

Article

Solutions to improve quality, create breakthrough in training, fostering, attracting and employing talents in Vietnam

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Abstract: In order to create the possibility of economic breakthrough development, remove economic institutional bottlenecks, release resources, and develop the economy quickly and sustainably in Vietnam in the coming time, it is impossible not to mention solutions to improve the quality, create breakthroughs in training and fostering talents. This is one of the important solutions in the context that the Party and State require the application and development of science and technology more and more extensively in all fields and all sectors in Vietnam. The article focuses on researching the the political basis, legal basis, and practical basis for training, fostering, attracting and employing talents in Vietnam. Meanwhile, statistics on undergraduate and postgraduate training in the period of 2016–2022, the training level of the workforce and the Global Talent Competitiveness Index show that Vietnam has not achieved many positive changes in training, fostering, attracting and employing talents as expected. The article is approached from many different aspects, including the perspective of leaders and managers at the head of state agencies, the perspective of businesses and the perspective of the university teaching staff and scientific research workers themselves. On that basis, the article points out the key contents that need addressing so as to build solutions to improve quality, create breakthroughs in training, fostering, attracting and employing talents in Vietnam in the context of international integration and science and technology development. The main contributions of the article focus on the identification of the concept of “talent”, the criteria for determining “talent” and the renewal of awareness of policies and laws on training, fostering, attracting, employing, introducing and recommending talents.

Keywords: talents; education developing; training; fostering attracting and employing talents; science and technology development

1. Introduction

Talent is the core value and strategic resource in the process of building a modern country, because it contributes intellectually to the country’s economic and social development. With the advent of globalization, international integration and strong development in science and technology, the competition among countries has changed from “competition for growth and development” to “competition for professional, high-class talents with international vision”. Countries are competing across the globe to find talents they need and ones contributing to competitiveness, innovation, and growth (INSEAD, 2023). A country’s talent competitiveness is a set of policies and practices that allow it to develop, attract, and empower human resources that contribute to enhancing productivity and prosperity. The talent search policies of countries are increasingly diverse, not only attracting domestic and foreign talents but also aiming to attract personnel to work remotely. The “digital nomad” visa is increasingly being used by countries around the world to attract personnel to work remotely. There are currently about 58 countries that offer digital nomad visas

(Finance Times, 2024). The competition for attracting talents among countries will become more fierce in the next decade, as uncertainties and tensions in international relations continue taking place in the fields of trade, investment and politics. With that trend, all countries have set goal of training and fostering talents, nurturing domestic talents along with attracting foreign talents to provide internal resources for the stable and rapid development of the country's economy and society as well as enhance the country's strength and comprehensive competitiveness in the international arena.

Vietnam pays special attention to building and developing talents—high-quality human resources, meeting the requirements of promoting the country's industrialization, modernization and international integration. Vietnam is an economy that is strongly transitioning to the socialist-oriented market mechanism. The need for socio-economic development with a growth model based on high-quality human resources and driving factors of science, technology and innovation is becoming more and more obvious. The Communist Party of Vietnam has always been consistent with the policy of “considering people as the center, the subject, the most important resource and the goal of development; taking Vietnamese cultural and human values as the foundation and important endogenous strength to ensure sustainable development” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). In 2022, Vietnam ranked the 54th out of 100 countries in the ranking of the global startup ecosystem (Startup Genome, 2024); in 2023, it ranked the 46th out of 132 countries in terms of the Global Innovation Index (GII) (World Intellectual Property Organization, 2023). The Government of Vietnam has approved the Project “Discovering, fostering and promoting young Vietnamese talents in the period of 2022–2030” which sets a goal to build and operate the Global Vietnam Young Talent Network and the National Young Talent Digital Park by 2025. Vietnam's national strategy on attracting and employing talents to 2030, with a vision to 2050, has set the goal that the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) from 2031 onwards will always be improved and strive to gradually increase compared to the previous year; the indicators of “talent attraction” and “talent retention” rank high among upper-middle-income countries. Recently, Resolution 45-NQ/TW dated 24 November 2023 of the 8th Meeting of the 13th Party Central Committee on continuing building and promoting the role of intellectuals to meet the requirements of rapid and sustainable national development in the new period has officially recognized comprehensively the role and the importance of intellectuals in building the country, showing the change in the awareness of Communist Party of Vietnam of the policy of employing talents. On that basis, many legal documents have been promulgated, showing efforts in implementing the policy of employing talents such as: Law on Cadres and Civil Servants 2008; Law on Public Employees 2010; Law Amending and Supplementing a Number of Articles of the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants and the Law on Public Employees 2019; Law on Science and Technology 2013. However, according to the assessment of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the current law of Vietnam has not stipulated enough mechanisms to attract, train and develop high-quality human resources for science, technology and innovation (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2024, p.7) lacks breakthrough mechanisms and policies in investment, resource mobilization, training, fostering, attracting, employing and honoring intellectuals, especially the elite intellectuals (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2024, p.25). As a result, Vietnam's talent

attraction efficiency is still very limited. In the period of 2013–2022, Hanoi only attracted 55 talents who are valedictorians of universities to work in departments, branches, districts, towns and non-business units under the People’s Committee of Hanoi despite preferential policies (one-time support equal to 20 months of minimum salary; after 2 years of work, they will be prioritized to be sent domestic or foreign postgraduate training with a commitment to work for the city for 7 years if enjoying the support level) (People’s Council of Hanoi, 2013). Similarly, in the period of 2018–2022, Ho Chi Minh City offered many attractive incentive policies that only attracted 5 people, including 1 Vietnamese, 1 American, and 3 Japanese (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2023).

In general, Vietnam is well aware of the importance of talents to the country’s development and has issued many policies and legal documents on training, fostering, attracting and employing talents. Nevertheless, the application of these policies and legal regulations still has lots of problems and inefficiencies. The world’s assessment of the Global Talent Competitiveness Index in 2021, 2022, and 2023 has not made positive progress. This article studies and explores the causes of the ineffective implementation of Vietnam’s policies and laws on talents as a lesson for Vietnam itself and other countries. On that basis, the article suggests solutions to overcome the inadequacies, limitations and inefficiencies in Vietnam’s above-mentioned policies and laws.

2. Literature review

Research by Gallardo-Gallardo and colleagues exploring the history of the concept of “talent” shows that the concept of “talent” has changed over time and is still a topic of debate, not yet clear (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Up to now, the concept of “talent” is still being discussed. Countries have promulgated many policies and laws on attracting and employing talents in order to create a legal basis of creating a premise for national talent competition. So as to compete for talents, each country promulgates attractive policies on training, fostering, attracting and employing talents to create a legal basis for building and developing domestic talent resources as well as attracting domestic and foreign talents. High-quality talents and human resources become a crucial topic when countries look for development solutions in the context of international integration and the strong development of the fourth industrial revolution. The study “Future of Jobs Report 2023” by the Economic Forum (The World Economic Forum, 2023) shows that organizations and enterprises have identified the failure to attract talents as the main barrier to the transformation of the industry (The World Economic Forum, 2023). along with the transformation of business operations (The World Economic Forum, 2023). Recently, another study by The World Economic Forum (The World Economic Forum, 2024) surveying enterprises about talents in the future has found that the majority of businesses believe that access to talents is a bigger challenge than retaining and developing ones.

Research on countries’ talent development shows that each country has different strategies and policies to attract talents, depending on its political, economic and social characteristics as well as its development level. In Asia, Singapore and China are both successful countries with policies on developing, attracting, and employing talents.

Singapore, which not only has a small area and a small population but also is not rich in mineral resources, always attaches special importance to the policy of attracting talents. Nguyen Tien Thanh's research highly appreciates the effectiveness of the mechanism of prioritizing talents regardless of religion, gender, or nationality; focuses on education and training of high-quality human resources; and attracts talents with remuneration policies with decent salaries (Thanh, 2022). Studies on China note the relationship between the realization of the second 100-year goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and China's introduction of a scientific and educational strategy to rejuvenate the country, strengthen the talent pillar for national construction and modernization (Hien and Trang, 2023). deepen the implementation of the Great Power Strategy on talents, focusing on both the policy of attracting talents and the policy of training talents, in which special emphasis is placed on the factor of autonomy in talent training and focusing on talents in the area of science and technology (Thuy and Thu, 2022). Meanwhile, Article 62 of the 2013 Constitution of Vietnam recognized that "Developing science and technology is the leading national policy, playing a key role in the country's socio-economic development", but Vietnam is still facing lots of difficulties with the effectiveness of attracting talents, especially attracting talents for the public sector although Vietnam has issued many policies, decrees and circulars on education, training, attraction and utilization of talents.

Identifying the causes of difficulties in the effectiveness of talent attraction of Hanoi Capital, from the perspective of state management, Minister of Justice of Vietnam, Mr. Le Thanh Long, assesses that Hanoi's talent attracting policies currently only focus on recruiting some specific subjects; they do not emphasize the working environment, salary, income, learning opportunities, promotion opportunities, and other benefits, thus failing to compete with the private sector, hence lacking attractiveness. The scope of beneficiaries of talent recruitment policies is still limited, and the overall recruitment numbers remain low. The support budget is also inadequate, with no additional preferential policies regarding salary and income compared to other officials and civil servants. Therefore, it fails to attract groups such as highly skilled experts, leading scientists, and artisans (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2023). Regarding Vietnam's current policies and laws on talent attraction and utilization, The Minister of Science and Technology of Vietnam, Mr. Huynh Thanh Dat, stated, "There is a policy to attract talents, but implementation is very cumbersome due to regulations, laws on civil servants, public employees, and financial regulations" (responding to questions from National Assembly delegates on 7 June 2023) (Government Electronic Newspaper, 2023). Meanwhile, from the perspective of a an enterprise specializing in providing human resources solutions, Mr. Simon Matthews (Regional Manager of Manpowergroup Vietnam, Thailand and the Middle East) shared his experience in attracting talent in both ways: First, succession planning—finding talented successors within the business's internal human resources network based on 3 criteria (3E: Education—educational background or qualification; Experience—Experience in work; Exposure—develop experience by working in multinational environments for a short period of time); Second, employer branding-promote the image of the business to attract external talented individuals through community responsibility programs, business ethics, and fair wage (Simon Matthews, 2018).

Therefore, this study contributes advice for policy-making agencies and state management agencies to refer to in the process of perfecting solutions to improve quality and create breakthroughs in training and fostering talented individuals to meet international integration requirements.

3. Materials and methods

The main research method of this article is qualitative research method when accessing and studying research objects which are documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam, regulations in policies and laws of the State on training and fostering talented individuals. Based on the study of the above documents, policies and laws, this study points out the need to come up with solutions to improve quality and create breakthroughs in training and fostering talented individuals in all areas to meet the requirements of international integration and development of science and technology in Vietnam. Besides, the article conducts an in-depth interview with the leaders of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences to learn about the characteristics of attracting and retaining talents in public non-business units with the function of basic research and policy consulting. Opinions of managers in state agencies, leaders of science research agencies, perspectives of science and technology businesses speaking as heads of ministries and branches in conferences and seminars on the current situation of formulating and perfecting policies and laws on attracting, honoring and remunerating talents are also summarized by the article to help the article have comprehensive perspectives. In addition, the article uses analysis, synthesis and statistical methods so as to point out new content, identify new issues related to training and fostering talent. This is an input source for the process of establishing a system of policies and laws on training and fostering talent in Vietnam in the upcoming time. Accordingly, the new findings proposed by the study have been considered based on empirical evidence about the current situation of training and fostering talents in Vietnam during the past. The data on training institutions and qualifications of the workforce in this article are compiled by the author from the data published annually by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. The article also uses secondary data that carried out to generate/collect 500/302 response votes (in 2018) within the framework of the State-level project (code KX.01/16-20) to survey the opinions of heads of public units and enterprises on Science-Technology-Innovation.

4. Discussion

4.1. Basis for establishing solutions to improve quality, creating breakthroughs in training and fostering talented individual

4.1.1. First, the political basis

Since its establishment, the Communist Party of Vietnam has always paid great attention to the training and fostering of cadres, especially intellectuals and talented individuals. President Ho Chi Minh believes that talented individuals are virtuous people who can do things that benefit the country and its people. He emphasized: “If you have talent, you must have virtue. Talented but not virtuous is harmful to the

country. Having virtue but no talent is like a Buddha sitting in a temple, not helping anyone” (Minh, 1987). Inheriting President Ho Chi Minh’s viewpoint on discovering, attracting, and appreciating talented individuals, the Party has issued many Resolutions and Conclusions on this issue, considering it both an important and urgent immediate task, as well as a strategic, regular and long-term task, especially in today context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution taking place more and more widely on a global scale.

The viewpoint “Education and training is the top national policy” was first expressed in Resolution No. 04-NQ/TW dated January 14th 1993 at the Fourth Conference of the 7th Party Central Committee on continue to innovate education and training. Our Party continues to affirm the important position and role of education and training in future Party documents. At the 13th National Congress, the Party’s views on education and training were more specific when affirming “building synchronous institutions and policies to effectively implement the policy of education and training together with science and technology is a top national policy and a key driving force for national development” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). The goal of education and training in the coming time is also clarified, which is “Focus more on educating ethics, personality, creative capacity and core values, especially educating patriotism; pride, respect for the nation people, traditions and history; sense of social responsibility for all classes, especially the younger generation” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). The National Congress also emphasized the need to “Create a breakthrough in fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training, develop high-quality human resources, attract and appreciate talented individuals” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021); implement “Diversifying training methods based on the open education model, national qualifications framework, linked to the market and meeting the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Preparing human resources for digital transformation, developing digital economy and digital society”, “Planning the network of higher education institutions, focusing on pedagogical and medical universities; developing high-quality universities upto regional and world standards, prioritizing resources for the development of technology schools” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

The viewpoint of attracting and appreciating talented individuals is mentioned in many Party Resolutions. Resolution No. 30c/NQ-CP dated 8 November 2011 on the Master Program for State Administrative Reform for the period 2011–2020 stipulates: “Synchronously develop policies to train, attract, appreciate, and adequately reward talented individuals in science and technology” (The Government, 2011); The Resolution of the 10th National Party Congress emphasized: “Implementing the policy of appreciating talented individuals, leading scientists, general engineers, chief engineers, skilled technicians and highly skilled technical workers” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006). The Resolution of the 11th National Party Congress continues to affirm: “Focus on discovering, fostering and promoting talented individuals; training human resources for knowledge-based economic development”, “formulating synchronous mechanisms and policies to encourage creativity, utilize talents and promote the application of science and technology” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011). Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW dated 19 May 2018 of the Seventh plenary session of the 12th Party Central Committee focuses on building a team of officials at all levels,

especially at the strategic level, with sufficient qualities, capacity and prestige, suitable for their tasks, sets out these requirements: “Regulate a framework of mechanisms and preferential policies to discover, attract, and utilize talented individuals with a focus on key industries and areas that contribute to rapid and sustainable development. Develop a National Strategy to attract and utilize talented individuals that does not discriminate between Party members or non-Party members, Vietnamese people in the country or abroad”; “Improve the mechanism, promote the attraction and recruitment of staff from exemplary graduates, promising young scientists and pay special attention to training, fostering and instructing the next generation of officials. Proactively select, train, foster, and instruct good and exemplary graduates domestically and abroad” and identify one of the five strategic breakthroughs as “having mechanisms and policies to create fair, healthy competition and attract and utilize talented individuals” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2018). The 13th National Party Congress continued to affirm this viewpoint: “Strongly awaken the spirit of patriotism, the will for national self-reliance, the strength of great national unity and the desire to develop a prosperous and happy country; promote socialist democracy, the combined strength of the entire political system, the culture and the people of Vietnam, foster the people’s strength, improve the quality of human resources, have a breakthrough mechanism to attract and appreciate talented individuals, strongly apply science and technology, especially the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, promoting innovation and creating new driving force for rapid and sustainable development of the country” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). In addition, the 13th National Party Congress also emphasized: “Developing human resources, especially high-quality human resources; prioritize the development of human resources for the leadership, management roles and key areas on an advanced basis, creating a strong, comprehensive and fundamental change in the quality of education and training associated with the mechanism for recruiting, appreciating and handling talented individuals” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). Especially, the 13th Party Central Committee has just issued Resolution 45-NQ/TW dated 24 November 2023 on continuing to establish and promote the role of the intellectuals to meet the requirements of rapid and sustainable national development in the new period. In particular, Resolution 45-NQ/TW clearly stated the viewpoint “Focus on developing the Vietnamese intellectual team both domestically and abroad, have breakthrough mechanisms and policies to attract and utilize intellectuals, especially elite intellectuals, leading experts and talented individuals of the country” and “have priority and breakthrough mechanisms and policies in attracting, training, fostering, appreciating and handling talented individuals, especially policies on recruitment, salary, creating a suitable working environment; focus on exceptional scientists with great professional qualifications, capable of handling important scientific and technological tasks; leading experts, reputable intellectuals with achievements in key industries and areas; strategic advisory agencies”.

4.1.2. Second, the legal basis

Regarding the development of educating and training talented individuals. Some important documents on educational development such as: Education development strategy, issued together with Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg dated 13 June 2012 of the

Prime Minister; The project “Building a learning society for the period 2012–2020” was approved by the Prime Minister on 9 January 2013; The project “Promoting the lifelong learning movement in families, clans, and communities until 2020” was approved by the Prime Minister on 20 February 2014.

On 3 June 2020, Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister on approving the “National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, orientation to 2030” emphasized: “Research models of education, training, formation of Vietnamese people in the new era as social subjects, with comprehensive development, imbued with humanity and good cultural values, with expertise, skills, creativity and innovation to meet the increasing requirements of promoting industrialization towards modernity in the context of international integration”. Currently, the viewpoint on educational development in Vietnam is aimed toward developing the potential of learners, which not only provides knowledge but also educates and trains learners comprehensively in terms of capacity, quality, skills, creativity and innovation. At the same time, innovate the education system towards being more “open”, lifelong learning and building a “learning society” to gradually meet the requirements of perfecting and establishing a socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam.

Regarding the matter of attracting and appreciating talented individuals. Currently, the State promulgates quite synchronous and unified legal documents on attracting and appreciating talented individuals. Specifically, the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants 2008 (amended and supplemented in 2019) sets out a policy to discover, attract, foster, utilize and adequately reward talented individuals, prioritize the selection of talented individuals and assign the Government to prescribe a policy framework to utilize and reward talented individuals in public service activities (Article 6, Clause 4 Article 38). The Law on Public Employees 2010 (amended and supplemented in 2019) also recognizes the policy in building and developing public service units and public employees: “Discover, attract, foster, utilize and adequately reward talented individuals to improve the quality of service to the people” (Article 10). The Government also issued Decree No. 140/2017/ND-CP, dated 5 December 2017 (Decree No. 140) on policies to attract and employ staff from exemplary graduates and scientific staff. Especially, on 31 July 2023, the Prime Minister approved the National Strategy on attracting and utilizing talented individuals to 2030, vision to 2050, with the goal of establishing and effectively implementing strong and groundbreaking policies, solutions to attract and utilize talented individuals. In particular, the Strategy emphasizes a group of tasks and breakthrough solutions in training and fostering talented individuals. In general, the Party and State have made many decisions to expand the forms of attracting and appreciating talents and specific remuneration policies based on work performance for talented individuals.

4.1.3. Third, the practical basis

In the context of international integration and the fourth industrial revolution, attracting talented individuals has become an important task for many countries and organizations. One of the important solutions is to create a favorable environment to attract and retain talent from around the world. This includes establishing a flexible migration policy that meets the needs of talented individuals who want to contribute to their host countries. To attract talent in the current context, countries need to set

up a modern science and technology infrastructure, provide innovative research and development opportunities, as well as create favorable working conditions for talented individuals. International cooperation in the field of education and research is also an important factor to attract talents and promote development. Countries that want to attract talented individuals need to create: An open, welcoming environment for foreigners; ensure international talented individuals are protected and have a safe and fair working environment; ensure international talented individuals with opportunities to develop their careers, including promotion and study opportunities.

There have been many studies showing the organic relationship between talented individual, science and technology, innovation, and the country’s economic development speed. Derivative growth theory points out three factors that govern economic growth, including labor force, capital, and technology, in which technology plays a key role. Endogenous growth theory emphasizes that highly qualified human resources are the most important factor contributing to the economic growth of economies, which requires innovative and creative technology. Wherever can attracts more talented individuals, that place will have more development strength. Vietnam highly values the role of talented individuals and has implemented many policies to attract and utilize them. However, according to statistics from the Ministry of Education and Training, the number of universities, higher educational institutions remained almost unchanged in the 2016–2020 period; while the number of university students had the tendency to decrease in 2018 and 2019; and only increased slightly in 2020 (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Statistics of universities, higher educational institutions in Vietnam (2016–2020).

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. of School	235	236	237	237	241
No. of University Students	1,767,879	1,707,025	1,526,111	1,672,881	1,905,956
No. of Master’s Students	105,801	106,567	97,134	94,920	103,833
No. of PhD Students	13,587	14,686	11,000	11,054	12,112

The data does not include universities and academies in the security and national defense sector; Source: Data was compiled by the author according to statistics of the ministry of education and training.

Table 2. Workers aged 15 years and older with a university degree (2017–2022).

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total labor force	20.9	21.6	22	22.8	24.05	26.12	26.44
Labor force with elementary education	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.71	6.76	7.13
Labor force with intermediate education	5.3	5.3	5.2	4.7	4.4	4.11	3.72
Labor force with junior college education	3.2	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.82	3.57	3.72
Labor force with university education or higher	9.2	9.5	9.5	10.6	11.12	11.67	11.87

The data does not include universities and academies in the security and national defense sector; Unit: Thousand people, Source: Data was compiled by the author according to statistics of the ministry of education and training.

The proportion of workers with a university degree or higher increases gradually in the period 2017–2022, accounting for 9.5% to 11.87% of the total number of workers (see **Table 2**).

Besides that, the structure, quantity, and quality of the intellectual are not sufficient, there is a shortage of leading experts in key areas; favorable environment has not been created to encourage the intellectual to proactively research and apply science and technology, impart knowledge, advise and provide social criticism (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023). In general, Vietnam’s competitiveness index of talented individuals has improved in the past few years but still has many limitations. According to the world’s assessment of the Global Talent Competitiveness Index in 2021–2023, when compared over the short period of 2016–2018 and 2019–2021, Vietnam’s Global Talent Competitiveness Index remained unchanged at the 84th position (INSEAD, 2021) but when considered over a longer period, Vietnam had made some progress and was ranked 85th (during the 2013–2018 period) and moved up to the 80th (during the 2019–2023 period) (INSEAD, 2023) Regarding the component indexes, it is worth noting that most of the Indexes change in a positive direction, but the Talent Attraction Index in 2023 dropped 15 ranks (compared to 2022) (INSEAD, 2022), especially the Talent Retention Index is always ranked lowest among the indexes (See **Table 3**).

Table 3. Vietnam’s Global Talent Competitiveness Index (2021–2023).

Rank	Total score	Talent Attraction Index	Talent Development Index	Vocational and Technical Skill Index	Talent Retention Index
2021	82	95	65	80	94
2022	74	57	67	65	95
2023	75	72	55	71	98

Source: The author’s statistics are based on The Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2021–2023.

Another issue that needs further attention is how to attract foreign scientists to Vietnam to improve Vietnam’s Science-Technology-Innovation capacity, creating opportunities for domestic scientists to integrate with international STI activities. According to a survey on Science-Technology-Innovation of leaders in charge of operations of public units and businesses (500 questionnaires were distributed, 302 responses were received, reaching a rate of 60.4%), surveyed opinions believed that policies need to be more opened to attract foreign researchers, including: Programs to encourage scientists of Vietnamese origin to return to Vietnam (accounting for the highest percentage, 60.93%); Jobs for international researchers at universities or state research institutes (ranked second, accounting for 56.95%); Increase business opportunities for startups by foreign researchers (ranked third, accounting for 51%); Scholarships/grants for international students/scholars working in Vietnam (ranked fourth, accounting for 36.42%) (See **Table 4**).

Table 4. Main forms of research and technological infrastructure need to be open up to foreign researchers.

Main forms of research and technological infrastructure need to be open up to foreign researchers	No. of answers/Rating
Scholarships/grants for international students/scholars working in Vietnam	110 (36.42%)
Jobs for international researchers at universities or state research institutes	172 (56.95%)
Programs to encourage scientists of Vietnamese origin to return to Vietnam	184 (60.93%)
Increase business opportunities for startups by foreign researchers	154 (51%)

Source: Survey results and analysis of project KX.01/16-20 (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2019).

In recent times, Vietnam’s actions to train, discover, attract, utilize and appreciate of talented individuals have not yet met the policy requirements and goals and have not brought results in any practical way; Current legal regulations have not fully and synchronously institutionalized the Party’s policies on attracting and appreciating talented individuals, do not cover all the contents that need to be institutionalized, and lack specificity and clarity (Minh and Thuy, 2022). Recruiting talented individuals, especially in the public sector, still consists of many difficulties: The technology to assess, identify and evaluate talented individuals is hardly developed; The exam questions cannot evaluate the candidate’s true abilities. Also, the public sector still faces challenges in attracting and retaining talented individuals. Compare to the world, competition between the public and private sectors in attracting talent is even more fierce. Attracting and appreciating talented individuals still has some limitations and has not been as effective as expected. The main reasons for this are: All three main factors to attract and appreciate talented individuals (Income treatment; Creative working environment; Honoring talent) still have many shortcomings; There are no appropriate mechanisms and policies to attract talented individuals to perform civil service activities and provide public services; There are no legal documents detailing and guiding the implementation; the institutionalization of policies implementation is unsynchronized, with few breakthroughs, heavily depending on the capabilities of each ministry, sector and locality; The policies mainly attract people with advanced degrees (Tu, 2023). Job placement is not appropriate; promotion opportunities are limited, income and remuneration are not satisfactory; the working environment and conditions are not attractive enough, material remuneration policies are still low compared to the social standards; places in need of talents have not been proactively involved in the process of attracting, recruiting, and negotiating contract conditions and working conditions with experts and scientists (Son, 2023). These are the difficulties and obstacles in attracting human resources in ministries, branches and localities. The method of obtaining votes of confidence as a basis for promoting cadres, civil servants, and public employees is not really appropriate as it does not encourage the improvement of professional qualifications through the act of winning the hearts of the masses and building relationships (Dung, 2021). Answering the author’s question about “The current situation of attracting and retaining talents at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences?”, Assoc. Prof. Ta Minh Tuan (Vice President of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences) shared about the difficulties in attracting and retaining talents for basic science research in the area of social sciences because of the

lack of competitiveness with universities, ministries, sectors and enterprises outside the public sector. Mr. Tuan emphasized the importance of attracting and retaining talents in science research, and concurrently, the need to pay attention to attracting and retaining talents in the management and administration of science and technology organizations: “It is vital to have several “specific” and “outstanding” mechanisms and policies in recruiting, using and managing people with outstanding capacity and specific achievements in science research and innovation together with talents in management and administration of science and technology organizations”.

4.2. Main focus of the solution to improve quality, create breakthroughs in training and fostering talented individuals to meet the requirements of developing science, technology and innovation in Vietnam in the new context

4.2.1. First, identify the concept of “talented individual” and develop criteria to determine “talented individual”

First of all, it is necessary to clearly define the criteria to identify “talented individual”. There is a research (Trung, 2019). presenting that there are two major, prominent perspectives on talented individual. The first perspective evaluates talented individual as a whole person, and according to which, a talented individual must be a person who has both virtue and talent. Leaders such as Ho Chi Minh, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping all believed that a talented individual must have both virtue and talent. This perspective inherits from Asian moral values, thus, the charisma of an individual, especially a leader, depends not only on talent but also on personal prestige (formed based on one’s personal ethics and personality). However, in the current context of increasing specialization, each area has its own characteristics, and it is difficult to have talent in all areas. Many ideas believe that it is necessary to specify the criteria of “talent” and “virtue” according to the requirements of each area. The second perspective evaluates talented individual in a highly specialized context, according to which a “talented individual” is a person with outstanding ability in each area and has the ability to make a relatively large contribution to society. A person with only outstanding abilities in each area is not yet considered a talented individual. To be recognized as a talented individual, one must have a certain degree of talent that can make a relatively large contribution to society when given the right conditions. However, “talented individual” from this perspective is someone who has outstanding ability in an area, and thus, they must have been recognized for their talent. Therefore, from this point of view, the concept of “talented individual” is incomplete when it does not include “undiscovered talented individual”. The third perspective evaluates talented individual from both the perspective of capacity and ability to contribute. According to which, a “talented individual” must be a person with extraordinary professional qualifications (a leading expert, famous scientist, person with special talents) in a certain human community, with the ability to make a real contribution to the development of that community (Thang, 2023). A person with a high level of commitment (sense of responsibility, willingness to work) and a resolve to dedicate to the community will be able to contribute to the development of that community. These are also important requirements for the “virtue” of talented individual. In addition, the

ability to contribute also depends on many other factors (environment, working conditions; creativity; ability to work in groups...). However, there are also sentiments that the sign of “high professional qualifications” in the above concept is unclear, does not clearly show the “level” of qualifications for a person to be considered a talented individual, and does not demonstrate the “degree” of talent.

To discover, foster, utilize and manage talented individuals, it is necessary to classify different types of talents. The classification can be according to the nature of the profession, such as: politics, military, economic management, science and technology, culture and art; or according to the level of contribution, such as general talents (talented individuals with great contributions to society), distinguished talents (talented individuals with epochal contributions). If classified by management level, there are decision-making talents, executive talents, and management talents. Classified by level of contribution and influence, there are macro-level talents, meso-level talents, and micro-level talents.

In recent modern research on “talented individual” from the perspective of science of human resource, the 3C talent theory (Talent = Competence × Commitment × Contribution) of Professor Dave Ulrich (University of Michigan—USA) is being widely applied around the world, and has proven to be quite useful for organizations in discovering “competent individual”, thereby fostering and refining them to become “talented individual”, resulting in high value to the organization and society. As pointed out by Professor Dave Ulrich, talented individual in the new era must include these characteristics: (1) Competence (having knowledge, skills and values suitable for the current job and future development trends); (2) Commitment (having the will to work, the readiness to work); (3) Contribution (effort and initiative in developing one’s own knowledge and work skills; understanding the purpose of one’s work and taking pride in the opportunity to contribute). In the “3C theory” above, the three variables are connected together exponentially, not additively. If one variable is missing, the remaining two variables cannot replace it (Trung, 2019). One who is competence but lacks the commitment to work or does not have the spirit of contribution cannot be considered a talented individual.

Attracting talented individuals becomes a real competition in the knowledge economy, especially when the fourth industrial revolution is rapidly taking place. Based on needs, each business group, community or country will target its own talent groups. It is necessary to realize that, in an increasingly specialized society, there cannot be a talented individual for all areas. Each business, ministry, industry or country (collectively referred to as a human community) can determine the level of talent that needs to be attracted based on the community’s ability to utilize, appreciate it and the abilities of the talented individual can contribute to the development of that community. Competition for talented individual is becoming increasingly fierce, not limited within the border of each nations but taking place globally. The objects of competition to attract talented individuals between countries in the knowledge economy are not people with mediocre talents or those who are “widely knowledgeable, with the understanding of the past and present” nor knowledgeable about “thousands of books” (who have ample theoretical knowledge), but outstanding innovative talented individuals, with the ability to solve problems and make creative decisions in constantly changing circumstances. It is the innovative talent of

administrators and executives that may enhance the competitiveness of the economy (Hung, 2016). Talented individuals also exist in different areas: Talents in scientific research (social sciences, humanities; natural sciences); Talents in science, engineering and technology development; Innovative talents (in agriculture; in industry, construction, transportation; in service industries). For sustainable development, countries need to develop synchronously, interdisciplinary, with a focus on social sciences and humanities, natural sciences, science, technology and engineering and innovation.

Therefore, we believe that: “A talented individual is someone who has the ability to work at an outstanding level and has the ability to create real development for the community”. There are many ways to classify talent based on different criteria. But not all talented individuals are “geniuses” (people with outstanding abilities). Talented individuals in general must have the ability to work beyond the normal level. Not only must they contribute to the development of the community but they also have to create real development for the community. Policies and laws on talented individuals should not only be aimed at the talented but also towards people with the potential to become a talented individual. This is also a suitable perspective to approach talented individuals, including a series of activities such as finding, fostering, training, attracting, developing, retaining, utilizing and appreciating talented individuals.

It is important to illustrate the standards and criteria to determine a talented individual, including criteria to determine outstanding working capacity and the ability to create real development for the community. Regarding the identification of talented individuals, we need to comprehensively research the following groups of criteria: (1) Achievements in research and innovation (based on prestigious awards and titles that the person has received in the field of research; Quantity and quality of patents; quantity and uniqueness of innovative products and services); (2) Innovative and creative thinking for complex problems; (3) Profound knowledge and expertise that heighten the understanding of important issues and produce quality contributions; (4) Influence and reputation in the academic community (based on the number of articles published in prestigious journals and the level of citation of these articles; the level of participation and contribution of that person to important and influential research projects; the level of interaction, collaboration and contribution to the formation of a positive research environment); (5) Ability to guide and support the development of young human resources and create a positive impact in the community. In particular, the assessment of profound knowledge and expertise can be based on criteria (Sy, 2021) such as: people with diplomas (valedictorians, individuals educated by high-ranking schools domestically or abroad...); people with academic titles and degrees (doctorates, associate professors, professors); people with outstanding achievements (national and international medals)... However, the criteria to evaluate talented individuals need to be substantive, not too focused on qualifications, but need to properly evaluate intellectual capacity, practical capacity, work performance and outstanding ethical qualities.

In addition, the criteria to determine talented individuals can be changed appropriately according to each group of talented individuals or people with exceptional potential, such as: (i) Group of students with the ability or potential to become innovative creative talented individuals; (ii) People with academic degrees

(master, doctorates) and academic titles (professor, associate professor) whose research projects are recognized and applied effectively in practice; (iii) Group of talented leaders, managers, and entrepreneurs; (iv) Groups of intellectuals, experts, and scientists from abroad; (v) Group of exceptionally potential people with outstanding abilities and excellent results in labor and production. The criteria to determine talent may vary depending on each specific field.

4.2.2. Second, innovate the way of thinking and awareness of policies towards talented individuals

Clearly define the purpose of the policy to train, foster, attract and appreciate talented individuals is to create a favorable environment to help optimize the personal development of talented individuals, create conditions for each person to manifest their full potential, and make the most of the potential of talented individual in society; to ensure that potential and talented individuals are trained and developed in a sustainable way, meeting future challenges and opportunities. It can be seen that paying special attention to strategies involving talented individual to build a high-quality workforce for the country in the medium, long-term and immediate vision is a trend taking place in many developed countries around the world such as the US, Japan, Singapore (Hien and Nguyen, 2023). Talented individuals training is one of the steps in the talent creation chain, from: (1) Discovering people with the potential to become talented individuals; (2) Select potential people for training; (3) Develop talent training programs tailor to the circumstances, requirements, and subjects; (4) Develop teaching staff to meet the requirements for training talented individuals; (5) Have appropriate and effective training methods; (6) Have suitable training infrastructures... It is necessary to accurately assess the competence, commitment and contribution of each candidate to detect the right person with the potential to become a talented individual. The process of training and evaluating talents also needs to focus on all three characteristics of competence, commitment and contribution of each talented individuals. On the other hand, it should be noted that countries should not only aim to train a group of talented individuals, but more importantly, to create a favorable social environment that is the driving force for innovative talents to want live and contribute.

Regarding measures to foster, utilize, attract, appreciate and retain talented individuals. To develop and effectively utilize talent resources, Vietnam needs to prioritize investing in fostering sources of talented individuals and people with potential; establishing a talent market and reasonable circulation of talented individuals; adjust the talent structure appropriately between areas and regions in accordance with the country's socio-economic development strategy. In the public sector, utilizing talented individuals is inseparable from building a mechanism to evaluate and carefully foster talented individuals. By building a talent market, this will encourage the free movement of talented individuals on the basis of law, create competition between talented individuals, and promote socio-economic development. To properly circulate talent and adjust the talent structure between key areas and regions in accordance with the country's socio-economic development strategy, the State needs to manage and macro-regulate the talent market. Talent attraction policies need to be based on the needs of the locality, industry, area and current pool of

available talented individuals so that the structure of the talent pool reaches an optimal state.

Countries often do not rely on one method of attracting and appreciating talented individuals through “extraordinary” remuneration policies, but often employ many policies and measures to develop and utilize high-quality human resources, including talented individuals and people with potential. Through researches on the practice of attracting, utilizing and retaining talent in Vietnam in recent times and experience from China (Thuy and Thu, 2022), Korea (Hung, 2015), Singapore (Chien and Manh, 2022). Vietnam needs to focus on synchronously implementing the following measures to attract, utilize and retain talent: (i) Devise attractive programs to attract international experts to work in research organizations, universities and businesses; (ii) Create a favorable working and living environment for talented individuals (including policies on tax, social security, family support and quality of life); (iii) Set up a technology and knowledge transfer program from foreign researchers and experts to domestic businesses and organizations; (iv) Establish an international cooperation network to connect with experts, universities and research organizations abroad; (v) Develop policies to create attractive jobs and career opportunities for researchers and experts.

4.2.3. Third, establish institutions to encourage the introduction and promotion of talented individuals, ensuring openness, transparency and democracy in the introduction, recommendation and recognition of talented individuals

This is one of the breakthrough tasks and solutions to implement the National Strategy on attracting and utilizing talented individuals until 2030, vision to 2050. It is necessary to set up clear rules and regulations on the solutions to find potential talented individuals, especially solutions to introduce, recommend and recognize talented individuals (criteria, talent selection and recognition process). All individuals and organizations have the opportunity to participate in the talents introduction and promotion process. Also, by publicly publishing information about positions, job requirements, evaluation processes and selection criteria helps everyone know about the opportunities and talents introduction and recommendation processes. Standards and criteria for identifying talented individuals and potential people must be methodical, ensuring accurate assessment of each candidate’s competence, commitment and contribution to detect the right person with the potential to become a talented individual. The talent assessment and selection process must be based on specific data and information, ensuring the candidate review process is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Furthermore, creating a mechanism to evaluate and monitor the process of introducing and recommending talents as well as a mechanism to correct if there are errors or irregularities during this process is also necessary.

5. Conclusion

The article discusses the concept of talent and its elements in the context of international integration as well as science and technology having developed at a high level. Talents are not only people having the ability to work at an outstanding level, but also ones being able to create the community’s real development. Accordingly, the criteria for determining talents in the current context include a group of criteria determining the outstanding working capacity and a group of criteria determining the

ability to create real development of the community where that person works. The criteria for identifying talents can be changed appropriately according to each group of talents or potential people, and may differ depending on each specific field.

Vietnam highly values the role of talented individuals and has implemented many policies to attract and utilize them. However, training, discovering, attracting, appreciating and rewarding talented individuals in Vietnam still does not meet the requirements nor brings practical results in any practical way. To improve the quality and create breakthroughs in training and fostering talents, Vietnam first needs to clearly identify the concept of “talent” and develop specific criteria for identifying “talents” in accordance with the new context. Policies for talents in Vietnam need developing comprehensively, including: Policies to encourage introducing and promoting talents, recognizing/evaluating talents and mechanisms to remedy errors in the introduction and promotion of talents; Policies on training and fostering talents; Policies on building an ecosystem of employing, remunerating, retaining talents and promoting talents creative capacity in accordance with current Vietnamese conditions.

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