



ENHANCING COMPETITIVE CAPABILITY FOR EDUCATION IN VIETNAM IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

Do Thi Thuy Trang

PhD, University of Finance and Accountancy,
Viet Nam

Abstract:

In the trend of globalization, the development of intellectual standard and training of high-quality human resources, who meet the demands of current society, are seen as very significant targets because developing education does not only aim at building intellectuals standard of the people but also to be a major impetus for the development of a country. The process of globalization requires education background in all countries in general and Vietnamese education in particular to have some proactive switches in order to improve the quality of training that meets the requirements of domestic and foreign labor employment. Improving competitiveness for Vietnam education requires several immediate and long term strategies. Therefore, we have to assess the difficulties and advantages of education in Vietnam as well as the ability of other competitors in the region and worldwide, so we will find the most effective solutions to develop our education.

Keywords: capability; compete; globalization; education; solution

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the study

In the current period of integration and globalization, education plays a very important role in the process of a country development in all aspects, especially the building of human resources, which create people who are fully-trained with knowledge, soft skills, and high technical skills. In addition, they are able to acquire and use advanced technology in order to meet the requirement of high-quality labors in the renovation period.

Globalization will bring a lot of opportunities for development. Accordingly, social life standard is improved; however, there are also many challenges, which increase competitiveness in the context of the market economy. Therefore, the requirement for the government, especially the education sector, is finding the most optimal solutions for the innovation guideline and driving Vietnamese education to develop and meet the requirements of the "flat world" times and the context of

globalization. Nevertheless, these solutions must be consistent with the actual development of the country as well as not to fade away or lose the cultural characteristics of Vietnamese nation. As stated by Mr Nguyen Vinh Hien, the Deputy Minister of MOET Vietnam, *"we are living in a world where the globalization and international integration are becoming a popular trend. In that world, the development and success of a country more or less make an impact on other countries and vice versa"*. From that viewpoint, it can be seen that the developed education not only helps the country develop but also influences other countries. Thus, an advanced education which can make people virtuous and creative, are able to satisfy new criteria of working qualities, capabilities and skills. Moreover, they are capable of creating and applying advanced technologies into their work in order to meet the requirement of high-quality labors; the labor force who can turn out products and enjoy of the global benefits.

Through this research, we would like to delve into and research the following key issues:

1. Specifying the role and significance of education in the era of globalization;
2. Assessing the current status of tertiary education in Vietnam;
3. The quality of human resources aiming at meeting the demands of labor market in the period of integration;
4. The competitive capability of Vietnamese education.

From these issues, we can figure out the advantages, shortcomings as well as weaknesses, which still exist in Vietnamese education, through which we will offer a number of solutions aiming at making contribution to the development of Vietnamese educational background – an education which is capable of competing and integrating into the world.

1.2. Research Methodology

For above research purposes, we will employ the following methods of data collection:

1.2.1. Document researching method

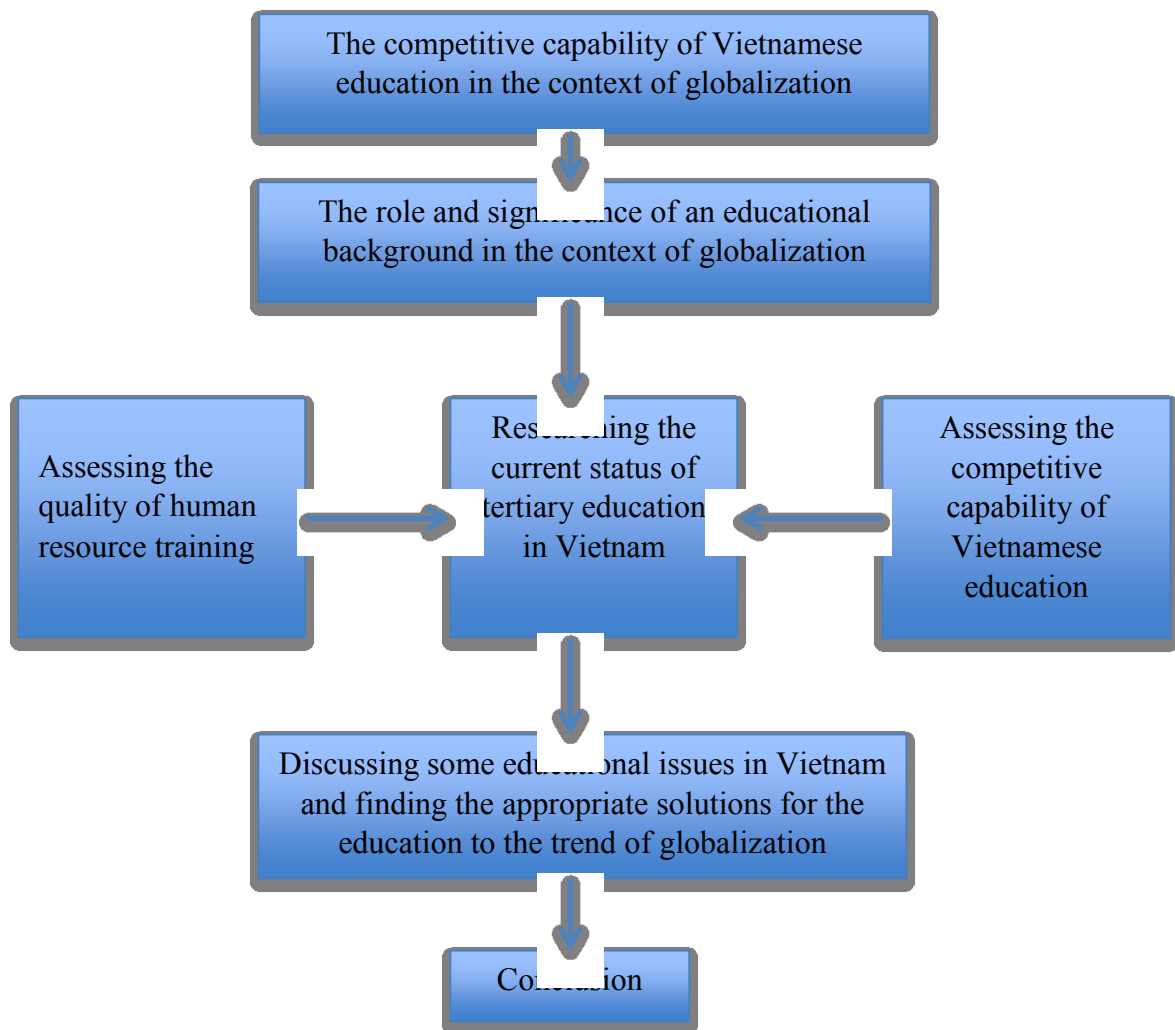
Through collecting references and synthesizing the information from the documents relating to the research issues of the proposal, which would be the rationale and legal basis for implementing the article.

1.2.2. Analysis and synthesis methods

Through analysis and synthesis of the issues, it can be seen the significance of education to the development of the country in the era of globalization, and the evaluation of the current status of tertiary education in Vietnam.

1.2.3. Interview Method

We have conducted interviews, talked to some education experts, lecturers and educational managers in term of some domains relating to the research issues. All the opinions collected will be the basis to find suitable solutions.



1.3. New findings expected after implementing the research

We are able to define the value, importance and key tasks of the educational background in the context of globalization, from which we will have the appropriate orientation in order to enhance the competitive capability for Vietnamese education.

2. Content

2.2. The role and importance of education in the age of globalization

In the era of science and technology, which have rapidly developed, many backwards, outdated and inappropriate working methods have gradually phased out and have been replaced by advanced and modern technological inventions. In some developed countries, they use robots to replace people or these robots can sit on the spot and operate a mass production line etc. Evidently, the process of industrialization - modernization has changed the society. In some net agricultural countries, rudimentary and backward means of production have gradually switched to modernized industrialization by advanced production means which have high efficiency, faster manufacturing and much more productivity. Therefore, the development of education,

which can be seen as a significant motivation to promote the industrialization - modernization process of a country, is the conditions for developing human resources and the fundamental issues towards social development.

Education plays a very important role in the development process of a country. Education is a tool and means of training and developing human resources, improving labor productivity of individuals through the accumulation of knowledge, skills and working attitudes. Education and training of human resources can equip people with knowledge and skills. Therefore, they have more job opportunities and are able to find a suitable job for themselves easily. Thus, they are more successful in their lives. Education will educate, train and equip learners with knowledge and skills in their particular ology. Therefore, they will be capable of working and meeting the demands of current work.

In the trend of globalization context, education is considered a vital measure for the development of people's intellectual standard and the training of high-quality human resources in order to meet the needs of current society. In view of the Vietnamese Government, education must be "the top national policy" because education contributes to improving the intellectual standard of the people and nation. Nowadays, in the developed and globalized society, education plays a role as training intellectuals and helping working labors. Education is the resources to impulse the country and the world to move towards a higher level and continuous development. It can contribute to training the ideal men who are independent, strong-willed and firm political thoughts in order to build and protect the country. These ideal people are powerful enough to fight against the impact of the external world or unwholesome cultural thoughts from other countries while almost countries in the world are in the opening, exchanges and integration period; Education contributes to training the workforce who are proficient at skills and qualified in profession. This is an important force in the construction and reconstruction of the country, as well as a significant force in creating wealth and prosperity for the society and the development of national economy.

Defining the role and importance of education tasks in the new era, Vietnam has been strengthening a definitely strong and stable education, whose quality can meet the general requirements in the trend of globalization and integration. During these years, the Party and Government of Vietnam always consider education as the top interest. A document made in the 11th Communist Party of Vietnam 's Congress affirmed that "Vietnamese education has been innovated basically and comprehensively according to the trend of standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration, and the innovation in the management of mechanism of education, development of teaching staff and staff management are the key issues.

Besides, the resolution made in the 2nd National Conference on education has also defined: "*The basic mission and targets of education is aiming at developing people and generations, who passionately attach to the thoughts of national independence and socialism, are virtuous and determined to build and protect the country, the course of industrialization and modernization of the country. These people and generations, who can preserve and promote the*

cultural values of the nation, are capable of absorbing the quintessence of human culture as well as developing the potential of Vietnamese people and nation. Furthermore, they have a high sense of community and are able to promote their individual positiveness; they not only master scientific knowledge and modern technology but also have innovative thinking with practical skills, modern working style, organizational discipline and good health etc. In this resolution, the specific goals were set forth, such as investing in education - training are taken from regular expenditure and developing expenditure sources in the state budget. The state budget plays a major role in the total resources for education - training and it is used to focus, prioritize the training and fostering of a number of teachers and staff in some important regions; foster talents and support education in some remote and indigent areas." In the 10th Congress of National Party, the Government also stressed, "...education and training are the motivation in the course of industrialization and modernization; they are important conditions for promoting human resources – the basic factor for social development and rapidly sustainable economic growth".

With the guiding ideology, resolutions and the viewpoints which are *"education and training are the top national policy, the career of the Party, State and the whole people. Investment in education is an investment for national development, which have got the priority ahead of many national policies and plans of socio - economic development."* (Resolution of the 8th Assembly, [11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam](#), No. 29-NQ/TW) on November 4th 2013), it can be seen that Vietnamese Government is definitely keen on the development of education and have clearly defined the educational goals, which is very significant, as it will guide the investing strategies for education, and then take the national education to be developed in the right direction and meet the requirements of domestic and international integration period. Therefore, the development of education is a factor for the development of the people's intellectual standards in aiming at meeting the demands of economy, culture, technology and social life. Education and training play a particularly important role for the development of a country, especially the tertiary education which is the main system for training high-qualified labors.

2.2.2. The reality of Vietnamese tertiary education in the current period

2.2.2.1. Achievements

In order to meet the goals of education in the context of innovation, development and integration, in recent years, Vietnamese education has gradually built, reformed, developed and identified the specific targets in accordance with the joint development of the world. School system has rapidly developed to meet the learning demands of all social strata; training quality is also enhanced; professional skills have been gradually improved. In June 2013, the Prime Minister issued the decision which adjusts the network of universities and colleges. Accordingly, by 2020, Vietnam will have 460 universities, colleges, which means that nearly 100 universities will be slashed comparing to the plan of 2007 in order to ensure such criteria as, *"to ensure these universities and colleges to meet the criteria about the quality of teaching staff, area of campus, infrastructure, technologies, and facilities, and to be suitable for investment possibilities of the*

state budget and the mobilization of social resources. By 2010, over 40% of university lecturers and over 30% of college lecturers have Master degree or higher; over 25% of university lecturers and 5% of college lecturers have Doctoral degree. By 2015, 70% of university lecturers and over 50% of college lecturers have Master degree or higher; over 50% of university lecturers and at least 10% of college lecturers have Doctoral degree. By 2020, over 90% of university lecturers and over 70% of college lecturers have a Master degree or higher; Over 75% of university lecturers and at least 20% of college lecturers have Doctoral degree. By 2015, there are 20 universities meeting the above criteria, and in 2020 there was one university ranking among the top 200 universities in the world" (Decision No. 711 / QD-TTg of June 13, 2012 of the Prime Minister).

In reality, the school system in Vietnam includes nearly 700 colleges, universities, and institutes with several forms of management, such as public schools or private schools, so a number of teachers and students have also increased. In 2015, the total number of tertiary students is 1,753,174, the number of freshmen is 470,044; the number of university lecturers is 65,664; the total number of college students is 449,558 and the number of freshmen is 143,635; the number of college lecturers is 24,260, compared with a current population of Vietnam which is about more than 90,000,000 people "(Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, 2015). According to statistics of the Department of Information Science and Technology, National Ministry of Science and Technology, in 2015 it can be shown that in Vietnam today, there are more than 24,5 thousand of Doctors (Ph.D), including 15,000 Doctors (involving Professors, Associate Professors) who are working in the universities and colleges. Vietnam sets a target that by 2030; the education can reach the advanced level in the region.

State budget which invests for education increases rapidly, from 15.3% in 2001 to 20% of total expenditure in 2010. The socialization of education has achieved some important results, especially in mobilizing many investment resources to equip school facilities, open new school and contribute funds for education. The investment resources in education are controlled carefully and increased efficiency in disbursement.

National education has been conducted. Social justice has been carried out. Education has made progress; there are policies and incentives for some poor families, or families who live in remote, mountainous areas or islands. Moreover, ethnic minority people, some poor people, or equality in gender is ensured. Implementation of socialization and international cooperation in education has achieved several satisfactory results. According to the announced statistics from the Education Department of the Ministry of Oversea education and Training of Vietnam, the number of Vietnamese students studying abroad in 2013 is 125,000, equivalent to 15% compared to 2012, this is the strongest growth since 2008-2009 school year until now. In 2014, nearly 110,000 citizens of Vietnam have been studying abroad, now there are about 130,000 Vietnamese students studying abroad and the number of foreign students studying in Vietnam is 20,000 students; facilities for teaching and learning have been gradually well-equipped and modernized, which approaches the advanced development of technology.

2.2.2.2. Limitations of education in Vietnam

Besides the achievements made in recent times, there are also many shortcomings that the government of Vietnam, especially the education sector, should have examined and adjusted. Thus, we should schedule some more appropriate guidelines so that we can follow and adapt to some developing educational background. Some of the most obvious limitations in Vietnamese education are:

Firstly, due to the expansion and diversification of school system with many forms of training, but human resources are limited, the potential use of domestic labor resources as well as the labor export are not fully assessed; Facilities and other fundamental conditions which do not meet the requirements of standardized criteria in education and training lead to some shortcomings such as: ratio of lecturers per students is very high, the majority of students learn the theory without practice, they lack access to the advanced technology and modern world. Especially, in some schools, the enrollment targets are high but facilities for teaching and learning are deficient, their lecturers are only visiting lecturer not faculty members. According to the regulations of Vietnam Ministry of Education, the ratio of lecturers per students is 1 per 25 but the real number is far different from this ratio. The majority of the current ratio of lecturers per students is 1/50, even in some schools; they combine many classes into one class for learning some general subjects. Thus, a lecturer can teach a class of 200 students sometimes. Besides, professional capacity of some lecturers is not still proficient. Currently, there are still many lecturers with Bachelor level still teach tertiary classes (because there is a massive upgrade from the secondary schools and colleges to universities, so the teaching staff has not standardized and upgraded their qualifications and capability yet). At present, the school system in Vietnam includes nearly 700 colleges, universities, institutes, academies and colleges but there is not any university of Vietnam which can rank among the top 1000 schools in the worlds, and the training of human resources still do not meet the demands of society.

Secondly, due to the requirements of standardized proficiency, there are some lecturers who are incompetent still attending class of Masters and Doctors. According to Dr. Mai Van Hung, a lecturer of Hanoi University of Pedagogy 2, *"a large part of officials and lecturers have become lecturers "in name rather than in fact". Many of them who are deficient or are not lecturers have raced to attend Master or Doctoral class in order to get the ISO qualification to cover up the their incompetence nature, or seek opportunities to change their life."* As Prof. Pham Tat Dong, vice president of Vietnam Study Promotion Association, former Deputy Head of the Propaganda Department said, *"Many Doctors are not in real doctoral level, their jobs are not properly trained to their doctoral level or they have got Doctoral degree which can not be used in their work, and sometimes they would like to study further to achieve higher positions"*. These incompetent staff and lecturers may train a generation, whose professional capacity are weak, is essentially inevitable. That is the reason why the quality of education are not ensured; many graduates with weak professional skills are disconcerted with their work and easily fail after being interviewed by employers; in case graduates succeed in a recruitment campaign, then almost of them must be trained in a certain time. According to the review of Prof. Dr. Nguyen Minh Duong – a

member of National Council of education and human development, *"Quality is the first and the survival of the market mechanism. Currently, in our country, many Bachelors and Engineers are redundant due to their unqualified professional skills"*.

Third, the development, expansion and socialization of education are essential and acclaimed; however, that also led to numerous consequences such as: some schools consider education as a kind of business, they only pay attention to how to enroll as many students as possible but they are not keen on the quality of graduates. Besides, some schools open several ologies that they have not enough the expertise staff and infrastructure (they mainly depend on visiting lecturers and renting campus), so that leads to some shortcomings in quality of education such as, moral education, lifestyle, practice skills, independent working skill ... Thus, a workforce has been created but lacks working skills. These working skills are achieved through real work and learning theory attaching to practice. However, currently, a number of tertiary students in Vietnam learn a lot of theory only and without practice.

Fourth, in term of the contents and programs in teaching, they are reformed slowly; teaching methods and facilities are backward and not linked to real life and professional work, especially during the context of development in every aspect and international integration. Some employers and experts totally agree that the training courses in many schools are truly weak. Currently, many enterprises, especially foreign companies, when they recruit employees, they seriously pay attention to employees' working skills, problem- solving skills, behavioural skills, communicative skills, presentation skills, team-work skills ...etc. According to Ms. Pham Hong Dung – the Director of Training Bureau of Hanoi Intercontinental Hotels, *"when hiring an employee, what caught my attention is the working sense, passion for work, attitude towards work, ability to work under pressure and professional working style."* So there is an ongoing paradox that even though there are a high rate of unemployed graduates, many companies still lack employees. Because graduates do not meet the needs of employers and the reason for this circumstance is they only learn theory but not much practice at school.

Fifth, currently, due to the fact that reference points of a number of universities are very low, which has made the quality of education not qualified, and graduates are both weak at professional qualifications and poor in working skills, or are not independent at work ... etc. So, it is difficult for them to get a good job, especially if they want to apply a position in some foreign enterprises. At present, some universities in Vietnam admit the reference points with 12 points per 3 subjects in the entrance examination. The enrolment of candidates who are weak at learning capacity will be trained to be skilled and proficient workforce, which is relatively difficult. According to Ms. Nguyen Thi Lan Huong, the Director of the Institute of Labor and Social Sciences, *"With many universities which have admitted 12 point as the reference points, maybe we should change the name of people with tertiary level to be people with tertiary degree."*

2.2.3. Petitions

In term of education in many countries in general and education in Vietnam in particular, globalization and international integration will provide more opportunities

and development prospect on par with countries which their education are developed. However; there are also many challenges and fierce competitiveness that Vietnamese education has to cope with. If we are incompetent, or we have no strategic objectives and policies, and no reasonable orientation, it is challenging to integrate with the general development of the world and we will easily be dismissed from the general development trend of the times "flat world" as present. At the first opening forum of innovative education for educational leaders of Southeast Asian nations celebrated at Training Center of SEAMEO Vietnam, according to the speeches of Deputy Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam, Mr. Nguyen Vinh Hien, *"in order to help build an ASEAN community after 2015, we need to build ASEAN into a block of prosperity, cooperation and development. If we desire to do that, all countries in ASEAN need to consider the renewal of education and training as a key task in order to find the right guideline aiming at building a labor force who have problem-solving skill, knowledge, and skills to work in a much more competitive environment."* From these sayings, it can be seen that globalization and integration have put on the shoulders of education managers, policy scheduler and school headmasters a heavy responsibility, which is how to find a suitable way and helps our education background keep up with the other countries in all aspects in order to meet the requirements of the society in the new era.

A developed education which can train high-quality human resources and meet the labor needs of society as well as are capable of cooperation and labor export is an education which is capable to compete with other countries with developed education background. Competitive capabilities cover a variety of factors such as institutions, policies and factors which determine the effectiveness of training and create beneficial human resources for the society.

Currently, Vietnam is a developing country, which is ready to adapt to the advanced technology base and the essence of humanity, is ready to open, exchange and cooperate with all countries in the world. There are some advantages of Vietnamese education such as, this is a country living in peace with a stable political background; Our country has integrated and exchanged with many countries in the world; Our country has been taken interests and invested by the Government with the viewpoint "education is a top national policy", which the Government spends 20% of the total expenditure budget for education; Our country is fully capable and willing to exchange and cooperate with other countries in education and other sectors; The scale of tertiary system has been expanded in various forms, which are training of multidisciplinary and multi-sector with nearly 700 colleges, universities, institutes and academies, have a connection training with foreign countries (at present, there are about 130,000 students in Vietnam studying abroad and about 20,000 foreign students studying in Vietnam); Training quality is increasingly standardized and improved. These advantages are considered as the upper hand to help facilitate Vietnam education to get more opportunities to access the inevitable trend of international integration and globalization as well as facilitate the learning process and experience exchanging in the aim at building an advanced education in the region and in the world; The international integration process are carried out extensively on education in a global scale, which can

create favorable opportunities to reach new trends, new knowledge, modern educational model, taking advantage of the external resources and providing opportunities for the development of education.

However, there are many difficulties and shortcomings existing in Vietnamese education such as: quality of training has not met the demand of workforce, which makes the rate of unemployed graduates rather high while the labor market still lacks labors. In recent years, there are about 400,000 people graduating from universities and post-graduates each year, but the number of graduates with university degrees are unemployed in 2015 was 192 500 people, making up 1/5 of the total number of unemployed people nationwide; Many universities can not afford to equip facilities for teaching and learning or teaching facilities are poor and backward as well as science and technology were under-developing compared to the education in other countries; Teaching staff in many universities are both insufficient and weak in profession and their capabilities in scientific research are not really independent; Research and application of educational scientific results are limited and can not meet the of educational development; The quality and efficiency of scientific researches in universities are still low; scientific researches do not closely associate with production reality as well as do not handle the relationship between quantity and quality.

In order to overcome these difficulties and shortcomings of Vietnamese education, we launched a number of solutions to make contribution to help Vietnamese education develop on par with the education background in other countries and be able to compete with several countries with advanced education background.

Firstly, mechanisms and policies should be built reasonably. Investment and development in expanding school system must be synchronized with the development of infrastructure and teaching staff. There must be specific strategy and targets as well as plan of development of human resources who can meet the requirements of development trend and are capable of accessing and using advanced technologies.

Secondly, it is very necessary to improve the quality of education. Quality of education must be set as the first criterion and should not depend on quantity of learners or enrolment targets but disregard the graduate quality, which can make human resources weak, unable to meet the needs of highly qualified workers, not enough capability to join the international education market and implement the international service in education. Therefore, the export of Vietnamese education is very weak and nearly unable to compete with foreign countries, especially in fields of technology and science.

Thirdly, the development and standardization of teaching staff are necessary requirements in the context of development and integration. Teachers always have to foster and enhance their professional skills in order to be able to do scientific research independently and are capable of renewing the curriculum. Teachers need to deliver their lessons with appropriate methods, focus on improving their professional morals, love teaching job, are dedicated to teaching job and have working style in order to be an example for pupils and students.

Fourthly, the content, teaching methods, examination, test and evaluation of education quality need renewing in line with outcome standards which are according to the requirement of social workforce and international integration process. Some of the advanced contents and programs of science and technology in the world should be refined and applied in teaching and learning.

Fifthly, education is the top national policy. Investment and development for education need to be carried out and ensured the financial resources to equip facilities for teaching and learning, improve the quality of social life for teachers and staff, increase investment in some core ologies and schools as well as improve education quality in order to be able to compete gradually with other education backgrounds in developed countries.

Sixthly, there are some preferential incentives for faculty members who are actually talented, which are the motivation for them to link earnestly to their teaching job; there are some policies to attract talents, which ensures their life to keep their mind in their work and do scientific research; Some individuals and groups, who make beneficial contribution to the development of education, need encouraging and rewarded timely.

3. Conclusion

It can be asserted that in the current period of integration and globalization, education plays a very important role in the process of country development in all aspects, especially the building of human resources, which can build people who are fully-trained with knowledge, soft skills, highly technical skills. In addition, they are able to acquire and use advanced technology in order to meet the requirement of high-quality labors in the renovation period. An advanced education can build people who are virtuous, creative, are able to satisfy new criteria of working qualities, capabilities and skills. Moreover, they are capable of creating and applying advanced technologies into their work in order to meet the requirement of high-quality labors; the labor force who can turn out products and enjoy of the global benefits. If Vietnamese education carries out the strategic objectives set above fully and appropriately, fair competition and development of education as well as capability in attracting students locally and internationally in Vietnam are no longer difficult issues and they are important human resources meeting the requirement of work force.

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