



Current Situation of Vietnam's Network of Vocational Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT:

Implementing the planning for vocational education institution network with a view to arranging and reorganizing public vocational education institutions in a streamlined and effective manner in accordance with Resolution No. 19 - NQ/TW dated 25/10/2017 of the Sixth Conference of the XII Central Committee on continuing to renovate the organizational and management system, enhance the effectiveness and productivity of operations in public service delivery units, the merger of vocational education institutions is really necessary. Consequently, there were significant changes in the number of vocational education institutions between 2017 and 2022. This article aims to analyze the current status of the vocational education institutions network through a statistical lens to clearly outline these transformations.

Keywords: current situation, vocational education, network of institutions, vocational education in Vietnam, network of vocational education institutions in Vietnam

1. Introduction

In 2022, it denoted the fifth year since localities, ministries, and branches commenced executing the directives outlined in Resolution No.19-NQ/TW dated October 25, 2017 by the VI Conference of the XII Central Committee on continuing to renovate the organizational and management system, enhance the effectiveness and productivity of operations in public service delivery units; consolidating inefficient intermediate schools and colleges into colleges under their supervision; dissolving intermediate schools and colleges under the Ministry of National Defense. Ultimately, there will be only one public vocational training focal point in each province. In 2022, there is an ongoing shift in the quantity of vocational education institutions focusing on a further decline in the number of public vocational education institutions. The promotion of socialization in the establishment of private vocational education institutions has been lacking. It is imperative to accurately assess the existing status of the vocational education institutions network in order to suggest strategies and policies for the development of vocational education towards a direction of "Investing in improving the quality of training and developing the network of vocational education institutions according to the planning; focus on investing in the formation of a number of high-quality key vocational education institutions to meet the human resource needs of the labor market, the learning needs of workers and gradually universalize vocational skills for youth" mentioned in Article 6 of the Law on Vocational Education of Vietnam.

2. Rationale

Vocational education: According to Article 36 of the Law on Education 2019, vocational education aims to provide training for personnel directly involved in production, businesses or services, who acquire proficiency equivalent to their training standards, possess professional ethics and good health, gain creative ability, adapt to the environment in the context of international integration; improve their productivity and quality; and enable students to find jobs, self employ or enter higher education.

According to the Law on Vocational Education of the XIII National Assembly of Vietnam passed on November 27, 2014: "Vocational education means a level of national education system which provides workers with elementary-level, intermediate-level, college-level vocational training and other vocational training programs in order to meet the demand of human resources in production, businesses and services, including: formal training and continuing training." Hence, vocational education forms an integral component of the country's education system, encompassing both professional and secondary vocational education. Its primary objective is to equip individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications to directly engage in production, business, and service sectors. This education system is designed to cater to the requirements of the labor market, allowing individuals to pursue further studies or enhance their qualifications to higher levels, provided there is a demand and suitable conditions.

Vocational training institutions: According to the Article 5 of Vocational Education Law of Vietnam, vocational training institutions include: Vocational training centers; Vocational training schools; Colleges. Vocational training institutions shall be organized under following types: a) Public vocational

training institution is a State-owned vocational training institution, whose facilities invested and constructed by the State; b) Private vocational training institution is a vocational training institution under ownership of a social organization, a socio-professional organization, a private economic organization or individual, or a vocational training institution invested and constructed by a social organization, a socio-professional organization, a private economic organization, or an individual; c) Foreign-invested vocational training institution includes wholly foreigninvested vocational training institution; joint-venture vocational training institution between domestic investors and foreign investors.

3. Research methodology

The analysis of the article is based on experimental data, surveys, an overview assessment of the state of vocational education in Vietnam throughout the years, and an analysis of secondary data from the General Department of Vocational Education between 2017 and 2022. These quantitative findings ensure the research's reliability and objectivity. The article explores the current status of the vocational education institution network by examining key indicators such as number of vocational education institutions; (ii) number of vocational education institutions catogorised by type; (iii) the number of vocational education institutions catogorised by ownership; (iv) Number of vocational education institutions by socio-economic region.

4. Current situation of vocational education network in Vietnam

The vocational education institutions in Vietnam are struggling to keep up with the demands of a rapidly changing labor market amidst economic development and international integration. There are numerous deficiencies within the network of vocational education institutions, including uneven distribution across regions and types. This article examines the current state of vocational education institutions network in Vietnam from 2017 to 2022 using statistical analysis to assess various indicators.

* About vocational education institutions catogorised by type

Implement the planning for the network of vocational education institutions with a view to arranging and reorganizing public vocational education institutions in a streamlined and effective manner in accordance with Resolution No. 19-NQ/TW dated October 25, 2017 of the Sixth Conference of the XII Central Committee on continuing to renovate the organizational and management system, enhance the effectiveness and productivity of operations in public service delivery units, the merger of vocational education institutions cannot be carried out mechanically. On that basis, Ministries, branches, and localities are actively conducting assessments and appraisals of vocational education institutions within their jurisdiction. These evaluations are carried out in accordance with the criteria outlined in Decree No. 143/2016/NĐ-CP, issued by the Government on October 14, 2016, which sets forth the conditions for investment and operation in the field of vocational education and Decree No. 140/2018/NĐ-CP dated October 8, 2018 of the Government on amending and supplementing Decrees related to business investment conditions and administrative procedures under the state management of the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs. In 2017, there were a total of 1976 vocational education institutions across the country. However, by 2022, the number of these institutions had decreased to 1879, indicating a decline compared to previous years. Specifically, in 2022, there was a decrease of 22 institutions compared to the previous year, and over a span of 6 years since the handover of state management of vocational education in 2017, there was a decrease of 97 institutions compared to 2017. It is worth noting that the growth rate of vocational education institutions has consistently followed a decreasing trend in all years since 2017. For instance, in 2018, the growth rate reached 98.58% compared to 2017, while in 2022, it was only 95.09% compared to the same base year.

Table 1: Number of vocational education institutions in Vietnam, 2017-2022

Quota	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of vocational education institutions (institutions)	1976	1948	1907	1911	1901	1879
The constant absolute increase (decrease) (institutions)	-	-28	-41	4	-10	-22
Absolute differences between the current year to base year (institutions)	-	-28	-69	-65	-75	-97
The growth rate of the current year compared to the prvious year (%)	-	98.58	97.9	100.2	99.48	98.84
The growth rate of the current year compared to the base year (%)	-	98.58	96.51	96.71	96.2	95.09

Source: General Department of Vocational Education

In 2017, the nation possessed a total of 1976 vocational education institutions. Among these, there were 395 colleges, constituting 19.99% of the overall number of vocational education institutions; 541 vocational training schools, accounting for 27.38% of the total, and 1040 vocational and continuing education centers, making up 52.63% of the total. In 2020, there was a mixed of increase and decrease in the various types of vocational education institutions. Specifically, the number of colleges increased by 10, while vocational training schools decreased by 19 and the number of vocational and continuing education centers increased by 13 compared to 2019. This trend can be attributed to the ongoing efforts of localities to plan the network of vocational education institutions. These efforts involve merging intermediate schools into colleges under provincial management, as well as establishing or upgrading colleges in provinces such as Vinh Phuc, Hau Giang, Binh Duong, Quang Binh, Phu Tho, and others. Ministries and sectors persist in planning the vocational education institution network based on the pattern of amalgamating such institutions situated in close proximity, within regions

that share similar training domains and occupations. Notable examples include the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

In 2022, there was 1879 vocational education institutions nationwide, comprising 385 colleges (20.49% of the total), 436 vocational training schools (23.2% of the total), and 1058 vocational and continuing education centers (56.31% of the total). The number of colleges and vocational training schools in 2022 saw a decrease compared to 2017, with colleges decreasing by 10 schools and vocational training schools decreasing by 105 schools. The number of vocational and continuing education centers increased from 1040 establishments in 2017 to 1058 establishments in 2022. Several regions consolidated inefficient vocational education institutions, including Yen Bai province, Binh Thuan province, Lam Dong province, Dak Lak province, Hanoi City, and Hai Phong city. In 2022, 11 colleges under the Ministry of Defense were dissolved, and the remaining 03 colleges are in the process of being transferred to the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs for management.

Table 2: Number of vocational education institutions in Vietnam by type during the period 2017-2022

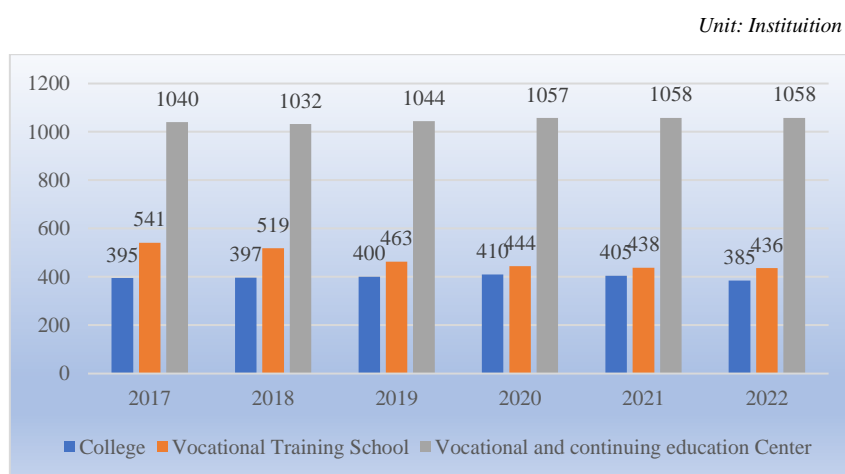
Quota	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Nationwide</i>	1976	1948	1907	1911	1901	1879
College	395	397	400	410	405	385
Vocational training School	541	519	463	444	438	436
Vocational and continuing education Centers	1040	1032	1044	1057	1058	1058
<i>Percentage (%)</i>						
College	19.99	20.38	20.98	21.45	21.3	20.49
Vocational training school	27.38	26.64	24.28	23.23	23.04	23.20
Vocational and continuing education Centers	52.63	52.98	54.75	55.31	55.65	56.31

Source: General Department of Vocational Education

Note: The total number of vocational education institutions nationwide in the table does not include other institutions participating in vocational education.

Fluctuation in the number of vocational education institutions in Vietnam by type in the period of 2017 - 2022: There was a gradual decrease in the number of colleges and vocational training schools. Vocational and continuing education centers varied throughout the years 2017 – 2020, with no changes observed in 2021 and 2022 as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Number of vocational education institutions in Vietnam by type 2017-2022



Source: General Department of Vocational Education

*** Number of vocational education institutions by ownership**

In the period of 2017-2022, there was a declining trend in public vocational education institutions, although they still hold a larger share compared to non-public vocational education institutions (as shown in table 3). The number of public educational institutions decreased from 1306 in 2017 to 1,046 in 2022, marking a reduction of 260 institutions. Furthermore, there was a decrease of 33 institutions in 2022 compared to 2020. On the other hand, non-public vocational education institutions, which include private and foreign-invested establishments, have been gradually increasing. However, their share

remains below 45% when considering both public and non-public ownership. The number of non-public vocational education institutions rose from 670 in 2017 to 833 in 2022, indicating an increase of 163 institutions compared to 2017.

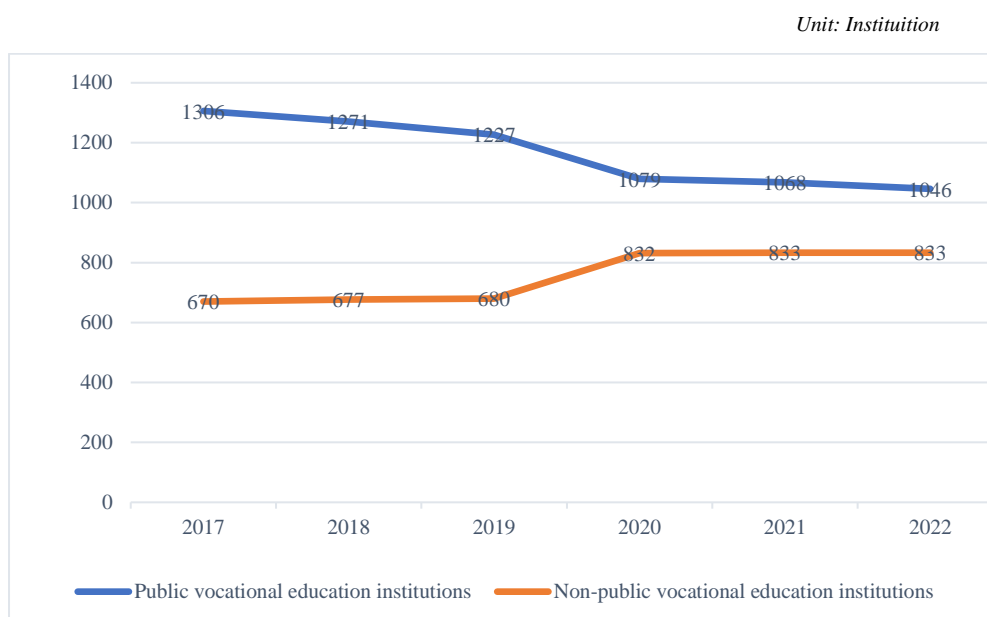
Table 3: Vietnamese vocational education institutions by ownership, 2017-2022

Quota	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<i>Nationwide</i>	1976	1948	1907	1911	1901	1879
Public vocational education institutions (institutions)	1306	1271	1227	1079	1068	1046
Non-public vocational education institutions (institutions)	670	677	680	832	833	833
<i>Percentage (%)</i>						
Public vocational education institutions	66.09	65.25	64.34	56.46	56.18	55.67
Non-public vocational education institutions	33.91	34.75	35.66	43.54	43.82	44.33

Source: General Department of Vocational Education

Figure 2 illustrates that there is a mixed trend in the number of vocational education institutions based on ownership. Public vocational education institutions are on the decline, while non-public vocational education institutions are gradually increasing. However, the pace of change remains sluggish in comparison to the demands outlined in Resolution No. 19 - NQ/TW dated October 25, 2017 of the VI Conference of the XII Central Committee. The process of reviewing and restructuring vocational education institutions with similar training programs, located in the same area under the management of ministries and branches in 2022, had been progressing slowly, with only the Ministry of Defense having closed down 11 colleges. Therefore, moving forward, it is imperative to continue exploring and implementing strategies to plan the network in a manner that promotes the socialization of vocational education.

Figure 2: Trends in the number of vocational education institutions by ownership in the period of 2017 – 2022

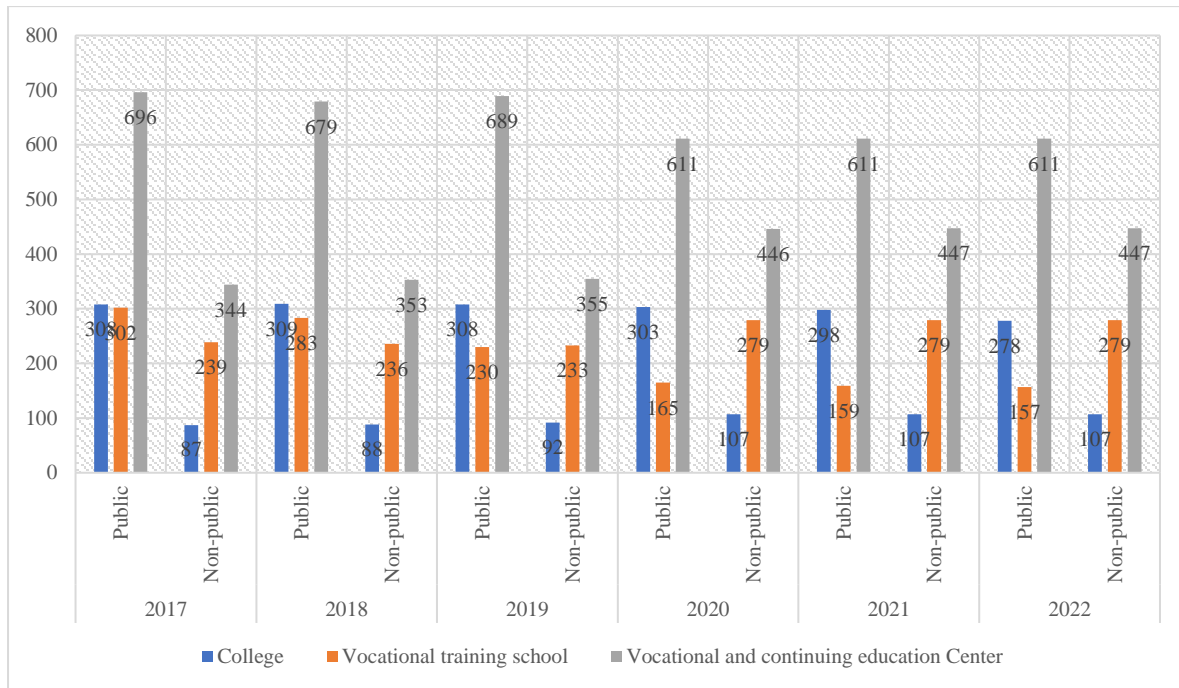


Source: General Department of Vocational Education

The Government's Decree No. 60/2021/NĐ-CP issued on June 21, 2021 outlines the framework for financial independence of public service providers in the domains of education, training, and vocational education. Consequently, the consolidation and closure of colleges and intermediate schools are approached as a means to promote autonomy rather than just merging schools that are autonomous. Additionally, the restructuring and reorganization of vocational education establishments will be conducted in an open and adaptable manner, catering to the demands of the present labor market in terms of human resource development. Figure 3 illustrates a decline in the number of public vocational education institutions, particularly colleges, which had undergone substantial changes. The count has decreased from 308 in 2017 to 278 in 2022. Conversely, the number of non-public vocational education institutions in Vietnam showed an upward trend from 2017 to 2022. This includes all colleges, vocational training schools, and vocational and continuing education centers.

Figure 3. Vietnamese vocational education institutions by type and form of ownership in the period of 2017 – 2022

Unit: Institution



Source: General Department of Vocational Education

*** Number of vocational education institutions by socio-economic region**

In the years 2017 and 2018, the majority of socio-economic regions had vocational and continuing education centers that were almost twice as numerous as the count of vocational training schools and colleges (table 4). This indicates the crucial need for the replanning of vocational education institutions in socio-economic regions, in order to adequately train and promptly supply high-quality and efficient human resources within these regions. Notably, vocational education institutions are primarily concentrated in the Red River Delta and North Central Coast regions, while the other regions have a comparatively lower number of such institutions. Regional economic development involves unfolding the unique strengths of each area and attracting investments from businesses, as well as focusing on training and providing skilled workers for the job market. Lately, the Central Highlands, Mekong Delta, and Northern Mountainous Midlands Areas have been receiving attention from the government for investment and growth. As a result, it is crucial to replan vocational education institutions based on the specific socio-economic characteristics of each region, invest in upgrading colleges to top-tier institutions, and prioritize key vocational training programs to meet the current demands.

Table 4: Vietnam vocational education institutions by socio-economic region, 2017 – 2022

Unit: institution

Quota		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Northern Mountainous Midland Area	College	140	140	48	48	46	48
	Vocational training school	191	181	48	47	46	45
	Vocational and continuing education centers	263	259	198	198	198	198
	Total	594	580	294	293	290	291
Red River Delta	College	51	52	146	147	147	137
	Vocational training school	58	57	160	156	156	155
	Vocational and continuing education centers	205	202	268	267	268	268
	Total	314	311	574	570	571	560
Other regions	College	81	81	83	88	85	81
	Vocational training school	105	99	93	91	85	85

North and Coastal Area	Central Central	Vocational and continuing education centers	233	231	228	232	233	233
		Total	419	411	404	411	403	399
		College	12	13	14	14	14	11
Central Highland		Vocational training school	23	23	13	13	13	13
		Vocational and continuing education centers	69	69	77	80	79	79
	Total	104	105	104	107	106	103	
		College	70	70	71	73	73	69
Eastern South		Vocational training school	104	104	93	88	89	89
		Vocational and continuing education centers	126	126	129	136	136	136
	Total	300	300	293	297	298	294	
		College	41	41	38	40	40	39
Mekong Delta	River	Vocational training school	60	53	56	49	49	49
		Vocational and continuing education centers	144	145	144	144	144	144
		Total	245	239	238	233	233	232

Source: General Department of Vocational Education

5. Some solutions to develop Vietnam's vocational education network

The vocational education network basically encompasses all provinces and cities, yet there is a shortage of skilled workers, highly skilled technicians, and businesses grappling with recruitment challenges. Consequently, it becomes imperative to strategize the reorganization of vocational education institutions within the region, with a focus on guaranteeing quality and efficiency. This replanning should aim to cater to the requirements of learners at the onset and align with the human resource demands of both domestic and international labor markets. The plan's orientation must be aligned with national, sectoral, and local human resource development plans to ensure resources are available for implementation according to the roadmap. Key considerations include the placement of top-tier schools in vital economic areas and communities that serve as the core of socio-economic zones; positioning colleges at the provincial level, vocational training schools and vocational education centers at the district level; allocating vocational education institutions in regions facing severe socio-economic challenges, as well as in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, along borders, islands, and coastal areas. Additionally, vocational training schools offering vocational training programs that do not align with the job placement demands and workforce requirements of the local labor market should either be integrated with nearby colleges or dissolved. Vocational education institutions should be encouraged and motivated to actively engage in socialization efforts, particularly in areas, fields, branches, and training professions where they have already demonstrated success and effectiveness.

To ensure the successful execution of the Party and Government's directives regarding the enhancement of vocational education in terms of both quantity and quality, which in turn supports the strategic advancement of human resource development in the nation, it is imperative to conduct an initial assessment of the performance outcomes of merged vocational education establishments following the enactment of Resolution No. 19/NQ-TW, and extract valuable insights from the process. Develop management models for public vocational education institutions that align with the specific characteristics and size of each institution, taking into consideration the requirements of human resource development. Advocate for the transfer of responsibilities and authority from vocational education institutions to management bodies at various levels, while phasing out the governing body structure for public vocational education institutions. Autonomy and self-accountability play a crucial role in the reform of vocational education, addressing the challenges related to the quality of skilled workforce in both present and future vocational education systems.

Enhancing and expanding the network of public vocational education institutions in an open and flexible manner to address the workforce demands of the job market; maintaining the appropriate size, composition, and relevance of professions and educational levels, standardizing, modernizing, and stratifying quality, ensuring the ability to deliver training within the region; consolidating focal points of vocational education institutions without compromising training capacity, maintaining favorable conditions for investing in vocational education through land, infrastructure, staff, and financial resources; Implementing specific strategies to boost enrollment capacity, guaranteeing training excellence to meet the demands of human resource development in the era of the fourth industrial revolution.

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