State Policies of Vietnam towards Scientific Researchers

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Abstract: Human resources are crucial for a country, playing a decisive role in the development of society. Being aware of the position and role of human resources in the cause of building and defending the country, Vietnam has always paid attention to the development of human resources in general and the contingent of scientific researchers in particular. The Government has formulated and promulgated many policies on the recruitment of, attraction towards, and employment, training, retraining, and honouring of scientific researchers. Vietnam's policies towards scientific researchers, however, remain limited, while not encouraging and motivating them to concentrate on the research.

Keywords: State management, policy, scientific research.

Subject classification: Public management

1. Introduction

Science, including natural sciences, technological science and social sciences, is one of the driving forces of human society. Each field of science is designated to have the function of researching, exploring, and perceiving the world's objective motion rules and to better the world, as well as human life and development. The Party and Government do appreciate and attach great importance to and invest in scientific and technological development, especially in the current context of international integration and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Accordingly, the

development and promulgation of policies towards scientific researchers also become the focus of interest by the Party and Government. The State policies regarding scientific researchers have a great influence on the development of science in Vietnam. Such policies are reflected in legal documents (promulgated by the National Assembly) and sub-law documents (promulgated by the Government and ministries) on people and scientific researchers. Policies on scientific researchers shall not outward the general policies towards Vietnamese people. Several policies for human development have been made by the State, such as The Vietnam

Socio-economic and Cultural Sustainable Development Strategy in the 2011-2020 Period, which reaffirms that "The people are the centre of sustainable development, promoting the role of people as the key subject and resource of science and technology, as well as the foundation and driving force for the country's sustainable development. Modern, clean, and environmentally-friendly technologies should be given priority to be widely applied in sustainable manufacturing industries" (Prime Minister, 2012); Vietnam's Education and Training Development Strategy considers educational development as "the priority of the national policy, the cause of the Party, the State, and the people" (Prime Minister, 2012); the Strategy on the Development of Human Resources in Vietnam in the 2011-2020 Period defines "to make Vietnam's human resources the foundation and the most important advantage for the sustainable development of the country, international integration, and social stability" (Prime Minister, 2012). Policies towards Vietnamese people are also indicated in the Constitution of 2013, the Law on Gender Equality, the Law on Public Employees, the Law on Higher Education, the Labour Code, the Law on Science and Technology, the Law on Marriage and Family, and Circular No.16/ 2021/TT-BNV (promulgating regulations the recruitment of public employees); regulations on the examination for the promotion of professional titles for public employees, internal regulations on the recruitment examination and promotion examination of professional titles for public employees. Resolution No.10/NQ-TW dated 3 June 2017 of the 5th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee on the development of a socialist-oriented market economy emphasises the support for

the private sector in innovation, modernisation, industrialisation, and development of human resources, as well as labour productivity improvement. Resolution No.11/NO-TW dated 3 June 2017 of the 5th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee on completing the institution of a socialist-oriented market economy has set out several development orientations of science and technology. Decision No.562/QD-TTg dated 25 April 2017 of the Prime Minister approves "the programme on the development of basic sciences in the fields of chemistry, life science, earth science, and marine science for the period 2017-2025". Directive No.16/CT-TTg in May 2017 of the Prime Minister on strengthens the capacity to respond to the Industrial Revolution. Directive No.19/NQ-TW dated 25 October 2017 of the 5th Plenum of the 12th Central Committee renovates the organisational and management system, improving the quality and efficiency of activities of public non-business units as a requirement to rearrange the scientific and technological organisational system while focusing on investing in some institutions of basic and applied science to meet the regional and global levels. Decision No.677/QD-TTg dated 18 May 2017 of the Prime Minister promulgates regulations on the approval for the "Vietnamese Digitalised Knowledge System Development" scheme, with the aim of "Knowledge sharing -Creativity promoting- Community connecting - For the Future of Vietnam". In an endeavour to continuously promote the role of science and technology (S&T) in the national development and international integration, in 2019, the Party Central Committee has out a number of significant orientations, such as Conclusion No.50-KL/

TW dated 30 May 2019 of the Secretariat on continuing to implement the Resolution of the 6th Plenum of the 11th Central Committee on the development of S&T to serve the industrialisation and modernisation on the back of the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration; Conclusion No. 52-KL/TW dated 30 May 2019 of the Secretariat on continuing to implement the resolution of the 7th Plenum of the 10th Central Committee on the development of a contingent of intellectuals in the period of boosting the country's industrialisation and modernisation: and Decree No.13/ND-CP dated 1 February 2019 of the Government on S&T enterprises, which replaces Decree No.80/ 2007/ND-CP, creates a legal environment to support and promote the development of S&T enterprises, as well as encourages the research and application of S&T production and business. This is considered as the operation license and the basis for implementing preferential support policies for S&T enterprises. In addition, there are also many other documents towards expressing the State's policies Vietnamese scientists.

There have been several studies on Vietnamese policies towards the contingent of intellectuals and scientific researchers. However, there remain differences between opinions on policy evaluation (specifically those on recruiting, training, retraining, and honouring scientific researchers). article shall provide the basic content of Vietnamese policies towards some scientific researchers in public scientific research institutions (hereinafter referred to as scientific researchers) and then give additional comments on such policies.

2. Policies on the recruitment of scientific researchers

Policies on the recruitment of scientific researchers are the sum of the State's point of view, attitude, decisions, and regulations on solutions and tools for the research scientist recruitment. Recruitment policies are regulated in many different legal documents. Specifically, recruitment policies of public employees in general and scientific researchers. in particular, is regulated in the Law on Public Employees of 2010, the Law on Science and Technology of 2013, the Labour Code (National Assembly, 2010), (National Assembly, 2013), Decree No.29/2012/ND-CP dated 12 April 2012, and Circular No.15/2012/TT-BNV dated 25 December 2012 of the Ministry of Home Affairs guiding the recruitment and signing of labour contracts and compensation for training and retraining expenses applicable to public employees (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012; Government of Vietnam, 2012). As stated in those documents, the recruitment of public employees and scientific researchers must be based on the work demand, the job position, the professional title criteria, and funds for salaries of the public non-business entity. Also, the recruitment must ensure openness, transparency, fairness, objectivity, and compliance with the law, as well as ensure competitiveness while giving priority to talents and the people with meritorious services to the Revolution and ethnic minorities. To be admitted to scientific research institutions, applicants must satisfy several conditions such as a Vietnamese nationality and residence in Vietnam; an application form; a clear personal background; diplomas, training certificates, practitioner's certificates, and optimal skills and attitude suitable to the job position; as well as physical fitness to perform tasks and satisfy other conditions as required by the job position determined by the public nonbusiness entity but not contrary to the regulations of law. The recruitment method is usually conducted in two forms: examination or recruitment assessment. According to the Law on Public Employees, for public research organisations and institutions which are granted autonomy, the heads of the public non-business entities are empowered to perform the public employee recruitment and take responsibility for their decisions. If the public research organisations, units, and institutes have not been given autonomy, the competent authorities managing public nonbusiness entities shall recruit employees or delegate the heads of such entities to carry out the recruitment.

The recruitment policy for scientific researchers is further specified in the following documents: the Master Plan of development of S&T human resources to 2020 issued by the Minister of Science and Technology (attached with Decision No.4009/ QD-BKHCN dated 29 December 2011); Joint Circular No.24/2014/TTLT-BKHCN-BNV dated 1 October 2014 (which regulates codes and standards for professional titles of public employees specialised in science and technology); Circular No.13/2016/TT-BKHCN dated 30 June 2016 (providing regulations on the management of the Scheme on training and retraining S&T human resources with the State budget); Joint Circular No.21/2015/ TTLT-BKHCN-BTC dated 6 November 2015 (guiding the implementation of the policy on employment of and good treatment of individuals engaged on science and

technology activities); Decree No.115/2005/ND-CP dated 5 September 2005 (stipulating the mechanism of autonomy and self-responsibility of science and technology public organisations); Decree No.29/2012/ND-CP dated 12 April 2012 (in recruitment, employment and management of public employees); Decree No.08/2014/ND-CP dated 27 January 2014 (detailing and guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on Science and Technology); and Decree No.40/2014/ND-CP dated 12 May 2014 (regulating the employment and good treatment of individuals in S&T activities) (Ngo Thi Phuong, 2007).

The recruitment policy for scientific researchers is stated in the Law on Science and Technology of 2013. Article 24 of the law provides that "Individuals engaged in scientific and technological activities being overseas Vietnamese and foreign experts are encouraged to participate in scientific and technological activities in Vietnam" (National Assembly, 2013). As stipulated in the Law on Science and Technology, individuals engaged in scientific technological activities who are overseas Vietnamese during their working terms in Vietnam shall have the same rights and obligations as of domestic organisations and individuals. In addition, they are entitled to enjoy several other privileges, for example, to be appointed to or hired as leaders of scientific and technological organisations, assigned to assume the prime responsibility for the performance scientific and technological tasks at all levels; as well as recognised and appointed the titles of scientific research or technology prescribed in the Law on Science and Technology. Moreover, they can be entitled to specialists' salary level according to the Government's regulations and other benefits under their contracts and privileges on immigration, residence, housing, and others in accordance with the law.

The recruitment standards are still weighty on qualification requirements with prevalent qualitative criteria such as education, information technology foreign skills. language proficiencies, sufficient health, and qualifications adequate to recruitment requirements. Other criteria have not been mentioned yet, such as skills of communication, creativity, and team-working. The recruitment which is inconsistent with reality and science renders the recruitment process' quality low. This is still one of the limitations of the recruitment process that most state agencies encounter. The important thing should be to recruit people with appropriate expertise and working ability to achieve high productivity, good performance, and meet the job requirements.

3. Policies on the employment of scientific researchers

Be kind to your staff, but not with indulgence or by putting them at ease, said President Ho Chi Minh, which means that in addition to supporting the staff in their study and progress, one must help them to solve difficulties, create decent living standards, and care for them in sickness, depending on the circumstances to help their families. Thus, the policy on employing scientific researchers plays an important role in developing human resource for scientific research in Vietnam. Such policy is a tool of the State, issued to adjust the activities of

employing scientific researchers effectively, suitable to the general context of the country. employment policy for scientific researchers is shown in the following documents: The Law on Public Employees 2010 (stipulating the employment of public employees from Article 25 to Article 46, including provisions on labour contracts, the appointment of professional titles, the change of professional titles, and job positions of public employees; the training and retraining public employees; the secondment, appointment, and dismissal of public employees; the assessment of public employees; retirement schemes and severance regimes of public employees) (National Assembly, 2010); Decree No.29/2012/ND-CP dated 12 April 2012 on the recruitment, employment and management of public employees (which specifies contents on the employment policy of public employees including the assignment of tasks; the secondment, appointment, and dismissal of public employees; the regulations on the change of professional titles; the assignment of organising examinations or promotion of professional titles for public employees; the regulations on the process and procedures for organising examinations or promotion of professional titles for public employees; the regulations on the transfer and transition of public employees, and the regulations on the dismissal and retirement of public employees); and Decree No.40/2014/ND-CP, regulating the employment and honouring of individuals engaged in scientific and technological activities (Government of Vietnam, 2014).

Decree No.40/2014/ND-CP advocates to 1) create favourable conditions and working environments for individuals engaged in scientific and technological activities to

maximise their capabilities and benefit from their scientific and technological working results; 2) facilitate conditions for talents to perform important scientific and technological tasks to bring into full play their talents and provide them with benefits worthy of the tasks undertaken: 3) and ensure the resources for implementing policies on the employment and good treatment of individuals engaged in scientific and technological activities. This decree specifies scientific research titles for research assistants, researchers, principal researchers, and senior researchers, as well as scientific titles in the public non-business entities engaged in scientific and technological activities (including scientific titles from grade VI to I; the appointment of scientific research titles and scientific titles; the working regime of the scientists; the preferential treatments for those with special achievements; the regime for extension of working time applied for high-quality human resources in scientific research (such as professors, associate professors, doctors and leading experts).

It is stipulated in the Law on Public Employees of 2010, the Law on Science and Technology of 2013, Decree No.204/ 2004/ND-CP of the Government (on the salary regimes applicable to cadres, civil servants, public employees, and armed forces), and Joint Circular No.01/2016/TTLT-BKHCN-BNV of the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Home Affairs (guiding the appointment and salary ranking by professional titles for public employees in science and technology sector) that the salary regime for public employees in scientific research does not have a separate schedule and shares the same with other types of public employees

in the state non-business entities; The method of calculating the actual salary is the same as that for other types of public employees. Senior researchers are entitled to a salary scale of 6 grades (with coefficient pay from 6.20 to 8.0); principal researchers are entitled to a salary scale of 8 grades (with coefficient pay from 4.40 to 6.78); researchers are entitled to a salary scale of 9 grades (with coefficient pay from 2.34 to 4.98), and research assistants are entitled to a salary scale of 10 grades (with coefficient pay from 2.10 to 4.89).

Consequently, the salary regime scientific researchers in Vietnam has no higher levels than those for cadres, civil servants, and public employees. The treatment policy towards scientific researchers is even worse than those working in other sectors (such as for civil servants and teachers). In the case of civil servants, in addition to the salary regime, which is the same as scientists, they also enjoy the civil service allowances. Teachers and lecturers, besides the salary, are favoured with class attendance and seniority allowances. If compared with the salary system applied to the armed forces, the salary grades and coefficients of scientific researchers are much lower. A 62-year-old research scientist at an advanced level with 40 years of experience in scientific research and hundreds of research works, would only receive a pension on his retirement - a 50% equal to that of a 60-yearold teacher at an average grade. This leads to the fact that many talents refuse to become scientific researchers.

4. Policies on training and retraining of scientific researchers

Policies on training and retraining scientific researchers are specified in the Law on Education No.11/1998/QH10, the Law on Public Employees of 2010, and Decree No.29/ 2012/ND-CP (regulating the recruitment and employment of public employees) (National Assembly, 2010; Government of Vietnam, 2012), and others. Policies on training and retraining scientific researchers are tools being promulgated by the State to achieve the goal of developing a contingent of scientific researchers with sufficient professional qualifications and ethical qualities to meet the requirements of national construction and development tasks. In other words, policies on training and retraining scientific researchers are the sum of the State's point of views, attitude, decisions, and regulations on specific solutions and tools for the training and retraining of research scientists. Accordingly, the objectives of training and retraining scientific researchers are to update their knowledge, foster, and improve their skills and methods of performing the assigned tasks; to contribute to the development of a contingent of public employees with professional ethics and qualified professional capacity to ensure the quality of their professional activities. The training and retraining of scientific researchers should be based on the work positions, the professional title standards, and the needs for the development of human resources of public non-business entities. It should also ensure the autonomy of public non-business entities in training retraining activities and that officials study and improve their qualifications to meet the requirements such as publicity, transparency, and efficiency. Research scientists' training and retraining shall be made according to the criteria of managerial positions, with retraining based on scientific research titles to supplement and update knowledge and

skills in service of scientific research activities. The contents, programmes, forms, and durations of training and retraining should be based on the criteria of managerial positions and scientific research titles and meet the requirements on supplementing and updating knowledge and skills in service of professional activities.

Over the years, the number and qualifications of scientific researchers have been improved. The proportion of researchers with postgraduate degrees (doctoral, master) has increased from approximately 43.8% (105,230 people in 2011) to 51.5% (131,045 people in 2015) out of the total number of scientific researchers. According to the "Research and Development Survey 2016", in 2011, among 105,230 people who directly performed scientific research, there were 43,844 female scientists. The number of scientific researchers with a doctoral degree was 11,501 people, of which 2,890 were female scientists. At the master's degree level, there were 15,649 female scientists out of 34,618 people in total. There were 55,116 scientists with bachelor's degree and 3,995 with a college degree, among which there were 23,594 and 1,711 female scientists respectively.

In 2015, Vietnam had a total of 131,045 scientific researchers (among which 58,694 were female scientists). The number of scientists with a doctoral degree was 14,376 people, of which 4,054 were female scientists. At the master's degree level, there were 25,064 female scientists out of 51,128 people in total. At the bachelor's degree level, there were 60,719 people with 27,128 female scientists. There were 2,448 female scientists out of 4,822 people with a college degree (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2017, p.73). Thus, in terms of expertise, after four

years, Vietnam has trained more than 2,875 PhDs, 16,510 master's, and 827 bachelor's degree holders (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2017). According to the latest survey conducted by the Ministry of Science and Technology in 2019, the qualification of

research scientists has been significantly improved. The percentage of qualified researchers has increased. However, the proportion of researchers having doctoral degrees is still low and only a slight increase has been recorded compared to previous years:

Table 1: Number of Researchers by Education Level (person)

Education level	2011	2013	2015	2017
Doctoral degree	11,501	12,261	14,376	15,874
Master's degree	34,618	45,224	51,128	55,890
Bachelor's degree	55,116	66,684	60,719	57,022
College degree	3,995	4,828	4,822	7,284
Total	105,230	128,997	131,045	136,070

Source: Ministry of Science and Technology (2019), *Science, Technology and Innovation of Vietnam 2019*, Science and Technology Publishing House.

Professional training contents mainly focus on the fields and working positions of scientists. Training forms mainly continuous full-time training at universities, institutes, and research institutes in the country; with a small number of scientists trained abroad through some governmentfunded projects (such as Project 655, Project 911, and Project 2395 of the Prime Minister on the approval of the project on training and retraining of female human resources in science and technology in the country and abroad sponsored by the state budget).

Retraining activities for scientific researchers in the past years have also been paid attention to by the management agencies of state research institutes, the public research departments, universities, and academies. The training contents focus on the retraining of

political theory at preliminary, intermediate, and advanced levels for individuals who are eligible for promotion and hold managerial positions in scientific research organisations, units, and agencies, and for the leaders of departments, facilities, divisions of universities and institutes. Retraining related to professional and managerial knowledge based on the managerial positions and scientific titles is also conducted regularly to ensure that scientists in any position will be retrained for the knowledge suitable with their positions. Annually, universities and institutes in the public sector have been dispatching thousands of level-3 lecturers to participate in the level-2 lecturers training courses, and hundreds of level-2 lecturers to level-1 lecturers training courses to improve their knowledge and skills. Along with that,

scientific research institutes have also facilitated favourable conditions for public employees to join training courses for researchers, principal researchers, and senior researchers.

In addition to the retraining of political theory and management and professional knowledge in accordance with scientific titles, scientific researchers have also participated in foreign language courses, courses on the improvement of scientific research skills and methods, and courses on scientific and technological applications in scientific research activities. The survey result of the implementation status of training and retraining activities towards scientific researchers (according to the actual survey results which serve the author's PhD dissertation at research and training centres of all three Northern, Central, and Southern regions; selected by the non-probability sampling method for the cities of Hanoi, Hue, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City. The two groups of subjects surveyed include scientific research managers and female scientific researchers) show that: 47 out of 300 respondents marked well-done for the researcher training, accounting for 15.67%; 92 out of 300 respondents commented that the training was at an average level, accounting for 30.67%; the number of surveyed participants marking "not good" for the research training is considerably higher with 161 out of 300, accounting for 53.67%. The survey results on the status of fostering scientific researchers show that 41 out of 300 respondents marked the training as the good performance, accounting for 13.67%; 89 out of 300 responders evaluated that it was performed at a fair level, accounting for 29.67%, and 170 out of 300

participants evaluated that the retraining was not performed well, accounting for 56.67%. A comparison of the opinions of the two surveyed groups shows that the evaluation results of the two groups are quite similar (Kieu Quynh Anh, 2019).

However, the training and retraining for scientific researchers have not been of good quality and high efficiency. Many contents of the training and retraining have not been linked to practical working requirements. The training contents are still slowly updated, whereas the training forms and methods are more of formalism than of quality. Weighted too much on political theory, the training programme is considered as not relevant to the titles and working positions of the scientists.

Annually, the Ministry of Science and Technology shall assume the prime responsibility for, and coordinate with ministries, ministerial-level agencies, government-attached agencies, and the People's Committees at provincial and municipal levels in proposing the state budget allocation for science and technology, then formulating a budget for training, retraining, and developing of science and technology activities. However, since the spending for training and retraining towards scientific researchers depends mainly on the state budget and partly on the trainees' contribution, the process encounters many difficulties and limitations.

5. Policies on honouring scientific researchers

In an endeavour to honour scientists, the Government awards scientists who have made substantial contributions and achievements in scientific research activities. They are the Ho Chi Minh Award in recognition of scientific and technological achievement; the State Science and Technology Award; the science and technology awards of the ministries, the ministerial-level agencies, and the agencies under the Government; and the science and technology awards of the provincial and municipal People's Committees. Besides these, there are awards raised by organisations and individuals to honour those who have achievements in scientific research and science and technology activities in general (Government of Vietnam, 2014; Ministry of Science and Technology, 2014; Ministry of Science and Technology, 2015). The award consideration period for the Ho Chi Minh Award and the State Science Technology Award is every five years, announced and awarded on the National Day of 2 September. The reward bestowed on organisations and individuals who win the Ho Chi Minh Award in science and technology is equal to 270 times the basic salary, while the rate of the State Science and Technology Award in science and technology is equal to 170 times the basic salary, calculated from the date of signing the decision of award recognition (Government of Vietnam, 2014; Ministry of Science and Technology, 2014).

In addition to the two above-mentioned awards, the Ministry of Science and Technology also has several other awards to honour scientists, including the Ta Quang Buu Award, the National Quality Award, the Vietnam Science and Technology Innovation Award; the Kovalevskaya Award, and the Award of the World Intellectual Property Organisation of the United Nations (WIPO).

The Ta Quang Buu Award is an annual award held by the Ministry of Science and Technology, organised by the National Science and Technology Development Fund as a permanent organisation towards Vietnamese scientists who are authors of basic research studies in the fields of science and engineering. The award has been launched in 2013 (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2015).

The Kovalevskaya Award is a nationallevel award that is annually held for outstanding scientific female groups and individuals, to honour those who have excellent achievements in scientific research and the application of science into life, as well as brought benefits to economic, social, and cultural fields. The Kovalevskaya Award was firstly started in 1985.

The Vietnam Science and Technology Innovation Award (VIFOTEC), formerly known as the VIFOTEC Science and Technology Award, is chaired by the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations and the Ministry of Science and Technology, and in coordination with VIFOTEC Foundation's founders such as the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, Vietnam Youth Federation, Ministry of Finance, and other ministries including Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Vietnam Television, and other scientists. In 1997, the President of the Union and the Minister of Science. Technology and Environment signed a project to organise the VIFOTEC Award. In 1998, the VIFOTEC Foundation cooperated with the Vietnam Museum of Revolution to build the VIFOTEC Award exhibition room placed at the Museum. In 1999, the VIFOTEC Science and Technology Award was upgraded to the Vietnam Science and Technology Award as currently. The award is to encourage technological scientists to deeply research and apply modern scientific and technological achievements suitable to Vietnamese circumstances into production and life.

As being reviewed by some scientists, the awards for honouring the scientists lack diversity and prestige, while not maintaining obvious differences compared to awards in other fields. The orders, procedures, and forms of those are also heavily formalistic, cumbersome, and complicated. As such, these awards have not received much attention from scientists.

6. Conclusion

Since the promulgation of Resolution No.20-NQ/TW of the 6th Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (on science and technology development to serve the industrialisation and modernisation in the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration), the Government and ministries, especially the Ministry of Science and Technology, have issued new policies to promote the development of science and technology, including on recruiting, employing, training, retraining, and honouring scientific researchers in the public sector. So far, the policy system has been relatively stable, synchronous, and more complete from the central to the locality level, which creates motivation for the development of science and technology. As a result, Vietnam has attracted a large number of human resources for scientific research; with the contingent of scientific researchers increasingly contributing to the country's economic, social, and cultural development. The quality of scientific human resources has been improved gradually, and there have been greater numbers of scientists receiving at least a Master's degree and winning scientific awards. However, to develop scientific research to meet the integration requirements, Vietnam needs to continuously improve the system of policies towards scientific researchers.

Note

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