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Internationalization of Higher Education-Experience of Some Asian Countries and Lessons for Vietnam

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Abstract

Internationalization of higher education is considered an inevitable development trend of national education, especially in the context of globalization and international integration. The internationalization of higher education has far-reaching effects on changes in the structure, function and operating model of the global higher education system, bringing huge benefits to higher education institutions in Viet Nam. In the article, the authors have mentioned some concepts of internationalization of higher

education, introduced some lessons of internationalization experience in higher education of some developed countries in the region. Such as Japan, South Korea, and China, thereby providing some implications for administrators to ensure high quality and efficiency for the internationalization of higher education in Vietnam, thereby helping to the university changes for the better to develop and integrate.

Keywords: Internationalization of Higher Education, Asian Experience, Lessons for Vietnam

1. Introduction

During the integration period, to meet the increasing demand for a high-quality workforce, promote the international competitiveness of higher education in Vietnam. Internationalizing higher education is becoming an increasingly urgent requirement. All universities can not only try to operate effectively in the domestic market but also reach out to the world in order to connect globally and create a new generation of international citizens. Universities around the world generally and the region particularly have been increasing internationalization to ensure that their students are fully prepared in terms of knowledge, experience, skills and attitudes to be ready to participate and compete effectively in the international labor market. Therefore, internationalization has become one of the leading criteria to evaluate the quality, the quality and the reputation of a training institution has become an essential part of many development strategies at universities around the world.

In addition, it is essential for Vietnam to selectively refer to the experiences of developing higher education in general and internationalizing higher education in particular from developed countries. It helps Vietnam minimize the costs waste opportunities and quickly catch up with world trends.

Therefore, the authors decided to work on this study to provide an overview of the internationalization of higher education. Using a qualitative approach, the authors analyze the experience of internationalizing higher education in some Asian countries and provide some management implications to help the internationalization of higher education in Vietnam deployed effectively. Secondary data including articles and documents on internationalization are the main tools used in this research.

2. Overview of Internationalization of Higher Education

Internationalization plays an important role in the transformation of business, economics, geography and higher education. Internationalization is an intentional process of integrating international, cultural and globalization aspects into the purposes and functions of education, improving the quality of training and research for all students, college students, lecturers and staff in educational institutions; At the same time, creating meaningful contributions to society (De Wit & Hunter, 2015) ^[3]. From this definition it can be seen that internationalization is important in higher education, it is considered one of the leading trends determining the survival of modern universities (Sharipov, 2020) ^[10]. Therefore, university administrators need to make appropriate decisions and policies for universities to transform their roles and functions to adapt to the demands and pressures of the external global environment.

There is a lot of discuss about the concept of internationalization of higher education. This is not a new term; it has been used a lot in the political and educational fields since the early 1980s. Internationalization of higher education is a process in which

functions such as teaching, researching and services of the higher education system are more compatible with international and multicultural needs (Ebuchi, 1990) ^[4]. According to Knight (2004) ^[6], Internationalization of education is defined as the process of integrating internationally, interculturally or globally into different educational purposes, functions or provisions. Internationalization of higher education is the totality of measures to strengthen and promote the creation of an international academic community, with the aim of leading students to prepare for a solid career in an economic and social environment globalization society (Sharipov, 2020) ^[10].

The process of internationalization in higher education has transformed the higher education landscape over the past two decades. In the context of globalization and the development of the industrial technology, there are four popular models for implementing the internationalization of higher education:

Firstly, universities can import knowledge from advanced schools around the world by recruiting high-quality researchers, lecturers, and educational managers from other countries;

Secondly, universities can hire a foreign partner to conduct training and evaluate students' study programs. Universities can also send their students abroad to study at a number of affiliated universities or use joint training programs with other universities;

Thirdly, universities can enroll international students to study at their universities to expand the training market. This model is applied to bring income to the universities, while attracting many international students to study, creating prestige for the country and the reputation of higher education, creating a basis for promoting ideas and culture;

Fourthly, some universities internationalize with direct investment from foreign countries. They will build a university campus in another country and run the training and research activities exactly like the headquarters.

3. Current Status of Internationalization of Higher Education in Vietnam

In Vietnam, internationalization of higher education has been oriented by the Government from Resolution No. 14/2005/NQ-CP dated November 2, 2005 of the Government on Fundamental and comprehensive innovation of Vietnamese education for the period 2006–2020 ^[1], which clearly states the goals of basic and comprehensive innovation in education. Additionally, in the socio-economic development strategy for the period 2021-2030, Document of the 13th Party Congress: human resource development, education and training to fulfill the high-quality human resource requirements of the fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration. To gradually innovate in this direction, university administrators have made important decisions that bring certain effectiveness to the internationalization process. The proposed projects and programs focus mainly on internationalizing the teaching staff, training programs and building international universities.

Over the past two decades, internationalization activities in education have taken place vigorously, increasing in scale and diversifying in form, purpose, content and audience. In the period 2016-2021, there were about 45,000 international students coming to study in Vietnam (an average of about

4,000 to 6,000 students/year), much more modest than the number of Vietnamese students abroad, only in 2020, the number of international students who was studying and working abroad is 190,000 people. (Thu, 2022) ^[7]. In addition to the presence of international universities that attract many students such as RMIT and British University Vietnam (BUV), there are also schools established under government-level cooperation agreements such as Vietnamese-German and Vietnamese-Japanese, Vietnamese-French. The total number of students studying at these schools also reaches tens of thousands. Even within domestic universities, there are up to 485 transnational education training programs between Vietnamese and foreign higher education institutions. These programs are often taught in two languages: English and Vietnamese.

Besides the university-level cooperation efforts, the Ministry of Education and Training has implemented an advanced program project (Decision No. 1505/QĐ-TTĐ of the Prime Minister) in which the training programs are international programs. Reputable products with quality inspection are imported to Vietnam. In addition, there are other types of programs such as high-quality programs, talented bachelor's programs organized by training universities that also have different internationalization content, or are taught entirely in English or other programs. The course curriculum is designed to be similar to a course at a foreign university.

In addition, at the working session of Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc with leaders of Vietnam National University - Hanoi, Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang University on November 2, 2017, the Prime Minister also requested to focus on investing in the infrastructure. As a result, Vietnam National University - Hanoi, Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang University can become an excellent and leading higher education institutions in Vietnam, gradually becoming universities. Regional and international level. These universities have provided vision, mission and goals for each specific period: Vietnam National University – Hanoi with the vision of becoming the leading university in Asia and the world before 2045, Vietnam National University – Hanoi with the vision of becoming a leading university in Asia and the world before 2045, Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City with the vision of becoming one of the top university systems in Asia, the University of Da Nang with the vision of becoming one of the three largest university centers of the country and ranked in the top 50 universities top of Southeast Asia area.

Many lecturers, after receiving doctoral training abroad and returning to domestic universities, have made efforts to innovate training programs and subject programs in many ways such as introducing new content and changing course structure. studies and programs, applying new teaching organization methods, and bringing international academic standards into the domestic academic environment. Through the community of researchers and university lecturers, indicators such as the number of ISI/SCOPUS articles, number of citations or H-index are used to measure the quality and influence of publications. and scientific research works are all Western standards "imported" into Vietnam. According to the announcement of Quacquarelli Symonds Education Organization on the ranking results of the best universities in Asia 2021, Vietnam has 11 universities on the ranking, including Vietnam National University – Hanoi and Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City are the

two universities with the highest rankings.

The effort to innovate and reform in higher education on a national scale is the conversion of the yearly system to credit, and Quality Accreditation activities within the scope of AUN-QA. Some universities in Vietnam have innovated educational methods based on educational models of some countries around the world. Specifically, Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City has applied the CDIO model - an international program to train engineering students with the ability to form ideas (Conceive) - design (Design) - implement (Implement) - Operate, proposed by MIT (USA) and Sweden to train comprehensive engineers. Accordingly, Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City has achieved international accreditation standards AUN-QA and ABET in the period 2010–2014. In addition, there are also many educational cooperation projects between Vietnam and other countries such as the Higher Technical Education Alliance Program that cooperates between many universities in Vietnam and the US.

It can be seen that internationalization activities have brought many changes, contributing to bringing a new look to Vietnam's education system. However, Vietnam is a developing country and is at a disadvantage in the internationalization process in terms of the balance of "export" and "import" of educational services and products. Vietnam's educational relations activities are mainly import-oriented, so that they face many problems in quality management and implementation.

First of all, one of the big problems is the implementation of imported forms of education. The credit system has been introduced into universities for more than twenty years, but the number of universities and colleges that accurately, fully and successfully implement this form of training organization is not many. In addition to the lack of information technology platform to support the credit organization process, leading to the ineffectiveness and the unreasonable in allocating the teaching and practicing hours. Secondly, in addition to cases of genuine links and international quality, there are countless cases of links of poor quality, even with elements of fraud. One of the noises that has occurred during the educational integration process is the buying and selling of international degrees from fake diploma mills or the organization of transnational training with 'ghost' schools abroad. Higher education once broke through with doctoral degrees awarded by the University of the South Pacific, the University of Southern California, and foreign cross-border training programs between the non-existent Asian International University and a non-existent prestigious public school. We can be mentioned the link between My Vietnamese International School and International University - INU (USA) or North-West University of America. After many cases of poor quality training links, international training links at the university level are now more strictly managed.

Thirdly, hastily importing and applying foreign educational programs without carefully calculating implementation conditions can cause the failure of the program. VNEN is the most typical case of importing an educational model into Vietnam on a national scale. This is a copied model from the EN model, Colombia's new school which has been successful in a number of countries, mainly in South America - Latina area. During it was piloted and then replicated in Vietnam, this program, with many opposing praises and criticisms, became the most controversial issue

in the system. As a result, many lecturers and parents in some provinces protesting, responded drastically to the program forcing the Provincial Department of Education and Training to stop VNEN.

Internationalization has contributed to enriching and diversifying the Vietnamese higher education system in terms of school architecture and operations. However, the problems of inequality and injustice have emerged because internationalization is being carried out in a fragmented and reactive manner. This privileges a small group of elite students who can afford to pay tuition and meet the entry requirements of internationalized programs such as the high-quality, Advanced Program at University. At the same time, the admission to transnational and dual degree programs also raises questions about quality, because these programs often do not require entrance exams or admit students based on lower academic scores than those of other students' requirements for other programs at Vietnamese public universities. Furthermore, internationalization activities are primarily focused on high-demand career fields, especially on business and accounting. However, the expected results cannot be achieved without the proper policies and strategies to support universities and individuals in promoting effective and sustainable internationalization.

It is visible that there have been many efforts in management and implementation, the internationalization of higher education in our country still has many limitations in both policy and practice. Consequently, many internationalization policies have not been applied consistently and efficiently in practice, especially the activities of each level in higher education institutions have not been truly systematic after the implementation of the law carry out internationalization.

4. Internationalization Experience of Some Countries Around the World

For universities, internationalization is implemented in many forms such as opening training facilities abroad, opening international programs taught in English, transferring degree programs and brands, training cooperation and degree with schools in the host country. Internationalization takes place at both the micro level such as in lecturers' practice, in program development, training organization, management, administration, and quality assurance of the school, and at the macro level in building build educational models and policies.

Internationalization of higher education has different aspects and forms in different countries. Internationalization of higher education is an issue of great concern to countries in the Asian region. Many Asian countries in recent decades have undergone a major expansion of higher education, and are on the verge of creating world-class universities, typically Japan, South Korea, and China. Services for commercialization and internationalization of higher education such as expanding international branch facilities, participating in international professional organizations, international research cooperation, students exchange,... are being strongly developed in these countries.

4.1 China's Experience

China is a country with a long Asian cultural tradition. The economic innovation policy made the Chinese Government shows the need to train highly qualified professional forces to modernize the country. Within three decades, since 1976,

the number of students in China reached nearly 25 million people, leading China into the largest higher education system in the world (Hammond, 2016) ^[5]. Therefore, China has had a strong need for internationalization and globalization to maintain the competitiveness. During this period, China mainly followed the import model. Starting in the 2000s, when China achieved a fairly significant level of economic development, its internationalization strategy changed drastically towards placing more emphasis on positioning China in the global higher education map.

The managing role of the Chinese Government has not diminished even though marketization and competition play the main role in the higher education picture. At the same time, China has been very determined to build a number of excellent research universities within the policy of international integration, aiming for "international class" and proving national status. The state has invested in two key universities - Tsinghua and Beijing, with an amount of about 225 million USD in the first 3 years.

China has modernized and internationalized its education system in designing programs, textbooks, testing and evaluation according to international standards, training lecturers, infrastructures and facilities. China also advocates maximum use of modern international programs and textbooks. China's top ten universities have integrated almost all of the textbooks being used at Harvard, Stanford and MIT. Furthermore, universities also teach science and technology subjects directly in English; increase the inviting of professors, experts, principals, and directors who are overseas Chinese or foreigners. Since 2001, the government has required that 5 to 10% of training programs at leading universities must be taught in English. China has sent nearly one million international students, including fee-paying students, to study in more than 100 countries and regions, more than half of whom study in the United States; 1/3 of them have returned home to directly contribute to the construction and development of modern China, the remaining 2/3 are important bridges and collaborators to help China cooperate in doing things. eat with the world (Zweig & Rosen, 2003) ^[11].

China invests in laboratories, research equipment and funding to call on leading scientists and scholars from abroad to work to improve the quality of education. In addition, to attract more domestic and foreign scholars, unlimited reward policies as well as working conditions, research funding... are widely advertised, creating competition between universities. learn.

To lay the foundation for the internationalization, China pursues a strategy that combines administrative autonomy and strict accountability in state management. Universities are allowed to make management decisions without state intervention, from choosing foreign textbooks, designing training programs, modernizing research and teaching equipment to self-regulation. Recruiting domestic and foreign lecturers in case of lacking, etc. to achieve quality standards set by the State. However, schools must also be accountable to the State for ongoing issues to ensure these activities are still directed towards the common goals and vision of education of the university and the country.

The allocation of state budget to Chinese universities was previously based on the criteria of the number of enrolled students, but has now been changed to the following criteria: the number of research grants, the number of patents that the school receives. grant; or lecturers' scientific publications in

peer-reviewed international scientific journals. Therefore, it has created transparency and pressure for universities to improve quality and evaluate lecturers more objectively.

4.2 South Korean Experience

In Asia, South Korea is considered one of the countries with high quality education and competitive education systems in the world. South Korea mostly focuses on quality instead of quantity. Therefore, university programs always prioritize the application of information technology and effectively utilize the internet for learning, which is an outstanding advantage of South Korean education. The process of internationalizing South Korean higher education takes place in the context of the South Korean Government reforming the Ministry of Education into the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, with a clear emphasis on the element of building human capital. for the development of high-level science and technology, serving the national economy. In particular, internationalization of higher education is an important part of this reform process. When studying the internationalization process of South Korean higher education, it can be seen that the Government's internationalization policies have contributed positively to building the international competitiveness of universities. The criteria used to measure the level of internationalization of a university in South Korea are: Number of international students; Number of international lecturers; Number of subjects taught in English; Number of international academic conferences/activities organized by the school annually; Number of cooperation agreements signed with foreign schools; Dormitory for international students; Government funding for international activities.

Along with Government support, pressure from the business sector and the needs of the economy have pushed universities to innovate and increase internationalization. The internationalization of South Korean higher education is closely linked to the need for skillful human resources and the country's development strategy. The Government creates conditions to improve the scientific research productivity of domestic scholars by building key universities with world-class research capacity. The Korean Studies Project aims to recruit 50,000 international students by 2010 as well as increase the percentage of international students from 0.3 to 1% (Dewi, 2018) ^[2]. Besides actively sending students abroad to study, recruiting foreign professors has become a trend at universities in South Korea. Accordingly, the number of foreign professors in Korea increased from 1,390 professors in 2003 to 6,130 professors in 2013. In addition, since the early 2000s, the South Korean government has encouraged and then required staff at universities take courses in English and supplement the English curriculum (Dewi, 2018) ^[2].

Over and above that South Korea also implements many policies to attract international students such as: tuition incentives, regardless of international students and Korean students; Study abroad policy for international students in South Korea is quite open; preferential accommodation and transportation for international students; Visa support for international students who are stuck and cannot return to their home country due to entry restrictions or the expiration of their student visa.

4.3 Japanese Experience

Japan is a country with the most achievements in education

in Asia, having paved way for the process of internationalizing higher education. The internationalization of higher education in Japan is carried out according to the model of both exporting its educational system to other countries and, at the same time, adapting its educational structure to the world by importing education from developed countries. In 1970, Prime Minister Nakasone launched outstanding plans such as a strategy to recruit 100,000 international students to study at Japanese universities by 1983 to improve relations with other Asian countries (Ota, 2018) ^[9]. In 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government officially promoted the trend of internationalization of higher education with the policy of increasing the number of Japanese students studying abroad from 60,000 to more than 120,000 through the following programs: Resurrect Japan, Japan goes global and connects to universities. With the TOBITATE project - Young Ambassador Program, Japanese students are sponsored to study abroad through funds contributed by businesses to train global human resources. Additionally, Japan also attracts international students to enroll in Japanese universities to more than 300,000 students in 2020 through the following programs: 300,000 international students plan, Global 30, Exchange Project. Inter-university student exchange (Ota, 2018) ^[9]. Statistics on the number of foreign students coming to Japan show that 93.3% of foreign students come from Asia because universities in Japan are close to Asian residents.

On the other hand, Japan has established many local universities, private universities, and short-term training colleges. In 2020, Japan has 780 universities, including 86 national universities, 90 local universities, 604 private universities (accounting for over 75%), creating a diversification of training types, leading to competition in improving the training quality of schools. Japan has set a target for 10 domestic universities to be on the list of the world's top 100 universities by 2024 according to the Top Global Universities Project. To achieve the goal, schools have reformed curricula, hired many experts in international education and university internationalization, increased teaching activities in English, increased online participation and offline with foreign students for ease of access, while changing campus life to adapt to the needs of international students, as well as focusing on adding academic support scholarship packages to attract foreign students. Every year, the Japanese Ministry of Finance always spends a significant amount of investment as scientific research funding, most of the funding will be allocated to science and technology projects and programs managed and created by MEXT a vibrant competitive scientific research atmosphere at universities and researchers in recent years.

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In the process of integration and globalization, as a country that is participating later in the process of internationalization of higher education, selective reference to the internationalization experiences of the countries analyzed above is essential for defining direction of internationalization of higher education in Vietnam. This is an opportunity that cannot be wasted and is also a strategy that must be implemented to catch up with the trend of the times. Higher education is globalized because of the borderless nature of knowledge and information. The spread of information and knowledge across borders has existed

since the establishments of universities. Along with knowledge and expertise are experiences in policy or educational management methods that have been successfully applied internationally.

From the research of the trends and practices of higher education management in some countries in the region, we can draw some of the following arguments:

- Internationalization of higher education is an inevitable trend in the development of higher education all around the world. It comes from the labor market's demands for knowledge and skills according to international standards; requires workers to have the ability to adapt and work in a multicultural environment. Furthermore, in countries with centralized higher education management mechanisms, for successful educational management, governments need to have strategies and plans to support universities in higher education, including financial support policies which plays a paramount role. University autonomy is a top condition to promote international relations and university development.
- Universities need to build and have clear strategies and plans, incorporating the issue of international relations into all aspects of the university such as vision, mission, plans or into areas such as teaching, research, and transformation technology. In addition, universities need to have a strong and wise leadership team that creates consensus on high internationalization in all departments and also need a team of professional officials, lecturers, and staff to meet internationalization requirements.
- Program contents and teaching methods at universities need to be designed in the direction of international integration, be highly opened, and be updated regularly to suit the requirements of occupations in the labor market, the diplomas need to be internationally recognized.
- Scientific research should have connections with foreign partners to mobilize funds, research together and publish internationally. Universities had better cooperate with foreign businesses to cooperate in training, research and technology transform.
- To attract international students, schools need to focus on attractive factors such as: job opportunities after graduation; international standard learning environment; availability of schools' staff, safe and multicultural environment, extracurricular activities; scholarship support; tuition policy; job support and caring policies for post-graduation students.

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