

Research on Geographical Education in Vietnam Journals Within The 10-Year Period (2010 - 2019)

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Abstract

Geographical education is a term that is not commonly used in research on Educational Science in Vietnam. Instead, researchers often refer to concepts such as Geography teaching or Geography lecturing. Geographical education is defined as the amalgam of two academic fields: Geography and Education (Gerber, 1996). Studies of geographical education published in journals over the past 10 years reflect the development of this field in my country. The objective of this study is to give an outline of research on geographical education in Vietnam between 2010 and 2019. The search for research articles uses Grounded Theory and is carried out in three phases. This research has contributed to the establishment of the geographical education definition in order to form a conceptual framework for the studies on the same field in Vietnam. More importantly, it generalizes prominent trends in the research on geographical education during the 10-year period as a basis for research strategy planning for the following phases. These results play an important role in improving education strategy in Vietnam from 2018.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam promulgated Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW on “fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education, serving industrialization and modernization in a socialist-oriented market economy during international integration”. In which, the following was emphasized: "Keep making dramatic and comprehensive changes in fundamental elements of education towards valuing learners' capacity and personal qualities, including education programs, education contents, teaching and assessing methods (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam 2013). The aforementioned orientations have created the backbone of research aimed at innovating education and teaching over the past decade. Geography teaching and learning at high schools and gifted schools are not out of this trend. From the facts mentioned above, the article's role is to consider the researched issues, the fields that have been approached to have an overview of Geographical education research, especially the trend. Discussion about the research direction in the next stage is questioned, thus contributing to the implementation of the 2018 Geographical education program officially issued by the Ministry of Education and Training in the new general education program.

Geographical education is a very important field. It equips future generations with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to take care of and make a reasonable decision for this planet. Geographically educated citizens understand human relationships and their responsibilities to the natural environment and other environments. Geographical education helps people learn to exist in harmony with all species on the planet (The International Geographical Union 2016). Geographical Education gives students a critical analysis of their own world and its vital outcome is the worldwide understanding. But to have a worldwide understanding, students are required to have valuable knowledge of what is fundamentally used to make any decisions about human's surroundings in both the near and long term (Kasimov et al. 2005). Therefore, research on geographical education in the current context is very necessary. A great way to teach Geography to different learners is always a big concern and that involves current significant studies. IGU encourages policymakers and geography educators to develop competence to conduct both theoretical and applied research. On the other hand, “Geographical education is neglected in some parts of the world, and lacks structure and support in others” (The International Geographical Union 2016). David Lambert in research: "Geographical education research and why it matters" said that: Geographical education is a specialized field of research with specific conditions. This is an important but limited area of research and researchers need to focus more on important issues (Lambert 2010).

According to S. Bednarz, geographical education is not just Geography, but is about geography teaching, learning, thinking, and related educational and cognitive processes. Geographical education is a field of study, to define which one must consider the two academic fields it relates to, namely geography and education. In which, geographical research studies about the complex and interrelated surface of the Earth - the area that humans live in. Education is divided into three separate areas. The first one includes research on learning and building a theoretical understanding of the learning/teaching/educational process. The second one concerns the study of teacher training, the process of preparing and building a knowledge base for teachers. The third one improves practice in the classroom, in management, or the development of policy related to education.

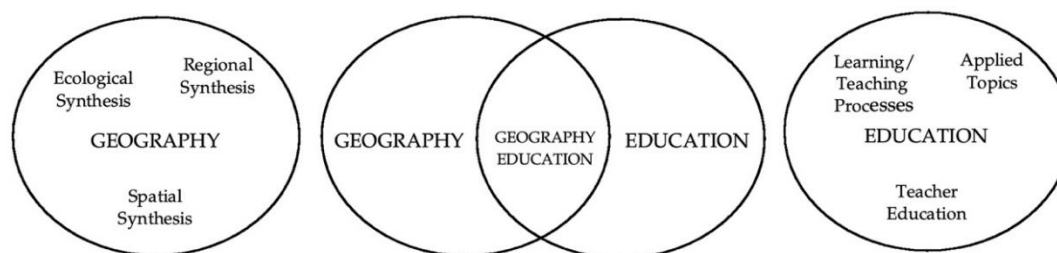


Figure 1. Geographical Education defined as an overlap between Geography and Education
Source: Sarah Bednarz, 2010 (S. Bednarz 2000)

Geographical education research is where research on geography and education "intersect" (Figure 1). Imagine geography and education as two overlapping turntables. Duplication can occur in any research topic pursued by either academic fields. If an overlap occurs between learning theory and geography, the study will address fundamental questions such as: "What is geography learning? What is the nature of geographic knowledge? What skills help improve geography learning?" If an overlap occurs between learning theory and one of the systematic properties of geography, the study will focus more on questions such as: "How do students learn to think about relationships between humans and the environment?". If geography intersects with teacher training, research can find out how teachers acquire pedagogical content knowledge to teach and the ability to explain concepts and teach geographical skills. If geography intersects with the third sub-domain of education, the topics of application, research will involve the application of what is considered "best practice" in geography (S. Bednarz 2000). Geographical Education Research in the *Journal of Geography* 1988-1997 by Sarah Bednarz generalizes the changes in the scope and the methodology of Geographical education through publications in journals from 1988 to 1997. This study also provides a clear conception of Geographical education as an independent research field (S. Bednarz 2000). The authors use and improve the approach points, research methods, methods of classifying studies on geographical education and clear views on geographical education in this research as the foundation of the methodology for research on geographical education in Vietnam. Geographical education: national policies and standards, Susan M. Heffron points out: Internationally, national policies and standards on geographical education are reflected in many areas, implementation and evaluation processes. The case studies here are Australia, the United States, the Netherlands, the Philippines and the UK to get an overview of geographical education policies and standards in the world. (Heffron 2016). "A road map for 21st-century geographical education" reviews current trends in education research that geography educators can use to build synergies, capacity, and linkages with a vibrant research domain. There are different points about the research in the past two decades: especially rich in three areas (how people learn, how they learn in particular disciplines, how to translate these research findings into curricular standards and guidelines for instructional materials and for improving classroom practice (S. W. Bednarz, Heffron, and Huynh 2013, P.26); Current research in geographical education is often small scale, short-term, piecemeal, and underfunded ("Research in geographical education"); all Geography educators collaborate and care about international comparative perspectives (Solem and Boehm 2018, 191-192); Geography education community requires a wider range of orientations to research (Firth and Morgan 2010). The research by Seo and Kim, 2012 introduce the current status of geographical education research in South Korea. It consists of mainly two parts: Source of knowledge and Content of knowledge in geographical education research. The main academic journals are introduced as sources of knowledge. The research trends in these journals are discussed as the content of knowledge. They classified geographical education research into three types based on the framework suggested by

Bednarz (2000): Nature of geographic knowledge, learning, and curriculum; Teacher education in geography; And strategies in the geography classroom. Relevant research regarding each category is introduced (Seo and Kim 2012). In Portugal, Maria Esteves briefly presents the role of Geography Education in the Portuguese school system and the curricular reform of 2001 (changes in the contents and methodology of Geography taught at schools), which was accompanied by important research: teachers coping with the educational reform; the contribution of Geography Education to Environmental Education and Citizenship Education (2012). The paper “What Kind of Geography Education Research is there?” seeks to encourage geography teachers to read GER by describing what kinds of GER are available to them, what kinds of improvements in geographical education there are. It found that making research-based instructional decisions can be time-consuming so not many teachers prioritise reading research and the use of published research in improving geography instruction. GER is mostly concerned with issues related to curriculum development and spatial thinking but has not comprehensively evaluated the efficacy of different instructional approaches and teachers may need to search beyond GER (Josef Tan 2019). The inequity in academic publishing in geography because of the increasing use of metrics as a measure of research quality is highlighted in “A perspective on problems and prospects for academic publishing in Geography”. The author examines patterns in the ranking of geographical journals in major global databases and compares them with the database of the International Geographical Union to find the shortcomings: inter alia, linguistic bias, the lack of representation of books and chapters in books, the geographical unevenness of accredited journals, problems of multi-authorship, the mismatch between ranking and social usefulness and alternative or critical thinking,... and the hegemony of the global commercial publishing houses (Meadows, Dietz, and Vandermotten 2016). The article “Geographical education: outcomes, trends and challenges about geography didactics” provides relevant elements for the renewal process of teaching geography as well as presents work and progress in research on teaching geography: meetings of researchers, book production, systematization of educational experiences, higher education programs, development of meetings and events. This contributes to the reflection of geographical education, especially to think of other possibilities to understand the geographical space and their education at different school levels with a view to building an academic community to promote and propose alternatives in geographical education (Lache 2011). In all European Union countries that have harmonized attitudes on the improvement of the quality geographic of education, innovation can't be completed without quality professional and personal development of teacher's geography. The article “Renewal, modernization and supplement professional knowledge and skills acquired in the framework of the initial of geographical education” determines the extent to which geographical teachers use geographical education research in their courses and which barriers prevent them from using the results of geographical education research in the Serbian classroom environment. The results showed: 26% of teachers subscribe to academic journals; 62.4 % of them just follow the publications; more than 87.6 % of respondents believe that the use of geographical education research improves learning, students' motivation and quality of courses; almost half of the respondents do not think that it is necessary due to time and excessive class sizes. Geographical education research is a multidimensional concept and cannot be easily estimated, solutions should be sought in a multimodal approach (Rajović and Bulatović 2017).

Research on geographical education in Vietnamese journals for 10 years (2010 - 2019) applies the approaches and methodologies of the above studies to build theoretical bases and research methods. They include the concept and structure of geographical education, the research classification of geographical education and the research trends in this field around the world, some countries, and regions. This research seeks to answer the questions: What are the research trends in geographical education over the past decade? Which trend attracts a lot of attention? Which journals do the studies focus on? How is there a relationship between studies of geographical education in

universities and high schools? This study does not aim at assessing the quality of the publications, but to generalize trends in geographical education research in Vietnam within a decade from the beginning of the fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education through statistical and classification.

METHODS

The search for articles in journals and yearbooks uses the Grounded Theory method and is done in 3 steps. This method involves making the author's subjective decision based on interpretation of the selection and classification of articles according to different criteria (S. Bednarz 2000).

Step 1. Select studies on geographical education

Based on the conceptual framework of geographical education that was established earlier to find relevant articles within the 10-year period. The articles on geographical education research are selected and classified. An article is considered a study if it has the following characteristics:

The theoretical overview is mentioned in the article. This criterion is reviewed through the overview, research history (if any) or a cited list of documents.

The description of the research methods used in the paper. This criterion is considered through the Research method presented (if any), or deducing from the content, method of conduct and research results.

The value of the research shown in the usefulness and new knowledge. What value does that research have in terms of theory as well as practice? What is its novelty compared to previous studies?

Step 2. Categorize research on geographical education

At the end of step one, 416 studies were selected. These articles are classified by topics based on the main content of that study. The establishment of classification criteria is based entirely on the content of accessible studies, based on reference to the classification of S. Bednarz et al., 2010 (S. Bednarz 2000). The whole research can be divided into two large areas: The studies of the training of geography teachers; Studies of geographical education in general education. These two areas are divided into 3 research groups: i) Strategies and methods of teaching geography, ii) Geographic thinking and learning, iii) Geographical education process organization. In addition, the author relies on the scientific journal list approved by the Vietnam State Professors Council to classify publications according to the scores achieved by the journal. (Vietnamese State Council of Professors 2019)

Step 3. Generalize into research trends

This step outlines the general trends of studies within the same group/category as proposed in step 2.

This research only builds the category to classify the articles, not to evaluate their content, meaning, and quality, nor to assess the appropriateness of the research method. The main purpose is to develop an overview of geographical education research in Vietnam between 2010 and 2019.

The authors use Microsoft office Excel to key primary data for the statistics and classification of research articles. Next, using SPSS software to analyze data at the level of frequency statistics, cross-school tables, Independent Sample T-test to analyze some research trends on geographical education and the relationship between them. Using the statistical results analyzed by SPSS charted

by Microsoft office Excel to generalize research trends. This study uses a growth formula to calculate the increase in the number of studies over the past 10 years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview of research trends of research on geographical education

- **Strategies and methods of teaching geography.** This category includes studies that combine geography and education, which is the application of teaching and educational methods in Geography. These are practical studies, from which proposing strategies and solutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Such studies are mostly the result of applying an opinion, method or strategy to a particular teaching or educational context. These studies often use empirical research method. Articles are often helpful and instructive, but systematically lacking links to previous research in the same field. There are even overlapped studies that are not cited or referenced with each other.

- **Applying the viewpoints of teaching and education to geographical education** such as integrated teaching, differentiated instruction, interactive teaching, teaching from the perspective of competency development, education for sustainable development. In which, integrated issues in teaching and geographical education include: environmental education, climate change response, disaster risk prevention and mitigation, national sovereignty, islands, real estate, career guidance, living values, global citizenship, local geography...

- **Applying teaching methods and techniques to Geography:** project-based learning method, group discussion method, active teaching techniques, using mind maps, hands-on method, modelling method, organizing presentations, problem-based learning method, STEM; specific methods for Geography such as survey, geographic table and exhibition... The number of studies on the application of general teaching methods and techniques and Geography dominates compared with studies on specific methods of Geography

- **Methods of using geographic means:** General geographic means, visual channels in geography teaching, using maps, charts, pictures, diagrams, data tables, diagrams - maps...

- **Application of ICT in geography teaching:** applying software to create maps for teaching, Webgis, Webquest, social network applications, online learning on web platforms, photo editing software...

- **Assessment in geography teaching:** Innovating assessment according to competency orientation, assessment methods and tools, designing assessment questions, tests, cognitive problems in assessment...

- **Geographical thinking and learning.** Studies in this category focus on geographic thinking and learning processes, combining learning theory and geography. Geographic thinking: Territorial thinking and geographic questioning, spatial thinking, geographic symbol and concept formation, geographically specific capabilities; students' self-study ability; geographic learning attitude...

- **Geographical education process organization.** Articles in this category study geographical education as a system. They include program description, analysis of the role of geography in the education system, geography textbooks, the status of some geography teacher training issues, geography teacher training, application of foreign experience in geographical education ... Many of these studies describe and explain the form and process of different geographical education problems. Many research methods are used, but these studies are rarely experimental or presented only empirically. Apply geography curriculum and textbooks.

2. Results discussion

2.1. In terms of publication and publication address of geographical education studies

- *The tendency to publish research focuses more on geographical education in high schools.* The number of articles on geographical education in universities, colleges and vocational schools is only 1/3 (119/297 articles). The statistical difference shows that the study of geographical education in high school attracts more attention from researchers than in university (table 1).

Table 1. The number and rate of studies on geographical education at tertiary level compared to studies on geographical education in high schools

Levels	Frequency	PercentValid	PercentCumulative
University	119	28.6	28.6
High school	297	71.4	100.0
Total	416	100.0	100.0

- *National geographic conferences and journals with scores of 0.5 and 0.75 attracted many researchers and lecturers to publish the results.* National Geographic Conference is an annual forum for those who work in Geography and geographical education, so the number of articles published is very large and concentrated. At the 0.5 points, there are 236 publications, accounting for 56.7% of the total number of statistical articles (including articles in the National Geographic Conference). There are 85 articles, accounting for 20.4%, published in journals with a score of 0.75, mainly Educational Journal and Ho Chi Minh City University of Education – Science of Journal (table 2).

Table 2. Number and proportion of articles by scored journals and National Geography Conference

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Journal names
No score	31	7.5	Journal of Science Hue Education University (58,1%), Journal of Science & Education (41,9%)
0,25	17	4.1	Journal of Teaching and learning today (47,1%), Journal of Science Dong Thap University (5,9%), Journal of Science Tay Bac University (11,8%), Journal of Science Ha Noi Metropolitan University (11,8%), Journal of Science of Thu Dau Mot University (23,5%)
0,5	236	56.7	Journal of VietNam Social Science (11,9%), Journal of Science Vinh University (1,3%), Scientific Journal of Saigon University (1,7%), Can Tho University Journal of Science (3%), TNU Journal of Science and Technology (2,1%), Journal of Science and Technology-The University of Danang (3,8%), National Geographical Conference VII, IX, X, XI (68,2%), Journal of Education Management (0,4%), Journal Educational Equipment (7,2%), Journal of Science Ha Noi 2 nd Education University (0,4%)
0,75	85	20.4	Journal of Education (76,5%), Journal of Science Ho Chi Minh City University of Education (23,5%)
1	47	11.3	HNUE Journal of Science (63,8%), Journal of Science Viet Nam Education (36,2%)
Total	416	100.0	

- *The number of published studies on geographical education tends to increase in the 10-year period, from 2010 to 2019.* The increase and decrease rate are not equal year by year, but the average increase rate is 21%/ year. This data proves the fact that more and more Geography lecturers and teachers are

interested in publishing their research results. The number also increased in all 3 groups of research fields: Strategies and methods of teaching geography, Geographic thinking and learning, Geographical education process organization (table 3).

Table 3. Number and proportion of articles classified by three trend groups in the period 2010 - 2019

Year	Total number of articles	Split into groups (Quantity (%))		
		Strategies and methods of teaching geography	Geographic thinking and learning	Organize the geographical education process
2010	13	8 (61,5)	1 (7,7)	4 (30,8)
2011	19	16 (84,2)	3 (15,8)	0 (0)
2012	18	15 (83,3)	1 (5,6)	2 (11,1)
2013	25	21 (84)	0 (0)	4 (16)
2014	65	54 (83,1)	4 (6,2)	7 (10,7)
2015	32	27 (84,4)	2 (6,3)	3 (9,3)
2016	68	58 (85,3)	4 (5,9)	6 (8,8)
2017	31	28 (90,3)	2 (6,5)	1 (3,2)
2018	75	66 (88)	6 (8)	3 (4)
2019	70	52 (74,3)	7 (10)	11(15,7)
Total	416	345 (82,9)	30 (7,2)	41 (9,9)

2.2. About the content trend of geographical education studies

- The published studies focus mainly on the group Strategies and methods of teaching geography. There are 345 articles in this field, accounting for 82,9%; meanwhile, Geographic thinking and learning and Geographical education process organization account for a negligible proportion, 7,2%. and 9,9% of the total number of statistical articles respectively (table 3). This trend reflects the approach in educational innovation and teaching from the perspective of impacting on the subject (the teacher) and then towards the learners, instead of looking from the perspective of learners to change their educational process and self-education. When changed to competence development-oriented education, that will create a new trend to enrich the research field of learning and geographic thinking.

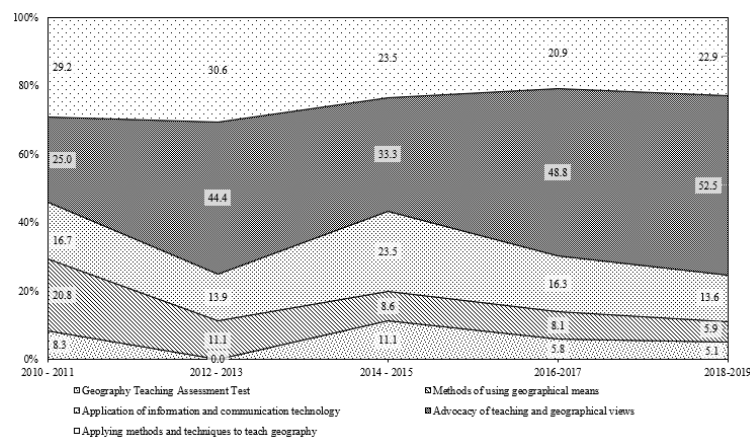


Figure 1. The proportion of articles classified into 5 groups belongs to the field of Strategy and teaching methods

There are differences in research activities between the smaller research areas. In the group of Strategy and teaching methods. Research trends Applying teaching points to teaching geography accounts for nearly half of the publications (50%); increasing steadily from 2010 to 2019. Following that, the trend of Applying teaching methods and techniques to geography teaching contributes about 20% of the total publication and is not stable over the years. The studies in the evaluation research trend are insignificant (6.4% of the total number of studies over a 10-year period) and increase slowly.

- Research trends in geographical education are driven by changes in educational strategies and macro teaching. Each short period of 3 to 5 years initiates a trend of innovating teaching and educating methods, which is followed by research on the concretization of these trends into teaching subjects and specific educational activities. The number of studies on applying integrated teaching in Geography increased rapidly from 2014 to 2019; the number of research on competence development-oriented teaching in recent years has increased sharply when basic orientations of the general education program have been formed (Table 4). This result reflects the dominance of research in applied pedagogical sciences, one of the positive and necessary changes for the implementation of the new program. However, it also creates a lack of in-depth and systematic structural studies of geographical education.

Table 4. Number of articles on two topics: integration and capacity development teaching

Year	Integration			Capacity development		
	total	In which		total	In which	
		University	High School		University	High School
2010	0	0	0	2	1	1
2011	2	2	0	1	1	0
2012	0	0	0	1	0	1
2013	0	0	0	3	3	0
2014	2	0	2	10	5	5
2015	3	0	3	11	5	6
2016	9	1	8	11	6	5
2017	6	1	5	5	2	3
2018	10	2	8	14	6	8
2019	12	3	9	16	5	11
Total	44	9	35	74	34	40

2.3. About the relationship between research trends in Geography teacher training and geographical education in high schools

There is a fundamental similarity between the research trend of geography teacher training and geographical education in high schools. The variation in the number of publications and the rates among study groups was similar. The total number of articles in the three research trends increased. The publications in the Strategy and method of teaching geography trend account for the majority, 77.3% in university and 84.8% in high school, respectively (Table 5). When performing independent sample T-test analysis between 3 research trends, including Strategies and methods of teaching geography; Learning and geographical thinking; Organizing the process of geographical education classified according to the university and high school from 2010 to 2019, the Sig index at Levene's Test for Equality of Variances reached 0.000 below 0.05. This result shows the variance of the two subjects, which are different research trends in geographic education at tertiary and general education. Examine the Sig index of the T-test test, the two populations have a value greater than

0.001 with significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. Thus, there is no difference in research trends in geographic education between university and high school (table 6).

As for the research content, the 119 articles counted reflect the fact that research in training Geography student teachers towards the goal of creating qualified Geography teachers to meet practical requirements in high school. During the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, most research has a touch of the major changes in the general education strategy, typically the tendency of teaching towards competence development (Table 5).

Table 5. Number and proportion of articles classified by 3 research trends comparing university and general education in the period 2010 - 2019

	Split into groups					
	Strategies and methods of teaching geography		Geographic thinking and learning		Organize the geographical education process	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
University	92	77.3%	10	8.4%	17	14.3%
High School	252	84.8%	21	7.1%	24	8.1%

Table 6. Analysis of Independent Samples T-test three research trends by university and general education in the period 2010 – 2019

		Independent Samples Test	
		Research trends in geographic education	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	14.267	
	Sig.	0.000	
T-test for Equality of Means	t	2.021	1.846
	df	414	182.738
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.044	0.067
	Mean Difference	0.137	0.137
	Std. Error Difference	0.068	0.074
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	0.004
		Upper	-0.009
			0.271
			0.284

However, the research in teacher training in this respect is still "one step ahead", which shows the leading and proactive role of training institutions, not "following the popular" as some previous subjective comments. Most research focuses on strategies and methods to develop teaching competencies for Geography Teacher Education students. From the list of publications, the authors found that: there are not many structural systematic studies that go into the nature of the Geography teacher, the training program of Geography teachers, or a model, theoretical framework for teacher training in the innovative context. Figuratively speaking, these studies are "colors of an abstract picture being sketched but no one has seen the whole of that picture". Therefore, it is necessary to have studies to connect and systematize the diverse fields that researchers have done. The authors will generalize these trends in a study on Geography teacher training.

Besides, the research on teacher training plan for the implementation of the 2018 general education program has opened a new trend in the geographical education research. These are the studies of programs, methods and strategies to improve the professional and professional capacities of teachers in regular career fostering. The number of publications accounts for 31.7% of the total number of articles in the Organizing geographical education process trend and 3.1% of the total number of publications. The publications in this trend have increased since 2015 when the reforming process general education began in Vietnam.

CONCLUSION

On the statistical basis of publications in geographic journals and conferences, with the Grounded Theory method, the authors have generalized research trends on geographical education in Vietnam within the 10-year period; previously applying the studies of some foreign authors to establish the concept of geographical education as a conceptual framework for this study. The results show that: research on geographical education in our country in recent years is quite vast in quantity and diverse in topics. These topics focus on the applied pedagogical scientific research trend in order to apply innovative directions and new methods to geographical education; research and innovate teacher training in accordance with and respond to research trends in general education. This research makes an important contribution to geographical education in Vietnam. The generalized 10-year geographical education research trends will provide geographic educators with visionary directions for the publication of their studies. This indicates that it is necessary to add more research in important areas but also limit the publications, further development of fundamental research trends. On that basis, promoting the development of geographical education in Vietnam, especially in the period of reforming the General Education Program from 2018.

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