

The Development of the Food and Beverage Management Departments in Vocational High Schools in Vietnam

Chiu-Heng Du

Department of Industrial Technology Education,
National Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan

Shi-Jer Lou

National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan
lou@npust.edu.tw (Corresponding Author)

ABSTRACT. *This study aims to conduct an analysis of the development and general conditions of the Food and Beverage Management Department in Vietnam's Vocational High Schools. From the analysis of this particular department and its general education introduction, the content goes in three main directions, including "concept acknowledgement, technical skills and intuition" are to be pursued as targets. Researchers conducted the analysis by delving into the department's four main issues, such as limited funds, massive requirements for equipment, insufficiency in professional and qualified teacher numbers and challenging student management. Food and Beverage Management courses should set to train students to actively adjust self-role and integrate the department's specific work ethics in class discussion while leading students to work with their professional techniques and concept acknowledgement. Necessary course counseling teachers must be independently arranged and be responsible for relevant issues.*

Keywords: *Food and Beverage Management Department, vocational high school,*

I. Introduction of General Education in Vietnam

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam, the area is 331,689 Km² as the world's 58th largest country. Three quarters of the country's land is mountain area. Vietnam links to Mainland China in the north and connects to Laos and Cambodia. The border line is 3,730 Km² in total. Vietnamese population is approximately 93 million people. Vietnam is a socialism country which equipped its central government units in North Vietnam, Hanoi.

Since Vietnam was once a Chinese territory, most of the culture and traditional festivals are similar. Although the main language in Vietnam is Vietnamese, other languages such as Chinese, Tibetan, and Tai Languages, also influence the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese language is deeply affected by Chinese, hence the massive similarity between the two languages. However, Vietnam was also colonized by the French, therefore French was once used broadly in the nation.

The usage of language at that time was to write Chinese by Pinyin, resulting later on the Vietnamese people's incapability of writing Chinese characters, however, some major French customs and culture are still well-reserved in Vietnam.

The Communist Party of Vietnam is the only one government power, according to the country's current constitution, the top legislative body is the National Assembly. Underneath is the National Assembly Committee. A conference is held once every month. The highest institute is Cabinet which is led by the premiere with four vice premiers and 25 ministers.

Vietnam's economics has been greatly influenced by an elongated war history in the past which severely damaged its industrial facilities, high ways and bridge systems. After the unification, Vietnam remains in poverty until now after the foreign economic blockage and inaccurate country policy was implemented. The outcome led Vietnam to continuously face economic stagnation, agriculture production decrease and inflation increase. To improve the economic conditions, Vietnam has been implementing economic revolution since 1986. In recent years, the obtainment of international support and the gradual stream of massive foreign capital started to shed light on Vietnam and its economics began to develop properly.

Before Russia was disintegrated, many Vietnamese people went to Russia to study for both countries manifested socialism. After the economic revolution, its government designated to broaden various directions in education. The Ministry Of Education enforced schools on setting up Russian and English-learning courses to impel university students to change their conventional aspirations from previously medical studies, pharmaceutical studies or technical studies to now more popular departments such as English, information technology, economics and law. English has become the most popular language to learn and more people are planning to attend Western countries for further study.

The enrollment ratio of education is 92% in Vietnam, the education fund is 12% of the total national budget. Each village is equipped with one elementary school and each community contains a junior high school and a senior high school in every district. Vietnam is a country that is influenced by the Confucian culture for a long time. It emphasizes very much on pre-working training education. The literacy rate has reached 88.6%. Due to education system being widened for the revolutionary requirement, system and content have also been changed. To raise university educational levels, the government has integrated universities and colleges to form the National Hanoi University, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, and other regional universities in Hue, Da Nang, and Thai Nguyen.

The Ministry of Education is mainly responsible for school establishment, teacher regulations, training schedule and courses, examination regulations, and ink authorization process of diploma documents. All the Master and PhD diplomas in Vietnam are issued by the head of Minister of Education; whereas the diplomas below university are issued by school principles.

The Minister of Education and Training (hereafter MOET) includes Secondary Technical and

Vocational Educational Departments. The purposes of these two departments as positions are to be responsible for technical education and to train each level from elementary schools to high schools. Each level can also be indicated as semi-technical and technical. Bridging the junior high school education and vocational education is one of the Vietnamese government's important policies – to solidly link graduate students from junior or senior high school to the vocational education system for further education.

Until 2000, there were 285 secondary technical schools and 127 vocational schools in Vietnam. Both contain courses including health, education, economics, industry, agriculture, forest and service educational contents (which 70 professional courses have been established and more than 200 industries were covered).

Below the description is to state the education year duration and school system (the education of Vietnamese education system chart, please refer to diagram 1):

- (1) Mandatory education: mandatory education refers to children aged from 6 to 15 years old, including primary school (age 6 to 11), 5 years in total; lower secondary school (age 11 to 15), 4 years in total. A certificate of lower secondary school will be received after graduation.
- (2) Technical secondary school is for young people age from 12 to 15 years old, 3 years in total.
- (3) Upper secondary school is for people age 15 to 18 years old, 3 years in total. Candidates must pass the Graduation diplomas High School Examination to receive qualification to enter university.
- (4) Post-secondary studies are for non-university level which inclines toward technical/vocational type of education, which are usually provided by colleges or community universities, technical course duration can be either 1 to 3 and a half years.
- (5) Higher Education: Higher Education belongs directly to MOET and the system mechanism includes: specialized colleges, community universities, junior colleges, open universities and universities. For general universities, the study duration is 4 years; 5 years for engineering major study and 6 years for medical study. There are also master and doctorate degree courses in universities.
- (6) Teacher education is normally situated and trained in universities for 4 to 5 years.
- (7) Non-official Education includes long-distance higher education, non-official higher education and lifetime learning education, etc.

To understand the system from Graph 1, “543” is the school system in Vietnam for young people aged from 6 to 18 years old. MOET is the authority for the higher education in Vietnam. According to MOET data, the enrollment ratio of education is 92% in Vietnam, education expenses are 12% of the total national budget. Each village is equipped with one elementary school and each community contains a junior high school and a senior high school in every district. In a 1998 statistics showed higher education contained 716,839 students in 126 universities and colleges; there

were 1,621 high schools which contained 1,390,206 students, and 5,252,144 students in 8,367 junior high schools in Vietnam (as Diagram 1 indicated).

Table 1 School and Student Number Chart for Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools and Partial Higher Education Schools

Year	Junior		Senior		Higher Education	
	School	Student	School	Student	School	Student
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
1942	65	16,700	3	652		
1945-1995	7,600	3,100,000	1,200	724,000		
1996-1997	8,158	4,860,709	1,402	1,175,530		
1997-1998	8,367	5,252,144	1,621	1,390,206	126	716,839

Data source : Vietnam education and training directory (p.264),
by MOET,2000a, ,Hanoi, Vietnam: Education Publishing House .

II. The Food and Beverage Management Education Target in Vietnam Vocational Schools

Food and Beverage Management education aims to cultivate relevant business operation skills and primary level management talents. New courses were designed mainly to raise students' interests and requirements, with the intention to student training and to develop their senses to concept acknowledgement, technical skills and intuition, here are the potential implementations for the three targeting directions (MOET, 2006):

The target concept:

- (1) To fulfill the new food and beverage department courses and strengthen professional knowledge.
- (2) To cultivate food and beverage preparation techniques and understand basic levels of management knowledge in service.
- (3) To encourage students to pursue further education and raise their interests and ability for building a lifetime learning concept.

Targeting technical skills:

- (1) To teach food and beverage preparation, service knowledge and technical practice.
- (2) To enable students to plan activity and design abilities, to develop diversity in talent.
- (3) To cultivate students computer skills and to help students adapt to future social development

Intuition target:

- (1) To develop the virtue of maintaining one's honor, credibility, diligence and highly passionate work ethics.
- (2) To develop food and beverage server's work morality and humanity accomplishment.
- (3) To emphasize higher skills in virtue and righteous education concepts and spirit.

- (4) To exalt food and beverage art and to add glory to its senses of knowledge and fun.

III. The Current Status Quo in Vocational School Food and Beverage Management Department

As the industry and commerce's rapid growth and economic development, society's style has changed from an agrarian society to an industrial and commercial society. With the raise of the public's living standards and national income, women began to shift the main focus from staying at home solely to participate in the work field, hence dinning out has increased within the population. For the food and beverage business operation in equipment and management directions, computerized systems have replaced a greater part of the conventional labor power system. The scale of business has changed from a family-operated to an enterprise operation. Marketing perspectives have become international and management has upgraded from institutionalized management to human-based management (Ruan, 2008) .

The speedy economic growth in Vietnam has also promoted and developed the food and beverage business in tourism. Relevant vocational training and education have also formed a trend, and via this training, required talents can be cultivated for the business market. Tran (2009) points out that most of the teachers, students and business operators reckon more similar departments ought to be added in shcools, and most of the business runners think subjects related to food and beverage departments ought to be increased to meet the society's requirements to provide the manpower in need. By receiving related education in schools, more talent can upgrade the quality regarding food and beverage service.

According to MOET's statistic, in a research dated from 2007 to 2011 school year concerning vocational school's department increase and decline condition, future departments for cultivating potential teacher teams can be determined by three standards: classes that entail the increasing ratio within the top 10% and increased more than 10 classes each time, but still maintain growth or do not decrease. The top three departments were the Data Processing Department, the Food and Beverage Management Department, and the Automotive Mechanics Department. Followed by the Advertising Design Department, the Tourism Department, the Applied Foreign Languages Department and the Early Childhood Nursery and the Education Department. This is to show that the Food and Beverage Management Department is highly important in the vocational education in Vietnam. Table 2 shows that it is understood that the class and student numbers of this department have maintained an ongoing increase from 2007 to 2011 school year, especially after the 2007 school year, the increasing speed is averagely 30 to 40 classes per school year, hence the department has become the most attention-received and well-accepted one. As to the gender of students, male students have surpassed females in 2008. As Chinese slang "gentleman should stay away from the kitchen" which hinds the traditional male chauvinism that man should not be involved in cooking, has broken its taboo. The male generation nowadays has not opposed to choose to study in the Food and Beverage

Management Department, this phenomenon is evident by the over-whelming male population of kitchen staff in hotels

Table 2 Most recent 5 years class and student numbers in vocational schools in Vietnam

School Year	Class	Student Numbers		
		Total	Male	Female
2007	160	7.977	3.791	4.186
2008	195	9.751	5.062	4.689
2009	259	12.947	7.042	5.905
2010	291	14.519	7.954	6.565
2011	317	15.826	8.655	7.171

Data Source : Vietnam MOET (2007~2011)

Nguyen (2011) discusses the current status of all the Food and Beverage Management Departments in vocational schools, and points out that despite the established time of this particular department was significantly short, the increase of relevant classes and students formed a great potential in this genre. In addition to the requirement for professional food and beverage talents, the basic level serving staff is still the most ardent one, therefore for vocational food and beverage education training, there is yet a grand space for future development. However, research also discovered several difficulties that schools are facing while implementing relevant education, including limited funds, massive requirements for equipment, insufficiency in professional and qualified teacher numbers, and challenging student management.

The food and beverage education shows the lack of qualified teacher's prerequisite and quantity. Lin (2006), points out in her research that the most crucial aspect that needs to be fulfilled and improved is teacher qualification. According to Vietnam MOET regulation documents, statistics showed that in high schools, the standard of each teacher ought to be responsible for 20 students, however, in reality, one teacher needs to take care of 38 students, far more than the regulated number. The fact shows the ratio of qualified teachers in need and students are highly contrasted and the lack of the teachers in numbers. Furthermore, as to the teacher training program, Vietnam has not yet established a training target for developing food and beverage management teachers, therefore the teaching staff comes from other departments such as the Tourism Department, the Home Economics Department and the Department of Applied Living, etc.

To analyze domestic teacher qualifications, teachers can be qualified with high school teachers after receiving university or master's degrees and completing the education credits. These terms can simply be considered as beneficial terms but for an outstanding and experienced teacher, more are to

be acquired. As the rapid increase of the Food and Beverage Management Department, students maintain, a teacher may need to teach multiple courses, and cannot focus on its own professional teaching. This issue influences directly to the disadvantage that vocational students have confronted with a leakage and disconnection between school learning and employment requirement.

In the research that Le conducted in 2011, only 23.8% of teachers who passed teacher qualifications in the Food and Beverage Management Department in vocational schools in Vietnam. A Vietnam Education Report in 2010 discovered that 31.2% of the teachers in Hanoi vocational schools qualified with certificates, this leads to greater responsibility and overtime working for the teachers and created enormous pressure for them. The most desired mechanism for the Food and Beverage Management Department teachers to attend further education are practical workshops or intelligent seminars which are held by relevant industry institutions. In other words, professional events that are held in hotels and conducted by either master chefs or people in management level. Not only teachers are able to obtain more teaching experience but also can be involved with a practical experience exchange. However, general hotels regard these types of workshops or seminars as a direct effect on the general business operation, therefore, general willingness of holding this kind of cooperation is low.

Chau (2009) suggested that the discovery of how food and beverage managers consider the most important requirement as work capabilities for students in relevant departments to aim for: the ability of showing professionalism, the maintaining of well-constructed relationships with customers and to reach professional and objective standards at work. Interpersonal relationships and leadership can be more emphasized afterwards. General vocational schools expect students to learn the entire techniques and theories within the span of three years' study in order to adapt to current society's working requirements. However, the content of the course may be too deep and the scale of its coverage may be too broad. The outcome of these conditions combined together leads to insufficiency of student's learning after all. Too many theories and explanations could overlook student's skill development. As a result, the fundamental professional skills cannot be fully acquired by the students to meet the industry's expectations and requirements. Vũ points out business operators feel satisfied about how the students present at work and praise them for their good-learning attitudes. However, to vocational school's three years target, some teachers held their skepticism and remain doubting the impropriety.

Truong & Nguyen (2011) suggested that the important degree for graduate students is multistage and the order should be: food and beverage practice, work ethics and capability, service and techniques, preparation skills for beverage, mixed-drinks and food. MOET conducted a study in 2006 specifically aimed at the important skills that food and beverage business institutions regard students to be fully-equipped: firstly, the ability of communication; secondly, the knowledge and capability of professionalism and thirdly the language ability. According to Phong (2005), in a sample questionnaire test regarding the opinions that business runners have toward students from

either related department and non-food and beverage management departments, research showed most unsatisfied aspects can be the lack of package selling technique (including meal assembly, order meal mechanism, knowledge to sell, poor training in ordering service, insufficient ability of communication in foreign languages, lack of experience in solving customer complaints and the ability to deal with emergency issues.

IV. Food and Beverage Management Course related researches in Vocational Schools

1. Food and Beverage Management Course

(1) Tourism practice and service, beverage and mix-drinks preparation, bar tending, Chinese culinary cooking, Chinese snacks preparation, Western snacks preparation, Baking, Western culinary cooking, vegetable and fruit carving, cake decorating, original culinary creation and banquet culinary courses.

(2) Theories such as the general tourism studies, the hotel management studies, the food and beverage management studies, the travel practical affair studies, the beverage studies and the food studies.

(3) Language Information courses such as Tourism English conversation, French conversation, computer concepts, data processing and applied calculation, etc.

(4) Business practice courses such as elementary accounting, salesperson techniques, marketing and international protocol training, etc. (For more detailed course content please refer to Table 3).

2. Teaching attraction

(1) To enhance student's cooking ability, baking, western snack preparation and service practice and technique by hiring master chefs in culinary-teaching and pass down practical experience so students can apply at schools when learning and adapt quickly at work for a smoother entry in the business world.

(2) Students can aim for their most interesting and broadened learning scales such as original culinary cooking, banquet food practice, western culinary cooking, original western snack cooking and Japanese conversation to develop their personal techniques if schools provide diverse select courses.

(3) To cooperate with famous hotels and urge business and school propaganda: to work with hotels for practical experience by constructing workshops and build cooperating programs with business institutions for future preparation.

(4) To solidify student's basic ground for further education: to set up theory classes such as mathematics, food and beverage management, hotel management so students can be equipped with well-organized thinking and planning abilities and secure the ability of further education.

3. Future development

- (1) Further education: through recommendation in selection and unit registration to enter university, higher and secondary tourism management departments, hotel management departments, food and beverage management departments and tourism operation management departments.
- (2) For future employment: food and beverage service, small-scale self-employed business, hotel and traveling business, travel guide and tour people, etc.

Table 3 The Courses of the Food and Beverage Management Department

Serial NO.	Course	Credit	Category
I.	General education knowledges	39	Basic education courses
II.	Professional education knowledges	111	
II.1	Basic knowledges	18	
	Microeconomics, economic and law studies, management studies	10	Basic professional courses
	Applied business information studies, economic and mathematics studies	8	Information techniques
II.2	Knowledge (including:professional subjects)	80	
II.2.1	Knowledge	18	
	Marketing studies, quality control studies, business statistics studies	9	Basic professional courses
	Accounting studies, finance and credit studies	6	Basic Financial affairs and accounting
	Information management system studies	3	Information techniques
II.2.2	Professional Knowledge	47	
	Professional Languages (English or French)	6	Applied Foregin Languages Department
	Manu studies, product and nutrition physiology studies, professional culinary studies	27	Culinary art
	Culinary process control studies, theory professional cooking	14	Culinary art
II.2.3	Complementary Knowledge	15	
	Travelling general studies, travelling psychology studies, general travelling adaptation and formation studies	7	Basic professional courses
	Culture and delicacy studies	4	Culinary art
	Safty and environment studies, theory	4	Restaurants

restaurant affair studies			
II.3	Internship	5	
Practical training programs and reports			
II.4	Graduation Test	8	
	inary process control management	4	Writing test
	essional culinary	4	Internship test
	Basic principles of Marxism	Fail/Pass	Writing test
III.	Total	150	

Source: The 2011 school year course list of the Food and Beverage Management Department by MOET in Vietnam

V. Conclusion

Entering the 21st century, the higher food and beverage management system in Vietnamese society is facing impacts such as fast-growing technology, complicated and diverse social condition, conventional industries migrated, and the school age population downsizing drastically. How to adjust to cope with the change and to develop skillful man power to adapt to market requirements are now what higher food and beverage management education should be contemplating seriously. Future food and beverage management education ought to conceptualize the idea of “refinement” and replace the old upgrade and expansion notions.

The Food and Beverage Management in Vietnam need to cultivate more related practical skills and to be infused with modern business knowledge, to better adapt to global trends and the upgrade of domestic dieting quality. The Food and Beverage Management Department in Vietnam has rapidly developed and grown. Not only do the schools introduce new courses, the teachers also provide excellent, professional, and newly-equipped learning environment for students to practice apart from teaching students the fundamental food and beverage preparation knowledge. Individual techniques are carefully passed down by teachers’ dedicated teaching methods with love and well-organized teaching plans. School teachers should induce students to a professional realm and to hope for them to “achieve when learning, adapt to one’s talent”, to become excellent figures in society, and to fight for honor and add glory to the spirit of this department’s students.

References

- Chau, T. M. N. (2009). *Research and development of food products for guests staying at the guest house*, Hue university of Tourism Faculty.
- Lin, M. L. (2006). *The Study of International Tourist Hotel Employee Professional Skills*, Dissertation, Tainan University of Technology, Taiwan.

- Le, V. H. (2011). *Measures to manage school teachers in Ha Dong city basis to enhance the quality of teaching in the current period*, Dissertation, Ha Noi Pedagogical University, VietNam.
- Nguyen, T. Q. N. (2011). *Management measures developed in school teaching staff*, Dissertation, Ha Noi Pedagogical University, VietNam.
- MOET.(2000a). *In 2002 international conference amongst the southeastern Asian countries on technological and vocational education(p.16)*, Hanoi, Vietnam, Education Publishing House.
- Phong, D. (2005). *Some measures to manage training programs contribute to improving the quality of learning and teaching college at the College of Tourism in Hanoi*.
- Tran, N. D. (2011). *Measures to manage teaching activities to improve the quality of vocational training* , Thesis, Nam Dinh University, Viet Nam.
- Truong Thi, D., & Nguyen Phuong, T. (2011). *Managing service quality restaurants in the first six months of operation - Researchers at Hanoi restaurant hexa Club*, Dissertation , Business and Tourism in Hanoi University.
- Vu, T. P. (2011). *Forty years of scientific research in service training of university archives and graduate of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Ha Noi Social Sciences and Humanities University.