# ความร่วมมือด้านการศึกษาและการฝึกอบรมในโลกร่วมสมัย: กรณีศึกษาความร่วมมือด้านการศึกษาและฝึกอบรมของเวียดนาม-ออสเตรเลีย (พ.ศ. 2552 - พ.ศ. 2564)

# Educational and Training Cooperation in the Contemporary World: A Case Study of Vietnamese-Australian Educational and Training Cooperation (2009 - 2021)

Ha Trieu Huy[1]

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**บทคัดย่อ**

บทความนี้ศึกษาความสำเร็จของเวียดนาม-ออสเตรเลียในความร่วมมือด้านการศึกษาและการฝึกอบรม ซึ่งเป็นหุ้นส่วนความร่วมมือนับตั้งแต่ปี 2009 ผู้เขียนได้ใช้แนวคิดพื้นฐานของแนวคิดเสรีนิยม การทูตสาธารณะ และอำนาจละมุน โดยใช้วิธีการทั้งเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพในรายงานวิจัยนี้ ผลการวิจัยพบความสำเร็จที่โดดเด่นของความร่วมมือด้านการศึกษาและการฝึกอบรมระหว่างเวียดนาม-ออสเตรเลีย ได้ลงนามในคำอวยพรและบันทึกข้อตกลง ตลอดจนจำนวนนักศึกษาเวียดนามที่เพิ่มขึ้นตลอดจนการสร้างสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกของออสเตรเลียในเวียดนามและออสเตรเลีย การทำงานของรัฐบาลออสเตรเลียและองค์กรไม่แสวงหาผลกำไรช่วยกระชับความสัมพันธ์ทวิภาคีและทำให้เกิดการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่สำคัญในลำดับชั้นการศึกษาของเวียดนามทุกระดับ ในอนาคต บทบาทที่ปฏิเสธไม่ได้ของแนวคิดเสรีนิยมและการทูตสาธารณะ มีแนวโน้มที่จะกระตุ้นความร่วมมือด้านการศึกษาระหว่างเวียดนาม-

[1] Faculty of History, University of Social sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City, Email: Hatrieuhuy97@gmail.com

ออสเตรเลียอย่างต่อเนื่องมากขึ้นเรื่อย ๆ ดังนั้น บทความนี้จึงคาดการณ์ถึงโอกาสของความสัมพันธ์นี้และให้คำแนะนำแก่ทั้งเวียดนามและออสเตรเลียในการดำเนินการความสัมพันธ์นี้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

**คำสำคัญ:** ความร่วมมือด้านการศึกษาและการฝึกอบรมเวียดนาม-ออสเตรเลีย เสรีนิยม อำนาจละมุน การทูตสาธารณะ

**Abstract**

This article examined the accomplishments of Vietnam and Australia in educational and training cooperation since their comprehensive partnership began in 2009. The author applied the fundamental rules of Liberalism, public diplomacy, and soft power, while using both quantitative and qualitative methods to deal with the issues addressed in this research paper. The findings revealed that the prominent achievements of the Vietnamese-Australian educational and training cooperation have been signed wishes and memoranda, the increasing number of Vietnamese students in Australia, and the rapid expansion of Australia's facilities in Vietnam and Australia. The allocations of the Australian Government and non-profit organizations have strengthened bilateral relations and have produced significant changes in all levels of the Vietnamese education hierarchy. In the future, the undeniable role of Liberalism and Public Diplomacy is likely to stimulate Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation more and more intensively. Therefore, this paper also anticipates this relationship's prospects and proposes some suggestions for both Vietnam and Australia to conduct this relationship more effectively.

**Keywords:** Educational and training cooperation, Vietnam-Australia, Liberalism, Soft power, Public diplomacy

## Introduction

Educational and training cooperation is an inevitable trend in contemporary international relations in the context of globalization and worldwide cooperation. Vietnam and Australia are not exceptional. Vietnam-Australia bilateral diplomacy originated from the convergence of their national interests in the context of globalization. The deep integration of Vietnam and the extensive involvement of Australia in Southeast Asia resulted in the "Comprehensive Partnership" of this relation in 2009. This event was a turning point that accelerated educational cooperation between Vietnam and Australia. Since Strategic Partnership in 2018, educational and training cooperation has been tightened and gained predominant achievements to motivate national education of Vietnam and the index of Australian soft power in the world.

Specifically, education plays a vital role in improving the quality of human resources. With the inception of *Doi Moi*, Vietnam embarked on extensive educational cooperation with Western countries and capitalist countries in different regions of the world. The objective of Vietnam was to approach their educational advancements in pedagogical and assessment methods and modern educational mechanisms. This policy directly contributed to the success of *Doi Moi* and international integration in Vietnam. The 10$^{th}$ Congress of Vietnam Communist Party (2006) put stress on the importance of education, training, and scientific technology. It is supposed that education was a driving force for Vietnam's Industrialization and Modernization (Vietnam Communist Party, 2007: 278). This viewpoint was continuously reasserted in the 11$^{th}$ Congress of Vietnam Communist Party (Vietnam Communist

Party, 2013: 313) and the party opined that education would promote well-qualified human resources and satisfy the demands of the fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration (Vietnam Communist Party, 2021: 136). The necessity of education encouraged Vietnam to seek both copious aid and foreign investments for intensive training courses and educational renovations.

Meanwhile, the educational cooperation of Australia in international relations depends on Australia's notion of soft power. Educational cooperation is one of the objectives in the Public Diplomacy Strategy 2014-2016 of Australia. This plan aims to invigorate Australia's effects, reputation, and international relations by boosting a transparent, creative, and self-assured vision for Australia's international policies, reflecting their national interests, and improving domestic affairs. It also underlines that education assets go with public diplomacy's economic, creative, cultural, and sporting values. Most importantly, the pivot region in this policy is Indo-Pacific, including Vietnam (Australian Government, 2014). Besides, Australia issued National Strategies for international education until 2025. It stated that education export is a part of soft power to facilitate mobilization for students, teachers, and lecturers. There are three pillars of this policy: (1) Reinforce educational principles of Australian education to bring the best experiences for learners; (2) Boost national cooperation, international cooperation, and sustainable development in linking alumni and their mobilization; (3) Boost global competition for Australia's educational services and expand the market of international education (Department of Education and Training (DET), 2016). Moreover, the Australian Government stated that Southeast Asia is located in a nexus of strategic competition in the Asia-Pacific Ocean. It concentrates on the relationship with ASEAN so as to make forums for peace, stability, and prosperity (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 43). It intends to

unceasingly build on extensive fields with ASEAN countries, mainly educational and people-to-people links (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 44).

Generally, the clash of developing education and rising soft power becomes a critical factor in linking Vietnam with Australia in a long-term cooperative relationship that contributes to significantly improving Vietnamese education and indirectly diffuses Vietnamese values to the international community. Therefore, researching Vietnam-Australia's educational cooperation is committed to strengthening this relationship and sharing mutual values for both countries, promoting soft power, and reciprocally gaining national interests in the upcoming years.

**Literature Review**

Vietnam and Australia's educational cooperation is not a novel academic topic. Thang Manh Tran and Dorian Stoilescu published a scholarly paper titled “An Analysis of the Content, Policies, and Assessment of ICT Curricula in the Final Years of Secondary schooling in Australia and Vietnam: A Comparative Educational Study” in the Journal of Information Technology Education (Thang and Stoilescu, 2016). This paper examines the effectiveness of the ICT program in evaluation for students at secondary school and analyzes advantages and disadvantages in the application of Vietnam and Australia to propose some recommendations for both country’s education. Despite having an approach of education studies, this research contributed to suggesting the author’s research paper to scrutinize Australia’s experiences of improving Vietnamese education. Meanwhile, Zachary Abuza soon generalized the initial achievements of Vietnam in educational reform via international approaches to capitalist countries by an article named “The Politics of Educational Diplomacy in

Vietnam: Educational Exchanges under Doi Moi". The author appreciated the fundamental change in the Vietnamese leaders' outlook to willingly absorb the educational progression of the Western countries (Abuza, 1996). Zachary cited a typical example of the US-Vietnam Educational Diplomacy as the starting point of Vietnam's educational and open-door policy after 1995. The reliance on the first case study of US-Vietnam educational cooperation makes the author of this research paper wish to employ the research methods and results of Abuze to study educational diplomacy between Vietnam and Australia. This is a typical work-related to initial norms of soft power and educational cooperation.

Besides, the article *Overseas students: immigration policy changes 1997–2015* written by Harriet Spinks, gave a better understanding concerning the Australian Department of Education and Training's switching policies on immigration with Vietnamese students studying abroad as well as international students from 1997 to 2015. It can be said that the policy modification was substantial due to promoting the rapid growth of foreign student education in Australia. It has constantly been striving to benefit from educational diplomacy to boost its value of soft power thanks to diaspora policy. The study has given us a synopsis of Australia's immigration programs, especially the positive modifications in attracting international students from Vietnam for an international course (Australia Parliament House, 2016). Likewise, *Education Policy Outlook: Australia,* published in 2013 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in June 2013, presented the most comprehensive and clear presentation of the Australian Government's effective policies. The author analyzes the rationality and quality of education in Australia compared to other countries globally, the vision and educational equipment for Australian students in

education, and the potential labor market. Furthermore, the document mentioned policies to raise awareness for national education, such as improving schools, a friendly environment, fostering leaders and teachers, and focusing on school assessment and evaluation. In addition, the document also clearly shows the strict, systematic, and scientific management of Australia's education policy (Organization for Economic Co-operation, 2013).

Recently, Vietnamese researchers have paid their scholarly attention to this research topic. Initially, Nguyen Ho Phuong Chi – a Vietnamese student at the RMIT University in Australia, provided her practical experiences to readers via a research paper "Absorbing Australia Culture through the Exchange Program at RMIT International University in Vietnam". Chi outlines a case study of Vietnamese students following an exchange student course in Australia. She indicates that learning in Australia helped Vietnamese students improve their English proficiency and enhance individuals' personal growth. Simultaneously, the author assumed that Vietnamese students confronted cultural sensitivity, discrimination, fear, and academic apprehension in their course (Nguyen Ho Phuong Chi, 2013). Eventually, she suggested that exchange program arrangement and more experiences sharing on pre-departure orientations are crucial for educators and teachers to equip their potential exchange students with necessary skills prior to their matter-of-fact experiences in their course. Personally, this research paper clearly examines the benefits and difficulties of Vietnamese students in Australian education. The down-to-earth experiences are strong evidence to evaluate all aspects of Vietnam-Australian educational and training cooperation, and this research paper primarily depends on Chi's findings to make accurate suggestions for this relation. In the meantime, Dao Thi Thu Giang

underscored the role of higher education in Australia- Vietnam education collaboration impacts: a case study in Foreign Trade University. The author perused the Foreign Trade University (FTU)- a typical example of international cooperation and modern higher education in training high-quality human resources for Vietnam. She supposed that international collaboration with students and teaching staff resulted in the achievement of the FTU vision and strategy. Australia collaborations with FTU have had a wide range of positive social impacts in Vietnam through scholarships, international conferences and exchanges, and research collaboration, and then there are four key arguments to discuss the role of Australia in Vietnam. First, it is the Australian Government's aid program (AusAID). Second, opportunities in partnership and exchange scholarships are major drivers for Vietnamese students, and it is Vietnam's recognition of the advancement of Australia. Last, educational cooperation is likely to make a linkage with economic investments (Dao, 2013). A case study of Giang contributed to raising pivotal issues of Vietnam-Australia educational and training cooperation in the future. Significantly, the undeniable role of Australia's scholarship and investments are expected to make a major alternation for the national education of Vietnam.

In general, an academic overview of this field provided a scholarly significance to this research paper in light of their diverse approaches and professional analysis on Vietnam- Australia educational and training cooperation. Primarily, it should be appreciated that Vietnamese students' experience contributed to elucidating Australian education's effectiveness and making accurate assessments regarding Vietnam-Australia cooperation. Meanwhile, the other works initially referred to this relation, and authors anticipated the potentials of

Vietnam in educational integration in regional and international environment after its Doi Moi. However, few works depend on methodological approaches and research methods of international relations. Moreover, it is questionable that both Vietnam and Australia gained new educational accomplishments in their new situation of bilateral relations. While Vietnam is expected to maintain the stability of its foreign policies, Australia also intends to raise their voice in regional affairs of Southeast Asia as well as tie its relations to members of ASEAN. Thereby, the objectives of this paper are to provide new evaluations of this educational cooperation via objective data and foresee future and scenarios of this topic in the future.

## Methodology and Research Methods

### 1) Methodology

This research paper has compliance with the fundamental principles of Liberalism in international relations. While Realists obstinately assumed that power and balance power play a vital role in the international environment, Liberalists, by contrast, strongly underline the role of international cooperation or collaboration in the new context of international relations (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012: 129). It is possible that a Post-Cold War world with its characteristics is likely to gain its national interests through soft power and negotiations. This theory also raises the value of nongovernmental, transnational organizations in world politics. Meanwhile, Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry denoted three elements of liberal world order. They highlighted that the liberal international order is international norms. Liberal norms favor international cooperation, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law (Meiser, 2018: 3). The essence of a government is more democratic than

the previous government in the post-cold war context. The majority of countries in the world are recommended to adopt the new tendencies of the war, including bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to make a direction for economic well-being and political stability. Simultaneously, liberalists made an attempt to explain the role of private groups, organizations, and arrangements to advance their social and political goals (Moravcsik, 1997: 7). It is considered that this theory has a strong correlation with the role of public diplomacy in modern diplomacy of the world while widely recognizing key roles of nongovernmental organizations and individual interests in international relations.

Particularly, Mark Leonard stated that public diplomacy involves a much broader group of people on both sides and a broader set of interests beyond the Government of the day. It is based on the premise that a country's image and reputation are public goods that create an enabling or disabling environment for individual transactions (Leonard, 2002: 8-9). It is indicated that public diplomacy contributed to fulfilling all missions of national diplomacy through the voice of the NGOs and people. It is evident that these factors have an avidity to reassert their role in the international environment. The proliferation of NGOs results in the widespread promotion of national values to other countries, and the nation is likely to gain national interests by virtue of this channel. Meanwhile, European Parliament Preparatory Action believed that "Public Diplomacy refers to the process whereby a country [or an entity] seeks to build trust and understanding by engaging with a broader foreign public beyond the governmental relations that, customarily, have been the focus of diplomatic effort." (European Parliament Preparatory Action "Culture in EU External Relations", 2014). This viewpoint appreciates the role of public diplomacy because it supposed that all countries could

expand their international relations as well as generate a mutual understanding. In the Cold War phase, public diplomacy was unproductive in international relations due to different political viewpoints like a repercussion of realists. Resultantly, it might be difficult for a nation to comprehend the opponent's political scheme. Thus, war and conflicts are inevitable outcomes. The role of public diplomacy under the influence of Liberalists contributed to potential concording conflicts and building mutual fidelity in international relations, mainly in the context of globalization and developmental cooperation. Eventually, Joseph Nye created a notion of soft power. This definition may clarify and typify the role of Liberalism and Public diplomacy in the contemporary world. He supposes that a country can obtain the results it hopes in world politics because other countries can appreciate their values, set them an example, aspire to its level of wealth and openness-want to follow it (Nye, 2004: 175). By this method, the Government can apply its soft power to achieve its goals through educational cooperation. Through aiding the source of scholarships for students, governments can promote the pre-eminent power of education. Nye appreciated soft power's critical role because it can attract other actors to reach acquiescence (Nye, 2004: 6). Compared to hard power, soft power does not coerce people into mandatory regulations or tied agreements.

Educational and training cooperation is a category of public diplomacy, while this cooperation is still a hybrid method that combines state diplomacy with public diplomacy and soft power under the influence of Liberalism. All nations participate in the international milieu to seek their own national interests via bilateral and multilateral relations. While developing countries depend on their integration to encourage developed countries to allocate money for educational

renovations and educational quality enhancement, developed countries take advantage of this opportunity to promote their advancements and achievements to improve their position in the international environment. Obviously, it is a specific reaction in a clash of harmonious interests.

**2) Research methods**

Liberalism and definitions of public diplomacy and soft power are the critical theoretical framework of this research paper. Specifically, Liberalism is the best guide for this research paper, while knowledge of public diplomacy and soft power has a solid link to this theory. It is clear that most researchers made a strenuous attempt to explain Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation based on this theory. Thereby, the author of this paper would like to take advantage of its benefit to meticulously examine this relation's achievements and prospects comprehensively.

This research paper analyzes the achievements of Vietnam-Australia educational and training cooperation via qualitative and quantitative methods, though the author is prone to qualitative methods to deal with all issues of this paper. The qualitative method is applicable for educational accomplishments contingent on accurate data of Vietnam and Australia to examine educational accomplishments between Vietnam and Australia. The data source is gathered from the Department of Education and Training (DET). This official annually updates the number of overseas students, so this source is reliable for this research paper. The author conducts choosing a sample, collecting data, and analyzing data to find results precisely. In the meantime, the qualitative method is dedicated to analyzing events and assessing them based on foreign policies and their role in bilateral relations. Thus, the

author generalizes the main features of the bilateral relation and makes a projection for its prospects in the future.

**Research results**

Education and remain a prominent area of bilateral cooperation, and it results in warming the entire relationship. Consequently, Vietnam pursues a hedging strategy to maximize its benefits by expanding further cooperation with Australia to bolster the economic well-being and aim at a long-term partnership in all fields of bilateral cooperation. Two nations proclaimed the Viet Nam-Australia Comprehensive Partnership in 2009. It is found that there are three key accomplishments in this relation: the wishes and memorandum regarding education and the increasing number of students, as well as the mushrooming of Australia's educational facilities in Vietnam.

**1) Wishes and memorandums**

In the new context, education and training are interested and considered as a driving force for the two countries relations. In the "Declaration of Comprehensive Partnership between Vietnam and Australia" in 2009, the keyword "education" was mentioned six times. It is indicated that education is a central issue between Vietnam and Australia. On 7 September 2009, Deputy Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam Pham Vu Luan bilaterally met with leaders of the Australian Ministry of Education, Employment and Professional Relations to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in education.

Meanwhile, Vietnam allowed Australia to construct educational buildings, officials, language centers in Vietnam via a project named *"Teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education*

*system for the period 2008-2020"*. This plan is expected to standardize the quality of linguistic education and English language proficiency of Vietnamese students. In October 2010, Vietnam and Australia officially signed *Vietnam – Australia Action Plan in the period of 2010-2013*. This event indicates that Vietnam paid much attention to Australian investments in education for Vietnam, and this country was looking forward to intensive cooperation to make a rational change in its private education. So far in 2011, the establishment of *Vietnam - Australia Joint Working Group on Education and Training* in Canberra 2011 remarked a great stride in this relation. Both countries defined that vocational education, higher education, kindergarten education, educational policies, and standardized diplomas are key fields of educational cooperation (Vietnam - Australia Joint Working Group on Education and Training, 2011). Obviously, the generosity of Australia offered Vietnam a comprehensive education, primarily in incidental fields of Vietnam, such as higher education and vocational training.

In 2013, the New South Wales State Department of Community Education, Ho Chi Minh City Department of Education and Training and EMG Education Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in college and professional training for students, teachers, and administrative officials (Mien, 2013). Australia put stress on improving the quality of vocational training in Vietnam and developing a network of colleges and professional secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City. On the occasion of the 40$^{th}$ anniversary of diplomatic relations, they sanctioned a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation in education and training on 24 October 2013. It was believed that this wish would contribute to strengthening and tightening the relationship to gain a mutual understanding.

The memorandum has been continuously extensive through deepening previous wishes between the Ministry of Community Education and Training, State of New South Wales, Ho Chi Minh City Department of Education and Training and EMG Education in the course of a Vietnam prime minister's visit to Australia in 2015. Australia acquired to support Vietnam with universal assessment standards, assessment standards, and English language training. Simultaneously, Vietnam and Australia stimulated information exchanges on education and training programs between Ho Chi Minh City and New South Wales to develop vocational training courses and higher education. It is implied that there is a harmonious linkage between the role of state and local authority in order to address unexpected obstacles of Vietnamese education through both state and public diplomacy. Ho Chi Minh City is known as a very modern city of Vietnam, a pioneer in economy and education. Thereby, the educational cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and the states of Australia can be seen as a typical example for other cities to emulate these achievements.

In 2018, the situation of Vietnam-Australia was thriving and gaining “Strategic Partnership”. According to James E. Henderson, it can be understood that In a strategic partnership, the partners remain independent; share the benefits from, risks in and control over joint actions; and make ongoing contributions in strategic areas (Henderson, 2014). In this case study, the approach of Australia is prone to Vietnam’s market and defense in an alliance to deter the power of China’s soft power in Southeast Asia. On this opportunity, Vietnam would like to benefit from Australia's involvement in regional issues to make a close connection with educational cooperation and training. Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Malcolm Turnbull officially signed a Memorandum between Vietnam and

Australia. This paper highlighted encouraging cooperation on improving teacher quality and curriculum development via Australian providers. Simultaneously, Australia came to an agreement for encouraging institutional collaboration in English language training development, mostly was Academic English for tertiary education. Besides, Australia promised to share its experiences and keep in contact with public and private universities and colleges of Vietnam in getting access to education technology, policy, and governance (The Government of Australia, 2018: 2). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia actively encouraged distance learning and online training course for Vietnamese students. In 2020, Vietnam and Australia held a broad discussion about online education September 2020 to assist potential Vietnamese students soon approaching Australian education in light of global disruption to the education sector (RMIT University, 2021). Australia contributed to offering its international leadership in education to Vietnam's young people and lifelong learners in the situation of digital transformation of education. It is assessed that the program of Australian online education is an optimal method to avoid an inevitable disruption in Vietnam-Australia liaison in education. Accordingly, the educational market of Australia is expected to remain stable as well as Vietnamese students still have an opportunity to get Australian education without any restrictions.

**2) The increase of Vietnamese students in Australia and the mushrooming of Australia's educational facilities in Vietnam**

First and foremost, the increasing number of Vietnamese students in Australia is an optimistic reaction of Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation. The registration of the Vietnamese for training courses of Australia demonstrated that Australia earned an impressive revenue via

this source. Likewise, the promotion of Australian education made its index of soft power move to the ladder throughout those years. All data below is displayed for Vietnamese students in total number, vocational and tertiary education, respectively.

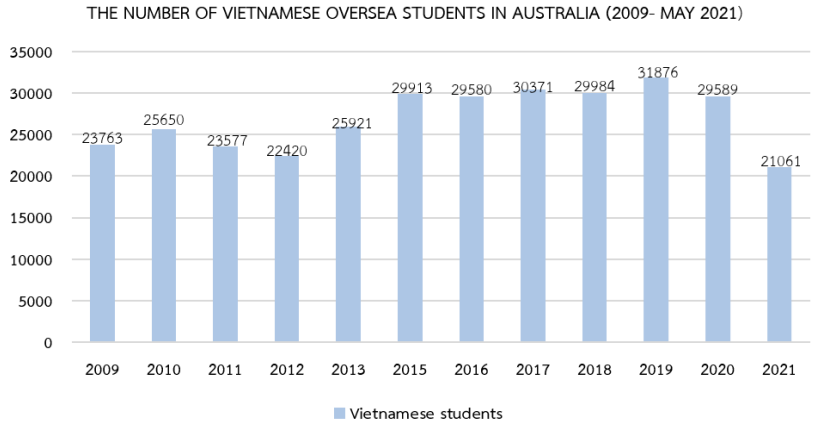



**Figure 1**: The number of Vietnamese overseas students in Australia (2009- May 2021)
*(Department of Education, International students data 2021, 2021)*

According to Figure 1, the number of Vietnamese overseas students in Australia witnessed an upward trend over ten years from 2009 to 2019. It peaked at 31,876 Vietnamese students in 2019 despite the fact that this figure experienced a slight decline in 2019-2021 due to the severe global pandemic. Despite a volatile phase, this number significantly soared compared to 335 Vietnamese students in Colombo programs in 1975. It is indicated that the policy of Australia was highly influential in order to appeal to Vietnamese overseas students for a rewarding experience in Australian education. Simultaneously, this figure is a predictable corollary while Vietnam and Australia continuously

signed wishes and official memorandums to tie their educational cooperation from 2009 to the present. It reveals that the Vietnam government attempted for their citizens to access the benefits of modern education. Accordingly, it implies that the expansion of Australian education notified a rising appearance of Australian soft power in Southeast Asia and Vietnam is a typical example.

More notably, Vietnam ranked fourth position in the top countries whose students followed an international course in Australia. The table below unveils this statement.

**Table 1**: Top countries in overseas students in Australia (until December 2020) *(Department of Education, International students data 2021, 2021)*

| Rank | Nationality | Number of overseas students |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | China | 182.163 |
| 2. | India | 118.981 |
| 3. | Nepal | 57.644 |
| 4. | Vietnam | 29.589 |
| 5. | Brazil | 25.350 |
| 6. | Malaysia | 21.545 |
| 7. | South Korea | 19.424 |
| 8. | Indonesia | 17.969 |
| 9. | Thailand | 17.118 |
| 10. | Hong Kong | 12.736 |

Based on this table, China is the leading country with the highest number of overseas students, ranked at 182.163. Meanwhile, Vietnam follows India and Nepal in educational opportunities in Australia. It points out that the number of Vietnamese students is significantly increasing in the overseas student community in Australia. On the other hand, it is

evident that the Vietnamese and Australian governments are conforming to articles of signed wishes and memorandums in their bilateral cooperation. Also, the rising number of Vietnamese students in Australia facilitated the growing cultural values of the Vietnamese community in Australia. It is a crux to promote the role of Vietnam's soft power in Australia.

In addition, Vietnamese students are fully cognizant of the advantages of Australian education's hierarchy. Resultantly, numerous primary and secondary school students participate in Australian education. The chart below illustrates this fact.

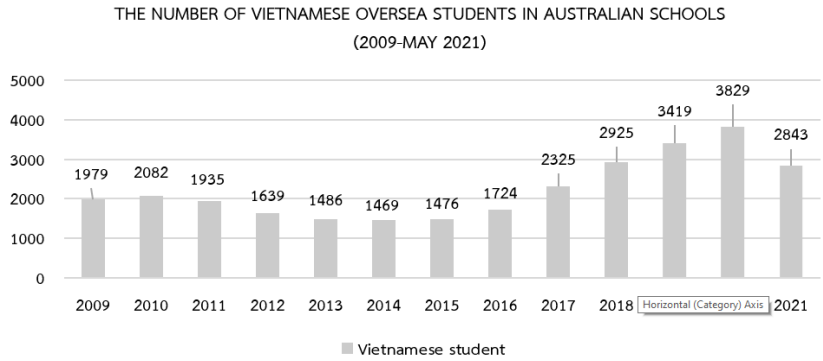



**Figure 2:** The number of Vietnamese overseas students in Australian schools (2009-May 2021) *(Department of Education, International students data 2021, 2021)*

Figure 2 proves there is a considerable increase in the number of Vietnamese overseas students in Australian schools. In 2009, the number was 1979 people, but it substantially augmented and peaked at 3829 students in 2020 despite an uneven period. Significantly, the number from 2015 to 2020 reveals a growth trend owing to the

tightening Strategic Partnership relation between Vietnam and Australia. Although educational cooperation in primary, secondary, and high school is not a pivotal scheme of this relation, it makes evidence that Vietnamese students gave their full credence to outstanding advancements in Australian education. The early participation of Vietnamese children and teenagers in Australia's educational hierarchy helped them enroll in tertiary education and became the potential high-quality resource for Vietnam.

In the meantime, the central objective of Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation is higher education and vocational education. In fact, the majority of the Vietnamese made enormous efforts to be entered a university in Vietnam. It is a critical policy of the Vietnam government to improve the quality of human resources and create a driving force for economic thriving and well-being. Australian leaders might be fully aware of this demand, so policymakers accelerated the implementation of policy in order to offer Vietnamese students' educational opportunities. Initially, Australia built some large-scale English Academic Language to assist the Vietnamese to improve their language proficiency. This is a fundamental method to crack all language barriers and open the door to Australian education for Vietnamese students. Likewise, Australia applied its educational paradigm in Vietnam through *RMIT University* and the *University of Queensland* in Vietnam to bring Vietnamese students to Australian higher education in the absence of expense preoccupation. Moreover, an opulent source of annual scholarships granted by Australia Awards offering hundreds of opportunities for excellent and middle-income students. The kindness of Australia reveals that it is making smooth path for Vietnamese students to receive exceptional Australian education. The chart below proves that

tertiary and vocational education of Australia generated opportunities for individuals to approach them.

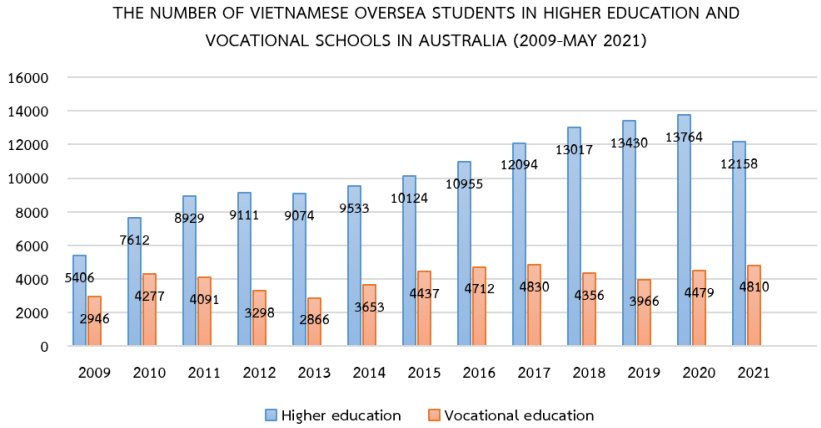



**Figure 3:** The number of Vietnamese overseas students in higher education and vocational schools in Australia (2009-May 2021) *(Department of Education, International students data 2021, 2021)*

According to Figure 3, the number of higher education and vocational students expressively increased from 2009 to 2021. The number of higher education reached its highest point at 13,764 students in 2020. This evidence verified that Vietnam and Australia had augmented their engagements in the sphere of education since their Strategic Partnership. Additionally, the figure for vocational students gradually rose, from 2946 students in 2009 and peaked at 4810 students in 2021. It divulges that Australian vocational education established a close link with Vietnamese students. Besides, Australia also provided educational assistance through twelve vocational-education textbooks given for Vietnam, and this program is being applied in 25 high-quality

vocational schools nationwide. Some facilities in Vietnam, such as the University of Industry in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, College of Eastern Asia in Danang, were in collaboration with Australian vocational schools to educate Vietnamese students (Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs, 2013). Australian students have started to select Vietnam for their internship via New Colombo Plan. It is estimated that 674 Australian students came to Vietnam in 2019, and this figure is 3609 in total in the period of 2015-2019 (Department of Education, 2020). This is an ideal occasion to exchange knowledge, experiences, and cultural values between Vietnamese students and Australian communities.

Furthermore, the expanding Australian school in Vietnam made accurate proof of Australia's involvement in the Vietnamese education hierarchy. Evidently, Australia aided in establishing various private schools in Vietnam. This Australia's valuable support was likely to satisfy the demands of a rapidly expanding global training market. For instance, Western Australia School System (WASS) is a well-known Australian education system in Vietnam. Its training quality is highly appreciated, and its curriculum is worldwide recognized. Alumni are likely to win a chance to learn overseas after their graduation in Vietnam. Besides, WASS provides a creative and active learning environment for students. Simultaneously, it contributes to buttressing a well-rounded foundation of knowledge for students to develop throughout their training comprehensively. Besides, the *Vietnam Australia International School system* (VAS), established in 2004, is a very well-known Australian school system in Vietnam. It contains a wide range of training programs for students in all levels of pre-higher education. This system is committed to training more than 8500 Vietnamese students from kindergarten to Grade 12 and possessing eight campuses in Ho Chi Minh City (VAS, n.d.).

This school principally focuses on improving the quality of instructors by multi-requirements in communication, collaboration, pedagogical methods substantiated on Australia's standards. The core-curriculum subjects are yearly updated in teaching content, which conveniently adapts new knowledge experiences of Vietnamese students. By early 2020, 3,624 local students had been learning at Australian schools in Vietnam, which increased up to 17.1% compared to 2019 (Department of Education, 2020). There were three types of curriculum they experienced in their courses: South Australia Certificate of Education, Western Australian Certificate of Education, and Victorian Certificate of Education. Accordingly, Vietnamese students own various selections for their learning objectives. Also, the objective of Australia-Vietnam private schools is to introduce bilingual education to Vietnamese students. These schools promoted Foreign Language Projects for Vietnamese students, and it considerably supported Vietnamese students for an extraordinary improvement in English proficiency through their academic performance and extra-curricular activities. From 2016 to 2018, there were 16 linked schools established between Vietnam and Australia (Department of Education, 2020). This system contributed to privatizing public schools in Vietnam and facilitating the Vietnamese students' desire for international education.

## Discussion

In the context of globalization, the majority of leaders in the world are inclined to Liberalism, which is an effective technique for foreign policymakers to make a healthy competition in international relations. The rise of China and the appearance of the US in Southeast Asia is leading Australia to a scheme of expansion to restrain the power

of the US and China and spread its value in this region. In this case study, the rapid growth of Vietnam economy stimulated this country to seek educational opportunities to train a generation of high-quality human resources. Meanwhile, Australia is expected to depend on the advantages of education diplomacy to promote its power and position in international relations. Specifically, the Australian government supposed that "Our commitment to education, training and research exchanges will remain central to Australia's soft power. These exchanges build influence and strengthen people-to-people links and mutual understanding. Australia will continue to welcome hundreds of thousands of international students to our shores (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 111) while Vietnam has profoundly integrated into regions and intends to take a big push in all diplomatic relations. It is indicated that both countries have a joint vision statement of multiple spheres, yet educational cooperation is the most prominent field in the future.

Vietnam and the Australian government have a penchant for Liberalism and reinforce the role of public diplomacy and soft power in the future. Particularly for Vietnam, this country especially lays great emphasis on public diplomacy as one of the three pillars of national diplomacy. Despite not forming a norm of Vietnam soft power, it intends to build fundamental principles of Vietnam’s soft power in the upcoming years (Vietnam Communist Party, 2021: 163). Meanwhile, Australia proclaimed that The Government is committed to marketing our commercial, educational and cultural credentials. This government intends to develop a more robust national brand that reinforces its reputation as a quality education provider internationally competitive investment destination. (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 110). A deficiency of human resources for a sparsely populated country like

Australia is explainable. Quite the opposite, Vietnam is an overpopulated country, which is likely to become a potential labor market for Australia. Hence, Vietnam is expected to benefit from Australia's investments and opportunities of the Australian Government's scholarship source, included Australia Awards, Endeavor Scholarships, Fellowships, and Endeavor Mobility Grants. Also, this country is expected to facilitate Australian private schools with equal national education and keep people-to-people contacts through educational and cultural exchanges.

In addition, Vietnam should raise its deep concern about public diplomacy, primarily in higher education. The collaboration of Vietnam and Australian universities should be strengthened in the following year. In the research of Dao Thi Thu Giang, the author supposed that the Australian Government's aid program (AusAID) plays a vital role in Vietnam's awareness and recognition (Dao Thi Thu Giang, 2013: 4). Likewise, Australians stated in the Foreign affairs White paper that "Our flexible vocational and higher education pathways help Australians develop skills to find jobs and opportunities in changing workplaces (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 55)." As a result, it is suggested that Vietnam effectively tie Australia's educational aid, not only is the source of scholarship but also conducting other educational projects in the level of public diplomacy in cooperation among both countries' universities. For example, Vietnam and Australia are reciprocally implementing Aus4Skills for Vietnamese students in the mountainous region of Vietnam. This program aims at mountainous universities of Vietnam and improving human resource quality in impoverished areas.

However, it is crucial that Vietnam issue rigorous regulations for Vietnamese students to serve their country after graduation to avoid a brain drain problem. Consequently, Vietnam can allocate Australia's aid

in revamping facilities, hiring well-qualified lecturers, and reforming the curriculum attached to the practicality. Through Australia's scholarship, Vietnam should have a strong synergy with Australia in spurring students to select Australia for their careers. Also, it should offer governmental scholarships for Australian students to follow an exchange course in Vietnam. It is an optimal method to promote the cultural and historical values of Vietnam and its soft power. In the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Vietnam and Australia can spread shared experiences in online education and distance learning. It is the best way to foster cross-educational exchange during the pandemic and avoid educational disruptions for both countries.

While vocational training may become a pivotal issue of Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation, Australia proclaimed that "Our support for vocational education and training, including the Australia-Pacific Technical College and universities in the region, and scholarships for study in Australia, will have a sharper focus on preparing graduates for employment and community engagement (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 103)." Accordingly, the vocational school system in Vietnam should effectively exploit Australian-based training methods in education. The type of training should be varied: full-time, part-time, second degree, distance learning. Owing to Australia's experience, the Vietnam university system should make an attempt to cooperate with Australia for career-orientation programs, job fairs, and professional consultants. Australia supposed that "We will continue to deliver our distinctive model of education that connects early vocational education and training to ensure that domestic and international students obtain a world-class education and student experience. The Government is examining ways to increase recognition of Australian

qualifications and licensing, creating new opportunities to professional export services and increasing the value of Australian qualifications to international students (Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017: 67).” This is a rewarding opportunity to make a major change for the vocational training system of Vietnam and significant change the Vietnamese’s thinkings about the importance of vocational education.

Besides, evidently, the Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation is bilateral, but Vietnam showed its weakness and passiveness in this relation. While the Australian government offered Vietnamese students a copious source of scholarships and learning opportunities, Vietnam still hesitantly provides cultural exchanges and academic chances for Australian students. In addition, Vietnamese students must undergo a few disadvantages in their course in Australia. Chi supposed that the majority of Vietnamese students confronted academic apprehension and fear of discrimination throughout their training course (Nguyen, 2013: 5-6). The main reason for these feelings originated from the ill-preparedness of Vietnamese education for its students. In addition, the dearth of extra-curriculum led to a lack of the Vietnamese’s soft skills and practical solutions. Although Vietnam ties its relation to Australia, the educational disparity between Vietnam and Australia is transparently conspicuous. It is high time that an education paradigm shift was a radical change that Vietnam was able to emulate Australia’s, mostly in vocational and higher education. First, Vietnam education is suggested to equip its students with practical skills via soft skill training. Vietnamese educators can benefit from the encouragement of Australia to radically reform the educational curriculum, apply new pedagogical methods and technology in teaching. The private school system of Australia is recommended to be a pioneer in meeting the urgent

requirements of Vietnamese parents and students. Additionally, Vietnam should encourage its universities to closely make a liaison with Australia's universities to strengthen the benefits of public diplomacy. Vietnam is suggested to depend on Vietnamese communities in Australia to promote its soft power included core values of Vietnamese history, culture, and society to build a notion of Vietnamese Studies in Australia's sciences. Likewise, it is recommended that Vietnam government should offer numerous scholarships to stimulate the interests of Australian students to come Vietnam for cultural and educational exchange courses.

## Conclusion

To sum up, Vietnam- Australia ties in educational cooperation in the period of 2009-2021 experienced remarkable achievements. Based on the theory of Liberalism, Public diplomacy, and soft power, this paper generalizes two salient points of Vietnam-Australia educational cooperation. The findings indicate that two countries have been devoted to promoting individual values and national interests via educational diplomacy. While the quality of Vietnamese human resources has been significantly improved thanks to the aid of Australia, the appearance of the Vietnamese student community in Australia implies that Australia is effectively benefitting from this community to promote the educational values of Australia and bolster its soft power in Southeast Asia. It is suggested that a template for Vietnam-Australia cooperation to enhance Australia-ASEAN linkages be necessary to balance the soft power of the US and China in Southeast Asia. Through educational exchanges and scholarship, Australia is likely to work closely with the Vietnamese government to improve the quality of Vietnamese education, and

Vietnam is expected to encourage both government-to-government and people-to-people diplomacy to spread its potential soft power based on Vietnamese diaspora. All accomplishments of Vietnam-Australia denote that the prospects for deeper cooperation between Vietnam and Australia are forecasted to remain bright in the future.

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