

## International Perspectives on Vietnam's Educational Reform

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### Abstract

The purpose of "cultivating people" is an admirable and ambitious one. Learning and research are crucial to the growth of every civilization. Education efficiently serves the socio-economic development goals of each nation and ethnic group by producing well-informed, competent, and healthy members of society.

Development in education and training is now seen as a key priority by governments throughout the world, including Vietnam, which sees it as an investment in the future of its citizens. Vietnam's education system

faces many challenges as a result of international integration. This is because our system continues to place too much emphasis on knowledge transmission rather than the quality and capacity development of learners; the quality of our teaching and administrative staff is not uniform; and our infrastructure system has not yet been fully developed. To address the demands of its inhabitants while it undergoes internationalisation, Vietnam's educational system has to be developed.

**Keywords:** Education, training, international integration, Vietnam.

### INTRODUCTION

All resources need to be taught, developed, and promoted efficiently, and education and training are the best ways to do so in the modern world. As a result, education has always been seen as critically crucial by every developing nation and people group. To invest in education and training is to invest in the future, since education and training are now seen as a unique social activity, a crucial component of society, and a significant role in defining the progress of the economy and society.

Ho Chi Minh recognised the need of education in shaping individuals, noting, "An uneducated people is a weak people" [1] and elaborating on the purpose of schooling by

declaring, "Learning to work, to be human, to be an officer." It is imperative that one "learn to serve the unions, the class and the people, the Fatherland and mankind" [1].

Informed by this idea, the Party and State of Vietnam have always prioritised the growth of education and training, both during the revolution and during the comprehensive renovation of the country, declaring, "Education and Training is the top national policy, the decisive factor for the successful implementation of the cause of national construction and defence; is the cause of the entire Party and people" [2]. Vietnam further stated: "The government places a high priority on educational initiatives. Improve intellectual attainment, cultivate human resources, and prepare future talent through expanded educational opportunities. Educators are making a radical change, focusing less on imparting information and more on cultivating students' skills and character. Needs for scientific and technical advancement, national building and defence, human resource development, and the needs of the labour market are all intertwined with the evolution of education "[3]. In the perspective of Vietnam's ongoing international integration, this article examines the country's educational successes, difficulties, and potential remedies.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Education for global citizenship and problem-solving in the context of international integration is a broad field that has attracted the attention of researchers in many disciplines and the attention of a wide range of international non-governmental organisations.

First, Jean-Jacques Rousseau discussed the importance of education, its goals, and its methods in shaping and developing individuals and improving society. And he constructs a future education he calls "natural education" and afterwards examines and assesses educational ideas, the interaction between teachers and students. There is a strong association between his name and this approach to environmental education [4]. John Dewey also discussed the role and function of education, the idea of creating a progressive education, which is an active education with specific educational goals, flexibility, creativity, suitable for nature, and achieving social efficiency, and education in a democratic society.

Thomas J. Vallely spent over eight pages discussing policies for developing teaching staff and educational management, mobilising all resources in society to develop education in Vietnam. He also discussed the history of Vietnam's educational development over the past decades, focusing on the country's efforts to overcome various challenges along the way to its current achievements. Three takeaways are discussed at the end of the report: Firstly, the Vietnamese

government has always prioritised education and training, as well as scientific and technological research and development; Secondly, the Vietnamese education system must be developed fundamentally and comprehensively toward democratisation, socialisation, diversification, standardisation, and modernization. Thirdly, fresh perspectives on school growth are at the foundation of Vietnam's innovative educational management [6].

The importance of education in economic, social, and political growth; Marxist perspectives on the purpose of education; the direction of educational progress; and a variety of challenges facing our education system as we approach the twenty-first century all figure prominently. [7]. The goals, guidelines, policies, and solutions for educational development in Vietnam [8] have been concretized through studies presenting the current educational situation of our country, the context, opportunities, and challenges for our country's education in the next few decades, and the views guiding the development of education; education action programmes. To further the success of the basic and comprehensive renovation of education and training in Vietnam, there are also writings and speeches by leaders, past leaders of Party and State agencies, central and local agencies, managers, and scientists [9].

## **METHODS**

### **Purpose**

Vietnam's contributions to international integration and educational development have helped the country's economy grow. However, Vietnam's educational system still has a long way to go before it fully meets the needs of industrialization and modernization. Vietnam requires effective strategies to improve its educational system so that it may better serve its inhabitants as it undergoes international integration.

### **Methodology**

For the purposes of research and article presentation, this article makes use of a variety of research methods from reference sources, including historical and logical methods, collation and comparison, analysis and synthesis, inductive and interpretive methods, and statistical approaches.

### **Main Findings**

The development of education in Vietnam throughout the course of the last several decades has made important contributions to the education of the Vietnamese people, including the

cultivation of talents and the development of human resources to support socioeconomic growth. Despite this, the expansion of educational opportunities in Vietnam in the present day has not "become the top national policy." It is necessary for the government to have proper solutions and policies in place in the next period in order to continue the process of further developing education as part of the international integration process.

### **Applications**

The findings of the research may be utilised to give significant planning suggestions for the development of education in the context of the process of international integration.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The most important accomplishments of the Vietnamese educational system**

To begin, let's talk about education beginning in infancy and preschool.

A report by the Ministry of Education and Training found that only 18 provinces and cities met the standard of universal preschool education for children ages 5 and under in the 2013–2014 school year; by 2017, this number had risen to 63/63 provinces and cities; the number of preschools and the percentage of preschools that are not part of the public school system is increasing rapidly. Children's mobilisation rates have consistently outpaced their age-specific goals. The Government unanimously agreed in August 2018 to implement the policy of free tuition for preschool children aged five and to support the payment of tuition fees for universal children attending non-public base schools, with a focus on children living in poor villages and communes, areas with ethnic minorities, and remote and isolated areas [10]. To create a development of gratitude, humanity, justice, and social progress in Vietnam's current industrialization, modernization, and international integration, this policy is deeply reflected in efforts and determination to raise the intellectual level of the people for all strata of the people and all regions of the country to have access to education, as well as to provide social protection for the disadvantaged.

Next, let's talk about formal schooling in general.

Improvements in high school infrastructure are a priority because of the resulting increase in student enrollment. For comparison, there were 25,932 schools in use during the 2010–2011 school year, and 28,710 in use during the 2018–2019 school year; the number of teachers increased by nearly 1.2 times, to 853,000; and enrollment in schools peaked at 18.7 million; of these, more than 2.5 million were high schoolers, with a graduation rate of 97.94% (2018–

2019); and the number of students enrolled in vocational secondary and professional high schools increased by a similar margin. This means that more than two-thirds of the youth in this age bracket (67%) have graduated from high school or its equivalent [11].

Strong community-level deployments of universal primary and lower secondary education have made it possible for a subset of the population to pursue higher education, based on their needs and the resources available to them. This subset includes members of ethnic minorities, the economically disadvantaged, and those living in geographically and geographically isolated mountainous regions. The literacy rate for those 15 and older is 95.1% nationally, and all provinces and cities satisfy the requirements for preschool universalization [11]. Since 2000, the country has met national goals for the elimination of illiteracy and the universalization of primary education. In terms of access to basic education, men and women are treated equally in this nation. Those at the bottom of society's social ladder—women, members of underrepresented groups, and children from low-income families—have benefited the most from the recent push to increase educational parity. As a result of the proclamation and implementation of education policies for ethnic minorities, there has been significant improvement in the quality of education provided in minority, distant, and isolated communities.

Many medals were won at worldwide and regional Olympic contests thanks to the hard work of students and teachers around the country in the field of scientific research. At the Asian and worldwide Olympic events in cultural themes, the Vietnamese student delegations performed exceptionally well, with 38 out of 38 high school students competing. For any student, this is an incredible accomplishment, but especially for the kid with the greatest marks in the world. Some groups consistently do well, scoring near the top in standardised tests of mathematics, physics, and computer science. The Ministry of Education and Training claims that Vietnamese students have been doing better than ever in international and regional contests, leaving a lasting impression on foreign partners in the fields of education and tourism about Vietnam and its people.

Thirdly, in terms of the breadth of educational attainment.

University and vocational education have expanded significantly in recent decades, at first addressing society's demands. The availability of schools providing vocational education has increased dramatically. There are 235 universities and institutes in Vietnam as of 2019 according to the General Statistics Office. This includes 170 public schools, 60 private and private schools, 5 schools with 100% foreign capital, 37 scientific research institutes tasked

with training doctoral level, 33 pedagogical colleges, and 2 pedagogical intermediate schools. There has also been a growth in the number of schools offering intermediate education, from 238 in 1996 to 303 in the 2017-2018 academic year. Human resource development programmes consistently outpace their predecessors in annual expenditures, as well as in the number of students enrolled in related subjects. There is typically an annual rise of 10–12% in the student and graduate population.

Regarding the role of socialisation in HR development efforts, fourthly.

Urban and rural workers, the rich and the poor, are now able to access training and vocational training programmes thanks to the rapid development of technical education institutions, tertiary training institutions, and colleges with increasing education and training budgets and the implementation of supportive policies for poor localities, poor households, and other disadvantaged people. The good effect of educating the country's human resources is bolstered by the fact that investment resources for education are diverse with flexible mobilisation, suited to each locality's economic capability and conditions, each stage, and each individual. At the same time, there has been an expansion in the range of academic offerings. The number of private institutions and instruction has increased. In recent years, there has been an increase in the availability of high-quality distance learning opportunities. With the State issuing and progressively improving the regime of collecting tuition fees and other contributions, more financial resources have been made available to public schools. The growth of the private school sector relieved stress on public institutions and opened doors for community groups and the government to play a role in children's education.

Thus, after more than 30 years of renovation, Vietnam's education has obtained many important achievements. A relatively complete, unified, and diverse national education system has been formed, offering a full spectrum of education and training levels from preschool to postgraduate. The educational system has initially been somewhat varied in terms of both types and modes, and it has progressively integrated with the general trend of education across the world. Non-public schools, various varieties of informal schools, open schools, with training techniques from long-distance, training association mode with other nations, and so on have emerged from a system in which only public schools and mostly formal ones previously existed. Our Party, after taking stock of Vietnam's progress in the realm of education, declared: "Every year, more and more schools and other training facilities open their doors, and the existing ones grow larger and more interconnected. There has been a thorough reorganisation of the whole educational and training system. There has been a marked rise in the standard of

teaching and learning. The infrastructure, as well as the teaching and learning tools, have been updated and upgraded. There has been a rise in both the quantity and calibre of educators and administrators. The process of socialisation in education has sped up "[3].

### **Tensions and problems in Vietnam's classrooms**

To begin, there is still a significant gap between the needs of development and the level of education and training provided, especially in regards to the preparation of highly trained people resources. While there have been many positive changes in the education sector throughout the reforming years, our current priorities are still too heavily weighted toward expanding the scope and volume of education without giving sufficient thought to the quality. The most important aspect in raising the general level of education and the standard of human resources is the curriculum, its contents, and the techniques used to impart knowledge to students. Nonetheless, course material and instructional practises are still decades behind the times. We place far too much emphasis on imparting information to workers and far less on instilling in them the necessary skills, manners, culture, and ethics. The majority of time spent instructing students is devoted to theoretical musings, with only a few weeks or months devoted to hands-on learning. Despite our best efforts, the status quo in the classroom has not shifted toward more modern approaches that emphasise active learning and student agency. The low quality of human resources produced by the education and training business is a direct result of all of its flaws. There is still a deficiency in industrial style, labour discipline, and professional ethics among workers; some employees are slow to adapt to the market mechanism; the organisation and discipline are subpar; the level of scientific and technical application is low; and the technology is rudimentary, to say the least. There is a wide gap between the traits, talents, and skills of the average Vietnamese worker and what is needed to advance Vietnam's economy in the face of intense global competition. Our country ranks poorly in terms of the quality of its human resources compared to others in the region. The quality of Vietnam's human resources, on a scale from 1 to 10, is just 3.79, whereas those of South Korea, India, China, and Malaysia range from 6.91 to 5.76 to 5.73 to 5.59 respectively. The second problem is that the school's physical resources and technological framework are insufficient and antiquated. Insufficient funds have been allocated for classroom and laboratory equipment, and many subjects are still taught in the conventional manner. Too few computers, and not enough of the right kinds of texts for many of the kids. The number of colleges and universities has expanded dramatically in recent years, but the quality of teaching staff and

school infrastructure has not kept pace. As a result, schools are enrolling students once again before handing them certificates, guaranteeing that unemployment will persist. More than 100,000 people with bachelor's degrees are out of work in 2018, while another 70,800 people with some college education are also looking for employment. Meanwhile, 41 percent of businesses report they are unable to find enough qualified applicants. Labor that requires a high level of education or training has seen a 40% rise in new job searches in the first three months of 2018 compared to the same time in 2017. In reality, this is a "bottleneck" for the progress of education in modern-day Vietnam.

Thirdly, despite progress, there are still problems with ensuring that everyone has access to quality education and training. This is mirrored in the fact that lower secondary education is now universal, but there is still a large number of children, particularly in rural and minority communities, who have not had the opportunity to receive an education. Approximately 3.6% of pupils in that age range are chronically absent from school, per reports from the Ministry of Education and Training. The Red River Delta has a dropout rate of 2.96%; the Northwest region, 6.91%; the Central Highlands, 17.16%; and the Mekong River Delta, 12.64%; all of these are significantly higher than the dropout rates in major economic zones and metropolitan centres. In mountainous regions, the illiteracy rate for teenage females is 13.69 percent for those aged 10 to 14, 7.98 percent for those aged 11 to 14, and 9.08 percent for those aged 15 to 17. According to their ethnicity, the Mong have the highest prevalence of female illiteracy (90%) followed by the Ha Nhi (89%) the Gia Rai (83%) and the Bana (82%).

In a similar vein, the faculty is ineffective, understaffed, and non-synchronous. There is a mismatch between the magnitude of education development and the number of instructors, especially at the Preschool and University levels, where student populations are growing at an alarming rate. The lack of consistency in kinds contributes to the problem of a teacher shortage and job redundancy. Despite having adequate instructors overall, many communities are short on specialists in areas like music, foreign languages, and technology. University classroom instructors are becoming older and there is a growing demand for younger instructors due to a severe lack of those with the appropriate credentials to teach at the university level.

Fifthly, there are significant gaps and flaws in the way the government oversees the country's schools and universities, despite the fact that innovation has spread to every sector of the economy. All of the aforementioned data demonstrates the unquestionable success of our country's education and training system's evolution over the past few decades. Nonetheless, Vietnam is without a comprehensive plan to develop its people. The main barrier is that policies



for economic growth and strategies for fostering growth in human resources are not complementary. There is a lack of synchronous and reasonable macro-level decisions to promote education development; some education policies are still subjective, willful, far from reality, and lack social consensus; and there is a disconnect between the agencies responsible for economic strategy and those responsible for social strategy, so they aren't exactly advising the Party on newly emerging complex issues. The pace of educational reform is so sluggish that it is falling behind the needs of national renewal and progress in an era of growing international integration. That's because it creates the kind of redundant instruction that's sorely needed in many fields.

Sixthly, the examination-centric curriculum and the accompanying moral deterioration in prevailing via education are gradually becoming a societal concern. In addition to putting stress on students and their families, our education system's emphasis on testing has led to widespread acceptance of failure as an acceptable outcome and an achievement race among educators, institutions, and families. Exam fraud and the "success" mentality that it fosters have spread like a plague throughout the academic and social systems. Vietnamese schools have a long history of instilling good manners before teaching literacy. What a priceless inheritance! This slogan means different things at different times, but it always has meant something about supporting moral ideals and being human. Nonetheless, the public's view on education and teaching is shifting, which is having a negative impact on these principles.

However, there are also instances where students or parents have physically harmed a teacher: Ben Tre male students allegedly punctured the teacher's midriff and ridiculed him in front of the class. Students at Bac Lieu School recently battered the teacher, sending her to the hospital; this follows an incident in early December in which a mother videotaped herself cursing and criticising the instructor over the loss of her daughter's trousers.

These occurrences should serve as a wake-up call to the Vietnamese educational system, which has been steadily losing its moral compass in recent years. As soon as possible, these problems must be fixed so that the Vietnamese people may be successfully mobilised to serve the ongoing socialist building as "red" experts.

All of the aforementioned problems and issues have been highlighted by our Party: "Insufficient progress has been made toward making education and training the primary national policy and a primary driver of growth. Education and training are still heavy on theory and light on experience; they are not up to pace with current needs, especially in the realms of higher and vocational education. Neither the requirements of industry nor the demands of the

marketplace are taken into account in the design of training programmes, which results in an inadequate focus on teaching students the values and habits of successful workers and the development of their academic and professional potential "[3].

The primary cause is that I education management and leadership at all levels have failed to adequately grasp the national policy's perspective on the field. To facilitate educational development, many ministries, branches, and localities have not given it sufficient priority; (ii) Vietnam's innovative thinking, development of education and training in recent years, has not really met the requirements of Vietnam's socio-economic development in the process of international integration, leading to internal conflict. The rate of workers with high professional credentials and skills remains low, and education and training are still of low quality and efficiency. Employment trends have little impact on the training industry. A portion of young adults with formal training who are either unemployed or engaged in activities that are counter to their field of study; a teaching workforce that is redundant, insufficient, and unbalanced in terms of qualifications and expertise because it has not yet caught up to educational requirements of the modern era. The percentage of faculty members holding master's or doctoral degrees in universities and colleges is insufficient to satisfy human resource development needs (only approximately 15%). It takes a long time for changes to be implemented in pedagogical training programmes. Lacking in meeting the needs of enhancing human resource quality is the teaching division's knowledge, profession, and ethics. The State has not released synchronous and complete legislative papers and operational guidance documents, and cooperation between central and local authorities, all of which have contributed to a slow pace of socialisation in the education sector. Unlike public schools, private schools are not subject to the same level of oversight.

### **Improving Vietnam's Educational System**

First, there needs to be a comprehensive overhaul of curriculum, curricula, and pedagogical approaches across the board. This is especially true for pre-K, where efforts should be directed toward establishing new schools and classrooms in the city's industrial zones and manufacturing district and toward enhancing the state's ability to better oversee the sector. High schools should prioritise students' intellectual and physical growth, quality formation and citizenship, the discovery and cultivation of talents, and career orientations appropriate to each stage of the country's development, as well as ensure that all people of school-age can go to school, especially in rural and remote areas. When thinking about what should be taught in

schools, foundational skills and knowledge acquisition should come first. To effectively merge the new with the old, to provide excellent career guidance, and to establish strong ties between high schools and universities, colleges, intermediate schools, and vocational schools in each community, it is essential to employ a uniform and comprehensive advanced educational method. High schools need to develop and renovate management systems, and improve the quality of test organisation, especially for the national high school exam. For industrial parks, engine areas, and labour export, the number of students trained at vocational colleges and vocational secondary schools must be increased fast. Strengthen the connection between companies and demand-based training institutions, with a focus on teaching skills and knowledge based on the real requirements of each particular area across the country. Training skilled individuals appropriate for the economic restructuring process, with a concentration on human resources for high-tech, high-value sectors, is a primary goal of higher education today. Increasing the number of graduates who find work in their field of study is a priority for the Vietnamese government, which is working to satisfy the demands of a more globalised economy.

Make the connection between classroom instruction and real-world experience. Now that information can be found and accessed with relative ease thanks to technological advancements, education must do a better job of simulating and preparing students for life after high school. Increasing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) instruction in schools is a viable option. Therefore, students will be able to use what they learn in the classroom, will get experience in researching and developing new technologies, and will be encouraged to do so as a means of bettering the state of the art in technology. This method takes an interdisciplinary approach to teaching students the tools they'll need to tackle real-world challenges.

To begin actively and effectively participating in the regional and worldwide high-tech labour market, the ASEAN Economic Community has granted free movement to eight professions (dental, nursing, engineering, construction, accounting, architecture, survey, and tourism). Complete accurate short- and long-term forecasts of the labour market and demand. Reviewing and refining the planning and then implementing the proper planning for the network of universities, colleges, and vocational training across the country is essential in order to achieve the goals of the national strategy for human resource development.

Second, inspire continuous education. The development of students' interests, abilities, and motivations to learn more throughout their lives is a key objective of education. In order to

achieve this goal, it is crucial to overhaul the current system of continuing education and community learning centres and alter long-held beliefs in order to construct centres dedicated to lifetime education. This is also the cornerstone answer to reforming education from the ground up, as outlined in the White House's "Perfecting the National Education System towards an Open Education System, Lifelong Learning, and Building a Learning Society" report.

Third, update Vietnam's educational and training management structure to accommodate the country's modernization and industrialisation efforts. Education and training should be decentralised more so that organisations can be more innovative in their approach to management, administration, and the implementation of policies and programmes; this will help highlight the important role that education and training play in fostering societal and economic growth. At the same time, it's important to define collective and individual responsibility, particularly the personal responsibility regime of the head, in order to foster a culture of leadership and encourage the development of effective managers. The delegation of authority and responsibility to educational and training establishments; the introduction of curricular and social oversight; the improvement of inspection and examination procedures at all administrative levels; the promotion of democracy, publicity, and transparency.

Fourth, cultivate and grow a strong pool of qualified educators. To date, this is the single most significant improvement in Vietnam's educational system. Curriculum, materials, and resources meet minimum requirements. Time spent studying is fair, but instructors' expertise is lacking. There will be no good results and no excellent education if moral standards are low. The Ministry of Education and Training has to make preparations for the next 5-10 years by aggressively developing training programmes to cultivate a contingency of teachers and lecturers. The goal is to earn many degrees from a university, so that you may become a master teacher. To counteract the local teacher shortage and boost educators' moral fibre, it is vital that every year, plans for sending training, including abroad training of talented and bright young cadres in teaching and research, be reviewed and revised.

Fifthly, finish developing a national education system that is accessible, up-to-date, and interconnected. Meeting the demand for human resources for socio-economic development, with a focus on training high-quality human resources at all levels, we must finish moving the national education system in the direction of openness and integration, standardisation, modernization, diversity, and international integration. Assembling a multifaceted educational system that allows students to study in a variety of ways, we can create a learning society in which everyone may pursue their education at their own pace and for as long as they choose.

While strengthening activities of supervision, inspection, and examination of the implementation of these reforms is essential to ensuring their success, developing an open, modern, and interconnected education and training system is the precondition for the development of science and technology, exploiting the most and effectively applying the knowledge resources of the nation and people, and laying the groundwork for the industrialization and modernization process and the construction of a knowledge economy in our country.

## CONCLUSION

Education and training play an increasingly essential role in today's world, as mankind is transitioning to the information economy and science is becoming a direct factor for economic growth, particularly in the process of international integration. To meet the demands of industrialization to modernization, international modernization, and integration, however, we must quickly fundamentally reform, comprehensively educate, and train, and we must have a determination to choose methodical ways, in accordance with a certain roadmap. Building an educational system that is at the forefront of the region and the world is essential. The future of Vietnam's youthful population will also be affected by an effective budget allocation and a strong governmental commitment to education and training.

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