

# **Developing high-quality human resources in Vietnam amid international integration**

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**Abstract:**

*Developing high-quality human resources is a top priority for Vietnam amid international integration. Despite a large population, there are still significant deficiencies in high-quality human resources. In the context of international competition, the demand for highly skilled and specialized labor is increasing. Vietnam faces significant challenges in meeting these demands. Compared to developed countries, the quality of human resources in Vietnam still lags far behind. Many workers lack expertise and skills, especially in technology and management fields. This hinders the economy in adopting and developing new technologies. To address this issue, Vietnam needs to implement various measures, including improving the quality of education and training, promoting cooperation between educational institutions and businesses, and innovating educational methods to enhance the creativity and practical skills of workers. Additionally, attracting foreign investment needs careful attention to create employment opportunities and development for high-quality human resources.*

**Keywords:** *Human resources, high-quality, Vietnam, integration*

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Date of Submission: 01-04-2024

Date of acceptance: 08-04-2024

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## **I. Introduction**

Human resources, especially high-quality human resources, are among the foremost important factors in any country's economic and social development strategy. During the process of international integration, to develop on par with countries in the region and worldwide, the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam have consistently emphasized that human beings are at the center of development. Developing high-quality human resources is a crucial breakthrough. The 13<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress advocates for "Promoting the development of human resources, especially high-quality human resources, to meet the requirements of the fourth industrial revolution and international integration. Developing a team of leading experts, scientists; focusing on technical labor force, digital labor force, technology management labor force, management labor force, social management and organization of life, and human care". With the development of education and training, the number of highly skilled laborers is increasing. However, the current quality of human resources in Vietnam still has many shortcomings, failing to meet the demands of economic and social development. Therefore, recognizing the reality and proposing solutions to this issue is necessary.

### **The current status of high-quality human resources in Vietnam**

#### *High-quality human resources worldwide*

High-quality human resources represent the most essential segment of the workforce. They are individuals with the health, expertise, exemplary ethical qualities, and the ability to adapt quickly to technological changes, creatively applying the knowledge and skills acquired through training in the production process, contributing to the most effective socio-economic development. In general, high-quality human resources are characterized by physical fitness, intellectual capacity, personality, and social competence. According to these criteria, the countries with the highest rankings include Switzerland, Finland, Singapore; followed by the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Despite being the world's largest economy, the United States ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in high-quality human resources due to its health ranking at 43<sup>rd</sup> [2].

In the era of globalization, with the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, significant strides have been made in the global economic development process. However, alongside these positive trends, hundreds of millions of workers are expected to lose their jobs in the coming years. Numerous jobs will disappear, and the labor market will witness a stark polarization between low-skilled and high-skilled labor groups. Consequently, the advantage of cheap labor in the Asian region, including Vietnam, is gradually diminishing. This poses a significant challenge for Vietnam amid international integration.

### *Current high-quality human resources in Vietnam*

Compared to other countries in the region and globally, Vietnam possesses a vast labor force. According to 2022 statistics, Vietnam's total population is 99.46 million, ranking second in Southeast Asia. Among them, the labor force in the working age group is 52.1 million, accounting for 68.9% of the population.

The increase in Vietnam's population corresponds to a strong growth in the labor force. This indicates that Vietnam's labor force is capable of meeting the demand for labor supply for domestic and foreign enterprises.

Despite the large quantity, the quality of Vietnam's human resources remains low on the international scale, with insufficient skilled laborers. The proportion of skilled laborers is only 26.4%.

Laborers with training and certification, ranging from vocational training to university and postgraduate levels, account for 20.92%. Over the past decade, the proportion of trained laborers has increased significantly, but still, 73.6% of the workforce lack professional training [3].

According to forecasts from McKinsey & Company, Vietnam is currently lacking approximately 15% of highly skilled labor and has an excess of 10% of low-skilled labor. The current workforce fails to meet the requirements to operate and control modern machinery and equipment. This is a major concern amid deepening international integration.

Continuing to delve into specific capabilities, regarding physical fitness: The physical fitness and stature of Vietnamese workers have been improving and gradually rising. However, compared to countries in the region (Japan, Thailand, Singapore, China, etc.), Vietnam's average height, endurance, and flexibility are still lower. The average height of Vietnamese men is only 164.4cm (13cm shorter than the World Health Organization standard), while the average height of Vietnamese women is 153.4cm (10cm shorter than the WHO standard). The height of Vietnamese youth is significantly lower compared to other countries in the region, for example, 8cm shorter than Japan and South Korea, 7cm shorter than China, and 5-6cm shorter than Thailand and Singapore [4].

In terms of language proficiency: This is a crucial requirement for students in universities today. In a labor environment with foreign investment, language proficiency is a key factor in helping workers perform efficiently and achieve high productivity. However, only 5% of new graduates are confident in their English proficiency, while up to 27% admit their language skills are very poor. Each year, graduates struggle to find employment because a significant number of them lack English proficiency. This barrier undermines the confidence of Vietnamese personnel in the integration process [5].

Regarding issues related to soft skills, work ethic, professional ethics, industrial culture awareness, and labor discipline, a significant portion of Vietnamese workers, from ordinary laborers to engineers and graduates, receive numerous complaints from foreign companies about their compliance with company regulations and labor safety regulations.

According to the World Bank's evaluation in 2016, the quality of Vietnam's human resources scored 3.79 points (on a scale of 10), ranking 11th out of 12 countries surveyed in Asia (South Korea scored 6.91 points; India scored 5.76 points; Malaysia scored 5.59 points). This assessment also indicates that Vietnam's human resources are weak in quality, lacking dynamism and creativity, and have an industrial labor approach [6].

### **Opportunities and challenges for Vietnam in developing high-quality human resources**

#### *Opportunities*

Currently, international integration brings many positive directions for Vietnam in the process of developing high-quality human resources:

*Firstly*, enhancing the quality of education and expanding the learning environment and training. With the introduction of various international training models along with contemporary knowledge, Vietnamese learners have more opportunities to choose educational environments, keeping pace with trends and grasping the demands of the global labor market. Opportunities to study in foreign educational environments are also facilitated by making it much easier for learners to study abroad.

*Secondly*, with a young and abundant labor force, Vietnam becomes a bright spot in attracting investment from foreign investors. Not only in terms of investment capital, but the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge, sharing management experiences, work ethics, etc., helps Vietnamese workers grasp trends, hone their skills, and meet employment demands.

*Thirdly*, the process of international integration helps Vietnam attract consultants and experts from developed countries. This addresses shortages in the high-level labor force while also providing an opportunity for us to learn from the expertise of this team.

*Fourthly*, the labor productivity of Vietnamese workers is improving, narrowing the gap with countries worldwide. This enhances Vietnam's competitiveness in the global market.

### *Challenges*

Alongside these opportunities, the process of international integration also poses significant challenges for Vietnam's high-quality labor force:

*Firstly*, the integration trend will lead to high competitiveness in the labor market, while Vietnam's vocational education readiness remains slow. Competition between Vietnam and other countries in providing high-quality labor is increasing, demanding a significant improvement in the quality of vocational education to meet regional and global standards, enhancing the recognition of qualifications between Vietnam and other countries.

*Secondly*, the quality of Vietnam's current labor force still has many limitations. The proportion of trained labor in the working age group is low, and there is still a shortage of highly skilled labor to meet market demand and integration requirements. The gap between vocational education and the needs of the labor market is widening. Meanwhile, the shifting economic structure and model change the supply and demand in labor, while academic institutions have yet to catch up with the trend in the use of labor by enterprises.

*Thirdly*, the domestic and global labor markets require workers to meet professional standards, but the national vocational skill standards system is still under construction and is initially aiming towards regional and global standards. This remains a constraint for Vietnamese workers.

*Fourthly*, Vietnam will have to deal with the issue of population aging, which will gradually erode the advantage of the young labor force over time. Another issue is that the economy will be significantly affected by climate change, causing some sectors to decline sharply and affecting competitive advantages.

### **Enhancing the quality of high-quality human resources during international integration**

The development of high-quality human resources in the process of international integration requires a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities in the training and utilization of human resources. This is a task for the entire society, the responsibility of leadership at all levels, educational and managerial authorities, businesses, families, and the individuals themselves. To build a high-quality workforce, Vietnam needs to implement a comprehensive range of solutions. Specifically:

- It is necessary to develop a human resource development strategy linked to the socio-economic development strategy. Shifting the current training paradigm from one based on available resources to one based on the demands of the economy and society is essential. Training should be oriented towards the trends and development needs of the Vietnamese economy, addressing the correct utilization, and embracing global best practices. Hence, collaboration between universities and businesses is imperative. Universities should engage with businesses from the training phase through research, ensuring that students meet training requirements and market demands.
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training is essential. Education and training must be quality-assured from preschool to higher education, focusing on comprehensive development from moral qualities, physical fitness to work competence and necessary skills.
- Innovating educational methods to adapt to global integration is crucial. Currently, traditional education programs, heavily laden with theory and academic achievements, impose significant pressure on learners, leading to passivity and limiting creativity. Thus, comprehensive innovation in knowledge systems and training methods is necessary, with learners at the center, aiming to enhance work capacity, creativity, and practical skills. Theoretical teaching should be accompanied by practical applications to develop workers' soft skills, enhancing adaptability to real working environments. Educational institutions need to further develop high-quality vocational fields, such as digital technology, information technology, energy, new materials, and biotechnology, to empower workers to master the current digital revolution.
- Implementing effective salary policies, rewards, and incentives; valuing talent recruitment policies. Reforming salary regimes for teachers and lecturers to motivate them to focus on their profession. Particularly, there should be supportive policies to encourage students, teachers, and skilled workers. This will attract a majority of laborers to vocational training, encouraging lifelong learning.
- Raising awareness among workers about the importance of learning and training to improve their qualifications. Currently, a significant proportion of Vietnam's workforce has low qualifications. Furthermore, the trend of investment from third-world industrial countries is increasing, leading to a large number of unskilled workers entering this sector. This creates a mentality of "not needing a university degree" and still having good jobs. This is an inevitable reality in the integration process of developing countries. However, it should be recognized that maintaining a high proportion of low-skilled labor at a high level will significantly reduce the possibility of investment attraction, linkage with high-level labor environments, and modern science and technology. Thus, the strategy to improve the quality of human resources is crucial for the country's development, and workers need to recognize the importance of this issue.
- Learning from experiences and effective training models from countries worldwide. Observing and learning from global human resource development experiences will provide Vietnam with valuable insights to develop its domestic human resources. Currently, Vietnam lacks a suitable and accurate employee competency

assessment tool. Therefore, standardizing skill, expertise, and competency standards is necessary. This creates a competency framework for each profession, accurately and effectively evaluating human resources.

In summary, Vietnam has the comparative advantage of a large population. However, without systematic and scientific training, this large population becomes a burden on society. Therefore, in the national development strategy, human resources must be prioritized, creating favorable conditions to enhance intellectual capacity, willpower, and confidence. High-quality human resources, with appropriate quantity and structure, rich in intelligence, willpower, and aspirations, are ideal. In the trend of the world economy, which involves both cooperation and competition, to assert our position, we need to seize opportunities, harness our internal strength, with a strong emphasis on developing high-quality human resources.

## **II. Conclusion**

Developing high-quality human resources is a significant challenge for Vietnam, yet it also presents an opportunity for sustainable economic development in the era of international integration. Through improving the quality of education and training, fostering cooperation between schools and businesses, along with innovating educational methods, Vietnam can create a highly skilled workforce that meets the demands of the international labor market. Moreover, attracting foreign investment plays a crucial role in generating employment opportunities and fostering the development of high-quality human resources. Support from international organizations also plays a vital role in enhancing the knowledge and skills of Vietnamese workers. With effective measures and efforts from the government, businesses, and the community, Vietnam can further progress in human resource development, thus contributing positively to the comprehensive development of the nation.

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