



STATE MANAGEMENT OF YOUTH WORK IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Phan Van Tuan¹,
Nguyen Khanh Ly²,
Nguyen Thi Thanh Tuyen³,
Vu Thi Tuoi⁴,
Nguyen Dinh Hoang⁵,
Nguyen Chi Hai⁶ⁱ

¹Dr., Lecturer, Vice Dean,
Faculty of Political Science and Journalism,
College of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Vinh University,
Vietnam

²Masters,
PhD Candidate,
Vinh University,
Nghe An University of Economics,
Vietnam

³Masters,
PhD Candidate,
Vinh University,
Vietnam

⁴Masters,
Vietnam - Japan Education and Medical Company Limited,
Vietnam

⁵Dr., Lecturer,
Head Faculty of Party Building Department,
To Hieu Political School,
Vietnam

⁶Dr., Lecturer,
An Giang University,
Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City,
Vietnam

Abstract:

Youth plays an important role in the socio-economic development of Ho Chi Minh City. State management of youth work aims to ensure the comprehensive development of this force, contributing to the development of high-quality human resources to serve the modernization and international integration. This study analyzes the current status of the

ⁱ Correspondence: email nchai@agu.edu.vn

state management system for youth in Ho Chi Minh City, including the legal framework, implementation mechanisms, and youth support programs. The results show that although Ho Chi Minh City has a fairly complete policy system and synchronous implementation mechanisms, challenges such as uneven awareness of youth work, loose coordination mechanisms, and limited financial resources and management data remain. The study has proposed solutions to improve the effectiveness of state management of youth work, including raising political awareness, perfecting inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms, ensuring financial resources, building a youth data system and developing a team of specialized staff. The synchronous implementation of these solutions would help Ho Chi Minh City make the most of the potential of young people, contributing to the city's sustainable development.

Keywords: state management, youth policy, Ho Chi Minh City, youth development, youth strategy

1. Introduction

Youth always plays an important role and is the core force in the development of each country. Resolution of the 7th Central Committee, Session X of the Communist Party of Vietnam stated that Youth is a great social force, one of the important factors determining the future and destiny of the nation; is the main force in many fields, undertaking jobs that require hardship, health and creativity (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2008). Ho Chi Minh City currently has about 3.2 million young people, accounting for 12.8% of the total number of young people in the country. With this large and dynamic force, Ho Chi Minh City youth is an important human resource, directly contributing to the socio-economic development and playing a pioneering role in many movements of the city.

State management of youth work is of special importance to orient, support and maximize the potential of the young generation. The role of the State is reflected in the promulgation of policies and laws, the mobilization of resources and the creation of a favorable environment for young people to study, work, start businesses and participate in social activities (Bach *et al.*, 2022). The Vietnamese State has the Youth Law 2020 (effective from 2021) and many youth development strategies and programs to ensure the comprehensive development of young people. The Ministry of Home Affairs, the agency assigned to manage the state on youth, has requested localities to implement the Youth Law 2020 and guiding decrees, as well as organize periodic dialogues between government leaders and young people.

In addition, the Vietnam Youth Development Strategy for the period 2021-2030 has been issued, requiring localities to develop action plans to implement youth development goals in the new period (Prime Minister, 2021). These moves show that state management of youth is increasingly focused on aiming to create a framework and motivation for Ho Chi Minh City youth to promote their role in building and developing the city.

2. Methodology

The article uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyze the current state management of youth work in Ho Chi Minh City. First of all, the document research method is applied to collect secondary information from legal documents (Youth Law 2020, relevant decrees and decisions), summary reports of the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee and departments, branches and sectors on youth work, and published scientific studies.

The analysis and synthesis method is used to systematize the current theoretical framework and policies on youth, as a basis for assessing the current situation. In addition, the group of authors consulted experts and youth managers in Ho Chi Minh City to collect opinions on the effectiveness of state management and challenges in practice. The collected data is processed, compared and contrasted between policies and the current implementation status in Ho Chi Minh City, thereby drawing out strengths and limitations and proposing appropriate solutions. The scientific nature of the research is ensured through citing reliable sources and following a systematic research process.

3. Research content

3.1. State management system for youth work in Ho Chi Minh City

The state management system for youth work in Ho Chi Minh City is organized according to the general model of the whole country, with the division of tasks from the city level to the grassroots level. The People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City is responsible for general state management of youth in the area, with the specialized advisory body being the Department of Home Affairs. The Department of Home Affairs of Ho Chi Minh City is assigned the focal point to assist the People's Committee of the City in developing and implementing plans and programs for youth development, coordinating with other departments, branches and sectors to integrate youth policies into specialized fields. Similarly, at the district level, the Department of Home Affairs takes on the role of advising the People's Committee of the district on youth work; at the commune and ward level, there are also cadres (cultural and social civil servants or statistics offices) who concurrently monitor youth work. The consolidation of the management apparatus from the city to the grassroots level aims to ensure that youth policies are implemented synchronously, closely following the actual situation of each locality (Ha & Tung, 2022).

The role of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union (known as the Ho Chi Minh City Youth Union) and other youth organizations is significant in youth work. The Youth Union is a socio-political organization, not a state agency. The Youth Law 2020 stipulates that the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union is the core force in the youth movement, and actively participates with state management agencies in developing and implementing policies and laws for youth. The Ho Chi Minh City Youth Union closely coordinates with the Department of Home Affairs and related departments and branches to implement many action programs for youth (study, start-up, volunteering for the

community, and skill development). The role of the Youth Union in monitoring and social criticism in the implementation of youth policies is also emphasized. The State creates conditions and mechanisms for the Youth Union to participate in monitoring and giving opinions to perfect policies and programs for youth (Nguyen *et al.*, 2019). The state management system for youth in Ho Chi Minh City is a combination of state administrative management with promoting the role of the Youth Union and youth associations, creating a synchronous network to care for, nurture and promote the city's youth force.

3.2. Current policies and implementation mechanisms for youth work

The policy and legal framework on youth in Vietnam, and in Ho Chi Minh City, has been completed, creating a solid legal foundation for state management of youth. The Youth Law 2020 is the most important legal document regulating the rights and obligations of youth, the responsibilities of the State, family and society towards youth, as well as the role of youth organizations (Tran, 2018). The Youth Law 2020 requires ministries, sectors, and localities to integrate youth development goals and targets into their socio-economic development strategies and plans; at the same time ensuring the participation of youth in the process of formulating and implementing policies for them. This means that in Ho Chi Minh City, all macro-level policies (human resource development planning, employment programs, urban development) need to take into account the youth factor, ensuring that young people benefit from and contribute to those programs. The law stipulates that the State ensures resources to implement youth policies, including budgets and encourages social contributions. This is the basis for Ho Chi Minh City to allocate annual budgets for youth support activities (such as training, vocational training, start-ups, health care, culture, and sports for young people).

The Vietnam Youth Development Strategy for the 2021–2030 period approved by the Prime Minister sets out specific goals and targets for youth development nationwide in the next 10 years. These targets cover many areas, such as education and training, careers, employment, health, skills, and youth development in specific areas (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2022). Based on the National Strategy, Ho Chi Minh City has developed a City Youth Development Plan for the 2021–2025 period and a vision to 2030, with targets appropriate to the characteristics of large urban areas (Ho Chi Minh City Youth Union, 2023). The city focuses on increasing the proportion of youth receiving vocational training, creating jobs for immigrant youth, supporting young people to start innovative businesses, and developing a source of young leaders and managers in the city's political system. The issuance of local plans to concretize the National Youth Strategy is a mandatory requirement that has been emphasized by the Ministry of Home Affairs: provinces and cities must have 5-year and annual plans to implement the goals and targets of the Strategy. Ho Chi Minh City is among the leading localities in the country in implementing the Youth Strategy, demonstrated by the early issuance of the Resolution of the City People's Council on youth work and the Action Plan of the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee for the period 2021-2025 (Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, 2023).

In addition to long-term strategies and plans, Ho Chi Minh City has implemented specific mechanisms and activities to bring youth policies to life. One of the important mechanisms is to organize Youth Month in March every year. According to legal regulations, the Government and local authorities at all levels are responsible for ensuring mechanisms, policies and resources for the Youth Union at the same level to effectively organize Youth Month activities. In Ho Chi Minh City, Youth Month is organized by the City Youth Union in coordination with departments and branches, focusing on volunteer activities for the community, creative startups, environmental protection, and building a civilized urban lifestyle. Through Youth Month, the city government creates conditions for young people to participate in contributing to the community while listening to the ideas and initiatives of young people (Tram, 2024).

The dialogue mechanism between government leaders and young people has become a new highlight in state management of youth. The Youth Law 2020 stipulates that the Chairmen of People's Committees at all levels must organize dialogues with young people at least once a year on issues of concern to young people (National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020). Implementing this regulation, Ho Chi Minh City leaders have maintained meetings and direct dialogues with the city's young people. Every year, the City Party Committee and People's Committee organize meetings between city leaders and young people to discuss topics such as startups, employment, digital skills development, and Union - Association activities. At these forums, many opinions and recommendations from young people have been listened to and directed to be resolved by the city's leaders. Regular dialogues not only help young people express their voices and aspirations but also help Ho Chi Minh City authorities promptly grasp the pressing issues of the younger generation, thereby adjusting appropriate policies. This is considered an effective policy implementation mechanism, enhancing youth participation in local governance, in line with the spirit of the Youth Law, which states that youth policies should be developed and implemented with the participation of young people.

Ho Chi Minh City has a relatively complete policy framework for youth work, including laws, strategies, plans and specific implementation mechanisms. The implementation of these policies is carried out through inter-sectoral coordination and the mobilization of youth organizations. Many youth support programs in Ho Chi Minh City have achieved positive results, such as Start-up City programs, vocational training and employment programs for young people, volunteer activities for the community, and building life skills for urban youth. However, besides the achieved results, state management of youth in Ho Chi Minh City still faces many challenges that need to be overcome.

3.3. Challenges in state management of youth in Ho Chi Minh City

Although the youth management system and policies have been established, the implementation process in Ho Chi Minh City still reveals some limitations and challenges.

The first, the awareness of some Party committees and authorities about the role of youth work is not adequate. In some localities, leaders have not paid due attention to youth, leading to formal and unsynchronized implementation. This is not only a problem of Ho Chi Minh City but has also been recorded in many other localities, requiring further improvement of awareness in the political system about the importance of youth work.

Second, the inter-sectoral coordination mechanism in implementing youth policies is sometimes not tight (Mai, 2023). Although the city has a youth development plan and assigned tasks to departments and branches, some agencies are slow to concretize the Party's guidelines and the State's policies on youth in their respective fields. The advisory work of departments, branches, and branches on youth policies is still limited, especially in proposing specific regimes and policies to meet the needs of the city's youth. Ho Chi Minh City is a special urban area with a high rate of immigrant youth, but there are not many specific policies for immigrant youth (on housing support, training in urban integration skills). The lack of in-depth policies and policies suitable to local characteristics makes the effectiveness of state management on youth not high.

Third, limited resources and data for youth management. Although the State has paid attention to allocating budget for youth work, the needs of Ho Chi Minh City youth are very diverse and large, so the resources to meet them are still inadequate, especially at the grassroots level. Many youth activities still rely mainly on volunteer movements and support from the Youth Union, while the state budget specifically for youth is limited. In addition, the work of collecting and updating the youth database has not been done well. Currently, statistics on the number of youth, qualifications, jobs, and needs in Ho Chi Minh City are not comprehensive and have not been shared synchronously among sectors. The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to analyze, forecast, and build youth development programs, and reporting results does not accurately reflect reality. This is a big challenge in the context of modern management that needs to be based on data.

Fourth, the staff working on youth work is still small and has multiple roles. At the ward and commune levels, most civil servants in charge of youth work also have multiple other tasks (cultural, social, and statistical), so the time and resources for youth work advice are limited. Training and fostering of specialized youth skills for this staff have not been carried out regularly. As a result, the quality of advice and implementation of youth programs at the grassroots level is not high, making it difficult to meet all the legitimate requirements and aspirations of young people (Kiely & Meade, 2018).

Fifth, Ho Chi Minh City youth face complex social problems of a large urban area, which pose increasingly heavy management requirements. The situation of youth unemployment or working in the informal sector, immigrant youth lacking support, leading to vulnerability; a segment of youth falling into social evils (drugs, crime). These problems require inter-sectoral coordination (labor, education, police, health, culture) in management, but in reality, coordination is sometimes ineffective. Without effective solutions, social challenges will hinder the healthy development of the youth force and affect the security and order of the city.

Although state management of youth in Ho Chi Minh City has achieved many positive results, there are still limitations in awareness, coordination mechanisms, resources, and personnel. These challenges need to be taken seriously to find solutions and to further improve the management efficiency and quality of youth development in the city.

3.4. Proposed solutions to improve the effectiveness of state management of youth work in Ho Chi Minh City

To overcome the limitations and improve the effectiveness of state management of youth work, Ho Chi Minh City needs to synchronously deploy many solutions in terms of institutions, resources, and implementation organization.

First, raise awareness and responsibility of the political system for youth work. It is necessary to continue to thoroughly grasp the position and strategic role of youth in the revolutionary cause and development of the city in all levels of Party committees and authorities (Nguyen, 2006). Leaders of People's Committees at all levels must consider the implementation of youth development targets as one of the criteria for assessing the level of completion of local socio-economic development tasks. Each cadre and civil servant in charge of youth-related fields needs to promote responsibility and proactively coordinate in performing assigned tasks. In particular, heads of agencies and units must be exemplary in caring for and closely directing youth work, considering it part of their political tasks (Bradford & Cullen, 2014).

Second, perfect the inter-sectoral coordination mechanism and strengthen youth advisory. The Department of Home Affairs - as the standing agency for state management of the youth sector - needs to take the lead in effectively coordinating with the City Youth Union and other departments, branches and sectors. Steering committees or inter-sectoral working groups on youth should be established at the city level to coordinate the implementation of youth development programs. At the same time, each department and sector needs to have a focal officer in charge of youth and actively propose policies related to youth in their fields. The Department of Education and Training focuses on vocational training and employment policies for youth; skills education, ethics and lifestyle for youth; the Department of Science and Technology proposes a program to support youth start-ups and innovation; the City Police advise on solutions to prevent social evils among youth (Nguyen *et al.*, 2023). Proactively advising on policies that are close to the practical needs of the city's youth will help overcome the previous general lack of specificity.

Third, increase financial resources and develop a youth database. Ho Chi Minh City should prioritize allocating adequate budgets for youth development programs and projects for the 2021-2030 period. At the same time, mobilize the participation of the private sector and social organizations in supporting resources (scholarships, start-up funds, preferential loans, skills training) for youth. Regarding management technology, the city should build a modern youth database system, connecting departments and branches to monitor information on youth (population, qualifications, employment, health, needs). This is consistent with the task of implementing the set of statistical

indicators on Vietnamese youth set by the Government. When youth data is regularly updated and shared, management agencies can analyze and forecast trends to make more effective policies. This is also the basis for implementing digital transformation in youth management, helping to reduce administrative procedures and increase access to information and services for youth (Valentin, 2007).

Fourth, develop and improve the quality of the staff working in youth work. It is necessary to have an annual training plan on skills and expertise in state management of youth for civil servants of the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Home Affairs, and key Youth Union officials at all levels. The Ministry of Home Affairs has directed the organization of training courses to improve skills for civil servants performing state management tasks on youth and strengthen inspection of the implementation of this task, to raise awareness and responsibility of authorities at all levels in implementing youth policies. Ho Chi Minh City should proactively coordinate with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Central Youth Union to open specialized training courses, update new knowledge on youth work in the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution, innovative startups, and international integration. In addition, the city can study and implement policies to attract young talents to work in state agencies in the spirit of Decree 140/2017/ND-CP on attracting excellent graduates and young scientists to work in the locality. Having more young, qualified civil servants will add high-quality resources to youth management, creating more understanding and sympathy for the young generation.

Fifth, the State promotes youth support programs and the role of youth in participating in city development. Along with improving management from the State, it is necessary to create an environment for youth to practice, contribute, and mature (Collins & Tuyền, 2016). The city should continue to maintain and expand effective programs such as the youth start-up movement "Ho Chi Minh City - Start-up City" aiming to build a generation of dynamic young entrepreneurs, skill clubs, volunteer programs for the community, and youth forums to advise city leaders. The State plays the role of a midwife, supporting mechanisms, finance, and training for youth initiatives. At the same time, promote the role of supervision and criticism of youth through the Youth Union and Association in implementing local development projects and programs. All policies related to youth need to consult with youth and Union organizations, thereby ensuring transparency and making youth feel respected and responsible.

In short, the above solutions should be implemented synchronously and persistently. Ho

Chi Minh City has the advantage of being a dynamic city with a high level of education, and the city's youth are very creative and sensitive. If the authorities at all levels get involved, create conditions and give opportunities, Ho Chi Minh City's youth will certainly further promote their pioneering role, making great contributions to the cause of building a civilized and modern city.

4. Conclusion

State management of youth work in Ho Chi Minh City plays a decisive role in nurturing and promoting young resources to serve the city's sustainable development goals. This study has clarified the importance of youth work, the current status of the management system, current policies as well as challenges and limitations in implementation in Ho Chi Minh City. On that basis, the article proposes several solutions to improve the effectiveness of state management of youth, emphasizing the need to raise awareness, improve coordination mechanisms, increase resources, develop specialized human resources and promote youth participation.

In the future, for youth work to truly meet the requirements of the new era, Ho Chi Minh City needs to continue to update and innovate management methods suitable to the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution and international integration. This includes applying digital transformation in youth management and building online interactive information channels between the government and youth. At the same time, it should focus on specific youth groups, such as immigrant youth and disadvantaged youth, so that no one is left behind. In addition to the efforts of the government, the support of the whole society - families, schools, businesses and mass organizations - in caring for, educating and creating conditions for young people is extremely important. State management is only effective when it mobilizes the combined strength of relevant parties.

Youth is both the goal and the driving force of development. An effective and efficient state management of youth work will create a favorable environment for the young generation of Ho Chi Minh City to develop comprehensively, contributing their talents and youth to the cause of building the city into a leading economic, cultural, scientific and technological center of the country and reaching the regional level. Promoting the role of youth is an investment in the future of Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam.

Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the conception and writing of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Phan Van Tuan is a Doctor of Faculty Politics and Journalism at the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vinh University, Vietnam. He is teaching and researching fields including Vietnamese Politics, Management Science, Public Policy, and Political Science.

Nguyen Khanh Ly is studying for a PhD at Vinh University. She is teaching at Nghe An University of Economics. Her research trends and research areas include Public Policy and Political Science.

Nguyen Thi Thanh Tuyen is studying for a Ph.D. at Vinh University, Vietnam. Her research trends and research areas include Public Policy and Political Science.

Vu Thi Tuoi has a Master's degree. She is working at the Vietnam - Japan Education and Medical Company Limited. Her research trends and research areas include Education and Political Science.

Nguyen Dinh Hoang is PhD, Head Faculty of Party Building Department at To Hieu Political School. He is teaching and researching fields including Vietnamese Politics, Ho Chi Minh studies, Public Policy, and Political Science.

Nguyen Chi Hai is a Doctor of Political Science. Currently, he is working in teaching and inquiry at An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. His research trends and research areas include Education, Indigenous Culture, Public Policy, and Political Science.

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