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## Research Article

# HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM - REQUIREMENTS FOR BASIC AND COMPREHENSIVE INNOVATION WITH THE MULTI-PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

Vietnam education in general and higher education in particular is seen as the central issue in economic – social development strategies from all periods. Especially, the requirements of the industrialization, modernization and international integration, the development of education is the most important decision to the strategy for building and developing the human resource, especially the high quality human resources. However, in the last few years, the current situation on the inadequacies and limitations in higher education has posed many problems to be overcome and resolved. This article presents an objective necessity for the renewal of university education; the reality situation of the Vietnam education nowadays; the advantages and limitations as well as the inadequacies of the state higher education training, from which the authors offer some solutions to contribute for improving the quality of higher education to meet the requirements of public service industrialization, modernization and international integration.

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## INTRODUCTION

The 8<sup>th</sup> Resolution of the Central Executive Board XI (Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW pp.27) which content was the basic and comprehensive Innovation in education and training to meet the requirements of industrialization and modernization - modernization in conditions of socialist-oriented market economy and international integration.

This Revolution stated that: "For the higher education, focusing on resources human training process high, fostering talents, developing the capabilities and qualities for self-study, self-knowledge, creativity of learners. Improving the network of higher education and career training system corresponding with the national human resources development plans which include some schools reaching to regional and internationally level. Diversifying the training system according to the need of technologies development in all sectors, to the need of the construction, defense and integration of the country". This is Resolution is comprehensive and fiercely in the direction of the Communist Party of Vietnam in education in general and higher education in particular to meet the requirements of the international integration period.

According to the data from the Vietnam General Statistics Office in 2013, in total, there are 427 universities and colleges in Vietnam are: 427 cases including 343 public schools and 84 private schools Vietnam General Statistics Office, Statistical

Yearbook, 2013 Publisher of Statistics, tr.670. And the question here is: 427 universities and colleges with 90 million people in Vietnam more or less? Counting with the population of Vietnam, the number of colleges and universities in our country is not really much. Currently, China has more than 4,000 universities and colleges with the 1.3 billion people; the United States with 4495 universities and colleges of 314 million people; Singapore has about 68 universities and colleges over 3 million people (including foreign institutions operating in the territory of Singapore, the international affiliate schools, training institutes bachelor's degree and postgraduate school) ... However, this comparison purposes only outlined by the level and scale of the universities and colleges in our country which cannot be compared with the level, the quality and the scale in education and training of these countries. But, while noting these numbers our aim is to have an objective and comprehensive perspective of the situation.

### *The real current situation of higher education Vietnam*

The number of universities and colleges increased: in 2005 there were 227 universities and colleges; 2010 increased to 414 and in 2013 rose to 427. The number of teachers increased rapidly; in 2005 there were 48.6 thousand teachers, 2010 increased 84.1 thousand teachers and 90.6 thousand in 2013. Accordingly the number of students trained each year also increased rapidly. In 2005 the quantity of student in total is

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1387.1 thousands, in 2012 increased to 2178.6 thousands. Vietnam General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook, 2013 Publisher of Statistics, tr.670. These numbers represented the level increased rapidly of universities and colleges, of teachers and students of the last years. Besides the number of students trained increasing, the quality of education have also been enhanced, education infrastructure system has been gradually improved. The Central Resolution No. 8/ XI asserted: facilities, educational materials, training significantly improved and modernized gradually. The quantity of pupils and students increased rapidly, especially in higher education and vocational education. The quality of education and training has progress. The force of teachers and education managers is growing in both quantity and quality, with the structure more and more reasonable. The budget expenditure on education and training reached 20% of the total state budget expenditure. The socialization of education is to be promoted; the contribution of non-public sector in education and training has been developed in the whole country. The management of education and training has also progress.

However, the quality and efficiency of education and training is still low in comparison with the social requirements, particularly in higher education and vocational education. The education and training system has the lack of correlation between different levels and modes for example the heavy of theory and light of practice. Training has the lack of correlation with scientific research, manufacturing, business and the needs of the labor market; have not paid proper attention to moral, lifestyle and work skills. The methods, implementing, testing and evaluating of the education is still modest and impractical. Higher education has been not effective, practical, especially the training associated with the use still low, the number of unemployment students after graduation has been increased in recent year because the rampant training situation.

Management education and training force is still weak. Teachers and education managers shortcomings in quality, quantity and structure; the competence of one part has not been met the demand of the innovation and development in education, lack of enthusiasm, even in violation of professional ethics.

The investment in education and training is not effective. The policies and financing mechanisms for education and training is not appropriate. Technical facilities have been lacking and outdated.

#### ***Some current problems of Vietnam higher education***

Firstly, the educational reform has not brought a radical innovation and comprehensive follow its own right. Specifically, after independence in 1945 to now, our country has carried out three times on the education reform in 1950, 1956, 1979, and is conducting ongoing education reform since 1986 to date. However, the reform and renewal of education in our country mainly focuses only reform school level, lack of coordinated solutions and especially not tied to reality, we have to stop too long at a Catholic background focuses on providing training and expertise (Nguyen Quang Giao, 2009). Not hard to realize this, the university, postgraduate training programs are dense specific knowledge. With the amount of new

knowledge is produced continuously growing and updated on the program, the overload is irreparable, if not will increasingly aggravated. The largest university in Vietnam was built in two resistance wars against the French and American and some schools were built after the liberation, the model for the organization under specialized university system had to meet great demand for manpower planning economy in the past. However, maintained severe theoretical models of university training are revealed gaps before development needs of the country in the context of market. Many schools are developing in an interdisciplinary. Limitations of the specialized schools (monophyletic) also in that limited research and teaching towards interdisciplinary and very lack of complementary between basic research and applied research. This is the restriction between training and using if we don't want to talk that it will form "the wall" between training and social demand.

Secondly, the higher education system is also closed, the teaching problem in the books, in the manual. Just talking about the teachers, the professional work is well, but the practical problems and real funding are limited. This is maybe due to the objective conditions of actual outlays on the field still limited, the policy may also be due to the mechanism, particularly in the higher education system we have not focused on collaborative links with institutions, companies, enterprises and government agencies and also by the subjective themselves of the teachers. This also means the training tasks themselves contained the barriers between teaching theoretical and the practice.

#### ***Evaluation students' capacity problem***

To serve the educational goals, equipped with expertise, classification systems core courses, electives are also conducting a simple style, not open direction. That means memorizing something, remembering something, to grasping something will "return" to the hands of the students without applying in to the practice. Consequences of this problem are that graduate students are very good in theory, but very unfamiliar with the work. So many firms must take one or two years to retrain their new employees.

This different phenomenon in our education system which leads us to treat well, try to connect the training and the need of labor market.

Thirdly, a major drawback of higher education in our country is far from social needs and the reality. Most of the current training program is what the school and the teachers impose for students, rather than the social need. There is an important cause that is in our country for a long time, supplying and demanding of higher education seriously imbalanced. Students trained but not be used or have do the jobs that was not the major studied in the university International Conference, 2012.

Fourthly, there exists an alarming problem, even danger that is the trend of pursue the diploma in the community. Just going to school and obtained a degree certificate for easier job and the worse, if the more little learning, even not learning but also have the certificate is better. With that thought, a lot of people try any trick to get a diploma. Many educators are worried when our society having a lot of trained people, high diploma but their competence and ability are really worse. This

phenomenon has a lot of causes, but the principal root is from the limitations and weaknesses of the education and training system, from the foundation and source of higher education. This fact guides us to have a comprehensive, objective and rigorous thought.

In countries where the education system development (we are talking here is to aim of bringing in practice) we can easily recognize two problems: first, the university training system is very professional with the clear and practical strategies, plans. Second, the product of training process is expressed by practical capacity, working capacity and efficiency. So, if the training institutions, the students trained that is lack of competence, practice will automatically be eliminated from the community. This is the rigor of the training process and use the resources human with high efficiency which Vietnam education system needs to learn and perform.

Fifthly, higher education is still lacking, weak and poor in facilities, equipment in teaching, especially in modern and advanced technology of training equipment. For students capturing, accessing and being familiar in the learning process with modern technology, modern facilities are indispensable requirements. However, this is the common situation in almost of universities in Vietnam today.

In addition, the foster policy for teachers is still not satisfactory. Their salary is very little that their live and their family are not enough. Despite these years, the Party and State have invested great effort in education, the annual expenditure on education accounted for 20% of the total State budget expenditure. This figure is quite high in comparison with the expenditure of many countries, including Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia... but it was also very low. This limited resource is not reasonable in using cause of fragmented, scattered and inefficient investment which is not said to be loss of resources for the waste in big projects. This situation lasted for a long time is also the cause of the limitations of Vietnam education in general and higher education in particular.

#### ***The necessary to renew the higher education system in Vietnam***

These existences, limitations are crucial requirements for us to renew the higher education and training system in basic and comprehensive way:

Firstly, to promote the strengths of human resources of Vietnam almost in the working age, the students, the intelligentsia, while overcoming the limitations and shortcomings in higher education in our country in the past years. It is the existence in the training strategy and methods. Secondly, due to the development economic and society requirements in the new period, especially the requirements of the transition model of development of our country's economy from extensive to intensive economic, restructuring the economy towards the high quality, efficiency, competing with advanced countries in the world. The high quality of human resources will be the key factor to accomplish these objectives. Our Party has identified: development closely linked to the development of human resources and the application of science, technology, education and training is one of three breakthroughs to make our country become the industry country towards modernization in 2020, creating a firm basis

for further development at a next stage. We can tell that the fundamental, comprehensive innovation in education and training is one of the most important factors determining the success of industrialization, modernization and implementation of the goal of "rich people, strong country, democratic, fair and civilized".

Thirdly, the achievements in socio-economic development in our country recent years pose big demand for human resources in particular, high-quality human resources is a "threat" about the scarcity, many industries require skilled, high-tech human but we must hire foreign experts in the condition that we have enormous of human resources. This is a big problem for many years that we have to solve.

Fourthly, in the process of globalization, international integration more and more deep, intrinsic competitiveness between countries is now competing on quality human resources. Therefore, education reform in general and higher education reform in particular is an inevitable trend globally. Any countries that don't innovate or educational reform will be lagged, be lost the competitiveness in the international arena and beyond be left behind. Many countries already conduct reforms towards a modern education. Vietnam education also requires sinewy innovation with the aim to have enough of resources to implement the integration process.

The main reasons given suggest that our country must carry out fundamental, comprehensive innovation for university education system.

#### ***Some solutions for high education innovation and reform in the new era***

Firstly, well management the education system in general and higher education in particular with the quality and level of investment. 20% of the annual investment budget for education is a big effort of the Party and State. However, the effect is not really commensurate especially in higher education - a necessary task to better empower the country development requirements. So, where are the reasons? Cause of limited investment or the lack of strict management, or methods not appropriate? We can affirm the expenditure of 20% to an industry is not small number of an developing economy, but this spread investment, lack of strict management is the cause of low efficiency in education in general and higher education in particular.

Secondly, socialization of higher education by increasing the competitiveness of the training and education institutions can reduce the "burden" of state investment. This has mobilized social investment in the education and improve the initiative of students, linking their sense of learning to "economic responsibility", while reducing the expenditure of government. A small calculation, the average cost of a student at Public University is 560,000 VND / month, non-public is 2.395.980 VND / month, accounting for 97% or 122% (depending on the public / non-public university), the income per capita of low-income family groups, and accounted for 38.5% or 58.6% of the average income group. So the "difference" amount of each student between public and non-public state and the state pays every year for 1786,9 thousand students from the public system, the state must pay the amount calculated formula 2.395.980 VND per month except for 560,000 VND per month

multiplied by 1786.9 thousand students is a too big number (Nguyen Ngoc Anh, 2012). It is not including the investment in infrastructure, equipment and funds for training teachers ... but some students are trained have to seek their jobs after graduating by themselves. This is a clear situation like previous period our free in pedagogical training and many preferential policies, but after graduating some students don't work pedagogy sector.

Thirdly, we have to change in a fundamental way in evaluation system from test to assess knowledge capacity. In this process, the capacity assessment to understand and absorb what they have learned creatively. Tightening the output management, competency assessments, applying what they were learned and trained on environmental upcoming. With this way we are opposed to advanced education in the world when we have excessive attention on the stage of entrance and output slightly. This phenomenon leads to lots of students entering university but don't focus on learning but still eligible to graduate. There is also the cause of the low quality of higher education in Vietnam. Fourthly, the training construction should have output standard. Standard output here is to compare with the objective reality and requirements of the society, rather than not "standard" but self-regulation by the school as many training institutions are doing. Thus, we have to understand that output standard meet the needs of the labor demand of society. Higher education and professional training where train and provide the human resources for society. The diversity requirements on the type and quality of labor shall determine the type and stratification of the training institutions. Besides the high quality requirements of leading institutions, there exist moderate requirements of the smaller institutions. For example, a small business wants to have an accounting having university degree is certainly no need to engineer from leading schools of economics. Thus, universities must be affordable to train this kind of manpower. This is the basic logic to have a layered look for higher education. In this sense, the unanimously shouted "high quality" slogan is a voluntarism, unrealistic and inconsistent with the reality.

Fifthly, the standardization in higher education level, considering this is an important basis for evaluating the capacity of students. Previously, several prestigious universities, high quality training, but the training in Masters and PhD level has to reevaluate because they also enroll from input and output institutions. Many establishments recruit by the highest diploma but not pay attention in basic training as a university degree. So that, there are many highly educated labor but the quality is not very good.

Sixthly, to be able to conduct a fundamental renewal of higher education, the solution must be comprehensive and inclusive. First of all is the renovation of mechanisms and policies, the management mode, the implementation measures. In the current difficult situation of the country, the increasing budget for education and training policies is not the most important policy but the resources distribution policy must be effective. In this process, the focused and efficient investment is the priority. Beside the mechanisms of financial policies, other innovative mechanisms and policies related to higher education, such as the investment policy for non-public

systems and policies to attract abroad schools, oversea training cooperation.

## CONCLUSION

Higher education is a significant issue that decides on the quality and effectiveness of human resources training to serve the industrialization, modernization and international integration. In the current period, good performance with quality in higher education system is the basic factor in ensuring the competitiveness of the economy during the integration period. In these years, the reality of the innovation education in general and higher education in particular has demonstrated the role of higher education for the development of human resources quality, especially human resources with high quality – the key factor to ensure the country's sustainable growth and create competitive advantages globally./.

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