After 25 Years, Private Universities Play An Even More Important Role

This year commemorates the 25th anniversary of the post-1975 era of the development of private universities in Vietnam. To date, there are still only sixty nonpublic (or private) universities in Vietnam, with several others soon converting from "people-founded" to "private" status. Private universities now compete in the network of Vietnamese universities and make important contributions to the development and security of the nation, especially in the development of local education and training.

Creation of post-1975 private universities in Vietnam

In 1986, the 6th national Party Congress developed comprehensive and innovative plans in all sectors, including education, creating new ideas about the founding of the first nonpublic universities.

In 1988, the Ministry of Education and Training authorized the opening of the Thang Long people-founded university in Hanoi, now Thang Long University, as a pilot project.

In 1993, the 7th Party Central Committee continued to concentrate on educational development and promoted the establishment of new people-founded schools and private schools at the preschool, vocational and university levels.

In 1994, the Prime Minister authorized the opening of the first five people-founded, nonpublic universities in Vietnam, three in Hanoi, one in Danang and one in HCM city.

In 1996, the 8th Party Central Committee drew up a strategic education and training plan in the new era of industrialization and modernization, including objectives until 2000.

The resolution stated their aim clearly, "To develop semi-public and people-founded universities in appropriate key locations, and to gradually open private universities at several levels, including preschool, general high school, professional high school, vocational training institutions and universities."

To implement this resolution, the Prime Minister approved the founding of five people-founded schools in the 2000 to 2005 time-frame.

In 2005, the 11th National Assembly passed the Education Law and, in 2006, ordered the abolishment of semi-public and people-founded universities, leaving private universities as the only nonpublic type.

As a result, nonpublic universities in Vietnam officially came into existence in 1994 and private universities in 2005.

Statistics

In 1987, there were 63 universities in Vietnam, but no nonpublic ones. In 1994, there were five, and sixty by the end of 2016.

Table 1: Number of nonpublic universities in Vietnam from 1994 to 2017

Year	1994	2000	2005	2010	2016
Number of nonpublic universities	5	16	20	51	60
Percentage of all universities	8.6	18.2	16.9	26.7	25.5

By the end of 2018, there were 60 private universities out of all 236 universities, not including the Security and National Defense schools, representing 25% of the total.

The private universities in Vietnam are located in 29 of the 63 provinces and cities, with 23 in the north, 12 in Central Vietnam and the Central Highlands and 25 in the south. Hanoi has the most, with 13 schools, followed by HCM city with 12, and the implementation of the University Education Law is now complete.

There are now also five private, fully-funded foreign universities in Vietnam, RMIT, founded in 2000 in HCM city, the British University, in 2009 in Hanoi, the Tokyo Human Health Sciences University, in 2015 in Hung Yen, the American University, in 2015 in Danang and the Fulbright University, in 2016 in HCM city.

Number of students: Private universities have been educating 10% of Vietnamese students for many years now. In 2017-2018, there were 1,707,025, including 267,530, 15.67%, from private institutions (Table 2) [4].

Table 2: Number of university students from 2013-2014 to 2017-2018

Academic year	Number of university students			
	total	public universities	private universities	percentage at private universities
2013-2014	1.670.023	1.493.354	176.669	10.58%
2014-2015	1.824.328	1.596.754	227.574	12.47%
2015-2016	1.753.174	1.520.807	232.367	13.25%
2016-2017	1.767.879	1.523.904	243.975	13.80%
2017-2018	1.707.025	1.439.495	267.530	15.67%

Several private universities have been enrolling international full-time or exchange students and, recently, 12% of all Vietnamese students graduated from private schools, the highest share so far (Table 3) [4].

Table 3: Number of graduates from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018

Academic year	Number of graduates			
	total	public universities	private universities	percentage at private universities
2013-2014	244.880	212.344	32.536	13.29%
2014-2015	353.936	302.617	51.319	14.50%
2015-2016	352.789	307.760	45.029	12.76%
2016-2017	306.179	268.947	37.232	12.16%
2017-2018	320.578	281.965	38.613	12.04%
Total:	1.578.362	1.373.633	204.729	12.95%

Number of lecturers: in 2017-2018, there were 74,991 university lecturers in Vietnam, 15,759, 21.01%, worked in private universities, up from previous years (Table 4). The number of PhDs lecturers was 3,195, or 15.82% of the total [4].

Table 4: *Number of university lecturers from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018*

Academic year	Number of lecturers			
	total	public universities	private universities	percentage at private universities

2013-2014	65.206	52.500	12.706	19.49%
2014-2015	65.664	52.689	12.975	19.76%
2015-2016	69.591	55.401	14.190	20.39%
2016-2017	72.792	57.634	15.158	20.82%
2017-2018	74.991	59.232	15.759	21.01%

Several private universities recruited foreign lecturers for teaching and research.

Education

Private universities now offer a large variety of majors, even ones that require a large investment in both manpower and capital, such as Health Sciences.

In 2013, Duy Tan University became the first private university in Vietnam to offer PhD programs. Education at private universities is of relatively high-quality, with over 80% of graduates finding employment within a year of graduation, in some up to 97% [2].

Private universities are especially strong in their ability to flexibly develop and modify their curricula, according to the latest career preferences and requirements. They all focus on relationships with business and on international partnerships, at graduate and postgraduate levels, which have been successfully implemented at several private universities, in contrast to public ones.

Scientific research

Success in scientific research at private universities has been rated only good [2]. However, a few private universities have led the way, such as DTU, with 840 international publications, from a total of 1,264 in 2018-2019) [5]. DTU has been ranked fifth in research activities in Vietnam in the 2019 Nature Index [6].

FPT University also won the Sao Khue award in 2011 and Lac Hong University had outstanding success in the regional Asia-Pacific Robocon contest.

The DTU Institute for Research and Development

Facilities: The Ministry of Education and Training currently assesses the facilities at private universities as good. Many of them have spacious, modern campuses, sometimes built to rigorous international standards [2].

These can all be seen as strong advantages at private universities when attracting, hiring or enrolling high-quality lecturers and students.

Quality accreditation: 18 out of the 123 private universities have undergone external quality assessments. Seven academic programs at two private universities meet international standards, according to the latest information from the Ministry of Education and Training [7]).

From the above data, it can be seen that during 25 years of development, private universities have contributed to the increase in educational capacity and, at the same time, made important contributions to international integration.

Private universities offer alternative choices, by tailoring of the latest, most sought-after courses to meet student requirements. They have awarded thousands of university degrees, allowing graduates to actively participate in Vietnam's industrialization, modernization and security, meanwhile contributing a major boost to the country's financial educational investment. Private universities provide employment for tens of thousands and contribute hundreds of billions of VND to the state budget. In 2016, that contribution amounted to 111 billion VND, from only 43 private universities [2].)

The Vietnamese private university network is becoming ever more developed and has affirmed its indispensable role in national university education. Successful Party policies and guidelines have led to the development of private universities in Vietnam to meet current country requirements. Government, the Ministry of Education and Training, local authorities and other agencies and organizations have supported the new University Education Law to form a solid legal framework for the development of a network of private universities

With a passion for education, prestigious academics, scientists and managers founded, built and developed private universities, with the support of staff, lecturers and employees.

The development of Vietnamese private universities is still limited, however, for several reasons. However, the network is still developing strongly, making an international university education a reality in Vietnam.

Investors with considerable capital resources have been investing in almost all private universities, including some who were initially struggling to enroll students. Many Vietnamese private universities are

determined to soon be ranked amongst the best in ASEAN and the world. This demonstrates the great potential of the Vietnamese private university network.

Reference:

[1] //giaoduc.net.vn/giao-duc-24h/giai-phap-phat-trien-he-thong-cac-truong-dai-hoc-tu-thuc-viet-nam-post189878.gd

[2] B? Giáo d?c và Đào t?o (2017), Báo cáo t?ng h?p k?t qu? nghiên c?u các tru?ng d?i h?c ngoài công l?p, Tp. H? Chí Minh.

[3] B? Giáo d?c và Đào t?o (2018), Tài li?u H?i ngh? Ch? t?ch H?i d?ng tru?ng, Hi?u tru?ng các co s? giáo d?c d?i h?c và tru?ng su ph?m nam 2018, Hà N?i.

[4] //www.moet.gov.vn/thong-ke/Pages/thong-ke.aspx

[5] //thanhnien.vn/giao-duc/dai-hoc-duy-tan-840-cong-bo-quoc-te-trong-nam-hoc-2018-2019-1100491.html

[6]//tuoitre.vn/cac-dai-hoc-viet-nam-tren-bang-xep-hang-nature-index-2019-2019100114244387.htm

[7] //moet.gov.vn/giaoducquocdan/khao-thi-va-kiem-dinh-chat-luong-giao-duc/Pages/Default.aspx?ItemID=6233

By.Dr Tran Van Hung *(Duy Tan University)*

(Media Center)