

COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM IN LECTURER DEVELOPMENT

PhD Candidate. Le Hung Diep

hungdiep2112@gmail.com

*Office Administration Department, Faculty of Library, Office of Sai Gon University,
HCMC, Vietnam*

Abstract

The fundamental and comprehensive renovations of university educations have become an urgent requirement of the current Vietnamese education. Facing the trend of globalization, internationalization and industrial revolution 4.0 have posed many challenges for universities and lecturers in Vietnam. It is time for universities to connect and cooperate in the orientation from the State in developing their lecturers.

Keywords: *Cooperation, development, higher education, lecturers*

1. Introduction

The trend of globalization, internationalization, and industrial revolution 4.0 currently has set an urgent need for fundamental and comprehensive innovations in education and training, especially in university education. Series of issues from the planning of training institutions, renovation of management mechanisms, policies, training programs, etc., have been carried out, including the teaching force - the core part of university education.

One of the current important goals of universities is to develop teaching force in both quantity and quality, ensuring that there are enough lecturers with high professional qualifications and innovative pedagogical skills with competent foreign language and computer skills to adapt well to the tasks of teaching and scientific researches in the new era. That requires teachers to be planned and trained to update educational research achievements as well as applications of science, technology, and communication in their working; to assess student learning outcomes according to competency approach, and to enhance curriculum development.

In universities around the world, the lecturer development is not the sole responsibility of any individual teacher or university, but it is a common task of the industry and universities to connect, collaborate, and share experiences to develop teaching force.

The above problems have been addressed by universities in some countries such as the UK, Korea, etc in actively linking and creating networks, regularly making professional

exchange forums with the participation of a large number of lecturers in different professional positions.

2. Method

To clarify the necessity of cooperation between universities in lecturer development, the article presents some typical experiences of university education in some countries and clarifies the actual situation of quantity and quality of teaching force at universities in Vietnam.

The two selected countries are the UK and South Korea - where the cooperation between universities has been formed for many years by the model of an association between university education institutes

The analysis of the current situation on the quantity and quality of university lecturers in Vietnam is based on statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training from 2013 to 2019. This is the time when the Law on University Education 2012 took effect and is also the time to organize the implementation of a fundamental and comprehensive renovation of university education following Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW dated November 4th, 2013 of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

From the analysis of the structure of the quantity, quality, and professional qualifications of the Vietnamese teaching force, the article analyzes the weaknesses in the cooperation between universities in Vietnam today and offers some recommendations on roles of the Government and the Ministry of Education and Training, roles of universities, and models of an association between university education institutes in Vietnam.

3. Results

a) Experience in some countries around the world

Experience in the United Kingdom

In the UK, the lecturer development is led by the Universities Council for the Education for Teachers (UCET). This is an independent organization established in 1967 by universities, colleges, and other educational institutions to connect and cooperate constructively in training and fostering teachers; support members to upgrade the quality, sustainability, and professionalism of teachers, and promote researches in university educations across the UK and globally. UCET works on the following aspects:

- Act as a focal point for collecting and exchanging information about job positions in higher education institutions and providing recruitment information to the society to attract suitable candidates for teaching positions at universities and colleges which are members of UCET.

- Organize regular and periodic conferences and seminars for members who are managers and lecturers to discuss all issues related to higher education, methods, and pedagogical practical skills of teachers.

- Design and organize basic and advanced training programs for university lecturers that have a positive impact on learners, in a way that is consistent with UCET's values and principles, through the sharing of information, promulgating and championing relevant research and providing networking opportunities.

- Sponsor for researches related to university education, methods, and pedagogical practical skills of lecturers.

- Pro-actively monitoring the changing social, political and economic environment and helping UCET's members plan and adapt appropriately.

- Share information with members of UCET by publishing advisory materials; conference and seminar documents; formal responses to Government consultations; scientific research reports and newsletters.

UCET performs as a national forum for the discussion of issues related to training, lecturer development, and researches about education and training in the university sector, and provides a network to exchange information between members of universities and colleges.

Experience in South Korea

Korea Council for Universities Education (KCUE) was established in 1982 as an intermediary between the Government and universities that seeks to promote the development of universities through the mechanism of autonomy and cooperation between universities; represent the common voice of universities to the Government and the National Assembly of Korea and is responsible for implementing projects authorized by the Government. As of 2020, more than 200 universities have participated in KCUE.

Through the process of building consensus and cooperation among universities, KCUE plays the role of a bridge between them and between universities and the Government by representing the voice, needs, and requirements of universities in front of the Government and orientalize and consult for the development of universities members.

KCUE is the only consultancy agent for universities in Korea. Through the association and cooperation among members of universities with the orientation from the Government, KCUE has consulted, collected, and represented opinions of university members on current issues and policies, seek to solve the problems facing the universities, and made policy proposals and proposed to the Congress and Government. In addition, KCUE shares information and collaborates with university consultancy agencies around the

world to promote the globalization of university education in Korea and provide training programs for university lecturers to upgrade their professional capacity.

Compared to the UK's UCET, KCUE has a broader scope of activities, covering many aspects of higher education to promote and improve the quality of university education. The full role and functions of KCUE:

- Conduct research on higher education;
- Address common issues to policy makers and educators;
- Maintain quality assurance of institutions;
- Coordinate university admissions system;
- Provide training to university faculty/staffs;
- Provide information on university to public;
- Support high education internationalization and globalization.

Particularly within the scope of activities to develop the teaching force, KCUE is the center providing high-quality training programs for the lecturers and managers, and service staff. In details:

- Provide high-quality training programs for faculty and staffmember to develop competencies and sharpen skills.
- Provide systematical and continuous opportunities for faculty and staff to enhance their expertise in areas necessary for the operation of universities.

b) Reflect on Vietnam

In Vietnam, the development of teaching staff has always been an important issue in universities' education renovation. Resolution No. 29-TW/NQ dated November 4th, 2013, declared the task of "Developing teachers and managers, meeting the requirements of education and training renovation" by "building resource plans and training plans and strengthening teachers and educational managers in association with the needs of socio-economic development, assurance of security, national defense and international integration"; "strongly renovating the goals, contents, training methods, retraining, fostering and evaluating learning and training results of teachers according to the requirements of improving the quality, responsibility, ethics and competence of professional force" [1].

From 2013 when the Law on Universities Education 2012 officially took effect to 2019, the number of universities and the number of students and lecturers increased each year, in which the group of public universities accounted for a large proportion, up to 72.6% in 2019. From 2013 to 2019, the number of lecturers increased by 2.77 times, and the number

of students increased by 2.33 times, in which, the non-public group tended to significantly increase upward.

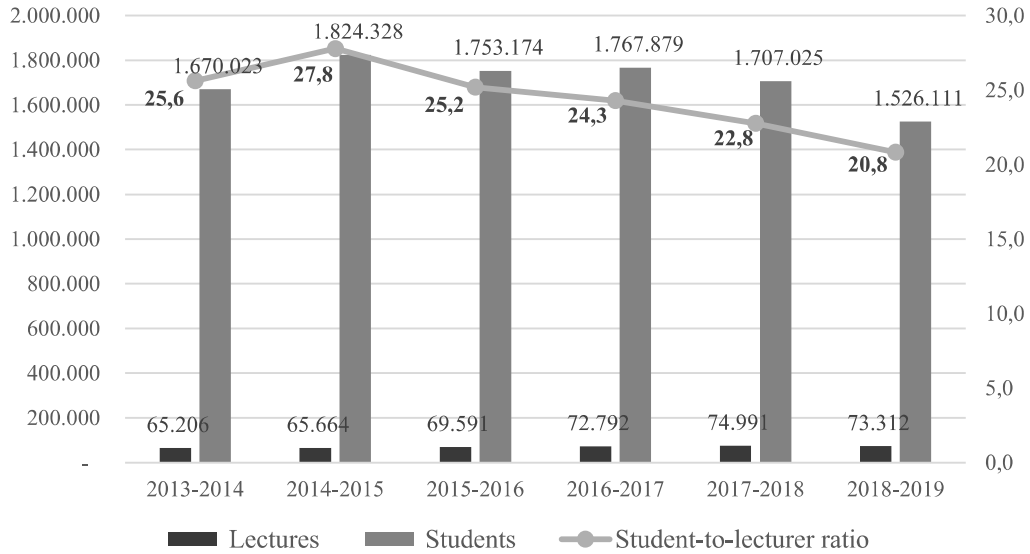
Table 1: Number of universities, lecturers and students over school years

School year	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Number of University	214	217	223	235	236	237
- Public	187	189	163	170	171	172
- Non-public	27	28	60	65	65	65
Lecturer	65.206	65.664	69.591	72.792	74.991	73.312
- Public	52.500	52.689	55.401	57.634	59.232	56.985
- Non-public	12.706	12.975	14.190	15.158	15.759	16.327
Student	655.428	539.614	1.753.174	1.767.879	1.707.025	1.526.111
- Public	1.493.354	1.596.754	1.520.807	1.523.904	1.439.495	1.261.529
- Non-public	176.669	227.574	232.367	243.975	267.530	264.582

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training over the years, www.moet.gov.vn

However, the number, proportion, and structure of teachers have not met the immediate and long-term needs. The student-to-lecturer ratio has decreased to 20,8:1 but compared to countries with advanced universities education in general, it is still low. In such countries, the ratio ranges from 15 to 20:1 [3].

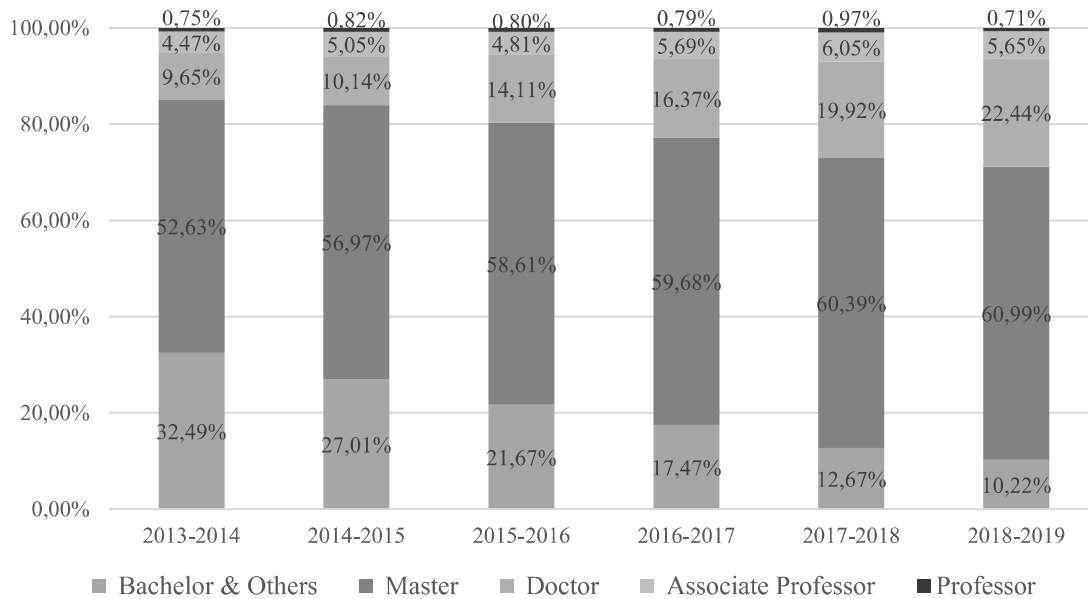
Figure 1: Number of lecturers, students, and student-to-lecturer ratio over school years



Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training over the years, www.moet.gov.vn

The current quality of university lecturers is not commensurate with the development of the country and international integration, and there is a lack of highly qualified lecturers.

Figure 2: Structure of lecturers by academic qualifications



Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training over the years, www.moet.gov.vn

The percentage of lecturers who are professors and associate professors over the country only reached 6.35% in 2019, the rate of doctors reached 22.44%, and masters accounted for 60.99%. The quality of Vietnamese university lecturers is much lower than the goal of the education development strategy, which is that by 2020 Vietnam will have at least 25% of the lecturers holding PhDs [4]. Besides, the foreign language and computer skills of the lecturers are still not high, and the number of lecturers capable of teaching in English is small.

The development of university teachers still lacks the connection, cooperation, and exchange of experiences with each other. Many universities have set up departments and centers to perform the function of international cooperation (including domestic cooperation), but the efficiency is not high because each university performs the cooperation in their ways and their resources are also limited. Especially, there is a scare of collaboration between universities in sharing and exchanging faculty resources as well as in training and upgrading teaching force.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the context of our country's deeper and more comprehensive international integration with countries around the world and within a region, the training of human resources not only meets domestic needs but also participates in the allocations of labor and international cooperation. Each university has different strengths in terms of the number, qualifications, experience of the teachers to resources, facilities, technology, etc., which requires a connection with each other to supplement, minimize existing weaknesses and create sustainable development in the future, including the use of human resources, finance, facilities, etc. in lecturers development.

Therefore, Resolution No. 29-TW/NQ has emphasized the connection among university education institutions in developing the teaching force through "deploying solutions, models of communication, linking between training institutions, especially universities with science and technology organizations, especially research institutes" [1]. These connections are not simply between schools and schools, institutes and institutes, but the interweaving link between schools and institutes, from which schools can expand, not only the vision but also create broad information channels to adopt new knowledge.

From that, it is necessary to organize an increasingly close and comprehensive association among university education institutions including national universities, regional universities, universities, and scientific research institutes in reinventing university education in general and lecturers development in particular.

Looking at the global experiences, the association between universities in developing teaching staff has been formed for a long time, as a requirement and an inevitable need of managers and lecturers.

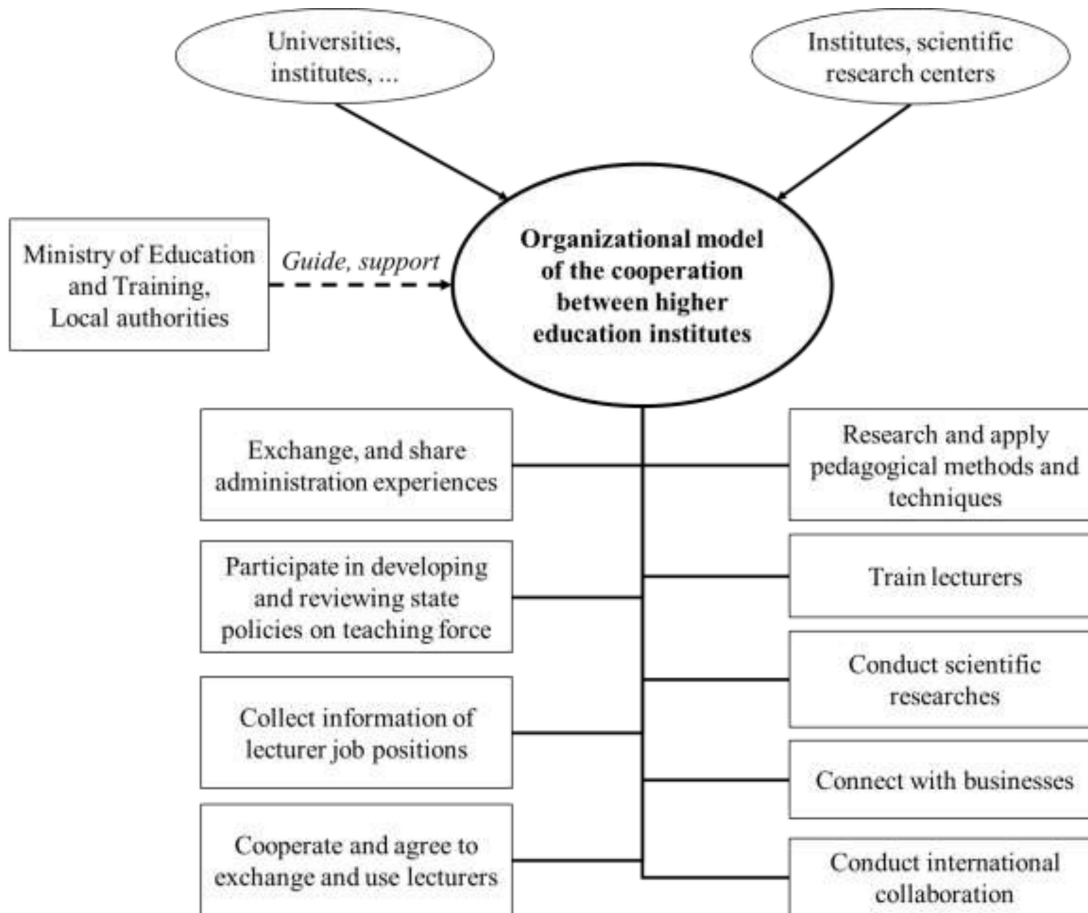
Concerning university education in Vietnam, when the policy of university autonomy is being strongly piloted, the roles of state management in education and training is changing from giving orders to becoming the one who promotes, supports, and guide, the formation of cooperation between universities education institutions needs the orientation, expedition, and support of the state management.

In particular, the National Assembly and the Government need to develop and issue legal documents regulating association activities between universities to create a legal corridor and orientation for this activity. The Ministry of Education and Training and local authorities need to direct and guide universities to build and form connections between universities education institutions, firstly between local schools; determine the mechanism, resources, and direction of operation; pay attention to invest and create new motivation for universities to shake hands to cooperate and support each other to develop based on proactive cooperation and linkage between universities. In addition, the two National Universities of Hanoi and Hochiminh City, and regional universities also need to promote their pioneering roles and foster the remaining universities.

The model of the association between universities in the participating localities, with resources and operating budgets from the universities themselves, with partial support from the State and local authorities.

The organizational model and operational aspects of this affiliate can be visualized through the following diagram:

Figure 3: Organizational model of the association between higher education institutions



The association between universities operates on the initiatives of cooperation, exchange, and sharing among universities education institutions in the following aspects:

- Is a place for cooperation, exchange, and sharing of information and experiences among universities in management and the development of universities education in general and the development of lecturers in particular.
- Represents the interests of member universities and promotes the development of lecturers through state policy research and also proposals on various areas of higher education.
- Act as a focal point to collect information on the demand for lecturer positions of university members.
- Develop a mechanism for collaboration and exchange of lecturers among universities. This helps to limit the shortage of lecturers among universities in the short term, and it is also a solution to increase income and experience for competent lecturers.

- Is the center for scientific researches on pedagogy; studying and designing training programs, fostering pedagogical skills, applying scientific and technological achievements in teaching activities.

- Is the focal point to organize scientific researches, organize large-scale seminars towards building a database of scientific research results to support scientific research activities of lecturers in universities and other institutions and organizations.

- Gathering resources of member universities together to support and promote external linkage activities such as: linking with businesses, international cooperation in scientific research, and application development faculty members.

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