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Some Solutions to Reduce Educational Inequality between Males and Females in Vietnam

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Abstract

Education is given special attention by the Vietnamese government. People from all socio-economic classes are given opportunities to participate in learning. However, due to natural gender differences, and old prejudices, educational inequality between males and females still exists. This research is based on the Household Living Standards Survey Report, Statistical Yearbook, Labor and Employment Survey Report, Population Change and Family

Planning Survey Report, and other official reports of General Statistics Office of Vietnam. Analysis results show that there is still inequality in opportunities to access education, to get high-status and high-income job between males and females. Based on these analysis results, this article proposes some solutions to improve females's status and income at the same time with reduce gender education inequality in Vietnam.

Keywords: Inequality, Education, Inequality in Education, Gender, Gender Equality in Education and Training

1. Introduction

Education has a positive impact on developing personal capacity, raising awareness, and improving the material and spiritual life of the population. Females with higher levels of training knows how to organize their lives better, raises their children better, and invests more in their children's education, improves the qualifications of future generations.

Focusing on developing a fair, democratic, and civilized society, Vietnamese Government always creates conditions for all citizens to have equality in education through legal documents.

Vietnam's Education Law of 2019 states: Learning is the rights and obligations of every citizen. All citizens, regardless of ethnicity, religion, beliefs, gender, personal characteristics, family origin, social status, or economic situation, are equal in educational opportunities.

To ensure maximum rights for females, the National Assembly of Vietnam promulgated the Law on Gender Equality No. 73/2006/QH11, which clearly states: "In the case of international treaties to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a member with regulations different from the provisions of this Law, the provisions of that international treaty shall apply.

However, with females's motherhood, and old social prejudices passed down to generations from the family, inequality in access to education, inequality in high-status and high income between males and females still exists. Vietnam has implemented many solutions to increase educational opportunities for females, and has had many significant achievements. Next, there needs to be a solution to give females high-income job opportunities and high employment status corresponding to their level of training.

2. Theoretical basis

Inequality

According to sociologists, "Inequality is the disparity of opportunities or benefits for different individuals in a social group or in many social groups."

Émile Durkheim (famous French sociologist, who laid the foundation for functionalism and structuralism, and who contributed greatly to the formation of the disciplines of Sociology and Anthropology) in his work "Division of Labor in Society" (1893), argued that all societies consider some actions more important than others and that inequality involves differences in individual talents, the number of people who have more natural talent than others, and, through training, the differences will increase which leads to inequality in society.

Thus, according to Durkheim, education and training can increase or reduce inequality in society.

Education

The concept of education in Vietnam has not been defined in legal documents. There are many different concepts of education based on many different research approaches. But they all have something in common: Education is understood as the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next through teaching, training, and research.

Vietnam's Education Law of 2019 states: Education levels and training levels of the national education system include:

- a) Preschool education includes kindergarten education;
- b) General education includes primary education, lower Secondary education and upper Secondary education;
- c) Vocational education training at primary level, intermediate level, college level and other vocational training programs;
- d) Higher education provides training at university level, master's level and doctoral level.

In particular, primary education is compulsory education, lower secondary education is universal education, and upper secondary education is career-oriented education.

Inequalities in Education

From the concept of inequality and education, it can be understood that "Educational inequality is the disparity between individuals and groups of people in terms of opportunities to participate in education and benefits from education".

Educational inequality can be specified in several aspects: unfairness in ensuring opportunities to participate in education, ensuring learning rights and employment opportunities according to educational level.

Firstly, inequality of opportunities to participate in education and educational outcomes entail: Inequality in opportunities to go to school for all individuals and groups in society, inequality in conditions and environment of learning, facilities, qualifications and degrees achieved.

Secondly, inequality in the benefits of education through employment opportunities and high-income opportunities according to training level include: Opportunity to use qualifications, to find jobs suitable with training level, to get higher income...

Gender equality in education and training

According to Vietnam's Gender Equality Law No. 73/2006/QH11:

1. Gender refers to the characteristics, positions, and roles of males and females in all social relationships.
2. Gender refers to the biological characteristics of males and females.
3. Gender equality means that males and females have equal positions and roles, are given conditions and opportunities to develop their abilities for the development of the community and family, and enjoy equal benefits from the result of that development.
4. Gender stereotypes are biased and negative perceptions, attitudes and assessments about the characteristics, positions, roles and abilities of males or females.
5. Gender discrimination is the practice of limiting, excluding, not recognizing or not valuing the roles and

positions of males and females, causing inequality between males and females in all areas of social and family life.

6. Gender equality in the field of education and training:
 - Males and females are equal in terms of age for schooling, training, and fostering.
 - Males and females are equal in choosing fields of study and training.
 - Males and females are equal in accessing and enjoying policies on education, training, and professional development.
 - Female officials, civil servants, and public employees participating in training and fostering with children under thirty-six months old will be supported according to Government regulations.
 - Measures to promote gender equality in the field of education and training include:
 - + Regulating the ratio of males and females participating in study and training;
 - + Female workers in rural areas are supported with vocational training according to the provisions of law.

Indicators reflecting inequality in education

With official data published from the General Statistics Office, the article selects a number of indicators to analyze inequality in education:

Indicators reflect opportunities to participate in education and training results include: Proportion of population aged 5 years and above divided by school attendance status, proportion of out-of-school rate, completion rate, average number of years of schooling and expected number of years of schooling, spending on education and training average of 1 person attending school for 12 months, spending on education and training average of 1 person attending school for 12 months divided by expenditures, literacy rate of population aged 15 and over, proportion of population 15 years old and older divided by technical and professional level.

Indicators reflecting benefits from education through employment opportunities and income according to training level include: Structure of employed workers aged 15 and above divided by technical and professional level, the occupational structure of employed workers from 15 years of age and above, structure of employed workers aged 15 years and above divided by employment status, unemployment rate of workers in working age, underemployment rate of working-age workers, average monthly income per capita, average monthly income of working employee.

3. Research methods

Analytical data source: The article uses data from the Statistical Yearbook published annually, the results of the Vietnam Living Standards Survey conducted every two years, and the Labor and Employment Survey Report 1/7 Annually, Report on the results of the population change and family planning survey on April 1 annually, and the official results announced by the General Statistics Office. The article uses indicators that reflect opportunities to participate in education, educational outcomes, employment opportunities and income of trained workers.

Scope of research: Vietnam in the period 2012-2022.

Analysis method: Compare differences (relative or absolute) in indicators reflecting educational opportunities and

benefits between urban and rural areas in Vietnam over time.

4. Research results

4.1 Current status of educational inequality between male and female in Vietnam

4.1.1 Opportunities to participate in education and results

With the Government's attention specifically stipulated in legal documents, along with the family's investment and females's educational efforts to improve their capacity and position in life, their training level are getting higher and higher over time.

Table 1: Proportion of population aged 5 years and above divided by school attendance status and sex in the period 2016-2021

Unit: %

School attendance status	Gender	04/01/2016	04/01/2017	04/01/2018	04/01/2020	04/01/2021
Attending school	Male	23.2	23.2	23.4	24.0	24.7
	Female	21.3	21.4	21.4	22.2	22.4
	Male-Female	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.8	2.2
Dropped out of school	Male	74.1	74.2	74.2	73.8	73.2
	Female	73.6	73.6	74.3	73.9	73.9
	Male-Female	0.5	0.6	-0.1	-0.1	-0.7
Never went to school	Male	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.1
	Female	5.0	5.0	4.3	3.9	3.7
	Male-Female	-2.4	-2.4	-1.9	-1.7	-1.5

Source: Calculate from the results of population change and family planning survey April 1, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021 of the General Statistics Office

Opportunities to participate in education for males and females gradually increased in the period 2016-2021. Although males's opportunities to participate in education were still higher than female's, the gap between males and females tended to decrease over this period. This was reflected in the fact that the proportion of the population aged 5 years and older who have never attended school were always lower among males than among females during this period. This proportion in males gradually decreased from 2.7% in 2016 to 2.1% in 2021. Correspondingly, this proportion in females gradually decreased from 5.0% to 3.7%. The difference in this proportion between males and females gradually decreased from 2.4% to 1.5%.

Table 2: Out-of-school rate by educational level and by sex

Unit: %

	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
Country	1	5	22
Male	1	5	23
Female	1	5	20
Male-Female	0	0	3

Source: UNICEF Vietnam Education Summary Report in 2022

At primary and lower secondary education levels, there was no differential participating in studying between girls and boys. However, at upper secondary level, girls participated in studying more than boys. This was reflected in the rate of

out-of-school children. (Children and adolescents of specified age who are studying at an educational level but do not attend that educational level).

According to UNICEF's 2022 Vietnam education summary report, the out-of-school rate at primary level for both boys and girls were equal to 1%, and at lower secondary for both boys and girls were equal to 5%. At upper secondary, this rate for boys were 23%, for girls were 20%, the difference being 3%.

Table 3: School completion rate by sex

Unit: %

	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
Country	98	87	59
Male	98	84	51
Female	99	90	65
Male-Female	-1	-6	-14

Source: UNICEF Vietnam Education Summary Report in 2022

Females have higher learning efforts than males, which is more evident at higher levels of education. This can be seen through the school completion rate (which is the percentage of children whose age is 3-5 years older than the prescribed age of the final grade (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary) have completed that class).

According to UNICEF's Vietnam education summary report (2022), the school completion rate for boys was higher than for girls at all levels of general education, the higher the level, the greater the difference. The school completion rates for boys at all level: primary, lower secondary, upper secondary were 98%, 84%, and 51%, respectively. These rate for girls were 99%, 90%, 65% respectively. These rate for girls were 1%, 6%, and 14% higher than for boys according to educational level.

Table 4: Average number of years of schooling and expected number of years of schooling by sex

Unit: Year

	Country	Male	Female	Male-Female
Average years of schooling	9,0	9.4	8.7	0.7
Expected years of schooling	12,2	12.0	12.4	-0.4

Source: Results of the population and housing census in 2019

Females's educational opportunities were still lower than males's, but this has gradually improved over time. Along with studying efforts, participating in higher education and completing education better, females have the opportunity to achieve higher educational results than males in the future.

According to the results of the 2019 Housing Census of the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, the average number of years of schooling for females was lower than that for males, but the expected number of years of schooling for females was higher than for males.

The average number of years of schooling for males was 9.4 years, for females was 8.7 years, for males was 0.7 years higher than for females.

The expected number of years of schooling for males was 12 years, for females was 12.4 years, for females was 0.4 years higher than for males.

Table 5: Average spending on education and training per person attending school in 12 months by sex in the period 2012-2022

Unit: 1000 VND

	Year 2012	Year 2014	Year 2016	Year 2018	Year 2020	Year 2022
Country	4082	4557	5459	6623	7071	7001,5
Male	4326	4594	5337	6564	7195	6817.2
Female	3830	4520	5583	6683	6944	7614.4
Male/Female	1.13	1.02	0.96	0.98	1.04	0.90

Source: Household living standards survey by the General Statistics Office in the period 2012-2022

According to data from the Household Living Standards Survey, spending on education for females being 11% lower than for males in 2012, by 2022, spending on education for females was 12% higher than for males. However, these differences has no specific trend. In the period 2012-2022, spending on education for females compared to males were sometimes higher and sometimes lower.

Spending on education and training per person attending school per 12 months for males and females both increased gradually in the period 2012-2020. By 2022, spending for males decreased to 6817.2 thousand VND, spending for females still increased to 7614.4 thousand VND, spending for females was 12% higher than for males.

Table 6: Average expenditure on education and training per person attending school in 12 months by expenditure and by sex in 2022

Expenditure (thousand VND)	Country	Male	Female	Male/Female (%)
1. Tuition, out-of-district	2818.9	2714.4	3165.5	85.7
2. School and class contributions	557.7	560.7	548.2	102.3
3. Clothes & uniforms	361.3	350.3	397.6	88.1
4. Textbooks	436.2	438.6	428.9	102.3
5. Learning tools	318.1	315.7	326.1	96.8
6. Extra tuition costs	1159.4	1107.6	1330.4	83.3
7. Other educational expenses	1350.0	1330.0	1417.7	93.8
Total	7001.5	6817.2	7614.4	89.5
Expenditure structure (%)	Country	Male	Female	Male-Female (%)
1. Tuition, out-of-district	40.3	39.8	41.6	-1.8
2. School and class contributions	8.0	8.2	7.2	1.0
3. Clothes & uniforms	5.2	5.1	5.2	-0.1
4. Textbooks	6.2	6.4	5.6	0.8
5. Learning tools	4.5	4.6	4.3	0.3
6. Extra tuition costs	16.6	16.2	17.5	-1.2
7. Other educational expenses	19.3	19.5	18.6	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0

Source: Household Living Standards Survey of the General Statistics Office in 2022

In spending on education, the expenditure that accounts for the largest proportion for both males and females was tuition and out-of-district, followed by extra tuition cost and learning tools. In the 2021-2022 school year, spending on education for females was higher than for males in nearly all expenditures: tuition, out-of-district, clothes and uniforms, textbooks, learning tools, extra tuition costs, other education expenses. Spending on education for males was higher than for females in school and class contributions, clothes and uniforms.

Table 7: Literacy rate of the population at 15 years of aged and above by sex in the period 2012-2022

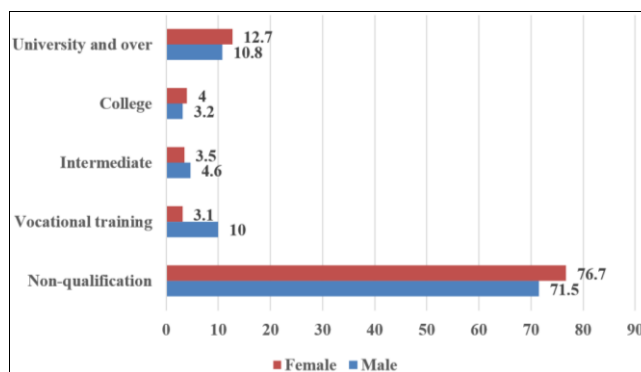
Unit: %

	Year 2012	Year 2014	Year 2016	Year 2018	Year 2020	Year 2022	Year 2022- Year 2012
Country	94.7	94.7	95	94.8	95.4	96.13	1.43
Male	96.6	96.4	96.6	96.5	96.7	97.2	0.6
Female	92.9	93.0	93.5	93.2	94.1	95.8	2.9
Male/Female	3.7	3.4	3.1	3.3	2.6	1.4	

Source: Statistic yearbook 2022

The literacy rate for males was higher than that for females during the period 2012-2022, with the trend of gradually narrowing the gap between males and females. In 2012, the literacy rate for males was 96.6%, for females it was 92.9%, the difference being 3.7%. In 2022, the literacy rate for males was 97.2%, for females it was 95.8%, the difference being 1.4%. Thus, by 2022 there was still 2.8% of males and 4.2% of females who were illiterate.

The 2019 Education Law stipulates that primary education was compulsory education, and the increasing rate of school attendance at the correct age will help increase the literacy rate of the people in the future.



Source: Results of the population change and family planning survey of the General Statistics Office on April 1, 2021

Fig 1: Structure of labour force at 15 years of age and above by qualification, and by sex on April 1, 2021 (%)

As analyzed above, girls have lower opportunities to go to school than boys. However, girls attended upper secondary at a higher rate than boys, and girls also completed general education at a higher rate than boys. This corresponds to the 2021 Population change and Family planning Survey Data, the structure of the labor force aged 15 and above for females was higher than that for males in the group non-qualifications, college and university and over. This structure of males was higher than that of females in intermediate and vocational training groups.

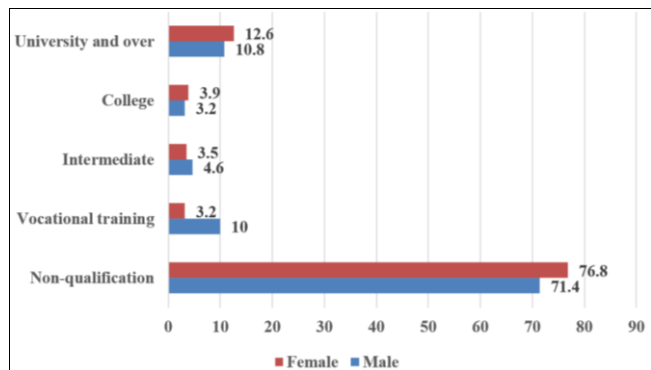
Figure 1 show that the structure of labour force at 15 years age and above non-qualifications of females accounted for 76.7%, which is 5.2% higher than that of males.

At the vocational training and intermediate level, the structure of labour force at 15 years age and above of females accounted for 3.1% and 3.5%, respectively, lower than that of males 6.9% and 1.1%, respectively.

At the college, university and higher levels, this structure of females accounted for 4% and 12.7%, respectively, higher than that of males, 0.9% and 1.9%, respectively.

4.1.2 Job and income opportunities

Males had higher employment status and higher income than females. Males often worked in occupations that require more physical strength, while women worked in service and technical fields more often than males. The unemployment rate for males was lower than that for females, the underemployment rate for males was higher than that for females.



Source: Labor and employment survey report of the General Statistics Office on April 1, 2021

Fig 2: Structure of employed workers at 15 years of age and above by qualification and by sex (%)

The structure of employed workers without technical qualifications still accounts for the highest proportion of both men and women, followed by the structure of groups with university and over, vocational training, intermediate and college degrees. This structure corresponds to the structure of the labour in Fig 1.

The proportion of employed workers among males was higher than that of females at vocational training and intermediate degrees, and lower than that of females at the others degrees.

Comparing Fig 1 and Fig 2, it can be seen that the higher the level of education, the lower the chance of getting a job for females compared to males. Females's employment opportunities were higher than males's in the group of workers non-qualification and vocational training; equal opportunities in the intermediate group; and lower than males's at the college, university and above, with the gap being greater at higher levels.

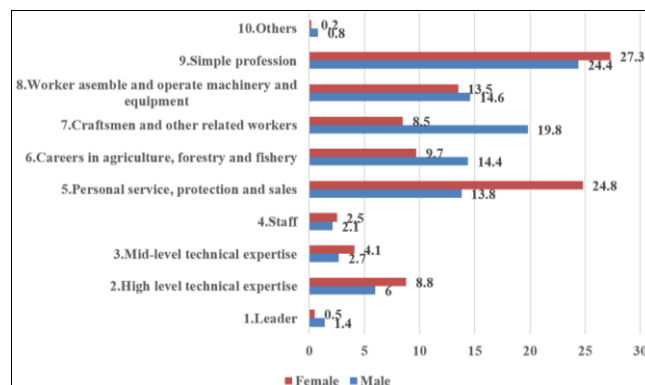
For workers without professional qualifications, the structure of female employed workers aged 15 years and above was 76.8%, 1% higher than the structure of the female labor force in this group. In contrast, for males in this qualification group, the structure of the employed workers aged 15 years and above was 71.4%, 1% lower than the structure of the labor force in this qualification group of males. It can be seen that, without technical qualifications, females have higher job opportunities than males.

The structure of male employed workers aged 15 years and above at vocational training qualification was 10%, equal to the structure of male labor force aged 15 years and above at the same qualification. While, at this qualification, the structure of female employed workers aged 15 years and above was 1% higher than the structure of female labor force aged 15 years and above. Shows that females have higher job opportunities than males at vocational training qualification.

The structure of employed workers aged 15 years and above at intermediate qualification were equal to the structure of

labor force aged 15 years and above at the same qualification for both males and females. Job opportunities for males and females were the same at intermediate qualification.

The structure of males at college, university and above qualification employed workers were equal to the structure of male labor force at the same qualification. Meanwhile, the structure of female employed workers at the same qualification were 1% and 2% lower than the structure of the female labor force at the same qualification. Thus, the opportunity to find a job for females with high professional qualifications are more difficult than for males.



Source: Labor and employment survey report of the General Statistics Office on April 1, 2021

Fig 3: Structure of employed workers aged 15 and above by occupational field and by sex (%)

Division of labor according to occupational fields in accordance with gender characteristics. Men have better physical health than women, so they work in the fields of craftsmen and other related workers, worker assemble and operate machinery and equipment, occupations in agriculture, forestry and fishery and other occupations with a higher ratio than women. Women are more meticulous and thoughtful than men, so they work in simple professions, personal services, security and sales, staff, middle-level technical expertise, and high-level technical expertise with a higher proportion than men.

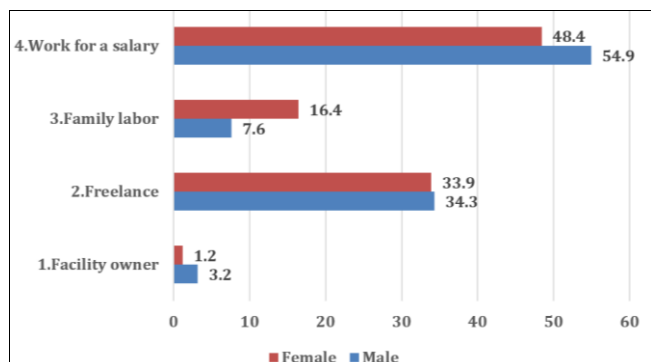
There is still inequality in enjoying the benefits of learning. Although the structure of female labor force with training qualifications at college, university and over levels is higher than the corresponding structure of training qualifications labour force of males, the structure of males who are leaders was higher than that of females.

According to the labor and employment survey report on April 1, 2021 of the General Statistics Office, the structure of employed workers aged 15 years and above working as craftsmen and other related workers was 19.8% for males, 19.8% for females, 8.5%, the difference being 11.3%; occupations in agriculture, forestry and fishery was 14.4% for males, 9.7% for females, the difference being 4.7%; Males assemblers and operators of machinery and equipment was 14.6%, females was 13.5%, the difference being 1.1%.

Structure of employed workers aged 15 years and above doing personal services, security and sales: Females 24.8%, males 13.8%, the difference being 11%; Simple profession: Females 27.3%, males 24.4%, the difference being 2.9%; High-level technical expertise was 8.8% for females, 6% for males, the difference being 2.8%; Mid-level technical

expertise was 4.1% for females, 2.7% for males, the difference being 1.4%; females staff 2.5%, males staff 2.1%, the difference being 0.4%.

The structure of employed workers aged 15 years and older as leaders was 1.4% for males, 0.5% for females, males being 0.9% higher than females.



Source: Labor and employment survey report of the General Statistics Office on April 1, 2021

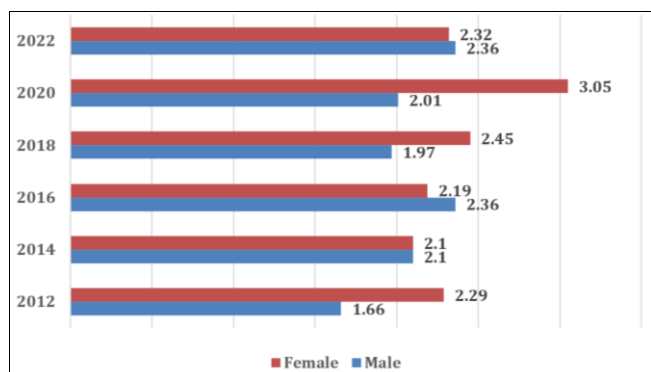
Fig 4: Structure of employed workers aged 15 and above by employment status and by sex (%)

Wage workers accounted for the highest proportion of employed workers, followed by freelance, family workers, and facility owners.

The family labor structure of females was 2 times higher than that of males. In other groups such as freelancers, salaried employees and business owners, males had a higher structure than females.

According to Labor and employment survey report on April 1, 2021, the structure of employed workers aged 15 and above of family labour was 16.4% for females, 7.6% for males, this structure of females was 8,8% higher than that of males.

The structure of male employed workers aged 15 years and above who are salaried workers, freelancers, and facility owners were 54.9%, 34.3%, 3.2% respectively, these structures of female workers were 48.4%, 33.9%, 1.2% respectively, these structures of males were 6.5%, 0.4%, 2% higher than that of females respectively.

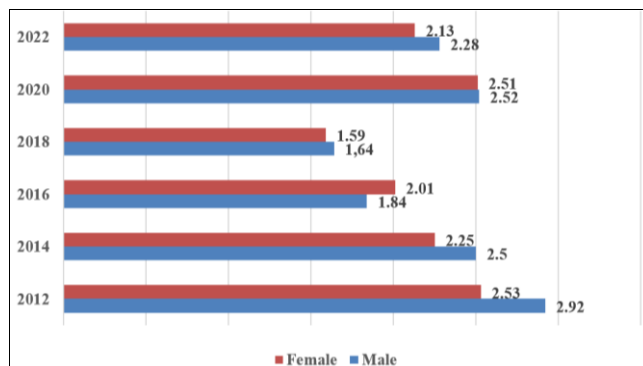


Source: Data published by the General Statistics Office

Fig 5: Unemployment rate of labour force at working age by sex in the period 2012-2022 (%)

There was no clear trend in the unemployment rate difference between males and females. During the period 2012-2020, the unemployment rate of labor force working-age for both males and females increased and decreased without a trend, these rate for females fluctuated between

2.1% and 3.0%; these rate for males fluctuated between 1.66% to 2.36%. The highest female unemployment rate was 3.05% in 2020, the year Vietnam began to be severely affected by covid-19. That same year, the unemployment rate for males was 2.01%. By 2022, the unemployment rate for females decreased to 2.32%, this rate for males increased to 2.36%.

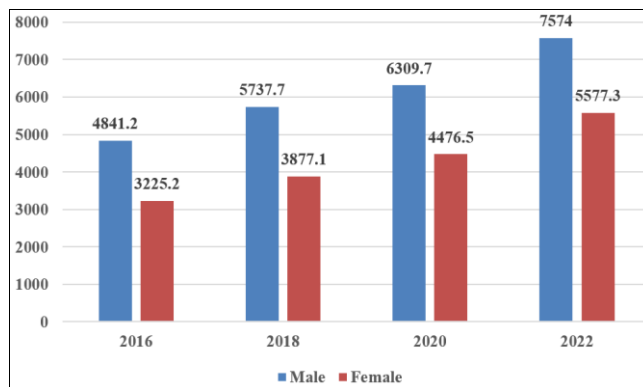


Source: Data published by the General Statistics Office

Fig 6: Underemployment rate of the labor force in working age by sex in the period 2012-2022 (%)

The underemployment rate of the labor force in working-age for both males and females gradually decreased from 2012 to 2018. In 2020, Vietnam began to be strongly affected by covid-19, the underemployment rate for both males and females increased sharply. By 2022, the underemployment rate for both males and females decreased, but remained higher than in 2018.

The underemployment rate of male labor force in working-age was always higher than that of females in the period 2012-2022, except in 2016. In 2022, this rate of males was 2.28%, this rate of females was 2.13%.



Source: Data published by the General Statistics Office

Fig 7: Average monthly income per capita at current prices by sex in the period 2012-2022 (thousand VND)

Males's income was always higher than females's and gradually reduced the difference from 50% in 2016 to 36% in 2022. In 2022, the average monthly income per capita for males was 7574 thousand VND, for females was 5577.3 thousand VND, males was 36% higher than females.

5. Continue solutions to reduce educational inequality between men and women, improve employment status and income for women in Vietnam

From the reality of inequality in opportunities to access education, opportunities to get high employment status job

and high income, the article outlines some specific solutions:

Continue to implement measures to promote gender equality in education, focusing on increasing opportunities for females to participate in learning

- There needs to be more data on the reasons for not participating in school or dropping out of school at each level of education by gender.
- There needs to be more solutions for females to participate in studying in difficult economic conditions such as: Opening online classes, free online learning for women in difficult conditions, and having solutions to support online learning for females in difficult conditions.

Increase opportunities for high-status and high-income jobs for females

- Publish additional annual survey data on labor and income of workers by gender, such as: Unemployment rates by training level and gender; income by level of training and gender to clearly see the benefits from education for females.
- Effectively implement salary payment according to job position.
- Implement more solutions to limit the reduction of fertility among educated women because they didn't want to be disadvantaged in terms of employment status and income compared to men such as:
 - + Propagate through mass media such as movies, television game shows, etc. to reduce the pressure on women to give birth, raise children and take care of the family.
 - + Increase social benefits for women during childbirth. Support for agencies and businesses that employ female workers during childbirth.

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