THE APPLICATION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY TO THE PROJECT OF VIETNAMESE LABOUR EXPORT TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES MARKET: THE CASE OF MALAYSIA

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Abstract
The use of foreign labor resource is popular in many countries. Nowadays, under the process of globalization, this has been improved more and more, depending on the human resource strategy in each nation. Vietnam is evaluated as the nation of young population with the high rate of labor age, making up about 63% of its total population (by the end of 2006, there were 43.3 million labors, in which 22.5 % were trained workers and 5% were managing staff). However, the rate of unemployment is quite high. Therefore, employment is an urgent and long-term problem. To solve this problem, it is important to develop local business and production, but also the labor export to neighbor countries and the world should be taken into account. This is also in line with the policy of the Vietnamese Government and the Party’s Directive No. 41/CT – TW dated 22 Sep 1998 on “Labor and Expert Export” that stressed, “Together with solving employment by local business, labor and expert export is the important, long-term strategy to contribute to building a human resource for our national construction process in the period of industrialization and modernization”. Among Southeast Asian nations, Malaysia is considered as a potential market for labor export, because it is available for unskilled workers. It needs about 1 million of foreign workers per year to fill the lacking of its local labor for the strategy of turning Malaysia into a developed industrial nation towards the year of 2020. As the spirit of building an ASEAN Community of caring societies, Malaysia has opened the labor market for Vietnamese workers since April 2002. However, the labor export process to Malaysia still has some existing problems needed to study and improve. To carry out the targets of labor export policy, besides the responsibility of concerned agencies and authorities, it is necessary to require the contribution by scientists, including Anthropology. Hopefully, the applied research of anthropology could contribute to the improvement of Vietnamese labor export to Malaysia market, and limit the risks of cultural problems, particularly between Vietnamese laborers and local ones in Malaysia which is an Islamic multi-ethnic country; by collecting the experience of some Southeast Asian nations, based on the policy of Vietnam’s 11 Based on the 2003 data of Vietnamese Agency 12 Based on the data of Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Welfare Party and Government and the most effective activities of the competitive advantages among ASEAN, we carry out the project: “The application of Socio-cultural anthropology to Vietnamese labor export to Southeast Asian countries’ market - The case of Malaysia”.

Keywords: foreign labor resource, labor export, anthropology

Abstrak
Penggunaan tenaga kerja asing sudah menjadi kebutuhan negara-negara industri pada kondisi globalisasi dewasa ini. Ketergantungan akan tenaga kerja asing berbeda-beda untuk setiap Negara tergantung pula dari kebijakan ketenagakerjaan Negara tersebut. Vietnam dikenal sebagai Negara dengan populasi angkatan kerja muda sebesar 63% dari

Kata kunci: foreign labor resource, labor export, anthropology

1. Research Background

To understand more about this receiving Vietnamese labors nation, we would like to present generally about The policy of Malaysian Government for foreign labor. Malaysian Government is facing with the shortage of the labor source in some economic fields, especially in industry, construction, and agriculture. To cope with this problem, from the early year of 1970s, Malaysian Government has allowed using the immigrated labor source. Recently, Malaysia needs about one million of labor from other countries. To strengthen the legal and effective management for immigrated labor, from January 1992, Malaysian Government has promulgated the new policy about recruitment for foreign labor based on Working Law in 1995. Labor Law of Malaysia has stipulated that the foreign labor is treated equally as the native labor on salary, benefits, and other duties. Thus, by their policies, Malaysian Government respects and defends the legal interests for immigrated labor. Foreign labor is guaranteed to be treated fairly as the native labor on benefits, and other duties.

Today, Vietnamese labor has been working in 13 states of 14 states in Malaysia; among of them, Kuala Lumpur and Johor are two areas that gather most of Vietnamese workers, approximately 20,000 people in each area. Overall, Vietnamese labor is evaluated quite well in working ability; they are laborious, creative, and acquire so well in working. This is the first step to make a good position in this market. In Malaysia, Vietnamese labor works mainly in industry, construction, and some work in public services, and agriculture. Besides the above