Educational goals are achieved through a variety of activities undertaken by many people. Collaboration is key to connect these "materials". The task of managers is to create organizations, institutions and mechanism that promote interpersonal collaboration. The meaning of the word "total" in the phrase "total quality management" is that each person, each link in the whole chain of production or operation must ensure quality and be responsible for the quality. Therefore, in order to achieve high quality, individuals are required to connect to each other at the highest level. This connection at the level of consciousness is mutual agreement on mission and goals, and at the level of action, is cooperation.

- Continuous improvement: continuous improvement of results must be a permanent goal of the organization. To improve the quality of training to meet the requirements of customers, continuous improvement must be a regular activity of each staff as well as of the entire unit. The unit must constantly innovate, improve service operating method and improve quality of service. The improvements can be made step by step or they may be significant leaps. Method of improvement should be based on the needs of resident students, requirements of the university and the whole society.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

TQM is an effective system that integrates efforts of sustaining, developing and improving quality of many groups within an organization in order to promote and apply science and technology, produce and deliver services, fully satisfy the needs of customers in the most economical way. TQM applies a method of management that creates favorable conditions for sustainable growth through the mobilization of all its members in order to produce quality in an economical way according customers' needs.

Thus, the theoretical study of the management of resident student assistance activities in universities under the total quality management approach with specific characteristics in the contemporary context is necessary to provide a basis for proposing effective management measures for resident student assistance in the aim of meeting the higher requirements of training quality and perfecting universities' training products in response to the requirements of the fundamental and comprehensive reforms of education and training in light of the 8th Central Resolution (session XI) of the Party.

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# BUILDING AND DEVELOPING STUDENT HUBS
# AT UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

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**Abstract:** The "student-centered" teaching approach has been considered one of the most effective teaching methods worldwide. One of the most successful system to boost student energy in both learning and socializing is student hubs. This article highlights some significant benefits that student hubs offer students and universities. Then, the current situations of operating student hubs at several universities in Viet Nam is addressed to suggest some solutions to build up and improve the quality of student hubs in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Student hubs, modern learning environment, university.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern learning environment is defined as the effective combination of indoor and outdoor learning activities and interaction [1]. Many universities in the world have considered this learning environment as the crucial factor to help their students to be more active in learning and socializing; therefore, building and modernizing high standard student hub have been their top priority [2]. In Vietnam, despite numerous breakthroughs in creating better environment for students to study recently, there is still a lack of adequate attention to building sufficient student hubs for university students. Many universities and colleges still manage to maintain the outdated student hubs with the conventional management system as well as facilities. More surprisingly, some higher education settings in our country completely lack a public space for student to collaborate and study more effectively.

This article highlights some significant benefits that student hub brings to students and universities. Then, the current situations of operating student hubs at several universities in Viet Nam is addressed to suggest some solutions to build up and improve the quality of student hubs in Vietnam.

## 2. CONTENT

### 2.1. Student hubs at universities

Student hub has been defined in various ways but primarily as the place where users can enjoy learning, relaxing and interacting. People believe that a student hub is a well-designed area where students can satisfy all their demands to gain better learning result as well as more informal and accessible relaxation and socialisation areas. One of the stated objectives of a student hub is to "provide an appropriate and comfortable environment, accommodation and facilities for the use of library resources, and for individual and group study". A student hub can be addressed with different names including but not limited to library, public space, interacting area, and open zone in which the main role is to provide student with information resources and facilities for their different purposes in both academic work and social life. Obviously, there are slight differences in the operation of these mentioned areas regarding their functions and services, despite the ultimate purpose of comprehensive development of learners. However, in modern learning environment, which this article mainly focuses on, all the functional areas are blended to be a "single access system" as a comprehensive supportive tools for learners' personality and social skills development in the university community [2]. The space is equipped with the most possible up-to-date facilities and serves as a harmonious combination of learning room, cafeteria and other recreational and fitness training areas.

*The key benefits of student hubs include:*

*- Time Flexibility:* The first benefit student can gain from the student hub is the flexibility in managing their time. Bryant [2] highlighted the integral role of providing functional student centre to fulfil their needs and preferences both in studying schedule and socializing environment. Applying the "learner-centered" approach, many universities have their libraries and student HUB opened 24 hours a day to promote students' studying motivation and skill development. More importantly, with the convenience of facilities and spaces in their modern libraries and

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hubs, students can efficiently save the commuting time. For instance, after learning, students just need to spend little time on something for meal, and going to other locations for relaxing, learning and doing exercises. Most of their daily needs are available within their walking distances so that they can maximize the time for the activities themselves. Specifically, those who live far from university no longer bother with the closing hours of the facilities as they can stay for as long as they want.

- *Socializing opportunities:* Having better networking sites is the next crucial advantage for students who study in the universities with well-furnished student hubs. As the hub is flexible for students to not only study in group or individually but also to chat, eat, and drink, it will be the best place to meet up with others [2]. In this informal and convenient space, it is easy for users to be proactive in understanding other cultures, living styles, and personal values, discussing both academic and personal problems, and getting involved in many activities. Positively, students will strengthen their communication, team-working and analytical skills to meet the demands of society. Unsurprisingly, both planned and unplanned social gathering will also benefit students' networking skills. The hub is surely the bridge to bring people closer to each other, regardless of race or ethnics.

- *Convenience:* Convenience seems to be the main purpose of building modern student hubs which effectively help student and staff to fetch for everything in one place. The services cover most aspects of their living and learning activities. Users can eat, relax and learn in a very well-designed area where everything has been organized as much convenient as expected and possible. Moreover, the rooms for relaxing, playing sports, gathering, reporting and presenting are also available to meet the demand of a new form of modern learning environment as it has been a commonplace of all higher education disciplines [3; pp. 326]. In addition, people can leave everything intendedly without worrying about any risk that makes them feel comfortable to study. Furthermore, as there are microwaves and fridges provided, students can bring food from home and enjoy at campus. The convenience has been acknowledged by Meyer and Stuart [4; pp. 2] as the core factor to the success of learning productivity. As an example, between 1995 and 2002, 92% of new building and refurbishment is

for collaborative study space and 80.8% is for Internet connection facilities which is still on the increase now [2]. A recent study on academic libraries in the USA found that "providing access to technology, such as computers, and wired/wireless internet connectivity was a priority" for many universities [5], [6].

- *Learning motivation:* The most important benefit for educators, managers and most importantly, for students is the learning motivation. Well-designed social spaces are likely to enhance students' motivation and may even have an impact on the ability to learn. The main purpose of a modern student hub is to create public space to support and add value to students' learning experience. Furthermore, based on the five core criteria of a modern library, which include adaptable, flexible, multidimensional, accessible, and secure [7], libraries are designed to encourage incorporating in group and alternative styles of learning in the shared space. This innovative educational culture inspires learning through interacting, sharing, and enjoying. As a result, learning will be much effective and more enjoyable as students feel safe and respected. It is obvious that with an attractive student hub, there will be some more reasons for students to stay on campus for learning and connecting with others.

## 2.2. Student hubs in universities in Vietnam

### 2.2.1. Building and operating student hubs in universities in Vietnam

As for higher education, while libraries and student hubs are the heart and soul of most of the universities in the world, an ironic fact in Vietnam is the lack of concerns from educational managers and leaders in building and developing this learning environment. In Vietnam, student hubs can be understood as simple as an academic library. In fact, most of the academic libraries in Vietnam are just built and maintained to support the most basic demand of users as simply a place to read books and surf the Internet. This mean that, most of the student hubs in universities in Vietnam cannot meet the demands of students in developing their knowledge and social skills.

Many universities in Vietnam have not had or built their own libraries and student hubs since they encounter many difficulties as mentioned as follows:

- The first major issue will be the financial issue. When the number of student reduces, the budget is going to be smaller so they need to be careful in

spending. Besides, many public universities are under the government and education and training ministry's management so they cannot decide to have significant innovation for their universities, which also hold back the development and innovation process in each university.

- The second reason is the long-term vision of the universities' leader and manager. The leaders play a vital role for setting and operating the strategic continuous development plans in the trend of globalization and integration. However, many of them just think of how to have money for next year missions and forget about the further future of their school. They care too much about short term development and vision. For instance, many unnecessary buildings and plans may be signed to operate, which may bring them little profit in sharing but have no contribution to the supporting students and building the best learning environment for them.

- The next cause can be the limited network in terms of capacity of innovation and calling for investors to the universities, especially, for the continuous development and long-term integration. As the matter of fact, many leaders seem to focus only on what the government ask them to do rather than to be proactive to seek the financial resources. Consequently, many universities in Vietnam are being held back in both quality and quantity as well as the innovative spirit.

- Finally, it is difficult for universities to expand their existing space as most of them are in crowded areas such as cities. Consequently, as universities keep their own traditional system and operate them in a strict boundary, they are losing more and more students as learners have many choices for better education systems where the university possesses better investment and vision to create the "student center" learning area. This, in turn, leads to the challenges in improving financial power and the quality of education in the future.

### 2.2.2. Some solutions to help universities develop their own high-quality student hubs

With the abovementioned difficulties faced by many universities in Vietnam, the solutions should come from both the government and universities themselves.

-The government and ministries should pay greater attention to supporting and facilitating innovation in universities with open, suitable and supportive policies and management. Especially, the investment for better student hubs should be the core concerns and actions in our modern world. Moreover, the government should have better support for the development of the student hub in each university as this area is the significant space for students to fully develop themselves to meet the demand of this modern society.

- Long - term vision: is the first thing each university should seriously consider. It is important to proactively act on innovation and integration to make sure that the new generations can meet the demand of the globalization process, specifically:

+ Promoting the investment policies for modernizing and improving the quality of facilities in the university: Education is the most important factor for human development of the whole nation; it is necessary to invest in and build up the most convenient area to educate people. Therefore, proactively developing the strategic plan and call for investment are the best choice as finance is also a big issue. To do this, universities are required to be more active in finding, expanding the networks with the investors, obtaining supportive aids to effectively execute the integral strategic plans of upgrading facilities.

+ *Converting the available spaces and taking advantage of facilities and resources available*: This approach will be best applied with well-designed areas and inspiring arrangement of the facilities. Given that many universities are struggling financially, flexibility to convert the available facilities into a good student hub would create great impact on the development of each university. Creating and optimizing modern learning environment would have great contribution to the survival and development of the universities. Therefore, the model of building and setting up modern student hubs and up-to-date educational environment should be paid greater attention.

+ *Strengthening and expanding international cooperation:* Cooperating with modern universities in developed countries would bring new opportunities for the development of student hubs in universities in Vietnam. With the mission of creating the best learning environment for students and with the

powerful finance budget, many universities in the world have expanded their markets and their brands with the priceless values in managing, designing and investing. Moreover, actively cooperating with modern education systems in the world will help lecturers and staffs in the university have more opportunities to learn, share, and effectively apply the modern managerial and operational skills. This will have the greatest benefit for the long-term development of the universities. In order to have better network and cooperation, each university should have useful and affordable plan to ensure the efficiency of attracting students to study as well as the talented to work with them.

+ *Training leaders and managers:* Universities should care more about the training for the managers and leaders to widen their perception and select the suitable talented people to develop the system with better skills and cooperation. Understanding about innovation and modernization will be improved through training courses in developed countries with the modern student hubs. As a result, leaders and managers will have better preparation, knowledge and ideas for the development of the university as well as overcome all the difficulties during the execution of each project and plan. In addition, people will have opportunity to witness the dramatic development of different education system in the world through different training programs. Consequently, leaders and managers will have great motivation to take risks and prepare themselves for thoughtful innovation in order to create the best supportive and modern learning environment to help students fully develop.

+ *Improving interaction and collaboration among offices and organizations*: Effective teamwork in finding solutions and direction to modernize the education settings with the fully ensured quality and minimal costs will be the best approach in order to successfully execute the strategic plan of the university. Furthermore, organizing and choosing the best design and operational ideas for the modern, effective and creative student hub will provide people an opportunity to show their ability, vision and support. This also can help the university effectively use the internal strength to better solve the problem.

+ *Analyzing the result of applying the student hub in other universities*: By doing this, each university will have better background knowledge of how to be successful and what are the problems in building the modern learning environment. This will reduce the risk in the execution of each project and find out the best investment plan for each university. In the revolutionary era, to have a modern education system, people are required to have clear and specific plan to guarantee the continuous development of the education settings. The process of analyzing and identifying difficulties and advantages in having higher and better education system will be the important background to set up the new goal in building and operating student hub.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

Many studies have shown that with thoughtful investment and refurbishment, which leads to a positive outlook for the student hub, this area could result in more efficiently used space and making university a popular and attractive place for student to stay and study. The great working environment will also be available for lecturers and staffs as student hub brings them convenience and flexibility. Having high-quality student hub is an important factor to connect lecturers and students to know more about each other and have a better sharing platform in both academic and social life.

In conclusion, modern and well-designed student hub has been an innovation and a new trend in terms of building better higher education systems which can bring about long-term benefits to both students and universities. Taking a serious look in this kind of learning environment and putting forward actions should be done to encourage students in Vietnam to study and socialise to be more active and practical. As there are only few related issues the universities in Vietnam have to deal with, the benefit gained is no doubt to be excellent and outstanding.

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