

■ ■ ■ Public Opinion, Statistical Data and Education from Communication Science Perspectives

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Abstract. From communication science perspectives, public opinion is formed and changed in communication process involving leaders and managers as information sender, receiver and regulator. The public opinion of statistical data and tertiary education is examined as Vietnam study cases to indicate that public opinion is a vital component of communication and a powerful instrument of problem solving for sustainable development.

Public opinion is not simply a sets of opinions of individuals, but it is a special social phenomenon reflecting the knowledge, attitude and tendency of action of social groups about rising issues in their life. According to this definition, the silence, not expressing any comment by a group of people is also a form of public opinion, reflecting a certain attitude and behavior tendency of the people.

Public opinion is an object of leadership and management and is studied for years from different scientific angles in order to clarify its every special dimensions. Therefore, to understand public opinion there is need to have an aggregated point of view not to overvalue this approach and under-look at the other. Studying a system of media theories about public opinion is very important and necessary to lead and manage media in order to create the public opinion for the safe of sustainable development.

Public represents an instrument, means to recognize, interpret and anticipate facts, phenomena in a changing human living environment. Researchers of public media very concern about studies forms of mass /public communication. Studies about communication often emphasize the role of instrument and means of modern media that have been strongly developed at the late of XIX and early XX Centuries. Since then, in the world, the studies of public opinion is closely linked to those of mass media and contribute to the development of some communication theories about public opinion¹.

Keywords: communication science, communication theory, education, media, public opinion

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THE COMMUNICATION THEORIES OF PUBLIC OPINION

The theory of “magic bullet”

This theory is also called “Hypodermic needle” theory. Several researchers such as Harold Lasswell points out a very important role of mass communication in general and its means like newspapers, radio, television in particular in the process of rising social issues in- and out country [Thibault; Nixon, Servitje]. From those studies emerging theories of communication about public opinion like magic bullet or hypodermic needle. This theory emphasizes a decisive role of media on the perception, attitude and behavior of an individual, hence considers that there may use media to make the audience and listeners to immunization to those of media of enemies. According to this theory, communication leadership and management should orient to provide true, correct, sufficient and regular information to the people to ensure they are not affected by the flows of incorrect information. However, the way of “repeated” communication may also lead to boring, ineffective, like ‘I have know it already, how so boring it is!’.

The theory of two-step flow

This theory is also called comment and remark leader theory and sociological theory of public opinion. In the middle of XX Century some researchers like Paul Lazarsfeld and others discovered that communication almost did not have any direct impact as the theory of magic bullet or hypodermic needle had but indirect impact on public opinion [Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet; Moy, Bosch]. From empirical studies of this topic the two-step theory has been formed: the first step is when the message is transmitted to a comment leader who has knowledge, reputation and power to affect others; points of view and; the second step is when the message is channeled from the leader to the other people, hence forming public opinion [Katz; Moy, Bosch]. The two-step theory of communication is also called comment and remark leader theory and sociological theory of public opinion because it emphasizes the role of social structure for the points of view of its members and opinion of social community. The empirical studies by this theory indicate that view leader is one who has had knowledge, social status in a certain community where the members are not knowledgeable, and often follow the leader’s opinion. This theory also discovered that view leaders often have stronger effect than media means because their view is channeled through personal communication, talks in a trust, flexible and non-popular manner. Thus, according to the two-step, view-

leader or sociological theory, to create and orient public official media and view-leader communication should not compete, conflict each other but support and complement. By this theory, communication leadership should not limit itself in the system of media means like the system of loud-speakers, television, newspapers, publishers, etc. There is need to form and attract view-leaders in in social communities including governmental organizations from national down to villages, wards, to nongovernmental organizations. Modern on-line and now, always media means come to exist and popular in nowadays will not reduce the use of the two step communication but it may make the two step into a social communication multi-step, multi-level model of communication a number of information centers, stations, etc. in the social network.

The theory of agenda setting

Mass media may not directly create public opinion but it is able to set an agenda for public opinion. Bernard Cohen discovered this point when he wrote a famous phrase: Newspapers may not always succeed in telling people what to think about, but it is very successful in telling them what they must think about [Cohen; Moy, Bosch]. During several last decades of the XX Century, there were hundreds studies about the agenda setting role of media for public opinion in all the areas of social life, from political to economic in- and out the country; from hard form of media such as newspapers, journals, publications, books, etc. to soft one such as Internet. However, those studies also discovered that the agenda setting role of modern mass media still much depend on many other factors like the demand, attitude and knowledge of the public; the quality of the information and the benefits are linked to the agenda. According to this theory, mass media leadership and management should pay special attention to the participation of specialists in different areas, because these specialists are capable set up agenda appropriate for orientation and adjustment of public opinion. The theory of agenda setting is popularly used and effectively in communication movements to make changes in the perception, attitude and behavior of certain target groups. This theory indicates that an issue that is formed and highlighted by the mass media that will caught the attention of the public opinion. However, this theory maybe does not help to the media determine the way the public consider, process and deal with the contents of the agenda but it just forms its scope.

The theory of priming

Public media may raise an issue to form the scope, area of an issue so that the people can discuss, but it does not suggest or orient the way they discuss, deal with every content of the agenda [Moy, Bosch]. Therefore, some studies point out that communication can not only set up an agenda by making it attractive to the public concern and attention, but it can make comments and remarks on specific issues of the agenda. Studies by the priming theory indicate that setting up an agenda always is companied by priming, suggesting and the most effective way to provide

new and continually and regularly activated messages. This theory indicates the role of leadership and management in the orientation of public opinion by encouraging provision of messages with cute, short and sensitive and attractive remarks. Advertisers may be successful practitioners in using this priming theory: they always are generous in free introducing their new, attractive products to their potential customers.

Framing theory

Studies basing on agenda setting and priming theories found out that media has had a special important impact for public opinion [Moy, Bosch]. That is the ability of framing basing on that to orient and adjust public opinion. Framing means to create principles to be shared and used by the community in determining issues, denoting and interpreting reasons, assessing outputs and suggesting the way to deal with the issue. The development and using sets of conducts, criteria, rules before discussing and making decision on a certain problem provides a clear expression of the use of framing theory of public opinion in an organization or a community at both macro and micro levels. The organizers of negotiation, bargaining are very good ones in making seemingly fair and “mutual interest” conduct rules before discussing, deciding a raised issue.

Public opinion is always a social product and at the same time a social process under a direct effect of the public media. In turn, public media becomes an object of consideration, comment, praising and criticizing of public opinion. In the past, public opinion was seen as “a huge machine” inducing daily public opinion. Nowadays, thank to 4.0 scientific and technological advancements anyone of power in approaching media internet means can become “a communicator” of an official or an un-official social network. The mass media becomes a necessary part of a true and fictional life of a human. But, that is the reason of why modern media becomes more and more a social product and process that is continually social “now and always” set up. That is, because public opinion, just now mentioned media theories have not yet concerned to clarify. Theories such as “magic bullet”, “hypodermic needle”, “two-step flow” media, “agenda-setting, priming, framing ones all emphasize different dimensions of the effects by individuals and professional media organizations on public opinion. These theories have not concerned about a back-ward effect of public opinion on public media and especially that of “mass” – amateurs communicators including anyone who can approach social media. These theories have not yet clarified the position, role and change of public opinion as a special effective instrument, means to make change in the community’s perception, attitude and behavior in general and to promote the democratization process in particular.

MECHANISMS OF PUBLIC OPINION FORMATION

The communication mechanism of public opinion formation

Communication theories of public opinion point out informing and communicating mechanism in formulating public opinion. By this mechanism, public opinion is

formulated during the process of informing, communicating from one person to another. Individuals are always in the shortage of information and hence, often demand to seek for and exchange information. When they are seeking for the information, communicating and exchanging information public opinion is formed and changed.

According to the communication theory public opinion is formed through four stages of information process. They are discovering information, approaching information, transmitting information and changing information.

The communication mechanism indicates an important role of public media means and information for the formulation of public opinion. According to it, if one does not want people to express their opinions about a certain issue the best way is not to allow informing them of that issue. In practice, not few leaders try to block information in order to prevent comments and views on a certain issue. But, this kind of conduct seems not appropriate any longer in the context of a market economy and democratization. Therefore, the best way of conducting would be open, transparent and regular provision of true, sufficient and correct information to the people so that they can understand, hence, have support in effective implementation of what to be done. The informing mechanism emphasizes the position and role of information in the formulation of public opinion. That is why, leaders and managers can and need to use media means in general and information, messages in particular for form, shape and adjust public opinion.

The mechanism of problem solving in the formulation of public opinion

The communication theories emphasize dimensions of information, communication of public opinion to provide an answer to a question of how public opinion comes to exist but not to other questions. For example, questions: why is public opinion? What do people and society need public opinion for? What are the use and role of public opinion for human life and for social development? The informing mechanism has not provided answers for these questions, neither indicated the position, role, function and especially the “mission” of public opinion?

To answer this question there is need of using the approach of functionalized theory [Yankelovich; Foote, Hart; Le Ngoc Hung]. According to functionalized theory, public opinion has had the function and “mission” of solving problems rising in the life of people. These problems are of many types such as those in political, economic, cultural areas, those in sport, recreation, environment and others. With this approach, one can see that social groups living in the similar environment, media conditions but every of them may have urgent different problems and concerns hence different public opinions.

For leaders and managers, public opinion represents an instrument, means to deal with certain issues in their job of leading, managing. For the people, public opinion is also the way they are involved in leading and managing the society in general and solving their own problems in a certain way. In short, according to the functionalism theory, public opinion has had the function of solving rising problems in the life of social groups.

The functionalism approach indicates public opinion is formulated at the stages of process of solving a problem. They are as follows: stage of discovering a problem; catching attention on the problem; discussing the problem; suggesting and choosing the way of solving the problem and implementing the way of solving the problem.

There are always many issues in a society but only those are discovered and caught the attention would create public opinion about that issue. Therefore, there are always individuals who are knowledgeable to discover issues and caught attention of other people about that issue. They often are journalists of radio, television and unofficial journalists and “face bookers”, on-liners, including all those people who can access to and use internet and use internet media means. These people are potential mass communicators because they discover issues, post up them and, at the same time, express their own comments, assessments and discuss, suggest on how to deal with those issues.

Whenever issues are discovered and caught the public attention those interesting people often express their comments, views and discuss about those issues. This kind of discussion is not simply “ideas and words” with different views and comments but also suggestions of how to solve the discussed issue. Therefore, the following stage is choosing the optimal said way to solve the problem. Choosing approach to deal with the problem may happen in conscious and unconscious manner in the form of “purified”, filtered or stratified in at least three flows of opinion in three tendencies such as “supporting”, “not supporting”, not clear” or “like”, “not like” and no answer”. The opinion about an issue will end when a decision is chosen and implemented to solve the problem. This indicates an important role of the leadership, management in general and media staffs in particular in listening to public opinion in order to choose an optimal way to settle down the problem concerned, paid attention and disputed by the public opinion. Noteworthy that in some cases the public opinion about a certain issue may temporally set down or drop down in a so-called “silence circle” not because of the issue is solved but because the issue may be difficult, sensitive to choose a way to deal with. In this case the public opinion is not disappeared itself but temporally set down in a silence and waiting for an opportunity to burn up to solve the raised problem.

The spiral silence theory contributes to explain this circumstance at individual level and at small and large group level in different time and space frames [Noelle-Neumann]. For example, there are issues but not all people concern about, express their comments, some people listen to, wait but not make any clear comments, choosing appropriate way and time to express their points of view. In this case public opinion is defined as “comment is spoken out but not punished”. People will not make comments if they anticipate that their comments may be punished. This explains why in an authorized society, public opinion make become in forms that may not be punished such as anecdotes, poems, tales, legends, etc. or unknown information pieces.

This is also to explain why some issues are raised by the public opinion for years and even for decades and stand by for being solved completely and in accordance to the law.

The mechanism of an issue solving clearly indicates that public opinion has had the function of settling down psychological disorder caused by the issue and at the same

time the function of orientation, adjustment and suggestion of and support the way to solve the issue. The mechanism of an issue solving also indicates that public opinion contributes to motivate the solving an issue that leaders and managers should “see and hears on their own” to grasp the public opinion and in fact to understand the issue and choose an appropriately optimal way to deal with it basing on the contribution of the people.

Using an issue solving mechanism on the people’ is an appropriate of leaders and managers in the spirit of democratization. In the context of nowadays information technological revolution and democracy, there is need to combine two theories of media approaches and functionalism in dealing with public opinion as an object and also as an instrument, means in solving problems raised in a modern social life.

In short, media theories and informing mechanism indicate important position and role of media, information for the formulation of public opinion. Media mechanism answers the question of how public opinion is formulated. However this mechanism hardly answer why public opinion appears and disappears. The functionalism theory and issue solving mechanism provide an answer that public opinion appears when an issue rises to be settled down and it certainly disappears whenever that issue is solved. The combination of both theoretical approach and mechanism suggests directions and measures to improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management. That is, one needs to know how to use modern media means to provide qualitative information and quantitative data, such as correct, full and on-time statistical information about necessary issues raised for the formulation of public opinion about a certain issue. Through the formulation and understanding the public opinion one can choose and realize optimal solutions provided by the society. Thus, public opinion is formed and changes together with the process of solving problem basing on the information, facts including statistical information supplied in different forms and through different canals, media means and public/mass media.

STATIASTICAL DATA AND PUBLIC OPINION

Characteristics of statistical data users

In nowadays society, statistical information/data tends to become a necessary part in public communication in particular and in human life in general. Decisions increasingly depend on evidences including statistical data from different sources with very important those officially collected, processed and provided by state organizations through the mass media. This is very popular in market economies, but in Vietnam it is still new. This may be because the legislation on public opinion and statistical data is issued and becomes effective lately. Such as, the Law on Information technology was promulgated in 2006, the Law on Statistics was issued in 2015 and the Law on people’s ideas became effective in 2015, and the Law on information approach in 2016.

In 2017 the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and The Statistics Office (GSO) announced the report of output of the Consensus on the demand and the

level of satisfaction of statistical data users. According to this report¹, 13170 people replied questionnaires of them 9,325 males accounting for 70.8% and 3,845 females accounting for 29.2%. This sex structure may not represent Vietnam's population rather balanced sex structure. Regarding age, the respondents under 36 years old accounts for 23.1%; from 36-50 age accounts for 46.2% and over 50 age accounts for 30.7%. Regarding occupation, state officials, servants and employees account for 70%, rather high. This occupation structure of statistical information users does not represent that of people working in the national economy of Vietnam presently, where the group of state officials (leaders and managers) accounts just for 1% and people working in state areas account for 10% and the total wage-workers account for one third. However, the output of this sampling survey may help in understanding some characteristics and features of public opinion of the statistical data users in Vietnam nowadays. Hence, it can suggest some measures to improve quality and effectiveness of statistical work, communicating statistical data and users in orienting public opinion supporting socio-economic renewal in Vietnam.

Tab. 1. The number and percentage of respondents by occupation and the rate of using statistical data, 2017

Occupation	Number	Percentage, %	Rate of using statistical information
State officials, servants, employees	9248	70.2	94.6
Businessmen, investors	1541	11.7	52.2
Researchers, teachers, students, pupils	1532	11.6	60.4
Journalists	595	4.6	87.6
Others	254	1.9	
Total	13170	100	84.7

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. *The outputs of a consensus on the demand and satisfaction of statistical information users in 2017*. Statistical Publishing House. Hanoi. December 2017.

Out of 15.3% “not use” statistical data, more than 36% said that the reasons are of not using are “do not know about statistical data”, about 30%: “using other sources”, more than 15%: “cannot access the source” and only 1%: “not believe in this statistical data source”. For job position, 391 are leaders, managers of ministries,

¹ Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the Statistics Office (GSO). The output of the Consensus on the demand and the level of satisfaction of statistical information users in. Hanoi. December 2017. This is a sampling survey of 13,200 people of them 13,150 were face-to-face interviewed and 50 people were indirectly surveyed. In total, 13,170 fulfilled questionnaires collected back and the rate of replying was of 99.8%, of which 13,150 face-to-face interviewed making 100% and an indirect survey of 20 questionnaires (40%) was done on foreign embassies and international organizations basing in Vietnam.

central organizations, provinces, cities accounting for 3% of the total respondents; 2,800 are leaders and managers of departments of ministries, provinces, institutes and account for 21%; 672 are leaders and managers of district levels, accounting for 5,1%; 3,869 are leaders and managers of divisions, offices, accounting for 29.4%; 1,534 are leaders and managers of enterprises, 11,6%; 20 are employees and staffs of embassies and international organizations basing in Vietnam (0.1%) and 3,884 work in different positions, accounting for 29.5%.

Tab. 2. The number and percentage of respondents by employment status and the rate of using statistical data, 2017

Job position	Number	Percentage, %	Rate of using statistical information
Leaders of ministries, central organizations, provinces, cities	391	3.0	99.5
Leaders of departments, institutes	2800	21.3	96.6
Leaders at district level	672	5.1	99.4
Leaders of divisions	3869	29.4	93.4
Leaders/managers of enterprises	1537	11.6	52.3
Staffs of embassies and International organizations	3904	29.6	76.0
Total	13170	100	84.7

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

Products of statistical data

Statistical office provides 5 types of major products including “yearbook” that is mostly known, more than 91%; the number of people who know about “socio-economic situation analysis publication” accounts only for 52%.

Tab. 3. Percentage of respondents “knowing” statistical products, 2013-2017

	2013	2017
Monthly socio-economic situation report	64,5	72,9
Yearbook	88,9	91,2
Socio-economic situation analysis publications of years	41,5	52,4
Outputs of statistical surveys	80,1	82,8
Website of GSO	64,6	73,3

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid. Note: among forms of media, the “website” is “the most like” with 73% in 2017, increased about 20% as compared to 51.9% in 2008.

The objective of statistical data use

Regarding the objective of statistical data use: out of 11,126 respondents 10,914 accounting for 59.6% said that their objective of data use is for the designing strategies,

plans and macro analysis and evaluation; The rate of those who use statistical data for researches, teaching is 31.5%; for development of companies' households' business strategies and plans is 12.5% and; for other purposes is of 22.1%.

The assessment of statistical data

Regarding the level of easy access, even though the GSO has had a Website (<https://www.gso.gov.vn>) where there is a page of "statistical data" and "statistical publication", but only 31% of the number of surveyed said they "easily access data", 60.5% access relatively easily and 6.6% find it difficult in accessing and about 2% answered "don't know".

Regarding the level of fairness in media, only one-fourth (26%) of the total number of 10,926 people saw the information provision is "fair" and this rate is not much different among occupation groups.

Tab. 4. The number and percentage of respondents assessing the level of fairness in providing statistical data, 2017

	Number	Fair	Relatively fair	Not fair	Not know
All	10926	26.0	59.9	6.3	7.8
State officials, servants, employees	8590	26.2	61.1	6.1	6.6
Businessmen, investors	778	28.4	56.2	4.5	10.9
Journalists	507	23.3	57.4	6.5	12.8
Researchers, teachers, students, pupils	914	24.2	54.5	9.4	11.9
Others	137	29.2	48.2	3.6	19.0

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

Regarding the level of openness in the development and supplying statistical data: only 63.5% of 10,860 respondents "know" the process of statistics development and the schedule of publicizing the state statistics as it is provided in the Statistical Law. But, 36.5% of the remaining people "do not know" about this provision. This can be explained that the Law on Statistics was promulgated just in November of 2015 and became effective on the 1 of July 2016 and it may require the statistical sector to use the "magic bullet" approach to improve the effectiveness of the media about the Law on Statistics and information.

Regarding the level of the importance of the openness in media, only 47.5% of 10,860 surveyed people provides the assessment of "the openness of statistical data publication" as "very important"; 49.9% said "important", 2'3% "less important" and 0.3%: "not important".

Regarding the use of statistical data, 40.6% of the total 11,080 people assessing "the data is very useful", 56%: "useful" and only 3.4% said it is "less useful" or "not useful". Thus, less than a half of the total number of surveyed people consider the

statistical data is “very useful”. This also relates to the “on-time” of data provision: only about 18% of respondents said the data is provided “on time”, about 70% consider “relatively on-time” and more than 12%: “not on-time”. Today on-line information technology era requires statistical information provision “very on-time”, even “right and regular” anywhere.

Tab. 5. The number and percentage of respondents assessing the level of statistical data provision on-time, 2017

	Number	Very on-time	Relatively on-time	Not on-time
All	10.934	17.9	69.7	12.4
Leaders of ministries, provinces	387	17.1	70.8	12.1
Leaders of departments, institutes	2.672	15.0	73.8	11.2
Leaders of district levels	665	25.2	67.7	7.1
Leaders of divisions	3.558	17.9	69.4	12.7
Leaders of enterprises	763	17.8	68.6	13.6
Staffs of embassies, international organizations	18	22.2	61.1	16.7
Others	2.871	19.1	67.0	13.9

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

Regarding the sufficiency of statistical data, about 22% of total 10941 respondents assessing data is “sufficient”, 69%: “relatively sufficient” and over 9% consider it “not sufficient”. Though the assessment of the sufficiency is relative from the user point of view, but only one-fifth respondents assessing statistical data are “sufficient”, indicating that this is a big challenge for the statistical sector.

Tab. 6. The number and percentage of people assessing the level of sufficiency of statistical data, 2017

	Number	Sufficient	Relatively sufficient	Not sufficient
All	10.941	21.6	69.0	9.4
Leaders of ministries, provinces	388	17.0	73.2	9.8
Leaders of departments, institutes	2.669	19.3	72.3	8.4
Leaders of district levels	668	27.8	65.3	6.9
Leaders enterprises	3.550	22.4	68.2	9.4
Staffs of embassies, international organizations	770	20.8	66.7	12.5
Leaders of divisions	19	15.8	78.9	5.3
Others	2.877	22.1	67.9	10.0

Source: The ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

Regarding the level of trust, only 37.4% of total 10,950 people consider statistical data “trust” and the rest “relatively trust, less and not trust. More than 41% of leaders of district see statistical data “trust” as the highest and the rate of staffs of embassies and international organizations comes the last, 12%.

Tab. 7. The percentage of respondents assessing the level of trust of statistical data, 2017

	Number	Trust	Relatively trust	Less trust	Not trust
All	10.950	37.4	58.6	3.6	0.4
Leaders of ministries, provinces	385	33.5	63.4	2.8	0.3
Leaders of departments, institutes	2.681	35.6	60.8	3.3	0.3
Leaders of district level	663	41.3	56.6	2.0	0.1
Leaders of divisions	3.557	38.2	58.0	3.3	0.5
Leaders enterprises	772	29.9	63.5	5.4	1.2
Staffs of embassies, international organizations	17	11.8	82.3	5.9	0.0
Others	2.875	39.8	55.7	4.1	0.4

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

The level of satisfaction

Regarding the level of satisfaction with statistical data, out of 10,928 surveyed people only 37.5% of the respondents are satisfied with the provision and publicizing statistical data by the statistical sector, 57.2% of them are relatively satisfied and 5.3% of them are not satisfied (this rate was 8.2% in 2013).

Tab. 8. The percentage of respondents with levels of satisfaction of statistical data in 2013–2015

	2013	2017
Satisfied	31.5	37.5
Relatively satisfied	60.3	57.2
Not satisfied	8.2	5.3
Total	100	100

Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

Regarding the desire of using statistical data in the coming time

The public opinion about statistical data always includes the tendency of action specifically expressed in the want to use statistical data in the future. Only about 14% in the total of 11,791 respondents indicate that in the future they want to use statistical data in raw form, primary one, and the rest, about 79% want to use it in forms of tabulated data and analytical report with tables of data. The group of businessmen

and investors make the lowest rate, 7%, wanting to use the raw data, about a half as compared to the rate of other occupation groups.

Tab. 9. The number and percentage of respondents desiring to use statistical data in form of data base, 2017

	Number	Raw data, primary data	Summing up and tabulated data	Analyzed data with interpretation and tables
Total	11.791	13.6	69.0	71.1
State officials, servants, employees	8.892	14.0	71.5	72.0
Businessmen, investors	1.041	6.9	65.6	68.1
Journalists	540	13.5	38.5	82.0
Researchers, teachers, students, pupils	1.133	16.4	66.9	62.8
Others	185	16.8	65.9	67.6

Source: Source: The Ministry of Planning and Investment – The General Statistical Office. Ibid.

PUBLIC OPINION AND STATISTICAL DATA ON EDUCATION

A hypothesis of this paper is to provide a scientific evidence including statistical data to form, orient and adjust public opinion in order to contribute to create agreement, support sustainable and renewal development. There may do a case study of public opinion with the statistical data of education to clarify this hypothesis. The public opinion criticizes quantitative development neglecting qualitative development in university education. A thorough analysis of statistical data of university education indicates that such public opinion is not correct that needs appropriate adjustment.

Tab. 10. The total population and several selective criteria of tertiary education, 2010–2017

	2010	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total population	86947,4	90728,9	91709,8	92692,2	93671,6
Number of schools	188	219	223	235	235
Total number of teachers	50951	65664	69591	72792	74987
Post-graduate teachers	30637	48077	54644	60164	65460
Total number of students	1435,9	1824,3	1753,2	1767,9	1695,9
The number of graduates	187,4	353,9	352,8	305,6	319,5

Source: The General Statistical Office. *Statistical Yearbook 2017*. Statistical Publishing House. Hanoi 2018

The statistical data of university education in 2017 seems to support the flow of popular public opinion continuing from the late of 1990s to now, where the Vietnam

education and training has been too expanding with quantitative rather than qualitative focus. This is said to result in the serious situation of “redundancy in teachers and shortage of workers”. At first sight, the statistical data on tertiary education such as the total number of students, the graduates show the tendency of increasing. For example, the total number of students of Vietnam increased by 18% from 1.4 million people in 2010 up to 1.7 million in 2017 and the number of the graduates increased by 70% from 187.4 thousand people to 319.5 thousand accordingly. However, a careful examination of those data in the bellow table can discover some new findings that may make dramatic changes in the above mentioned public opinion. That is, while the total population of the country has been continually increasing by 1% annually from 2010 to 2017, tertiary education indicators slowly increased and reached the peak in 2014 and after that continually decreased to 2017. For example, the total number of students reached the highest of 1.8 million people in 2014 and down to 1.7 million people in 2017. Similarly, the total number of graduates reached the peak of about 354 thousand persons and downed to about 320 thousand in 2017. Since 2014, the first time in the history of tertiary education, universities have to compete with each other in enrolling, that is, they have been worrying about the shortage of students. Before they worried about redundancy of students and tried to limit the applicants. In the past, potential students had to seek for university admission opportunities. However, since 2014, on the contrary, universities have started to find way to compete for students. But, the public opinion did not discover this change in tertiary education system. With this new things, the public opinion neither aware about another big change that recently, the number of schools, the total number of teachers and the number of post-educated teachers have been continually increased. This means, the quality of university education is now clearly increasing, not so as the public opinion has been criticizing so far, that university education concerns only about the quantity, while neglecting the quality.

The public opinion in Vietnam so far has been considering that there are now too many highly qualified people working as teachers and too few people to be workers in Vietnam, and, the ideal structure of the labor force would be 1 university graduate: 4 technicians: 10 workers. Our rapid surveys by using questionnaires done on thousands leaders and managers indicate that most of respondents estimated the ratio of over 55% of young people going to universities (actually, statistics says only over 20%). This may be a reason of why many people including leaders, managers and researchers having opinions that Vietnam is in the shortage of workers and redundancy of teachers. This lead to false statement that Vietnam needs to improve the quality rather than open more opportunities for university education. Thus, not only the public opinion but also the opinion of the most of leaders and managers consider that Vietnam has had “too many teachers and too few workers”. However, this is a type of public opinion and comments maybe not adequate for the sustainable development of a country under renovation that requires to rapidly increase the number of tertiary education and the number of people with technical training. Statistical data supports the view of rapid increase the indicators of tertiary education: that is, out of about 54 million

employed people in Vietnam, the rate of those with university education increased by 1.5 times, from 5.7% in 2010 to 9.3% in 2017, but this rate is very likely not to meet the requirement of speeding up the industrialization, modernization of the country, especially in the context of the forth industrial revolution. The rate of working people with technical, vocational training and college education slowly increases from 8.9% to 11.7%. By 2017, the technical, professional structure of the employed working people above age of 15 years old is 1 university holder has 1.2 technician and 8.5 unskilled workers. This analyzed statistics can help to orient and adjust incorrect public opinion about Vietnam's situation of "redundant teachers and shortage of workers" to that of "shortage of both teachers and skilled workers". This new public opinion based on statistical data must expand to both leaders and managers of all sectors and levels. The new public opinion should become policy decisions of more investment in tertiary education in particular and education, from pre-school to university education in general, in order to rapidly increase the rate of working people with technically educated and university education levels. This is to accelerate Vietnam rapidly move from the stage of slow development basing on simple labor force to the that of highly qualified working force, with most of them having post- upper- secondary education and more of them having university education level.

Tab. 11. Total number of employed working labor of age over 15 year-old by trained qualification levels, 2010 – 2017

	2010	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total number of people (thousand people)	49048.5	52744.5	52840.0	53302.8	53703.4
All (1+2+3)	100	100	100	100	100
1. With no technical education	85.4	81.7	80.1	79.4	79.0
2. Technical level	8.9	10.7	11.4	11.6	11.7
- Vocational training	3.8	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.3
- Professional secondary school	3.4	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.7
- College	1.7	2.1	2.5	2.7	2.7
3. University and over	5.7	7.6	8.5	9.0	9.3

Source: The General Statistical Office. *Statistical Yearbook 2017*. The Statistical Publishing House. Hanoi 2018

In summary, public opinion represents a special social phenomenon studied from different theoretical perspectives including mass media communication theories, functionalism and problem solving theories. In the context of democratization, public opinion depends much on open, transparent communication of information including the official statistical data. With the tendency of socio-economic renewal, the media of statistical data will continue to improve its quality and the way it communicates in order to meet an increasing demand and at the same time the satisfaction of the users. The statistical data on tertiary education may help to orient and adjust the old

public opinion of redundant teachers, shortage workers to anew public opinion flow that Vietnam is now in the shortage of both teachers and workers. Therefore, there is the need to support decisions on more investment on education, especially tertiary education in order to rapidly increase the rate of working people with tertiary education. The approach of media theory emphasizes that leaders and managers should provide and use correct, transparent information including statistical data in orienting, adjusting and form public opinion supporting the renewal and restructuring of socio-economic for the sustainable development in Vietnam.

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■ ■ ■ Общественное мнение, статистические данные и образование с позиций коммуникативной науки (коммуникологии)

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Аннотация. С точки зрения коммуникологии, общественное мнение формируется и изменяется в процессе коммуникации с участием лидеров и менеджеров в качестве отправителя, получателя и регулятора информации. Общественное мнение, сложившееся в отношении высшего образования рассматривается на примере проведенного во Вьетнаме исследования, результаты которого наглядно демонстрируют: общественное мнение является жизненно важным компонентом коммуникации и мощным инструментом решения проблем для устойчивого развития.

Общественное мнение – это не просто набор мнений отдельных людей, а особый социальный феномен, отражающий знания, отношение и склонность социальных групп к решению возникающих в их жизни проблем. Согласно этому определению, молчание, не выражающее каких-либо комментариев группы людей, также является формой общественного мнения, отражающего определенное отношение и склонность людей к поведению.

Общественное мнение является объектом лидерства и управления и изучается годами с разных научных точек зрения, чтобы прояснить все его специфические аспекты. Поэтому, чтобы понять общественное мнение, необходимо иметь агрегированную точку зрения, чтобы не переоценивать этот подход и недооценивать другой.

Ключевые слова: наука о коммуникации, теория коммуникации, образование, медиа, общественное мнение

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