

## BRAINWORKER IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY AND OPINION ABOUT VIETNAM'S ISSUES

LƯU MINH VẤN<sup>(\*)</sup>

*Model and resources are big problem for development of nations, states. During nearly 3 decades of renewal, Vietnam has some significant changes, especially in economy; however, the problem of development of Vietnam is facing great challenges: changing from development strategy by scale to depth to “keep with” development of developed countries. Therefore, the recognition of characters of knowledge society that transitional developing countries entering, is the necessities to execute the “keep with” strategy of Vietnam. This article is going to present some viewpoints about knowledge society of Peter F. Drucker, - he is considered as one of the tow authors who put the foundation for theory of knowledge society, with hope to provide data for people to think about posing problem for Vietnam today.*

### **I. Knowledge society and knowledge economy, labor through points of view of Peter F. Drucker<sup>(\*)</sup>**

*1. Knowledge society and knowledge economy “Knowledge society”, “post-industry society” or “modern society” are common concepts, but quite*

confusing. Research of P. F. Drucker on knowledge society mostly begun from challenges facing developed countries. However, that does not mean there is no sense for developing countries, including Vietnam, because globalization is forcing all nations to join a common game, force us to find way to get used to, or “it is sure to be behind the times and never can keep with the world”.

How will the Knowledge society (or new society – term used by Drucker) be? The answer is not in a definition, but an

---

<sup>(\*)</sup>Peter F. Drucker (1909-2005) was a researcher, writer, lecturer, and consultant. His published more than 30 mentioned sociology, politics, management science, economics, pedagogy... He was appraised as the most prestigious future science in the world. His piece of research always attracted attention of wide range elements: politicians, plan makers, managers (in developed countries) and any one who want to study the knowledge society (post-modern society), the society where we know little about it and basically different from our experience and understandings.

---

<sup>(\*)</sup> PhD. Social Sciences and Humanity University (Hanoi National University)

outline of some appeared characters of it and force us to see it with a new point.

*Firstly*, change in demography- the reserve change of population structure- fast increase of old citizen and fast decrease of youth. The abnormal and challenge of this situation under Drucker' eyes are: (1) change of labor supply market related to the increase of people over working age as regulation will directly challenge commitment of politicians (promise to "maintain pension regime") and of macro-manager (current labor management model mostly based on the old conception: labors must do full time for organization while increase number of people over working age to work part-time, temporarily); (2) decrease ratio of young labor will force the government to deal with series of challenges: politic- growing in immigration will wound traditional political association; economy- the homogeneity of labor market does not decided by the youth but the middle-aged; management- full time management regulation will not suitable at all, etc.

*Secondly*, knowledge - new decisive factor of new society. In future society, knowledge becomes the key source that controls and affects the economy. *Proportion of brainworker will predominate*<sup>(\*)</sup>. Related to these elements, he underlined the following 4 points: 1) that is the non-border society because knowledge can move from this place to other faster than money"; 2)

---

(\*) Since the late of 20<sup>th</sup> century, in developed countries, brainworkers counted for about 1/3 of working force in society, while parts of traditional working structure such as farmer and blue-collar is reducing in role and number.

"chance to get promotion is for everyone due to the non-difficulty in studying full time"; 3) the ability of success and failure of each person is "equal" because "everyone has "production tools" is knowledge for work, but not everybody can be the winner"; 4) the combination of these factors makes knowledge society become *more competitive* with individual and organization.

*Thirdly*, knowledge economy basically linked with inertia of globalization, notes are: 1) controlling feature of transmission to global economy is no limitation of trade, investment due to quick moving of capital, in the fact, it is the element that changes the nature of world economy; 2) "the slowness" or "un-homogeneous" in politic and globalization trend is deforming this progress. He considered this was a bad precedent for the choice, selection and adaption of nations, people. The typical example was that the government tended to issue new protect tendency to deal with economic and social changes as the indispensable attribute of globalization.

*The fourth is*: appearance and increase of non-profit organization and charity beside traditional organization such as state (public sector), economic organization (private sector) is the new integration and ensure that the society can adapt to usual changes, by increasing methods to persons and society in modern society.

*Next*, companies will more and more become the decisive factor of future society. Changes of position of companies, firstly is in multi-nation companies coupled with change in their

function. That is, 1) growth of *strategic control* instead of *possessive control* and 2) “coalition tendency, joint venture, agreement” with the status of a decisive tendency that means the increase of indeterminate. It causes many difficulties not only for governments.

Although the sketch above does not present all feature of knowledge society, those warnings of Drucker about our awareness, state of mind and preparation to deal with this process is remarkable. His general feeling is “worry and unsafe”. The main warnings that he called “slowness” of modern society as the followings: 1) knowledge society, post-modern society is close to us, but its challenges does not expose. However, he said, it is affirmed that “We are living in a deeply transition time with some extreme changes than the previous changes”; 2) for awareness, he believed that we know too little about the coming changes in knowledge society, basically we still see it by old understanding and experience, in simple way, *Backward understanding* can not be the unnoticeable reason; 3) for state of mind, as his opinion, actually, human is not willing to face with challenges of changes; 4) the slowness of organization presented in managers, politicians, and policy makers of nations and economic, social and educational organization... is not really changed to adapt to the changes.

## 2. Definition of brainworkers (or intellectual source)

(1) With the question “what is the decisive motive force for the development of knowledge society”? His answer is human. This clause, as his

idea, is not new in conscious history of human being, at least since the left half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. *But the problem is that, only in knowledge society, knowledge economy, strength of human: Brain, knowledge and creative capability are really the decisive factors* of wealth producing (motive force of industrial society is machine; of agricultural society are manual labors).

(2) Access to human resources from competition of structure and role of brainworkers and manual labors (who produce and move objects) he expressed:

- Knowledge economy poses these two kinds of labor before challenges: for people with knowledge, knowledge society is “world of opportunities”, while for those without skills and knowledge, their existent future is unemployment, poverty and disappointment.

- In developed countries, that means in place transmitting to knowledge economy, he imaged far-sight of manual labors as the key feature below: *firstly*, strong reduce in proportion in labor structure, he forecasted that in near future, that proportion will be 1% over total labor force; *secondly*, manual labor productive revolution passed over, therefore, the role of this form of labor to the wealth of society is reducing; *thirdly*, manual labor will exist in new form – combination of manual labor and brainworkers of executive, experts; *finally*, in knowledge economy, brain workers and services are decisive forces.

(3) Drucker imaged the basic characters of brainworkers as follow: 1/ Brainworkers is labor forces formed by *official educational system*, hence,

education with foundation of school system is center of knowledge society ; 2/ Labor forces in knowledge society (in knowledge economy ) are those with high professionalism; 3/ Group is working unit. Implicitly of this theoretical point is that quality and effectiveness of work of brainworkers depend on its association with an organization. 4/ Brainworkers in knowledge society poses “producing tools” (knowledge, skills), this makes it basically differ from previous form of work and different organization and management models in nature; 5/ Elements that decide the productivity of knowledge society, - although current problems are quite vague in theory and reality, we can imagine in general : Clarity of target and appointed task (for blue-collar, the matter is how to do); Must create a self-ruling characters of labors: self-responsible for productivity and self-control; Always renew is task and responsibility of to perform this task, it must be studied for all life. Criteria to evaluate productivity of brainworkers moves from quantity to quality.

(4) What do we have to do to uphold the brainworkers, to adapt to the changes? Not to go too deep to abstract argument of human- that is the discussion of Drucker on this issue. His goal is actual activities, he stressed on:

*Firstly*, choose the strength, he believed it was very important because in knowledge society people can only success if they know their strength, bring their strength into pay and don't waste power for weak fields.

*Secondly*, study forever: for individual, it related to ability, attitude and state of

mind; for society, that is the establishment of an advantageous environment for citizen to study.

*Finally*, the compatibility between personal value and organization value.

This is the summary from speeches of Drucker related to the discussion topic above. There are many arguable matters, but at least we can accept it like data for consideration. That is our choice.

## **II. Some opinion about building, upholding the brain-force (brainworkers) in Vietnam nowadays**

We don't have conditions to analyze, summarize the feature of brain force of Vietnam in deep, in this article, we used summaries of some experts in this field as initiative fulcrum for thoughts about conditions to improve labor resource I Vietnam today.

(1) In our nation's history, it was proved that: to be survive in a strict danger of invasion and severe weather conditions, the use of talented and improve strength of citizens are basic motive force of success to protect and build our country. It implies that, Vietnamese is not lack of intelligence, lucidity and diligence, the problem is how to improve and uphold it.

(2) Starting from intelligence is the combination of basic elements: brain, knowledge and creative ability, we consider that tries to describe intelligence of Vietnam should pay attention to clear out the elements mentioned above. In the early of the previous century, historian, cultural scientist judged intelligence of Vietnamese as “In spirit aspect, Vietnamese is generally intelligent,

however, for a long time, there is few of person with extraordinary outstanding intelligence. Memory is prospering, artistry is stronger than science force, and intuition is stronger than theory. Almost is interested in studying but in vanity literature than actual learning, appearance rather than thought and action. Fancy brain was détente by actual brain so Vietnamese is less illusive but their judge is often practical... Their temper is often superficial, impatient, easy disappointed, usual show off, like to decorate the appearance and like vainglory. Normally be timid and love peace, but know to sacrifice for high duty. Less creative brain but knows how to imitate, adapt and amalgamate. Vietnamese respects to ethical behavior but be clever in a petty way and often disparage and jeer. This is summary of common spirit of Vietnamese, original from antiquity with a little change, formed gradually by history and state of society; therefore, we do not consider the mass unchanged features (see 15).

Reorganization of brain's characters of Vietnamese issued by Đào Duy Anh may not be perfect true to nowadays, it is quite dull but his comments is worth thinking, while we are entering a globalization world.

(3) Concept of brain force is wide in connotation and classification, so within this article, we call it "knowledge labor" that Peter F. Drucker determined as the most important labor kind to create wealth in post-modern society (for society, it called knowledge society, for economy, it called knowledge economy). Moreover, among brainworkers, the most important part is

"talented person". For poor countries, if they *really want* to escape from poverty, they must find the way to attract, build and exploit this kind of labor. As our attitude, we can count to:

First of all, it needs to create a suitable working environment that is the requirement to be done gradually, even when we are not in knowledge society by efforts of government and society. Practically, the development of poor countries and Vietnamese prove that "bad working environment" is the most significant factor cause to losing of talents and high quality working force that means the officially trained labor force. "Brain-drain" from state sector to private sector and foreign countries is the proof and the similarity in the third world countries. There, working environment does not encourage labors (annul the engine) is the leading alarm.

What is the suitable working environment for brainworkers? Many sociology and theoretical study showed that, at least it must pay attention to the encouragement, unique, creativeness, independence and critic. Meanwhile, in aspect of principle, the points mentioned above are not difficult to accept, but in a specific socio-cultural, regulation, this clause is not easy to accept. Renew the promotion, treatment based on working result, talent. For example, in Vietnam, maintain salary system based on length of service does not reflect the value of works and it is behind the time, and annulling the motive force to dedicate of labors.

Next, if we really admit the treatise "brainworker" as the basic resource and the most important element of the prosperity, development of Vietnam

society which is opening and integrating to the world, the slowness and ineffectiveness to renew the national education system is irresponsibility to the future. The viewpoint of “Brainworkers” of Drucker mentioned above can be the not-too-far hint for the determination of target, content and value of education renew.

Finally, in the context of globalization, the phenomenon of (immigration” of working force in global range is objective. Circumstance of this immigration for some countries is the reduce of high quality resource (especially for poor countries), but globalization and international integration create chance to attract talents by good opportunities of jobs. That means, factors to hold talents can be improved but not stops, the problem here is that the governments needs to issue a good policy to maintain relations and exploit potential of the leaving persons. In the past centuries, there are not little countries, nations; international organizations succeed in solving this problem.

#### REFERENCE:

1. Peter F. Drucker. Challenges of management in 21<sup>st</sup> century. H.: Youth, 2003, 298p.
2. Peter F. Drucker. Discuss about knowledge society, management, business, society and state. Nguyễn Quang A selected and translated.
3. Nicole Gnesotto & Giovanni Grevi. The world in 2025. H.: Knowledge 2008, 350p
4. Phạm Minh Hạc ... (editor in chief). World education in twenty-first century. H.: National Political Publishing House, 2002.
5. Many authors. About Russian intellectuals. (Translated by La Thành – Phạm Nguyên Trường) H.: Knowledge Publishing House, 2009.
6. Many authors. Rethinking the future. H.: Youth Publishing House, 2005.
7. Joachim Matthews. Some theoretical issues and research methods about human society. H.: Hanoi, 1994.
8. Edgar Morin. Earth - the Fatherland. Declare for the new millennium. H.: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2002.
9. Geoger F. McLean, Phạm Minh Hạc (co - editor in chief). Human beings, peoples and cultures: Living in an era of globalization. H.: National Political Publishing House, 2007.
10. Lester C. Thurow. Enrich in the knowledge economy. H.: Youth Publishing House, 2003.
11. Bruno Palier, Louis - Charles Viossat (editors). Social policy and the process of globalization. H.: National Political Publishing House, 2003.
12. Hồ Sĩ Quý. Human and human development. H.: Education Publishing House, 2007.
13. Ansel M. Sharp, ... The Economics of Social Issues. H.: Labor Publishing House, 2005, 224 pg.
14. Commission of Science, Technology and Environment of the National Assembly X. Education towards the XXI century. H.: National Political Publishing House, 1998.
15. Đào Duy Anh. Vietnam cultural history in general. Saigon: Four methods, 1951.