

The Developmental Process of Non-Public Higher Education System in Vietnam

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This paper clarifies the characteristics of the developmental process in non-public higher education system in Vietnam, focusing on the legitimacy of non-public universities, through multiple analysis of background to the formation of private universities (Trường đại học tư thục) in Vietnam and field study about the present situation. In this paper, I will provide some viewpoints on how non-state universities obtain legitimacy and on formulation process of private universities in Vietnam. Private universities have existed since becoming regulated by the government in 2005, joining people-founded universities to form the core of the non-public sector in Vietnam.

With intention to achieve this research object, in the first section, official policies related to non-public higher education in Vietnam and relevant papers of the journal which ministry of education and training Vietnam has issued are discussed. In the next section, the institutional governance system of non-public universities, especially that of private university, are analyzed in comparative perspective. In the third section, the present situation of FPT University, which was founded by leading IT company “FPT group” in Vietnam, is examined as a case study.

In the light of these points, it is concluded that developmental process in non-public higher education system in Vietnam is characterized by two-steps transition: The first step is the transition from highly controlled system with no non-public university to the Communist Party intervening system with people-founded university and the second step is the transition from that to the highly market oriented system with private university. In other words, people-founded university need to obtain legitimacy from the Communist Party from establishment to operation, while private university is distant from the Communist Party and doesn't need legitimacy from it. Private university is market-oriented university model, which obtains legitimacy from the management matrix company in the market.