

AN INVESTIGATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FROM TEN MAJOR VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Regarding the issue of entrepreneurship education development, previous studies seldom explored the developmental status from emerging countries. This study applies the approaches of web-based content analysis and following up with interview and e-mail questionnaire from renowned Vietnamese universities. An important result is that these universities did not provide the entrepreneurship courses or programs. Also, we found there are three major factors: the history and culture, the educational system, and the workforce of society to impact the current status of entrepreneurship education in higher education of Vietnam. Finally, the implications of findings are discussed.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education; higher education; emerging countries; national culture

INTRODUCTION

Regarding the initiation of entrepreneurship education, Harvard Business School opened the first course naming “The Management of New Enterprises” since 1947 [1] [2]. Since then, the entrepreneurship education gradually became a world trend. It started from the United States then moved on to European countries and Asian countries because it is aware that entrepreneurship education plays an important role for prosperity of each country [3] [4] [5] [6] [9]. Hence many people started to build their own enterprises. A great number of them could not be successful due to their lack of knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship. With a program and its courses on entrepreneurship, learners can get much more knowledge. And they also are provided with necessary knowledge which helps them to be confident to start their business and overcome challenges based on the provided knowledge [1] [7] [8].

Vietnam, a country has faced many historical changes and overcome them to develop constantly. Vietnam’s economy has innovated since the early 1980s’. With a variety of the government’s incentive policies, a wide range of enterprises were established. However, the business spirit is always available in every Vietnamese. But why has Vietnam’s education not yet really paid attention to entrepreneurship education until now? Also, we recognize that Vietnam’s educational system has been made some dramatic reform with many high effective programs of education. Some agencies directly under Ministry of Education or out of education system opened many training classes regarding different fields such as management, marketing, finance, etc. These courses met learners’ real demand when they did not have or were not good in any

skill. However, according to the world's trend of entrepreneurship education development, people need much more like that. Those are complete courses providing full of essential knowledge and skills for an enterprise's owner. Based on the current situation of Vietnamese higher education, this study conducts web-based content analysis, email questionnaire and interview to investigate the actual situation of renowned universities and then to give a conclusion of Vietnam's development of entrepreneurship education and synthesizes major factors influencing the above situation.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the following research methods: web-based content analysis, email questionnaire and interview.

Firstly, based on the web-based content analysis, the first survey step in the research process is based on a book entitled "Important information about university and college enrollment 2010 & 2011", Viet Huong web page and Science - Economy Information web page. We have a list of universities and colleges in the nation, including name of the universities (the faculty, majors, centers), universities addresses and particularly web page addresses of total 192 universities and 230 colleges (including public and non-public universities). Among them, the northern region has 113 universities and 118 colleges. Southern region has 79 universities and 112 colleges. Then, after having overview of Vietnamese universities and colleges system, we omitted universities belonging to group of military and police, medical schools, and focus on local universities, economics and management universities, which includes two national universities, local universities, institutes belonging to civil, non-public universities through the these university websites. Hence, we selected ten major Vietnamese universities such as Vietnam National University, Hanoi and Tay Bac University: university of Northwest Vietnam.

Secondly, we understand the finding information on web pages was not enough. A lot of information could not be found on web pages. Therefore, during the research process, questionnaire via email was sent to the teachers of the top 10 universities. Sending email questionnaire seemed to be simple, but it really took a lot of time to wait for the reply. It took approximately six months to send email and receive feedback. Some mails sent but ended with no reply, some answers were not complete or assigned the wrong flavor.

Finally, the interviews were conducted before and after the traditional lunar New Year in Vietnam during 2011-2012. Due to difficulties of arranging location and time, interviews were only carried out at universities in Hanoi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the investigation of web-based content analysis, we did not find the major courses of entrepreneurship education such as Introduction to Entrepreneurship in top 10 universities. Hence, this study further synthesizes three major factors to impact the development of entrepreneurship education in higher education of Vietnam via email questionnaire and interview. We provide more descriptions about these factors as follows.

1. The history and culture

From the historical perspective, the Vietnamese had been so closely associated with agriculture and the self-sufficient economy, however business had not been highly appreciated in Vietnam's feudal society. Being influenced by Confucian, Vietnam people ranked "trade" as the final position in the list of social hierarchies: intelligentsia – farmer – worker – trader.

Also, in the feudal society, Vietnam from the State's policy to the people's mind had considered farming as a principal occupation, but considered craft industry and trade as unsubstantial. In fact, the operation of industrial and commercial activities took place within the framework of autonomous self-sufficiency economic. In the general society, the business activities were exciting and simmering in a few stages, but due to the policy of "primarily working on farm "and "peasant in seclusion" of the feudal dynasties that business could not developed.

2.The educational system

Because Vietnam has the objective to become a modern industrial country by 2020, it is essential to completely speed up innovation, industrialization, and modernization together with the development of economy as well as positively comprehensive and international integration. This objective puts Vietnam's education and training in new requests, missions and challenges. However, from the viewpoint of the pedagogical demand, there is now a severe lack of human resource, especially the high-qualified human resource in Vietnam's main academic fields such as pedagogy, medicine-pharmacy, economics, agriculture – forestry – fishery, technology and military technique. For reaching the targets, it is compulsory for the Vietnam's universities to train a great number of high qualified human resources to meet the social demand in above sectors before 2020. Hence, Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training's targets which are regarded as general guidance for universities are to train high qualified human resource.

3.The workforce of society

Vietnam's labor forces are abundant and each year some a million labors join in the labor forces. However, the average skill level is low and improves slowly. Nearly half of Vietnam's workforces are unskilled and at the primary education level or with no qualifications. According to the general census of population and housing in Vietnam in 2009, 18.9% of the population aged 25 or older graduate from secondary education and only 5.4% access to a higher education level. The proportion of Vietnam's population with secondary and higher education is lower than that of other Southeast Asian countries. More importantly, Vietnam's economy lacks severely of capable and knowledgeable staffs.

4.Summary

Based on the above results, we found that Vietnam's system of universities has not yet set up a complete program of entrepreneurship education till now. Above criteria are quite suitable to this result. Those criteria made business spirit hardly rise and boom although the spirit existed in mind of many people, especially the youngster. Truly, we still believe that Vietnamese's business spirit is always strong and lively. The spirit is like a fire. And it can burn with light wind.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above results, Vietnam's education has not yet really set up a program on entrepreneurship education up to now. The lack of entrepreneurship education can be regarded as a losing opportunity when the target of Vietnam to become a country of modernization and industrialization by 2020. One country is just considered as a rich developed country when there are many rich enterprises. In addition, owner's leading ability plays a very important role in contribution to sustainable development of enterprises.

In recent years, although the number of small and medium private enterprises has rapidly increased, at the same time, the quantity of bankrupted enterprises has also increase in direct ratio. Beside objective reasons such as global economic recession, no competition with cheap products imported from China, and no access to state supporting policies, another important reason is that there have been a variety of limit in doing business ability of enterprise's owners.

Also, almost small and medium private enterprises have founded in spontaneous way. It means that the owners have a little bit of knowledge or no experience in training courses of entrepreneur. They have enough adventure but not enough knowledge of operation. They seem to be confused when facing to any challenge.

Finally, Vietnam has had rapid growth but it cannot avoid many weaknesses compared with other countries in the region. For the program on entrepreneurship education, neighbor countries such as China, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan have set up for long time. Hence we suggest Vietnam needs to pay much attention to the development of entrepreneurship education.

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