

**JAPAN INSTITUTE FOR LABOUR POLICY AND TRAINING**

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**IMPROVING VIETNAM'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
LESSONS FROM  
JAPAN'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

	Abbreviation	Meaning
1.	AJC	Southeast Asia - Japan Center
2.	ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
3.	FDI	Foreign direct investment
4.	FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
5.	GSO	Vietnam General statistics office
6.	HDCA	Human development capacity approach
7.	ILO	International labor organization
8.	JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
9.	JILPT	Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training
10.	JVET	Japan vocational education and training
11.	MEXT	Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
12.	MHLW	Japan's Ministry of health, labor and welfare
13.	MOET	Ministry of education and training
14.	MOLISA	Ministry of labor, invalid and society
15.	NPA	Japan National Police Agency
16.	ODA	Official Development Assistance
17.	SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
18.	TTXVN	Vietnam News Agency
19.	TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
20.	VET	Vocational education and training
21.	VNVET	Vietnam vocational education and training

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH APPROACH

### 1.1. Reason for choosing the topic

In Vietnam, the field of vocational education is probably the field that has changed the least.

In terms of law, among of 230 laws, the Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET) is one of the few laws amended in 2014 that is still in effect today. Related vocational education activities after the promulgation of the Vocational Education Law are still controversial.

Across the country, rapid and complex changes in many fields around the world are affecting the speed of recovery and development of Vietnam, especially investment, trade, finance, exchange rate and job opportunities. High inflation and economic recession after COVID-19 are causing layoffs or job losses taking place in many businesses. On the contrary, many other businesses cannot find and recruit highly skilled workers<sup>1</sup>. The key to this situation, in my opinion, lies in the human skills, working competency and ability of workers to transform and adapt to changes in socio-economic development. Furthermore, at a certain stage of development, the business leader is required to change the way the business develops and operates. Correspondingly, individual workers also need to change their career skills. Along with that, the Fourth Industrial Revolution continues to impact many fields, changing both the structure and the labor market.

Vietnam has many opportunities to develop strongly as its economy is considered a prosperous with high-growth market. Vietnam is the third largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the region<sup>2</sup>. In the context of a volatile and challenging labor market, skilled workers with certificates and vocational certificates still have advantages. Therefore, education and training need to continue to be promoted and innovated to provide skilled and quality human resources, contributing to the development of an effective labor market<sup>3</sup>.

In the first quarter of 2023, the Vietnamese labor force aged 15 and over is about 52.2 million workers, an increase of more than 1 million compared to 2022<sup>4</sup> (on average, there are 1 million new workers each year). The proportion of young workers is high and the potential is very promising. But this workforce does not meet the requirements of some businesses, especially FDI enterprises. The rate of trained and certified workers in Vietnam is about 26.4%, which can be said to be very low compared to practical requirements. Even among workers with degrees, the proportion of workers with practical labor skills is much lower.

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<sup>1</sup> Phuong Linh (2023), Lifelong learning, increasing adaptability is the key to job transformation, <https://baodautu.vn/hoc-tap-suot-doi-tang-kha-nang-thich-ung-la-chia-science-process-study-work-d192059.html>

<sup>2</sup> My Hanh (2023), Upgrading skills, unlocking opportunities - The strategic key of Vietnam's labor market, <https://tapchilaocong.vn/nang-cap-ky-nang-mo-khoa-co-question-share-science-course-cua-thi-school-lao-dong-viet-nam-1327054.html>

<sup>3</sup> TTXVN (VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY) (2023), Innovating vocational training activities to meet labor market requirements, <https://tuyengiao.vn/thoi-su/doi-moi-hoat-dong-dao-tao-nghe-dap-ung-yeu-cau-thi-truong-lao-dong-145759>

<sup>4</sup> Vietnam General Statistics Office (2023), Vietnam labor market report quarter I/2023

According to forecasts of the Center for Human Resource Demand Forecasting and Labor Market Information of Ho Chi Minh City, in the second half of 2023, businesses in Ho Chi Minh City need about 155,000-165,000 working and training places, concentrated in four key industries: food processing, chemicals - rubber - plastics, mechanics, electronics and main service industries such as: commerce, accommodation services, catering, transportation - warehousing... Notably, the need for trained labor accounts for over 86% of the total human resource need<sup>5</sup>.

In Binh Duong - a locality in the southern key economic region, in the first 6 months of 2023, the number of unskilled workers (without degrees or professional certificates) falling into unemployment reached nearly 92% of the number of people applying for unemployment subsidies<sup>6</sup>.

From the perspective of the International Labor Organization, the ILO believes that, Vietnam needs to put skills training of the workforce in first priority<sup>7</sup>.

From a personal perspective, it can be seen that improving career skills is no longer an option but a mandatory requirement for workers to be successful in their respective fields.

From a national perspective, the need for learning and education in Vietnam is not just a temporary trend; this is the most important source for country's economic transformation. The need for a highly skilled workforce is not only an aspiration but also a necessity for Vietnam to become an upper middle-income economy by 2035, as stated in the report "Education for Development" by the World Bank<sup>8</sup>.

Japan's development history shows that, due to scarcity of resources, the Japanese have long emphasized the human factor. There is no other way to develop the country than creating strong and quality human resources. Focusing on human education has become the most prominent feature of Japanese education.

This is consistent with the human development philosophy that I pursue.

Japan is considered a country with high quality education, with a modern and comprehensive education system, focusing on practical elements, and having the best learning environment and experience for learners. Education towards practical science for life is considered a progressive point of Japanese education, education is associated with life benefits, therefore, training programs are always highly appreciated. The training models deployed are always associated with the production site, not only helping learners improve their knowledge but also

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<sup>5</sup> TTXVN (VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY) (2023), Innovating vocational training activities to meet labor market requirements, <https://tuyengiao.vn/thoi-su/doi-moi-hoat-dong-dao-tao-nghe-dap-ung-yeu-cau-thi-truong-lao-dong-145759>

<sup>6</sup> TTXVN (VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY) (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> Phương Linh (2023), *ibid*, <https://baodautu.vn/hoc-tap-suot-doi-tang-kha-nang-thich-ung-la-chia-khoa-chuyen-doi-viec-lam-d192059.html>

<sup>8</sup> Mỹ Hạnh (2023), *ibid*, <https://tapchilaodong.vn/nang-cap-ky-nang-mo-khoa-co-hoi-chia-khoa-chien-luoc-cua-thi-truong-lao-dong-viet-nam-1327054.html>

creating opportunities for exposure and experience, helping students quickly adapt to the works later. Each Japanese worker has specialized skills after receiving vocational guidance and vocational education and having a process of career building.

Furthermore, at the government-to-government level, in his first term (2006-2007), Prime Minister Abe raised the bilateral partnership with Vietnam to an official strategic partnership. Currently, Vietnam consistently considers Japan to be its most important and long-term strategic partner<sup>9</sup>. Japan considers Vietnam a "very important" partner country of Japan in implementing the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy<sup>10</sup>. The high frequency of mutual visits by senior leaders of the two countries<sup>11</sup> shows that Vietnam - Japan relations have developed to an unprecedented level, based on mutual complementarity<sup>12</sup>. Japan has been the country with the largest ODA to Vietnam since 1975, but for Tokyo, that is not enough and Japan wants to "enliven" more cooperation in this field with a focus on strategic infrastructure development<sup>13</sup>.

Japan's ODA with Vietnam plays an important role in the following aspects: (i) improving and upgrading the business environment in Vietnam, promoting economic growth; (ii) improving the social environment; (iii) promoting the development of agriculture - forestry - fishery, contributing to hunger eradication and poverty reduction and (iv) contributing to promoting economic restructuring towards industrialization and modernization. In June 2023, Japan announced a new ODA policy for Vietnam. New ODA generation from Japan with low interest rates, almost zero, is expected to promote cooperation and exchange of experience and technology between the two countries in the coming time.

At the local level, since 2007 up to now, 5 centrally-run cities, 11 provinces and 3 prefectural cities of Vietnam and 16 districts, 12 cities and 1 town of Japan have exchanged a total of 37 memoranda of understanding on cooperation, economic connection, enhancing mutual understanding, contributing to restoring the local economy and promoting culture based on the

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<sup>9</sup> The Vietnamese Prime Minister affirmed at a meeting with Member of the National Assembly, Head of the Policy Research Department of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) Hagiuda Koichi on July 10, 2023, Vu Khuyen (2023), <https://vov.vn/chinh-tri/viet-nam-nhat-quan-coi-nhat-ban-la-doi-tac-chien-luoc-quan-trong-hang-dau-post1031738.vov>

<sup>10</sup> Ms. Kobayashi-Terada, Spokesperson of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, talked about the visit to Vietnam by Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko on October 10, 2023, <https://tuoitre.vn/nhat-ban-nhin-thay-gi-o-viet-nam-20231012004110779.htm?fbclid=IwAR0oKCu9otuEmf7p2PIEoFlqcxYzHTKhY6Uz1jCcBXLapWhF96R4WDOjasc>

<sup>11</sup> On February 28, 2017, Japanese King Akihito and the Queen began an official visit to Vietnam and Thailand for 7 days and 6 nights (in fact, the King and Queen officially visited Vietnam for 6 days, on the way back to Thailand). Lan pays her respects to the late King who recently passed away. In January 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe chose Vietnam as the first country he visited.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Tomohito Shinoda, Japan International University, spoke at the international conference "The relationship between Japan's 70-year post-war development path and Vietnam's international integration process" organized by the Diplomatic Academy and the Japanese Embassy co-organized the morning of October 13, 2015 in Hanoi, <https://tuoitre.vn/hop-tac-voi-nhat-vn-da-dang-hoa-loi-ich-kinh-te-984460.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Ms. Kobayashi-Terada, Spokesperson of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, talked about the visit to Vietnam of Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko on October 10, 2023, <https://tuoitre.vn/nhat-ban-nhin-thay-gi-o-viet-nam-20231012004110779.htm?fbclid=IwAR0oKCu9otuEmf7p2PIEoFlqcxYzHTKhY6Uz1jCcBXLapWhF96R4WDOjasc>

characteristics and potential of each region<sup>14</sup>. The strengths of the localities are fully exploited by both sides to enhance complementarity and create a win-win cooperation situation.

People-to-people exchanges between the two countries began with a visit to Japan in the 8th century by a Vietnamese monk. Then, in the 17th century, when trade routes between the two countries were opened, many Japanese merchants lived in Hoi An. By the 19th century, many Vietnamese people came to Japan to study during the Dong Du movement. From those exchanges, a strong friendship has developed between the people of the two countries. After establishing diplomatic relations, the Japan-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Alliance was established in 1978. This is a friendship association with an extremely active history to this day. The exchanges between parliamentarians of the two countries, the trusting and friendly relationship between the two National Assemblies have greatly contributed to the development of bilateral relations.

Vietnam is an important production base for Japanese companies and one of the promising investment destinations. In particular, as Japanese companies diversify their supply chains, Vietnam is attracting more and more attention. The growth of Vietnam will be closely associated with Japan's development. Japan will continue to cooperate with Vietnam to achieve sustainable economic growth, help build an inclusive society, and continue to develop together<sup>15</sup>.

So, Japanese businesses, especially large businesses, have great interest in investing in Vietnam. Japanese FDI is the second largest source of FDI capital into Vietnam, very suitable for the technology transfer in FDI linkages. In the past 20 years, direct investment by Japanese businesses has increased fivefold. The outstanding characteristics of the Japanese business model are: (i) production orientation, (ii) always pursuing the best quality and customer satisfaction, (iii) long-term orientation, (iv) build long-term production relationships, (v) always be ready to impart complex skills and techniques to local companies and workers and (vi) strictly comply with local labor regulations, taxes and environment. These characteristics of FDI enterprises from Japan need to be noted and thoroughly applied in the Vietnamese context. The skills of workers trained in Japanese enterprises are the exact skills that need to be trained for Vietnamese workers.

Regarding people, in recent years, exchanges between the people of the two countries have increased dramatically. The number of Vietnamese people living in Japan has increased tenfold

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<sup>14</sup> 2021 data from research results of State Project KX01.13/16/20 "Research on the theoretical and practical basis of economic connection between Vietnam and Japan in the context of economic integration region", <https://vjst.vn/vn/tin-tuc/4554/ket-noi-kinh-te-viet-nam-va-nhat-ban.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), <https://baotintuc.vn/thoi-su/viet-nam-nhat-ban-thuc-day-hop-tac-tren-nhieu-linh-vuc-20230920130747094.htm>

within 10 years, from 50,000 people in 2012 to 500,000 people in 2022<sup>16</sup>. The number of workers going to Vietnam to work in Japan accounts for over 50% of the number of workers going to work abroad every year. The program of sending and receiving Vietnamese interns and workers to Japan has had remarkable development. Specifically, since Japan began accepting Vietnamese interns, over the past 30 years, there have been more than 400,000 young Vietnamese people coming to Japan to practice skills. The number of Vietnamese interns entering Japan, from 10,200 in 2013 to 82,700 in 2019, increased more than 8 times; In 2022, there were nearly 68,000 interns; In the first 6 months of 2023, there are more than 35,000 Vietnamese interns going to Japan. The program to bring Vietnamese nursing and midwifery candidates to Japan to work within the framework of the Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement began to be implemented in 2012. To date, Vietnam has brought 1,697 Vietnamese nursing and midwife candidates working in Japan. Regarding the technical labor program, engineers and interpreters, there are currently about 65,000 Vietnamese people working in Japanese enterprises. Vietnam is currently the leading country sending workers to Japan among 15 countries sending workers to Japan with the total number of Vietnamese workers living and working in Japan being 345,000 people (as of September 2019 - December 2022). There are about 80,000 Vietnamese specified workers working in Japan, accounting for 58.7% of the total number of foreign specified workers in Japan, of which technical intern trainees make up 81%<sup>17</sup>. Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023) said that in Japan, where the birth rate is decreasing and the population is aging, Vietnamese human resources are playing a huge role, supporting socio-economic development. Japanese association<sup>18</sup>.

Vietnam's vocational education policy was issued a long time ago and has been amended in both the Labor Law, the Education Law and the Vocational Education Law. The time to amend the law lasts many years. But the data on the structure of trained labor is not better. In the context of the number of FDI enterprises increasing rapidly, technology changing extremely rapidly, countries shifting growth models, and strong climate change forcing both domestic and foreign enterprises to adapt. Foreign countries cannot recruit the desired manpower, among many job applications. In particular, Vietnam is famous for its abundant young but unskilled workforce, known as unskilled workers for many decades. Interestingly, during the 3 years of COVID-19, when social distancing was implemented, the unskilled labor force from businesses returned to their hometowns, causing unprecedented cross-regional migration, like in the war time. The sudden increase in the number of these workers returning to rural areas shows that when their hired jobs run out, unskilled workers are unable to survive in the workplace and are

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<sup>16</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), Vietnam - Japan have endless potential for cooperation, <https://tuoitre.vn/viet-nhat-co-tiem-nang-hop-tac-vo-tan-20231010084816463.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Thuy Truc (2023), The Japanese labor market attracts many workers, why?, <https://kinhthedothei.vn/thi-truong-lao-dong-nhat-ban-thu-hut-nhieu-nguoi-lao-dong-vi-sao.html>

<sup>18</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*, <https://tuoitre.vn/viet-nhat-co-tiem-nang-hop-tac-vo-tan-20231010084816463.htm>

forced to return to the countryside for help from their relatives. Clearly, the supply and demand pressures on vocational education are both greater than ever.

I think that, in terms of development needs, improving the quality of industrial human resources is one of the focuses to promote Vietnam's economy. The surplus general human resources in Vietnam must be more skilled and become Vietnam's high-quality industrial human resources in the future. With the characteristics of Japanese education, Japan's vocational education model is the right model that Vietnam needs to learn the most.

## **1.2. Literature overview**

Around the world, research on Japan's vocational education policy in Japanese is quite rich. Research on this topic in English is rare, and in Vietnamese it is even rarer. One can easily find research on the Japanese education system, including a section on vocational education in few rows with in. Research on Japan vocational education in Vietnamese mainly appears on the introduction pages of businesses sending workers to Japan or of Japanese study abroad service companies.

Within the scope of more than 10,000 document files that I have found and read in the time doing research fellow in Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT), there is not a single study comparing the vocational education policies of Vietnam and Japan, in either Vietnamese, English or Japanese, even in the data warehouse of the Center for Japanese Studies under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. Even, in preparation for amending the Vietnam Vocational Education Law, in the vocational education policy overview of the Ministry of Labor of Vietnam (MOLISA), the vocational education policies of 19 countries are mentioned according to each item. Only the Japanese concept of 'worker' is referenced. Therefore, the research gap in the field of Japanese vocational education in Vietnam is very large.

## **1.3. Objectives of the study**

The research objective is to understand aspects of Japan's vocational education policy that Vietnam needs to refer to and improve in vocational education policy in Vietnam, based on public policy approach.

## **1.4. Research Methods**

With a public policy approach, this report mainly uses desk research and document review methods. Data collected from secondary documents, including: official documents on labor policies and vocational education policies of the Vietnamese government and the Japanese government; previous research on vocational education by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, schools and research institutes. In all arguments and data analysis, comparative methods and descriptive statistics are most used.

## **Research approach**



## (1). Concepts definition used

Work. There are increasingly strong arguments that the world of work will be very different from today, with huge implications for VET policy. This report uses the broad definition of work from Moodie, Wheelahan and Lavigne (2019: 23)<sup>19</sup>, work is an activity that maintains the sustainability of an individual or society.

Vocational education is education that prepares people for a skilled craft as an artisan, trade as a tradesperson, or work as a technician. Vocational education can also be seen as that type of education given to an individual to prepare that individual to be gainfully employed or self-employed with requisite skill<sup>20</sup>. Vocational education is known by a variety of names, depending on the country concerned, including career and technical education<sup>21</sup>, or acronyms such as TVET (technical and vocational education and training) and TAFE (technical and further education).

A vocational school is a type of educational institution specifically designed to provide vocational education.

Vocational education can take place at the post-secondary, further education, or higher education level and can interact with the apprenticeship system. At the post-secondary level, vocational education is often provided by highly specialized trade schools, technical schools, community colleges, colleges of further education (UK), vocational universities, and institutes of technology (formerly called polytechnic institutes).

## (2). The context needs to improve vocational training policies

It is impossible to deny the impact of the 4th industrial revolution on people and the labor market. Disruptive digital transformation affects every area of professional, private and social life, especially during the Covid-19 epidemic. Advances in digitalization are changing the way we live and work, and opening up new dimensions to our understanding of learning and training. The rapid pace of development and change continues to increase. Individuals need to embrace change and be motivated to shape new challenges within the broad scope of lifelong learning. VET curricula and training regulations need to demonstrate a willingness to adapt. VET teachers and trainers must be trained as change agents, aware of new technological and socio-economic developments and able to design appropriate programs.

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<sup>19</sup> Moodie, Wheelahan and Lavigne (2019), Technical and Vocational Education and Training as a Framework for Social Justice: Analysis and Evidence From World Case Studies, [https://issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/2019\\_eiresearch\\_tvet](https://issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/2019_eiresearch_tvet)  
Moodie, G., Fredman, N., Bexley, E., & Wheelahan, L. (2013). Vocational education's variable links to vocations. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. Retrieved from <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-andstatistics/publications/all-publications/vocational-educations-variable-links-to-vocations>

<sup>20</sup> Lawal, Abdulrahman W. (2013-09-03). "*Technical and Vocational Education, a Tool for National Development in Nigeria*". *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 4 (8): 85. [ISSN 2039-2117](https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.v4i8.2117).

<sup>21</sup> "*Career and Technical Education*". *edglossary.org*. 15 May 2013.

Beside, global imperatives in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and the need for sustainable development to reduce poverty and inequality, enhance human well-being and protect the planet from destruction ecology has profound implications for education. Meanwhile, education is core to achieving not only Education Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals but also an essential foundation of all 17 Goals (Sachs, 2016). Let look at The 2016 Global Education Monitor with educational framework capable of achieving sustainable development (Global Education Monitoring Group, 2016, p. 11). Therefore, the new vocational education policy must foresee everything and contribute to a continuous cycle of innovation in future vocational education activities.

(3). VET policy. Surely, everyone agrees that, developing appropriate VET theories for the new era is not only an urgent task for academic purposes but also an essential foundation of the new policies and practices needed to transform VET so that it can contribute to social transformation, supporting human development across the economic, environmental and social sectors.

In the context of new skills demands, looking back at applied theories, there is a growing sense that the mainstream set of theories and policies for VET is ineffective (McGrath, 2012; Zancajo and Valiente, 2018; Bonvin, 2019; McGrath et al. events, 2019, Moodie, Wheelahan and Lavigne, 2019; Powell and McGrath, 2019a).

This is especially true in developing and underdeveloped countries where poverty and inequality persist, prevailing and indecent work is widespread; limited accessibility; but government/local government there still want education retention and achievement reports to continue pursuing international education funding projects.

VET must be transformed to address a range of new and challenging goals.

Returning to Amartya Sen's work "Development as Freedom" (Sen, 1999), moving the VET debate away from equality in the assessment of knowledge or qualifications to consider equality in freedom and multidimensional human well-being. A society that develops comprehensively prosperous and sustainable, and human resources in that society are properly career guided and properly vocational trained is a cause-and-effect relationship. From here, it can be considered that better learning, better work and better life are closely linked to each other to design public policy in the field of vocational education.

Most fundamentally, what Sen draws is the argument that development is about human flourishing. In Sen's view, individual income and national economic development are simply means to achieve this larger end.

Education is mainly aimed at human development, not just human capital development. The educational approach to both human development and the development of human capacities (HDCA) focuses to sustainable human development, allowing questions, how educational

institutions succeed or fail in helping to achieve human development, ensuring their multidimensional freedom in an ever-changing society.

For public education policy and public policy implementation agencies, the concept of “collective capacity”, importance of “relational capacity” must be raised. Walker and McLean (2013) and Powell and McGrath (2019a) have argued that educational institutions must have organizational capacity. Conradie and Robeyns (2013) and Moodie (2019) noted that, schools and community groups play a key role in developing collective and relational capacity. Here, and businesses must be included.

Applying HDCA to VET, De Jaeghere (2017), Powell and McGrath (2019a) and McGrath et al (2019b) showed that we can escape narrow focus to employment and production, trying to return to broader questions about the purpose of vocational education and training as part of individual and community efforts towards human development, explaining stronger self-determination, hope and personal experience of VET; wishes for future life.

Accordingly, for countries at low starting point, the VET policy takes into account the main factors:

- Multi-dimensional poverty perspective
- Gender perspective
- Interact with the political economy
- Broader concept of work
- Focus on flourishing
- Centrality of desire
- Many decisive milestones in the vocational learning path. The human element as thinking agents constructing life projects and aspirations. Human awareness determines reassessment. It can take place at certain life milestones that individuals experience related to their learning and work trajectory.

Taking the concept from adult learning theory, the assumptions are as follows<sup>22</sup>:

**Readiness to Learn** – Adults who are ready to learn are usually spurred by a specific reason, such as self-development and growth related to their work or career path.

**Orientation of Learning** – Adults are more prone to learning when it is applicable to everyday lives instead of general learning about certain subjects that are unrelated to

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<sup>22</sup> Knowles, M. S. (1962) A History of the Adult Education Movement in the USA, New York: Krieger. A revised edition was published in 1977; <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/adult-learning-theory/>

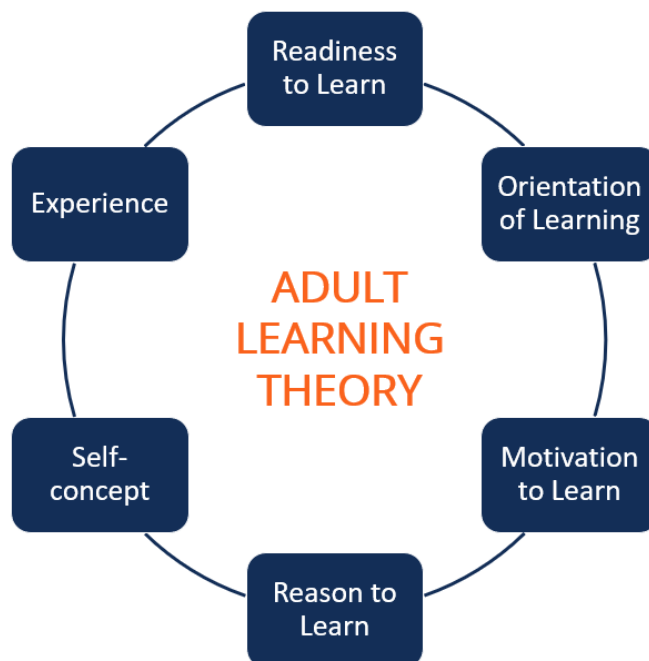
our lives. In general, adults will want to learn practical skills that will make their lives and work more efficient.

**Motivation to Learn** – Adults require their own motivations and reasons to learn new things. As children, the reason for learning is simply because they are directed to learn; however, adults need to develop their own motivation.

**Reason to Learn** – Adults require a strong reason to learn, such as a problem that they need to solve and an immediate application of new knowledge.

**Self-concept** – Adults' learning is much more self-directed and independent as they mature. It allows adults to decide when they want to learn, what they want to learn, and how they want to learn. Such an assumption shows that educators need to develop a plethora of choices for adult learners, allowing them to design their own learning environment.

**Experience** – Adult learning, in contrast to children, includes a significant amount of previous life experiences to rely upon to assist with new learning experiences. The previous experiences can bring a unique perspective that fosters discussions and are valuable learning resources. However, they may also result in some biases and misinformation.



Adult learning theory also places importance on the ability to share life experiences as adults with each other, which can enhance the overall learning experience. Therefore, other adult

experiences can be used as resources to learn. Furthermore, adults will base their learning on situations that arise in their life, which they may require new learning in order to deal with such situations.

As an adult who progresses through life and is developing skills and their career, adult learning theory is crucial to understand in order to develop training programs for adults. The training programs are important for employees who are learning new skills and job functions. They are also essential for customers who may be learning to use a new product or new technologies.

Understanding adult learning theory is important in our ever-changing society. New technological developments, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, will reshape both the job market and the retail market. Effective adult learning practices can help with the transition and ensure that the adults of tomorrow are well equipped to handle the resulting changes<sup>23</sup>. This suggests flexibility in VET policy corresponding to learners' motivations and calculations about when to decide to participate or stop participating in VET. To apply adult learning theory, there are a few steps that should be loosely followed, including:

1. Analyzing learning with the theory in mind to create a learning process and overall framework for training.
2. Foster collaboration within the learning process, which gives an opportunity for adult learners to benefit from each other's life experiences.
3. Create a self-directed learning experience where the learners are able to control when, where, and how their learning is conducted. New technologies have made this self-directed learning much easier through e-learning.
4. Examples should be derived from real-world cases. It allows the trainee to see the application of what they are learning.
5. Allow learners to problem solve and figure out solutions on their own. It fosters creativity and critical thinking on a deeper level.

Trial and error is important for adult learning, allowing learners to experiment and test different things is important to training.

- Evaluate

### **1.5. Research scope**

In terms of content, this report focuses on researching public policies on vocational education in Japan and Vietnam. Labor policy and career guidance and education policies are not the main subjects of research, but are mentioned as supporting policies for vocational education policy. Vocational education and training facilities, organizations noted are public or government or state-own facilities.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/adult-learning-theory/>

The subjects of vocational education and training are unskilled workers, mostly young (and at middle age), because according to the structure of the Vietnamese labor market, as stated above, the highest proportion of unskilled workers in labor market is, mainly, junior- high school-graduated students. This proportion has little change after many revisions of vocational education and training policy.

The research period is focused on the real time 2019-2023, when the current vocational education policy and supporting policies are in effect.

#### **1.6. New contribution**

Regarding theory, based on re-questioning the meaning and role of vocational education according to sustainable development goals, new VET theory and adult learning theory to reveal the long-term picture and ongoing education process of a VET public policy.

This idea has not been found in any research on VET policy in Vietnam. And, certainly, this is not mentioned in studies on vocational education of the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam either;

In practice, with the selection of the case of Japanese vocational education policy, the study points out some aspects that need improvement in the implementation and enforcement of Vietnam's vocational education policy.

At the same time, unlike the explanations of many individual researchers and authorities related to labor cooperation between Japan and Vietnam on the causes of some negative activities in labor cooperation, based on cross-cutting argument, the author of this report found the cause in professional discipline and the education of professional qualities for the young generation of Vietnam. Professional dignity in general are only formed during the career building process, as a result of decent career guidance policies and correct vocational training.

#### **1.7. Layout of the report**

Beside from and introduction and conclusion, the report includes 4 main parts:

- (1). INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH APPROACH
- (2). JAPAN'S VET POLICY OVERVIEW
- (3). IMPROVING VIETNAM'S VET POLICY BASED ON JAPAN'S VET POLICY STUDIES
- (4). JAPAN-VIETNAM VET POLICY COOPERATION

## 2. JAPAN'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY OVERVIEW

With a public policy approach, my research focuses on the activities of VET governance actors.

### 2.1. Japan's perspective and approach to vocational training

VET: the “transition from school to mainstream society/one's profession” and the “social and vocational independence” of young people is a structural issue that runs throughout society.

Everyone must recognize each side's role and work together to find a solution<sup>24</sup>.

The underlying trend is to support lifelong career building. Secondary education plays an important role in this and it is essential to promote career and vocational education in schools to facilitate a smooth transition from school to mainstream society, as well as enhancing young people's social and vocational independence, supporting people to build careers throughout their lives<sup>25</sup>.

The term “career” and the distinction between career education and vocational education caught my attention. This clear definition is very basic and defines the depth and length of education system and process.

Accordingly, the term “career” is referred to in school career education, meaning “a continuous series of endeavors that enable a person to realize the value of their role as well as the relationship between themselves and their role throughout life”<sup>26</sup>.

Career education: Education encourages career development by cultivating the abilities and attitudes necessary to enhance the individual's social and professional independence<sup>27</sup>.

Vocational education: Education to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes needed to do a certain or specific job<sup>28</sup>.

Japan VET (JVET) policy shows the essentials for social and professional independence and a smooth transition from school to mainstream society/one's profession.

JVET policy defined basic competencies and general competencies in particular are essential competencies that underpin social and professional independence regardless of the business sector or type of work and must be at the heart of vocational education<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

◆ Necessary abilities for social and occupational independence as well as a smooth transition from school to mainstream society/one's profession are determined as following:

- Basic/basic knowledge and skills
- Basic and general abilities
- Ability to think logically and creatively
- Readiness, attitude and set of values
- Professional knowledge and skills

◆ Basic and general abilities are defined as following:

Ability to establish relationships and community. Ability to understand one's own situation, participate in society through cooperation, collaborate with others while playing an important, proactive role in building one's future society country as well as understanding the ideas and situations of many other people, listening to the opinions of others and accurately conveying your ideas to them. Examples: Ability to understand other people's personalities, ability to encourage others, communication, teamwork and leadership skills

Ability to understand and manage yourself. The ability to control one's thoughts and emotions, as well as take positive, proactive steps that take into account ideas such as one's own future potential and willingness to learn for future development at the same time maintain a general relationship with society, while examining my own sense of "what I can do", "what I value" and "what I want to do". For example: Understand your own role, have the ability to always look ahead, maintain self-motivation, maintain patience, manage stress and be proactive.

Ability to solve problems. Ability to detect and analyze various problems at work, solve them by devising a suitable plan and resolve them. Examples: Understanding, selecting and processing information, understanding the nature of the problem, pursuing causes, detecting problems, planning, focusing energy on action, evaluating and improving

Career planning capabilities. The ability to make proactive decisions to shape one's career by understanding the value of "work", defining "work" as it relates to the various positions and roles one holds perceive in life and appropriately select/use different information about diverse lifestyles. Examples: Understanding the value and role in learning and working, understanding diversity, planning for the future, make choices, take action, and make improvements<sup>30</sup>.

JVET policy strengthens the vocational education component, aiming to develop two types of human resources: those who will enter higher education institutions to obtain more advanced

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<sup>29</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)



qualifications and be trained in knowledge and skills to become Future professionals and those who will be employed after graduation and responsible for local industries and society<sup>31</sup>. Therefore, vocational training is divided into two types: Advanced vocational training and conventional training.

**Table 2.1. Vocational training facilities**

Name of vocational training facility	Type of vocational training	Establishing entity
Polytechnic Colleges	Advanced vocational training for senior high school graduates, etc. (specialized course)  More advanced, specific and practical vocational training for those who finished advanced course (applied course)	Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers
Polytechnic Junior Colleges	Advanced vocational training for senior high school graduates, etc. (specialized course)	Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers Prefectures
Polytechnic Centers	Short-term vocational training for unemployed workers and employed workers	Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers
Advanced Polytechnic Centers	Advanced and innovative vocational training in production-related fields mainly for middle-career engineers	Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers
Polytechnic Schools	Vocational training for junior and senior high school graduates, unemployed workers, and employed workers, etc.	Prefectures  Municipalities
Polytechnic Schools for Persons with Disabilities	Vocational training for junior and senior high school graduates, unemployed workers, and employed workers, etc.	The government (The operation has been entrusted to Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers  Prefectures

Source: Mex (2010), Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

Japan's VET emphasizes the need to promote not only vocational education but also systematic career education from preschool to higher education<sup>32</sup>.

The entire Japanese VET policy document does not leave any redundant or repetitive sentences. All terms demonstrate professionalism in delineating activities leading to exact understanding.

## **2.2. Select policy enforcement tools**

### **2.2.1. Update the development context, promptly adjust/amend old standards and promulgate new standard regulations**

I would like to list the times of changes/adjustments to legal documents and policies related to vocational training of the Japanese Government based on Saito (1993)<sup>33</sup> to see the timeliness of the policy with the country's development practice.

1921 • Employment Arrangement Law was enacted. → Opportunity to systematize pre-war vocational training.

1921 - Vocational assistance (unemployment support measures for the unemployed and disabled) was implemented for unemployed people in Tokyo City.

1938 • Recruitment agencies were nationalized. Short-term accelerated training begins.

1939 • Ordinance on factory worker training based on the National Mobilization Law. → Obligation to train long-term skilled workers for medium and large factories. Full livestock education and training cooperation.

1945 ♦ I The period of building democratic vocational training policies (1945-1957)

1947 - The Labor Standards Act is enacted and the "Skills Training System" is implemented. • Enact the Employment Security Law. Launched "Vocational Guidance System". → Two vocational training policy systems.

1958 ♦ II Period of blossoming and development of vocational training policy = 1958 Period of Vocational Training Law (1958-1968) • The Vocational Training Law ("1933 Law") was promulgated • The vocational training system was certified

1959 • Skill certification system established (fiscal year 1959)

1963 • Promoting skills competition, etc. (since 1963)

1967 • Award for outstanding technician (modern master craftsman) (since 1967)

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<sup>32</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> 斎藤[1993]、職業能力開発行政史研究会[1999]、厚生労働省職業能力開発局監修[2002]、厚生労働省職業能力開発局編[2002]及び厚生労働省行政資料を参照。) )

1969 ♦Ⅲ Expanding vocational training policy = Early period Vocational Training Law 1969 (1969-1973) - Law was amended to become the new Vocational Training Law ("Law 1944"). A comprehensive vocational training system is established, in which "vocational guidance" becomes "public vocational training" and "skills training" becomes "internal vocational training" '. • Vocational training company system

1974 ♦Ⅳ The period of adjusting vocational training policy = The final period of the vocational training law in 1964 (1974-1978) • Promulgation of the Employment Insurance Law. Establishment of a skills development enterprise as one of three enterprises under the Employment Insurance Act.

1978 ♦Ⅴ Turning point in vocational training policy = 1979 Vocational Training Law Period (Central Enterprise Education and Training) (1979-1985) → "First amendment" of the new Vocational Training Law. 1) Develop a vocational training delivery system, 2) Encourage private vocational training, and 3) Develop vocational capacity development associations for the purpose of promoting vocational training and skills testing.

1985 - The Promotion of Vocational Capacity Development Act (changes the title of the Vocational Training Act) passed a partial amendment (second amendment) of the Vocational Training Act (1944 Act). → Emphasis on education and training provided by the employer, etc. A system will be established to encourage all workers to develop and improve their vocational skills in a timely and appropriate manner throughout their working life. → Develop and enhance employees' career capabilities through building internal career development plans, providing paid holidays, etc. → Actively use authorized training, etc.

1986 ♦Ⅵ Period of professional capacity development policy = Period of law encouraging professional capacity development (after 1986)

April 1992 • Revised to respond to the transition to a labor shortage economy due to the decline in the youth workforce and the growing trend of skill shortages.

1997 • Meeting the complexity of public vocational training to increase the added value of enterprise products and expand into new fields (1997)

October 1998 • Amendment of the Act on Promotion of Professional Capacity Development. → - Organize the vocational training system and promote international cooperation according to the trend of young people leaving behind skills. → • Promote the development and improvement of voluntary skills development, such as strengthening the education and training leave system. • Amendment of the Employment Insurance Act. → Build an education and training welfare system.

2001 • Assessing the ability of occupations to respond to technological innovations such as the IT revolution, economic globalization, longer working hours of workers due to a rapidly aging

population, and diversification of attitudes and employment patterns, especially among young people. development   ▪ Professional development promotion allowance (since 2001)

2002   ▪ Development of professional competency assessment standards (since 2002)

2006   ▪ As we enter a society with a decreasing population, we will face the risk of disinheritation and loss of skilled techniques and skills due to the trend of increasing numbers of young people unemployment and part-time work as well as the retirement of many people. baby boomer generation.   ▪ Establish a vocational training system including practical training.   ▪ Local youth support station project (since 2006)

2008   ▪ Job card (sheet including work history, training results, etc.) \*Valid for evaluation at the time of recruitment. (From fiscal year 2008). The Job Card system is being implemented in promoting the transition to stable employment of job seekers, students, and workers, etc. via fostering their profession aspires and clarifying any issues through career consultations using Job Card, providing them with the opportunity to take practical vocational training (vocational ability development programs), and then compiling the results of the evaluations made by training institutions along with their work histories, etc.

2011   ▪ Establishment of job seeker support system. Under this system, vocational training (for those who have quit their jobs) (from October 2011) - “9th Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan” (5-year plan with implementation goals, basics, etc.) (from fiscal year 2011)

2013   ▪ Meister Production (from 2013)   ▪ Career Improvement Allowance (from 2013)

2014   ▪ Establish professional practice education and training benefits. From October.   ▪ Development of vocational training courses through cooperation between local relevant organizations (local level corporations) (from fiscal year 2014, fiscal year 2014: 10 locations, five fiscal 2017: 15 locations)

2015   ▪ Internal human resource development promotion subsidy (from fiscal year 2015)

2016   ▪ “10th Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan” (5-year plan with implementation goals, basic issues, etc.) (from fiscal year 2016) <sup>34</sup>

Specific examples of policy adjustments:

The Standards for Establishing Universities and the Standards for Establishing Colleges were revised in February 2010. These Standards were established to organize the system of activities

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<sup>34</sup>初谷 [2001]、「第2章 NPO 政策の変遷」(133-229 頁)参照。

斎藤[1993]、職業能力開発行政史研究会[1999]、厚生労働省職業能力開発局監修[2002]、厚生労働省職業能力開発局編[2002]及び厚生労働省行政資料を参照。) )

towards social goals and independent vocational training inside and outside the curriculum in all schools from April 2011<sup>35</sup>.

According to the revision of the Standards for Establishing Universities and Standards for Establishing Colleges, MEXT accelerates various supports, such as promoting the project to support workforce training for university students and Comprehensive implementation of measures at all grade levels as well as systematic guidance throughout the period from admission to graduation, towards students' independent social and career goals<sup>36</sup>.

In addition, regarding the five-year integrated education after secondary school graduation for colleges of technology, MEXT conducts vocational education that is gradually and continuously refined, in accordance with step-by-step student development, encouraging advancement in classroom subjects with a focus on building a broader career awareness and other educational opportunities in a variety of specialty areas<sup>37</sup>.

In order for students to have enough understanding of reality and the necessary competencies for each job, as well as a clear sense of learning goals right from the early stages, MEXT promotes training of lecturers to improve skills to help students gain the ability to proactively plan their careers throughout their lives<sup>38</sup>.

*The VET policy adjustment above described shows that, in Japan, social development is in agreement with the development of the education and vocation training system. VET policy is like a rudder/driving wheel, directing the entire transition system. People are the center of all activities and are organized into a unified block.*

### **2.2.2. Issue universal guidance and disseminate uniform information to each relevant party on vocational education and vocational training**

MEXT publishes the "Handbook of Secondary Vocational Education" to ensure that the vocational education policy is followed, representing a concrete measure to enhance vocational education at the upper secondary level<sup>39</sup>.

MEXT established the "Research Collaborator Meeting on the actual use of external human resources in vocational education" to research and survey measures to help schools actively implement vocational education. MEXT conducted a survey to better understand students' sense of purpose related to the integrated course vision in an effort to support the needs of

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<sup>35</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

students, their parents or guardians, and local community/society at large. Each school must review its career orientation from a career education perspective taking into account the actual circumstances of its students<sup>40</sup>.

MEXT plans to enhance the educational content of specialized high school courses (commerce courses, technical courses, agricultural courses, etc.) by revising the Senior High School Course and improving education vocational education by sharing and disseminating information on results from practical educational activities nationwide, promoting better understanding of integrated courses, educational activities and system improvements to help students gain a sense of purpose in choosing a career. Examples of this include long-term on-site practices with local companies, assigning people with business experience as teachers, and collaborative efforts with universities.

Furthermore, for subjects at specialized colleges (high school courses), there is a need to institutionalize “credit courses” and “corresponding courses” to support academic requirements, vary depending on the actual situation of the student. With this in mind, since November 2009, MEXT has organized the "Research Survey Collaborators Meeting on Incentives in Higher Education and Specialized Training". MEXT has repeatedly conducted surveys of experts and has published a draft design for the system, introducing corresponding courses and credits, courses at specialized training colleges in March 2011 report<sup>41</sup>.

The government and prefectures are obliged to “provide vocational training for workers who intend to change their jobs and other persons who need special assistance for the development and improvement of their vocational abilities” (Article 4-2 of the Human Resources Development Promotion Act). In consideration of this provision, public human resources development facilities are established to provide various types of vocational training to meet individual worker's needs. In detail, there are following policies with a numbers of concrete measures, but, I do emphasize, in entire country as a unite block:

i/ Developing and improvement of vocational abilities

- Promotion of educational training conducted by employers, etc., preparation of in-house vocational ability development plan, appointment of a vocational ability development promoter
- + Subsidies to employers that support workers' efforts in career development (career development promotion subsidy, subsidy for career upgrading, subsidy for promotion of human resources development at companies;

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<sup>40</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

- + Facilities for educational training implemented by an enterprise or group of enterprises (accredited vocational training)
- + Support for in-house training [lending facilities, dispatching instructors, etc.]
- + Guidance/advice and information provision at Vocational Ability Development Service Centers
- + Educational training at Care Worker Support Center Foundation
- + Support for internationalization-aware human resources development [information provision and consultation etc., Practical ability development combining on-the-job training and classroom education (fixed-term practice training, practical human resource development system)]
- Implementation of public vocational training
  - + Training for unemployed workers, Training for employed workers, Training for school graduates
  - + Training for vocational training instructors, etc.: Polytechnic University of Japan (Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers), a training school for the development of instructors, etc.
- Implementation of support training for job seekers
- Promotion of workers' voluntary self-initiative development
  - + Career development promotion subsidy
  - + Educational training benefits (part of training expenses is subsidized when insured person of Employment Insurance for a certain period of time takes certain training)
  - + Promotion of career consultations
- Career development support throughout Working Life for casual employees/NEETs: Japanese version of dual system, Regional Youth Support Stations

Progress made in a prolonged work life and the diversity of work styles, etc. have made the provision of support for career development throughout a person's vocational life, according to the characteristics of the individual, in addition to enhanced/improved vocational training and ability-oriented labour market development, necessary in thereby promoting the development/improvement of vocational abilities of workers in a step-wise and systematic manner, and thus leading to the greater security and development of human resources and improved productivity, etc.

The following measures have therefore been promoted in accordance with the 9th Basic Plan for Human Resources Development

(1) Support for individual voluntary human resources development

- Effective utilization of education and training benefits, etc.
- Development of an environment in which career consultations can be received at certain points in one's working life, such as when leaving/changing jobs, etc.
- Securement and improvement of human resources through the development of ability improvement systems for career consultants, etc.
- Active promotion of utilizing Job Card that can serve as effective tools in career consultations

(2) Support for human resources development of workers by enterprises

- Further effective utilization of the "career development promotion subsidy", "subsidy for promotion of human resources development at companies" and "accredited vocational training systems" etc. and promotion of the development of human resources that can lead the promotion of career development within enterprises etc.
- Further effective use of training for employed workers implemented according to the individual needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises and a training instructor dispatch system, etc. to make the vocational training available that is difficult to implement within enterprises due to the lack of facilities, training instructors, or funds, etc.

(3) Promotion of career education

- Nurturing persons with expertise who support and promote career education at universities etc.

ii/ Vocational ability evaluation and promotion of trade skills

- Vocational ability evaluation system

+ National Trade Skills Tests: The government tests workers' skills based on standards and officially certifies them. Skills and occupations, etc. covered. Common trade skills widely used in enterprises across the country, and occupations in which a large number of workers are engaged.

Type of certification: A person who passed the test is given a certificate either in the name of the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare (for Special Grade, Grade 1, and single grade) or the prefectural governors or the head of designated test organization (for Grades 2 and 3), and is given a title "Certified Skilled Worker".



Eligible applicants: Persons who have practical experience in principle

+ Authorized in-house trade skills tests: The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare authorizes in-house trade skills tests which are regarded necessary to promote skills development.

Skills and occupations, etc. covered: Particular trade skills used in-house are subjected, including food processing and automobile parts management, etc. are authorized.

Type of certification: Authorized in-house trade skills tests can be labeled as “authorized by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare”.

Eligible applicants: Workers employed by enterprises conducting authorized in-house trade skills tests

**Table 2.2. Outline of skills test**

Grade	Skills are required
Special Grade	The level of skills that managers or supervisors of each tested occupation must have, and the level of knowledge related to the skills
Grade 1	The level of skills that advanced skilled workers of each tested occupation must have, and the level of knowledge related to the skills
Grade 2	The level Of skills that intermediate-level skilled workers of each tested occupation must have, and the level Of knowledge related to the skills
Grade 3	The level of skills that elementary-level skilled workers of each tested occupation must have, and the level of knowledge related to the skills
Basic Grade 1	The skills required to carry out basic works of the tested occupation, and the level of knowledge related to the skills
Basic Grade 2	The essential skills required to carry out basic works of the tested occupation, and the level of knowledge related to the skills
Single Grade	The level of skills that advanced skilled workers of each tested occupation must have, and the level of knowledge related to the skills

**Table 2.3. Vocational ability evaluation standards**

	Standards specify the ability levels required for each trade, occupation, and duty for enabling the evaluation of the vocational abilities of workers using common criteria.
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Occupations, etc. covered	A broad range of trades is covered as well as cross-cutting clerical occupations such as accounting and personnel management, etc.
Evaluated persons	Workers/job seekers (who should be evaluated depending on evaluators using evaluation standards)
Evaluation methods	The government formulates model standards for the respective industries. These standards can be customized by the individual enterprise. Evaluation methods used may be continuous observations or written examinations.

Source: Human Resources Development Bureau, MHLW  
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/wp/wp-hw9/dl/06e.pdf>

+ Development of vocational ability evaluation system for a wide range of occupation types

- Promotion of trade skills: Award for Outstandingly Skilled Workers, Monozukuri Nippon Grand Award, Youth Monozukuri Skills Competition, National Skills Competition, Skills Grand Prix, World Skills Competition, Abylimpic, etc.

- Measures:

+ Young Skilled Workers Development Support Projects: “Monozukuri meisters (experts in manufacturing)”, who have excellent skills and experience, are sent to enterprises, industrial organizations, and educational training institutions to provide young skilled workers with hands-on instructions using competition tasks of skills competitions, etc. In order to develop society’s respect for skills, efforts through originality and ingenuity of concerned parties in regions, including the provision of opportunities to acquire skills through the utilization of skilled workers, etc., are further promoted.

+ Youth Monozukuri Skills Competition: The Youth Monozukuri (or manufacturing-related) Skills Competition has been held annually since FY2005 and is open to anyone aged 20 or younger who is currently studying at a human resources development institution, an accredited vocational training institution, or a technical high school. The Competition was designed to set targets for any such young people and increase their skills to get opportunities for employment.

+ National Skills Competition: The National Skills Competition has been held annually since FY1963 with the aim of providing skilled young workers (23 or younger in principle) in Japan with aspirational goals via the use of a proficiency level competition and thus appealing to the importance and necessity of skills to the general public widely in developing a positive social feeling of respect for having obtained a skill.

+ World Skills Competition: The World Skills Competition was first held in Spain in 1950 and at present is held once every two years with the aim of promoting vocational training and developing worker skills in participating countries and promoting international goodwill and exchanges through holding an international skills competition among young skilled workers (22 or younger in principle).

+ National Skills Grand Prix: The Skills Grand Prix has been held annually since FY1981 and at present has been held once every two years since FY2002 as a skills competition in which skilled workers with advanced grades of skills, 1st grade, etc., can participate with the aim of further advancing their proficiency levels and promoting their social status and skills.

+ Award for Outstandingly Skilled Workers: This award has been granted to outstandingly skilled workers annually since FY1967 with the aim of developing a social feeling of respect for skills and thus improving the status of skilled workers and their proficiency levels, while also developing the positive social feeling of enabling young people to become skilled workers who have pride and hope in and are devoted to their work.

+ Monozukuri Nippon Grand Award (Prime Minister's Commendation): The award has been granted to individuals, groups, or organizations engaged in “Monozukuri” (manufacturing), which supported the development of industries and culture and made such a great contribution to the public wealth of Japan, that have had outstanding achievements (once every two years) since FY2005 and with the aim of ensuring a succession to the next generation of the technologies and skills involved in “Monozukuri” via praising their achievements.

+ Award for Human Resource Development from the MHLW. This award is granted to offices, organizations, or individuals that are recognized to have made an outstanding achievement in promoting the accredited vocational training and National Trade Skills Tests that serve as a model to others and to offices and organizations that have been recognized to have made an outstanding achievement in promoting trade skills which serve as a model to others with the aim of contributing to the promotion of accredited training, national trade skills testing, and trade skills, and thereby to the advancement of technology levels, and disseminating/enlightening the purpose of the Human Resources Development Promotion Act.

+ Abylimpics (National Vocational Skills Contest for the Disabled Persons): The Abylimpic has been held since 1972 with the aim of promoting the vocational ability development of persons with disabilities and enabling them to participate in society with confidence and pride as skilled workers and also facilitating the employment of persons with disabilities through raising public awareness and understanding of them.

### III/ Welfare measures for working youth: Promotion of welfare measures at working youth centers

- Vocational Ability Development for Persons with Disabilities
  - + Establishment/operation of vocational ability development schools for persons with disabilities operated by the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers, prefectures and Prefectural vocational ability development schools for persons with disabilities;
  - + Vocational ability development of persons with disabilities at ordinary vocational ability development schools
  - + Diverse entrusted training according to the disability (commenced in FY 2004): Implementation of vocational training through utilization of various entrusted entities in regions, including enterprises, social welfare foundations, NPOs, and private educational training institutions, etc.
  - + Studies on vocational ability development for persons with disabilities, etc.
  - + Conducting National Vocational Skills Contest for the Disabled Persons (Abilympics)
- Set up Regional Youth Support Stations: Support for those who do not belong to labour force is important, not only because it broadens their career possibilities, but it also keeps them from depending on public assistance in the future and nurtures them as supporters of the regional society by making them economically independent and next bearers of the country's industries. To this end, at "Regional Youth Support Stations" in collaboration with local governments (Collaboration includes financial support from local governments), consultations by professionals for vocational independent, follow-up support for job retention and career upgrading and intensive training program for young unemployed people are provided, in order to help them to lead a fulfilling vocational live and become supporters of the country's future. (The services are targeted at people aged between 15 and 39) (From FY 2006 on: The services are provided by non-profit organizations (NPO) and other types of organizations, who have experiences and know-how in supporting young people.)<sup>42</sup>

#### **2.2.3. Build a cooperation system**

MEXT believes that it is important for vocational education that both Japanese education and industry share a future vision of industries and jobs, and target resources and necessary ability. To fully promote career education and vocational education, it is important to encourage efforts made through cooperation between schools, families, local communities, businesses,

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<sup>42</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

economic organizations /professional associations and NPOs with a mutual understanding of each other's different roles<sup>43</sup>.

JVET policy builds a collaborative system to develop resources and enhance education to foster the skills needed to work within such a system. Accordingly, for universities and colleges, in cases where universities and colleges are differentiated by function, strengthen vocational education with clear identification of target resources and competencies to be developed. Developing and implementing practical education through cooperation with businesses and to meet the need for lifelong learning that allows continuous learning of skills needed for a specific job.

MEXT supports measures aimed at students' social and professional independence, such as promoting problem-solving learning, to enable each university and college to collaborate with other companies conduct practical educational programs.

Furthermore, for colleges of technology, MEXT promotes vocational education efforts in cooperation with local industry, enhances educational content and methods, and promotes the necessary educational organization to open up new sectors based on local and national needs.

Specialized schools enhance the educational environment so that they accommodate the different lifestyles of learners and support their learning needs, such as promoting the advancement of employability and re-education for those who have lost their jobs.

In order not to repeat the regulations and activities stipulated in Japan's VET policy, it can be seen that the assignment of activities to each subject in the VET system along with collective responsibilities is clear, almost no overlap<sup>44</sup>.

#### (i) Cooperation with local communities and industry

Effective collaboration between local schools, communities and industry is carried out, such as the formation of a council with the help of parent-teacher associations (PTAs), principals associations, neighborhood councils, economic organizations/professional associations and NPOs.

Creating a team of specialized lecturers for schools and the Board of Education, assigning designated staff to the above-mentioned Board, MEXT has considered how to build a system and apply practical measures at schools and the Board of Education when introducing external human resources for vocational education.

#### (ii) Cooperate with parents or guardians of the family and children

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<sup>43</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

The family is an important place to support children's growth and development and encourage their independence. Parents' views on work significantly influence their children's career development. Therefore, the school shares an understanding of each party's role and their impact on vocational education within the family;

The school provides factual information by taking into account various environmental factors, developments related to employment and enrollment.

The child's parents or guardians support the child's growth and development in parallel with the school's efforts.

The school proactively involves the child's parents or guardians in school activities by leveraging their own experiences as working adults and professionals.

- Enhance career building support from a lifelong learning perspective<sup>45</sup>

(.) Support learners after transitioning to mainstream society/employment, support dropouts and people who do not work

(.) Establishment of a Fund to support lifelong learning about employment

(.) Employment support for new graduates

Schools provide vocational education, organize and improve curricula, implement practical vocational education activities, and engage high-caliber entrepreneurs in these activities by working closely with local communities and relevant companies, focusing on the development of basic and general capabilities as outlined above.

**Table 2.4. Vocational training enterprises: number of enterprises by province**

code	prefecture	Fiscal year 2017			Fiscal year 2018		
		Total number of training courses	Vocational training implementation certificate	Vocational training certificate suspended	Total number of training courses	Vocational training implementation certificate	Vocational training certificate suspended
1.	Hokkaido	25	20	5	26	21	5
2.	Aomori	12	7	5	12	7	5
3.	Iwate	16	16	0	16	16	0
4.	Miyagi	6	6	0	6	6	0

<sup>45</sup> Educational Standards and Educational Expenditure in Japan, White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2010, [https://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588\\_006.pdf](https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201001/detail/1326588_006.pdf)

5.	Akita	9	9	0	9	9	0
6.	Yamagata	10	9	1	10	9	1
7.	Fukushima	8	8	0	8	8	0
8.	Ibaraki	13	9	4	13	9	4
9.	Tochigi	9	6	3	9	6	3
10.	Gunma	7	7	0	13	12	1
11.	Saitama	10	8	2	10	8	2
12.	Chiba	11	8	3	8	6	2
13.	Tokyo	10	9	1	11	10	1
14.	Kanagawa	8	6	2	6	5	1
15.	Niigata	15	15	0	15	15	0
16.	Toyama	8	7	1	9	7	2
17.	Ishikawa	4	2	2	4	3	1
18.	Fukui	3	3	0	3	3	0
19.	Yamanashi	3	1	2	3	3	0
20.	Nagano	7	6	1	8	6	2
21.	Gifu	8	4	4	8	4	4
22.	Shizuoka	17	14	3	16	16	0
23.	Aichi	11	11	0	11	11	0
24.	Mie	8	8	0	8	7	1
25.	Shiga	10	9	1	10	9	1
26.	Kyoto	6	6	0	6	6	0
27.	Osaka	6	5	1	6	5	1
28.	Hyogo	4	4	0	4	4	0
29.	Nara	4	3	1	3	2	1
30.	Wakayama	4	0	4	4	0	4
31.	Tottori	4	4	0	4	4	0
32.	Shimane	4	2	2	4	2	2

33	Osaka	5	2	3	5	2	3
34	Hiroshima	6	5	1	6	5	1
35	Yamaguchi	2	2	0	2	2	0
36	Tokushima	3	1	2	3	3	0
37	Kagawa	1	1	0	0	0	0
38	Ehime	3	2	1	2	2	0
39	Kochi	3	3	0	3	3	0
40	Fukuoka	4	4	0	4	4	0
41	Saga	8	8	0	8	7	1
42	Nagasaki	7	4	3	7	4	3
43	Kamamoto	6	6	0	6	5	1
44	Oita	6	3	3	6	3	3
45	Miyazaki	11	10	1	11	10	1
46	Kagoshima	6	6	0	7	5	2
47	Okinawa	1	1	0	1	1	0

Source: 初谷 勇 (2019), 職業訓練法人の課題 : NPO 政策の観点から, RIETI Discussion Paper Series 19-J-005 2019 年 1 月 , 大 阪 商 業 大 学 , <https://www.rieti.go.jp/jp/publications/dp/19j005.pdf>

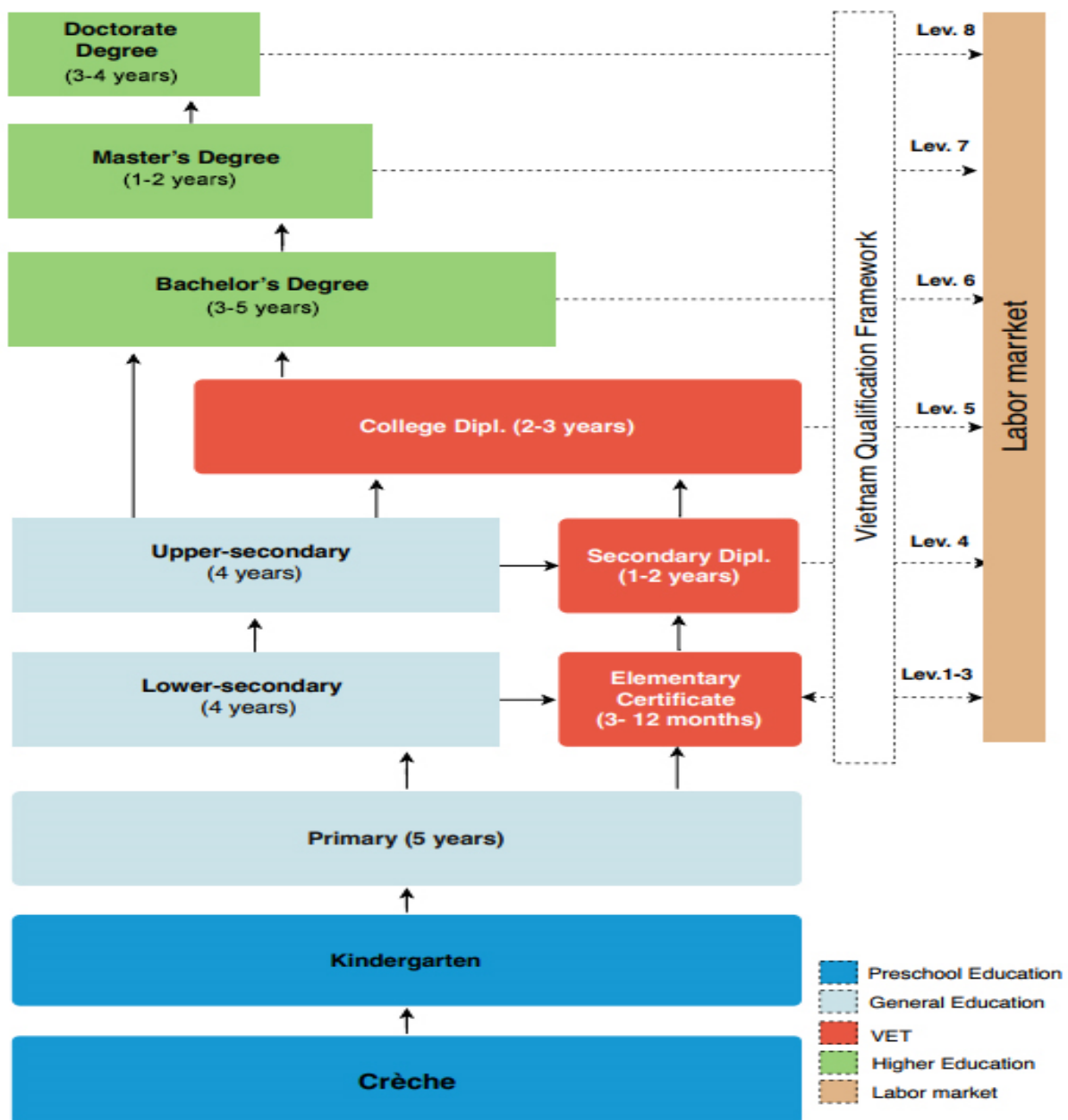
### 3. IMPROVING VIETNAM'S VET POLICY BASED ON JAPAN'S VET POLICY STUDIES

#### *3.1. Current status of vocational education policy in Vietnam*

The national education system of Vietnam consists of pre-school education, basic education, vocational education and training and tertiary education:

- Pre-school education: nursery, kindergarten;
- Basic education: primary education, lower secondary and upper secondary education;
- Vocational education and training: elementary level, intermediate level and college level;
- Tertiary education: university education, master and doctor philosophy.





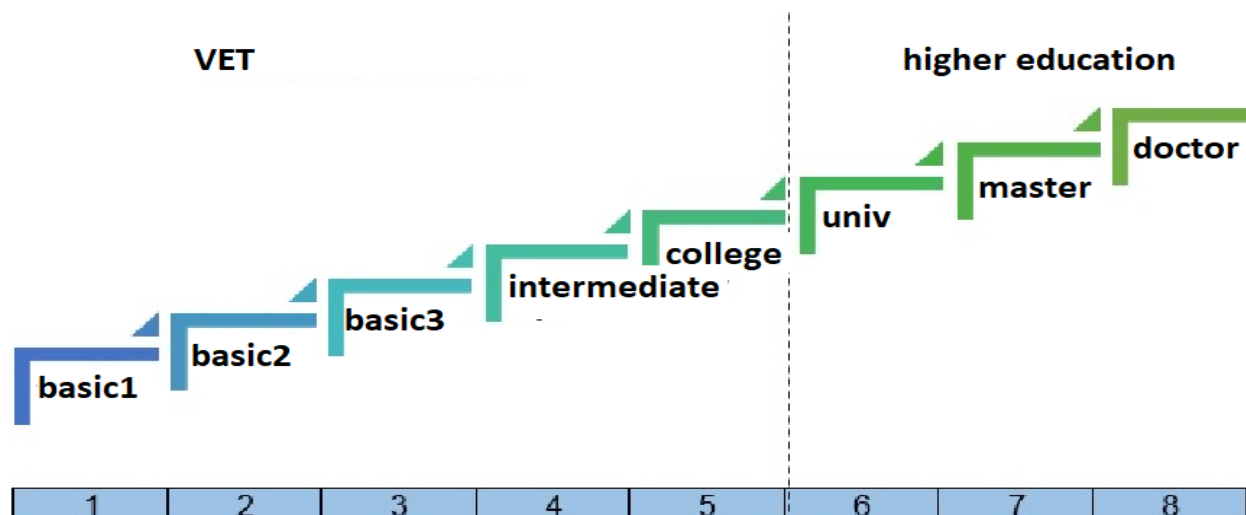
**Figure 3.1. National education system**

Vietnam's VET has long-standing history of development tied to crafts in traditional villages and agricultural production. The VET system was officially legalized by the Law on Education 2005 and the Law on Vocational Training 2006, Law on Vocational Education and training 2014.

## National Qualifications Framework

Pursuant to the Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated October 18, 2016 of the Prime Minister, the National Qualifications Framework includes 8 levels in which 5 related to levels of VET (Table 2).

**Figure 3.2. VET levels in the Vietnamese National Qualifications Framework**



## Training levels

VET provides three training levels: elementary level, intermediate level, and college level. Training duration as well as diplomas and certificates are described as in the Table below:

**Table 3.1. VET levels**

Levels	Entrance requirements	Training duration	Diplomas/ Certificates
Elementary level 1 Elementary level 2 Elementary level 3	Enough health condition	From 03 months to under 01 year	Elementary certificate level 1 Elementary certificate level 2 Elementary certificate 3 level
Intermediate level	Graduated from lower secondary schools	From 01 year to 02 years depending on the disciplines or	Intermediate level diploma (cannot move to

		vocational training	higher training level)
	Graduated from upper secondary schools (or satisfied requirements pertaining to cultural knowledge of upper secondary education as regulated)	From 01 to 02 years depending on training occupations	Intermediate level diploma (can move to higher training level)
College level	Graduated from upper secondary schools	From 02 to 03 years	College level degree (recognized as bachelor of practical training or practical engineers)
	Graduated from secondary VET schools and satisfied requirements pertaining to cultural knowledge of upper secondary education as regulated.	From 01 year to 02 years	

### Training areas

VET in Vietnam has the wide range of occupations in the national education system. Besides technical fields, technology fields such as computers, information technology, engineering; architecture and construction; production and processing; agriculture, forestry and fisheries; environment and environmental protection etc., there are also different areas such as teachers; culture and arts; languages (English, German, French, Japanese and so on); the press and information; business and management; legislation; health care; social services; transportation services; hotel and hospitality; security and defence, etc.

### Vocational Education and training institutions

VET institutions consist of VET centers, secondary VET schools and colleges to educate and train all levels of VET (Table 3)

**Table3.2. Vocational Education and training institutions**

<b>Colleges</b>	<b>Secondary VET schools</b>	<b>VET centers</b>
<b>Training levels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– College level</li><li>– Intermediate level</li><li>– Basic level</li></ul>	<b>Training levels:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Intermediate level</li><li>– Elementary level</li></ul>	<b>Training levels:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Elementary level</li><li>– Early Education</li></ul>

### **Types of vocational education and training institutions**

VET institutions are organized in the following types:

#### **Public institutions**

Public institutions include those owned by the State, those whose infrastructure is invested and constructed by the State

#### **Private institutions**

Private VET institutions include those owned by social organizations, social-professional organizations, private or individual economic organizations; those whose infrastructure is invested and constructed by social organizations, social-professional organizations, private or individual economic organizations

#### **Foreign-invested vocational education and training institutions**

Foreign-invested VET institutions include those with 100% foreign capital; those of joint ventures between domestic and foreign investors.

### **Training forms of vocational education and training**

There are two training forms in VET: formal training and continuing training.

Formal training is the form of full-time training organized for elementary, intermediate and college levels.

Continuing training is the form of training-on-the-job, distance learning or guided self-learning at intermediate and college levels, implemented in a flexible manner in term of curricula, duration and method.

## **State management agency of central level of vocational education and training**

According to the Law on Education 2005 and the Law on Vocational Education and Training, the State management agencies of central level of vocational education and training are the Ministry of Labour – War invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The MOLISA manages vocational colleges, vocational secondary general schools and vocational training centers. MOET manages professional intermediate schools and colleges.

In 2017, MOLISA was assigned by the Government to manage the VET system except the pedagogical field.

In 2019, to institutionalize the assignment of the Government, the Law on Education (Amending and Supplementing) prescribes the MOLISA responsible towards the Government for implementation of state management in VET except the pedagogical field (intermediate pedagogical education, college-level pedagogical education).

Therefore, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training is an unit of MOLISA assisting the Minister in managing, implementing legal policies on VET (except for pedagogical education) in the whole country; manages, carries out public services of VET as regulated by the law.

### **3.2. Government's viewpoint**

Vietnam's Socio-economic Development Strategy for the period 2021 - 2030, determines the country's development model in the direction of modern industry (by 2030) and becoming a developed country (by 2045), affirms development of human resources, especially high-quality human resources, is one of three strategic breakthroughs and has clearly stated the orientation to build an open and flexible vocational education system<sup>46</sup>. Issuing Decision No. 2239/QĐ-TTg dated December 30, 2021, approving the Vocational Education Development Strategy for the period 2021-2030, vision to 2045. The Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government of Vietnam require vocational education to:

- diversify training methods;
- forming new training professions, especially training high quality human resources,
- Training "green" occupations, ensuring learners have professional skills, digital skills, soft skills, creativity - entrepreneurship skills and foreign languages...
- adapt to the requirements of the domestic and international labor market.

### **3.3. What should Vietnam's vocational education policy improve from the case study of Japan's vocational education policy?**

The Law on Vocational Education of Vietnam was passed by the National Assembly of Vietnam on the afternoon of November 27, 2014. Of the 412 delegates participating in the vote, only 274 delegates approved (55.13%), 125 delegates did not approve (accounting for 25.15%), and 13 delegates did not vote (accounting for 2 delegates). (0.62%). This is the law with the largest

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<sup>46</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the 13th National Congress, National Political Publishing House Truth, H.2021, t.I, tr. 149-150.

number of disapproving delegates among the passed laws. This shows low consensus among representatives of 63 Vietnamese localities.

### **3.3.1. Vietnam's approach to vocational training**

In the Vietnam's Law on VET, it is stated:

“Vocational education is a level of the national education system that provides training at primary level, intermediate level, college level and other vocational training programs for workers, meeting direct needs of human resources in production, business and services, carried out in two forms: formal training and continuing training”.

Based on the new VET theoretical perspective, it can be seen that in Japan's VET policy, the concepts of vocational training, career building... are really accurate, specific, and practical. Each concept specifically represents the level of expertise of vocational education activities. Apprentices see the vocational goals, the task to acquire basic, specific skills, and the level of training in the vocational training policy.

The general goal of vocational education is to train human resources directly for production, business and services, with practice capacity corresponding to the level of training; have ethics and health; have professional responsibility; have the ability to be creative and adapt to the working environment in the context of international integration; ensuring improved productivity and labor quality; create conditions for learners after completing the course to be able to find a job, create their own job or study for a higher level.”<sup>47</sup>

In Vietnam's VET Law, compared with the perspective on employment, compared with the new VET theoretical perspective, Vietnam considers VET to be a level of the education system, the concept of VET goal is narrow (meeting production needs), only addresses one aspect of the VET function in the current human development context.

I think that detailed criteria for each type of competency to be achieved at each level of vocational education need to be clearly specified. Phrases such as “creativity to meet the working environment in the context of international integration” do not need to be included in vocational education goals. It has a too broad and too abstract macro meaning. The Law on VET is specialized law, the number of general provisions is still quite large, so too many guiding documents are needed, which is difficult for the implementation<sup>48</sup>.

### **3.3.2. Select policy enforcement tools**

#### **3.3.2.1. Systematicity in performing state management functions**

At the time of passing the Law on VET, it was unclear which ministry was in charge of state management of VET. Implementing the resolution of Central Committee, the Government assigned MOET to play a "leading" role in fundamentally and comprehensively innovating education and training, but with the Law on VET, MOLISA almost takes on the presiding

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<sup>47</sup> Vietnam's National Assembly (2014), Law on Vocational Education and training

<sup>48</sup> Thu Phuong (2020), <https://quochoi.vn/tintuc/Pages/tin-hoat-dong-cua-quoc-hoi.aspx?ItemID=44524>

responsibility to develop related policies for a series of legal regulations<sup>49</sup>. At the time of promulgation of the Law on VET, vocational education organizations were governed by both ministries. But the two sets have little connection. The MOLISA is instructing 63 localities to plan a network of vocational education establishments to 2020 - vision 2030, while MOET is also directing schools in 63 localities to report on planning and preparation to reorganize the professional and college education system until 2020 - vision 2030 in the spirit of the Government's action. Wherever there is overlap function, both ministries left it blank...<sup>50</sup>, i.e. unregulated sub-sector.

The state management function is a seamless system, no step can be left blank. When the Vietnam's education system stipulates knowledge connection between vocational education and university education, or vocational education levels are a step to transition from compulsory education to university education, then the separation of management hierarchy should not be the reason for interrupting learners' educational levels.

When the management of VET institutions belongs to MOLISA, MOET applies very rigid state management authority, not allowing VET institutions to teach scientific knowledge, only vocational training. At the request of the Ministry of Education and Training in Official Dispatch No. 2857/BGDDT-GDTX dated July 31, 2020, vocational schools are not allowed to teach school knowledge, but assign continuing education centers or high schools to teach school knowledge to vocational school students.

This causes many difficulties for VET students, at one grade they have to go two places – one for school knowledge (managed by MOET), and other place for vocational knowledge (managed by MOLISA), so their schedules are difficult to arrange properly because they depend on two educational institutions places. In localities, education centers are often far from vocational schools<sup>51</sup>.

Across Vietnam, nearly one million students are in this situation, sending request to the Government to make the right and timely decision soon<sup>52</sup>. The Association of Vocational Schools has also "called for help" from the Prime Minister to solve this problem<sup>53</sup>.

It is clear that Vietnam's policies are creating management conflicts. The consequence is a negative impact on learners.

### ***3.3.2.2. Updating and issuing policy documents***

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<sup>49</sup> <https://tuoitre.vn/den-luat-luat-giao-duc-nghe-nghiep-730577.htm>

<sup>50</sup> <https://tuoitre.vn/den-luat-luat-giao-duc-nghe-nghiep-730577.htm>

<sup>51</sup> Nhat Hong and Dinh Cuong (2021), What does MOET say about stopping teaching school knowledge in vocational schools causing difficulties for students? <https://dantri.com.vn/giao-duc/bo-gddt-noi-gi-ve-viec-dung-day-van-hoa-trong-truong-nghe-gay-kho-hoc-sinh-20210329102331591.htm>

<sup>52</sup> <https://dantri.com.vn/giao-duc/mot-trieu-hoc-sinh-nghe-dang-bi-tac-nghen-loi-ra-vi-quy-dinh-cua-bo-gddt-20210402191405733.htm>

<sup>53</sup> Le Thu (2021), Stop teaching school knowledge in vocational schools: Many problems and complications will arise, <https://dantri.com.vn/giao-duc/dung-day-van-hoa-trong-truong-nghe-se-nay-sinh-nhieu-rac-roi-phuc-tap-20210329014143121.htm>

Number of vocational education policy documents issued. As of April 2022, Vietnam has issued 71 policy documents of all kinds at the central level on vocational education (including: 20 Decisions of the Prime Minister, many Decrees, Circulars, Joint Circulars, Executive documents). That does not include policy documents of 63 localities.

In section 2.2.1, Japanese policies record the milestone of changing policy regulations based on changes in the context and professional requirements, in order to develop professional capacity, that is, demonstrate focus on quality professional training. Meanwhile, a large number of central-level documents in Vietnam since the promulgation of the 2014 VET Law have focused on administrative procedures and training organization.

The VET Law was promulgated in 2014 and 71 central-level documents related to Vietnam's VET issued from 2015 to 2021 create a legal mess. Localities, businesses, training institutions, and learners have different understandings of the content of VET regulations.

Among the issued policies, there are no policy documents regulating periodic job market assessment; sociological assessment of learners' needs and motivations. The criterion stated in the policy document is "70% of workers will undergo vocational training by 2025"<sup>54</sup> is just a subjective number of the government, not based on people's career change trends or people's desires. Personally, I think that without these assessments, Vietnam will not have exact input data to continue to make the right policies on vocational education and human development period to period. Assessments of Vietnam's human resources are just compiled from individual, scattered studies, or from people's one-sided testimony in the Viet Nam Population and Housing Census<sup>55</sup>.

Still with the data presented above, if knowledge subjects are still taught separately from vocational techniques, the vocational high school program existed more than 30 years ago is being repeated<sup>56</sup>.

Japan updated the development context, promptly adjusted/amended old standards and promulgated new standard regulations; *issued universal guidance and disseminate uniform information to each relevant party on vocational education and vocational training*. Looking at the activities of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), looking at the functions of the Japan Institute of Labor Policy and Training, the National Vocational Education Organizations, Japan Vocational Education Development Association (JAVADA) and its local branches, we find that, their surveys and investigations closely followed the practice of vocational education development... are done quite meticulously and methodically. Studies by experts and researchers from the two Ministries, and in-depth research from the Institute of Labor Policy and Training help government agencies draft public policies with authentic practical bases to decide on any adjustments or changes<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the 13th National Congress, National Political Publishing House Truth, H.2021.

<sup>55</sup> The way to conduct Vietnam's Population Census is that each household declares according to a prescribed form. The individual's qualifications are listed by checking yes/no on the declaration without verification by the licensing agency.

<sup>56</sup> Hoang Ngoc Vinh (2019), Law on VET, don't waste another 5 years, <https://tuoitre.vn/luat-giao-duc-nghe-nghiep-dung-de-mat-them-5-nam-nua-20190527083704052.htm>

<sup>57</sup> Look further Japan Institute for labor policy and training papers, such as: Fujimoto Makoto et al. (2022), Job Change, Skill Development, and Career Formation of Middle-Aged Workers, JILPT Research Report No.215



### **3.3.2.3. Build a cooperation system**

**Regarding synchronization with relevant laws.** Vocational education is most closely related to the Education Law and the Labor Law. But when the Education Law and Labor Law were amended in 2019, the Vocational Education Law still kept the 2014 Law. There are 10 important amendments in the Labor Law, including provisions related to the right to autonomy in participation of individual employees, and the freedom of business owners to negotiate contracts. The law stipulates Clause 1, Article 61 of the 2019 Labor Code regarding the apprenticeship period. Law on Vocational Education No. 74/2014/QH13 dated November 27, 2014 of the National Assembly, effective from July 1, 2015, amended and supplemented by: 1. Law on Fees and Charges No. 97 /2015/QH13 dated November 25, 2015 of the National Assembly, effective from January 1, 2017; 2. Planning Law No. 21/2017/QH14 dated November 24, 2017 of the National Assembly, effective from January 1, 2019; 3. Education Law No. 43/2019/QH14 dated June 14, 2019 of the National Assembly, effective from July 1, 2020; which is not supplemented by the Labor Law 2019.

Take another example, in the content of Vietnam's National Qualifications Framework approved by the Prime Minister, there are 8 levels of qualifications including 2 main components that are consistent with each other: university education and vocational education. Of which, three levels 6, 7, 8 (undergraduate, master's, doctorate) belong to university education presided over by MOET, the remaining five levels belong to vocational education presided over by MOLISA (college, intermediate, certificate 1, 2, 3). Each level of qualification is clearly described and linked together according to output standards of knowledge, skills, level of autonomy and responsibility. Therefore, the qualification system will ensure continuity between levels, creating conditions for qualification recognition and lifelong learning.

Vietnam's national qualifications framework has not been mentioned in any of Vietnam's relevant legal documents, namely the Law on Education, the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Vocational Education, other than the two documents of the 2011- 2020 Education Development Strategy, and the Vocational Training Development Strategy 2011 - 2020, two Decisions No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated October 18, 2016 of the Prime Minister approving the Vietnam Qualifications Framework and No. 1981/QĐ-TTg dated October 18, 2016 of the Prime Minister approved the National Education System Structural Framework<sup>58</sup>.

**About practicality.** When the Vocational Training Law changed its name to the Vocational Education Law, some vocational training establishments were not allowed to have vocational education activities because of the name change. For example, the Farmer Support Center with the name Vocational Training and Farmer Support Center (established in 2009) has the function

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HORI Yukie, KOSUGI Reiko, RYU Hwangseok, and OGURO Megumi (2022), Changes in Work and Consciousness of Youth in Major Urban Areas: From the 5th "Survey on the Working Style of Young People", JILPT Research Report No.213

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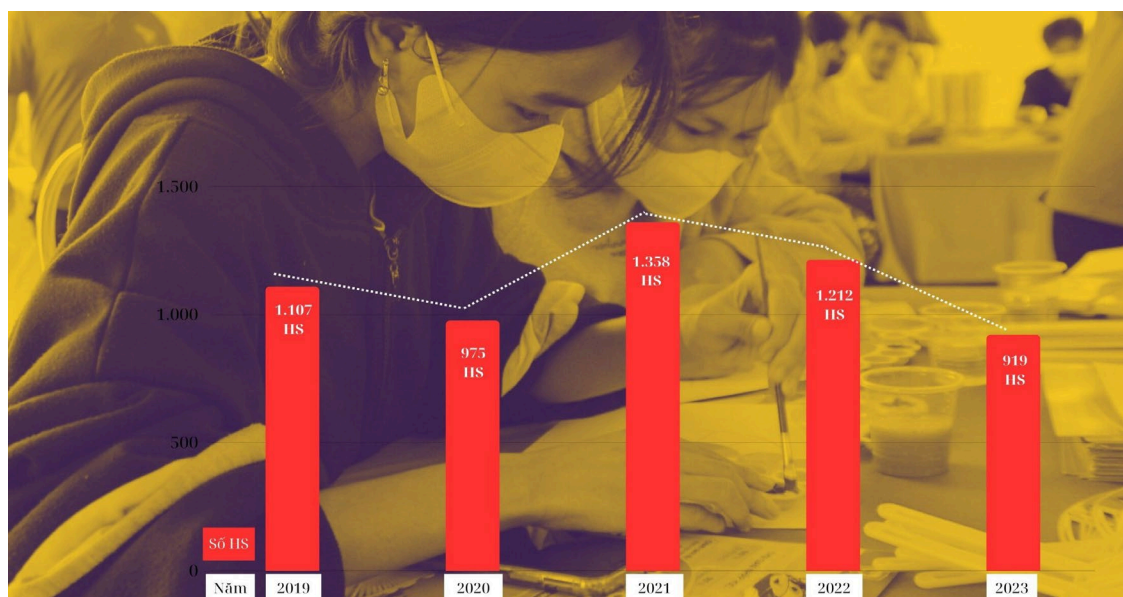
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<sup>58</sup> <http://chuongtrinhkhgd.moet.gov.vn/tintuc-sukien/Pages/tin-tuc.aspx?ItemID=4585>

of providing elementary-level vocational training. After changing its name to Farmer Support Center, the Center is not allowed to register vocational education activities. This wastes human resources, while Center's teachers with many years of teaching experience have to change jobs. The Center loses their collaborative relationships in vocational education activities, loses their contacts with businesses and factories for rural workers to ensure output for apprentices<sup>59</sup>.

In Japanese vocational education policy, I did not find the same case.

**Lack of career-oriented policies.** Vietnam has a gap in vocational education policy. Clause 1, Article 3 of Decree 75/2006/ND-CP defines vocational guidance. Overall, it seems that career guidance is not properly valued in the Vietnamese education system<sup>60</sup>. As a result, for example, in 2023, in Ba Ria - Vung Tau, nearly 1,700 students, after graduating from junior high school this school year, do not know where to go. However, the management agency, the Provincial People's Committee, determined that the reason why these students did not choose a direction of study was due to insufficient learning ability, difficult family economic conditions, or due to their awareness. Students and parents still have limitations... it's not that they don't do career guidance properly. The vast majority of students do not continue studying after junior high school, which does not mean they study vocational education, but often choose to become freelance workers, meaning they do whatever they hire, but do not have a training certificate. Employers of workers in this age group may be violating child labor laws. Some students choose vocational training as a stepping stone for the next exam, not because they want to study vocational education. This is also the reason why many vocational training establishments open but have no students.



Source: Khanh Chi (2023)

<sup>59</sup> Tuong San (2023), When the VET Law was introduced, the Farmer Support Center encountered difficulties because it did not receive vocational training, <https://giaoduc.net.vn/khi-co-luat-gdnn-trung-tam-ho-tro-nong-dan-gap-kho-vi-khong-duoc-dao-tao-nghe-post236459.gd>

<sup>60</sup> A survey conducted from 2011 to 2016 at International Trade class of University of Economics, Hanoi National University, in an advanced class of 86 students, which included students with high university entrance exam scores. 75% of students wrote in the form that they studied because their parents wanted them to.

**Figure. Number of Vietnamese students graduating from junior high school who have not found a career direction from 2019 to 2023**

Box 3.1.

Ho Thanh Thao (residing in Lang Dai commune, Dat Do district) shared: "After failing the 10th grade public exam, I was very sad and confused. My parents let me make my own decisions, but I can't determine what my forte is to make a choice."

Ms. Nguyen Thi Be Tu, Thao's mother, said that the family intended for Thao to learn the profession of hair curling so that she would not waste time studying and could immediately go to work to earn an income, but she did not agree. "My husband and I let her play for the rest of this year and then move on," Ms. Tu said.

Nguyen K.D (residing in Vung Tau city) after graduating from junior high school, did not take the high school exam but went to work in a seafood processing factory near his home. My work starts at 3 am and ends at 1-2 pm.

And L.L., a female student in Vung Tau city, chose to work as a bar hostess after graduating from junior high school.

Source: Khanh Chi (2023), <https://www.baobariavungtau.com.vn/xa-hoi/202309/vi-sao-phan-luong-hoc-nghe-sau-JHS-chua-dat-hieu-qua-ky-cuoi-not-de-hs-tu-boi-truoc-nguong-cua-cuoc-doi-991640/>

In the opposite picture, it can be seen that career orientation is extremely important and necessary for everyone. Japan is a learning society. In which, the economic impact and medium- to long-term effects of career guidance to be prioritized<sup>61</sup>. The public employment service and independent qualified career guidance counsellors are delivering guidance services, but more efforts should be made to promote these services, make them more accessible and target them better at the needs of specific groups. As a complement to face-to-face guidance, easy-to-use online career guidance portals can support adults in their career transitions by providing high quality information about the labour market and relevant training opportunities. A large amount of information about careers and training is available on Japanese Government websites. The survey shows that in Japan 74% of respondents say they participated in some form of career guidance in non-fee-paying secondary school (75% for fee-paying schools). This is the highest share among OECD countries included in the survey. Between 70 and 79% of students who received some guidance at school in Japan say that it was useful, which is in line with the cross-country average<sup>62</sup>. Some regular career guidance activities include: **School-mediated guidance activities**, supporting internal career progression, supporting external career transitions, career guidance for job seekers.

Temporarily summarizing, with up to 71 central policy documents related to vocational education, Vietnam's vocational education still has important policy gaps that need to be

<sup>61</sup> Hideo Shimomura (2018), Is career counseling effective? Japan Labor Issues, vol.2, no.4, January 2018 [https://www.jil.go.jp/english/jli/documents/2018/004\\_03.pdf](https://www.jil.go.jp/english/jli/documents/2018/004_03.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> OECD (2021), Creating Responsive Adult Learning Opportunities in Japan, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/85953269-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/85953269-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/85953269-en)

learned from Japan's vocational education policy. That is a career guidance policy, which has been agreed by many studies to be disseminated and implemented for early age of student.

	Japan vocational education policies	Vietnam vocational education policies
Coordination to solve vocational education problems	<p>Jointly from the Minister of MEXT, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry to major economic organizations.</p> <p>Cooperation with the local community and industrial circles (establishment of a council with the help of parent-teacher associations (PTAs), principal's associations, neighborhood councils, economic organizations / professional associations, and NPOs. Such cooperation must happen in more locations)</p> <p>Cooperation with home and children's parents or guardians. Parent-teacher associations are also said to be active in providing assistance with guidance.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of teachers to find employment for their students, and to assist their transition to the next stage.</p> <p>Local employment offices may assist with this task. Local authorities maintain links with employers to encourage recruitment, and most schools have a programme of informative visits by employers to the school, or of students to the workplace.</p>	<p>Vietnam's VET policy document mentions and names the relevant ministries: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of National Defense</p> <p>No responsibility for coordination is specified, only related responsibilities are stated</p>
Assess and test vocational skills	<p>Although there is no unified system for assessing learning in vocational education, The ministry of labour runs a system of skills tests through its training centers. These are intended to assist the entry of trainees into the labour market, or to support job changes.</p> <p>Large employers run systems of internal examinations which are available to employees seeking promotion. These</p>	<p>There are no regulations on the participation of workers and businesses.</p> <p>Applicable to a total of 51 occupations but only for the first 3 of the 5 levels. The actual assessment focuses on only a small number of occupations, such as underground mining, automotive engineering and industrial electricity<sup>63</sup>.</p> <p>No businesses are licensed to assess VET</p>

<sup>63</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, 2020. Vietnam VET Report 2019, <https://www.tvet-vietnam.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/220426-Vietnam-VET-Report-2019-EN.pdf>

	<p>examinations are very demanding, and employees are generally expected to invest their own time in preparing for them. Suppliers to the large companies may use the same examination system.</p> <p>In some professions, for instance accountancy, trainees are submitted for examinations devised by a board drawn from the profession and from academics.</p> <p>Certain occupational standards are regulated by the government.</p>	<p>school.</p> <p>In 2019, two new NOS test sets were developed and issued, and six additional NOS test sets were updated <sup>64</sup>.</p>
Collaborate with industry	<p>Enterprises actively and proactively participate, are trainers, and co-sponsors of vocational education.</p> <p>Industry's role as training provider.</p> <p>Most Japanese people receive training through the private sector or from their employers. Training at technical colleges is closely linked to the needs of industry.</p> <p>Career assessments are designed by committees of experts from the relevant industry.</p> <p>Almost all companies train their employees outside of work hours: corporate philosophies, personal efficiency skills, and outdoor education designed to promote personal growth are all popular.</p> <p>In addition to running training schools specifically for their employees, large corporations sponsor a number of colleges as businesses and their graduates participate in the open job market. . Such colleges, which operate as educational trusts, provide tax</p>	<p>Recognized as an important component in market-oriented vocational education programs.</p> <p>There is a tax reduction policy for participating businesses.</p> <p>Before 2015, training facilities were not affiliated with businesses;</p> <p>Due to the increasing number of young people entering the workforce, but without vocational education credentials; Enterprises lack labor. Since 2016, the number of enterprises having cooperative relationships with vocational education establishments has been increasing, especially in localities with industrial parks or production raw material areas.</p> <p>In 2019, Vietnam had a total of ≈685,000 businesses, of which 7.7% said they had cooperative relationships with the VET sector, an increase of 0.1% compared to 2018. Non-state-owned enterprises continued to have a high proportion of businesses. The rate of cooperation with VET institutions is the lowest (6.2%) compared to 2019; with 10.6% of foreign-invested enterprises and</p>

<sup>64</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*, <https://www.tvet-vietnam.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/220426-Vietnam-VET-Report-2019-EN.pdf>

	<p>benefits to their host companies and contribute to the pool of trained human resources in the country.</p> <p>Commercial companies also contribute to the education of high school aged students, providing work experience, company visits and information exchange.</p>	<p>19.4% of state-owned enterprises. The most popular areas of cooperation include: i) providing information on the human resources needs of businesses, ii) providing internship positions for VET students and teachers and iii) further training for enterprises' employees at VET establishments<sup>65</sup>.</p>
Support and evaluate training facilities	<p>To assist schools and colleges with the work of occupational guidance and job placement, agencies of the ministry of labour run seminars for guidance teachers, and job interview fairs for students and employers.</p> <p>There are special measures to assist schools in dealing with underqualified young people who may have dropped out of education early, and to help young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities find jobs</p>	<p>- Mostly, training institutions self-assess following to the format designed by the management agency (MOLISA) every year. But only 26.22% complied <sup>66</sup>.</p> <p>In 2019, two independent VET accreditation organizations were licensed to evaluate and accredit VET facilities and programs according to current accreditation criteria and regulations. One of these two accreditation agencies is a private enterprise<sup>67</sup>.</p>
Evaluate vocational education programs		<p>- MOLISA sends pre-designed assessment samples to vocational education institutions for self-assessment.</p> <p>In 2019, only 7.2% complied with MOLISA's requirements <sup>68</sup></p>
Funding guaranteed	<p>Ministries of education and labour, both supply some funding for vocational educations, albeit in different types of institution, as do the ministries of agriculture, construction, and health.</p> <p>Publicly funded institutions receive their running costs from either national or prefectural administrations, but their students may still pay fees. It is estimated that a Japanese family might spend</p>	<p>The Vietnam VET Law does not indicate specific support funding, but is mixed with many other programs and policies such as hunger eradication and poverty reduction; new rural areas, ethnic policies...</p> <p>The proportion of budget spending on VET is gradually decreasing, if in 2011 it was 9%, then by 2015 it decreased to 6%.</p> <p>State budget allocated to VET through two projects under the National Target Program, i.e., the project "Innovating and</p>

<sup>65</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*,

<sup>66</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*,

<sup>67</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*,

<sup>68</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*,

	<p>up to a third of its disposable income supporting a child through higher education</p> <p>Annual budget for 1996 was 7.7% of total government expenditure.</p>	<p>improving the quality of VET" and the project "Improving the quality of vocational training for agricultural workers village" has increased steadily since 2016, worth 2,690 billion VND (≈117 million USD) in 2019<sup>69</sup>. Central budget investment in VET through national target programs for the period 2011 - 2020 is 21,575 billion VND, equal to 2,638 times compared to the period 2001 - 2010 (in the period 2001 - 2010 the investment budget for the program national target is 8,177 billion VND)<sup>70</sup>.</p> <p>Disbursement from other sources is small. Ministries and local authorities in particular can only disburse 3% of the capital committed to the project <sup>71</sup>.</p> <p>The rate of state budget spending on VET is tending to decrease, causing difficulties in investing in facilities and equipment to improve the quality of teaching and learning at vocational schools.</p>
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#### 3.3.2.4. Regarding the results of VET policy implementation in Vietnam

	Origin target	Results
In quantity	<p>The 2012 vocational training strategy is to provide vocational education to 40% of workers</p> <p>According to Decision No. 579/QĐ - TTg, dated April 19, 2011, of the Prime Minister, on "Approving Vietnam's human resource development strategy</p>	<p>According to the 2019 Population and Housing Census data, the proportion of workers with vocational training (technical expertise) only accounts for 22.8%.<sup>72</sup></p> <p>Actual 2020 statistics from the General Statistics Office show that only 24.1% of trained workers have elementary degrees and certificates or higher degrees<sup>73</sup>.</p>

<sup>69</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*,

<sup>70</sup> Tran Thi Van Anh (2021), To effectively use resources from the state budget for vocational education, [https://mof.gov.vn/webcenter/portal/ttpltc/pages\\_r/l/chi-tiet-tin-ttpltc?dDocName=MOFUCM196652](https://mof.gov.vn/webcenter/portal/ttpltc/pages_r/l/chi-tiet-tin-ttpltc?dDocName=MOFUCM196652)

<sup>71</sup> General Department of Vocational Education and training, *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Vietnam General Statistics Office 2020. 2019 Population and Housing Census

<sup>73</sup> General Statistics Office: "Press release on labor and employment situation in the fourth quarter and 2020", <https://www.gso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2021/01/thong-cao-bao-chi-tinh-hinh-lao-dong-viec-lam-quy-iv-and-nam-2020/>

	for the period 2011 - 2020", by 2020 there will be 70% of Vietnamese workers motivated through training;	
In quality	<p>- Vietnam relies on degrees and certificates immediately after training; Not tested in practical production, so the gap between training and product quality is very large.</p> <p>Japan relies on the level of application of professional theory to the production process, work operations, teamwork coordination and product quality. It can be said that the quality of training corresponds to the quality of work.</p>	<p>The proportion of the workforce aged 15 years and older with training of 3 months or more remains low at 23.68%.</p> <p>Many bachelors and masters have registered to re-study secondary school and vocational colleges because of unemployment. The professions chosen by many students are car repair, cooking, hotel and restaurant service, beauty, mechanics, programming...</p> <p>A large number of workers with university and postgraduate degrees cannot meet the demand for capacity.</p> <p>Apprentices do not get practical experience; practice results are not satisfactory; The issued certificate does not guarantee the reliability of the learner's skills; 80% of students graduating from vocational schools find jobs, however, according to businesses, the quality of vocational training is not high, forcing businesses to retrain.<sup>74</sup>.</p> <p>The group of workers directly involved in production and business has the highest level of skill shortage, followed by the group of indirect workers and the group of management workers.</p> <p>Among all skills/competencies, foreign language skills are lacking the most, followed by information technology, creative thinking and autonomy, and business skills<sup>75</sup>.</p> <p>Issues of physical fitness, sense of labor discipline, professional ethics, and the ability to work in a multicultural environment are considered weaknesses of Vietnamese workers. These qualities are not included in vocational education regulations. -&gt; <b>should be integrated, especially from vocational education programs.</b></p>

From a VET theoretical perspective, Vietnam's vocational education policy does not achieve human development goals and is wasting human capital. The most important policy gap is

<sup>74</sup> State Audit Report (2023), <http://baokiemtoan.vn/meo-mo-trong-trien-khai-chu-truong-xa-hoi-hoa-dao-tao-nghe-26665.html>

<sup>75</sup> Vu Ba Toan (2022), Labor skills of the Vietnamese workforce, <https://tuyen Giao.vn/van-hoa-xa-hoi/xa-hoi/ky-nang-lao-dong-cua-luc-luong-lao-dong-viet-nam-141732>



policies and measures to coordinate career guidance from a young age. Skipping the career guidance stage for each generation is a waste, because after that, vocational education must persuade them to pursue a certain career. At that time, vocational education became only able to develop human capital without developing development aspirations. As theory (2) explains, lack of pursuit of aspirations will limit creativity.

Vocational education management in Vietnam lacks a system to monitor and control the training improvement of vocational education institutions, leading to poor quality training programs and learner skills that do not meet job requirements. Training facilities mainly train according to their "supply" capabilities, but do not train according to the "demand" of businesses, and make reports on functional performance according to government targets. Employers are businesses that do not or rarely participate in quality inspection. All of these policy processes have been going on for a long time in Vietnam.

While in the case of Japanese vocational education, the state management authority, the Japanese Ministry of Labor, quantifies the achieved goals; know clearly the labor market situation: which industries are lacking workers; from there, accurately assess labor needs, forecast needs, and orient vocational education for schools and localities; enterprises of all industries; both short and long term. In return, the subsequent adjustment policy ensures feasibility and reliability.

Where the quality of provision is high, it appears to be based on a sense of shared purpose, coupled with a sense of commitment from both employers and employees, to do a job well, with the backing of adequate resources. The Japanese concept of kaizen – continuous improvement – maintains a competitive edge in business and manufacturing, but it also has religious overtones linked to Buddhism and the search for perfection. Attention to detail is much in evidence, and underpins both policies and practice. For example, the group was impressed by the degree of careful planning which had preceded the opening of the new integrated high school. Punctuality is a universally exact science. 38 The characteristics most valued in Japanese managers are the ability to develop their staff and to encourage a spirit of harmonious working in a team. Goals are therefore communal, rather than individual. The improvement of quality is similarly a shared effort.

Say for example, at the Nissan Technical College, the course structure was prominently displayed on a wall in the hallway. Each unit is regularly reviewed by the teaching staff, in consultation with students, and updated annually. A major assessment item is a group project in which each group member's contribution must be successful. The course structure is reviewed by the teachers in consultation with company managers, to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the company. At Nissan, the concept of harmonious working was evidenced by the mission slogan "high technology and humanity". The training produced technically expert personnel, but was designed to ensure that they could apply their theoretical expertise to the manufacturing process and develop sympathetic personal skills as employees and members of a work-group. Their primary goal was to ensure customer satisfaction with the products.

Most of the limitations in Vietnam's vocational education policy are not present in Japan's vocational education policy.

However, it should be affirmed that the quality of vocational education in Vietnam is adjusting in a positive direction. Training gradually shifts from a "supply" direction to a "demand" direction, associated with human resource needs, labor demand of businesses and labor-employing units and job demand of the labor market.

Due to the need to recruit labor, to be proactive in labor supply, businesses participate more in vocational education. The proportion of enterprises participating in vocational skills training cooperation is about 12%, of which the proportion of state-owned enterprises, private enterprises, and FDI enterprises participating in skills training accounts for about 31%, 10% and 16% respectively, the most common is accepting learners for internships at enterprises (accounting for 62.54%). Only 10.23% of businesses participate in evaluating the learning outcomes of apprentices<sup>76</sup>. The employer's responsibilities for training, fostering and improving vocational skills for employees as stipulated in Article 60 of the 2019 Labor Code have not been fully implemented by enterprises<sup>77</sup>.

The most obvious result is vocational training for rural workers, contributing to local socio-economic development, poverty reduction, ensuring social security, and shortening the gap between rich and poor between rural areas and urban areas, improving the material and spiritual lives of people, reducing social evils, and reducing pressure on employment needs in big cities. According to the General Statistics Office, the labor force aged 15 and over in 2022 is 51.7 million people, of which the rural labor force is 32.2 million people. The rate of workers with informal jobs in rural areas is 61.9%; the unemployment rate among working age people in this area is 6.68%. In 2020, the rate of trained workers with degrees and certificates from elementary school or higher in rural areas will be 16%.<sup>78</sup>.

Regarding the implementation of the role of vocational education, there is a lack of consistency in awareness and action.

As the person responsible for managing the entire society and economy, Vietnamese government, requests and orders the direct management agency, MOLISA, to proactively carry out research on career trends, thereby shaping vocational training accordingly. In those imperative documents, the State stated that "vocational training establishments are encouraged to regularly review vocational training programs, thereby taking appropriate measures to reform the training system." The writing of "encouragement to do" in imperative documents is inconsistently understood by localities and vocational education institutions. In fact, if the State needs statistics, there are still numbers to be counted. Direct employers must self-train or retrain on the job after recruitment. This explains the increased number of businesses involved in vocational education in recent years.

Public policy management of vocational education in Japan is exactly the opposite. This comparison is lame because of the difference in development levels of the two countries. But the reality of a sharp increase in comprehensive cooperation between Vietnam and Japan, and

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<sup>76</sup> Vu Ba Toan (2022), *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Vu Ba Toan (2022), *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> General Statistics Office: "Press release on labor and employment situation in the fourth quarter and 2020", <https://www.gso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2021/01/thong-cao-bao-chi-tinh-hinh-lao-dong-viec-lam-quy-iv-and-nam-2020/>

the reality of a large number of young Vietnamese workers becoming industrial workers in the Japanese labor environment (not to mention other reasons) force Vietnam's vocational education policy must adjust this gap as much as possible.

Regarding vocational training establishments, because they are 'encouraged' by the State in legal documents, they only act when there are additional orders from local authorities in their areas. Therefore, disseminating information about the changing situation of professional areas, reviewing the operating training program system, and promptly restructuring the system to suit needs: eliminating the programs are outdated, building new programs to serve the labor needs of newly arising occupations is not frequent. From there, updating and innovating the content of teaching materials; Retraining and improving the professional qualifications of vocational teachers also rarely occurs. Many former vocational teachers are unemployed. Students who want to learn a new profession must go to big cities or businesses or work as interns in Korea, Japan, or Taiwan. Of course, funding for education is the biggest obstacle for their families.

On coordination of relevant parties in vocational education. Links between schools and related professional sectors in Vietnam only take place at the initiative of certain businesses, usually businesses investing in localities that need local workers. Training institutions and businesses will advertise joint activities to increase tuition fees. Vietnamese apprentices are willing to pay high fees for this activity.

According to the assessment of the provincial competitiveness index (PCI - VCCI) in 2014, when FDI enterprises are less satisfied with the quality of local vocational training, they have to spend more on retraining new workers recruited. 2014 witnessed a sudden decrease in vocational training quality ratings of FDI enterprises and a sudden increase in their internal training costs. The assessment of FDI enterprises also coincides with the assessment of businesses in general about the quality of vocational education in the provinces. Although the quality of vocational education in the provinces has tended to improve in 2016-2017, compared to 2012-2013, the proportion of businesses evaluating the quality of vocational education in the province has decreased. This is not necessarily due to the decline in the quality of vocational education, but due to the increasing labor requirements of businesses, while vocational education has not kept up with these requirements<sup>79</sup>. Because the quality of labor does not satisfy businesses, it tends to increase, causing the proportion of business costs that businesses have to spend on labor training to also increase. This will increase business costs of businesses, increase financial pressure on businesses, and have a certain impact on production and business activities of businesses. Therefore, there needs to be changes in vocational education so that the quality of vocationally trained labor can meet the requirements of businesses. The solution to this situation is to attract the participation of businesses in the vocational training process, promoting the connection between businesses and vocational schools.

In Japan, businesses and vocational education institutions clearly understand this activity. Although it is not mandatory, when providing it, businesses do so responsibly. Enterprises

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<sup>79</sup> Thu Phuong (2020),  
<https://quochoi.vn/UserControls/Publishing/News/BinhLuan/pFormPrint.aspx?UrlListProcess=/content/tintuc/Lists/News&ItemID=44788>

coordinate with the provincial government to organize skills competitions and issue certificates. Enterprises and the government clearly understand the strengths and limitations of the locality, and cooperate with localities in other countries on vocational education and labor recruitment.

From the analysis of sections 3.2 and 3.3., from the perspective of public policy management for Vietnamese vocational education policy, looking from Japanese vocational education policy, it can be seen that although Vietnam's vocational education has improved a lot towards reaching the ASEAN level, it is necessary to adjust vocational education goals to be more realistic; Improve the detailed regulations and assignment of responsibilities to relevant parties, in particular, add clear regulations on the rights and responsibilities of parties in vocational education, and cooperation mechanisms between parties. Vocational education policies must specify in detail vocational education activities and the person in charge of each activity, the level of participation of each party, resources for each activity, mechanisms for using resources, and reporting mechanism. The keywords are systematic, consistent, responsible, practical to Support People for Lifelong Career Building. In particular, because Vietnam's level of integration is very high, employment standards and vocational education must quickly move towards international standards. This forces MOLISA to have many specific and verified studies and surveys.

From my short time working at JILPT, there are some observations that I would like to share. All assessments here are not intended to praise or criticize, but are based on new VET theory and follow the logic of minimizing the development gap in vocational education view point and activities to facilitate upgrading the quality of Vietnamese labor as well as contributing to better equipping the young Vietnamese workforce when going abroad to work or live.

Japan's vocational education policy demonstrates

- the belief that high levels of education are an essential prerequisite for a successful economy and are accompanied by high levels of investment by individuals and countries
- the diversity of general and vocational education in post-compulsory education in Japan, and high participation rates
- relatively low levels of public funding for vocational training. Industry and commerce played an important role in financing, both directly and through the tax system. Individuals and their families contribute significantly to the costs of their own education
- the meticulous attention to detail that characterizes preparedness for change, is well researched, well-resourced and ultimately successful
- carefully designed teaching methods and changing social attitudes can help students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Group responsibility for quality assurance is part of a long tradition of tight working teams, shared skills and the highest product quality. This is both a Japanese social tradition and an industrial concept.

Vietnam's vocational education policy shows:

There are many risks in a market-oriented approach without quality assurance measures.

As public management, policy must include clear and specific measures that provide important protections for both quality and professional discipline. Networking between government agencies, between local and national authorities, which can avoid excessive duplication or gaps in provision, incorporating a national inspection system for vocational education, including rigorous self-assessment, established in consultation with suppliers.

Teachers have no professional experience, harming overall quality. There should be high status for teachers and good support for them.

The quality of the profession is guaranteed by active management, commitment and good teamwork with a clear focus. Quality control is applied in any field, it must be applied to that field of study to train learners right from school.

Application equipment is important. Always high quality with advanced technology.

Culture and history have an important influence on practice. Both parents and students need to understand the nature of the changes if they want students not to lose motivation and be conscious of nurturing their careers and vocational skills. Responsibility for quality assurance must be established in each Vietnamese person from now on. To be established uniformly, it must be a main content besides career building task in the vocational education policy framework.

## **4. VET COOPERATION WITH JAPAN**

### ***4.1. Japan-Vietnam relation context***

#### ***4.1.1. Government – government (G2G) cooperation***

After establishment of diplomatic relations in 1973, the Japanese government implemented foreign policy according to the Fukuda doctrine, which advocated that Japan plays a bridging role and actively contributes to maintaining peace and stability in Southeast Asia, and believes that Vietnam will play an important role in this cause.

In November 1992, Japan resumed Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Vietnam, Japan continuously provided aid to meet Vietnam's reconstruction and development needs based on its view point that Vietnam's growth will not only lead to Vietnam's own growth but also to the development of the entire region and the development of Japan<sup>80</sup>.

Besides infrastructure development, completing basic laws, ordinances and standards on business, tax policies, intellectual property, etc. is essential to promote foreign investment. Since fiscal 1996, Japan began implementing the technical cooperation project "Supporting the formation of important government policies on the legal system", and over the course of 10 years has introduced the legal system, Japan's laws and human resource training regime, consulting on contents related to amending the Civil Code. With Japan's support, the revised Vietnam's Civil Code was promulgated in 2005. After that, Japan continued to support the formation and implementation of laws such as Vietnam's Civil Procedure Law,

Japan's approach here is not to impose improvements in policy mechanisms but to support Vietnam in the process of self-reform, helping Vietnam choose, develop, and apply new laws/policies quickly, proactive way through information sharing and dialogue. For many years, the Central Ministry of Law, the Supreme Court, the Japan Bar Association and Nagoya University, etc. have been systematically supporting Vietnam. These supports make the two partners increasingly trust each other, creating a premise for implementing technical cooperation with Vietnam's central legislative, judicial and administrative agencies such as the Government Office, National Assembly, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Administration in human resource training.

(1) For Japan, Vietnam has an important position in both geography and diplomacy, and is a country with third largest population in Southeast Asia. Therefore, supporting Vietnam to carry out national reconstruction and economic growth is an important mission of Japan. Japan has applied an approach based on three economic pillars: Trade - Investment - ODA.

(2) Not only is the largest donor, Japan also attaches importance to coordination with other donors. From 1995 until now, Japan has always been the largest ODA donor among bilateral donors to Vietnam. From 1992 to 2011, Japan's total ODA aid to Vietnam in the fiscal year 1992 - 2011 amounted to more than 2 trillion yen, accounting for 30% of the total aid capital that international donors give to Vietnam. In the spirit of respecting Vietnam's self-reliance, 78% of

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<sup>80</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), <https://tuoitre.vn/viet-nhat-co-tiem-nang-hop-tac-vo-tan-20231010084816463.htm>s

the total ODA capital was provided by Japan in the form of ODA loans. Japan and other donors have deployed sub-sectors to provide effective support.

(3) Support for both hardware and software aspects. Not only providing hardware support, Japan also helps Vietnam create an environment that encourages foreign investment with projects on strategic planning for market economic development and improvement of policy mechanisms. In the field of social security, Japan also focuses on supporting both aspects of infrastructure construction and human resource training with projects at 3 central hospitals: Cho Ray Hospital, Bach Mai Hospital, and Ho Chi Minh City Hospital, Hue Central Hospital; improve capacity to prevent infectious diseases such as measles and bird flu; environmental protection of Ha Long Bay, etc.

(4) With the spirit of learning from Japan, Vietnam has actively used ODA capital and applied Japanese technology to industries. Vietnamese people inherently have a high ability to absorb technology, so technology transfer in projects is highly effective.

(5) In the field of legal system reform, cooperation is carried out based on the experiences that Japan has drawn when building its legal system since the Meiji period - a legal system that has many advantages. Improving the legal system in Vietnam - an area that Japan has focused on developing for nearly 30 years. The cooperation is carried out in the following manner: the Japanese side provides information related to its country's legal system; In addition, Japanese legal experts will provide professional and technical comments on draft laws that Vietnam develops.

For example, on cooperation in the field of State Administration

Project Supporting the formation of important government policies on the legal system Phases 1,2,3 (FY 1996 - 2006)

Project on Improving Capacity to Implement Competition Policy and Law (FY 2008 - 2012)

To support Vietnam's industrialization policy, Japan also implements software projects such as:

1. Institutional reform (Modernizing industrial property management, etc.),
2. Strengthen the standard system operating mechanism,
3. Strengthen the capacity of government financial and monetary institutions such as the State Bank of Vietnam,
4. Support the development of small and medium enterprises, and supporting industries,
5. Human resource training for industry.

Example of human resource cooperation: Technical human resource development project at Hanoi University of Industry (FY 2009 - 2012)<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Japan International Cooperation Agency (2013), Vietnam - Japan partnership from past to future, [https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/vietnam/office/others/pamphlet/ku57pq0000221kma-att/Japan\\_Vietnam\\_Partnership\\_To\\_Date\\_and\\_From\\_Now\\_On\\_vie.pdf](https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/vietnam/office/others/pamphlet/ku57pq0000221kma-att/Japan_Vietnam_Partnership_To_Date_and_From_Now_On_vie.pdf)

Currently, Japan-Vietnam relations are said to be at the best stage ever. Japan considers Vietnam a "very important" partner country of Japan in implementing the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy. High-level visits between the two countries continuously take place, and the two countries' heads of state have also built a special relationship of trust<sup>82</sup>. Japan-Vietnam relations contain infinite potential for further outstanding development, looking towards the future, reaching the world as partners with equal status<sup>83</sup>. Japan always wants to further promote efforts to contribute to regional peace and prosperity together with Vietnam.

From 2023, Japan wants to further promote Japan-Vietnam relations. Vietnam is becoming an important production base for Japanese businesses in the process of promoting supply chain diversification after experiencing unprecedented difficulties due to the COVID-19 epidemic. On the other hand, in Japan, where the birth rate is decreasing and the population is aging, Vietnamese human resources are playing a huge role, supporting Japan's socio-economic development. The relationship between Japan and Vietnam can be compared to sincere friends who always need each other. Vietnam's growth will be closely linked to Japan's development. Japan wants to strengthen cooperation in regional and international forums, including ASEAN, in a context where the foundation of the international order is shaken with many divisions and conflicts. Located on the Pacific and Indian Ocean sea routes, Vietnam is an important partner in realizing this goal. The next prospect is to strengthen cooperation in the field of environment and clean energy to solve global problems such as climate change, cooperation in the space sector and cooperation in using the latest technology is also very important role. The potential for cooperation in these fields is still great, confirming that the relationship between the two countries will become even closer<sup>84</sup>.

### ***Local – local (L2L) relation***

Exchange and cooperation between localities of Japan and Vietnam has been a new trend since 2007. Up to now, 5 centrally run cities, 11 provinces and 3 provincial cities of Vietnam are together. Japan's 16 prefectures, 12 cities and 1 town exchanged a total of 37 cooperation memoranda. Expanding exchange and cooperation at the local level has a meaningful and important role in promoting economic connections between Vietnam and Japan on a national level in general and locally in particular through increasing Strengthen mutual understanding between the people of the two countries, contribute to restoring the local economy and promoting culture based on the characteristics and potential of each region. The strengths of the localities are fully exploited by both sides to enhance complementarity and create a win-win cooperation situation<sup>85</sup>.

However, the trend of local cooperation is still only concentrated in certain areas of Vietnam and Japan that have long-standing historical and economic understanding and relationships and developed economic conditions such as Hanoi and Japan. Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hai Phong... Up to now, although 37 memorandums of cooperation between Vietnamese and

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<sup>82</sup> <https://japanvietnam50.org/vi/concept>

<sup>83</sup> <https://japanvietnam50.org/vi/concept>

<sup>84</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> Research results of project KX.01.13/16-20: "Research on the theoretical and practical basis of economic connection between Vietnam and Japan in the context of regional economic integration"



Japanese localities have been signed, this number is still very small with great potential cooperation between the two countries<sup>86</sup>.

#### **4.1.2. Business relation**

The friendship between the two countries today has been cultivated through a long history of exchanges spanning more than 1,000 years. From the 16th to the 17th century, many Japanese trading ships visited Hoi An, which was once a busy trading port in Central Vietnam, and formed the Japanese quarter.

Vietnam is an important production base for Japanese companies and one of the promising investment destinations. In particular, as Japanese companies diversify their supply chains, Vietnam is attracting more and more attention<sup>87</sup>.

Recent survey results conducted by JETRO show that Vietnam is the second most popular country in the world, after the United States, for Japanese businesses to expand their business in the future<sup>88</sup>.

Japanese businesses increase investment in Vietnam and implement new projects, thereby creating an even more positive cycle in the economies of both countries.

According to Vietnam's Lao Dong (labor) newspaper, in the first 6 months of 2021 (data as of June 20), out of 33,787 projects with a total capital of 397.89 billion USD by investors from 140 countries and territories in Vietnam. , Japan is the second largest foreign investment (FDI) partner with 4,716 valid projects with a total registered investment capital of more than 63 billion USD. Many large Japanese enterprises invested in Vietnam early on, such as Toyota, Honda, Panasonic, Canon. Not only in industry, Japanese investors also penetrate other fields such as retail, food... with "big men" in the retail sector such as AEON, Uniqlo. That is not to mention FII capital flows into the Finance - Banking sector, such as Mizuho owning shares of Vietcombank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking owning shares of Eximbank<sup>89</sup>.

The M&A market continues to be led by investors from four countries: Japan, Korea, Thailand and Singapore. The period 2019–2020 recorded many M&A deals by Japanese investors in the main fields of real estate, construction, finance - banking and pharmaceuticals - healthcare<sup>90</sup>. Some notable M&A deals of Japanese investors include Mitsubishi Corporation and Nomura Real Estate acquiring 80% in phase II of Vingroup's Grand Park Project; Aozora Bank buys 15% shares of Orient Commercial Joint Stock Bank; Haseko Real Estate Group bought 36% shares of Ecoba Construction Company; ASKA Pharmaceutical Company bought 24.9% shares of Ha Tay Pharmaceutical Company<sup>91</sup>.

Japanese businesses will further strengthen cooperation between the two countries in areas such as infrastructure, ODA, digital transformation (DX), green transformation (GX),

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<sup>86</sup> Research results of project KX.01.13/16-20: "Research on the theoretical and practical basis of economic connection between Vietnam and Japan in the context of regional economic integration"

<sup>87</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>88</sup> <https://japanvietnam50.org/vi/concept>

<sup>89</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/viet-nam-mieng-banh-mau-mo-voi-nha-dau-tu-nhat-ban/>

<sup>90</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/viet-nam-mieng-banh-mau-mo-voi-nha-dau-tu-nhat-ban/>

<sup>91</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/viet-nam-mieng-banh-mau-mo-voi-nha-dau-tu-nhat-ban/>

modernization/industrialization, development human resources to create momentum to promote the relationship between the two countries.

Creating an investment environment that encourages private sector investment between Japan and Vietnam is important. Japan believes that a mature economic relationship means companies can conduct healthy economic activities in each other's countries without government intervention. Japanese companies will increasingly invest in Vietnam. It is essential for the development of economic relations between the two countries to mature that the governments coordinate and establish an investment environment that helps create a mutually beneficial relationship for the companies of the two countries, as well as benefit the two countries<sup>92</sup>.

#### **4.1.3. People to people (P2P) relation**

Relations between the two countries are increasingly close and developing rapidly. The foundation for the development of Japan-Vietnam relations is understanding and sympathy between people. This relationship is also strengthened by the activities of all those who have contributed in the different fields. Originating from the long historical and cultural connection between Japan and Vietnam, there is an anecdote that in the 8th century, the monk Phat Triet came from Lam Ap (now Central Vietnam). ) performed "Lam Ap music", a form of courtly music, at the Opening Ceremony of the Great Buddha statue at Todaiji Temple. Besides, there is also the love story between merchant Araki Sotaro from Nagasaki and princess Ngoc Hoa of the Nguyen Dynasty during the Asia-India ship trade period from the 16th to the 17th century. This is proof of the connection of long history from ancient times of Japan and Vietnam<sup>93</sup>.

In the current period, many Vietnamese people come to Japan to study, work, Japanese people come to Vietnam to invest..., contributing to strongly promoting cultural exchange, creating closeness and connection between the two countries. In the field of cultural preservation, many Japanese experts and universities have actively and effectively supported Vietnam in large projects such as excavating and preserving Thang Long Imperial Citadel relics, restoring the value historical value of Hoi An, especially of Hue citadel<sup>94</sup>.

Japan always cherishes the historical past between the two countries to draw practical lessons, considering it the foundation for sustainable development today. With the spirit of "closing the past, looking forward to the future", Japanese historians actively cooperate with Vietnam to research and sociologically investigate historical issues during the period of World War II<sup>95</sup>.

#### **- Vietnamese in Japan**

People-to-people exchanges between the two countries began with a visit to Japan in the 8th century by a Vietnamese monk. Then, in the 17th century, when trade routes between the two countries were opened, many Japanese merchants lived in Hoi An. By the 19th century, many

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<sup>92</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>93</sup> <https://japanvietnam50.org/vi/concept>

<sup>94</sup> <https://dangcongsan.vn/hiep-hoi-doanh-nhan-viet-nam-o-nuoc-ngoai-ket-noi-doanh-nhan-kieu-bao-voi-doanh-nghiep-viet/tiem-nang-va-phan-trien/tiem-nang-thuc-day-quan-he-hop-tac-viet-nam-nhat-ban-len-tam-cao-moi-635871.html>

<sup>95</sup> <https://dangcongsan.vn/hiep-hoi-doanh-nhan-viet-nam-o-nuoc-ngoai-ket-noi-doanh-nhan-kieu-bao-voi-doanh-nghiep-viet/tiem-nang-va-phan-trien/tiem-nang-thuc-day-quan-he-hop-tac-viet-nam-nhat-ban-len-tam-cao-moi-635871.html>

Vietnamese people came to Japan to study during the Dong Du movement. From those exchanges, a strong friendship has developed between the people of the two countries. After establishing diplomatic relations, the Japan-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Alliance was established in 1978. This is a friendship association with an extremely active history to this day. The exchanges between parliamentarians of the two countries, the trusting and friendly relationship between the two National Assemblies have greatly contributed to the development of bilateral relations. Especially in recent years, exchanges between the two peoples have increased dramatically. The number of Vietnamese people living in Japan has increased tenfold in 10 years, from 50,000 people in 2012 to 500,000 people in 2022<sup>96</sup>.

The Vietnamese community in Japan is the second largest foreign community in Japan and has become an indispensable factor in Japan's socio-economic development process<sup>97</sup>.

Vietnamese human resources working in Japan are also very diverse, including technical interns, specific technical interns, international students, midwives, nurses...

As the number of Vietnamese people in Japan increases, the number of Vietnamese restaurants and grocery stores in Japan also increases, and opportunities to interact with Vietnamese people also increase, making Vietnam a very diverse country, friendly to Japanese people.

In Vietnam, Japanese cultural features such as manga comics and anime cartoons or Japanese dishes such as sushi and yakitori grilled skewers are also very popular with Vietnamese youth. I am extremely happy to see our two countries becoming closer and closer to each other<sup>98</sup>.

#### - **Japanese in Vietnam**

During a short period from the 16th to the 17th century, the Japanese community, known as Nihonmachi, in Hoi An consisted of several dozen households. During the 17th century, the Japanese community in Hoi An gradually dwindled and disappeared, blending into the local Vietnamese community. Inter-marriage not only took place in the Nihonmachi community, but also between Japanese and Vietnamese people (including the case of marriage with Lord Nguyen aristocrats). This is evidenced through records, tombstones, and other related evidence. Descendants of these families still keep artifacts related to their connection to Vietnam.

During World War II, the Japanese invaded Vietnam, then protected by France, and began building bases to fight the Allies in Southeast Asia. The Japanese army remained in Vietnam until Japan surrendered to its allies in 1945. This operation left behind many inter-marriages between Vietnamese and Japanese soldiers; and there were many Japanese soldiers who stayed in Vietnam and fought in the Viet Minh ranks against the French<sup>99</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>97</sup> <https://japanvietnam50.org/vi/concept>

<sup>98</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>99</sup> A 1642 report to the Dutch East India Company by a Japanese inhabitant of the port describes a Chinese population of 4,000-5,000 and a Japanese population of 40-50. (Laarhoven, Ruurdje (trans.) "A Japanese Resident's Account: Declaration of the Situation of Quinam Kingdom by Francisco, 1642." in Li and Reid (eds.) *Southern Vietnam*. p31.)

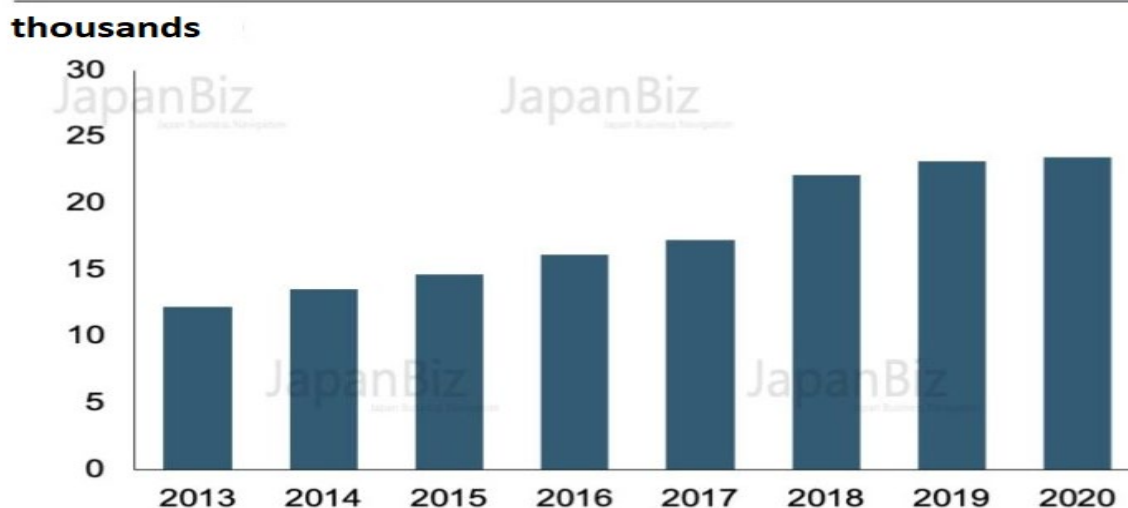
During the Vietnam War, many Japanese visited North Vietnam and a significant number of Japanese went to South Vietnam to work in service construction companies. Recently, many Japanese people have come and stayed in Vietnam for many different reasons<sup>100</sup>.

In addition to the positive progress of relations in many of the above fields, the visit to Vietnam in 2017 of Emperor Akihito and Empress of Japan (currently Emperor and Empress of Japan) and the cooperation between Cooperation between the two countries in measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic since 2019, and the visit in early 2023 of Crown Prince Akishino and the Crown Princess are events that have a strong impact on the Japanese people.

The number of Japanese people in Vietnam is also recorded as the highest compared to other countries in Southeast Asia until 2019. According to statistics published by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2019, the number of Japanese people living and working in Vietnam has increased sharply compared to many years ago.

Accordingly, by the end of September 2018, the number of Japanese people in Vietnam was updated to 22,125 people, an increase of 28.1% compared to the statistics for the same period in 2017. This growth rate is also recorded. Recognition is the largest in Asia as well as worldwide, counting in countries with over 150 Japanese people living and working. Based on classification by region and country, the number of Japanese people in Vietnam is the 14th largest in the world, surpassing both Indonesia and New Zealand<sup>101</sup>.

Based on this data, the average number of Japanese people in Vietnam increases by about 4,859 people each year, ranking second only to the US with 20,719 people. By the end of 2020, there were nearly 23.4 thousand Japanese people living and working in Vietnam, doubling compared to 2013<sup>102</sup>.



<sup>100</sup> Chuong, Thau. "Bridge of Friendship." in Ancient Town of Hoi An. p209

<sup>101</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/nguoi-nhat-o-viet-nam-va-cac-thong-tin-cap-nhat-moi-nhat/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/nguoi-nhat-o-viet-nam-va-cac-thong-tin-cap-nhat-moi-nhat/>

<sup>103</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/nguoi-nhat-o-viet-nam-va-cac-thong-tin-cap-nhat-moi-nhat/>

<sup>104</sup> <https://japanbiz.vn/nguoi-nhat-o-viet-nam-va-cac-thong-tin-cap-nhat-moi-nhat/>

<sup>105</sup> <https://baotintuc.vn/du-lich/khao-sat-70-so-nguoi-nhat-ban-tung-toi-viet-nam-co-y-dinh-quay-lai-20210713181009578.htm>

## **4.2. Current cooperation on VET**

### **4.2.1. Overview general Japan's international VET cooperation**

- Technical cooperation through international organizations, etc.
  - + Skills evaluation system transfer promotion projects
  - + Cooperation with ASEAN countries
  - + Cooperation with APEC economies
- Inter-governmental technical cooperation
  - + Cooperation in establishing and operating overseas human resources development facilities
  - + Dispatching experts in the field of human resources development
  - + Acceptance of trainees in the field of human resources development
- Accepting foreign national technical interns, etc.

The Technical Intern Training program was created in 1993 as a new system for transferring trade skills to foreign people. The program was revised by the “Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act” which was promulgated on July 15, 2009, and the current program has come into force from July 1, 2010. The program enables technical interns to acquire technologies and skills, etc. in an employment relationship after entering Japan with the residential status of “Technical Intern Training, Item 1.b.” and receiving training for a certain period of time (a program that enables the acquisition of technologies and skills, etc. while working). Those that passed certain skills tests (equivalent to the Basic Grade 2 of National Trade Skills tests) and are deemed to be willing to acquire further practical skills, etc. can change their residential status to “Technical Intern Training, Item 2.b.” and stay in Japan for up to 3 years, including the period “Technical Intern Training, Item 1.b.”, At present 71 occupations and 130 tasks are applicable to “Technical Intern Training, Item 2.b.”.

The Technical Intern Training system was revised in the revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act etc. that was promulgated on July 15, 2009, with the current systems being in force as of July 1, 2010. The figures for 2010 indicate the total number of registered foreign nationals with the residential status of “Designated Activities (Technical Intern Training)”, “Technical Intern Training, Item 1.b.” and “Technical Intern Training, Item 2.b.” The figures for the period of 2011 through 2014 indicate the total number of foreign nationals residing in Japan (registered foreign nationals for 2011) with the residential status of “Technical Intern Training, Item 1.b.” and “Technical Intern Training, Item 2.b.”

- + Appropriate and smooth promotion of technical intern training program
- + Acceptance of government-sponsored foreign national students
- + Capacity building of vocational training instructors in developing countries

### **4.2.2. Japan-Vietnam cooperation in VET**

In the modern period, Japan chose the path of self-reliance, self-reliance, the path of reform, the "Meiji" path. It is an example for Vietnamese people, especially in the context that Vietnam is still in a backward, outdated feudal regime and closed to the outside world... Many Vietnamese patriots have looked at Japan as a mirror to study, like Mr. Phan Boi Chau with the Dong Du movement<sup>106</sup>.... During the peak period of the Dong Du movement, nearly 200 young Vietnamese people came to study abroad in Japan. Shizuoka province is also the place that witnessed the exchange between revolutionary Phan Boi Chau - the founder of the Dong Du movement - and doctor Asaba Sakitaro.

Many generations of Vietnamese people have chosen Japan as a destination to study, research and develop their careers. The first generation of Vietnamese students came to Japan to study in the 1960s and 70s, including many who achieved success and fame in Japan such as Professor Tran Van Tho and the ventilator inventor. Chairman Tran Ngoc Phuc of Metran company. Since 2000, the number of international students in general and the Vietnamese community has continuously increased over the years, currently reaching nearly 500,000 people, becoming the second largest foreign community in Japan. Among these are many people from the younger generation, many of whom have studied, researched and worked in Japan for the past 15-20 years, and are now holding important positions in teaching and research, manager at prestigious universities and leading Japanese businesses in many fields such as information technology, electronics-microchips, robotics, agriculture, health, economics-law-society-humanity literature...(many people hold positions of Professor, Associate Professor, business manager, research Lab head)<sup>107</sup>.

Intellectual community, especially the Association of Vietnamese Intellectuals in Japan, the Vietnamese Academic Network in Japan (VANJ), the Community of Vietnamese Experts in Japan (VPJ), the Youth and Student Association Vietnam in Japan (VYSA) and the Vietnam - Japan Innovation Network (VJOIN) have successfully organized many events attracting a large number of Vietnamese and Japanese intellectuals and businessmen to participate such as Vietnam Summit. 2019, 2021, VANJ, VJSE scientific conferences...<sup>108</sup>

Together with the force of young intellectuals, start-up entrepreneurs and a large number of enthusiastic international students, they are playing a leading role in the development of the Vietnamese community in Japan, actively contributing to development. Japan's socio-economic development, becoming a bridge for friendly cooperative relations between the two countries<sup>109</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup> <https://dangcongsan.vn/hiep-hoi-doanh-nhan-viet-nam-o-nuoc-ngoai-ket-noi-doanh-nhan-kieu-bao-voi-doanh-nghiep-viet/tiem-nang-va-phat-trien/tiem-nang-thuc-day-quan-he-hop-tac-viet-nam-nhat-ban-len-tam-cao-moi-635871.html>

<sup>107</sup> Bui Hung (2023), Vietnamese intellectuals in Japan actively contribute to the country's development, <https://vov.vn/chinh-tri/tri-thuc-viet-nam-tai-nhat-ban-dong-gop-tich-cuc-cho-phat-trien-dat-nuoc-post1022943.vov>

<sup>108</sup> Bui Hung (2023), *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Bui Hung (2023), *ibid.*

According to Japanese Deputy Ambassador to Vietnam Watanabe Shige, in the current development context, human resources is a very important issue for both Vietnam and Japan to ensure human resources for society<sup>110</sup>.

Labor cooperation between Vietnam and Japan officially began in 1992. In order to establish a framework for cooperation in the field of labor and social affairs, MHLW and many Japanese ministries and agencies have signed cooperation agreements on vocational education, labor safety, bringing interns and workers to Japan to study and work, vocational education, and welfare society. Since fiscal 1996, Japan has introduced the system, Japan's laws and human resource training regime. Vietnam and Japan are coordinating to implement the project "Supporting connection of job information for Vietnamese workers working abroad under contract" with the goal of supporting Vietnamese workers to find suitable jobs; Adapt and work abroad according to your needs; Support service businesses to have better access to workers wishing to work abroad; and support domestic businesses to access and connect directly with returning workers...<sup>111</sup>

Through accepting Vietnamese interns to practice skills in Japan, the results of labor cooperation between Vietnam and Japan are increasingly better and constantly developing, bringing many economic benefits to the people and businesses of both countries. By December 2022, the total number of Vietnamese workers living and working in Japan is 345,000 people. Vietnam is currently the largest sending country among the 15 countries participating in sending workers to Japan. Japan's latest survey shows that: Vietnam is the country with the ability to expand, as well as the highest rated in the world for businesses wishing to invest in Vietnam by Japanese companies. Vietnamese human resources are considered very industrious and have made great contributions to the economic and social development of Japan today.

Beside from interns receiving, Japan has supported the completion of a vocational skills assessment system to meet the needs of supporting industries and develop human resources with elite skills in Vietnam. In recent times, the Japanese Government has supported Vietnam in a number of projects, specifically as follows:

#### Financial support projects

- Project "Demand-based vocational training to reduce poverty in the Mekong Delta" using non-refundable capital from the Japan Poverty Reduction Fund, was implemented from 2008-2012.

The main content of the Project is to improve the quality of life of the poor and ethnic minorities by equipping them with the necessary skills to find jobs and create their own jobs, contributing to the implementation of strategic goals of the Government on hunger eradication and poverty reduction and reducing the gap between regions. The project is implemented in two provinces of Tra Vinh and Soc Trang.

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<sup>110</sup> Nhat Anh (2023), Vietnam - Japan promote cooperation in labor, employment and social security, <https://nhandan.vn/viet-nam-nhat-ban-thuc-day-hop-tac-trong-lao-dong-viec-lam-va-an-sinh-xa-hoi-post769213.html>

<sup>111</sup> Thanh Hoa (2023), <https://nhandan.vn/nhieu-ket-qua-tich-cuc-trong-hop-tac-lao-dong-viet-nam-nhat-ban-post751277.html>

\* Project "Strengthening the field of vocational education" (loan project) invests in facilities for 3 fields of Mechanical, Electrical and Electronics at 13 beneficiary schools in the North, Central, South, and Central regions expected to be implemented within 5 years after the Loan Agreement takes effect. This is a large-scale project with the participation of many vocational education institutions across the country and has a long implementation period. The modern, synchronous equipment system invested in by the project along with a team of highly qualified teachers will be the foundation for schools to provide high-quality human resources to meet the requirements of the labor market in Vietnam and especially Japanese businesses are aiming to export labor in the near future. That is consistent with the policy of developing supporting industries, a priority area in the Vietnam Industrialization Strategy within the framework of Vietnam - Japan cooperation towards 2020, vision 2030.

\*In parallel with the project "Strengthening the field of vocational education" (loan project), JICA agreed to sponsor the project "Technical cooperation on vocational education" using non-refundable aid capital Aims to improve the quality of teachers and administrators in vocational colleges. The two sides agreed to select 03 core schools to replicate the vocational training model according to Japanese standards (Vocational College of Engineering and Technology, College of Engineering II and Hanoi University of Industry). Japanese experts will transfer technology and guide teachers and administrators of these three schools on how to use, operate, and maintain equipment invested in the project according to Japanese standards. After being trained, teachers and administrators will become core teachers to continue sharing knowledge with teachers and administrators of the remaining schools in the project through training courses. .

\*In addition to ODA projects, the Japanese side also supports Vietnam through technical support activities such as: Dispatching long-term experts to work at the General Department from 2002-2018 to support in assessment activities, develop vocational skills. Cooperate with JAVADA in training assessment skills for vocational teachers in Vietnam: Organize training courses for assessors for the professions of Turning, Milling, Installing information network cables, and Mechanical testing at the level of 2.3; Pilot assessment of vocational skills in Lathe, Milling, Installing information network cables, and Mechanical testing at level 2 and 3 (total number of participants in the assessment is 248 people and the number of people meeting the requirements according to Japanese standards is 118); Recognizing milling (5 people) and turning (9 people) assessors.

Based on the results of cooperation between the two countries, in order to further improve quality and international integration, on July 1, 2019, the General Department of Vocational Education and KOSEN Organization signed a Memorandum of Understanding on continue cooperative activities aimed at applying the KOSEN education model in Vietnam. Accordingly, the two sides will coordinate to establish a KOSEN Representative Office in Vietnam; Organize the development and implementation of training programs according to the KOSEN Education Model for 3-year and 5-year systems at pilot schools; Deploying short-term and long-term training for managers and teachers on training according to the KOSEN Education Model at KOSEN pilot schools in Vietnam; transfer teaching methods and teaching materials according to the KOSEN Education Model; promote cooperation and engagement between training schools



following the KOSEN Education Model and businesses of the two countries; Research and establish KOSEN Certification Committee in Vietnam...

KOSEN Office has been established and actively participates in Vietnamese conferences and seminars to share Japanese experience in training according to the KOSEN model, training high quality human resources. The General Department of Vocational Education has coordinated with the Ministry of Industry and Trade and schools organized by JICA and KOSEN to choose an organization to pilot training according to the KOSEN model (including a 3-year program to recruit high school graduates and a program to 5-year program to recruit students graduating from secondary school), connecting the above schools with schools in the KOSEN system and Japanese businesses to improve teaching programs and develop curriculum; complete the handbook "Program Design Guidebook according to the KOSEN Model"... The two sides will continue to coordinate to implement activities according to the signed Memorandum of Understanding.

In addition, the program to bring Vietnamese nursing and midwife candidates to work in Japan under the Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) has been implemented since 2012. Up to now, the two sides have cooperated in organizing 11 training courses for candidates in Vietnam, bringing 1,696 Vietnamese nursing and midwife candidates to work in Japan. Vietnamese candidates, after coming to practice and work in Japan, are highly appreciated by receiving facilities and nursing homes in this country for their expertise, foreign language skills, personality, and positive sense of work... Outstanding cooperation programs to bring Vietnamese interns to Japan are: cooperation program with the Japan International Training Cooperation Organization (JITCO); Cooperation program with the Human Resources Development Agency of Japan (IM Japan)<sup>112</sup>

In addition, Vietnam has also provided highly skilled technical workers, information technology engineers, and people with university and postgraduate degrees in various fields to Japan; Implementing the Program to bring nursing and midwife candidates to work in Japan<sup>113</sup>...

According to research by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), with the current population decline, by 2030, Japan may need an additional 630,000 foreign workers. Vietnamese workers as well as other foreign workers are an important driving force, contributing to the recovery process of Japan, the world's third largest economy, after the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>114</sup>.

Working Group No. 11 was established by the MOLISA and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Vietnam (JCCI) with the goal of developing highly skilled human resources. Group 11 activities aim to develop high-quality human resources, with the main cooperation contents being:

i) Strengthening mutual understanding between Japanese investors and vocational education institutions about the need for high-quality technical human resources of Japanese investors;

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<sup>112</sup> Thanh Hoa (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>113</sup> Thanh Hoa (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>114</sup> Long Nguyen (2023), <https://vtv.vn/the-gioi/lao-dong-viet-nam-dong-gop-tich-cuc-tai-nhat-ban-20230128064020408.htm>

- ii) Cooperation between the above organizations to improve the balance between supply and demand of technical human resources;
- iii) Support the development of a skills certification system;
- iv) Support the development of highly skilled human resources, and a skills certification system.

Kosen office for transferring JVET model

- KOSEN Office has been established and actively participates in Vietnamese conferences and seminars to share Japanese experience in training according to the KOSEN model, training high quality human resources.
- to choose an organization to pilot training according to the KOSEN model (including a 3-year program to recruit high school graduates and a program to 5-year program to recruit students graduating from secondary school),
- connecting Japanese businesses to improve teaching programs and develop curriculum; complete the handbook "Program Design Guidebook according to the KOSEN Model"...

The two sides will continue to coordinate to implement activities according to the signed Memorandum of Understanding

#### ***4.3. Obstacles in Japan- Vietnam cooperation in general, VET cooperation in particular***

On October 10, 2023, the Japanese Foreign Minister wrote in Vietnam Youth newspaper that Vietnamese criminals in Japan have increased. A group of technical intern trainees fell into a difficult environment. The Japanese government wants to further strengthen efforts between Japan and Vietnam to ensure this situation does not affect the friendly relationship between the two countries and so that Vietnamese people feel satisfied when coming to work in Japan<sup>115</sup>.

This reflects that this issue is a fact, not a rumor, and is affecting the good relations of the two countries. More specific data may be announced. The number of Vietnamese people living in Japan increases every year. The number of Vietnamese people in Japan next year is higher than last year. As stated above, the Vietnamese community is considered to be the fastest growing among foreign communities in Japan<sup>116</sup>, Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security reported that in June 2022, Vietnamese criminals topped the list of countries with citizens violating Japanese law<sup>117</sup>. The website 日本総合情報チャンネル<sup>118</sup>, Vietnamese people coming to Japan are divided into two stages. One is the number of Vietnamese people who came to Japan after 1975, when the war ended, and became refugees.

When the press reported on these boat people, Japan decided to accept refugees. By the mid-1990s, when the temporary shelter for Indochinese refugees was officially closed, Japan had received 11,231 people, including 8,587 Vietnamese. The Vietnamese group of 625 people were international students during the Republic of Vietnam who were trapped in Japan when Saigon

<sup>115</sup> Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>116</sup> <https://honto.tv/vi-sao-so-nguoi-viet-pham-toi-o-nhat-tang-caoxung-dot-giua-cac-nhom-toi-pham/>

<sup>117</sup> Duc Trung (2022), *ibid*.

<sup>118</sup> <https://honto.tv/vi-sao-so-nguoi-viet-pham-toi-o-nhat-tang-caoxung-dot-giua-cac-nhom-toi-pham/>

fell in 1975; 3,536 boat refugees were picked up by Japanese ships at sea; 1,820 people evacuated from refugee camps in Southeast Asia, and 2,606 people entered Japan as a United Nations ODP reunification<sup>119</sup>. Refugees from Vietnam after 1975 largely settled in Kanagawa and Hyōgo districts where the original temporary camps were located. When they left the camp, Vietnamese people often went to areas where many Korean-Japanese people lived (Zainichi Korean). However, they still do not have much sympathy for people of Korean descent because Koreans have been deeply integrated into Japanese society while Vietnamese people are still a young immigrant community<sup>120</sup>. The two districts of Kanagawa and Hyōgo until 2018 are still the places with the largest concentration of Vietnamese people: 4,962 and 3,692 people<sup>121</sup>.

Refugees have endured many difficulties adapting to Japanese society, especially in the areas of education and employment; In addition, the high school attainment rate for Vietnamese people is only about 40% compared to 96.6% for Japanese citizens. The reason for the difference is partly because the Japanese education system cannot adapt to foreigners, and partly because of cultural differences. In the second generation, there is even more of a gap between young people raised in Japan who are fluent in Japanese, while the group of parents who grew up in Vietnam still have language barriers. Most people of Vietnamese descent keep their Vietnamese names instead of taking Japanese names. Even if they take Japanese names to make a living, they still think they are treated differently because they use "katakana names". The Roman Catholic Church plays an important role in the Vietnamese community in Japan<sup>122</sup>.

The second generation of refugees faced discrimination from the Japanese at school or where they lived. They cannot share with their parents, and it is difficult to find good jobs when they grow up. Just like that, one person then two people, they gradually lost their way. And so, a criminal gang appears that is the second generation of refugees. They concentrated mainly in Tokyo, Kanagawa and Osaka, then began doing business with the Southeast Asian communities in these areas. Collecting protection money at bars for foreigners, transporting contraband, hooking up illegal labor, prostitution, drug trafficking... They started with activities for Southeast Asians in Japan and competed with violent gangs<sup>123</sup>.

However, there are also Vietnamese people who come to Japan in another way. After 1990, mainly people came to Japan to work and make money. Currently, there are people who go to Japan as technical intern trainees, but most come from poor families in Northern Vietnam. They went to Japan to work for a few years to earn enough money to pay off their debt in Vietnam, then they returned home. However, not everyone saves enough money and returns home as planned. There are people missing due to trouble at the intern reception facility, there are people residing illegally because their visas expired, and there are people who decided to stay in Japan. And there are even people who have to "dive in" just for money.

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<sup>119</sup> "Indochinese Report"" (PDF). Bản gốc (PDF) lưu trữ ngày 3 tháng 10 năm 2016.

<sup>120</sup> Shingaki, Masami; Asano, Shinichi (2003), "The lifestyles and ethnic identity of Vietnamese youth residing in Japan", in Goodman, Roger (edit), *Global Japan: The Experience of Japan's New Immigrant and Overseas Communities*, Routledge, tr. 165–176, ISBN 0-415-29741-9

<sup>121</sup> NEWS, KYODO. "Vietnam temple offers spiritual support for Japan community". Kyodo News+.

<sup>122</sup> Shingaki, Masami; Asano, Shinichi (2003), *ibid*.

<sup>123</sup> <https://honto.tv/vi-sao-so-nguoi-viet-pham-toi-o-nhat-tang-cao-xung-dot-giua-cac-nhom-toi-pham/>

Such people become a new group of criminals. That is, there are two different groups of criminals. One is a group of criminals descended from Vietnamese refugees who came to Japan after the war. The second is a group of young criminals who came to Japan after 1990 to make money. The complicated thing here is that the characteristics of each group are different due to generational differences<sup>124</sup>.

Post-war refugees are often proud that they are the first generation to have poured their sweat and tears into building the Vietnamese community in Japan and expanding the market. Therefore, they do not have a sympathetic attitude towards the group of Vietnamese people who came from Northern Vietnam, the group of people who came later and often commit crimes because of illegal residence<sup>125</sup>.

On one side is a gang of people who followed refugee families to Japan and lived and knew each other in areas reserved for refugees in Kanagawa and Hyogo. The other side is a gang of unrelated people who came to Japan and met each other through social networks. Thus, differences are natural.

In addition, the group of refugees after the war will be the group that holds power in the Vietnamese community. They collude with violent Japanese gangs to smuggle drugs or organize gambling, even a black credit fund for foreigners in Japan. Northerners still occasionally participate in these illegal activities as customers<sup>126</sup>.

Giving a similar description, Dr. Tuan Anh, an expert at the Southeast Asia - Japan Center (AJC), living in Tokyo for 10 years, said that this situation has deep roots, related to the regime. Interns to labor export activities "promoting 'dream' jobs, painting a rosy life, working comfortably and earning 40 million/month in Japan to send home"<sup>127</sup>.

According to data from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), by June 2021, there were about 202,000 Vietnamese technical interns studying in Japan, accounting for 63.8% of international students accepted vocational training in this country. To pay for the fees to go to Japan, 80% of Vietnamese interns borrowed an average of 674,000 yen, according to a Nikkei survey. However, some interns, upon arriving in Japan and facing a reality that was more difficult than they imagined, fell into the path of crime. They take a debt to Japan but then become disillusioned. The pressure to repay the debt is great, often leading to a mentality that easily commits crime. According to Hiromu Shimada, 31 years old, manager at a foreigner support company based in Tokyo, it cannot be denied that the selection of interns to Japan is not strict. Many of them are manual workers, have difficult starting points and are disadvantaged in terms of education. "When they come to Japan, they suffer extremely poor treatment, with large debts on their shoulders"<sup>128</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup> <https://honto.tv/vi-sao-so-nguoi-viet-pham-toi-o-nhat-tang-cao-xung-dot-giua-cac-nhom-toi-pham/>

<sup>125</sup> <https://honto.tv/vi-sao-so-nguoi-viet-pham-toi-o-nhat-tang-cao-xung-dot-giua-cac-nhom-toi-pham/>

<sup>126</sup> <https://honto.tv/vi-sao-so-nguoi-viet-pham-toi-o-nhat-tang-cao-xung-dot-giua-cac-nhom-toi-pham/>

<sup>127</sup> Duc Trung (2022), Overseas Vietnamese are sad because their compatriots are breaking the law in Japan, <https://vnexpress.net/viet-kieu-buon-vi-tinh-trang-dong-huong-pham-phap-o-nhat-4507756.html>

<sup>128</sup> Duc Trung (2022), *ibid*.

According to Japan Today on March 27, citing data from the National Police Department, out of 9,884 arrests of foreigners in 2013, 4,047 involved Chinese, 1,118 were Vietnamese and 936 were Korean. The number of crimes committed by Vietnamese people in Japan has increased nearly 60% in the past 9 years, from 713 people arrested in 2004 to 1,118 people in 2013<sup>129</sup>

In 2014, Japan welcomed 20,000 workers of Vietnamese origin to work. The number has increased to about 50,000 workers from Vietnam, accounting for 18.8% of the total number of foreign workers in Japan and second only to the Chinese. Among Vietnamese criminals, the proportion of people who study abroad accounts for 54.2%, and the proportion of people who go to Japan for vocational training accounts for 12.9%. In particular, criminals with student visas increased 1.8 times. However, a large number of Vietnamese workers work without a permit, partly because brokerage companies take advantage of recruitment to make money, partly because Japanese factories want to reduce salary costs when hiring foreigners. In 2016 alone, Japanese authorities discovered that Satoshi Kogyo had exploited 4,000 Vietnamese people to work illegally as laborers<sup>130</sup>.

In 2016, Vietnamese people top the number of crimes in the foreign community living in Japan, with 5,140 crimes committed by Vietnamese citizens, up from 3,177 cases in 2016 and accounting for 30.2% of the total. Stealing is the most common behavior among Vietnamese people, with about 3,080 cases, including 2,037 cases of shoplifting and 477 cases of house theft. Among Vietnamese criminals, 41% are students, 29% are technical interns<sup>131</sup>.

Kyodo News Agency in April 2018 quoted Japanese police data showing that in 2017 Vietnamese people ranked first in the number of crimes in Japan<sup>132</sup>.

Many overseas Vietnamese and even Japanese people believe that "everywhere there are such and such people" and that not every Vietnamese who is a trainee will commit illegal acts<sup>133</sup>.

Inevitably, people with understanding will not generalize above negative facts. Vietnamese people who live upright lives do not need to be embarrassed or awkward when interacting with Japanese people.

### ***Remedial measures***

From April 1, 2019, Japan has applied a new visa system to facilitate recruiting more foreign workers to cope with the labor shortage. The new visa system also recognizes a significant policy shift in traditionally strict immigration regulations by officially opening the door to skilled workers<sup>134</sup>

Currently, according to Japanese Minister of Health, Labor and Social Welfare Kato Katsunobu, Japan is conducting research to amend current legal regulations related to the Program for accepting interns and workers. Foreigners come to Japan to practice and work (framework

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<sup>129</sup>[https://www.bbc.com/vietnamese/vietnam/2014/03/140327\\_japan\\_foreign\\_crimes](https://www.bbc.com/vietnamese/vietnam/2014/03/140327_japan_foreign_crimes)

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/nhat-phat-hien-duong-day-nghi-co-hang-ngan-lao-dong-chui-nguoi-viet/3718299.html>

<sup>131</sup> [https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Di\\_Vi%E1%BB%87t\\_t%E1%BA%A1i\\_Nh%E1%BA%ADt\\_B%E1%BA%A3n](https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Di_Vi%E1%BB%87t_t%E1%BA%A1i_Nh%E1%BA%ADt_B%E1%BA%A3n)

<sup>132</sup> [https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Di\\_Vi%E1%BB%87t\\_t%E1%BA%A1i\\_Nh%E1%BA%ADt\\_B%E1%BA%A3n](https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ng%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Di_Vi%E1%BB%87t_t%E1%BA%A1i_Nh%E1%BA%ADt_B%E1%BA%A3n)

<sup>133</sup> Duc Trung (2022), *ibid*.

<sup>134</sup> "In 2019, the number of Vietnamese workers in Japan increased the highest." Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper. January 31, 2020. Accessed March 30, 2023.

program). In the process of researching and amending this regulation, the Japanese expert council paid special attention to the goal of technical transfer, ensuring the training of quality human resources, not only contributing human resources to Japan but also internationally<sup>135</sup>.

Regarding the issue of changing the technical intern trainee program and specified skilled workers, Japan is aiming to build a new system to "protect and develop" human resources.

This is considered a new turning point for Japan in accepting foreign workers. MHLW is completing the final report to submit to the Japanese Government on changes to this technical internship program.

MOLISA and MHLW regularly exchange and share experiences in the cooperation process between the parties to jointly solve issues related to the field of human resource development in the coming time. In addition, to protect the rights of Vietnamese workers living and working in Japan, the MOLISA has signed cooperation agreements with many Japanese provinces.

In 2018, the Prime Minister of Vietnam requested MOLISA to reorganize all sending businesses to ensure that interns can work in Japan in the best conditions. MOLISA will stop cooperating and not allowing businesses and unions with a high rate of interns to participate in this program.

In addition, MOLISA is also trying to negotiate with Japan to soon introduce specific standards for sending businesses. Accordingly, businesses with a 6-star or 5-star rating according to the code of conduct in the field of labor export will be sent to work in specific occupations with a high risk of escape.

Mr. Katsuaki Suga, President of the International Labor Cooperation Association (IRO), said that inadequate training is also the reason why interns run away in Japan. Because they were not familiar with the Japanese working style, the interns could not keep up, so they became bored and tried to escape. They need to be properly and thoroughly trained down to every small detail before coming to Japan. Including learning how to walk, talk and especially Japanese culture of behavior, office culture and factories. That way, new interns will be less confused and start working right away. Among the countries that send interns to Japan, we still highly appreciate those from Vietnam because of their diligence, diligence and quick learning<sup>136</sup>.

The IRO Chairman also emphasized that the Vietnamese Government needs to take strong measures to force labor-sending businesses to seriously and fully implement the criteria set forth by the program. Businesses must also bind specific responsibilities if they let the interns they send escape<sup>137</sup>.

Looking more broadly, across Vietnam, as mentioned above, Japan is the supplier of more than 30% of the world's bilateral ODA to Vietnam. This huge amount of capital is for:

- Implementing large-scale infrastructure development projects (such as airports, seaports, bridges and roads, urban infrastructure...) has created a driving force to promote sustainable socio-economic development. .

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<sup>135</sup> Thanh Hoa (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>136</sup> <https://dantri.com.vn/viec-lam/thuc-tap-sinh-bo-tron-tai-nhat-ban-vi-sao-20180827080946214.htm> )

<sup>137</sup> <https://dantri.com.vn/viec-lam/thuc-tap-sinh-bo-tron-tai-nhat-ban-vi-sao-20180827080946214.htm> )

- Support the transfer of advanced technology and human resource training through the implementation of ODA loan projects and JICA training programs. Many advanced technologies will also be transferred to Vietnam such as satellite assembly (through the project on Natural Disaster Prevention and Climate Change using earth observation satellites), bridge and road construction techniques (especially for large bridges).
- Indirectly or directly create conditions to attract foreign investment, especially investment from Japan.

The characteristic of Japanese ODA is that it is used for large-scale infrastructure construction projects in important fields such as power generation, water supply and drainage, and transportation, thereby improving socio-economic infrastructure and has a huge impact in attracting FDI in Vietnam.

- Directly or indirectly contribute to hunger eradication and poverty reduction. Direct impact of Japanese development aid through small-scale economic infrastructure development projects, investment in construction of schools, hospitals, rural roads, small bridges and other emergency works, water and electricity for daily use in poor localities.

Behind Japan's ODA disbursement activities, we can see a huge indirect impact. Large-scale infrastructure ODA projects contribute to attracting domestic private investment and FDI, creating jobs for the workforce in rural areas; Non-refundable aid projects, technical assistance in the fields of health and education as well as sending volunteers to work in Vietnamese localities have helped improve the capacity of grassroots-level officials. ...<sup>138</sup>

It is true that besides the achieved results, there are still difficulties and problems with some programs and projects, requiring both sides to make more efforts to resolve. For example, in the process of implementing large infrastructure construction in Vietnam and disbursing Japanese ODA capital, the history of relations between the two countries has recorded a number of extremely large corruption cases. But ODA is an area that is not approached transparently by businesses, its scope is limited to large state-owned enterprises in the above fields. Therefore, after handling these cases, transparency in state-owned enterprises is an important requirement because ODA capital and foreign concessional loans continue to be identified as necessary and important during the period. Vietnam's new development, especially the implementation of 3 strategic breakthroughs, including the strategy of developing high-quality human resources<sup>139</sup>.

Personally, I think that today's fruits are the consequence of the environment, seeds, and planting methods of many previous generations. In the negative phenomena mentioned above, especially in Japan, the cause does not lie in the lack of money, the trainee regime, or the debt before leaving. The core cause is the foundation of education, culture, ethics, and discipline.

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<sup>138</sup> Thanh Hoa (2023), *ibid*.

<sup>139</sup> Linh Ly (2023), Mr. Tran Quoc Phuong - Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment responded to an interview with Monetary and Financial Market Magazine, <https://thitruongtaichinhthiente.vn/viet-nam-nhat-ban-nhieu-du-dia-cho-phat-trien-quan-he-hop-tac-tren-cac-linh-vuc-kinh-te-thuong-mai-va-dau-tu-44638.html>

Returning the new VET policy theory proposed in the beginning, policy-makers should take into account broad poverty dimensions, emphasis has been placed on educating about self-discipline and early work discipline and accompanying the vocational guidance process. Simply, that is the principle of education. Human quality education must go hand in hand with behavioral education. And behavioral education must be carried out from the beginning of each person's life with the participation of both the school, family and guardians. Public policy on education cannot state the educational goal as human resources 'must be obedient', 'must be kind'. Dogma and sloganeering are not consistent with educational principles, analyzed in the section on setting vocational education goals of Vietnam's VET policy. One reason that experts say has a significant impact on this is the lack of information transparency in the recruitment market as well as the sharing of the meaning of the internship program has not been given due attention. Due to lack of information, it is difficult for interns to know which businesses are capable of dispatching; What are the criteria and goals that the program sets to ensure employment conditions as well as learning opportunities? Therefore, interns and international students must go through brokers or meet sending businesses that charge high fees if they want to participate in the program. This leads to many trainees having to take out loans as well as being pressured to repay debt in the early stages of work, causing them to lose focus on acquiring skills, creating the risk of running away.

Thus, overall, Japan's great cooperation for Vietnam is comprehensive strategic cooperation and mutual benefit. The process of cooperation develops from projects to participating in supporting the improvement of Vietnam's legal policies. In the hierarchy of the theory of international economic relations, when two countries have institutional and political cooperation, it is no longer mere cooperation, but has moved towards integration and harmony<sup>140</sup>, demonstrates a high level of trust and legal rigor. This relationship, according to logic, can only become tighter, due to the binding interests of social elements such as people, the business community and other interest groups. Applying to the case of Vietnam, this is also the only solution that I propose in my lectures to graduate students in the provinces of Vietnam, the solution to combat the sabotage of countries having political conflicts with Vietnam, because of the matrix of their interests with other countries that have relations with Vietnam<sup>141</sup>.

Applying to the case of VET cooperation, Japan has had 50 years of official relations with Vietnam with huge sponsorship. Japan has more than 30 years of cooperation in human resources. Vietnamese human resources are working at many Japanese businesses both inside and outside Japan. The Japanese vocational education model has been piloted in Vietnam at Hanoi University of Industry. Japan's ideas of implementing the vocational education process in the right direction for human development should be expanded in Vietnam. Awareness of

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<sup>140</sup> Hoang Khac Nam (2017), The development of international relations theory, Journal of Social Science Information, no.7.2017, p.3-14.

<sup>141</sup> In many studies on regional and international integration in the early 2000s, a bowl of spaghetti was symbolically described as the phenomenon of massive regional integration. When Vietnam signed many multilateral integration documents, there were also opinions that Vietnam participated too much. I think that, at the current stage, when the global supply chain is in serious crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflicts around the world, Vietnam's participation in many multilateral agreements has been are the most useful legal solutions. From here, Vietnam's customers and partners also benefit greatly indirectly.



career guidance education from an early stage will gradually be opened. This improvement in basic thinking will help the Vietnamese vocational education system managed by MOLISA solve input bottlenecks for vocational education institutions throughout Vietnam.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The report is presented in 4 main parts.

- 1. INTRODUCTION explains the reason for choosing the topic, approach to vocational education policy, and scope of approach.
- 2. JAPAN'S VET POLICY OVERVIEW describes some main contents related to public policy in vocational education in Japan.
- 3. IMPROVING VIETNAM'S VET POLICY. The idea of this section is to analyze and contrast the vocational education policies of Vietnam and Japan, finding the cause of the paradox of a young, well-receptive, industrious workforce with little vocational education. .
- 4. JAPAN-VIETNAM VET POLICY COOPERATION. The goal of this section is to find sustainable solutions to upgrade the industrial skills of Vietnamese workers, gradually increasing confidence in the quality of people (in the broad sense), based on the quality of work (in the broad sense). broad), not based on diplomatic sentiments;

Initial conclusion of each part shows the foundation of VET must be vocational guidance education must be underlined. Without career guidance from a young age, forming responsibility, professional qualities, and professional personality will be more difficult at post-secondary school age. The attitude of considering a job as a career will create more creativity.

**Japanese VET educators should help Vietnam from the foundation of Japan's vocational guidance policy with experience.**

**Young Vietnamese must learn self-discipline and acquire professional discipline from a young age, and most uniform way through career building process in their school life.**

The foundation for successful public policy implementation is transparency of policy information. Cooperation activities are being carried out with great efforts from the Japanese Government, localities and businesses.

But imperfect information is an opportunity for profiteering for interest groups, and in the Vietnamese environment, only when it happens loudly will there be intervention from management agencies.

**Therefore, transparent information on VET cooperation policy and policies related is needed by all means.**

**This brings benefits to everyone, making the cooperation process smoother because it is accepted and trusted by the public.**

If people is determined as beneficiaries of the G2G cooperation, the information of that cooperation must be publicly disseminated, transparent, and easily accessible. This is the best way to fight profiteering and corruption in policy implementation process.

From the above preliminary research, it can be seen that, in the long term, many issues need to be updated and adjusted for Vietnam's VET policy.

For a sustainable future of a civilized developed society, fundamental education thinking - nature of education, basic Instinct needs to be thoroughly grasped, deeply understood, specifically stated, and consistently informed to all Vietnamese citizens, regardless of age because mutual social influence. It is integrated and goes hand in hand with education on living behavior, working behavior, and professional practice of all citizens in that society.

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