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The performance policy on faculty development in the public universities in Vietnam

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Abstract

With the implementation of public participation education in Vietnam has led to a rapid increase of many new universities. However, the increase of the quantity of universities is incompatibilities with the quality of education. Practical research show that a large number of students can not finding job after graduated, inflation qualifications, labor productivity is lower than other countries in the region. To meet the requirements of the strategy of training high-quality human resources, the quality of education is at the centre of the need for innovation in the universities (especially public universities) in which the most important element is the quality of teachers. Policy development teaching staff has been mentioned in several different documents including the Law on Higher Education 2012. In reality, the implementation of faculty development policy have not achieved results desire, lecturers in universities today are limited in both quantity and quality, yet compatible with the requirements set out by education development Strategy 2009-2020 period and requirements of the renewal of the country. This paper uses the available data of the Ministry of Education and Training and relevant documents combined the qualitative research methods which reviews of the practical and propose policy solutions to complete the development of faculty in Vietnam universities in the present context integration.

Key words: training faculty; faculty development policy; higher education; developing teacher staff.

1. Lecturer development policy in public universities

1.1. Lecturers in public universities

There are different views on lecturers. In broad terms, lecturers are "the common name for teaching staff at universities, colleges, and training classes" (Nguyen Nhu Y et al., 1998, p. 171). In the narrower sense, lecturers are "the professional title of the teachers in the institutions of higher education and postgraduate, lower than those of professors, associate professors and master lecturers" (Bui Hien et al., 2001, p. 103). According to Clauses 1 and 2, Article 54 of the Law on Higher Education of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2012), lecturers in higher education institutions are people with clear backgrounds, good qualities and conscience, good health on occupational demand; professionally qualified as prescribed. The lecturer's titles include: assistant lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, professor.

Universities are higher education institutions including the colleges, universities, affiliated scientific research institutes belonging to different fields, separated into two levels for higher education. (Under Clause 8, Article 4 of the Law on Higher Education, 2012). State-owned public higher education institutions of which the facilities are invested and built by the State

(Paragraph a, Clause 2, Article 7 of the Law on Higher Education, 2012).

Thus, it is possible to understand lecturers are those who are teaching in tertiary education institutions. Lecturers in public universities include all teachers teaching at public universities.

1.2. Lecturer development policy in public universities

In Vietnam, public policy is a relatively new science but has attracted the attention of many scholars. Basically, scientists agree that public policy issued by the State is expressed in various forms, including a system of legal normative documents, tools and solutions to adjust the process of oriented socio-economic development.

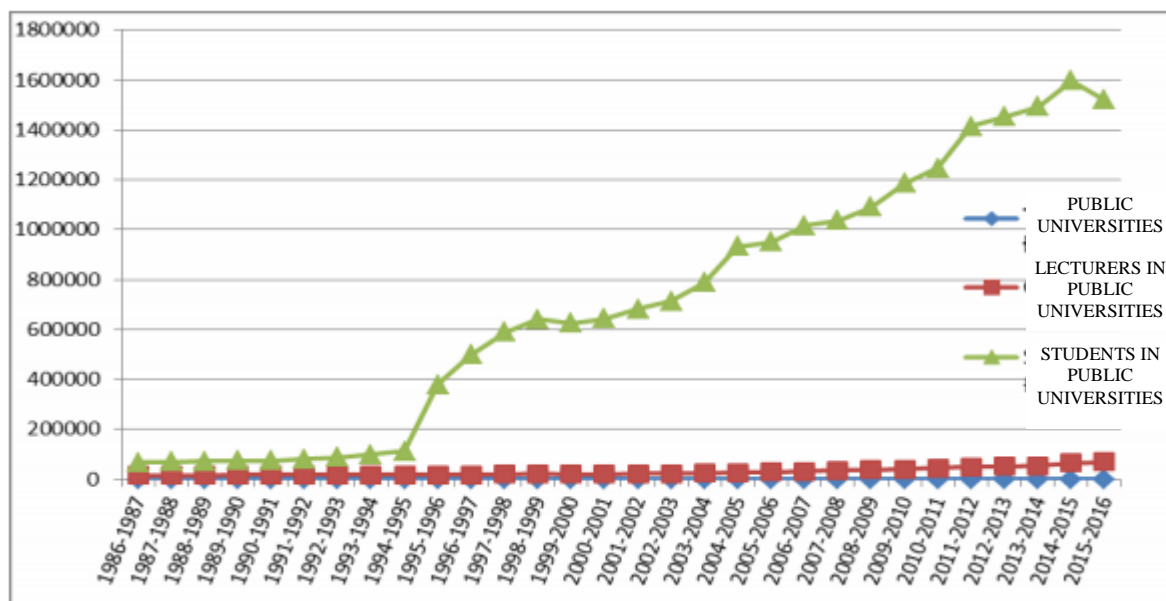
The lecturer development policy in public universities is a public policy system developed by the State to regulate issues arising in the process of lecturer development, with goals, tools and solutions to lecturer development in public universities.

The objectives of the lecturer development policy are: To build the team of lecturers in universities with high professional qualifications, good moral qualities and strong political will, ensuring sufficient quantity, quality and synchronous structure in order to meet the requirements for development and integration of education, successful implementation of the State's construction and development toward industrialization and modernization. Specifically, increase the proportion of university lecturers with master's degrees to 40% and doctoral degrees to 25% by 2010, 55% and 30% by 2015; 60% and 35% by 2020; Focus on training of highly qualified lecturers; lecturers are provided with access to knowledge and new scientific and technological achievements of the world and are given priority in oversea training and qualifications improvements funded by State budget. (According to the Government Resolution No. 14/2005/NQ-CP dated November 02, 2005, on substantial and comprehensive renewal of Vietnam's tertiary education in the 2006-2020 period).

2. Current situation of lecturer development policy in public universities in Vietnam today

2.1. With the education socialization policy, the types of universities as well as training models are becoming more and more diversified, the training scale and the number of students grow rapidly and continuously. After 30 years of higher education reform (from 1986 to 2016), the number of public universities has increased by 2.7 times, covering 62/63 cities and provinces across the country while the number of lecturers increased only 4.4 times (see the chart below):

Chart 2.1. Number of universities, lecturers and students of public universities from 1986-2016



Source: Compiling data from Ministry of Education and Training

Thus, the number of universities, class, students, lecturers has increased significantly but also still failed to meet the actual needs. As of 2015-2016, there are 163 public universities nationwide. With a lecturer team in public universities of 69,591 people, compared to the size of 1,520,807 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016), the student/lecturer ratio is relatively high, approximately 21.85%. The lack of lecturers leads to overcrowding as well as shortcomings in the quality of education today. According to statistics the State Council for Professor Title, the number of lecturers with a doctorate degree only accounts for 17%; there are only about 0.06 professors and nearly 0.4 associate professors per 10,000 people; 5.8 professors or associate professors per 100 university lecturers; 0.2 professors or associate professors per 100 students (Tran Van Nhung, 2016). This rate is clearly low compared to the objectives of the Education Development Strategy to 2020. Accordingly, Vietnam is required to have least 25% of lecturers with Ph.D. degrees. Meanwhile, according to data from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in 2010 and 2013, China has nearly 4 professors or associate professors per 10,000 people, 10 times more than that of Vietnam and 0.2 professors or associate professors per 100 students. Particularly in Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China (2013) there are about 2.5 professors per 100 students and 31 professors per 100 lecturers. In Germany, according to 2014 statistics, this country has 3 professors per 10,000 people and 1.7 professors per 100 students. In 2015, Austria, this figure has 0.62 professors per 100 students. At the University of Pittsburgh (USA) in 2014, there are more than 13 professors and associate professors per 100 students. Comparing this figure in some key Vietnamese universities, it shows that the rate of professors is significantly lower. For example, at Vietnam National University, Hanoi, there are nearly 1.7 professors and associate professors per 100 students; Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City has less than 0.5 professors per 100 students; this figure is about 0.8 at Hanoi University of Science and Technology, etc. So far, the State Council for Professor Title has recognized only three excellent professors who have been appointed overseas: Ngo BaoChau (2005), Vu Ha Van (2010) and Nguyen Ngoc Thanh (2011) as professors of Vietnam.

In addition, there is a great difference in teaching qualifications between national universities, regional universities key universities, and local universities. The structure of teaching staff is unbalanced with the majority of lecturers in basic science and lecturers of unattractive majors are at risk of leaving their careers because some of them are forced to leave their training majors because no students are enrolled.

2.2. Due to the high number of universities, classes and students, lecturers have to teach with high intensity. This will have a double-sided effect on the lecturers and educational management department: On one hand, they have the opportunity to improve their standard of living; on the other hand, they will lose the opportunity and time to participate in physical exercise, health promotion, study and scientific research. There are currently 91,183 lecturers involved in teaching, but very few lecturers participate in scientific research. To be more serious, rush into teaching for many hours in the classrooms will adversely affect the quality of teaching activities as causing lecturers to not have enough time to study, improve professional skills, and change the teaching methods appropriate to each subject. The phenomenon of lecture and time reduction in class, class combination or omission occur in many places adversely affect the educational regulations and disciplines, in the long run will lead to the common attitude and working style with the only focus on quantitative results and neglect of education quality and efficiency. This is a real danger and a challenge for Vietnamese higher education today.

In many universities, scientific research is less focused. Due to the rapid increase in classrooms and the number of students, lecturers are required to teach too many hours, plus low income and family economic pressure, Lecturers have less time to study, learn foreign

languages and improve their specialization. Scientific research is often conducted only for achievement merit, which is less practical. Many scientific subjects lack adequate overview research or an in-depth study. In addition, due to the weakness in information technology and foreign languages, the ability to collect, exploit, and use the information from the Internet is very limited and less updated with new professional knowledge and science technology. Lecturers have few opportunities to attend international conferences and seminars, as well as visit or study at reputable institutions around the world. International research collaboration and scholar exchange programs are also very limited. During 15 years (2001-2015), Vietnamese scientists published 18,076 scientific papers in journals in the ISI catalog. The number of articles continuously increases rapidly. The number of scientific articles in Vietnam is higher than Indonesia and Philippines but only 28% of Thailand, 25% of Malaysia and 15% of Singapore (Nguyen Van Tuan, 2016).

2.3. Some universities have a policy of publicly attracting and recruiting good graduates to stay in the universities and attracting high-level domestic and overseas human resources to come back to work with special treatment regime to "retain talent" (QuangNinh University, Da Nang University). The project of attracting overseas Vietnamese intellectuals has been developed by the Ministry of Education and Training, but the results are not as expected and the participation of overseas Vietnamese is very limited compared to the potential available and the requirements set out. (Pham Minh Hac, 2001). "Compared to over 400,000 overseas Vietnamese intellectuals worldwide, the attraction of Vietnam is too limited" (Le Thi Hong Diep, 2009, p.131). Vietnam has not paid attention to attracting international students to study and to work, while the situation of "brain drain" from Vietnam to foreign countries is increasingly serious due to policy of elite student attraction to study and stay after graduation of other countries (Vu Duc Le, 2017). On the other hand, the transfer of talents from the public to other sectors with better incomes and remuneration systems continues to occur (Pham Hong Tung, 2009).

There are many shortcomings in recruiting lecturers. Research on the recruitment policy for civil servants in the social sciences and humanities sector, as assessed by author Van Tat Thu et al. (2011), is heavily documented. The system of documents on the authority to manage the employment position and the number of employees is inadequate and inconsistent, leading to difficulties in decentralization of recruitment of officials. The recruitment of graduates to be lecturers is quite common, which also leads to certain limitations on scientific objections in many universities. In addition, the source of recruiting excellent lecturers is limited by regional psychology and societal barriers to the teaching profession (Vu Duc Le, 2017, p.79). On the other hand, there is a wide range of standard of professors and associate professors but most of which are not practical, especially fail to pay attention to international publication achievements (Vu Duc Le, 2017, p.88, p. 90). The number of professors and associate professors at a training institute has not been set; the current regulations on the title of professors and associate professors have not contributed to solving the imbalance leading to both shortage and excess (or lifetime professors or professors without being responsible for any specific tasks). The appointment of a title is more "honor", title instead of position with lifetime effect instead of a position with a definite term held at the universities and research institutes leading to "accidental contradiction with a new essential point that the title of professor must be associated with a training institution" (Le Thi Hong Diep, 2009, P.130).

The planning for lecturers has not been paid due attention causes the arrangement and use of lecturers to be passive and face the danger of intergenerational failures between different generations of lecturers. The lecturer structure is unbalanced due to the failure to prepare a good lecturer generation ready to replace the team of professors, associate professors and doctors at the retirement age. The lack of high quality lecturers seriously affects the quality and effectiveness of training, especially with local universities.

Vietnam's talent use policy is described by Pham Hong Tung (2009) as "one of the currently

greatest inadequacies" in Vietnam. A research by Le Thi Hong Diep (2009) also shows that the use of qualified human resources inconsistent or unsuitable with the previously trained major and profession is quite common. The policy for use and payroll management creates inertia and the ideals of averageism, grading, reducing development motivation of lecturers. The mechanism of utilization does not promote the capacity of individuals causing difficulty in recruiting good lecturers and failure to screen unqualified lecturers. Lecturer assessment is supposed to be formalistic within the lecturers, based on the number of articles and the number teaching hours of lectures, regardless of the quality of the work. This is also a partial reason for the loss of talent that is common in Vietnam. Many intellectuals have sought to go abroad. Even, many owners of kitchens or ready-made garment stores in Russia, Ukraine and Germany are academic cadres with high academic degrees and titles. The author Pham Tat Dong (2014) states that "This phenomenon is the dual result of the dramatically poor talent use policy in our country (Vietnam): causing both the corruption of labor and the loss of talents."

Policy on training and improvement has been implemented but it seems not to achieve the goals set out. In general, the policy system of training and improvement is not strong enough, nor encouraging and motivating employees (Van Tat Thu et al., 2011, p.172). The policy of sending lecturers for overseas training under the schemes has not met the objectives. In Vietnam, there is still a big gap in training policies in the orientation for the development of university lecturers while university lecturers of economic, technical and management majors occupy a large proportion but there is no policy to assign the task of training specialized lecturers to any specific universities. Data from the Ministry of Education and Training shows that the percentage of lecturers provided with training is very low: PhD, master, pedagogical skills, professional skills, foreign language and computer science training accounts for 22.3%, 52.3%, 64.8%, 53.9%, 32.6% and 37.8 % respectively. Beside their limited English proficiency, lecturers also fail to attend international conferences and seminars on a frequent basis, have no access to study in foreign institutions with a limit in international research collaboration programs (Do Minh Cuong et al., 2001, p. 350).

To meet the requirements of work, lecturers must constantly learn and self-teach to supplement knowledge and professional expertise. However, in addition to a small number of lecturers who have the opportunity to go abroad for postgraduate training, most lecturers are not provided with favorable conditions in terms of time, money or motivation to develop themselves. Training and skill improvement courses often focus on the training content that can be met but not the needs of the trainees.

The assessment of lecturers is not really scientific and comprehensive (without receiving feedback from many sides and many sources of information). Promotion and salary increases are based on seniority and experience, not based on academic merit and achievements, thus discouraging young lecturers who are passionate about their dedication.

Specific regulations on salaries and allowances for class attendance and seniority for lecturers who give lessons at the present increase payrolls of lecturers compared to the officials in educational service units. As of 2016, the salary of officials was adjusted 11 times, but the salary increase only aims to offset the increase in consumer prices instead of raising their standard of living. Lecturers' income levels are still low compared to the general level of the society and are paid in the form of averageism instead of based on actual capacity. Policies such as salary and social insurance, ... do not motivate lecturers to work and contribute. The majority of lecturers are currently working in shortages of facilities and equipment. State investment in science "never exceeds 1% of GDP" (Vu Duc Le, 2017, p.132).

In general, the form and content of examinations, grade increase, assessment methods, regulations on salary scales, rights and obligations of lecturers ... are designed like cadres and civil servants working in state administrative agencies which are not suitable with the nature

and characteristics of lecturers. The administrative style of "administrative-ization" along with a remuneration system significantly lower than that of the private sector not only influences the psychology of lecturers but also causes "brain drain" in universities currently.

2.4. Up to now, Vietnam has no specific policy for lecturers. Policy content for lecturers is interwoven in various legal documents such as the Law on Higher Education and Law on Civil Servants. Lecturers are subject to policy adjustment but not involved in the policy-making process. Proposals for policy making for lecturer development in Vietnam are primarily from state agencies empowered with state management of education, based on consideration and analysis of the actual situation of each state management agency. "This leads to a lack of coordination among ministries as well as a lack of comprehensiveness and objectivity of the policies issued (Vu Duc Le, 2017, pp. 96-97). Policy objectives are scattered, qualitatively and physically deceptive, unworkable and fail to reach the expected results in practice. The implementation of policy solutions is still inadequate due to lack of master plan development; there are not legal documents detailing and guiding the implementation of policies to attract lecturers. The recruitment policy is narrow and fail to recruit qualified foreigners. Lecturer assessment is formalistic and inefficient and the evaluations of lecturer development policy are only made when the problem arises.

3. Proposals to lecturer development policy in public universities in Vietnam today

It can be seen that the number and quality of lecturers in public universities are far from the actual needs as well as the objectives of Vietnam Education Development Strategy to 2020. Therefore, in order to meet the requirements of the national industrialization and modernization, to raise the educational level of Vietnamese people to create a momentum for sustainable development, the recruitment of talents and the development of high quality lecturers in universities are a task of home university education. This is also an important strategy of most developed countries in the world today. In order to overcome these shortcomings and to develop lecturers towards sustainable development, a suitable policy system should be developed, especially the following basic policy groups:

3.1. Attraction and recruitment policies

At present, the number of lecturers has increased rapidly but still not enough to meet the demand due to the rapidly increasing number of students and universities. However, to ensure the quality of training, during the recruitment, it is required to choose the right person for the right jobs. The recruitment should be open and transparent, meet the criteria of recruitment and selection of the right person for the right jobs as well as working capacity by position and title. At the same time, universities also need to plan to create resources and attract talent

(create and attract good students to stay and work in universities, attract overseas trained masters and doctors to come back for work).

3.2. It is also recommended to issue effective training and improvement policy according to demand and working positions.

The qualifications of lecturers are far from the requirements of the Education Development Strategy up to 2020 as well as the requirements of international integration in education. It is necessary to provide policies to motivate, encourage and facilitate all aspects for lecturers to participate in domestic and international graduate training courses. In addition, participation in short-term training and enhancement courses to improve professional and working skills is an activity that needs to be carried out regularly. Accordingly, it is essential to develop and perfect the model and objectives of training high quality lecturers; to renovate training and improvement program contents and methods in association with the demand, working position, quality and efficiency. Besides, there should be a mechanism to encourage and facilitate lecturers to continuously study to improve and develop themselves, promote academic exchanges domestically and internationally.

3.3. Policy on management and use should be effective and sustainably ensure the maintenance of motivation to work.

The recruitment, use and training of lecturers should be in line with the specific planning, ensuring the balance and rationality of each university, between public and non-public universities, and between universities in big cities and those in different regions and local areas. The evaluation of lecturers should be conducted regularly with appropriate criteria, ensuring objective, comprehensive and effective, reflection of the qualities, qualifications and capacities of lecturers.

On the other hand, in order to maintain the motivation to work sustainably, it is necessary to enhance the self-development of lecturers and intellectual adaptability in the context of integration in order to solve problems arising. This is also to build a knowledgeable and self-explored team to create motivational and refreshing factors.

3.4. Worthwhile remuneration policy

To attract, use and retain talented people in universities effectively, the State and tertiary education institutions should have appropriate mechanisms and policies for their lecturers. Currently, the salary scale of civil servants in the model of civil servants is unreasonable with the characteristics and requirements of lecturers. Salaries and remuneration for lecturers should be appropriately designed and adjusted for high-quality human resources in universities, especially for remote universities to ensure the stability of their lives, with more time spent on research and teaching; at the same time attract talents in the education sector and reduces the gap in quality of human resources across regions and areas.

Additionally, it is necessary to create a favorable working environment, build a democratic atmosphere and discipline the universities for a good behavior in the universities. Technical infrastructure and equipment in universities should be upgraded to meet the needs of teaching and scientific research.

Conclusions

Lecturers are the decisive factor for the prestige, image and training quality of each university, thereby affirming and ensuring the sustainable development of education and training institutions and high quality force for society serving the industrialization and modernization of Vietnam today. To build, maintain and develop the high quality team of lecturers, it is necessary to develop a suitable policy system to renew and improve the quality of recruitment, training, retraining, utilization, evaluation and remuneration.

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