

# Commodity Trade and Exchange of Human Resources between Korea and Vietnam: An Overview of Trend and Prospect\*

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## I. Introduction

Korea and Vietnam can be a good partner in the course of economic integration in East Asian region. There seems to be an appropriate gap in their stage of economic development to enjoy mutual gains from exchange of products and factors.

Since the diplomatic normalization in 1992, the bilateral economic relation between Korea and Vietnam has been deepening as well as widening in terms of commodity trade, initially, and exchange of factors of production via foreign direct investment, later, and exchange of human resources more recently. So far, capital and technology moved from Korea to Vietnam while labor moved from Vietnam to Korea. Half processed materials, accompanying the

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movement of capital and technology, also moved from Korea to Vietnam, making Korea one of the major trade partners to Vietnam, while causing a serious imbalance in commodity trade.

The objective of this paper is to review the recent trend of bilateral economic exchange between Korea and Vietnam, focussing on commodity trade and exchange of human resources, and to assess possibilities and derive policy directions for enhancing the bilateral relation, so that it may promote the partnership between the two countries in the process of East Asian economic integration.

The contents of this paper are as follows: Trend of commodity trade since 1992 is analyzed by decomposing the change in the volume of bilateral trade so that it may lead to implications for the future direction of commodity trade. Then, a brief review is done on trends of bilateral treaties/agreements and human resource (HR) exchanges between Korea and Vietnam. Trends and issues are discussed over Korea-Vietnam HR exchanges in three broad categories; (i) Labor and skill-related HR, (ii) Technology and knowledge-related HR and (iii) Capital and SOC-related HR. Assessments and policy proposals are then recommended as conclusion.

## II. Commodity Trade

The volume of Korean export(import) of commodity  $i$  to Vietnam,  $X_{iv}(M_{iv})$ , can be analyzed as:

$$X_{iv} = \frac{X_{iv}}{X_i} \cdot X_i$$

$$M_{iv} = \frac{M_{iv}}{M_i} \cdot M_i$$

where  $X_i(M_i)$  = total volume of Korean export(import) of commodity i and  $X_{iv}(M_{iv})$  = total volume of Korean export(import) of commodity i to Vietnam.

Therefore, change( $\Delta$ ) in the volume of Korean export(import) to Vietnam of commodity i,  $\Delta X_{iv}(\Delta M_{iv})$ , can be decomposed in two components: (i) change in the share of Vietnamese market(product) in Korean export(import) and (ii) change in the total volume of Korean export(import).

$$\Delta X_{iv} = \Delta \frac{X_{iv}}{X_i} \cdot X_i + \frac{X_{iv}}{X_i} \cdot \Delta X_i$$

$$\Delta M_{iv} = \Delta \frac{M_{iv}}{M_i} \cdot M_i + \frac{M_{iv}}{M_i} \cdot \Delta M_i$$

The first term in the right of the equation measures trade composition effect, while the latter measures trade volume effect. Denoting trade composition effect as  $\Delta V\%$  and trade volume effect as  $\Delta K$ , it becomes:

$$\Delta X_{iv} = \Delta V\% + \Delta K$$

Measuring  $\Delta V\%$  in the horizontal axis and  $\Delta K$  in the vertical axis, the pattern of change over time in commodity trade may be categorized in four groups. Following is an interpretation of these categories for export. A similar interpretation may be given for import as well.

- (i)  $\Delta V\% > 0$  and  $\Delta K > 0$ : Korean export of this product is increasing as is its Vietnamese market share, indicating that Vietnamese market helps increase the volume of Korean export for this

product. This is likely to arise if Korea and Vietnam maintains a complementary trade relation with respect to this commodity and/or Vietnamese import grows faster than Korean export for this product.

- (ii)  $\Delta V\% < 0$  and  $\Delta K > 0$ : Korean export of this product is increasing while its Vietnamese market share is declining. It may be that Vietnam is pursuing import substitution or Korea is losing its competitiveness in Vietnamese market for this product. The latter seems more likely if we consider the gap between Korea and Vietnam in their stages of economic development. Special attention needs to be taken if  $|\Delta V\%| > |\Delta K|$  when the volume of Korean export to Vietnam is decreasing.
- (iii)  $\Delta V\% > 0$  and  $\Delta K < 0$ : Korean export of this product is decreasing while its Vietnamese market share is increasing. Vietnamese market is increasing absolutely, if  $|\Delta V\%| > |\Delta K|$ , or relatively only, if  $|\Delta V\%| < |\Delta K|$ . The product may be that of a declining industry in Korea. For this product, foreign direct investment to Vietnam is more desirable than export.
- (iv)  $\Delta V\% < 0$  and  $\Delta K < 0$ : Korean export of this product is decreasing as is its Vietnamese share. This type of product is not desirable for export.

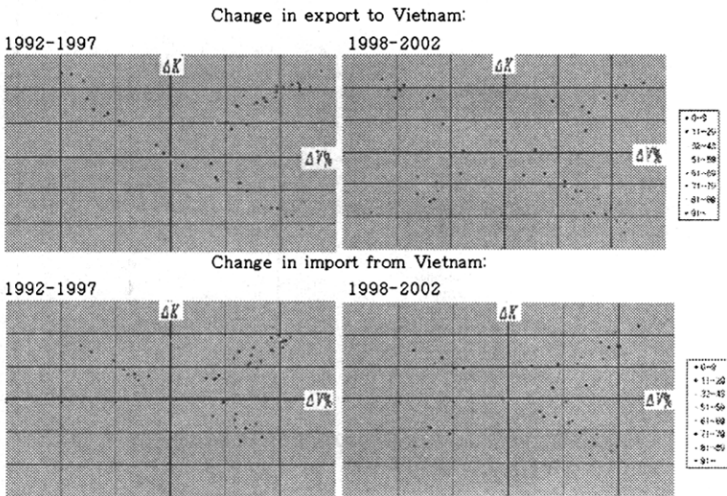
### 1. Factors behind the change in commodity trade between Korea and Vietnam

Commodity trade between Korea and Vietnam was insignificant until 1992 when they normalized their diplomatic relation. Since then, the volume of the bilateral trade increased continuously except for the year 1998 of foreign exchange crisis in Korea.

Following is an analysis, applying the above method, of the change in volume of commodity trade between Korea and Vietnam over a period of 10 years since diplomatic normalization. The period is divided in two parts(1992-97 and 1997-02). Commodities are classified according to SITC(two digits) of KOTIS(Korea Trade Information Services).

Fig.1 shows the result where the pattern of change over time in commodity trade are grouped in four quadrants; with  $\Delta V\%$  in the horizontal axis and  $\Delta K$  in the vertical axis. Scales are measured in log value of  $X/10,000$  where  $X$ =volume of trade in U.S dollars. Numbers in the right indicate SITC digits.

Fig.1 Decomposition of factors behind change in commodity trade between Korea and Vietnam: 1992-2002



Figures for 1992-97 do not have any observation below the diagonal line from the upper left(North West) to the lower right(South East) because trade had just begun to increase. Figures

for 1997-02 show that there are substantial variation in pattern and amount of change in commodity trade across commodity groups.

Table 1 summarizes the results for export of Fig.1 in the form of transition matrix. It shows that the number of commodities in quadrant 1( $\Delta V\% > 0$  and  $\Delta K > 0$ ) almost halved from 30 to 16 and that in quadrant 2( $\Delta V\% < 0$  and  $\Delta K > 0$ ) also decreased from 14 to 12. On the other hand, the number of commodities in quadrant 4( $\Delta V\% > 0$  and  $\Delta K < 0$ ) increased from 14 to 21 and that in quadrant 3( $\Delta V\% < 0$  and  $\Delta K < 0$ ) also increased to 10.

Table 1. Change in the pattern of export to Vietnam

		1992-1997				number of items
		0	quadrant 1	quadrant 2	quadrant 4	
0	0	1 meat 12 tobacco 25 pulp 32 coal 96 coins 99 gold				6
	quadrant 1		{54} medical {59} chemical {64} paper {(9)} misc. edibles {(52)} nonorg. chem. {(53)} dyng mat. {(58)} plastic product	{68} non-fer. metal {72} ind. Machine {78} vehicles {(55)} oil refined {(79)} other transport. {28} metal mine prod. 2 dairy 42 plant oil	{(8)} animal feed	16
1	quadrant 2		{74} gen. machine {(29)} rubbers {(75)} office equip.	22 fruits 7 coffees	{65} non-metal mine prod. {(71)} motors	12
	quadrant 4		{57} plastic materials {73} proc. Machine {78} commu. Equip. {(51)} org.chemical {11} drinks	6 sugars 21 furs	{89} misc. product {(29)} animals, plants {63} wood product	10
2	quadrant 3		{69} metal products {(4)} grains {(62)} rubber prod. {(81)} constructions {82} furnitures			10
	quadrant 4		{31} natural ore {(67)} ect. equipment {(88)} proc. Machine {27} unproc. Mine  {61} leather prod. {65} textile product {(26)} textile fibers {(56)} fertilizer {(67)} steel {(77)} electronic equip. 43 other oil product	{23} petro. product {97} sold	{85} shoes {(94)} clothes {3} fishery {5} vege. fruit {41} animal oil 0 live animal  {83} bags 24 timber	21
		7	30	14	14	65

none: -10,000\$, I: -100,000\$, (I): -1,000,000\$, {I: 1,000,000\$-

Note: Shaded items belong to upper right part of the quadrant and has trade volume increasing in absolute amount.

Merging quadrant 1 and 2 and disregarding insignificant numbers appearing in quadrant 0, we have the following transition matrix in terms of number of products:

		1992-97	
		quad 1+2	quad 4
1998-02	quad 1+2	25(0.568)	3(0.214)
	quad 3	7(0.159)	3(0.214)
	quad 4	12(0.273)	8(0.571)

It shows that about 57% of the exported products remained in the same quadrant(quad 1+2 and quad 4). Among those in quadrant 1+2 as of 1992-97, 27.3% and 15.9% moved to quadrant 4 and quadrant 3 respectively: important cases(in terms of monetary amount) are products of petroleum, leather, textile and metal. In contrast to this, three out of 14 industries moved from quadrant 4 to quadrant 1+2; an important case being non-metal mine product.

Thus, Vietnamese market is becoming more competitive and asks for higher international competitiveness for Korean products. It also shows that for a large number of commodities, FDI or other types of economic exchange is more appropriate than export.

Table 2 shows a summary result for import of Fig.1. The number of commodities in quadrant 1( $\Delta V\% > 0$  and  $\Delta K > 0$ ) almost halved from 29 to 16 and that in quadrant 2 ( $\Delta V\% < 0$  and  $\Delta K > 0$ ) also decreased from 13 to 10. On the other hand, the number of commodities in quadrant 4( $\Delta V\% > 0$  and  $\Delta K < 0$ ) increased from 11 to 17 and that in quadrant 3( $\Delta V\% < 0$  and  $\Delta K < 0$ ) also increased to 10.

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Table 2. Change in the pattern of import from Vietnam

		1992-1997				number of items
		0	quadrant 1	quadrant 2	quadrant 4	
1998-2002	0	0 live animal 2 dairy 12 tobacco 21 furs 34 natural gas 41 animal oil 42 plant oil 43 other oil product 56 fertilizer 87 sclequipment 96 coins 97 gold				12
	quadrant 1		[3] fishery (77) electronic equip. (84) clothes (55) vege.fruits ((66)) nonmetal mine prod. ((82)) furnitures [54] medical [63] wood product [74] gen. machine (89) misc. product	[99] others 81 constructions	((67)) steel ((71)) motors [78] vehicles 1 meat	16
	quadrant 2		9 misc. edibles 58 plastic product  ((76)) commu. Equip.	[26] metal mine prod. 55 oil refined  ((83)) bags 11 drinks 73 proc. Machine	[51] org.chemical  [62] rubber prod.	10
	quadrant 3		((29)) animals, plants ((33)) petro. product [6] sugars [27] unproc. Mine [32] coal [59] chemical 88 prec. Machine		[61] leather prod. [64] paper [72] ind. Machine	10
quadrant 4		[7] coffees [23] rubbers ((24)) timber ((05)) shoes [22] fruits [68] metal products 8 animal feed 53 drying mat  ((65)) textile product	((88)) non-fer. metal [26] textile fibers [52] nonorg. chem. [78] other transport 57 plastic materials 75 office equip.	[4] grains 25 pulp	17	
		12	29	13	11	65

none: -10,000\$, []: -100,000\$, (( )): -1,000,000\$, {}: 1,000,000\$

Note: Shaded items belong to upper right part of the quadrant and has trade volume increasing in absolute amount.

Merging quadrant 1 and 2 and disregarding insignificant numbers appearing in quadrant 0, we have the following transition matrix in terms of number of commodities:

		1992-97	
		quad 1+2	quad 4
1998-02	quad 1+2	20(0.476)	6(0.545)
	quad 3	7(0.167)	3(0.273)
	quad 4	15(0.357)	2(0.182)



It shows that a large number of reshuffling has occurred in Korea's import of Vietnamese products. Among those in quadrant 1+2, 35.7% and 16.7% of moved to quadrant 4 and quadrant 3 respectively: important cases(in terms of monetary amount) are coffees and rubbers. On the other hand, six out of 11 industries moved from quadrant 4 to quadrant 1+2 but their importance in terms of monetary value is limited.

Thus, Korean market is becoming more competitive and asks for higher international competitiveness for Vietnamese products. It also shows that Vietnam has to find other markets for a large number of commodities which are currently exported to Korea.

## 2. Future directions for commodity trade between Korea and Vietnam

The above analysis suggests the following list of commodities according to their future desirable direction in the mode of commodity trade:

- ( i ) commodities adequate for trade expansion: 16 items for both export and import in quadrant 1.
- ( ii ) commodities in need of competitiveness on the part of exporters: 12 items exported to Vietnam and 10 items imported from Vietnam in quadrant 2.
- ( iii ) commodities in need of conversion to other trade partners or modes of exchange: 31 items exported to Vietnam and 27 items imported from Vietnam.

### III. Exchange of Human Resources

Official relation in commodity trade and HR exchange between Korea and Vietnam starts from the opening of the KOTRA trade center in Hochiminh City in February 1990. Mr. Phan Van Khai, then the Chairman of the State Planning Committee, made a first official visit to Korea in April 1991. In December 1992, the two countries formalized a full diplomatic relation, with embassies in Seoul and Hanoi and Korean consulate general in Hochiminh City.

Official visits of VIP's, including presidents and prime ministers, occurred, in many cases on reciprocal basis, very frequently:

Presidential visits; Kim Young Sam(1996. 11) Kim Dai Choong(1998. 12), Roh Moo Hyun(2004.10), Do Muoi Party Secretary(1995. 4), Tran Duc Luong(2001. 8).

Prime minister; Lee Young Duk(1994. 8), Lee Han Dong(2002. 4), Vo Van Kiet (1993. 5), Phan Van Khai (2004. 9).

Deputy prime minister; Kwon O Kee(1997. 11), Nguyen Manh Cam(2000. 10), Nguyen Tan Dung(2002. 8) Phan Van Khai (2003. 9).

Parliament chairmen; Kim Soo Han(1996. 8), Park Kwan Yong(2003. 8), Kim Tai Sik(Deputy)(2002. 8), Nong Duc Manh(1998. 3).

Minister level: 18 from Korea, 10 from Vietnam

Such a frequent reciprocal visits led to a large number of bilateral agreements on exchange of human resources and technology such as:

Economic and Technical Cooperation(93.2),

Vocational Training Project(94.12)

Scientific and Technological Cooperation(95.4),

- Korea-Vietnam Technology Cooperation Center(98.8),
- Korea-Vietnam Industrial Technology Institute(98.12),
- Tourism(2002.8), and
- Korea-Vietnam Friendship Information Technology College(2004.10).

Table 3 shows the trend in number of visitors between Korea and Vietnam since 1994. For the period of January 1994-May 2004, 128 thousands of Vietnamese visited Korea while 581 thousands of Koreans visited Vietnam. Composition of the cumulative total shows that, other than tour and convention which accounts for 36.4% and 41.4% of Vietnamese and Korean visitors respectively, trainees(36.2%), business(11.6%) and official visits(9.7%) account for the most of Vietnamese visitors whereas business(46.1%) and family visits(7.2%) account for the most of Korean visitors.

Table 3: Trend of visitors between Korea and Vietnam: 1994-2004.5

Vietnam->Korea												
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	total x
Total	5575	11193	10563	9025	8303	12085	15520	11355	14384	20662	8398	128053 100.00
Trainee	3533	6485	5507	4304	2036	4356	6184	1532	2056	7832	2528	46363 36.21
Employment	9	0	3	29	1	6	46	88	365	230	252	1029 0.80
HR: sub total	3542	6485	5510	4333	2037	4362	6230	1520	2431	8062	2780	47292 37.01
Lecture, research	2	7	17	12	15	13	21	45	60	66	37	285 0.22
Study	24	41	57	52	71	62	122	168	263	453	291	1504 1.26
Sports, arts	3	4	7	23	3	1	31	84	6	3	2	167 0.13
Media coverage	2	0	2	4	0	1	3	3	14	5	3	97 0.08
Religion	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	7	1	17 0.01
HR: sub total	33	54	94	91	89	77	178	303	343	534	334	2120 1.66
Official	95	188	115	95	267	1138	1900	2269	2539	2794	972	12372 9.66
Business	815	1284	1473	1484	1414	1179	1211	1098	1753	2133	965	14809 11.56
HR: sub total	810	1472	1688	1678	1681	2317	3111	3367	4292	4927	1937	27181 21.23
Tour, convention	2067	3124	3275	2860	4313	5139	5825	5821	6575	5276	2306	46581 36.36
Family visit, Emigration	21	56	105	139	182	187	173	242	731	1847	1026	4710 3.68
Miscellaneous	2	2	0	23	1	3	2	2	12	12	3	62 0.05
Overseas Korean	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	2		7 0.01

Korea->Vietnam													
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	total x	KV/YK
Total	18298	30455	45108	44444	27723	36515	42742	60785	91440	113278	70012	580900 100.00	4.54
Trainee	298	585	868	1294	162	275	607	897	1226	1767	655	8654 1.49	0.19
Employment	492	404	525	799	530	636	254	268	325	423	176	4232 0.83	4.70
HR: sub total	790	989	1393	2093	712	911	861	1165	1551	2190	831	13496 2.32	0.28
Lecture, research	21	48	49	79	31	31	36	98	107	113	62	675 0.12	2.23
Study	54	85	128	151	113	113	104	111	167	221	83	1330 0.23	0.83
Sports, arts	144	160	250	251	217	186	216	334	258	330	119	2465 0.42	14.76
Media coverage	45	83	178	81	26	54	76	83	119	67	56	988 0.16	23.46
Religion	26	111	171	224	97	114	136	205	300	347	157	1898 0.33	114.08
HR: sub total	230	407	776	1084	464	498	588	831	981	1094	476	7226 1.24	3.41
Official	123	192	356	210	195	120	154	345	353	384	185	2687 0.46	0.22
Business	11452	16992	21134	21924	20154	23451	24273	28741	39214	41611	19135	287391 49.48	18.10
HR: sub total	11686	17084	21500	22154	20349	23571	24427	29086	39607	41995	18920	270558 46.60	9.99
Tour, convention	4368	9877	18449	14932	2588	6780	12670	24387	41821	59675	45049	240536 41.42	5.17
Family visit, Emigration	1030	1674	2538	3857	3194	4263	3781	4373	5968	7344	3781	41803 7.20	8.89
Miscellaneous	38	70	207	397	243	308	229	656	987	390	252	3773 0.65	60.92
Overseas Vietnamese	197	274	245	245	153	184	206	287	555	606	302	3264 0.56	484.89

Source: Statistical Office.

Let us define exchange of human resources as ‘international visits that are related to the provision or acquisition of labor, skill and production technology or knowledge in general’. Based on this definition, we can classify exchange of human resources in three categories:

HR1(labor and skill-related)=trainee, employment.

HR2(technology and knowledge-related)=lecture and research, study, sports and arts, religion.

HR3(capital and SOC-related)=business, official visits.

Table 3 show that while H1 is dominant for the Vietnamese visitors, H3 is more dominant for the Korean visitors. In other words, Vietnam sends labor-related human resources while Korea sends capital and SOC-related human resources. Composition of HR2, knowledge and technology-related human resources, is limited to less than 2% for both countries.

Annual trend of HR exchange is, in general, on the rise but is not stable. Trend for the Korean visitor shows that the foreign exchange crisis in 1998 is the cause for the instability: HR3 declined for 1 year but recovered immediately afterwards but it took three and five years respectively for HR2 and HR1 to recover fully from the downfall. For the Vietnamese visitors, the effect of foreign exchange crisis does not seem to be the sole cause for the instability. The crisis certainly affected the trend as all three categories show downfall around 1998; HR1 in 1998, HR2 in 1999 and HR3 in 1997. HR1 series, however, shows very severe fluctuation in addition to that. We can find three peaks (1995, 2000, 2003) and two troughs (1998, 2001) in 10 year period and the width of the fluctuation seems to be getting larger

more recently.

Detailed information on HR exchange is very rare and if it exists, is scattered over a variety of sources. Analysis in this section is based mainly on the following sources:

HR1(Labor and skill-related): Ministry of Labor(Vietnamese workers and trainees), KOTRA(Korean workers).

HR2(Technology and knowledge-related): Ministry of Science and Technology (Science and technology), Korea Foundation(social science), Ministry of Education (Knowledge).

HR3(Capital and SOC-related): Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade(Official), KOICA and Korea Development Institute(SOC related), KOTRA(Commercial).

## 1. Labor and skill-related HR

Table 3 shows that both countries send workers and trainees to each other but the nature of training and employment differs between them. Koreans, whether they are workers or trainees, go to work in Vietnam as self-employed or employed by the Korean firms. Vietnamese on the other hand, come to Korea, to work in most cases for Korean firms as trainee or as trained worker.

### (1) Foreign workers in Korea

As of December 2002, there were 362.6 thousands of foreign workers in Korea, which comprises 1.58% of the total employed population in Korea. Table 4 shows the recent trend in number of foreign workers in Korea, which increased more than 8 times from

44.9 to 362.6 thousands during the 11 year period since 1991. The trend is due to the introduction of the foreign trainee system, which allowed Korean firms to employ foreign workers under the name of 'the industrial trainee' and 'the FDI trainee' (trainee of Korean investors abroad).

table 4 : Foreign workers in Korea : number

	Total	Employee	Trainee(quota/industry)	illegal resident
1991	44850	2978	-	41877
1992	73968	3395	4945	65528
1993	66919	3767	8644(20000/21)	54508
1994	81824	5265	28328(30000/21)	48231
1995	128906	8228	36812(50000/21)	81866
1996	210494	13420	68020(79000/22)	129054
1997	245399	15900	81451	148048
1998	157689	11143	47009(80000)	99537
999	217384	12592	69454	135338
2000	285506	19063	77448(83800)	188995
2001	325555	27614	46735(85500)	255206

source: Yoo and Lee 2002. p.16

note: FDI Trainees/industrial trainees are composed of 15936/31073(1998)

20017/49437(1999), 15504/58944(2000) and 13505/33230(2001) for the recent years

Because of the increasing vacancies for the so called 3D jobs, especially in the (manual) labor intensive industries, the quota, which was set initially at 20,000 over 21 industries, increased continuously to reach 79,000 over 22 industries by 1996. The quota remained at 80000 around 1998, when Korea was hit by the foreign exchange crisis, but regained its increasing momentum to reach 85,500 by 2001. The result of this is the increase of foreign workers in Korea, who are composed of trainees, legal employees and illegal workers/residents. The rising number of illegal workers has become one of the hottest policy issues in Korea.

(2) Skilled Vietnamese workers in Korea

Professional and technological manpower are allowed to get

employment in Korea: professors, language teachers, researchers, other professionals and technological workers including popular arts. As a matter of fact, Korea encourages and welcomes the inflow of human resources in the area of hi-tech industries such as IT(information and technology), electronic commerce, e-business, etc. They are privileged to get multiple visa for three years(extendable) and are permitted to have dual jobs.

As of 2002, there were 28,560 foreign workers in Korea, who are composed of: trained (trainee-turned) workers 8,842(31.0%), language teachers 9,036(31.6%), popular arts 5,609(19.6%), researchers 968(3.4%), professors 716(2.5%), professionals 410(1.4%), technologists 207(0.7%), and others 2,772(9.7%)(Yoo et al. 2004: 34). All but trained workers belong to the professional and technological manpower.

Table 5 shows the trend of Vietnamese workers in this category who visited Korea since 1994. During the 10 year period, 681 technological and professional workers of Vietnam found employment in Korea and 43% of them were professors, teachers and researchers. In comparison to this, 691 trained workers got employment in Korea over the same period of time.

Table 5: Technological and professional visitors from Vietnam to Korea

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	total
Professors	2	2	3	3	2	2	9	15	8	17	8	71
Lang. teacher	0	1	2	5	7	8	5	6	6	7	3	50
Researchers	0	4	12	4	6	3	7	24	46	42	26	174
Technologists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Professionals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Popular arts	1	0	0	1	0	0	31	83	4	3	1	124
Others	0	0	0	4	0	6	27	46	69	73	35	260
Sub Total	3	7	17	17	15	19	79	174	135	142	73	681
Trained workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	39	291	139	216	691

Source: Statistical Office.

### (3) Unskilled Vietnamese workers in Korea

For employment of unskilled foreign workers, Korea currently has a dual system: trainee system on the one and work permit system on the other. The beginning of the former goes back to November 1991 when, motivated by the chronic shortage of unskilled workers in domestic labor market of Korea, foreign workers were allowed to work in Korea as trainees for the Korean investors abroad. The system was soon extended to include 'industrial trainee system', which after an experimental period (September 1992-April 1993) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, became the main part of the foreign worker system in Korea since January 1994.

The trainee system is currently managed by the Association of Small and Medium Firms<sup>1)</sup> and monitored by the Ministry of Labor. It allowed, initially, a maximum of two year work opportunities as trainees but began to allow one additional year of work opportunity as trained worker from April 2000 and the 2+1(2 year trainee+1 year worker) system was soon changed to 1+2 system since January 2002. However, the trainee system begot a number of problems; scandals surrounding the sending process<sup>2)</sup>, running away from the trainee

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1) The trainee system, as of 2001, allows firms of small and medium size in manufacturing industries (excluding tobacco, publication, copying), to employ 2-30 foreign workers (depending on the size of the firm, from less than 4 to 200-300 workers), who are healthy and of ages within 20-40 with some minimal knowledge of Korean language. Each firm pays to the Association of Small and Medium Firms an amount of 286 thousands won as overhead (for two years) fees per trainee assigned. The association gives the authority to guide the trainees to 20 agencies, which collect guidance fee (24000 won/month) from each trainee.

2) 44 agencies over 14 countries, and 8 for Vietnam, are involved with the selection and sending of industrial trainees, the cost of which ranges from



system, illegal foreign workers and controversies over their human rights<sup>3)</sup>, etc. Despite these problems, it was not easy to abolish the system and so an additional system, the work permit system, was introduced in August 2004 to complement and gradually substitute the existing system.

As of December 2001, a quota of 80,000 industrial trainees were assigned to 14 countries and 12,957 to Vietnam. By the end of 2001, 26,612 Vietnamese visited Korea as industrial trainees and 11,471 left, leaving 15,141. 14,695 of whom were identified to stay in Korea; 1,038 as trained workers, 4,299 as trainees and 9,358 as runaway trainees and illegal workers(Yoo et al. 2002).

Recently, Korean government asked illegal foreign workers in Korea to voluntarily report their status during March 25-May 29 in 2002. 256 thousands(93%) of total estimated illegal foreign workers responded, of whom 10,618(4.15%) were Vietnamese. All but 47 out of 10,618 Vietnamese were employed and 7839 among them were working in manufacturing sector(Yoo et al. 2004).

Surveys<sup>4)</sup> on the Korean firms' preference for foreign workers in Korea reveal that more than 20% of the Korean firms under survey

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950\$(Iran)-1590\$(Vietnam)-2180\$(China) per worker.

3) Trainees work 8 hours a day and 44(226) hours a week(month, inclusive of paid holidays) with wage above the legal minimum (474,600 won/month of 226 hours as of 2001) except for the first three months when they are paid only 80%. Industrial trainees are covered by the industrial accident insurance and the medical insurance but FDI trainees are covered only by the industrial accident insurance. Trained workers, however, are treated equally as for the Korean workers except for the unemployment insurance.

4) Korea Labor Institute(2001, 2003)

have been employing Vietnamese workers. Reasons for the preference for the Vietnamese workers are listed as: 'rule abiding' and 'loyal' in the 2001 Survey and 'job adaptability', 'diligent', 'friendly', 'cultural similarity' and 'docile' in the 2003 Survey(Yoo et al. 2004: 84,86).

#### (4) Korean workers in Vietnam

A lot of engineers and technicians may have accompanied the movement of capital and technology from Korea to Vietnam but information on Korean workers in Vietnam is very rare and hard to get. We can, however, get a glimpse on the picture of Korean workers in Vietnam through a survey done by KOTRA Hanoi Office; In-depth survey of management of Korean firms in Vietnam. The survey was done during March-May 2004 by questionnaire, which had 224 responses out of 668 target firms.

Table 6 shows the number of Korean workers appearing in the survey of KOTRA Hanoi Office, classified by industry and by types of firms. A total of 1036 Korean workers were working in 224 firms, dispersed over various industries but concentrated on textile/cloth and shoes industries where more than a half of the Korean workers are employed. On average, there are 4.6 Korean workers per firm but shoes, bag/leather and textile/cloth industries exceed the average and employ 98 out of 122 thousands of Vietnamese workers. Most of the firms in these three industries are export oriented and bag/leather and shoes industries import materials from Korea as well.

Table 6: Korean workers in Vietnam

	number of		Number of workers			Number of exporter				raw mat. From Korea
	firms	% sole investor	Korean	Vietnam	V/K	To all rep.	%	To Korea	%	
agriculture	6	100	16	441	28	3	50	3	50	2
bag/leather	15	86.7	77	15961	207	14	93.3	4	26.7	15
shoes	10	70	221	43230	196	9	90	2	20	9
textile/cloth	63	68.3	305	38988	128	55	87.3	23	36.5	14
steel/metal	10	50	40	3256	81	5	50	3	30	7
chemicals	23	56.5	88	2073	30	17	73.9	9	39.1	19
machinery	13	30.8	30	1942	65	7	53.8	5	38.5	11
electronics	16	31.3	79	5321	67	13	81.3	9	56.3	13
other	23	91.3	80	9019	113	18	78.3	10	43.5	18
soc	17	11.8	55	652	12	1	5.9	1	5.9	2
bank/real est.	12	16.7	29	1032	36	0	0	0	0	0
trade/service	16	50	36	469	13	5	31.3	2	12.5	3
total	224	57.6	1056	122384	118	147	85.6	71	31.7	118

The data does not show whether employment of Korean workers are in any way related to transfer of skill/techniques to Vietnamese workers. Although it is not shown in the table, the survey result indicates that labor relation is relatively minor problem nowadays: only 7.4% of the firms indicated it to be major management difficulties in Vietnam and attribute them to the differences in culture and language. 85% of the firms surveyed list abundance of cheap good-quality HR as the main advantage for investment in Vietnam.

## 2. Technology and Knowledge-related HR

Annual flow in exchange of technology and knowledge-related HR, is shown in Table 3 under the category of HR2 which accounts for 1.24% and 1.66% respectively for Korean and Vietnamese visitors. The category of lecture and research in Table 3 is composed of professors, language teachers and researchers who came to Korea under employment visa, as is shown in Table 5. Thus, the flow of HR2 to be discussed here may not necessarily match that in Tables 3 and 5 for the Vietnamese visitors to Korea. Owing to the nature of the data sources which are so diverse and dispersed, the discussion on the flow of HR2, here, is limited to three sources; KOSEF(Korea Science & Engineering Foundation) for science and technology, KF

for social science and MOE for university activities.

(1) Science and Technology: the case of Korea Science & Engineering Foundation

An agreement on science and technology cooperation was made in May 1995 between Korea and Vietnam. Ministers' meeting('96.5.3, Hanoi) then agreed to cooperate on nuclear energy and exchange of S&T human resources. Further agreements were made in the subsequent Summit meetings to support for the establishment of KIST-type S&T Research institute('96.11) and to launch S&T Committee('98.12). S&T Committee was then held three times ('99.5.26 Seoul, '01.10.22, Vietnam, 2004. 7.23, Seoul).

One result of the agreements above was the exchange agreement (1996. 5. 4, Hanoi) between KOSEF and VAST<sup>5)</sup>. Table 7 shows the number of scientists exchanged and seminars held since 1997 according to the program. During the period of 7 years, 30 Vietnamese scientists visited Korea while 4 Korean scientists visited Vietnam and two rounds of the international seminars were held in each country. KOSEF also has other programs: post-doc fellowships in Korea which awarded 66 Vietnamese scholars since 1994 and student research and training program which supported 26 Vietnamese students.

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5) Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology, renamed since 2004 from NCST which was founded '93.5 on the basis of the National Science Research Center.

Table 7: Exchange of scientists and seminars by KOSEF-VAST agreement

	Exchange of scientists		Seminar held		Post-Doc. Fellowships in Korea
	Korea to Vietnam	Vietnam to Korea	in Korea	in Vietnam	
1994	-	-	-	-	1
1995	-	-	-	-	3
1996	-	-	-	-	3
1997	2	6	-	-	3
1998	-	7	1	-	1
1999	-	1	-	1	11
2000	1	4	-	-	16
2001	-	7	1	-	12
2002	-	3	-	1	10
2003	1	2	-	-	6
Total	4	30	2	2	66

Source: KOSEF

## (2) Social Science: the case of Korea Foundation

The Korea Foundation invited 23 persons since 1993. Most of these people were either university presidents or directors of institutes related to social sciences and humanities. Korea Foundation supported 27 Vietnamese field researchers during the period of 1992-2004, who are from NCSSH (National Center for Social Sciences & Humanities) and universities.

Korea Foundation gave 12 (out of 243 total) research fellowships to Vietnamese scholars during 1994-2001 period. Eight of the research papers are related to Economics: private property ownership system(1994), industrialization(1996), economic development(1997, 1998), social equity(1997), Korea-U.S economic relation(1997), industrialization and human resources(1997, 1998).

## (3) Universities

As of March 2001, 166 Universities in Korea have 3484 exchange programs with 2477 universities in 91 countries. As is shown in

Table 8, this is the result of an increasing trend in exchange programs of Universities in Korea. The number of Korean universities having international exchange programs increased from 90 to 166 during the period of 8 years since 1992. Number of countries also increased from 56 to 91 while the number of exchange programs more than tripled from 920 to 3484 cases. U.S, China and Japan are the top three favorites for international exchange programs of universities in Korea.

Table 8 : Exchange programs of Universities in Korea

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	2000
Korean universities	90	92	97	98	115	130	154	166
Countries	56	61	63	67	69	76	82	91
Foreign univ(gross)	920	1056	1226	1538	1743	2130	2617	3484

By country(as of March, 2000)

	U.S	China	Japan	Russia	Austria	England	Taiwan	Other	Vietnam
Foreign univ(gross)	973	611	523	195	132	100	91	859	28
Foreign univ(net)	584	284	366	125	62	67	46	643	12
Korean universities	147	135	122	80	67	51	52	-	18

However, disproportionately little number of university exchange programs had been established between Korea and Vietnam: as of March, 2001, only 18 Korean universities have 28 exchange programs with 12 Vietnamese universities. This is mainly due to the short history of the academic exchange among universities of the two countries.

The beginning of exchange program among universities between Korea and Vietnam goes back to March 24, 1990, when Hankuk University of Foreign Studies of Korea(HUFS) signed an exchange program with Hanoi National University(HNU). The contents of the exchange program, however, were limited to the exchange of professors, students and academic materials. Soon, a large number of Universities between the two countries competed for additional

exchange programs but the contents of the programs remained within the limit set by the precedent made by HUFVS-HNU exchange program. It took more than 10 years to enrich the contents of the exchange program. Pohang University of Science and Technology set a new precedent by signing exchange programs with Hanoi N.U as well as HCMC N.U, which include mutual acknowledgement of academic credits taken and exemption of tuition fees as well as conventional agreements on exchange of professors, students, academic materials, research collaboration/joint research, etc.

As of June 30, 2003, there were 86 Korean students in Vietnam: 6 in graduate, 57 in undergraduate programs and 23 in language courses. These numbers are insignificant when we compare them to 5854, 24340 and 42505 respectively for those in Asia/Oceania region and 36140, 62191 and 61572 respectively for the world.

The situation is not much better for the opposite flow of students either. As is shown in Table 9, there were, as of September 1, 2003, 367 Vietnamese students in Korea, which is insignificant compared to a total of 10436(12314) of foreign students from Asian region(World) in Korea. However, the majority, 237 out of 367, of Vietnamese students in Korea are in M.A and Ph.D programs and are concentrated on Science and Engineering so as to occupy more than 10% of the foreign students in Korea majoring in the same program area. Other areas including Humanities and Social Sciences in the graduate program are much neglected, as are B.A programs and language courses.

Table 9: Vietnamese and foreign students in Korea: as of September 1, 2003

	B.A			M.A			Ph.D			Language	other	Total		
	Human	Other	total	S&E	Human	Other	total	S&E	Human				Other	total
Vietnamese	27	-	34	118	51	-	169	61	7	-	68	60	36	367
Asian	2559	193	3739	985	1298	94	2377	596	369	19	984	2839	497	10436
All	2796	236	4114	1065	1612	103	2780	621	440	26	1087	3525	808	12314

Source: Ministry of Education

### 3. Capital and SOC-related HR: the case of KOICA and KDI

Table 3 shows that 46.1% of Korean visitors to Vietnam went there for business while 0.46% for official purpose. In comparison to this, 11.6% of Vietnamese visitors came to Korea for business while 9.7% for official purpose. Detailed information is not available and only a glimpse on exchange of HR3 can be made through activities of many different organizations; MOFAT for official visitors, KOICA and KDI(Korea Development Institute) for SOC related visitors and KOTRA for business related visitors. We focus on KOICA and KDI because the official visitors and business related visitors were mentioned, partially although not fully, in III and III.1.(4)

As is shown in Table 10, KOICA projects for Vietnam contain exchange of human resources of various types. KOICA started from exchanging 6 persons but the number has recently increased to reach 269 in 2002. Most of these exchange occurred in the form of trainees from Vietnam to Korea. Other types of HR exchange moved from Korea to Vietnam, which is negligible as compared to the flow in opposite direction.



Table 10: Exchange of HR in KOICA projects: Korea-&gt;Vietnam

	work(mil)	%	Project case	persons	foreign servers	Vietnamese Trainees	Spe- cialists	m.d	Tai- kwondo	NGOs
1991	15.82	0.09	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0
1992	248.94	1.07	0	22	0	22	0	0	0	0
1993	804.25	3.27	2	49	0	46	3	0	0	0
1994	1833.12	5.96	5	72	4	63	4	0	1	0
1995	2592.01	6.83	9	117	16	95	4	1	1	6
1996	2794.1	6.46	10	139	24	107	6	1	1	5
1997	2531.39	4.8	8	147	31	112	2	1	1	5
1998	4374.58	8.13	7	113	30	80	1	1	1	3
1999	7366.97	16.33	9	140	26	109	2	1	2	5
2000	5517.14	10.76	5	216	30	181	3	1	1	4
2001	6214.19	8.87	9	256	31	221	3	0	1	4
2002	5887.9	7.63	8	269	39	227	2	0	1	3
2003	4189.02	2.83	4	215	36	175	3	0	1	3

Source: KOICA

Table 11 shows that 113 Vietnamese policy makers have participated in KDI programs since 2000. Majority of them joined study programs, which were designed exclusively for Vietnamese high ranking policy makers, for learning lessons about Korean economy and economic policies and about international trade under WTO system. Others participated in international workshops which were held under various themes with regard to economic development, human resource development, economic cooperation etc.

Table 11. Participants of Vietnamese policy makers in KDI programs

program	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	total
study program for Vietnamese policy makers	6		28		22	24	80
int. workshop on economic development	2	1	3	7	3		16
int. workshop on human resource development			1			7	8
int. workshop on economic cooperation		1	2	3	2	1	9
Total	8	2	34	10	27	32	113

source: Korea Development Institute

#### IV. Summary and Recommendations

This paper reviewed the trend of commodity trade and human resource exchange between Korea and Vietnam since their diplomatic normalization. Volumes of commodity trade and human resource

exchange have been continuously increasing as their bilateral relation deepened and widened. Their economic relation, however, can be further improved by adjusting the contents and volume as well as the mode of exchange. Following is the summary of the findings and recommendations based on them.

Decomposition of the change in commodity trade shows that the Vietnamese market for Korean products is becoming more competitive as is the Korean market for Vietnamese product. A large number of commodities, which have been exported to or imported from Vietnam, are in need of conversion in its mode of exchange from trade to FDI or others.

However, it would be too naive if we project the future prospect based solely on the past trend. We have to allow two other aspects in addition: (i) the overall balance of payment from the bilateral economic exchange and (ii) the direction of development in both economy and foreign relations for each of the two countries.

Vietnam's trade balance with Korea is marking a big deficit. The deficit is due to Vietnam's rising import demand for Korean products through two channels. One is that economic development of Vietnam calls for intermediary products like steel, light oil and synthetic fibers for which Korea is competitive. The other is that Korean firms in Vietnam import from Korea machinery and other capital equipment as well as raw and secondary materials. It reflects vertical or intra industry division of labor between the two countries(Kwon 2001).

One way to remedy the imbalance in the bilateral trade is through

diversifying Korea's FDI in Vietnam. Korea's FDI in Vietnam is concentrated in labor intensive light manufacturing industries, which process goods for export and so have high derived demands for input materials, especially from Korea. Therefore, diversification of FDI to capital intensive industries like petro-chemical industry or information and communication industries or financial sectors will have much less derived demand for input materials from Korea. Also important is its geographic diversification from South to North and from big cities to local regions, which may, through enhanced local procurements, reduce its dependence on Korean sources.

Increasing the amount of ODA may be another way to revamp the Vietnam's trade deficit with Korea. However, this is limited in that Vietnam is a major recipient of ODA from Korea's standpoint. The problem is the small amount of ODA of Korea, which is less than 1.5% of Japan. What makes the situation worse is that it is dispersed over large number of projects, whether it is concessional loans or grants.

Recently, Vietnam's foreign relation has been diversifying very rapidly: She joined ASEAN(1995.7), AFTA(1996.1), APEC(1998.11) and signed science and technology agreement with EU(1995.7)and trade agreement with U.S(2001.12) and is now applying for the membership in WTO(2004.12-). As a member of AFTA, Vietnam is under CEPT(Common Effective Preferential Tariffs for ASEAN) agreement(1994.1-), which stipulates lowering of CEPT to 0-5% by 2006 for all but unprocessed agricultural products(by 2010). On the part of Korea, more important than CEPT is Vietnam's trade agreement with U.S. since Korea is in the middle of U.S and Vietnam

in development stage.

Under the trade agreement with U.S., Vietnam is scheduled, within three to seven years, to reduce tariff and abolish quota, to permit U.S citizens to engage in trade and sales business in Vietnam and to open bank and insurance and communication market for investment. In return for it, Vietnamese products can enjoy drastic tariff declines in U.S market by; more than 30% point for textiles, clothes, wood products, mine products, metal products, electronic equipment; more than 20% point for rice, paper, transportation equipment, machine and equipment; more than 10% point for tobacco and beverages, leather products, rubber and plastics.

Textiles, clothes, leather products and electronic equipment belong to quadrant 4 of Table 1 while wood products and metal products belong to quadrant 3 of Table 1. Therefore, Vietnam's trade agreement with U.S will be helpful for Korean FDI especially in the former four industries. At the same time, Korea will import clothes, electronic equipment, wood products and metal products from Vietnam as they belong to quadrant 1 of Table 2. On the other hand, some complications may arise for paper, transportation equipment, machine and equipment, and plastics, as they belong to quadrant 1 of table 1, if Vietnam would like to develop these industries as export sector. This, however, seems to be, at present, a remote possibility.

A recent survey(Shin 2002) on Korean firms exporting to Vietnam shows that 79% of the firms were planning to invest in Vietnam, whether new(59%) or additional(93%). Main reasons for the investment were cited as accessibility to markets such as

AFTA(18.5%), U.S(16.3) and others(4.3%). These expectations are further boosted by the benefits expected from the WTO membership, for which Vietnam is undergoing the admission process.

Exchange of human resources can be another way to remedy the imbalance of the bilateral trade. Travel account, which is not covered here, can be helpful too. The meaningfulness of the exchange of human resources, however, goes beyond its role for revamping trade deficit. Noneconomic gains from it are innumerable and invaluable. Cultural and emotional partnership can only be formed by incessant exchange of human resources and once formed successfully, will obviate a lot of unnecessary bilateral conflicts including labor-management disputes.

The current pattern of exchange of human resources, Vietnamese trainees and workers coming to Korea with labor whereas Korean businessman and skilled workers going to Vietnam with capital and technology, needs to be continued in larger scale, as it helps revamp the deficit in trade balance and gives opportunities to learn market economy to more Vietnamese. In so far as the performance of Vietnamese workers is on a par with other foreign workers, it will raise international welfare if we give more opportunity to those who gain more from it.

Exchange of other types of human resources, so far, occurred under public rather than private initiatives, inviting Vietnamese to Korea rather than sending Koreans to Vietnam. Exchange of technology and knowledge-related HR needs to be enhanced far more than the current level. Although exchange of technology may need

official/diplomatic agreement, exchange of knowledge among universities and research institutes between the two countries may occur far more frequently with less red-tapes and on near private basis.

There is certain limit in promoting exchange programs among academic institutions of the two countries in that, for example, Korea and Vietnam has own language which is seldom used elsewhere, but the current level of academic exchange seems to be much short of the current needs. Academic exchange between the two countries will certainly deepen and widen as their partnership builds up but the two countries will enjoy the gain from partnership far more if there is wider and deeper understanding among them through wider net of academic exchange.

Exchange of capital and SOC-related HR has been limited by the FDI's in Vietnam by the Korean business firms on the one hand and by the official projects supported by organization like KOICA on the other. The future flow of the former will depend on the market performance of the Korean firms; whether they have to find production basis abroad, whether it is best if bounded for Vietnam and whether they are conducive to Vietnamese economy. The direction of development in Vietnam's industrial structure, as well as the structure of export and import substitution, will affect the future flow of the former as well as the contents of the latter.

Key words : Vietnamese market, Exchange of human resources,  
diplomatic normalization

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## 국문초록

## 한국-베트남 무역 및 인적자원교류: 추이와 전망

구 성 열

한국과 베트남은 국교정상화 이후 지금까지 10년여의 비교적 짧은 기간에 다른 어떤 양국관계에서 볼 수 없을 정도로 무역과 인적 교류의 확대/심화 과정을 경험하였다. 본 논문의 목적은 1993년 국교정상화 이후 한국과 베트남 간 무역과 인적자원 교류의 추이를 분석하고 양국 간 교류의 확대 방안을 모색하는데 있다.

품목별 수출(수입)액의 변동요인은 한국의 총수출(수입)액 변동에 기인한 부분과 총수출(수입)중 베트남시장(상품)의 점유율 변동에 기인한 부분으로 분해할 수 있다. 이 두 구성분의 증감여하에 따라 한국의 대 베트남 시장(상품)에 대한 수출(수입)품목별 교역의 전개방향을 교역확대, 경쟁력강화, 투자전환, 교역철폐 부문으로 분류할 수 있는데 이를 1993년 이후 10년간 한국-베트남 간 무역에 적용하여 교역확대부문과 투자전환부문을 파악하였다. 그리고 미-베트남 무역협정으로 어떤 추가적인 변화가 초래될 것인지를 전망하였다.

인적자원의 교류부문은 1994년 1월부터 2004년 5월까지 그 실태를 살펴 본 결과 베트남인(12.8만 명)의 한국방문은 관광(41.4%)과 연수목적(36.2%)인데 반하여 한국인(58.1만 명)의 베트남방문은 사업(46.1%)과 관광목적(36.4%)의 순으로 나타났다. 관광을 제외한 인적 교류를 연수/기능 인력, 기술/지식 인력, 사업/공무 인력의 3부문에 나누어 실태를 살펴본 결과는 다음과 같다. 연수/기능 인력은 주로 베트남에서 한국의

로 2001년 12월까지 26,612명이 이동한 반면 사업/숙련 인력의 이동은 주로 한국에서 베트남으로 이루어져 왔는데 베트남에 체재하는 한국인 기능 인력의 과반수는 섬유, 의복, 신발 등 노동집약적 수출산업에 취업하고 있다. 이에 비하여 기술/지식 인력 및 공무원력의 교류는 아직도 한국의 지원 아래 주로 베트남학자 및 공무원을 중심으로 소규모로 한국방문이 이루어지는 일방적 관계가 지배적이다. 특히 대학 간 학술교류 협정 및 유학생교류는 아직 호혜적인 관계를 기대하기는 어렵지만 다른 나라와의 교류에 비하여 극히 부진한 상태이다.

요컨대 한국과 베트남이 소위 포괄적 동반자관계를 이룩하자면 무역수지의 불균형을 논외로 하여도 양국 간 인적자원의 교류는 확대되어야 하며 특히 대학을 중심으로 한 민간과 비공무차원의 교류가 양방향으로 활발히 전개되어야 할 것이다.

주제어 : 베트남시장, 인적자원교류, 국교정상화.