

Role of Professional Training in the Development of Local Universities in Vietnam: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

This paper discusses the process of developing local universities in Vietnam. All round reform of education and training is always considered one of the essential and urgent requirements to overcome the limitations and weaknesses in the field of education as well as meeting the ever changing demands of the new century. As for higher education in Vietnam, orientating the training targets to meet the social requirements is currently an urgent issue of the Vietnamese society. The basic aim is to analyze the process of implementation of the policies regarding the training targets to meet the social requirements for all round reform of education and training in higher education. The paper proposes some orientations for regarding the educational targets and suggests remedies for the development of the local universities in Vietnam.

Keywords: local university, training and education, higher education

1. Introduction

Training and development are important essential components of education in general and higher education in particular (Kha, 2013). The need for developing education using knowledge and training has been the long traditions in different parts of the world. Universities as units of higher education need constant renovation and up-gradation in terms of knowledge management and quality services (Dinh, 2012). Currently, Vietnam is going through a crucial period in terms of educational development in the field of higher education (Hung, 2012). The universities in Vietnam are playing a key role in the development and growth of the nation. However, still there are some issues which have crippled the role of local universities in the larger national development (Chuong, 2013). One of the reasons is lack of financial and manpower resources to upgrade these local universities to the main national level universities. For this purpose, many initiatives have been undertaken in Vietnam for the last decades. For example, one such development was supported at the 8th meeting of the XI Party Central Committee on "innovation, comprehensive education and training was considered necessary to be adopted to meet the requirements of industrialization - modernization and fast emerging economic conditions of the country in the market-oriented socialist and international integration based scenario" (Kha, 2013). In this regard, the Vietnamese Government has identified specific goals for the development of higher education (HE) such as providing training to highly qualified personnel, fostering talent, developing skills, qualifications and self-study, self-enriching the knowledge and creativity of students (Minh, & Lam, 2013). For this purpose, completing the network of higher educational institutions, industry structure and the appropriate level of training to workforce planning national development has been declared essential (Minh, 2014).

More recently, at a meeting of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam declared that most drastic solutions are needed to be undertaken in higher education, because the main goals of higher education system is to provide high-quality human resources. To achieve this goal higher education was declared to be the foundation (Resolution No. 29-NQ / TW, 2013). According to reported data, 30% of students do not apply for graduate jobs. This indicates that quality of education is low in the universities. Moreover, in 2012, the number of trained workers accounted for nearly 50%, while the number of employees' graduate, college accounted for less than 10% as compared with the proportion of other countries in the region (Nguyen, 2013).

Increasing joblessness of graduates is one of the pressing problems in Vietnam. Although the number of university graduates is increasing every year, but it is not in commensurate with the available job opportunities in the job market. There is an increase of 4300 as compared to the last year (Son, & Ngoc, 2013).

Hence, there is increased to provide job related training to the new graduates to enable them to find work opportunities in the labour market (Yiping, 2010). The training is normally provided by the higher education institutions. In the local universities, there is dearth of resources both human and material to develop and conduct the relevant training programmes. This has created more challenges for the local universities (Nguyen, 2013).

Currently, there are 22 local universities in Vietnam, which include North: 11 ; Central: 3 and South: 8. Most of the universities were established in 2003. Local universities are public universities which were established by local authorities, under the provincial authorities (Chidamber, 2003). These universities are also the higher education institutions, multi-level, multi-sectoral having multi-disciplinary training levels from primary to university level, joint training several graduate specialized to meet the needs of human resources for economic development in the local and surrounding areas (Wilmoth, 2004).

However, the problem is that most of local universities in Vietnam does not meet the standards set out by the historical conditions of the country, international requirements and existing capacity because most of them have been established by enhancing their status from the Teacher Training College through upgradation or merging some schools in the province (Dang, 2007). Therefore, implementing the basic policy innovation, comprehensive education and training of the Vietnamese Government, including the training to adapt to the social needs and local and international challenges in the higher education system of the country.

2. The Status of Local Universities - a Simple Outline

Overall, the current local universities system in Vietnam has certain characteristics such as development in the teaching staff, officers and employees; scale training and education; facilities in the field of engineering and other fields. The local universities consistently provide training for preparing a qualified workforce for the local and surrounding areas to meet ever increasing human social needs.

However, most the local universities have been established in the last 10 years. Some provinces have very low economic conditions with difficult budget to sustain these universities (Dang, 2007; Chidamber, 2003). So many local universities have certain restrictions on trading higher education experience management, developmental strategy, training capacity, facilities, and financial resources (Welch, 2010). The challenges faced by the local universities are exacerbating day by day which puts a halt on their abilities to meet the practically and professionally social, political and economic needs of the Vietnamese society.

For the implementation of the Government's higher education related policies effectively is fundamental for comprehensive development of the local universities. In this regard the following areas must be covered and considered (Hiep, 2006). First, there is a need for a strong innovative training system that enables the local universities human power to be able to deal with the increasing social needs of the Vietnamese society. Second, there is a need enhance the capacity of the university manpower to meet the human needs in terms of quantity and quality. Third, there is a sharp need that the local universities should also undertake the responsibility to serve the economic development, social, local and surrounding areas more efficiently (Dang, 2013; Tran, 2013)

3. Major Steps in Order to Enhance the Capacities of Local Universities

In order to enhance the capacities of the local universities, the following main steps are being undertaken.

3.1. Innovation of Training

For efficient implementation of the training innovation, the overall goal, and specific objectives for higher education were clearly defined in the plenum of 8th, XI meeting (Tran, 2006). At the same time it was also ensured that this would be considered as a part for effecting basic reforms, comprehensive education and training by including innovation-oriented items in the training objectives to meet the social needs of the higher education system. It was followed by harmonization of both the central and local universities through a synchronization process based on the development of the scale careers, the number of students in the training, level and quality of training for meeting the professional requirements of the society (Wilmoth, 2004).

3.2. Renewal of Tasks and Duties

For determining the manpower needs of the local universities that could correspond to the level of training in the local areas and surrounding areas in the periods of 2015-2020 and orientation after 2020 on the basis of "Forecast of local workforce and surrounding areas". This change was effected in all areas such as the planning, development planning and training scale annual enrollment of the local universities.

At the same time, recommendations were made to the state agency authority to publicize in the mass media to guide students in choosing their education level and profession consistent with the needs of the Vietnamese society. That was also made limited to the phenomenon of unemployment or job training or applying in the industry after their graduation (Hayden & Thiep, 2007).

Renewal of the training programs goals were associated with the outcomes standards (knowledge - skills - attitude) to ensure scientific, modern, and practical systems for meeting the requirements of the local professional organizations and firms or industries as well as the surrounding of local areas and all the country (Tran, 2006). High standard training would be ensured in the organizations in the local universities by creating training links with other universities around nationally and internationally to develop the strengths of the local universities, the regional universities, national universities and promoting co-operation with the international institutions abroad for the development of higher education (Scott, Miller & Lloyd, 2006). Besides, it was also decided to mobilize the active participation of the administrative offices, business units, kindergartens and schools and the manufacturing facility in the process of training along with ensuring quality of the training for meeting the set professional requirements of the local universities (Painter, 2003).

The next step was strengthening the quality of teaching staff along with setting measurable the goals to maintain quality standards regarding improving their academic titles and status, quality and practical competence. It was also decided that that for promotion of innovative teaching methods, there is a need for transition from traditional teaching which is mainly equipped with the collection of knowledge only to development of new knowledge, setting of measurable quality objectives and to increase the competences of learner (Painter, 2003). For this purpose, enhancing the quality of management staff in higher education was also considered essential to ensure professional standards, professional education management and administration, with quality and good morals. Apart from that, it is inevitable to underscore the professionalization of teaching staff; administrative staff must focus on specialized staff training, in charge of academic advising and so on to develop a psychologically supportive atmosphere and academic communication system in the local universities for ensuring the policies of the regime for teachers and workers in local universities (Chidamber, 2003).

Besides, it was also ensured that innovation would be linked to students support in building learning methods, scientific research, especially training under the credit system; strengthening training, enhancement of professional skills, thinking skills, and life skills (soft skills). For proper development of these skills, it is necessary that proper care must be taken to sustain quality education for developing political and ethical, professional attitude, sense of serving the people (Thang & Quang, 2007). It is also essential to provide innovative facilities to the local universities in terms of knowledge development materials for fully secured, integrated and modern (textbooks, electronic library, classrooms equipped with information technology, departments, laboratory facilities, practice, production factories and so on. On the basis of mobilizing these resources for development and for investment infrastructure in the technical universities and establishments to use the linked units for training, ensuring quality training to meet the requirements of knowledge, skills and professional attitude. For this purpose, it is important to provide adequate funding for training, scientific research and management of the local universities (Son, & Ngoc, 2013).

To renew and complete the basic legal and mechanical policies for the management of the local universities, there is a need for relevant legislation, enacted adequate legislation in the direction of strengthening decentralization, enhance self-reliance, self-responsibility in training, staff financial, physical facilities, building relationships rules and improving the working styles of the management between members of the same level, with the other management levels such as governments organizations, unions; ensuring the leadership of the party on the principles by focusing democracy and respect for authority (Thang & Quang, 2007).

In the local universities, there is a prime need to promote socialization through training at all aspects by mobilizing the physical and social resources to support training funded facilities for the school, and coordinate school for practice, practice, they receive after graduation (Dang, 2013). Resource mobilization through social intelligence involved in the training process, especially in areas such as forecasting manpower needs and building training programs, curriculum development, teaching and scientific research along with developing mechanisms to monitor social participation and evaluation activities of local universities. For socialization through innovation in education and training in the local universities requires democratization, building mechanisms for assessing scientific objectivity between superiors and subordinates, between students-students and faculty for producing democratic, open minded, and receptive citizens (Tran, 2013).

The innovation of socialization in education and training should be associated with innovation of democratization in the marketplace along with innovation and improving the basic legal and social policies and mechanisms for effective management of the local universities to build training environment and favorable have a impact on the quality and efficiency of the higher education process, contributing to the achievement of the training objectives established (Yiping, 2010). There is a need for renewing the methods and evaluation following the training objectives. The evaluation methods focused cognitive abilities, skills, thinking ability of students through each course. The main purpose is to develop the independent thinking, creativity, the ability to exercise self-study, self-study for students. The assessment results will be used to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning, program quality, content of training as well as media training (Son, & Ngoc, 2013).

The local universities must create an environment to promote of doing scientific research on the basis of resource mobilization (faculty, staff management, equipment, finance); cooperation, technology transfer to higher education institutions and research institutes at home and abroad, focusing on topics to improve the quality of education, social needs, economic development the local social and surrounding areas (Tran, 2013). The other important step for the local universities could be to focus the enhancement of the quality assurance activities and training inspection. This will help to promptly remedy the negatives and weaknesses of the constituent elements of universities, as well as investment in the development to ensuring the necessary conditions through maintaining reach quality standards, facilitating the training process to meet the social needs of the local universities (Son, & Ngoc, 2013).

In the light of the above discussion one thing is clear that each area has its own important role to play in the development of local universities (Yiping, 2010). This could be ensured through particular tasks and solutions, forecasting demand for human resources, training program development and so on. For many local universities due to their limited resources it is essential to provide innovative solutions through training and socialization training is particularly important (Minh, 2014).

4. Conclusion

The development of local universities depends on many initiatives as discussed above. In order to perform effectively it is necessary to focus for introducing some basic reforms, comprehensive education and training programmes for local universities. In this regard, the universities' leaders need to implement fully implement the plans and procedure developed and programmes in order to achieve the goals of academic development. Thus, to create powerful shifts in "Training to meet the needs of society in terms of quantity and quality of human resources", will contribute positively in promoting local human capital development through training and utilizing the resources which will have a better impact on the surrounding areas and its economic conditions.

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