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## **Roles of Internationalization in Developing Vocational Education & Training in Vietnam: Challenges and Opportunities from Experts' and VET Institutions' Point of View in Times of Multiple Crisis**

Phuong Nguyen Thi<sup>1</sup>, Thanh Tuan Nguyen<sup>1</sup>, Utz Dornberger<sup>1</sup>, Linh Thai D Huynh<sup>2</sup>, Van Thanh T. Tran<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The SEPT Competence Center, Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

<sup>2</sup>Institution of Environment and Circular Economy Southern, Vietnam

\*Corresponding author: [Phuong.nguyen\\_thi@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:Phuong.nguyen_thi@uni-leipzig.de)

### **Abstract**

*In an increasingly interconnected world, internationalization has emerged as a potent force influencing educational paradigms, including VET systems. This study explores how international collaborations, partnerships, and knowledge exchange can catalyze the enhancement of VET programs in Vietnam, aligning them with global standards and practices. Through a comprehensive analysis of expert opinions and institutional perspectives, the research illuminates the potential for internationalization to augment the quality, relevance, and marketability of VET graduates, thus contributing to the nation's economic development and competitiveness on a global scale. However, these aspirations are juxtaposed against a backdrop of multiple crises, ranging from health emergencies to socio-economic disruptions. The paper investigates how these crises can both impede and stimulate the integration of internationalization within Vietnam's VET sector. By examining the strategies employed by VET institutions and experts to navigate these challenges, the study identifies adaptive mechanisms and innovative approaches that harness internationalization as a tool for resilience and renewal. Ultimately, this research encapsulates a nuanced exploration of the roles of internationalization in the development of VET in Vietnam, underscoring the intricate balance between challenges and opportunities, and spotlighting the insights of experts and VET institutions as they steer education towards a more globally relevant and crisis-resilient future.*

**Keywords:** crisis-resilience, internationalization, knowledge transfer, labor force, technology transfer, vocational education and training system.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the current era of globalization, internationalization emerges as a prevalent trend. Globalization describes the phenomenon in that societies and countries all over the globe collide and interact with others in numerous aspects such as cultural, natural and political (Steger, 2023). The effect of globalization has transformed the world's business environment to be more complicated and competitive; however, at the same time, lowered trade barriers allowing companies easier entrance to international market outside of their boundaries (Ristovska & Ristovska, 2014). In order to achieve sustainability, competitiveness and growth in such setting, organizations adopt different methods, one of which is internationalization.

Going international is a popular approach employed by many companies in the current context. Scholars have explored firms' internationalization process and discovered numerous motivations for the decision. Market environment could act as an important factor in determining companies' internationalization strategy. Santos & García (2011) found out that both competitive domestic market and international opportunities from outside market could potentially encourage business to go out of their boundaries from a different perspective. Similarly, efficient and effective resources utilization and acquisition as well as commercial opportunities are identified as the main motives of business internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2015; Kubičková et al., 2014; Van Tulder, 2015).

Education are unable to stay out of globalization and internationalization trend. Hemsley-Brown et al., (2006) acknowledged educational internationalization to be a worldwide occurrence since many students seek to study outside of home country. In term of internationalization stimulus, educational entities, despite having some unique objectives that are achieving educational mission and attract high quality foreign student to become qualified future labor force also sharing some common interest with business sectors namely revenue, market expansion and efficiency and effectiveness of resources usage (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2015; Hawawini, 2011; Van Tulder, 2015).

The global educational landscape is currently undergoing profound shifts driven by globalization, technological advancements, and evolving socio-economic dynamics. In this context, vocational education and training (VET) assume

a pivotal role in equipping individuals with specialized skills to meet the ever-evolving demands of the workforce. This significance holds true for Vietnam, a rapidly developing nation deeply integrated into the global economy. As Vietnam strives for competitive international positioning, the roles of internationalization in shaping and enhancing its VET sector become increasingly central.

Vietnam's vision for 2025 includes the establishment of 1,800 vocational education establishments, incorporating three nationally recognized high-quality vocational training centers and six regional centers (Vietnamese Government, 2023). The quality and quantity of VET graduates have notably contributed to the nation's economic landscape. This aligns with the Law on VET, which advocates international collaboration to progressively enhance VET quality in accordance with advanced vocational education standards. This has led to increased international partnerships, encompassing joint training initiatives, foreign VET institution representative offices in Vietnam, collaborative research, technology transfers, and scholarly events. It has also facilitated the exchange of educators, administrators, students, and training-related information, positioning Vietnam as an attractive prospect for educational cooperation.

Vietnamese VET benefits from a stable socio-economic and political environment, augmented by the socio-economic development strategy for 2011-2020, emphasizing economic restructuring, innovative growth models, and human resource development strategies (Vietnamese Government, 2012). These conditions serve as the foundation for a comprehensive overhaul of Vietnamese education and reinforce international educational collaborations.

In response to demands for national industrialization, modernization, and global integration, Resolution No. 29/NQ-TW of November 4, 2013, from the 8th Plenum of the 11th Central Committee, along with resolutions from the 12th National Party Congress, underscore the imperative of profound transformation in education and training. This transformation aims to enhance the quality of human resources to meet labor market demands and align with socio-economic progress and technological advancements.

Vietnam's active engagement in the new generation of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) has brought about transformative economic challenges and necessitated a reconfiguration of the labor force. Participating actively on the global stage, the nation has integrated itself effectively, implementing 13 FTAs and engaging in ongoing negotiations, providing a substantial advantage for international transfer projects and collaborative initiatives within the VET sphere.

The impetus to advance the VET system largely stems from a surge in foreign direct investment (FDI) within Vietnam. This trend is accentuated by the nation's population, exceeding 98.1 million and ranking 16th globally in 2022, coupled with its consistent economic growth rates (World Bank, 2023). This combination, alongside competitive cost structures and modest wages, has made Vietnam an attractive FDI destination, as acknowledged by the VCCI (2019). The significance of the labor market within the Industrial Location Theory (Grabow, 1995) has prompted the Vietnamese government to recognize FDI's pivotal role in shaping VET, as evident in the Draft Decree on Cooperation and Investment in Education and Training Involving Foreign Partners. This decree encourages collaboration and investment across various education and training fields, spanning industries like IT, telecommunications, mechanics, food technologies, and electronics. Notably, Vietnam's commitments under the AANZFTA enable foreign-invested VET entities up to 100%. Over time, international entities such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Germany, Korea, and Japan have provided both financial and technical support to Vietnam's VET system through multilateral and bilateral projects.

Aligned with aspirations for modernization and industrialization, the Vietnamese government is actively pursuing reformative measures to enhance ASEAN positioning and global competitiveness. These measures encompass expanding and diversifying educational training programs, influenced by the assimilation and adaptation of international VET programs and reforms (Reich and Ho 2017).

In light of Industry 4.0's rapid development and deep international integration, there is a growing demand for high-quality human resources capable of meeting labor market requirements. To achieve this, promoting and diversifying international cooperation in vocational education is crucial. This forms part of the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training's (DVET) strategies, which are further refined within a legal framework to attract foreign investors and businesses (said an expert from DVET in an interview 10.2021).

The concrete enhancement of international cooperation in vocational education is exemplified by numerous resolutions and decisions of the Party and State aimed at cultivating high-skilled human resources and shaping Vietnam's development model towards becoming a developing country with modern industry by 2030 and a developed country by 2045.

To meet the requirement of training high-quality human resources to international standards, in line with regional and global benchmarks, the DVET has implemented the project "Transfer of Curricula; Training and Retraining of Vocational Teachers and Managers; Pilot Training of Key Regional and International Professions within ASEAN." Strengthening and diversifying international cooperation remains a key strategy pursued by the DVET (said an expert from DVET in an interview 10.2021).

To deepen the topic of internationalization's roles in VET's development in Vietnam, the research was conducted with

the below highlight questions:

- What are roles of internationalization in development of VET in Vietnam?
- Which motivated stakeholders to internationalize in VET to Vietnam?
- How well-prepared was the market?
- What could be seen as challenges for VET in the multiple crises times while internationalizing?
- What are the opportunities for VET toward internationalizing in the multiple crises times?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

As a component of the research project "Internationalization of Vocational Education and Training (IntVET)," funded by the BMBF (Ministry of Education and Research of Germany), this study generated data through 40 interviews conducted with Vietnamese VET providers and experts actively involved in VET projects within Vietnam. To gain a profound understanding of Vietnam's VET system and its evolution, individual in-depth interviews were conducted with ten experts and 30 VET providers possessing extensive experience and knowledge in the realm of VET in Vietnam. The international sectors comprise of 12 foreign-owned or invested organizations and 3 Vietnamese organization specialized in providing international professional and/or vocational training degree. Among 12 international players, one organization is Asia based, one of each is from of the Thailand, Poland and Singapore, another two are from the USA while the remaining six come equally from England and Australia. These interviewees represent diverse entities, including VET institutions across the country, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Ministry of Labor – Invalid – Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET), as well as other organizations that have played integral roles in facilitating collaborative activities and orchestrating international transfer projects with VET providers in Vietnam. Notable among these organizations are Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), Vietnam-Japan Cooperation Center, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education (HCMCUTE), and Friedrich Naumann Foundations (FNF) (refer to Table 1).

**Table 1:** List of expert interviewees

| Experts          | Position                              | Years of experience | Title       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| MOET             | Senior Advisor                        | 42                  | Professor   |
| DVET             | Senior Advisor                        | 41                  | Ph.D.       |
| GIZ              | Sr. Project Officer                   | 20                  | Master      |
| FNF              | Vice Rector                           | 30                  | Ph.D.       |
| VJCC             | Vice Rector                           | 30                  | Ph.D.       |
| HCMCUTE          | Senior Consultant                     | 40                  | Master      |
| Auscham          | Board of Director member and Co-Chair | 22                  | Master      |
| VET institutions | President/Department Head             | 20                  | MA/MSc/Ph.D |

Employing a semi-structured interview approach, which serves as a two-way data collection method, enabled the comprehensive exploration of participants' perspectives and yielded an in-depth comprehension of the research subject. Specifically, the interviews delved into the following key areas:

- The impetus and progress in integrating international transfer projects into the Vietnamese VET system.
- Perceptions concerning the capacity of Vietnamese VET providers to embrace and innovate within the realm of international transfer projects.
- External factors that incentivize the VET system's engagement and investment in international transfer initiatives.
- Primary challenges and opportunities encountered by both organizations and governmental bodies in the advancement of VET.

Each interview session lasted approximately one hour, and meticulous audio recordings were made, subsequently

transcribed in their entirety, to facilitate comprehensive responses to these inquiries.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, through the interview, experts in Vietnamese VET and international VET providers in Vietnam that develop their activities in Vietnam have shed some light on their motivations for selecting the country during their internationalization process. After the categorization, below are the main finding related to the motivations and internationalization progress of foreign VET players in Vietnam:

- A number of factors influence international VET providers’ decisions to choose Vietnamese market. Some of the most notable elements include revenue opportunities, academic objectives, attracting qualified labor forces as well as reputation and influence enhancement.
- Majority of international players mention commercial objectives as the main reasons for choosing Vietnam. Every VET provider, public and private alike, need different sources of income to operate. Private sector is usually on their own to find these revenues. Public VET institutions’ expenditures are often subsidized partly by numerous entities; however, these funding are not always adequate. For these reasons, internationalization to grow revenues become one of the primary concern for foreign VET players. International VET entities, therefore, have to seek a country in which they are able to enter and obtain satisfactory commercial benefit. From the perspective of these VET providers, Vietnam thrives as a market with strong potential due to high population and demand for vocational training, strong GDP growth and a stable political situation. Additionally, governmental parties, especially DVET pay a lot of attention and effort in developing a strong national vocational education as well as supporting international vocational providers. All these aspects combined branded Vietnam as one of the ideal market for international VET institutions to operate.
- As an educational player, VET providers usually and specifically aim at spreading and sharing the knowledge they possess. Hence, the second most notable motivation for choosing Vietnam is to support and promote the quality level of vocational education in Vietnam. For instance, providers from a nation with advanced vocational background opt-in so as to share their know-how and system to help Vietnam improve its vocational education. Besides knowledge sharing and transferring, foreign providers also put emphasis on the ability to learn from local vocational partners in Vietnam and enhance their experience and capabilities in the international market.
- Human are considered one of the most important resources and indispensable to a country’s success and growth. One of the method to enrich the size and quality of labor force for a country is to attract qualified students who are interested in working at the home country of the institutions. For that reason, Vietnamese VET students get the offer by a certain number of VET providers to work at the country of origin that the providers come from.
- The growth in presence and influence in the world is the motive of organization which provide professional certificate. The more their certificates are recognized by countries and partners, the better their reputation. As a result, these organizations aim to expand to as many markets as they are able
- Initially, an organization didn’t plan to enter Vietnam; however, it took part in a project conducted in Vietnam. After the project’s completion, they recognized the potential of international training in Vietnam. Afterwards, they decide to initiate more projects in Vietnam not only with other international partners but also based on their own resources.
- Lastly, in a few certain cases, Vietnamese organizations are the one who approached and transferred international programs with international standard back to their home country.

In summary, the following table provides a concise overview of the motivations for internationalization in Vietnam's VET, as perceived from various perspectives encompassing international experts, Vietnamese experts, and VET providers:

Table 2: VET Providers’ Motivation for International Collaborations in Vietnam.

| Vietnamese VET providers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | International VET stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving teaching quality</li> <li>- Gaining strong reputation via international collaboration and quality</li> <li>- Building key resources,</li> <li>- Creating more value propositions for approaching market actively</li> <li>- Satisfying market demands</li> <li>- Adopting international standards: knowledge &amp; technology</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global reach and impact</li> <li>- Diversification of student base</li> <li>- Quality enhancement and innovation</li> <li>- Market expansion</li> <li>- Cultural exchange and understanding</li> <li>- Research and development opportunity</li> <li>- Government initiatives and incentives</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experiencing exchange</li> <li>- Carrying out the political missions assigned by government</li> <li>- Achieving independent funding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term partnership</li> <li>- Skill gap addressing</li> <li>- Contribution to sustainable development</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

According to DVET's data, approximately 5,000 educators and administrators have undergone training so far. Around 200 individuals have participated in foreign training courses across nations such as Malaysia, Australia, Germany, France, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Additionally, 655 educators have received training through curriculum transfer programs from countries including Australia and Germany, as well as short-term training courses conducted within Vietnam.

In line with this, the DVET is actively enhancing its legal framework and creating a conducive environment to attract foreign investors and businesses to engage in vocational education endeavors. This effort particularly emphasizes the expansion and enhancement of comprehensive collaborations between Vietnam and other nations. The DVET takes an engaged role in regional and international vocational education forums, associations, and skills competitions. Concurrently, it establishes cooperative relationships with developed countries worldwide, focusing on internationally standardized training, competency standards development for teachers, facilitating foreign teacher training, capitalizing on foreign experts' expertise during their visits to Vietnam, and bolstering foreign language proficiency.

Capitalizing on several advantages, international cooperation initiatives within vocational education are increasingly recognized as pivotal pathways for esteemed educational institutions to gradually integrate students into the global labor market. Such collaborations have emerged as a crucial endeavor for enhancing the training quality within vocational education establishments. Participating institutions share common attributes such as state-of-the-art facilities, students engaging with advanced internationally standardized equipment, and a proficient teaching staff.

Noteworthy international cooperation models encompass projects for training partnerships, exchanging vocational education standards and experiences, sharing curriculum programs, facilitating lecturer and student exchanges, and welcoming foreign students and interns. These models provide vocational students with enhanced access to higher qualifications aligned with foreign business requisites, ultimately expanding career opportunities within an international context.

The discernible improvement in training quality within Vietnam is evidenced by the exceptional accomplishments of numerous vocational students in ASEAN and global skills competitions. Impressively, over 80% of vocational students' secure employment with competitive income levels upon graduation. Furthermore, many employers hold vocational training at educational institutions in high regard due to its quality and relevance.

*"We are doing so well with our regular courses that 75% of the graduates from our college got jobs that related to their majors, with good salaries from 7-9 million Vietnamese dong. Some students were even employed though they had not graduated yet, and they could easily get jobs when they graduated."*, said the president of a VET institution in the interview (7.2021).

However, despite the achieved results, Vietnam's current human resources are not yet well-suited for the labor market. The quality of the labor force in Vietnam is still limited, leading to much lower productivity compared to other countries in the region. This limitation affects the overall competitiveness of the economy, especially in the context of competition in the domestic and global labor market, which requires workers to meet professional standards, vocational skills, and other soft skills.

Especially with the pressure of the Industry 4.0, the vocational education sector needs to accelerate digital transformation and innovate training methods, taking advantage of external resources to keep up with the new trends in the world's education system. Support and collaboration with international educational organizations to enhance the capacity of the vocational education system are particularly important, contributing to increasing labor productivity and meeting the increasingly high demands of the domestic and international labor market.

*"During the Pandemic, being locked at home, it was very difficult for all of us to keep continuing learning and teaching. We haven't had enough facility, structure and ability to conduct online teaching, especially those courses required practical and manual execution."*, a President of a VET college shared in our interview (7.2022).

Being said by an expert during an interview (10.2021), *"The 13th National Party Congress continues to affirm that developing human resources, especially high-quality human resources, is one of the three strategic breakthroughs with the orientation of building an open and flexible vocational education system"*, this is an important foundation for the development of vocational education in the future, meeting the requirements of the Industry 4.0 and international integration. To implement the Party's policy on the development of vocational education, the vocational education system

in Vietnam needs to renew itself, from management mechanisms to the entire training process. It also needs to absorb and apply the scientific and technological knowledge of the world and learn from the advantages of modern vocational training models in other countries to develop vocational training domestically and achieve a breakthrough in training quality.

Therefore, it is necessary to cooperate with countries and international organizations that have successful experiences in vocational education, especially Germany and ASEAN countries. The facets of collaboration encompass the following: providing support to enhance the management capacity of vocational training, strengthening the capabilities for vocational training planning and policy development within Vietnam, and securing ODA funds from donors. These funds would be utilized to develop vocational training and establish vocational schools that align with regional and international standards. Furthermore, the involved parties could collaborate to construct high-quality vocational training programs, particularly tailored for businesses with foreign investments. This collaboration would also involve reinforcing technical assistance to augment the overall system's capacity. Finally, it's crucial to acknowledge the importance of endorsing investments in high-caliber vocational training facilities, as well as offering training in professions that hold recognition on both regional and international scales. These endeavors can be realized through dedicated programs and projects that warrant comprehensive consideration.

Despite the historical engagement of Vietnamese VET in international cooperation and the establishment of international transfer projects in various forms, the positive impacts and advancements have been confined to a limited number of VET institutions. While efforts have been made, the broader VET landscape in the country still exhibits a situational approach to international cooperation, lacking a coherent and strategic direction. The effectiveness of collaborative programs and projects has fallen short of expectations, as indicated by the consensus among experts interviewed. These challenges can be categorized as follows:

- Inequity in education access and quality: the persistent wealth disparity and uneven development among different population segments and regions continue to contribute to unequal educational access and varying education quality. This presents a hindrance to effective international cooperation in the realm of VET.  
*“International program tuition fees are consistently higher than those of regular programs. This poses challenges for students applying and enrolling in these programs, while other parents might opt to send their children abroad due to the substantial costs involved.”, said expert 5 (10.2021).*
- Cognitive inertia and bureaucratic behavior: lingering tendencies toward subsidized thinking, cognitive inertia, and bureaucratic behavior among educators, administrators, and practitioners in the VET sector impede progress. This is compounded by a failure to keep pace with rapid socio-economic and technological transformations. Notably, complacency, vanity, and the pursuit of credentials among personnel have hindered development and curtailed the potential for international collaboration.
- Development disparity and outdated approaches: the growing development gap between Vietnam and more advanced nations in terms of socio-economic, scientific, technological, and educational aspects presents a significant challenge. Many VET institutions have not adapted their approaches to address the dynamic labor market's needs within the context of economic growth and international integration. workers, have been only partially achieved due to under-enrollment and a skewed distribution across different levels of training (Russell, 2020).
- Occupational imbalance and limited high-quality training: a persistent imbalance in the distribution of training professions across regions has only slowly improved and still does not meet societal human resource requirements. Enrolling students in certain demanding and hazardous occupations remains a challenge. Initiatives like high-quality vocational training projects have encountered delays, impeding the development of top-notch vocational schools and effective international and regional training programs.
- Underdeveloped institutional network and human resources: a lack of proper distribution and planning for vocational education institutions, coupled with insufficient attention to teacher and administrator development, compounds challenges. The number of educators is both excessive and inadequate, leading to imbalances in expertise and skills. Foreign language proficiency, computer literacy, program development capabilities, and curriculum preparation among VET teachers are all areas in need of improvement. Despite exposure to international cooperation, Vietnamese VET educators' overall capabilities often fall short of timely adaptation to new demands.
- Inadequate facilities, outdated content and loose industry connection: A VET schools is expensive entities to operate and keeping it in appropriate form in comparison with global development is much costlier than that (McGrath & Yamada, 2023). Insufficient facilities and equipment plague many VET institutions. Training programs and textbooks often feature outdated content that fails to consistently align with the needs of the labor market. The quality and efficacy of vocational education institutions remain suboptimal, with curricula not always tailored to specific industries or locales, and weak connections to enterprises. Students and graduates often exhibit deficits in foreign language skills and soft skills. National vocational skill standards are slow to be established, and quality mismatches persist relative to industry and market needs.
- Inadequate enterprise-linked VET institutes: the number of VET institutes within enterprises remains insufficient to address businesses' demand for skilled labor. The relationship between VET institutions and enterprises still lacks

strength, both in terms of responsibilities and mutual interests. Schools predominantly focus on their capacity to "supply" rather than genuinely responding to the business "demand." Consequently, many institutions only provide basic knowledge and skills, rather than catering to the market's genuine requirements.

Educational institutions also need to promptly update changes in technology and scientific and technical knowledge to improve the quality of training and adapt to the new context. At the same time, it is important to enhance infrastructure and modern equipment and create the most favorable conditions for learners in the process of practicing vocational skills to keep up with the trends of new training methods.

Vocational education institutions also need to proactively improve the professional, technical, and particularly language and computer skills of the teaching staff, enhance communication about international linked training programs to reach students and seize opportunities. Moreover, it is necessary to strengthen communication, establish cooperative relationships with companies and enterprises both domestically and internationally, and create favorable conditions for students to intern, enabling employers to timely attract high-quality labor into their workforce.

Furthermore, it is important to organize conferences, workshops, and dialogues to share experiences in the development and improvement of the quality of vocational education between countries, provide information about orientations, potential, and opportunities for cooperation, and promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation, especially between the General Department of Vocational Education and international organizations, towards sustainable development.

The industrialization and modernization of the country and international integration requires high-quality human resources, while the national resources and the ability to invest in education of the State and the majority of families are still inadequate and limited. The quality of human resources is still low, posing heavy tasks and great challenges to the development of education and training. The ongoing strong integration process also poses challenges for VET institutions. Experts have pointed out that in order to survive and develop, VET institutions need to constantly change to improve their competitiveness to attract students and international investors in human resource training cooperation. Along with the strong development of Industry 4.0, recruitment needs will change. This poses a challenge for VET institutions aiming for autonomy and resilience within a competitive landscape. To thrive, they must steer towards fostering expanded collaborations with nations boasting commendable training programs on both regional and global scales.

Besides those challenges, the intersection of internationalization and the development of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Vietnam during times of multiple crises presents a range of promising opportunities that can drive positive outcomes for both the education system and the nation as a whole. In the face of challenges posed by health, economic, and social crises, the internationalization of VET can offer several avenues for progress:

- **Global Best Practice:** collaborating with international partners allows Vietnam to access global best practices in VET. By adopting successful strategies from other countries, Vietnam can enhance the quality of its VET programs and better respond to crises.
- **Technology Transfer:** internationalization can facilitate the transfer of advanced teaching methods, tools, and technologies to Vietnamese VET institutions. This infusion of modern educational technologies can bolster the adaptability of the education system during crises.
- **Industry Alignment:** international collaborations enable VET institutions to align their programs with international industry standards. This ensures that graduates possess skills that are relevant not only domestically but also globally, enhancing their employability during and after crises.
- **Cross Cultural Competence:** international partnerships promote cross-cultural competence among students and educators. Exposure to diverse perspectives prepares learners to navigate a globalized world and fosters resilience in the face of diverse challenges.
- **Faculty Development:** collaborative initiatives encourage faculty development through international exchanges and training programs. This, in turn, elevates the overall quality of education delivery and promotes innovative teaching practices.
- **Flexible Delivery Models:** internationalization encourages the exploration of flexible and innovative VET delivery models, including online and blended learning. These models offer resilience during crises when traditional in-person education is disrupted.
- **Expanded Opportunities:** internationalization broadens opportunities for student mobility, enabling them to experience different educational systems and cultures. This global perspective enhances their ability to adapt to changing circumstances and challenges.
- **Enhanced Resource Sharing:** international partnerships facilitate the sharing of resources, including educational materials, research findings, and instructional methodologies. This collaborative sharing can help address resource shortages and gaps exacerbated by crises.
- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** exposure to international practices can stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation among students. This can lead to the creation of new enterprises that contribute to economic recovery during challenging times.

- **Global Recognition:** partnering with well-regarded international institutions can enhance the global recognition of Vietnamese VET programs. This recognition attracts international students and fosters cross-cultural exchanges, enriching the education ecosystem.
- **Economic Diversification:** internationalized VET programs can support economic diversification by producing a workforce skilled in emerging sectors. This diversification strengthens the economy's resilience against crises that impact specific industries.
- **Government and Institutional Support:** internationalization often receives strong support from governments and educational institutions alike. This backing can expedite the implementation of reforms and improvements within the VET system.

Incorporating internationalization strategies into the development of VET in Vietnam offers a holistic approach to address challenges while embracing opportunities. By leveraging global expertise, technological advancements, and cross-cultural exchanges, the nation can cultivate a workforce better equipped to navigate uncertainties and contribute to sustainable growth even in the face of adversity.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vietnam embarked on early engagement in international transfers, aligning with its ongoing VET development to effectively address labor market demands spurred by the global tide of industrialization and internationalization. Within the VET domain, international transfer projects play a pivotal role in nurturing a more robust developmental trajectory. The discernible outcomes encompass the advancement of more proficient curricula, elevated trainer quality, innovative teaching approaches, fortified resources for VET providers, and the fulfillment of industry requisites through strengthened collaboration among government bodies, VET institutions, and enterprises.

Despite the rising demand, Vietnam faced shortfall in providing capable people for the employment market both within and outside of the country. This is the result of the fact that a relatively large proportion current work force was not adequately trained. The contributing factors to this matter comes from both vocational training entities as well as the society.

Due to the wealth disparity, numerous family are unable to afford the tuition fee of vocational training much less international vocational courses. Financial support in the form of scholarship, loan or even accommodation would grant more people access to vocational education. The student should also be able to pay back the loan because the vocational graduates, as mentioned by the experts, are practically guaranteed well-paid job. As more people are thoroughly trained, the quality of the labor force would surely rise in both local and global employment market.

The second problem with vocational training in Vietnam is the quality of training facilities. Three most notable issues with these institutions are the facilities, the human resources and the curriculum. In term of facilities, add to the fact that the number of vocational schools is certainly lacking, only a limited number of active schools are well equipped with necessary training materials, machine, equipment and labs. Usually, public section in Vietnam is funded by the government; hence, the ministries in charge of vocational education could directly subsidizes these institutions more for the purpose of improving schools' facilities. Additionally, policymakers could implement towards specialized vocational training. At the moment, a lot of vocational training facilities provide different programs that are too diverse. For that reason, the available training resources of the country would have to be distributed dispersedly and shortage is deemed to happen. With more specialized skills that offer similar training program, the machines, equipment and materials could be shared which resulted in lesser amount of resources required for each school.

Furthermore, according to McGrath & Yamada (2023), in the current context. Vocational education and industrial sector are inseparable. Hence, a collaboration between vocational schools and private enterprises in training would be beneficial for both sides. Private sectors could lend or donate the educators the training equipment; in return, they could participate in designing the curriculum and training program. Consequently, the graduates who learns from the customized program and practices with machines and equipment from business sectors would get familiar and are able to work for collaborated organizations in no time.

Vietnamese people often undervalue vocational education and believe that technical profession can be learnt just by observing and practicing a lot. For that reason, if a young person would take a vocational job for the first time, a large proportion of them would prefer apprenticeship in various workshop rather than vocational courses. However, techniques aren't the only thing being taught in vocational education but also attitudes, skills, language and even safety measure and these factors matter, especially to companies with international standard. As a result, labor in Vietnam are not capable of meeting with the requirement of labor market. Government should create campaign to raise social awareness towards the issue. The message could be delivered via different channels such as TV, mobile phone and online platform. Additionally, orientation for learners in secondary and tertiary education during which they are still hesitant about future occupation could be a good step towards the goal of increasing people's realization of vocational education's importance.



One of the aspect that DVET should strategize around is educators' and administrators' capabilities. At the moment, the number of well trained and certified personnel in vocational education field is still relatively lackluster. Funding provision for the purpose of training, especially for oversea training course located in countries with strong and reputable vocational background the vocational trainers and administrator would be a good stepping stone. Since of vocational territory in Vietnam is immature, the margin to improve would still be at large. Consequently, having the educators with knowledge, skills and technique similar to those from advanced vocational background would aid Vietnamese policymakers in the process of revising, adapting and leveraging the Vietnamese vocational training as a whole. Additionally, this long term plan could reduce the dependence of Vietnam on foreign educators to provide high quality training that match with global standards.

Following are some recommendations for consideration both short and long term objectives:

Short-Term Objectives for Policymakers (1-3 years):

1. **Invest in Digital Infrastructure:** Allocate resources to enhance the digital infrastructure of vocational education institutions. Ensure access to high-speed internet and necessary digital tools for both educators and students to support online and blended learning, especially during crisis situations.
2. **Emergency Response Plans:** Develop and implement crisis response plans for the VET sector. These plans should include strategies for seamless transitions to online learning, provision of necessary equipment, and support for disadvantaged students to ensure education continuity during crises.
3. **Train the Trainer:** Provide short-term intensive training programs for VET teachers to improve their digital literacy and proficiency in online teaching methodologies. These programs should be easily accessible and tailored to the specific needs of VET educators.

Medium-term objectives (3-5 years):

1. **Curriculum Modernization:** Collaborate with industry stakeholders to update VET curricula to align with emerging skill requirements. Incorporate digital literacy, soft skills, and industry-specific certifications into the curriculum to enhance graduates' employability.
2. **Quality Assurance:** Strengthen quality assurance mechanisms in the VET sector. Implement rigorous accreditation processes and regular evaluations to ensure that VET programs meet international standards and industry expectations. Establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of VET programs in addressing immediate and medium-term skill gaps and crisis-related challenges.
3. **International Collaboration Framework:** after the pilot phase, continue to Develop a comprehensive framework for international collaboration in VET. Establish partnerships with countries known for their excellence in vocational training to facilitate faculty and student exchanges, joint projects, and curriculum development.

Long-term objectives (5+ years):

1. **National Skills Standards:** work towards the establishment of national skills standards that are internationally recognized. These standards should serve as a benchmark for VET programs, ensuring that graduates possess skills in demand both domestically and globally.
2. **Industry Partnerships:** foster enduring partnership between VET institutions and industries. Encourage the private sector to actively participate in curriculum development, internship programs, and job placement initiatives to bridge the gap between education and employment.
3. **Research and Innovation:** invest in research and innovation in the VET sector. Establish research centers that focus on identifying emerging industry trends and skill requirements. Promote collaboration between VET institutions, industry players, and research institutions to drive innovation in curriculum and training methods.
4. **Labor Market Intelligence:** Establish a long-term labor market intelligence system to continuously monitor industry trends and inform the adaptation of VET programs to meet future demands.
5. **International Mobility Programs:** Develop long-term international mobility programs for VET students and educators. These programs should offer extended study and work experiences abroad, allowing students to gain a global perspective and educators to refine their pedagogical skills. Formulate a long-term internationalization strategy that focuses on long-lasting collaborations with international partners, including the establishment of joint degree programs, faculty exchanges, and research partnerships.
6. **Continuous Monitoring:** Implement a continuous monitoring and evaluation system to track the impact of internationalization initiatives on the VET sector. Regularly assess the quality of collaborations, graduates' employability, and the relevance of curricula to ensure sustained growth and improvement.

7. Sustainable Funding: Establish a sustainable funding mechanism for the VET sector, ensuring that financial support remains consistent over the long term. Seek public-private partnerships and explore innovative funding models to reduce dependence on government funding alone.
8. Quality Assurance Mechanisms: Strengthen long-term quality assurance mechanisms, including accreditation and industry certification, to ensure VET programs consistently meet industry standards.

These actionable recommendations align with short, medium, and long-term objectives for policymakers to be able to effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by internationalization in the development of VET in Vietnam during times of multiple crises. They emphasize the need for immediate crisis response while also addressing long-term strategies to enhance the quality, relevance, and resilience of the VET sector in the face of multiple challenges. These recommendations aim to promote adaptability, enhance the quality of education, and ensure that VET graduates are well-equipped to contribute to Vietnam's economic growth and global competitiveness.

In conclusion, the roles of internationalization in developing vocational education and training in Vietnam during times of multiple crises are far-reaching and transformative. International collaborations empower VET institutions to fortify their resilience, incorporate global perspectives, and ensure that vocational education remains a cornerstone of economic growth and societal advancement, even in the midst of challenging circumstances.

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