
The Corporate Image Building Programme of TVET Institutions in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Abstract

TVET institutions are often perceived as second class and inferior to colleges and universities offering academic degrees. Few people choose the path in acquiring TVET as basis for an occupation because of the notion that VOCTECH jobs are not noble. This perception must improve in a manner of transforming the corporate image of TVET institutions. One of the best strategies to weed out this stigma is for TVET institutions to strengthen their good reputation and wholesome image that will further attract client patronage and retain stakeholder loyalty. This study investigated the Corporate Image-building (Cib) activities of TVET institutions of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as perceived by its school administrators. The inquiry used the Corporate Image-building Spectrum (Gapultos 2014) as its basis to explore the spectrum's three facets: Corporate Philosophy (vision and mission statements, core values and slogan), Visibilities (physical identity, employee psycho-social behaviour, and social responsibility), and Organisational Structure and Policies. This study applied the descriptive method using a structured Likert scaled questionnaire wherein TVET administrators were asked to rate Cib related activities in terms of existence, importance, and extent of implementation; to identify the Cib implementation barriers and constraints; and how Cib activities are integrated and worked out in the annual operation plan.

***Key Words:** Corporate Image building (Cib), Activities and Programmes (CibP), Spectrum and Facet, Visibility, TVET*

1 Introduction

An organization is like a human being. It must maintain a state of good health in order to attain maximum productivity. It has to be "FIT" at all times to achieve high and excellent performance. To be FIT means an organization must be equipped with an adequate financial (F) resource for subsistence, a sound institutional (I) programme for a competent workforce to execute, and contemporary technology (T) and equipment for efficient delivery of service. These FIT attributes are important and basic resources that are considered not only in the organisation's operations but also in mapping out future directions. Given proper management and wise utilization, these FIT resources translate to organizational sustainability. However, among these three resources, it is the institutional aspect (I) that needs to be given special attention and should not be taken lightly because it involves human resource and policy implementation. No matter how state-of-the-art the technology being used is or how much funding is available, it is in the hands of the workforce and the policies that they craft and implement where performance and results are evaluated. Human resource is the only organizational asset which has cognitive and reasoning properties. Lapses in judgment or

poor decisions made by the workforce may lead to mismanagement, misuse or wastage of FIT resources. Thus the institutional aspect, particularly all the people working for the organization, its managers and the rank and file alike, needs to be guided, trained, praised, and motivated to allow them to make use of resources efficiently and effectively. It is in this premise where the character and competence of the human resource could “make” or “unmake” the image of an organization.

There is a popular adage that says, “Your image is what makes your reputation.” The reputation of an organization is moulded by how its human resource practices human relations toward external stakeholders, how they act accordingly within their organization as they perform their duties, and how they dispense or utilize their financial (F) assets and technical (T) capabilities. It is the image which the human resource creates that forms the reputation of an organisation. One of the challenges of globalization is organisational sustainability. To be sustainable is to implement certain programmes that redound to improvement and innovation for organisational growth and development. Growth and development are best achieved if the FIT attributes are complemented with an image building programme. These image-building activities must be judiciously used and integrated within the FIT to boost continuous patronage of the organisation’s products and services. It is believed that a good image is the total embodiment of the organisation’s psyche and one that exerts a sort of psychological and influential appeal to the community. A wholesome image is a competitive advantage too, for it is instrumental in attracting partners and clients and in retaining their loyalty to the organization.

2 The Inferiority of TVET to Academic Degrees

Education is one of the strategic concerns of ASEAN Integration 2015. As such, educational institutions in Southeast Asia are prompted to harmonise their programmes and services with global requirements. In bracing for the challenges of internationalization, an educational institution must maintain its “FITness” thorough strategic laying out of programmes that call for its stability, sustainability and patronage. To be on a par with educational institutions in the region, there is one of many strategies that would bring them up to local patronage and even raise them to global recognition, and that is the exposition of a good reputation and a wholesome image in the delivery of their services. TVET institutions in Southeast Asia are not exempt from the ASEAN harmonisation programme. In fact, the important role of TVET in world trade is getting prioritized attention as far as students’ and workers’ mobility, access and equity, relevancy of curriculum, and equivalency programmes are concerned. These aspects are given consideration in the light of the integration initiatives.

However, it is not uncommon to hear from TVET administrators and teachers in Vietnam that technical-vocational education is usually perceived by people to be inferior to academic courses. Some Vietnamese TVET teachers claim that most parents usually dream for their children to enter prestigious colleges and universities in pursuit of professional degrees, without giving high regard to TVET. Perhaps vocational and technical jobs are seen as something

messy or low-profile. Some TVET teachers in Vietnam also have the notion that the youth's preference for academic degrees, besides being preconditioned by their parents, maybe also be influenced by peers or their secondary school teachers. In the Philippines for instance, a TVET study by Masapol (undated) supports these claims. Masapol argues that it is quite difficult to change the mindset of some Filipinos due to a common belief that TVET is inferior and does not promote better living. Masapol suggests that this is one reason why parents and students prefer taking courses on white collar related jobs. This practice, however, will eventually led to job mismatch if we are to base the skills upon what the present industries need. This observation is not only common in Southeast Asia. For instance, Adebile and Ojo (2013), in their study on TVET in Nigeria, have mentioned in their recommendatory statements that technical degrees are also regarded as inferior to regular academic degrees in Nigeria. They suggest, however, it is better to not dwell on the type of academic degrees that a person should pursue, but rather on the type of skill a person acquires that would contribute to national and economic growth. It is at this juncture that TVET institutions could take the best opportunities to re-visit its programmes and services as well as its existing image as a noble, educational institution.

This study was initiated solely because of these misperceptions. Generally, this inquiry intends to explore and describe the status of existing CIb related activities of TVET institutions in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam based on the perceptions and needs of TVET school administrators. It also aims to find ways, means, and recommendations for re-branding the image of TVET institutions, to help erase doubts and the stigma of unfavourable image toward TVET, and assist TVET school administrators in crafting image building plans and activities that would help promote a wholesome TVET image. Most specifically, it aims to determine:

1. The existence, extent of implementation, and the importance of corporate image building indicators based on the following facets of the CIb Spectrum:
 - a) Corporate Philosophy
 - b) Physical Visibilities
 - c) Organisational Structure and Policies
2. Constraints or hindrances in implementing CIb related activities; and
3. Modes of present and future implementation of CIb programmes

3 Research Design

A descriptive methodology was employed in this undertaking which enabled the researchers to acquire relevant information and to describe the current state of implementation of existing CIb activities in TVET institutions of Vietnam. All insights gained provided the researchers with awareness and familiarity with CIb related circumstances as bases for recommendation for future practice, application, and in depth investigations.

The respondents were 140 TVET school administrators and school heads representing the North, South, and Central regions of Vietnam. They are alumni of in country training programmes of SEAMEO VOCTECH during fiscal year 2013-2014 to 2014-2015.

Non-probability sampling was applied in selecting the respondents. Thus, this may constitute a limitation wherein the results of the study could not be generalized to the whole population. The response rate was 78% in which the elicitation of responses was done in a natural setting during one of the national conference workshops of TVET administrators. Data gathering was accomplished with the permission of Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE) of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam.

The instrument was a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire covers CIb indicators based on the facets of the CIb Spectrum (Gapultos 2014). It was structured in such a way that the CIb indicators that fall under one facet were equally spread and interspersed with other indicators to avoid cognitive bias. The disguised indicators, however, were re-grouped into their respective facets during the treatment of data. To determine the extent of underlying conditions of the CIb indicators, the questionnaire used five point and four point bipolar Likert response scales. A rank-order preference question was also used to validate the consistency of responses obtained from the Likert response scales. The questionnaire was prepared in English language but a Vietnamese version was available for respondents in case there is difficulty in English comprehension. The Vietnamese version was carefully translated by DTVE/MOET staff to avoid deviating from the original context of each indicator and instruction.

4 Corporate Image-building

Corporate image is the overall dynamic attributes (identities) of an organisation's psyche that makes it unique and distinctive from other organizations, deliberately or unconsciously projected to an individual or the public, and wherein a perceived outcome (reputation) may either be favourable or unfavourable. It differs from corporate identity because identity is the observable indicator that produces the image, and also differs from corporate reputation because reputation is the favourable or unfavourable outcome resulting from a perceived image. Argenti (1998) defines corporate image as "A reflection of an organization's reality.... It is the corporation as seen from the viewpoint of constituencies." Whereas, Argenti describes corporate identity as "The visual manifestation of the image as conveyed through the organization's logo, products, services, buildings, stationery, uniforms and all other tangible bits of evidence created by the organization to communicate with a variety of constituencies." In defining corporate reputation however, Argenti (1998) recommends Fombrun's view which states that "Reputations are partly a reflection of a company's identity and image and partly the result of managers' efforts to persuade us of their organization's excellence." In the context of this study, corporate image, identity, and reputation can be best understood from the paradigmatic model shown in Figure 1.

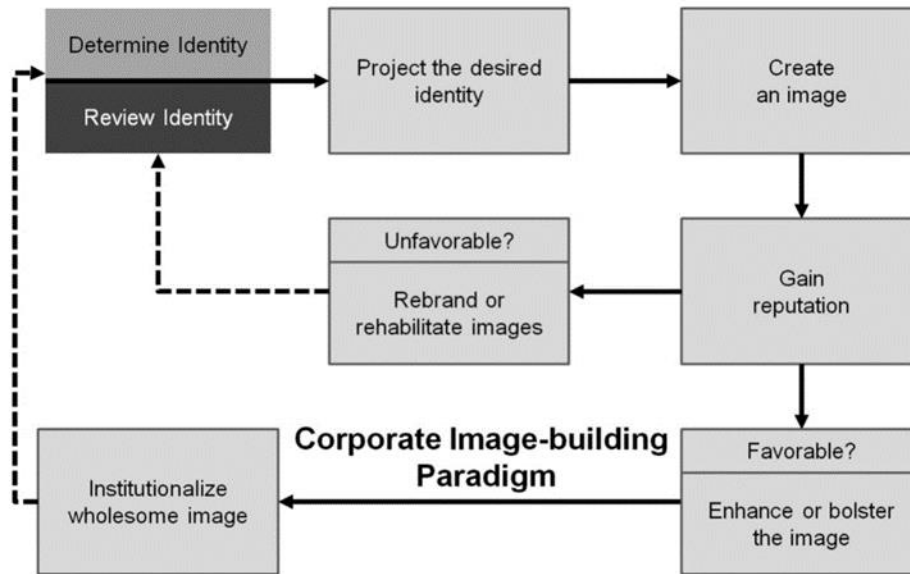


Figure 1: The Corporate Image-building Paradigm (Gapultos 2015)

4.1 The Corporate Image-building Spectrum

The corporate image-building indicators used in this study were based on the Corporate Image-building (CIb) Spectrum (Gapultos 2014). The CIb Spectrum is a strategic management model and guide that embodies the necessary factors that need to be considered in the formulation and implementation of CIb programmes. It theorizes that in crafting CIb programmes, the planner must consider two major dimensions. The first dimension is the CIb Mechanics that informs the planner of the step by step processes that needs to be undertaken from crafting the CIb plan up to its conception, implementation, and institutionalization. The second dimension is the CIb Facets which enumerate the relevant indicators that need to be considered for inclusion in the programme. The CIb Facets are also referred to in this study as CIb related activities. Both dimensions are distinct but are dependent and interrelated to each other. The Spectrum specifies three facets of a CIb programme: (1) the Corporate Philosophy which is the statement of beliefs and aspirations and source of inspiration of the organization; (2) the Visibility facet which itemizes three visibilities of the organization: (a) the physical identities, (b) the psychosocial behaviour of human resource, and (c) the organisation's corporate social responsibility; and (3) the Organisational Structure and Policies. Figure 2 shows The CIb Spectrum.

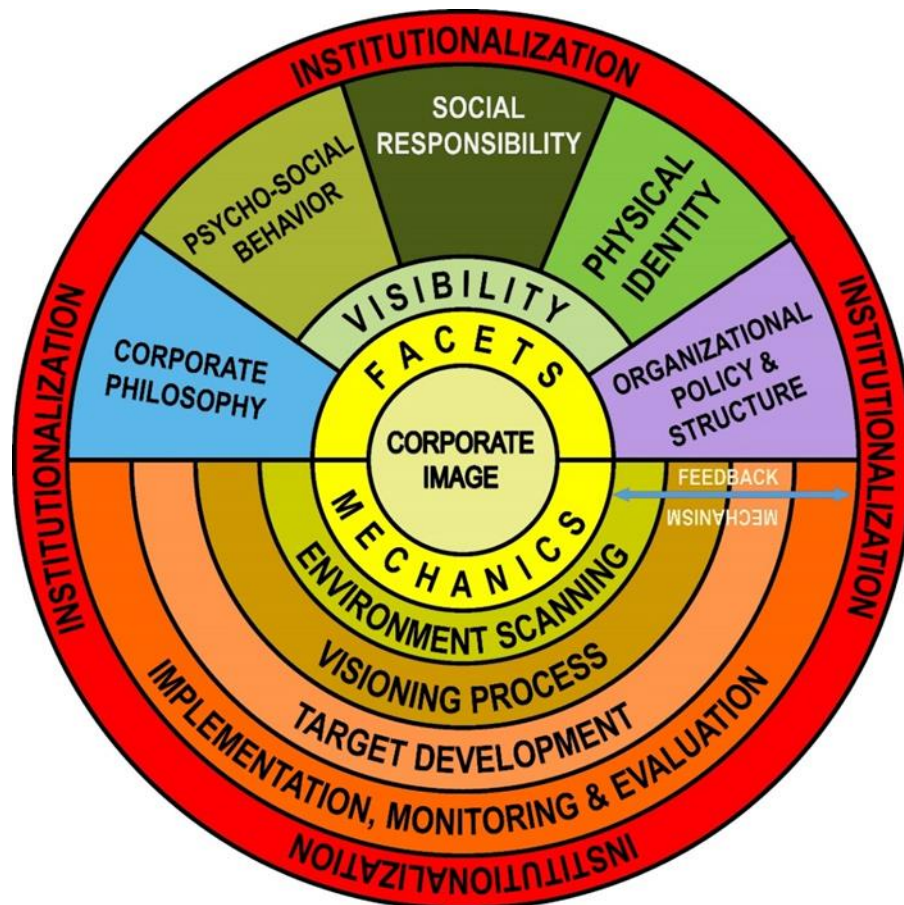


Figure 2: The Corporate Image-building Spectrum (Gapultos 2014)

4.2 The Corporate Philosophy

Corporate Philosophy is one of the facets of the CIb Spectrum. It contains a set of statements of beliefs which becomes the organisation's moral standard or ethical basis in achieving its goals and objectives. It includes the mandate, vision and mission statements, core values, a slogan or a motto. In some organizations, periodic themes are used to replace slogans or mottos. Themes may be retained continuously or may be changed periodically. A corporate philosophy is a significant facet because they are displayed on conspicuous walls and are printed in the organization's glossy publications. The purpose of visually presenting the corporate philosophy is to inform stakeholders of the organisation's conviction to attain its objectives through the proper guidance of these moral principles and beliefs. Business Education International (BEI) (2015), an agency which also specializes in training, explains corporate philosophy as a "Guiding Light and Source of Energy" which covers fundamental thought related to the company. BEI includes in the corporate philosophy the vision, the values, and a mission. According to BEI, if the organisation's corporate philosophy has been put in place clearly, it will enable every entrepreneur and his business to succeed. BEI enumerates some strategic hints that will lead organisations to succeed through a clearly defined corporate philosophy, these are: (1) the vision is like a lighthouse, always shining and guiding the

way... where existing and new employees can see the meaning of their works, (2) out of the conflict between the 'current' status and 'target' status arise the motivation for change, which proves to be a constant source of energy, (3) if you are aware of the vision, you can more easily define for yourself concrete and immediate goals, and (4) the business culture will also be demonstrated publicly and this has impact on the company's image in the market. In defining corporate values, BEI explains that if organisations sincerely practice their values, then this will enable a positive impact on the organisation's image because these values will be easily recognizable by clients and other stakeholders.

Table 1 shows how the TVET school administrators of Vietnam perceive the status of implementation of corporate philosophy in their TVET institutions.

Table 1: The Importance and Implementation of Cib Facet 1: Corporate Philosophy

Facet 1: Corporate Philosophy	The existence and extent of implementation of corporate image- building indicators		The importance of image-building indicators in the enhancement of corporate image	
	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating
Item 01: Corporate Vision statement	3.146	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.538	Very Important
Item 05: Corporate Slogan or Motto	3.475	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.551	Very Important
Item 09: Corporate Core Values	3.415	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.666	Very Important
Item 13: Medium- term Strategic Plan	3.390	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.631	Very Important
Item 17: Corporate Mission Statement	3.305	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.556	Very Important
Item 21: Organizational goals and objectives clearly defined in every unit's annual operational activities	3.556	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.453	Very Important
Weighted Mean for Corporate Philosophy Facet	3.381	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.565	Very Important

The CIB indicators under Corporate Philosophy are perceived by respondents to be “Very Important.” However, some appear to be implemented only when needed such as the vision and mission statements and the medium term strategic plans. In other words, the vision and mission statements are fixed on the wall for a period of time, which is only revisited and updated when the need arises. Other indicators are perceived as existing but not properly observed particularly the slogans, core values and organizational goals. A medium term strategic plan is about five years. In its preparations, corporate philosophy is often included in the review process to realign what the organization envisions with new goals brought about by innovation and foreseeable situations. However, it is a common observation that organizations only review their goals by maintaining the existing and introducing new ones, sometimes retaining and without revisiting the vision and mission statements. In some cases, most organizations display their corporate philosophies simply by a matter of compliance or because it is an “in thing” whereby organisations just jump onto joining the bandwagon. The role of corporate philosophy is vital in image-building. The significance of cascading or displaying corporate philosophy is that it allows external stakeholders to be aware of the organizational goals and objectives and how the people are driven to accomplish them. Secondly, the work force is obliged to perform productively given the expectations from the external stakeholders. Moreover, core values also act as motivating force for the human resource to perform where satisfaction benefits both the clients and the workers themselves. Whether a corporate philosophy is seen in the context as a management strategy or as a value system, it is by far an image-building indicator as it becomes a point of reference for quality service and clients’ satisfaction and patronage.

4.3 The Corporate Visibility

The second facet of a corporate image-building programme is the organisation’s visibility. Visibilities are tangible components of the organization or organizational properties and attributes that could be immediately perceived by the senses. The CIB Spectrum itemizes at least three visibilities which are physical identities, psycho-social behaviour of staff, and social responsibility. The importance of physical identities lie on the sense of aesthetics, comfort, and convenience felt and observed by stakeholders. This includes office lay-outs, logos, impressive landscapes, accessibility to office facilities, clean and sanitized restrooms, or orderliness of office materials and equipment, and the constant use of corporate uniforms and identification tags. The psychosocial behaviour of staff includes good grooming, human relations such as observable attitudes of respect, hospitality, and courtesy. Personnel behaviour may be consciously or casually projected, or it may be latent wherein the working individual may not be conscious of his behaviour but it is observable by others. Social responsibility, the third among visibility facets, concerns the organisation’s charitable programmes or philanthropy, involvement in civic activities, and commitment to the community’s advocacy such as environmental and ecological concerns. It may also include support programmes for senior citizens, indigenous groups, and persons with disabilities.

Table 2 presents the respondents' perception on the maintenance of TVET institutions' visibilities.

Table 2: The Importance and Implementation of CIb Facet 2: Visibility

Facet 2: Visibility	The existence and extent of implementation of corporate image-building indicators		The importance of image-building indicators in the enhancement of corporate image	
	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating
2a. Physical				
Item 02: Well-organised office spaces	3.198	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.443	Very Important
Item 06: Use of corporate colour in office uniforms	3.001	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.201	Somewhat Important
Item 10: Impressive building façade, gardens and landscape	3.156	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.253	Somewhat Important
Item 14: Impressive lobby and reception counters	3.168	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.310	Very Important
Item 18: newsletters, brochures, posters	3.531	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.168	Somewhat Important
Item 22: Use of corporate logo in all forms of communications; mascot	3.581	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.330	Very Important
Item 23: Consistent use of font styles and size in all forms of formal communications	3.650	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.258	Very Important
Weighted Mean for Physical Visibility	3.326	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.280	Very Important
2b. Psychosocial Behaviour				
Item 03: Courteous attitude of employees toward clients/guests	3.656	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.793	Very Important
Item 07: Leadership styles of manager and supervisors	3.521	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.606	Very Important
Item 11: Efficient and effective staff	3.671	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.680	Very Important

Item 15: Harmonious relations among employees	3.685	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.596	Very Important
Item 19: Staff training and development programmes/behaviour modification and improvement	4.816	Fully implemented; properly and strictly observed	3.626	Very Important
Item 24: Teambuilding, support and cooperation among staff	3.181	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.318	Very Important
Weighted Mean for Psycho-social Behaviour Visibility	3.755	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.603	Very Important
2c. Corporate Social Responsibility				
Item 26: Community involvement and civic action programmes	3.280	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.281	Very Important
Item 27: Philanthropy/charitable acts	3.451	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.181	Somewhat Important
Item 28: Media relations	3.012	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	2.943	Somewhat Important
Item 29: Human/Consumer relations programme	2.866	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.090	Somewhat Important
Item 30: “Greening” the environment/ecological activities	3.326	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.170	Somewhat Important
Weighted Mean for Corporate Social Responsibility	3.187	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.133	Somewhat Important
Grand Weighted Mean for Visibility Facets	3.422	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.338	Very Important

4.3.1 *Physical Visibility*

Table 2 breaks the Visibility facet into three areas which are: (1) the organisation's physical identity, (2) the psychosocial behaviour of the organisation's workforce, and (3) the organisation's corporate social responsibility. The TVET school administrators of Vietnam perceived all of these three areas as "Very Important" in image-building. However, physical visibilities of the organization receive attention and implementation, or actions are taken only when there is a necessity. In an interview with respondents, the physical appearance of the organization, particularly its buildings, landscapes, and interiors, are regularly being maintained but as superficial attention. The physical appearance of the organisation is only fully tended when there are special events that are forthcoming and when important guests are dropping in for a visit. This attention given to physical visibility includes general cleaning and beautification and refurbishments of facilities. Furthermore, the publication of TVET institutions' newsletters, promotional posters, and brochures are "Existing" in their annual programmes but "Not properly implemented or strictly followed." Even the use of corporate logo in all forms of communication and the utilization of consistent font styles are considered optional. This means that this inconsistency in practices fall within the "Not strictly observed" category.

The physical visibility of the organization provides comfort and convenience to clients and visitors. This physical visibility aspect is vital in image-building as it tells the public that the organization is well organised and environment friendly. In their promotional web page, Connolly Properties shares the importance of beautifying the workplace. They emphasized the significance of sensory stimulus brought about by an orderly and comfortable workplace as key attractions for customers and the idea of more productive outputs if employees work at convenient work stations. To project a wholesome image therefore, organizations should start with beautifying their surroundings and putting in place clean and orderly workspaces, especially lobbies and reception halls where guests receive the first impression of the organisations' atmosphere. One of the best models adapted for good housekeeping and beautifying the workplace is Japanese 5S advocated by Lori Williams and Associates (2015), a noted strategy company. The 5S was actually based on the Toyota Production System of Japan which are: Seiri (Sort), Seiton (Straighten or Set to order), Seiso (Shine), Seiketsu (Standardize), and Shitsuke (Sustain). According to Lori Williams and Associates, with the practice of the 5S, time and resources will not be wasted, safety will be in place, costs will be reduced, productivity will increase and staff efficiency will be enhanced because 5S involves orderliness, cleanliness, and standardized practice.

4.3.2 *Psychological Behaviour of Employees*

The practice of good human relations is very important in any organization, be it among employees or in their transactions with clients. Harmony in human interactions spells peace and order, assures trust and confidence, and elevates employee morale in the workplace. Harmony is the harbinger to productivity, teamwork and job satisfaction. The psychosocial behaviour of employees is certainly a visibility aspect. Following a psychoanalytical idea, an

employee may be exhibiting a behaviour of which he/she may be aware (conscious) or not aware (unconscious). The unawareness of certain employee's acts towards clients is sometimes dangerous or maybe alarming. Examples of these are tactlessness, imprudence, lack of self-control, or arrogance. There are instances where employee's responses in their daily conversation with co-employees or clients may seem to be true and correct, yet offensive. This situation happens when employees are not careful or tactful in expressing what they mean. A proverb explains this well: "It is not on what you say, but how you say it." An unfavourable attitude, whether deliberate or unconscious, is offensive and thus creates an unfavourable image. The habitual practice of courtesy, prudence, respect, and humility are the by words or mottos of building a wholesome image. These practices are what clients value the most. An unfavourable attitude is displeasing to co-workers and clients.

As shown in Table 2b, TVET school administrators in Vietnam are very aware of and are practicing the values of courtesy, respect and humility. They also perceive that they are not remiss in the implementation of staff development programmes relative to career development, skills enhancement and behaviour modification. In fact they claim that these training programmes are included in their annual operational plans. However, the practice of their programmes are not fully implemented and strictly observed. In general, psychosocial behaviour of employees as a visibility aspect is perceived as "Very Important but not Strictly Observed."

4.3.3 Corporate Social Responsibility

The presence of a TVET institution in the community is crucial for raising a wholesome image. One way organizational presence is felt in the community is through the exercise of CSR or corporate social responsibility. Educational institutions are, no doubt, the most active participants in community based programmes. Schools are often visible in civic action activities in their respective municipalities, cities, or provinces. Their involvement covers national day celebrations, competitions, charity, Red-Cross related activities, disaster assistance, and sports event. Other visible activities involve ecological conservation and environment protection such are "greening" and beautifying the environment like tree planting, street cleaning, and recycling activities. All these activities are perceived by the TVET school administrators as "Very Important" in image building. While the respondents claim that these activities are important, the respondents look at these activities as lacking regular and periodic implementation as they are "Existing but not strictly observed." CSR-related activities where "Actions are taken only when needed" include civic action programmes, visibility through media relations, and appropriate consumer relations programme plan.

4.4 Corporate Structure and Policy

The third facet of the organization's visibility to the public is its organisational structure and policies. It is imperative that an organizational chart should be displayed in any of the conspicuous spaces of the organization. The chart informs the stakeholders of the various peoples and units in the organization as well as their respective positions and functions. Stakeholders

should not be left clueless in terms of people with whom they would want to transact. Hand in hand with the structure are organizational policies, specifically the processes and procedures carried out in fulfilling stakeholder requirements. A process which is not clear confuses clients. Red tape, delay, and unnecessary procedures in office transactions make clients impatient. Such negative experiences do not result in favourable impressions of the organization. Policies and practices that give discomfort and inconvenience to clients contribute to the breakdown of the organisation's integrity and credibility.

Table 3 reflects how the respondents perceive organisational structure and policies of TVET institutions as an image-building facet.

Table 3: The Importance and Implementation of Facet 3: Organisational Structure and Policy

Facet 3: Organisational Structure and Policy	The existence and extent of implementation of corporate image-building indicators		The importance of image- building indicators in the enhancement of corporate image	
	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating
Item 04: Prompt and responsive actions to clients requests and complaints	2.798	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.316	Very Important
Item 08: Clear and simple office procedures	3.595	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.580	Very Important
Item 12: Standard responses for clients' inquiries	3.608	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.475	Very Important
Item 16: Clear job descriptions, staff roles and functions	3.473	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.683	Very Important
Item 20: Application of quality assurance and standard in office procedures	3.240	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.511	Very Important
Item 25: Updated employees' manual, staff rules and regulations	3.538	Existing but not properly implemented nor strictly observed	3.495	Very Important
Weighted Mean for Organisational Structure and Policies	3.375	Actions are taken and implemented only when needed	3.510	Very Important

It could be gleaned from the Table 3 that all the CIb indicators are deemed “Very Important.” However, prompt action or responsiveness to client’s requests and the application of quality assurance seem to be applied only when needed. Quality assurance and responsiveness are highly important in achieving client satisfaction and loyalty. Quality assurance practices must be considered high priority because they are clients’ utmost expectations of organizations. Although the seeking of ISO certification is quite costly for some organizations, the practice of quality assurance could be initiated in simple and doable ways provided that a system is in place. Thus, the absence of ISO certification must not be seen as a reason for not practicing quality assurance. In another instance, the respondents regarded simple procedures involving client services, job descriptions and roles, and staff rules and regulations as existing but not properly observed. In an interview with the respondents, they claim that staff rules and regulations and job description do exist. However, these documents are not periodically updated. Organisations exist because they have goals and missions to accomplish. Their structural designs are crafted in such a way that functions fit the desired and qualified manpower. Structure and policies are crucial in image-building because they are linked with employee behaviour. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) explain that “Organisational structure and design have always been important factors influencing the behaviour of individuals and groups that comprise the organization; the rules in operating in today’s global business environment make structure and design consideration even more crucial.” A clear cut and well communicated policy allows employees to work with harmony and efficiency. When an organisational process is put into order, it would facilitate transactions. Eventually, outputs borne out of quality management and efficient procedure invite higher client satisfaction. It is through a high satisfaction index that an organization would be able to earn good reputation from clients. A well designed structure and properly defined policies generate harmonious working relationships. It is a known fact that harmony and efficiency are harbingers of good corporate image.

5 Constraints and Hindrances in CIb Program (CIbP) Implementation

Framed conditions or conditions which cannot be avoided due to external factors may crop up anytime in the organisation’s bid to implement a programme. No matter how perfectly crafted a programme is, challenges and predicaments are certainly inevitable. Success depends on how top management can facilitate the smooth implementation of a programme based on careful decision making, creativity, risk taking, and teamwork in order to put the programme objectives into realisation. Although generally, constraints and challenges affect the overall programme, there are certain doable things that arise and are possible. Constraints in the implementation of the CIb programme vary from organisation to organization. The constraint may depend on the organisation’s cultural and social values such as how top management and the whole organization view the importance and immediacy of the project. Sometimes, the commitment and the ardent desire to implement a programme are strongly felt but certain external factors hinder the implementation. Other reasons may arise from organizational inefficiency, indifference, and most commonly, the employees’ resistance to change.

Table 4 presents the constraints and hindrances in the implementation of corporate image-building programme as perceived by TVET school administrators of Vietnam.

Table 4: Constraints or Hindrances in the Implementation of Corporate Image-building

Constraints or Hindrances in the Implementation of CIb Activities	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating
1. Lack of funds to support the project	3.508	Strongly Agree
2. Lack of cooperation and support among staff	3.116	Somewhat Agree
3. Poor or weak leadership of the institution's management to support the CIb programme	2.958	Somewhat Agree
4. No existing unit that will solely implement, monitor and evaluate the CIb programme	3.298	Strongly Agree
5. No existing image-building programme	3.021	Somewhat Agree
6. Staff implementing the programme has other functions and priorities to do	3.046	Somewhat Agree
7. CIb activities are not part of the strategic plan	3.195	Somewhat Agree
8. Different personnel implement CIb activities because CIb are spread in different units according to the nature of the CIb activity	3.128	Somewhat Agree
9. Poor decision making of management on the issues affecting the implementation of the CIb programme	3.076	Somewhat Agree
10. Too many processes and procedures affect and delay the implementation of the programme	3.200	Somewhat Agree
11. No clear-cut policy in monitoring and evaluating the CIb programme	3.295	Strongly Agree
12. Implementing CIb activities is very costly or expensive	3.115	Somewhat Agree
13. Functions or tasks of units or people implementing the CIb programme are not clearly defined	2.996	Somewhat Agree
14. Top management does not support the project	3.006	Somewhat Agree
15. Cultural traditions and customs affect the implementation of the CIb programme	3.090	Somewhat Agree
16. Indifference of mass media to TVET initiatives	3.110	Somewhat Agree
17. Poor quality assurance practices in the workplace	3.330	Strongly Agree
18. Management and Staff resistance to change	3.4976	Strongly Agree
19. Certain issues in the employment situations in the labor market affect the implementation of the CIb programme	3.520	Strongly Agree
20. Lack of ICT facilities/technology support	3.5238	Strongly Agree
General Weighted Mean	3.201	Somewhat Agree

The TVET school administrators of Vietnam “Strongly Agree” that the perceived hindrances in implementing an effective CIB programme are the following: (1) lack of fund to support the project, (2) no existing unit that will solely implement, monitor, and evaluate the programme, (3) no existing clear-cut policy on CIB programme implementation, (4) poor quality assurance practices in the workplace, (5) resistance to change attitude of management and staff, (6) lack of ICT facilities/technology support, and (7) certain issues in the employment situations in the labour market such as job mismatch, need for harmonizing job mobility, equity, and access, and a need for a synchronized qualifications framework. Generally, The TVET school administrators of Vietnam “Somewhat Agree” on the 20 assumed constraints in CIB implementation reflected in the Table 4.

In support of the perceived hindrances in programme implementation, Makinde (2005), in his study on problems and policy implementation in developing nations, opined that inadequacy of resources maybe a source of implementation problems even if implementation orders are clearly and accurately conveyed. These resources, in Makinde’s opinion, do not only include materials but a well-equipped and skilled staff as well. Makinde (2005) further expressed that the success of implementation will largely depend on how the people implementing the programmes could foresee the benefits and how the programmes affect personal and organizational interests. In another study on educational policies and problems of implementation in Nigeria, Okoroma (2006) cited at least 10 obstacles in his conclusions on implementing policies and programmes, wherein about five of which were related to this inquiry on image enhancement. Some of Okoroma’s (2006) perceived constraints in implementing educational policies include the following: (1) government lacks the political will for effective implementation, (2) the implementation of educational policies is also often hindered by the interplay of politics, which may sometimes relegate reality to obscurity, (3) most educational policies are well focused but the planning is often defective, making implementation difficult, (4) insufficiency of funds for implementing educational policies in Nigeria is a problem: a fact that has been reported in almost every implementation study that has been carried out, and (5) resources available for the implementation of a given educational policy are often over estimated and thereby elicit unrealistic expectations that fail to materialize.

6 Implementation of CIB Activities

An effective CIB activity must be carefully designed in such a way that it would present and function as a strategic plan. A strategic plan, according to Willis (1997), is the “Overall directions and targeted outcomes required to achieve the organisation’s mission.” Willis further added that a strategic plan “requires the organization to take longer term perspective than normally considered necessary for operational situations.” The CIB Spectrum, as a strategic management model, enumerates in its Mechanics Dimension the phases of the CIB operations. These are: (1) the conduct of environment scanning which includes the analyses of its current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, stakeholders, and gender issues; (2) holding a series of visioning process; (3) developing targets, (4) implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the plan; and (5) institutionalizing good practices and high-impact

outcomes. Thus, as a strategic plan, the CIbP could become a standalone programme which is distinct and separate from the general strategic and development plan of the organisation or it may be a separate and exclusive focus or key result area of the organisation's actual medium-term strategic plan. However, in the event that logistics constraints and limitations exist, the CIbP activities may be spread or embedded in the different key result areas of the strategic plan where it appropriately belongs as an important key indicator.

Table 5 reflects the respondents' perceptions on how their CIb activities are implemented at present and how these CIb activities could be implemented in the future.

Table 5: **Present and Future Implementation of CIb Programme**

Perceived Implementation	At Present		In the Future	
	F	%	f	%
1. CIb Programme as stand-alone; distinct and separate from strategic plan	2	1.42	16	11.35
2. CIb Programme as an exclusive and separate focus or key result area, but integrated in the strategic plan	27	19.15	51	36.17
3. CIb Programme related activities are appropriately spread and embedded in different focus and key result areas of the strategic plan	112	79.43	74	52.48
Summation	141	100	141	100

Table 5 shows that, at the present state of implementation, 112 or 79.43 per cent of the respondents assert that CIb related activities are spread and embedded in the different KRAs of their strategic plan. Whereas, about two or 1.42 per cent think that CIb programmes are stand-alone and separate from the strategic plan, and only 27 or 19.15 claim the CIbP as a separate and exclusive KRA of their strategic plans. However, in comparison to the respondents' perception on the future implementation of CIbPs, majority or 52.48 per cent of the respondents still prefer that their CIb-related activities be spread and embedded in the different KRAs of a strategic plan.

Whether CIb activities serve as a stand-alone and independent from, or integrated and embedded in the strategic plan, they must still be carefully crafted in such a way that the various facets are clearly defined and differentiated in the objective activity setting and target development. After all, a CIbP encompasses major and pertinent activities that are highly relevant in the achievement of recognition and good reputation. These relevant activities as enumerated by the facets of the CIb Spectrum are: (1) periodic review and update of the

corporate philosophy, (2) improvement of infrastructure and facilities, (3) organizational structural assessment and reform, (4) policy review and development, (5) human resource behaviour modification, change management, and professional development, (6) advertising and promotional activities, (7) improving customer relations practices, and (8) strengthening of social responsibilities.

7 Findings

- Corporate Philosophy, the first facet of the CIB Spectrum that includes the organizational mandate, vision and mission statement, core values, and slogan and mottos, is found to be “Very Important” by the respondents in building a good image. However, the respondents perceived that Corporate Philosophy is only implemented when needed.
- Visibilities, the second facet of the CIB Spectrum that includes the physical structures and facilities of the organization, the psycho-social behaviour of employees, and corporate social responsibilities are perceived by the respondents as existing activities and “Very Important,” but they are not properly implemented.
- Organisational Structure and Policies, the third facet of CIB Spectrum, are found to be “Very Important,” but actions are taken or implemented when necessity arises.
- Of the 30 CIB indicators under the facets of the CIB Spectrum, only Item No. 19 or Staff Training and Development Programmes/Behaviour Modification and Improvement is perceived to be “Fully implemented; properly and strictly observed.”
- Fifteen or 50 per cent of the 30 CIB indicators are perceived by respondents as existing in their institutions but not properly implemented nor strictly observed.
- The respondents claim that fourteen or 46.70 per cent of the 30 CIB indicators only receive action or implementation when necessity arises.
- The respondents “Strongly Agree” that the constraints and hindrances in the implementation of image-building programmes are: (1) lack of funds to support the project, (2) no existing unit that will solely implement, monitor and evaluate the CIB programme, (3) no clear-cut policy in monitoring and evaluating the CIB programme, (4) poor quality assurance practices in the workplace, Management and Staff resistance to change, (5) certain issues in the employment situations in the labour market affect the implementation of the CIB programme, and (6) lack of ICT facilities/technology support.
- The majority of respondents claim that in the present situation, the CIB activities of their TVET institutions are “Appropriately spread and embedded in different foci and key result areas of their strategic plans.”
- The majority of the respondents also claim that in future crafting of the CIB programme and planning workshops, the CIB activities of their TVET institutions should be “Appropriately spread and embedded in different focus and key result areas of the strategic plan.”

8 Conclusions and recommendations

The TVET school administrators of Vietnam are fully aware of the importance of an image building programme as a strategic instrument in attracting clients and retaining their loyalty and patronage. They are aware that image-building is a key to earning a good reputation for organizational sustainability. This kind of mindset is very promising and encouraging for the promotion of TVET in Vietnam. Although Cib in TVET institutions does not exist as a well-planned and packaged programme as the TVET administrators perceived it, image-building activities do exist but are seemingly disorganized or diffused in different units with no systematic way of monitoring its existence. The TVET school administrators agree that certain Cib activities are only recalled and implemented when needed. Most Cib activities actually exist in the TVET yard, but are not properly observed. In institutionalizing an image-building programme, the endurance of TVET administrators' sense of commitment must be within the hearts and minds of implementers. The conviction to strictly monitor and constantly evaluate commences from the right observance and putting into practice the organisation's corporate philosophy starting from the vision statement down to the corporate values and motto. This philosophical belief must be felt and should serve as a driving and motivating strength for the workforce to excel. A Cib programme must be implemented not for compliance' sake, and not because it is a trend which all organizations follow either. The corporate philosophy and the whole Cib programme must be cascaded among all stakeholders and the public in an easy to comprehend manner. The predicament for Cib, however, lies in the constraints and barriers of implementation. Although organizational challenges and trials do occur at any given time, the practice of initiating simple and doable things would be good enough to start a Cib programme. Financial or other resources might be limited, but the systematic, organized, and judicious utilization of available resources should generate an atmosphere optimistic enough to jumpstart the programme. The implementation of Cib must be accompanied with the right attitude and positive outlook of its implementers. Thus, the wellness of intent of a Cib programme does not require second thoughts, but the will and the conviction to think of gaining from its benefits, id est, an eventual good reputation and favorable response from stakeholders and the community.

Based on the research results following recommendations are to be made:

1. A general orientation and appreciation on the importance of a corporate image building programme is recommended for TVET institutions as a way of demystifying the TVET image as inferior to academic degrees and to elevate TVET as a highly prioritized educational sector that contributes to national progress and socioeconomic development.
2. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Employment could identify capable and philanthropic agencies, such as ADB, USAID, AUSAID, ASEAN, etc., to sponsor or financially subsidize, in part or in whole, the delivery of training and strategic planning sessions in crafting medium term corporate image building plans and programmes for TVET institutions.

3. It is also recommended that in the training on crafting a CIb programme, the Corporate Image building Spectrum, or CIb Spectrum which is a management model should be utilized for consistency and uniformity. Besides the CIb programme as the centerpiece of training, the concepts of change management, organizational behavior and behavior modification, and marketing and rebranding shall be included in the training package. So as not to disrupt regular school activities, it is recommended that the CIb training programme shall be module based (with continuity to monitor and evaluate previous activities) in its method of delivery.
4. Every TVET institution must designate a permanent unit, if not an ad hoc committee for the proper and systematic implementation, periodic monitoring, and constant evaluation of CIb related programme equipped with the necessary financial, institutional and technological logistics for its annual operations.
5. Full support from top management and the whole workforce is important in the implementation of a CIb related programme. The organisation must adopt the ‘walk your talk’ attitude and always practice and apply winning solutions based on the belief that “what you advocate is what your reputation gets.”
6. A further study on image building must be done as a follow up to this inquiry in order to determine deeper challenges and requirements affecting the image of TVET institutions.

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