt to the challenges of digital transformation and international integration, while building reputation and brand identity.

4.2. Survey Results on the Feasibility of Proposed Solutions

The survey results on the feasibility of management measures for changing teaching activities in high schools show an overall mean score of 4.34/5 with SD = 0.85. This reflects a high level of consensus among administrators and teachers, confirming that the proposed measures are not only necessary but also practically implementable. Among them, the measure *"Organizing training to foster innovative capacity for teachers"* received the highest rating (Mean = 4.60; SD = 0.81; ranked 1/5). This demonstrates that investing in teacher development is both a prerequisite and the most easily implementable step, as teachers are both the subjects and direct beneficiaries of the training process. The measure *"Integrating digital transformation into the entire teaching process, with teachers as the focal point"* ranked second (Mean = 4.54; SD = 0.82). This result indicates that teachers and administrators highly value the potential of technology in teaching. However, to implement this comprehensively, investment in infrastructure and digital skills training is still required.

Developing a professional learning community (PLC) within the school ranked third (Mean = 4.48; SD = 0.83). This reflects the high feasibility of the PLC model, especially in fostering a collaborative environment and experience-sharing among teachers. Nevertheless, its feasibility still depends on the commitment and leadership of the school administration.

Strategic vision planning based on contextual analysis received a mean score of 4.18; SD = 0.86; ranked 4/4. Although it plays an orienting role, this measure often faces challenges in implementation as it requires strategic analysis skills and consensus among multiple stakeholders.

Building an adaptive monitoring and feedback system for change achieved Mean = 4.14; SD = 0.87; ranked 5/4. This indicates moderate feasibility, but lower than other measures because many schools lack the conditions to apply digital technology to support continuous monitoring and feedback.

Finally, *"Fostering an organizational culture oriented toward sustainable innovation"* was rated the lowest with Mean = 4.09; SD = 0.89; ranked 6/4. This is also a major practical challenge, as organizational culture can only be shaped over a long period of time, requiring persistence, commitment, and consensus at all levels.

In summary, the survey results show that all six measures are highly feasible, with the top priorities being teacher innovation training and digital transformation integration. However, measures related to sustaining and institutionalizing innovation outcomes face greater challenges, reflecting the reality that building an innovation culture and adaptive monitoring systems remain weaknesses of high schools today.

V. CONCLUSION

This article analyzed the theoretical basis, surveyed practice, and proposed a system of management measures to promote innovation in teaching activities at high schools in the North-Central Vietnam region. The measures focus on strategic vision planning, developing professional learning communities, integrating digital transformation, fostering teachers' creative capacity, establishing adaptive monitoring–feedback mechanisms, and cultivating an organizational culture oriented toward sustainable innovation. These measures not only address the urgent requirements of the 2018 General Education Program and the national digital

transformation agenda but also contribute to improving teaching quality, motivating teachers, and building a democratic–transparent–collaborative educational environment. Furthermore, the proposed solutions help form long-term innovation capacity, ensuring that schools flexibly adapt to the context of integration and lay the foundation for the sustainable development of general education.

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