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Equality in Online Education during COVID-19: Challenging the Educational Needs of Ethnic Minority Students in Vietnam

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1. Title, Authors, and Publication Details

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- **Publication:** The Law, State and Telecommunications Review, v. 14, no. 1, p. 31-51, May 2022.

2. Research Questions/Objectives

- Analyze the inequalities faced by ethnic minority students in adapting to online education in Vietnam during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identify the challenges this poses to the Vietnamese education system.

3. Methodology Used

- Case study conducted in a cross-sectional form.
- Participants: 50 high school students and 10 teachers from a boarding ethnic minority school in Nam Po district, Dien Bien province, Vietnam.
- Data Collection: Questionnaires and group discussions with students, teachers, and school administrators.
- Periodic educational tests were used to compare online and in-person learning outcomes.

4. Key Findings and Results

- Lack of devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones) and poor internet infrastructure are major barriers to effective online learning for ethnic minority students.
- Geographical location and economic conditions significantly impact students' online learning experiences.
- Students' academic performance decreased by 7% compared to in-person learning.
- Students reported difficulties with internet connectivity, using online learning systems, grasping subject content, and interacting with faculty.

5. Main Conclusions and Implications

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in access to education for ethnic minority students in Vietnam.
- Effective financial policies are needed to provide connectivity and devices to poor students, bridging the gap in access to online education.
- The Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam needs to consider the indigenous cultural factors of ethnic minorities, and natural and economic conditions to design programs to reduce the appropriate volume of knowledge.
- Upgrading IT infrastructure, building digital learning resources, training teachers, and improving students' self-awareness and networking skills are crucial for effective online education in ethnic minority areas.

6. Limitations Mentioned in the Paper

- The study was conducted only at one ethnic school in Dien Bien province, a mountainous region of Vietnam.
- The study primarily used qualitative data collected through feedback from students, teachers, school administrators, and education professionals.
- The results may not fully reflect the situation and causes of inequality among ethnic minority students.