



## Research Article

# RECRUITMENT OF TALENTS AT UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

*Employing talents is one of the long-term development strategies of Vietnam to meet the socio-economic strategies and protect the Fatherland. The article focuses on research on opportunities as well as challenges in recruitment at universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The research mainly clarifies the viewpoints on recruitment and analyzes the current opportunities and challenges, the research results have shown that talent recruitment was effective, but it also faced many challenges. From the research results, solutions are proposed to improve the efficiency of using talents at universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

**Keywords:** employ talent; Ho Chi Minh City; talent; university

## 1. Introduction

Talent is the national resource. Especially for young intellectuals, it is considered one of the important factors that determine the survival or prosperity of a country (Le, 2021). Therefore, at all times, in all countries, talented people are always respected, affirmed, and revered by society, attracting the attention of the entire society. Talent recruitment is always a customer request, a matter of strategic significance for the country, never to be taken lightly.

Ho Chi Minh City is a special city, a major center of economy, culture, education, training, science, and technology, a focal point for exchange and integration with great attraction and influence of the international import region, is the locomotive, driving force, attraction and great spread of the southern key economic region, has an important political position of the whole country (Phung, 2020). To accomplish the goals and tasks of city development by 2025 based on Resolution 16-NQ/TW dated August 10, 2012 of the Politburo (XI term). One of the most important decisions is that Ho Chi Minh City must

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develop and implement the policy of attracting and respecting talents in the area (Phan, 2023).

Deeply aware of the position and role of attracting and respecting talents, in recent times, the Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee and the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City have often paid attention, cared for, attracted, and respected talents, especially in the universities in the city. There have been many guidelines, resolutions, and policies to attract and utilize the country's talents.

**2. Content**

**2.1. Research Methods**

This study applied two research methods qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative method aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human resource utilization at universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The quantitative one was based on the results obtained from the qualitative one to form a questionnaire “*Opportunities and challenges in talent recruitment at universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*”

*For the qualitative part:* The author researched and searched for related data, including student data of universities in Ho Chi Minh City, and the number of lecturers and other information such as articles, research papers, essays, and internet related to the research topic.

*For the quantitative part:* students and lecturers at universities in Ho Chi Minh City joined the survey. Due to limited time and resources, participants were 200 students and lecturers from different universities in Ho Chi Minh City who answered an online survey with a 5-Likert 5 scale (1. Totally disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. Neutral; 4. Agree; 5. Totally Agree). Table 1 displays how the scores were interpreted:

**Table 1. Data Interpretation**

Range	Level
1,0 -1,80	Totally disagree
1,8 -2,60	Disagree
2,61 -3,40	Neutral
3,4 - 4,20	Agree
4,21 -5,00	Totally Agree

**2.2. Theoretical foundations of talent-use activities at universities**

**2.2.1. Perspectives on talent and the use of talents at universities in Ho Chi Minh City**

“Talent” is a rather complicated concept and has many different interpretations. According to the Vietnamese Dictionary, talent is briefly defined as someone with outstanding talent. Specifically, a talented person is a person with outstanding ability in one or several fields, making many positive contributions to the benefit of the community and humanity (Tran & Ngo, 2022). Talent includes individuals who can make a difference in the

performance of an organization, either through their immediate contribution or in the long term by demonstrating their highest potential (CIPD, 2007; Davies, 2010). Appreciating and using talent is increasingly considered an important factor in the successful development of organizations and a strategic priority of businesses (Davies, 2010).

That special talent partly comes from natural talent, gradually perfected through the process of studying, working, and cultivating morality. They often have unique ideas, are more creative than other people, can think, analyze, and reason about problems, are sharp, are always passionate about exploring, inventing, and creating new things, and at the same time actively extremely complete, criticizing the existing ones; dare to think, dare to do, dare to accept change to bring new, breakthrough values and desire to assert themselves, devote their talents to society. In practical activities, talented people are people who work very effectively and are always interested in improving performance and quality of operations and often propose optimal solutions, to improve productivity and efficiency of the assigned work.

The terms “talent management,” talent strategy,” “talent utilization,” and “human resource planning” are often used interchangeably. These terms all refer to the process of developing and integrating new workers, developing and retaining current workers, and attracting highly skilled workers (Guthridge, Komm & Lawson 2008; Ringo, Schweyer, De Marco, Jones & Lesser 2010). From the general definition of talent, from the perspective of researching opportunities and challenges in talent recruitment at universities in Ho Chi Minh City, it is necessary to focus on many specific talent groups as follows:

*The first group is excellent graduates and young scientists. These are gifted students, graduates with excellent grades or higher, valedictorians, students studying in the bachelor's system, and talented engineers at higher education institutions in the country or abroad (accredited) who receive equivalent diplomas and certificates as prescribed by law. There are also young scientists, talented scientists who have new inventions and discoveries whose works have been published in leading prestigious international scientific journals or their research is applied in practice, or included in textbooks, textbooks, monographs written by another author and used as teaching materials (laws, theorems, formulas, etc.) at one or more levels of education in the national education system, or used abroad as teaching and research materials; those awarded with prestigious science and technology awards by domestic and international scientific organizations. This is one of the main criteria to recognize talents in science and technology. Thus, not only those who have high degrees, titles, and degrees but also those who participate in scientific activities and have excellent research outputs are still considered talented (without high degrees).*

The second group is Vietnamese intellectuals, experts, and scientists abroad. According to statistics from the State Committee on Overseas Vietnamese under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are currently about 600,000 intellectuals with university degrees, mainly in developed countries. This is considered an abundant source of "gray matter" to contribute to the development of the country, especially in the field of education at universities. In the US, the number of Vietnamese-born intellectuals is about 200,000 people. It is also the most highly educated of the immigrant community in the United States, with 55% holding a bachelor's degree and equivalent, 23% holding a master's degree, and 10% having a doctorate. In addition, there are many famous Vietnamese intellectuals in the US, especially in fields such as science, basic engineering, physics, space, and information technology. In Japan, there are up to 80,000 Vietnamese international students (an increase of 15 times in the period 2010 - 2020). The number of PhD students is estimated to be up to 3,000 people, and at least 1,000 people have obtained a doctorate and are doing post-doctoral research (Pham, 2021). The above figures are very impressive and only half of them return home to work at universities, research institutes, or state agencies and enterprises. The rest both work in developed countries and connect with domestic units, their scientific knowledge and experience gained from developed countries in the world will make a great contribution to the development of the country in the current context of globalization and international integration.

The application of talent is essentially the use and treatment of talents, if only paying attention to using and not paying attention to remuneration, it is impossible to attract talents, not promote the wisdom of talents, and not promote the roles and responsibilities of talents. Using talent must be the right person, the right talent, the right capacity, and the forte of talent. The use of talent must be commensurate with the talent's capacity, dedication, and contribution to the country. The use of talents not only shows the preferential policy of material and money but also shows the honor of the Party, the State, the society, our people, and our nation towards talents.

### *2.2.2. Opportunities in talent recruitment at universities in Ho Chi Minh City*

Using talents at universities in Ho Chi Minh City is an important and necessary policy that not only promotes the quality of educational knowledge in the city but also contributes to the overall development of Ho Chi Minh City.

Employing talents will help create many new job opportunities, help reduce unemployment, and ensure social security. In particular, highly qualified, experienced and capable talents in universities in Ho Chi Minh City will be given development opportunities, helping to build a contingent of high-quality adjacent human resources in organizations. office.

Using talents at universities with talents from many fields such as health, education, agriculture, and industry will contribute to improving the quality of social life. They will be the factors that promote the effective application of scientific and technical achievements to improve living standards and accelerate economic development from organizations, and businesses to society.

In particular, taking advantage of talent resources and properly using them can increase competitiveness in the international market, helping to improve the level, skills, and capacity of Ho Chi Minh City and the whole country in almost all fields, from manufacturing, technology, education, health, finance to science and research.

Recruiting talents also helps strengthen national defense in the form of contributions of defense scientists and personnel, helping to strengthen scientific and technical research and development in this field.

### 2.2.3. Challenges in talent recruitment at universities in Ho Chi Minh City

*Firstly*, there are no unified criteria for considering, evaluating, and using talents. Some organizations emphasize qualifications, sometimes on structure, on age. Some only attract good and excellent graduates from public schools. The attraction of talent is mainly focused on the political system, not paying attention to the business sector.

*Second, attitude and behavior towards personal values. There are still thoughts that are difficult to accept different things, outstanding and unusual qualities – the personal values of talented people, but often accept values of stable, uniform, and straightforward nature, avoiding thorns and criticisms in thinking and action. Thinking in the wrong way in cadre work: promoting age over talent, attaching importance to experience over scientific knowledge, being afraid to use young talented people, average mentality, dislike of superiority leading to envy, and trumpets are factors that have a strong impact, hindering the use of talents at universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

*Thirdly*, the role and responsibilities of the head are not clearly defined, not appreciated, and have not been decentralized in recruiting, evaluating, rewarding, or appointing talents. In addition, there are no regulations on responsibilities and sanctions to handle acts that obstruct or fail to seriously use the talents of heads of agencies and localities.

*Fourthly, for people in charge of personnel, the implementation of the mechanism for detecting, appreciating, and using talents is also problematic. Due to narrow-mindedness, many party organizations, cadres, and party members in charge of personnel still have prejudices against talented people, leading to the improper use of talents and not promoting them to the full potential and capacity of each person.*

*Fifthly*, lack of a professional environment. There are not only modern and synchronous facilities, but also attitude, style, democratic management, and knowing how to motivate, apply pressure and motivate at the right time. Talents are often most interested

in the working environment where they can demonstrate their abilities. An environment that lacks dynamism, heavily imprinted with bureaucratic management style will drain intelligence and reduce enthusiasm, leading to the use of talent that is not suitable for the situation and ineffective.

Because of those limitations, the situation of "brain drain" in the public sector of Ho Chi Minh City, especially the youth cadre programs is a matter of concern. For the City's policy of respecting talents to be developed and put into practice effectively and close to reality, some solutions to contribute to the development of a talent-based policy need to be implemented.

**2.3. Research results**

According to statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training, in the 2017-2018 school year, the total number of lecturers in universities in Ho Chi Minh City was 74,991 people (public: 59,232 people; non-public: 15,795 people). The number of lecturers with doctorate degrees is 20,198 people (accounting for 26.9%); The master's degree is 45,266 people (accounting for 60.36%); University degrees are 9,495 (accounting for 12.66%); Other qualifications are 32 people (accounting for 0.08%).

In the 2018-2019 school year, the total number of lecturers in universities in Ho Chi Minh City was 73,312 people (public: 56,985 people; non-public: 16,327 people). The number of lecturers with doctorate degrees is 21,106 (accounting for 28.8%); master's degree is 44,705 people (accounting for 60.98%); university degree is 7,489 people (accounting for 10.2%); Other qualifications are 12 people (accounting for 0.02%).

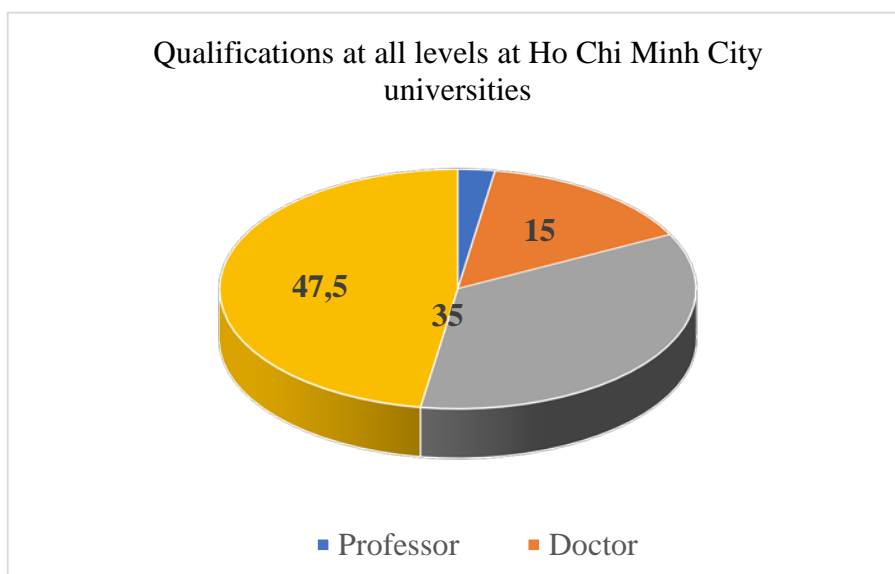
In the academic year 2019-2020, the total number of lecturers in universities in Ho Chi Minh City was 73,132 people (public: 57,217 people; non-public: 15,915 people). The number of lecturers with doctorate degrees is 21,977 people (accounting for 30.05%); master's degree is 44,119 people (accounting for 60.33%); university degree is 6,543 people (accounting for 8.95%); Other qualifications are 493 people (accounting for 0.67%) (Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training, 2021).

*Table 2. Number of lecturers in universities in Ho Chi Minh City in the period of 2017 -2020*

Unit: Person							
Period	Total	Public	Non-public	Doctorate	Master	Graduate	Others
2017-2018	74,991	59,232	15,795	20,198	45,266	9,495	32
2018-2019	73,312	56,985	16,327	21,106	44,705	7,489	12
2019-2020	73,132	57,217	15,915	21,977	44,119	6,543	493

*Source: (Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training, 2021)*

The results of the survey of talent groups at universities in Ho Chi Minh City are detailed in the following chart:



Accordingly, the result from 200 participants at universities in Ho Chi Minh City shows that the number of talents at universities has tended to gradually increase in qualifications and quality. Five participants are professors out of 200, accounting for 2.5%, PhDs are 15% (30 people), Masters is 35% (70 people) and 47.5% are bachelor's respondents, accounting for 95 people. This is an opportunity to attract highly qualified persons to the economic and knowledge development of the country.

The survey results on assessing opportunities in talent recruitment at universities in Ho Chi Minh City are displayed in Table 3:

**Table 3.** Opportunities in talent-utilization at universities in Ho Chi Minh City

Content	Level		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1. Talent sources of universities in Ho Chi Minh City are sufficient	3,40	1,389	3
2. Science and technology help improve professional qualifications and quick integration	3,38	1,302	4
3. Human resources of universities are creative and eager to learn	3,47	1,322	2
4. The City's policy of paying attention to training and fostering is good	3,49	1,326	1
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>		<b>0,752</b>	

Research shows that the talent source in our country, especially at universities, is increasing in both quantity and quality. At the same time, the impact of other external factors creates many opportunities for talent-based activities at Ho Chi Minh City universities. The research results in Table 3 show that all four aspects have above-average scores. Among them, the aspect “The City's policy of paying attention to training and fostering is good” has the highest average score of 3,49. “Human resources of universities are creative and eager to learn” is the aspect with the second highest average score of 3,47. In addition to these two aspects, the remaining variables are also rated quite high. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient reached 0,752, showing that the scale is reliable.

**Table 4.** *Challenges in talent recruitment activities at universities in Ho Chi Minh City*

Content	Level		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1. Many talents are not qualified enough	3,31	1,294	4
2. There is no clear plan and goal of using talent	3,53	1,219	1
3. Not making the right use of talent and expertise	3,48	1,219	2
4. There is bias and inequality among talents	3,46	1,227	3
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>0,830</b>		

The above survey results show that the level of assessment of the challenges faced by activities of valuing and using talent is quite high. Accordingly, all four aspects have above-average scores. The aspect “There is no clear plan and goal of using talent” has the highest average score of 3,53. “Not making the right use of talent and expertise” has an average score of 3,48. This shows that in previous periods, besides the opportunities that our Party and State had in appreciating talents at Ho Chi Minh City universities, we also encountered many difficulties and the factors mentioned above are the core and have the strongest impact on meritocracy activities. Among the four aspects, “Many talents are not qualified enough” has the lowest average score of 3,31, showing that this is not a major challenge encountered in talent recruitment but is mainly due to the talent utilization policies and plans are not reasonable and fair. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient reached 0,830 showing that the scale is reliable.

**2.4. Solutions to improve talent utilization at universities in Ho Chi Minh City**

Today, along with the rapid development of the modern scientific and technological revolution, the talented team has become a particularly important resource, creating the strength of each country in a special development strategy, is a source of talent at the universities of Ho Chi Minh City in particular and the country in general. Here are some



solutions to improve the efficiency of talent-based activities at the universities of Ho Chi Minh City.

*Firstly*, it is necessary to develop a strategy to select and detect talented people to effectively plan, train, foster, and use. To do this, school officials need to monitor the learning progress of students and have a teaching direction in line with today's development. In addition, there should be policies to reward and grant scholarships to individuals who have achieved high achievements in academics and youth union.

*Second*, create a favorable working environment and conditions for talents to develop their talents and contribute to the district, city, and country. The working environment is understood as having to put talents in the right position, because there are no almighty talents but only talents in specific fields, so human resource strategy is not only about discovering, introducing, and choosing but also arranging the right people and the right jobs. In particular, it is possible to create conditions for talents to go abroad to study, research, and participate in seminars.

*Third*, continue to publicize and transparently use and honor talents. Organizational and cadre work should not be considered as a secret and closed work within agencies, organizations, units, or among many people. It is necessary to set clear criteria, conduct public elections, elections, and appointments, and even run for election to arrange cadres in the right places, especially to overcome the situation of "buying and selling authority positions."

*Fourth*, create the most favorable conditions both materially and spiritually so that talented people can successfully research and develop scientific, technical, cultural, economic, and social works.

*Fifth*, the process of using talent needs to be fair and just according to the right capacity. Avoiding favoritism to powerful individuals can lead to a loss of unity and cohesion of the talents in the organization and possibly lower performance.

### **3. Conclusions**

In the period of economic integration and development in the direction of industrialization and modernization, it is necessary to have enough talented and qualified human resources. Therefore, the use of talented people, especially talents from universities in Ho Chi Minh City to work in the fields of economics and education in our country, becomes even more important to contribute to innovation and improvement, to improve the quality of human resources in the direction of professionalism and modernity, to meet the requirements of reforming the market economy. In the past years, the activities aimed at promoting and attracting many talents in Ho Chi Minh City, besides the opportunities to achieve, also encountered many challenges, which disrupted the process of attracting and appreciating talents of the city.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop and perfect mechanisms and policies to detect, attract, foster, utilize, and properly treat talented people. It is necessary to have reasonable policies to improve the material and spiritual life of administrators, permanent lecturers, and staff in schools. When the living standards of cadres and lecturers are better, ensuring they "live well" in their profession, surely higher education institutions will "retain" good and talented people, especially universities in Ho Chi Minh City.

❖ **Conflict of Interest:** Author have no conflict of interest to declare.

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**APPENDIX**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Qa.1	200	1	5	3.40	1.389
Qa.2	200	1	5	3.38	1.302
Qa.3	200	1	5	3.47	1.322
Qa.4	200	1	5	3.49	1.326
Qb.1	200	1	5	3.31	1.294
Qb.2	200	1	5	3.53	1.219
Qb.3	200	1	5	3.48	1.219
Qb.4	200	1	5	3.46	1.227

**Item-Total Statistics**

	<b>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</b>	<b>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</b>	<b>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha - .752</b>				
Qa.1	10.34	9.460	.580	.675
Qa.2	10.36	9.818	.593	.670
Qa.3	10.27	9.977	.553	.691
Qa.4	10.25	10.568	.466	.738
<b>Cronbach's Alpha - .830</b>				
Qb.1	10.48	9.778	.601	.813
Qb.2	10.26	9.641	.685	.774
Qb.3	10.32	9.543	.701	.767
Qb.4	10.33	9.820	.648	.790

**CƠ HỘI VÀ THÁCH THỨC TRONG HOẠT ĐỘNG  
TRỌNG DỤNG NHÂN TÀI TẠI CÁC TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC  
Ở THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH**

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**TÓM TẮT**

*Trọng dụng nhân tài là một trong những chiến lược phát triển lâu dài của đất nước nhằm đáp ứng chiến lược kinh tế – xã hội và bảo vệ Tổ quốc. Bài báo tập trung nghiên cứu về các cơ hội cũng như thách thức trong hoạt động trọng dụng nhân tài tại các trường đại học ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Bài báo làm rõ các quan điểm về trọng dụng nhân tài, phân tích các cơ hội và thách thức hiện có. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các hoạt động trọng dụng nhân tài đã đạt được hiệu quả, tuy nhiên cũng vẫn còn một số hạn chế. Từ kết quả nghiên cứu này, tác giả đưa ra các giải pháp nhằm nâng cao hiệu quả trong công tác trọng dụng nhân tài ở các trường đại học tại Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh.*

***Từ khóa:*** trọng dụng nhân tài; Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh; nhân tài; trường đại học