

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT – KEY FACTOR TO IMPROVE THE TRAINING QUALITY IN UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM TODAY

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1. Human resource development^(**) is one of the top issues which impact the national education and universities. *Vietnam's Socio - Economic Development Strategy for 2011 - 2020 and Directions and Responsibilities for national growth for 2011 - 2012* have mentioned as followed: “Educational development is a leading national policy which aims to basically and completely renew Vietnamese education. It focuses on standardizing, modernizing, socializing, democratizing and integrating with the world in which educational mechanism reformation and teaching staff growth are key issues” [3]. This is a strategic vision because development of new teaching staff and education management has become vital for Vietnamese education for current and long term. Vietnamese Communist Party has confirmed that the method to totally renew national education and training is “to completely improve education quality in which focusing on educating ideal, historical traditions, ethics, lifestyles, creative ability,

practical skills... in 11th CPV Central Committee. Also, teaching staff is required to ensure both quality and quantity” [1, 216].

In fact, every university and training center requires copious teaching resource who implement university’s missions including offering school’s all services. An university’s brand name and quality are built up by its teaching resources. They are also an important standard to positioning universities in the global list of top universities and college. Moreover, human resource growth does not only focus on their ability but also train them how to flexibly improve their capabilities so that they can reach the strategic target of university in a fastest way. Hence, resource development here includes both teaching staff and school management.

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^(**) The “resources” concept in this article includes school management, department leaders, and lecturers, administrative.

For school's leaders, including principal and vice principal, play an important roles in instructing and organizing schools' mission and vision and identifying the target of school. Leaders should persuade governmental departments, businesses, benefactors, graduated students to join in following activities: contribution to school, encouragement to cultural renewals and support this progress, and always use all energy to obtain the organization's purpose.

For leaders of each faculty, resource development has to focus on those who have ability to be aware of strategic position of his own unit as well as have personal skills in human management as team work, career and academic growth for staff. For now, faculty's leaders also need to have knowledge of technology and know how to apply IT in management and specialization development. One more important requirement is leaders should be sensitive with changes from external environment, for example, competitors, society's and students' demand as well as customer's interest. Leaders should also know how to make decision in specific circumstances and with certain staff.

For teaching staff, it is necessary to pay attention to their roles in teaching and doing scientific researches. In a fast changing circumstance, a teacher is required to have abilities, for example, recognize their teaching roles so they acknowledge that they are teachers who show people how to learn, not only

transfer knowledge. They need to know and understand that each student has his own learning style, and have knowledge as well as skills related to testing and evaluating the efficiency in study of students. The understanding of technology (including related law) applied in teaching and research; Lecturers should be able to work with students in a same network and catch up with their requirements and expectation on study. It is one of the standards when universities do recruitment for teaching staff.

Lecturers are those who have exemplary discipline and are responsible for keeping standards and knowledge of the current growth. They should be good examples for students. The sensitivity of a lecture is very important. In an intergrated circumstance when there are more and more foreign students come to Vietnam for study, teachers need to realize market changes and understand recruiter's demand; know about customer, respect ideas and hobbies of related objects (including students); understand how international factors impact on learning programs; ability to teach students (different level, age range, conditions and religion) various skills which will be used for long time. In another words, lecturers should know how to refresh the lessons as well as teaching methods.

Lecturers need to have all required skills when doing research, for example, ability to write a proposal for a research work; study and work in a group, in a network and ability to find a sponsor for project; ability to manage students, post

– graduate students and even researchers. Today, universities require their teaching staff to be able to write and manage a project, especially those related to international collaboration.

Universities have also develop the administration team. They need to have new abilities such as technical skills which have become a fundamental requirement in many universities in the world. They are knowledge of training, spending and being sensitive with budget's value demands as well as school's financial ability. One of the key skills is the ability to understand customer and to work flexibly under the tightly financial circumstances [10].

2. Educational Development Strategy for 2011-2020 has decided one of the weaknesses and disadvantages of Vietnamese education in the previous period (2001 – 2010) was a group of teaching staff and school management did not meet the requirement in the new period. They are surplus in quantity but shortage in quantity and not all of them are qualified. The percentage of teachers who have completed a post graduated degree is still low while the rate of student per teacher does not reach the level mentioned (suggested) in Educational Development Strategy for 2001 - 2010. A small part of teachers and educational management is still lack of responsibilities and energy for teaching job, even violate ethics and have bad lifestyle which negatively affect teachers' reputation. Also qualification of some teachers and management is rather low. Policies for teachers and educational management,

for example, salary and allowance policy is not satisfied and not attractive enough for excellent resources to join in educational field. Policies are not good enough to attract excellent people to join in education field, or to motivate internal people to improve their own's capabilities. Training course do not meet new requirements of education" [6].

The strategy has one of the targets as "Complete the mechanism of career training and university. Adjust industry distribution and training level, improve the educational quality and supply enough resources for the socio – economic development. Provide those who have creative ability, independent mind, responsible, ethical and skilled. In addition, they should have language ability as well as discipline at work. Also, they should be flexible with labor market's changes and competitive with surrounding areas and the world" to recover current weaknesses [6]. Strategy offers solutions which aim to improve the quality of teaching staff and management: "Keep training teaching staff until 2020 (...) 60% of lecturers in colleges and 100% of lectures in universities have master degrees; 100% of lecturers can use a foreign language fluently.

Implementing the project in which all teachers achieve doctoral degree by combining both local and abroad training courses. The target is to have 25% of university lecturers and 8% of college obtained doctoral degrees in 2020" [6].

The statistical figures of Ministry of Education and Training showed that

Vietnam has 419 universities and colleges (not including those belonging to military) in which 204 are universities and 215 are colleges. Total number of lecturers is 84,109 in which 59,672 are universities' lecturers and 24,437 are college's. In the total 2,204,313 students, there are 1,448,021 students of universities while total colleges' students are 756,292. There are, however, only 9,152 doctors (8,519 in universities, 633 in colleges) and 36,360 masters (27,594 for universities and 8,766 for colleges). Total number of those owning master degrees in both 1st and 2nd specialization are 443 people. There are only more than 43.22% of lecturers in universities and colleges have master degrees and 1.09% own doctoral degrees. These figures are proof to figure out the percentage of lecturers who are professors or associate professors is less than 1.09%. One thing needs to be taken into account is the inappropriate distribution of high qualified lecturers when they basically work for schools in big cities. Therefore, the target of strategy is actually not too hard to achieve if universities and colleges deliver positive behaviors. (Today lecturers, who have doctoral degrees in colleges in the world, normally accounts for one fourth or one fifth. For example, 30% to 40% of lecturers of Irvine Valley College (US) are doctors.) [7, 97].

Recently, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has done a survey on implementation of Resolution 50 (on training quality's conditions) issued by the 12th National Assembly. MOET has

requested to cancel the post – graduate applications in 161 training faculties due to lacking of qualified lecturers. Qualification required for this training type is doctors, associate professors and specialized professors. Each faculty hence requires at least 01 doctors and 03 masters but universities and colleges do not meet this requirement. There are cases of some universities or colleges have enough number of lectures as required when registering for school opening. But this number of lectures decreased due to many reasons during the training period. Some universities or colleges even hired doctoral degrees to ensure required numbers of degrees as MOET's regulation. Major scientific and technological resources are working in 233 units belonging to Governmental Centre Departments and Offices. This also pointed out the average age of Science and Technology resources, who already have a certain qualification, is 57.2 year old (59.5 years old for professor, 56.4 years old for associate professor). There are only 12% of these resources (under 50) achieved certain degrees (7.2% for professors and 13.5% for associate professors). These figures showed the risk of imbalance in the future when these high qualified resources retire^(*). In comparison with current developing demand, resources are surplus in quantity but shortage in quality and imbalance between regions. The rate of students per teachers or

(*) Figures provided by Ministry of Sciences and Technology in 2006.

student per lecturers are still too high for university, colleges and high schools.

In March 2012, MOET organized 5 groups and checked 38 universities and colleges (19 private and 19 governmental) as Resolution No. 50/2010/NQ-QH12 of National Assembly and Directive No. 296/CT-TTg of Prime Minister. The results showed that many schools have difficulties in resources and teaching conditions. There are 7 schools which have under 50 teachers signed long term contracts; 42 faculties (university level) do not have qualified doctors and 25 faculties (college level) do not have qualified masters; some even do not have land or the area is smaller than 01 ha. Some school had to hire other places in short or long term. Hot faculties have the rate of 400 students per lecturers.

Resolution No. 50/2010/NQ-QH12 of National Assembly and legal documents requested to ensure the training quality and stressed on the following criteria: teaching and learning conditions, number and quality of long term teaching staff, the rate of students per teacher. Government's purpose is 60% of lecturers with master degrees, 20% with doctoral degree and 20 students per teacher in 2015. The urgent issue now is to improve the lack of qualified lecturers, especially in new training faculties and in new opening schools. There is no another way but universities and colleges must improve and develop their own resources.

3. To successfully achieve the target in Educational Development Strategy for

2011 -2020, it is necessary to focus on some following solutions apart of the 8 ways proposed in Strategy:

- *Firstly*, understanding and concentrating on resolving Vietnam's biggest conflict. It has always been the conflict between the development of market economy with the mechanism and policies in education management when education is still subsidized by government. As a result, it has led to many limitations and it could not be solved if the current circumstance were the same for a longer time^(*). Director of Vietnam Program of Harvard University – Professor Thomas J. Vallely discussed about 5 misconceptions of how Vietnam improve the quality in university education, including the recruitment method which Vietnam is applying for now. The family background, for example, does not have much meaning in doing science. Or, a principal does not even have authority to fire a mermaid so how to improve the quality. Professor Thomas J. Vallely also suggested Vietnam to change the current resources in education field to achieve more efficiency. Otherwise, Vietnam cannot obtain the success in reformation. We have a lot of young talented scientist who achieved success inside and outside of Vietnam. Although government plays its key role in education but the renewal is still required [8].

^(*) Principal of universities and colleges do even have authority to fire their staff when this person do not work efficiently or meet the requirement of job. As a result, principals cannot make decisions on penalties, salaries or expenditure on attracting good lecturers, scientists as the market value.

- *Secondly*, speeding up the implementation of 911 Project [5] on training lecturers to achieve doctoral degrees in universities and colleges for 2010 – 2020 issued by Prime Minister. And it has to be tied with the process of *Educational Development Project 2011-2020* and *Socio – Economic Development Strategy for 2011-2020*. At the same time, MOET should pay more attention to create and implement the proposal on “Improving the intellectuals until 2020 for the promotion of industrialization, modernization and international integration”. These strategies and proposal will achieve success only when universities’s departments changes their regulations synchronizably. This will avoid conflicted or overlapped regulations.

- *Thirdly*, authorizing universities to change some regulations on policies for lecturers to obtain higher qualifications. Not only doctors, associate professors and professors, who joined in teaching at school, but also young lecturers need to be trained as well. Removing the below regulation: “Conditions for officer to join in post graduate course: more than 5 years of experience; Under 40 years old when starting join in course”,^(*) and replacing by allowing all graduates join in post graduate courses. However, each university has various types of expenditures classified by different

objects. It could be full or partly financial support or funded by themselves. Salaries should be based on the learning level and job position to motivate teachers to improve their qualifications; In fact, some officers do not want to pursue further qualification because they have already had master degrees and are qualified to be a lecturer. They only care about taking more classes and stop doing research. Because research works are used for their resume only, not for increasing income.

Fourthly, each teaching centers should have its own plan to improve the quality of resources. The plan should include details as role of each participant and school’s expectation; The participation in resource development is required and principals should support and ensure the resource development as a priority job with appropriate allowance; schools should create its own culture which the participation in these activities is usual. For now, universities and colleges suggest MOET to allow for schools sharing lecturers. This will effectively ensure the quality and quantity of lecturers as well as save costs for schools. In fact, the famous universities did invite lecturers from different countries to have class for their students. In Vietnam, the growth of universities is rather fast. Up to 2011, 63/63 cities and provinces have colleges and 40/63 cities and provinces have universities. There was only 191 schools during the period from 2001 to 2002 and this number has increased up to 419 from 2011 to 2012 [2, 260]. One of the big pressure for

^(*) Item no. 1 and no. 3, Article 20, Chapter IV, Decree no. 18/2010/NĐ-CP on March 5th 2010 by Prime Minister on *Training and Improving officers*.

university education is the imbalance of resources due to all parents and students expect to join in universities. They do not want to study in colleges or training centres.

In general, resource development is a urgent issues and important to the training quality assurance of Vietnam's universities and colleges for now and future. One of the requirements of education renewals is to build up qualified teaching team. Once solutions are synchronizedly implemented, it will be able to handle with crisis on teaching staff and education management in Vietnam's schools. Also, it is necessary to completely change the Vietnamese education so that it can reach to a higher level and improve the quality of universities and colleges in Vietnam as our expectation [2] □

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