

Linkage between Vocational Training Institutions and Industry in Laos: TVET programme contributing to the ready-made garment sector

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1 Introduction

Education is the crucial foundation of the national economic and social development, primarily technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Vocational education is considered a critical factor for improving or maintaining companies' competitiveness and national economics (Pilz, 2012).

At present, Laos has been confronted with an impressive GDP growth rate over the previous decades. To maintain the achievement of inclusive growth, the government has implemented the 8th of the five-year National Socio-economic Development Plan 2016-2020 to the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015; Weith & Koehler, 2019). More than half of Laos' manufacturing industry has experienced growth and transformation over the last half-decade. There are critical differences between small and large companies: larger ones have achieved more change rapidly in products, technology and organization. Therefore the educational institutions have struggled in providing practical training.

2 Research Objectives

This research aims to answer the research questions and meets the following objectives:

- To analyze the theory on cooperation between Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs) and industry for the suggestion about training concept
- To investigate the state of worker's qualification in the Ready-made garment industry
- To investigate the suitability of the curriculum in VTIs with the skill needed in the Ready-made garment industry
- To analyze cooperation activities between VTIs and the Ready-made garment industry
- To provide a suggestion to improve the training concept.

The research questions are as follows:

- Is the existing national framework already established for cooperation in TVET?
- What is different between curricula in VTIs if compared with the skill needed (5 positions) in the Ready-made garment industry, and how do the VTIs develop the curriculum?
- What are cooperation activities in TVET between Industry and VTI's?
- What suggestions for the improvement of the already existing concept of cooperation between VTI and industry can be found/made?

3 Research hypotheses

Regarding to the research questions and research aims, the following formulated hypotheses will be assessed by survey and analysis:

- The curriculum of TVET meets the skills required by the ready-made garment industry
 - H 1.1 the objectives of the curriculum correspond to the skills needed in industry
 - H 1.2 the content of curriculum is in line with the skills needed in industry
 - H 1.3 the requirements provided in the curriculum for the skill needs in industry are suitable
- Teachers are not qualified to develop the curriculum
- The industry did not participate in the curriculum development process

4 Research methodology

This is a transnational PhD project which investigates in the growth of technology and the need of industry in terms of skills in the context of Technical Vocational Education and Training. This study mixes quantitative and qualitative methods (QUAN + QUAL) in order to utilize the strengths of each approach (Creswell, 2002; Greene et al., 1989) addressed that a mixed-methods design provides a more comprehensive answer to the study's research questions. They also claim that a mixed method is more likely to produce better results in terms of quality and scope. According to Creswell & Clark (2017), at a general level, mixed methods research has the advantage of relying on both qualitative and quantitative research while reducing the drawbacks of both approaches.

Since the mixed methods approach provides a comprehensive, complex approach to study, it can also be ideal if the researcher has access to both quantitative and qualitative data. At the procedural level, it is a valuable strategy to have a better understanding of research questions/problems, such as:

- Comparing different perspectives drawn from literature reviews, quantitative and qualitative data on cooperation between VTIs and industry.
- Comparison of the job description and existing curriculums and interview VTI's teacher about the method of curricular development.
- Using qualitative data collection and analysis to explain quantitative outcomes.
- Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to have a better understanding of the adjustments required for a marginalized group.

- Having a better understanding of the need and impacts of an intervention program through collecting both quantitative and qualitative data over time.
- Mixed methods simultaneously may occur in all stages of this research, such as creating research questions, elaboration of the research design, data collection and data analysis procedures, and interpretation and discussion of the findings.

5 Summary

The garment-related curriculum of the public VTI in Lao PDR was developed in 2004. Until now, the curriculum is currently implemented in the VTI. The result of the investigation would recommend to the educators and policy-maker to re-consider about improving the garment-related curriculum to meet the industrial needs and market's skill demands.

6 References

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