



Developing high-quality human resources in the knowledge economy in Vietnam currently

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Abstract

In the trend of integration and globalization, especially in the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution, in order to create momentum for the development of the knowledge economy, countries all focus on developing high-quality human resources. This is also the pioneering force that determines the success or failure of Vietnam on the path of breakthrough development towards forming a knowledge economy in the future. However, the quality of our country's human resources has not made many breakthroughs yet, and there have been still some shortcomings in education and training. The paper focuses on clarifying some issues related to the development of high-quality human resources in building the current knowledge economy in Vietnam, thereby proposing some solutions to develop high-quality human resources in the process of building a knowledge economy in the new context.

Keywords: Development, high-quality human resources, knowledge economy, Vietnam

Introduction

Reality shows that every country that wants to develop its socio-economy must rely on key resources such as: natural resources, capital, science - technology, people...in which human resources are the most important and decisive factor, considered the resource of all resources. High-quality human resources are considered the most important factor determining the success or failure of any country in the process of integration into the new development trend of the era; an inseparable part of the national human resources when that country gradually shifts to a knowledge-based economy. Developing a country's high-quality human resources is the change in quantity and quality of knowledge, skills, physical strength and spirit; it is the process of creating and using comprehensive human capacity for socio-economic development and the perfection of each individual. In Vietnam, high-quality human resources are the quintessence of the country's human resources; they are the core force in realizing the Party and State's guidelines and policies, are participating and will participate in the labor production process, creating high productivity, quality and efficiency with positive contributions to the cause of building and defending the Fatherland.

Contents

1. Developing high-quality human resources in the knowledge economy - Some theoretical issues

High-quality human resources play a role as one of the breakthrough solutions in the country's development; one of the core elements of national competitiveness, reflected in: renovating the organization of the state management apparatus and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of state management; shifting the economic structure; creating modern industries and promoting the development and application of science and technology; improving social labor productivity; promoting the development of all human resources in general; developing the economy in a sustainable direction...

Knowledge economy is an economy in which science and technology become a direct productive force and it is a decisive factor. Developing high-quality human resources is a prerequisite for building a knowledge economy. The knowledge economy can only develop on the basis of high-quality human resources, because this force absorbs, produces knowledge and applies knowledge to all areas of social life.

Developing high-quality human resources in the process of building a knowledge economy in Vietnam is the overall activity of the Party and State, political and social organizations and workers, with the right guidelines, mechanisms and policies, especially focusing on developing education and training to improve physical, intellectual, and mental capabilities to create high-quality human resources, meeting the requirements of integration and sustainable development of the country.

2. The Party's awareness of the role of high-quality human resources

In the trend of globalization, international integration and Revolution 4.0, when the economy is mainly based on knowledge, human resources, especially high-quality human resources, increasingly play a decisive role. Realizing the role of human resources in the requirements of promoting industrialization and modernization, in the process of leading the country's innovation, the human development strategy has always received special attention from the Communist Party of Vietnam, considering it as both the goal and the driving force of the economic and social development process.

Through the Congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam, especially in the period of promoting industrialization, modernization, knowledge-based economy development, and international integration, the Party's awareness of the strategy of improving the quality of human resources, promoting the talents and intelligence of Vietnamese people to build and protect the Fatherland has become increasingly correct and complete.

At the 8th National Congress of Delegates (1996), our Party proposed the following viewpoint: “Taking human resource development as the fundamental factor for rapid and sustainable development” and “improving people's knowledge, nurturing and promoting the great human resources of the Vietnamese people are decisive factors for the success of industrialization and modernization”^[1]. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance and decisive significance of high-quality human resources in the context of deep international integration and international competitive advantages belonging to technology, knowledge, skilled labor...

At the 10th Congress, our Party proposed the policy of “Innovating comprehensively education and training, developing high-quality human resources... revitalizing Vietnamese education”^[2]; in order to successfully carry out the task of promoting industrialization and modernization associated with the knowledge-based economy, it is necessary to develop high-quality human resources, it means, to shift the strategy of developing human resources from breadth to depth. The Party advocates that it must pay special attention to improving the quality of human resources, developing science and technology, education and training; implementing a policy of valuing talents, leading scientists..., attracting foreign experts, especially good Vietnamese experts residing abroad, to participate in teaching and developing science and technology in Vietnam. To develop high-quality human resources, the Party emphasizes the need to innovate the university and postgraduate education system, link training with employment, directly serve the labor transition structure, and rapidly develop high-quality human resources, especially leading experts. Focusing on discovering, nurturing and valuing talents; quickly building a reasonable human resource structure in terms of profession, training level, ethnicity and region.

At the 11th Party Congress, starting from the requirement to implement the general goal: By 2020, to basically turn our country into a modern industrialized country, the Party has identified three strategic breakthroughs: Perfecting the socialist-oriented market economic institution; building and perfecting synchronous infrastructure; and rapidly developing human resources, especially high-quality human resources, in which developing and improving the quality of high-quality human resources are identified as “a decisive factor in promoting the development and application of science and technology, restructuring the economy, transforming the growth model and it is the most important competitive advantage, ensuring rapid, effective and sustainable development”^[3]. This breakthrough is a crucial turning point to focus on enhancing endogenous strength: The knowledge and intelligence of the Vietnamese people need to adapt and make breakthroughs in a dynamic world, in an era of rapid scientific and technological development, and only then can our country's economy achieve rapid, effective, quality and sustainable growth; can we escape the risk of falling into the existing middle-income trap and soon turn our country into a modern industrialized country.

At the 12th Congress, the Party affirmed that focusing on developing high-quality human resources continues to be one of the strategic breakthroughs. The Party emphasized: “it was necessary to synchronously implement mechanisms, policies and solutions to develop human resources,

especially high-quality human resources, to meet the requirements of socio-economic development”^[4].

At the 13th Congress, the Party continues to affirm that people are the center of development and determined to comprehensively develop Vietnamese people: “Considering people as the center, subject, most important resource and goal of development; taking Vietnamese cultural values and people as the foundation, important endogenous strength to ensure sustainable development”. At the same time, the Party affirms: “All policies of the Party and State must aim at improving the material and spiritual life and happiness of the people; implement “promoting the human factor, taking the people as the center; promoting the role of culture - the spiritual foundation of society, the goal and driving force of development”^[5]. The 13th Congress advocates: “Promoting human resource development, especially high-quality human resources, to meet the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration. Developing a team of leading experts and scientists; focusing on technical human resources, digital human resources, technology management human resources, business management human resources; human resources for managing society and organizing life, taking care of people”.

Thus, through the Congresses, the Party's viewpoint on human resource development, especially high-quality human resources, has shown consistency, comprehensiveness and up-to-dateness, meeting the requirements of human resources in the new context of globalization and increasingly deep international integration. Thanks to that, the quantity and quality of high-quality human resources in recent times have achieved some positive results.

3. Current situation of high-quality human resources in Vietnam

Currently, the country's population is 100.3 million people (2023). The labor force aged 15 and over is 52.4 million people, of which the labor force in urban areas is 19.5 million people (accounting for 37.3%), the labor force in rural areas is 32.9 million people (accounting for 62.7%); the female labor force is 24.5 million people (accounting for 46.7%), the male labor force is 27.9 million people (accounting for 53.3%). The labor force participation rate is 68.9%, of which the labor force participation rates of men and women are 75.2% and 62.9% respectively. According to statistics, the current size of Vietnam's labor force is relatively large and has a harmonious structure between male and female workers. This is an abundant resource in implementing the goals of the country's industrialization and modernization^[6].

Regarding the human development index (HDI): During the period 2016 - 2020, HDI of the whole country and most of the 63 provinces and centrally-run cities increased over the years. The country's HDI increased from 0.682 in 2016 to 0.687 in 2017; 0.693 in 2018; 0.703 in 2019 and 0.706 in 2020. Accordingly, from the Group of countries and territories with average HDI in 2018 and previous years, Vietnam joined the Group with high levels in 2019 and 2020. Vietnam's HDI ranking among countries and territories in the world increased from 118th in 2018 to 117th in 2019 and this rank may continue to improve in 2020 when UNDP updates the Ranking. Specifically, the HDI of the whole country and most localities increased, but the

growth rate was low. In 2020, the country's HDI reached 0.706, an increase of only 0.024 compared to 2016 with an average annual growth rate of 0.9%. Although the country's HDI has moved from Group 3 to Group 2, it has been still at the low level of Group 2. In the world HDI rankings, Vietnam's ranking has not improved much and it has still ranked 7th out of 11 countries in the Southeast Asian region. This shows that the quality of education and training in general, and human resource training in particular, has not played a leading role in developing human factors, especially high-quality human resources.

Regarding the structure of trained human resources level: The educational level of Vietnamese human resources has continuously improved over the years. The rate of trained workers has doubled in about 20 years, from 10.3% (in 2000) to 22.8% (in 2019). In the period 2009 - 2019, the educational level of Vietnam's human resources has been improved; the distribution of the labor force by educational level increased sharply in high-level groups and decreased sharply in low-level groups. Not only is the educational level improved, the technical expertise of Vietnamese human resources is also constantly improving. The proportion of the population with technical expertise has increased significantly compared to 2007, up 6.3 percentage points, from 17.7% (2007) to 24% (Quarter II/2020). The proportion of the population with a university degree or higher had the sharpest increase from 4.9% (2007) to 11.1% (quarter II/2020). This shows that Vietnam's higher and postgraduate education has undergone major changes in recent years, contributing to improving the quality of the country's human resources. However, Vietnam still needs to focus and make more efforts in education and vocational training to have a skilled human resource to serve the cause of national construction and development.

The quality of human resources has improved. However, in order to meet the requirements of promoting comprehensive and synchronous industrialization and modernization, developing the digital economy and knowledge economy, Vietnam's human resources still have many limitations. Specifically:

First, the physical and mental strength of human resources have not met the requirements of modern economic development in general and digital transformation in particular. Industrialization and modernization today are setting out requirements in the physical and psychological health of workers. The physical strength and stature of Vietnamese workers have been improved and gradually enhanced in recent times. However, when compared to other countries in the world and in the region such as: Japan, Thailand, Singapore, and China in terms of anthropometric, health, physical, especially neurological and psychological indicators, our workers are even lower than those. This causes difficulties when workers participate in the process of using and operating large, modern machinery and equipment or working in unfavorable environments. The poor physical, health and mental health of Vietnamese workers is due to poor eating and living conditions with inadequate nutrition. At the same time, knowledge, skills, and awareness of psychology and physiology in the process of raising and caring for the young generation have been still low. Therefore, the physical development of Vietnamese workers needs to take into account the reproductive quality factor and the physical, mental and nervous health factor for future workers.

In recent times, our Party and State have issued many policies and guidelines on social development, health care development, infrastructure construction, wages, etc. Thereby, contributing to improving the material and spiritual life of workers, typically Decision No. 641/QĐ-TTg dated April 28, 2011 of the Prime Minister on approving the Overall project on physical and stature development of Vietnamese people in the period 2011 - 2030; Resolution 20-NQ/TW dated October 25, 2017 of the 6th Central Conference, Session XII on Strengthening the work of protecting, caring for and improving people's health in the new situation.... However, the above policies and guidelines have not been effectively implemented in improving the physical strength, physique, mental, psychological and neurological factors of our country's human resources. This requires attention to and improvement of living standards and quality of life, especially health care and nutrition, psychology and physical strength of workers to meet the quality of human resources for the current industrialization and modernization process.

Second, the labor structure has not been reasonable, both in terms of professional education level and regional distribution. The professional education level of Vietnamese workers has been still low compared to the general level of countries in the region and the world. Currently, the proportion of workers with professional education level in our country is only roughly equivalent to that of Indonesia and much lower than that of many other countries in the region, such as: Japan, Korea, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Philippines.... Low professional education level of workers leads to limitations in the application of science and technology, use of modern equipment and machinery in the production process of workers, thereby not increasing labor productivity as well as the quality of goods and services, leading to low competitiveness of the economy. These are major difficulties for the future development of Vietnam's digital economy.

The current structure of professional qualifications of our country's workforce is also unreasonable: The labor force with university and postgraduate training accounts for the largest proportion and is increasing rapidly, while the proportion of labor with college and intermediate qualifications tends to decrease and accounts for a low proportion. In 2020, workers with higher education degrees accounted for 62.08% of high-quality workers, and those with university degrees or higher accounted for 46.25%, while those with intermediate vocational degrees accounted for only 18.33%. This leads to a serious shortage of technical and professional workers with college and intermediate degrees in our country. There has been a large gap between urban and rural areas in the distribution of high-quality labor resources. Although this gap has decreased compared to before, by 2020, the rate of trained workers with jobs in urban areas was 39.7%, 2.43 times higher than in rural areas (with a rate of 16.3%). In 2010, this gap was 3.6 times^[7].

Third, the majority of Vietnamese workers adapt slowly to rapid changes in science - engineering and technology. According to a recent study published by the ILO, in the next two decades, about 56% of workers in five Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, are at risk of losing their jobs due to the replacement of workers by robots, especially in the garment industry. The development of the

digital economy may eliminate a large number of jobs, such as agricultural processing workers, logistics workers... Workers are at high risk of losing their jobs if they lack the necessary skills to adapt and keep up with new jobs without adequate and timely investment in skill development. When entering the digital economy, our country may be under great pressure to solve employment for the surplus labor force and be at risk facing an increase in unemployment in the future. Industrialization and modernization put forward requirements for workers in terms of physical strength, qualifications and labor skills, affecting modern machinery and technology, thereby increasing labor productivity, developing productive forces, and thereby forming a class of workers with high technical qualifications.

Fourth, workers still lack many basic and professional skills to adapt well to the job. The current Vietnamese workforce has not yet equipped with the necessary skills to participate in the job market, including basic and specialized skills. As a result, their dynamism and adaptability to work and career have been still low. Over 65% of domestic enterprises believe that the majority of workers lack the necessary technical skills when entering specific jobs. At the XIII Congress, our Party also said: "The quality of human resources, especially high-quality human resources, has not met development requirements; it has been still heavy on theory and light on practice, and has not paid due attention to social skills, life skills, self-study ability, and creativity". Meanwhile, the acceleration of industrialization and modernization of our country associated with international integration requires workers to have the ability to adapt and be proactive in their work. This requires workers to have the right career orientation or formal training when participating in any job in the career and employment market. At the same time, this requires vocational training for workers in our country to take into account factors such as the interests and abilities of the workers themselves as well as the circumstances and conditions of the family and the needs of the labor market ^[8].

4. Solutions to promote the development of high-quality human resources in Vietnam in the process of building a knowledge economy

Faced with the current shortage of high-quality human resources in Vietnam, the dual impact of integration and the 4.0 industrial revolution is creating both great opportunities and challenges for Vietnam's human resource development.

In terms of opportunities, the integration process will create opportunities for Vietnam to become a destination for many international investment flows, helping to increase investment projects that are pioneering in technology or large-scale, narrowing the gap in labor productivity, increasing foreign direct investment, along with improving management skills, training human resources, contributing to creating many new jobs for workers.... Besides, Vietnam has a great advantage in abundant labor force and young labor structure; it can attract high-quality labor from other countries to work, making up for the shortage of high-quality labor, helping to increase labor productivity, reducing the gap with other economies in the region and the world.

In terms of challenges, competition for high-quality human resources will take place on a global, regional and national scale. Opening up the possibility of labor mobility between

countries requires workers to have high vocational skills and the ability to work in an international environment with standards and criteria determined by the labor market. An increasing competition between Vietnam and other countries in the world in providing high-quality labor resources requires the quality of vocational education to be significantly improved towards regional and world standards in order to enhance the ability to recognize degrees and certificates between Vietnam and other countries.

In the coming time, Vietnam will have to face the problem of population aging, causing the advantage of a young labor force to gradually disappear over time. Another issue is that the economy will be heavily affected by climate change, causing some industries to lose their competitive advantage; labor productivity and job quality have been still low; the operation of the current labor market information system still has many shortcomings; the ability to adapt to change, practical skills, awareness and working style are also significant challenges for Vietnamese workers.

From the above assessments, the author initially synthesizes and at the same time suggests some solutions to develop high-quality human resources in the process of building a knowledge economy in Vietnam in the coming time.

First, continuing to raise awareness throughout society. It is necessary to clearly identify high-quality human resources as the country's most valuable resource. Therefore, we need to continue to popularize so that the whole society has a more correct awareness of the position and role of high-quality human resources in the current context, thereby creating a strong change in awareness at all levels of leadership from the central to local levels. Besides, it is necessary to innovate thinking in using, evaluating and rewarding human resources, based on real capacity and work results and efficiency. In building a knowledge economy, it is necessary to quickly overcome the phenomenon of emphasizing "degrees" in recruiting and evaluating human resources. In addition, it is necessary to promote the socialization of education, gradually perfect the mechanism, promote the supervisory role of the community, encourage learning activities and talent promotion activities, build a learning society, and make the whole society participate in education and training. It needs to build a learning society according to the motto "lifelong learning", "learning everywhere, in all circumstances" ^[9].

Second, continuing to improve mechanisms and institutions. In the coming time, it is necessary to strengthen the summary of practices and innovate theoretical thinking to continuously improve the system of guidelines, policies, and legal regulations, creating a legal corridor for the development of high-quality human resources which are suitable to the requirements of building a knowledge economy. To do this, it is necessary to expand the mechanism for detecting high-quality human resources; having policies for training and fostering high-quality human resources; it needs to be close coordination between human resource management agencies and universities; implementing innovations in salary, housing, insurance, health care policies, creating motivation and an environment so that high-quality human resources can develop their abilities.

Third, focusing on education - training investment. High-quality human resources in Vietnam have been still a problem that needs to be solved. To solve this problem,

innovation in education and training mechanisms is an urgent requirement. Accordingly, it is necessary to strongly and comprehensively innovate education and training, gradually provide high-quality human resources to meet social needs; it is necessary to innovate the approach to building education, changing the philosophy of “learning to know” to “learning to work”; it is necessary to reform the content and training methods according to the practical motto, closely follow the requirements of reality and meet the requirements of building a knowledge-based economy... We must train human resources who have high creativity and adaptability in all circumstances, have the ability to adapt to new jobs, apply new ideas, have teamwork skills, equality in work, have the ambition to become great scientists, good entrepreneurs, excellent leaders, and have the ability to search for and use information. The context of the world and the times is not only opening up prospects and favorable conditions for Vietnam, but also putting our country in front of many risks and challenges in the integration, in which intellectual backwardness is the most worrying thing. As the cradle of training high-quality human resources, universities, colleges, vocational schools, especially higher education, have a great responsibility in creating and developing intellectual potential for the country.

Fourth, continuing to expand international cooperation. Promoting international cooperation to develop high-quality human resources is extremely necessary and important. In the coming time, it needs continue implementing support policies from the state budget and mobilizing socialized capital sources, calling for foreign investment capital to build a number of schools that meet international standards. It is necessary to attract a number of world-class universities to operate in Vietnam; international cooperation to train lecturers at all levels; international cooperation to transfer modern training technology; cooperation to train students and vocational trainees, especially in some key fields... This is an important foundation and premise in building a knowledge-based economy, keeping up with the development trends of the times.

Conclusion

In the knowledge economy, the education system has the opportunity to integrate, compete and move towards the development of the knowledge economy. Nowadays, all countries focus on investing in training and developing high-quality human resources. The education system is both a product of a socio-economic era and an important factor promoting the economic development and social progress of each country. For Vietnam, in order not to fall far behind the general level of advanced countries in the region and the world, we must truly have innovative policies for training and developing high-quality human resources. The synchronous implementation of the above solutions and the participation of all forces will create a comprehensive socio-economic picture and bring Vietnam towards a knowledge economy in the near future.

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