

# HUMAN RESOURCE COOPERATION BETWEEN VIETNAM AND TAIWAN: SITUATIONS, PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

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**Abstract-** The export of labor has become one of Vietnam's socio-economic development strategies in the context of regional economic integration. In recent years, Vietnam has sent more than 80,000 workers abroad each year and it has become one of major source countries for unskilled foreign workers for Taiwan since the two sides signed an agreement on sending and receiving Vietnamese labourers to Taiwan in 1999. Human resource cooperation between Vietnam and Taiwan not just addresses Taiwan's labor shortages but also creates jobs and a good income for Vietnamese labourers. However, there are problems. The larger the number of workers employed in Taiwan, the greater the number of runaway workers. In fact, the problem of Vietnamese runaway workers is complex, involving individual, environmental and institutional factors in both Vietnam and Taiwan. This paper has mainly focused on the issue of illegal brokerage. The study argues that one of major factors contributing to the high desertion rate among Vietnamese migrant workers is the high pre-departure cost charged by brokerage companies. So, to lessen the pressure on workers, it is necessary to produce reasonable labour export fees to ensure that workers are able to pay off their debts quickly and start accumulating capital to improve their lives. In order to support this argument, in-depth interviews with Vietnamese workers working in Taiwan were conducted by the author.

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**Keywords-** Human resource cooperation, labour export, labour migration, Vietnam, Taiwan.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the past several decades, Taiwan has achieved remarkable economic growth and has become one of four large dragons of East Asia. This development also led to changes in socio-economic life, including changes in standards of living and quality of life, and the labour skills of the Taiwanese people also increasingly advanced. Besides economic development, development also posed other social problems, such as aging of the population and declining birth rates. This led to a shortage of labour, particularly a shortage of unskilled workers or workers in some service sectors. These shortages were increasing in severity, and the recruitment of foreign labour was seen as a necessity. In October 1989, the Taiwan Council of Labor Affairs accepted permission for the legal recruitment of foreign workers to supply the labour for fourteen key national infrastructure projects. Thus, foreign workers were employed in Taiwan as a part of government efforts to solve the problem of labor shortages. Vietnam and Taiwan are geographically close to each other. The two sides also have many similarities in culture and customs.

For nearly two decades after South Vietnam's government collapsed in 1975, and until the late 1980s, Vietnam and Taiwan did not have any links. Since the late 1980s and during the early 1990s, along with the impacts of economic globalization and regional integration, Taiwan first launched a "Go south" policy in 1994, which aimed to lessen Taiwan's excessive economic dependence on mainland China by encouraging businessmen to shift investment to Southeast Asian countries, in the hope of leveraging Taiwan's economic might into political

clout<sup>1</sup>. The Vietnamese government also launched the "Doi Moi" policy (referred to as the Innovation policy) which was conducive to foreign direct investment, and adopted a foreign policy of multilateralism and diversification of international relations. As the government described it, "Vietnam is willing to be a friend and reliable partner to all countries in the international community"<sup>2</sup>. Vietnam has established relations with Taiwan in the economic and cultural fields, beginning the process of cooperation between the two sides.

Although the Vietnam-Taiwan relationship was established relatively late, only a few short years ago, cooperation between the two sides has developed very well and achieved considerable results. The relationship has been growing ever since the two sides opened representative offices in each other's sides. Specifically, in 1992, Taiwan opened "Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices" in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city and, in 1993, Vietnam opened a "Vietnam Economic and Cultural Office" in Taipei as well. In September 1999, Hanoi and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices signed an Agreement on sending and receiving Vietnamese laborers to Taiwan. Thenceforth, the two sides began implement human resource (HR) cooperation within the Vietnam-Taiwan economic relations framework. Since then, Taiwan has become one of the major destinations for Vietnamese migrant workers. Vietnamese labour exports to Taiwan not only help meet the labor

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<sup>1</sup> Taiwan needs to catch up in ASEAN: Southbound policy Office chief, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201605170011.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Building strategic, comprehensive partnerships - Vietnam's soft power, <http://english.tapchiconsang.org.vn/Home/Theory-and-Reality/2014/410/Building-strategic-comprehensive-partnerships-Viet-Nams-soft-power.aspx>

market demand in Taiwan but also create more opportunities for Vietnamese employees to work and have a good source of income as well as contributing to solving the employment situation for Vietnamese people. The presence of Vietnamese labourers on the island makes for mutual understanding in many areas, contributes to strengthening friendship and cooperation between the two sides not only in the present but also in the future.

In order to further stimulate HR cooperation between the two sides, however, it is necessary to examine what has been accomplished so far and what problems remain, so as to propose solutions that might enhance HR cooperation between Vietnam and Taiwan in the coming years. The study aims to examine the situation of Vietnamese labor exports to Taiwan in the past years, identify currently existing problems, so as to provide recommendation for Vietnam. To fulfill this purpose, the study begins, in the first section, by outlining the development of Vietnamese labor exports to Taiwan during over the past ten years. The second section explores reasons why Vietnamese workers are running away from their jobs. The third section discusses Vietnam and Taiwan's measures to reduce the number of runaway workers. The final section provides concluding remarks and recommendations.

#### 1. Overview of Vietnamese labor exports to Taiwan

As mentioned earlier, Taiwan formally started the policy of opening up its labor market to foreign migrant workers in the early 1990s. Initially, the source countries were limited to Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. Vietnam was added to list in late 1999<sup>3</sup> when the two sides signed an agreement on sending and receiving Vietnamese laborers to Taiwan. Subsequently, Vietnam has quickly become one of major source countries of unskilled foreign migrant workers for Taiwan. As shown in figure 1, the number of Vietnamese contract workers in Taiwan has continuously increased since 1999. In 1999, there were only 131 Vietnamese workers in Taiwan, but after 5 years, the number jumped up quickly to 90,241 people in 2004, which is more than 600 times the number of 1999, accounting for 28.5% (314,034) of all foreign migrant workers in Taiwan and representing 0.87% of Taiwan's total labor force of 10,318,000. Nevertheless, there was a sudden decrease in the following years because the desertion rate of Vietnamese workers has been the highest among all countries from which labour is imported. This led to Taiwan suspending Vietnamese household workers and caregivers in 2005<sup>4</sup>. However, Vietnamese labour exports to Taiwan began to increase again since 2010 and the total number

reached 80,030, accounting for 21.1% of total foreign workers, and then doubled to 169,981 in 2015, representing 1.45% of Taiwan's total labour force of 11,686,000 and accounting for 28.9% of the total number of foreign workers in Taiwan. Thus, during the first half of the 2010s, Vietnam always ranked second (after Indonesia) among Southeast Asian countries exporting labor to Taiwan. It is clear that Vietnam has become an important source for human resources for Taiwan.

So far, Vietnamese workers are mainly employed in the manufacturing industry, accounting for up to 87.4% of Vietnamese workers in Taiwan, and 43% compared with the total number of foreign workers in the same sector in Taiwan. The second largest number is in service industries, covering mainly the health care and household service sectors. This accounts for 11% of the total, while only about 2% of Vietnamese migrant workers are employed in the construction industry and fishing. This also led to the gender composition has changed significantly. The percentage of Vietnamese female workers between 1999 and 2006 always accounted for over 65% of the total number of Vietnamese contract workers in Taiwan, especially in 1999 (91%), 2004 (83%) and 2005 (85%). Since 2007, however, the percentage of Vietnamese male workers has increased, due to the fact that Taiwan stopped importing Vietnamese caregivers and domestic maids in January 2005. Also, there have been more Vietnamese males than females employed in the construction and manufacturing industries. As a result, since 2011, the percentage of male workers has always accounted for more than half the total number of Vietnamese workers in Taiwan.

According to the Council of Labor Affairs, since December 2010 the maximum length for the employment of foreign migrant workers has been extended to 12 years from the previous period of nine years, but they have to leave Taiwan every three years and renew their contracts. Since July 2014, the monthly minimum wage for migrant workers in the industrial and manufacturing sectors and construction sector is NT\$20,008 (US\$ 629)<sup>5</sup> and NT\$17,000 (US\$ 534) for domestic workers and caregivers. According to the Taiwan's Labor Standards Law (LSL), workers have two days off per week and no more than eight working hours per day, and their maximum allowable overtime work is 46 hours per month. They are paid an additional 1.33 times the hourly rate for the first two hours of overtime work and 1.66 times the hourly rate for the next additional hours. Domestic workers and caregivers do not receive these overtime rates because there is no system of recording how many hours they actually work each day. If they work on their day off or on public holidays, they are to be paid one extra day's salary as overtime, equivalent to NT\$667 (US\$21).

<sup>3</sup> Tsay Ching-Lung (2015). Migration between Southeast Asia and Taiwan: Trends, characteristics and implications, *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> Futaba Ishizuka (2013). International labor migration in Vietnam and the impact of receiving countries' policies, from URL <http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Dp/pdf/414.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Exchange rate: US\$ 1= NT\$ 31.8

## II. THE PROBLEM OF RUNAWAY WORKERS

After 17 years of implementation of the Agreement on sending and receiving Vietnamese laborers to Taiwan, so far Vietnam has sent 1.3 million workers to Taiwan's labour market. The number of Vietnamese workers has continually increased in recent years, so Taiwan is currently the largest labor export market for Vietnam (67%) in the Northeast Asia area. However, the larger the number of workers employed in Taiwan, the greater the number of runaway workers. In other words, the number of Vietnamese workers also directly proportional runaway workers. There have never been so many Vietnamese contract workers run away and work illegally in Taiwan as today. This is really a challenge for the Vietnamese government to promote labor export abroad. According to statistics, the number of Vietnamese runaway workers rose from 35 people (0.7%) in 2000 to 6,590 people (8.3%) in 2010, and the problem has continued and even getting worse. By the end of 2015, there were 12,618 Vietnamese runaway workers, nearly double the number compared with 2014, and the number of runaways reached 1,051 people on average per month. Compared to other countries in Southeast Asia area, Vietnam had the highest missing workers rate between 1999 and 2015, accounting for 43.8%, followed by Indonesia (41.6%), the Philippines (7.5%) and Thailand (7.1%).

However, instead of looking at these escalating figures and shaking one's head, there is a need to look at the reasons why these Vietnamese workers are running away from their jobs, this is the only way to solve the problem at its source<sup>6</sup>. According to surveys so far, there are several categories of runaway workers: first, workers who run away from their legal employers to get higher salaries outside their employment contract, or to escape high fees they are required to pay local labor suppliers for overseas jobs, or they want to enjoy better working conditions or to transfer to a workplace close to where more of their fellow countrymen are located<sup>7</sup>. Second, workers who finished their legal employment contract but don't want to go home, pay the placement fee, air fare and so on, to come back Taiwan again, or they fear that they will not find new jobs when they return home. Third, workers who work as caregivers in private households but unfortunately their patient passed away, employers do not need them anymore and they have to leave the family but cannot transfer to another legal job, so they decide to run away. Fourth, in the past, Vietnamese runaway workers have been mainly three-case types as discussed

above. However, the surveys show that the fourth case type contributing to high desertion rate among Vietnamese workers, is that a small part of Vietnamese students come to Taiwan for purpose of learning Mandarin without a scholarship, after completing their program of study, they overstay in Taiwan and work illegally. Becoming undocumented workers is probably risky. These workers lose their legal status, and are no longer covered by the health insurance. If they are caught by Taiwanese police, they will be detained for a short time and have to pay a penalty of NT\$10,000 (US\$300), and then be forced to return home.

Therefore, to address the above problems we should look at difficulties that Vietnamese migrant workers have meet at home and abroad.

The major domestic factor contributing to the high desertion rate among Vietnamese migrant workers is the high pre-departure cost<sup>8</sup>. According to Vietnamese labour law, the labour agencies sending workers must be 100 percent Vietnamese enterprises, with legal capital of at least about US\$250,000 and these agencies must recruit workers directly without collecting recruitment fees. In fact, however, the process of recruiting workers is generally complex and multi-layered, involving various organizations and individuals<sup>9</sup> refer to brokerage companies. Since labour agencies sending workers overseas rarely come to local communities to recruit workers directly, so 70-80% of the workers have been recruited via brokerage companies. In fact, according to Vietnamese regulations, the total costs for manufacturing and construction workers seeking employment in Taiwan should not exceed US\$4,500 and US\$ 3,600 for domestic workers and caregivers, and deposits required from workers to ensure contract completion should not exceed US\$1,000 for a three-year contract. However, manpower agencies in Taiwan and Vietnam, many of whom may seem unrelated on the surface, form strategic partnerships to exploit Vietnamese workers financially and split the profits<sup>10</sup>. The surveys show that workers had to pay costs on average from US\$5,500 to US\$7,000, and that many workers even had to pay a total fee of US\$8,000 for brokerage companies to be selected for a three-year working contract. Actually, most workers come from the destitute countryside of Vietnam, and they are unskilled workers with a low-middle education level, so they want to go abroad to earn more money for themselves and their family. Compared to other East Asian countries, however, Vietnamese labour exporting companies demand the

<sup>6</sup> Cody Yiu, "Runaway workers needing protection", <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2005/01/14/2003219318>.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph S. Lee "The management of foreign workers in Taiwan", [http://www.jil.go.jp/foreign/event/ko\\_work/documents/2007sopem/taiwan.pdf](http://www.jil.go.jp/foreign/event/ko_work/documents/2007sopem/taiwan.pdf), p.8.

<sup>8</sup> Futaba Ishizuka (2013). International labor migration in Vietnam and the impact of receiving countries' policy, *IDE discussion paper No. 414*, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Futaba Ishizuka (2013). International labor migration in Vietnam and the impact of receiving countries' policy, *IDE discussion paper No. 414*, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Cody Yiu, "Runaway workers needing protection", <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2005/01/14/2003219318>.

highest amount in placement fees. Due to this exorbitant level of placement fees, most workers had to sell or mortgage their family properties, and take out large loans from banks in order to pay the labour recruiters and labour export companies. Consequently, they left Vietnam heavy in debt, but with hopeful expectations that after three years of working contract, this debt would easily be repaid, with leftover earnings to save and to send home to their loved ones.

Looking at the monthly salary without extra work of those migrant workers covered by the LSL (see table 1), it is obvious that their income is not high. Some are lucky to find safe work and get frequent overtime, and these workers can earn enough money to pay off their debt in the first year. Other people took nearly two years to earn enough money to pay off their debt, and some even can only look forward to a lifetime of indebtedness, and become victims of the labour export companies.

**Table 1: Income calculation of Vietnamese workers without overtime work**

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Items		Salary	Salary	Salary
Salary	Minimum wage <sup>11</sup>	20,008	20,008	20,008
Depreciation cost	Brokerage service fee	1,800	1,700	1,500
	Labor insurance	572	572	572
	Health insurance	447	447	447
	Tax <sup>12</sup>	2,400	1,200	1,200
	Food & accommodation	2,500	2,500	2,500
	Total	7,719	6,419	6,219
Net monthly income		12,289	13,589	13,789
Net annual income <sup>13</sup>		147,468	163,068	165,468
Total of 3 years		NT\$ 476,004 = US\$ 14,968		

Source: The data sheet based on interviewee's information.

Another factor shows that there have been many unlucky workers who have to work at private factories or small enterprises with poor working conditions, heavy or dangerous work, and are even abused by the broker or employer, or they work at companies without overtime work, and with unstable income. They are bearing a heavy burden of responsibilities, and a big debt waiting for them at home, so they chose to run away from their employer in order to seek more profitable employment elsewhere. Those workers who do transfer to other employers without the prior approval of the government are immediately classified as illegal

workers<sup>11</sup>. By working illegally, they do not need to worry about tax deductions, Taiwan's monthly brokerage service fee or other costs associated with legal employment<sup>12</sup>. It should be acknowledged, however, that if there were no illegal employers, there would be no illegal employees. In fact, although employers know that foreign workers running away is illegal, they still hire these workers, even shielding undocumented workers from authorities. Especially in the agricultural sector, Taiwan's human resource demand is quite high, but so far there have not been many Vietnamese workers to be recruited into this sector. Therefore, there have been many workers were hired by illegal employers to grow fruits, vegetables and mushrooms, or to pick tea leaves in the mountainous areas in Taichung and Tainan. This can be explained by the economic benefits of using illegal workers, such as meeting immediate labor shortages, maintaining stability of production, and assisting with other activities of the employer and, most importantly, reducing the input costs due to the low cost of labor. In addition, the illegal employers do not have to pay labor insurance. They are not bound legally to the workers or to the local authorities. These employers can get the best out of the workers, even engage in labour exploitation and can easily dismiss these illegal employees.

#### Case studies:

Vinh-a worker from Phu Tho province who has been working in Taipei for two years, said: "Before coming to Taiwan, I had to pay a total of US\$6,300 for brokerage company to be recruited in a mechanic factory for a three-year contract. I had to borrow money from the bank, mortgaged several acres of land to secure that amount of money. I came here to work at a private steel foundry, my daily job is to check out machine and pick up hot steel. The foundry's working conditions are not good, and especially, I just had 6 hours of overtime work per month, my highest month salary was only NT\$17,000. After one year working there, I sent home only 60 million dong (about US\$2,900), so I decided to run away to find other job with better income". (Interviewed on November 6, 2016).

Hung, 33, from Nghe An province, came to Taiwan in September 2015 and worked as a bridge worker in Taichung. The total expenses for his trip were US\$5,500. Unfortunately, he just worked at this company for 10 months because the project's progress was very slow, the state suspended the company working on the project. Some workers went to the broker agency to ask for help in being transferred to another job, and some workers moved to another legal employer. Hung decided on running

<sup>11</sup> Joseph S. Lee "The management of foreign workers in Taiwan", [http://www.jil.go.jp/foreign/event/ko\\_work/documents/2007sopemi/taiwan.pdf](http://www.jil.go.jp/foreign/event/ko_work/documents/2007sopemi/taiwan.pdf), p.8.

<sup>12</sup> Cody Yiu, "Runaway workers needing protection", <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2005/01/14/2003219318>.

away and currently, he is working for a construction company in Taipei. At his second workplace, he loses his legal status and is not covered by the health and labor insurance, but he does not have to pay monthly broker's service fee like other legal workers in this company. "After moving to the second workplace, I feel satisfied with current work and income, I will stay here for a few years until I have accumulated a little capital for my future life in Vietnam", he says. (Interviewed on November 6, 2016).

Giang, a man 45 years old came to Taiwan to work in construction sector, said: "I arrived here from Ninh Binh province, I have been working in Taiwan for a three-year contract since March 2014. In Vietnam, I went through a labour exporting company, they charged me a total US\$1,500 as a placement fee, but that US\$1,500 didn't include all the side costs. When I came to the parent company, they charged me more than US\$5,400. I and others still had to shell out additional money to cover expenses for all the paperwork. Thus, I had to pay a total of US\$7,100 to be recruited to Taiwan for a three-year contract". Mr. Giang is a lucky man to be recruited into a building work in Taipei and his monthly overtime work ranging from 60 to 80 hours. Therefore, he could earn enough money to pay off his debt within the first 10 months working in Taiwan. However, his employment contract will end in April 2017. His employer does not intend to continue to hire these workers. So he intends to overstay in Taiwan for a few more years to earn more money before returning home. (Interviewed on April 6, 2016).

### 3. Taiwan and Vietnam's measures to reduce the number of Vietnamese runaway workers

The problem of runaway workers is not only a headache for both the Taiwanese and Vietnamese government, but also is a nightmare for legal employers. If this situation persists, it will not only damage the reputation and business of agencies who supply Vietnamese labor, but it will also have an adverse impact on Taiwan's security and society.

According to the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), to prevent the labor brokerage fees from being pushed up too high, since early 2013, Taiwan has officially implemented the provisions of the law, not renewing licenses or not allowing the establishment of branches of brokerage companies in Taiwan, and not renewing the licenses for labor export companies from the countries having high rates of runaway workers in the first three months after immigration. In June 2013, the Taiwan Labour Commission also issued revised procedures and support for foreigners voluntarily returning to their home countries to retrieve their passports, cash and property that their owners or broker had retained<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, Taiwan has revised the Employment Service Act and raised the level of fines on employers

who hire undocumented foreign workers from NT\$90,000 (US\$2,830) to between NT\$150,000 and NT\$750,000 (US\$4,717 to US\$23,585). If the employer has two violations within five years, this can lead to a three-year prison term plus a fine of up to NT\$1.2 million (US\$37,736)<sup>14</sup>. The Taiwanese government has also established a special program to deal with foreign workers' personal or job-related problems. These include direct telephone hot-lines through which foreign workers can make known their complaints regarding difficulties at work and other job-related issues with their employers. These telephone hot-lines are available in four different languages: Filipino, Thai, Indonesian and Vietnamese. With these types of arrangements and facilities, the problems faced by foreign workers can be dealt with in a timely manner and without any language barriers. Thus the undocumented rate can be more effectively reduced<sup>15</sup>.

The Council of Labor Affairs has also negotiated with the Vietnamese government to implement direct hiring programs. In accordance with the agreement, Taiwanese employers have the option to hire workers directly from Vietnam through the Vietnam Economic and Culture Office in Taipei, bypassing entirely the employment agencies in both sides. It is hoped that through such direct hiring, the problem of excessive brokerage fees can be totally eliminated. More importantly, an amendment to Article 52 of the Employment Service Act passed by the Legislative Yuan on 21 October 2016 removed a clause from the Act that requiring foreign workers to return their home countries every three years for at least one day in order to be eligible to renew their work contracts<sup>16</sup>. The amendment not only help foreign workers by saving time and brokerage fees and other fees to re-enter Taiwan, but also helps Taiwanese employers retain skilled employees without re-training. Thus employers can also avoid periods without these employees in their workforce. This is a real opportunity for Vietnamese workers who wish extend their working contracts that might total up to 12 years in Taiwan without having to leave Taiwan and apply for a new visa, especially they do not have to pay placement fees to re-enter Taiwan.

Besides measures produced by Taiwan to reduce the number of missing workers, the Vietnamese government has been taking several measures since 2011, including intensifying the education of people on the consequences of runaway workers status, enhancing the quality of language training and legal

<sup>14</sup> Zoe Wei and Evelyn Kao, Taiwan devises measures to resume import of workers from Vietnam, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201507050009.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> Uma A. Segal, Doreen Elliott & Nazneen S. Mayadas (2010). *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, practices and trends*, Oxford University Press, p.343.

<sup>16</sup> Stephanie Chao, Lawmakers ax mandatory exits for migrant workers, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/nationalnews/2016/10/21/481707/Lawmakers-ax.htm>

<sup>13</sup> VCCI, Labor export to Taiwan: Open opportunities, [http://vccinews.com/news\\_detail.asp?news\\_id=29585](http://vccinews.com/news_detail.asp?news_id=29585)

knowledge for workers, as well as changing methods of labor selection. In addition, the government issued Decree No.95/2013/ND-CP which took effect in October 2013, imposed a fine of between 80 million and 100 million dong (US\$3,635 to US\$4,545), and a two to five-year ban on taking up overseas work on Vietnamese guest workers who run away from their foreign employers without permission when they return home. Under the Decree, the Vietnamese government also encouraged illegal Vietnamese workers who voluntarily return home before March 10, 2014, who will not be fined for administrative violations. As a result, a newspaper article in April 2014 reported that right after the Decree 95 took effect, there were first three illegal Vietnamese workers fined by Mr. Bui Trong Van - the head of Vietnam Economic and Culture Office in Taipei (VECO) with a fine of 90 million dong per person<sup>17</sup>. By the end 2014, the VECO sanctioned 167 cases with total fines of over 15 billion dong<sup>18</sup>. However, the Decree 95 of the Vietnamese government has meet with intense protests from workers because they think that the fine is too heavy and brokerage companies should be the real objects of punishment rather than destitute workers.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It may be said that Vietnamese labour exports to Taiwan are a quite special form of international cooperation. It not only stems from uneven economic development, labour shortage or surplus, the international division of labour, migration and population distribution, but also is determined by socio-cultural factors and the relationship between Vietnam and Taiwan. However, the importance of promoting labour cooperation is to meet demand and pursue the interest of the two sides. In the past years, HR cooperation between Vietnam and Taiwan has shown that Vietnamese workers are bynature hard-working, active, intelligent, skillful and friendly, and that they are willing to do overtime work. Therefore, they are really important contributors to offset to Taiwan's labour shortage. It is also undeniable that many lucky workers are employed in reputable companies, they work well and have stable income. After returning to their home country, in some parts of the country, communities are called "Taiwan village". In such villages, many new houses are built and various shops set up, thus demonstrating prosperity in the midst of poor rural areas. Even many returnees have become investors, set up businesses to create more jobs for local labourers and contributing to the country's development.

<sup>17</sup> "3 lao dong dau tien bi phat do bo tron o nuoc ngoai" (The first three workers are penalized for fleeing abroad), *Nguoi lao dong*, 8 April 2014, <http://nld.com.vn/cong-doaan/3-lao-dong-dau-tien-bi-phat-do-bo-tron-o-nuoc-ngoai-20140408203931073.htm>

<sup>18</sup> <http://news.immigration.gov.tw/VN/Post.aspx?NEWSGUID=adf11877-e0c8-4cf9-a7cb-e96c7260da5a>

Unlike Vietnam's relations with other countries, the relationship between Vietnam and Taiwan is a non-diplomatic relation. Both sides can keep their cooperative relations by the people-to-people interaction in which a great contribution of the Vietnamese community includes Vietnamese migrant workers. Therefore, to improve the efficiency of labor export and reduce negative impacts on the HR cooperation between Vietnam and Taiwan, besides the development and improvement of the Vietnamese labor law system, it is necessary to strengthen and improve management mechanisms on labour exports, as well as, to develop long-term strategies and a vision for the outward migration of Vietnamese people in the context of regional integration and development. This is to reduce unsafe migration and prevent illegal workers, as well as enhancing the responsibilities of both sides and implement an effective and flexible cooperation mechanism between domestic companies, organizations and Vietnamese diplomatic representative office in Taiwan, so as to protect the legitimate rights and interests of workers through the various stages of migration including pre-departure, residence, work, return and reintegration<sup>19</sup>.

More importantly, there is an urgent need for Vietnamese government to produce reasonable labor export fees and prevent exploitation by brokerage companies to ensure that workers are able to pay off their debts and have a reasonable chance at capital accumulation in order to improve their life, thus lessening the pressure on them to run away.

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<sup>19</sup> Consular Department-Ministry of Foreign Affair of Vietnam (2012). Review of Vietnamese migration abroad, p. 55

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