Ly Thi Tran · Simon Marginson   *Editors*

Internationalisation in Vietnamese Higher Education

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Internationalisation in Vietnamese Higher Education

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Part II   Student Mobility, Employability and Contributions

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Chapter 1
Internationalisation of Vietnamese Higher Education: An Overview

Ly Thi Tran and Simon Marginson

Introduction

Over the past decade, Vietnam has achieved remarkable progress in basic education. It has achieved an adult literacy rate of 92.5 per cent, compared to the average world adult literacy of 89.5% (UNESCO 2013). There is strong commitment to education at the level of the family and school. Notably, despite debates around the nature and the way the OECD's Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted in different countries, Vietnam performs better in PISA comparison of student achievement than does the UK and the USA, in all three PISA disciplines. Nevertheless, at tertiary level educational provision and achievement is not as strong as in primary and secondary schooling. Even though the government policy agenda has prioritised tertiary education, achievements and comprehensive reform are still far from satisfactory.

Overall, Vietnam's HDI (Human Development Indicators) index of 0.593 in 2011 ranked 128 out of 187 countries (UNDP 2011). This can be partly attributed to the long-standing weaknesses of the higher education sector. Among those systemic weaknesses, the curriculum is often cited as being inadequately responsive to the society's needs, the nation's need for human capital, and worldwide developments. It has been more than 30 years since Đổi Mới (Economic Reform) that marked the transition to the alternative economic model and the nation's determination to move away from an inward-looking orientation to greater global integration. However, the Vietnamese higher education (HE) system is still looking for effective ways to make

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the curriculum more relevant to a socialist-oriented market economy, to changing local demands, and to the needs called up by growing economic and cultural integration at regional and world levels (Pham and Fry 2004).

In response to the changing local demands and global forces, the Vietnamese government has implemented various reform strategies. These include the Strategies for socio-economic development 2011–2020, Strategies for education development 2011–2020; Education Law; and Higher Education Law. According to the Strategies for socio-economic development 2011–2020, Vietnam aims to become 'basically a modern, industrial country' by the year 2020. To meet the target, the rapid development of human resources, especially high quality resources, has been chosen as one of the three breakthrough aspects. In light of these development strategies, education development is focused on building a popular, nationalistic, advanced, modern, socialist education, with Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thought as the foundation. It is also focused on promotion of deep and broad integration into worldwide education, on the basis of the conservation and promotion of national identity, maintenance of independence, autonomy and socialist orientation (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ [Prime Minister] 2012). The effort of and commitment to internationalisation of higher education are also realised in two other important policy frameworks: the Education Law 2005 and the Higher Education Renovation Agenda 2006–2020. The former legal document provides a legislative basis for international cooperation, while the latter proposes measures to improve the competitiveness of higher education system in the process of international integration.

In essence, the national focus on reforming the higher education sector ultimately aims at significantly improving the country's ability to compete in the global knowledge economy. Specifically, vocational and higher education aims to 'train people with creative capacity, independent thinking, citizenship responsibility, professional ethics and skills, foreign language competence, work discipline, industrial manner and ability to compete in the region and in the world and adapt to the changes of the labour market' (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ [Prime Minister] 2012, p. 9). To enhance graduates' capacity to effectively perform, engage and compete on the domestic labour market as well as in the Asia Pacific region, internationalisation of higher education has been identified as one of the crucial strategies. At the policy level, internationalisation is thus considered as an approach to enhancing institutional capacity, lifting education quality and keeping pace with international and fast moving developments in the region and the world.

However, in practice, many institutions are still ambiguous about the concept and rationales for internationalisation, the potential benefits of this agenda, what is involved in the process of internationalisation, and the specific ways to implement internationalisation that suit their institutional contexts. In recent years, many internationalisation efforts in Vietnam have been centred around the use of English as a medium of instruction, the borrowing of foreign curriculum, the provision of 'internationally-recognised' qualifications through partnerships with foreign institutions and international cooperation. Despite growing awareness of the importance of internationalisation to education reform and some positive changes, internationalisation activities in Vietnam are still fragmented, narrow, ad-hoc, inconsistent and

unstainable (Tran et al. 2014; Tran and Marginson 2018). In particular, the impact of internationalisation in Vietnam tends to be on a small group of students and teachers, who can have access to internationalisation opportunities. Therefore, issues of inequity and inequality have emerged from the fragmented way internationalisation is implemented, that privileges a small group of students who can afford or satisfy the entry requirements to 'internationalised' programs such as the advanced program in HE (chương trình tiên tiến) or the double-qualification program in the high school sector (chương trình đào tạo song bằng tú tài).

This edited volume builds on the earlier monograph *Higher education in Vietnam* (Tran et al. 2014) by focusing specifically on strengths, potential, constraints and tensions involved in the internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education. It also offers a comparative perspective on key aspects of internationalisation of higher education in Vietnam and its neighbouring countries. Based on empirical research, theoretical knowledge and the experiences of researchers from Vietnam and overseas, the book draws out the distinctiveness, diversity, complexity and tensions of internationalisation policies and practices. It also chart ways forward for the internationalisation of the education system. It is the first volume to address this topic area. In particular the book:

- Examines the key drivers and dimensions of internationalising Vietnamese HE
- Analyses the influence of internationalisation processes on the operation and outcomes of Vietnamese HE
- Explores the effects and contradictions of outbound student mobility and internationalisation as a powerful force for change and transformation in Vietnamese HE
- Clarifies and discusses issues, concepts and tensions related to the appropriation of traditional 'Western' internationalisation practice and models, and neo-liberal ideologies, to the local context of Vietnam
- Reflects on key concepts from contemporary theories and models of internationalisation and discusses the implications for innovation, flexibility and responsiveness to local needs in Vietnam.

Internationalisation in Higher Education: Policies, Practices and Tensions

Student and scholar travel across national borders for educational purposes, as one of the primary dimensions of internationalisation, has been recorded since the middle ages (Van der Wende et al. 1999). In Europe, internationalisation became a prominent feature during the 1990s and Europeanisation is seen as the regional version of internationalisation (Teichler 2004). The phenomenon of internationalisation has been considered as one of the most powerful and pervasive forces in the higher education sector worldwide over the past two decades (Rumbley et al. 2012). One of the most cited definitions of internationalisation of higher education is

proposed by Knight (2003): "Internationalisation at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 2). However, internationalisation in higher education is not a homogenous notion (Hudzik 2015) and people tend to interpret and use it in specific ways depending on their purposes (de Wit 2011). Hudzik has coined a new term 'comprehensive internationalisation', which he considers as 'a response to the greater complexity and dimensions associated with an evolving notion of internationalisation' (2015, p. 6). Citing his own 2011 definition, the author states that comprehensive internationalisation is seen as imperative to the institution, through the manner in which university agenda is translated into action to 'infuse international and comprehensive perspectives throughout the teaching, research and service missions of higher education' (p. 6). Hudzik's concept of comprehensive internationalisation is distinct from other definitions of internationalisation as it stresses the importance of putting commitment, policy and agenda into action, positioning internationalisation as being core to mission rather than simply being a desire of institutions, and seeing it as affecting the entire enterprise of institutions. This view is somewhat echoed by authors like Van Der Wende et al. (1999) who argue "internationalisation is seen more and more as a process related to the strategic orientation of higher education institutions and to the strengthening of the quality of higher education and research" (p. 66), stretching far beyond its initial core focus on student exchange. Over the past two decades, the concept of internationalisation of education has therefore been deepened and broadened.

Internationalisation has recently shifted from a reactive to a pro-active strategic issue, from a value-added to mainstream activity (de Wit 2013; Van Der Wende et al. 1999), and from *ad hoc,* marginalized to central in higher education systems across different parts of the world (Knight 2012). Transnational workforce mobility, the globalisation of the economy and the advancement of information and communication technology have been identified as the key forces driving the expansion of internationalisation of education (Van Der Wende et al. 1999). Internationalisation has been seen as a powerful instrument to promote the competitiveness of higher education, and improve domestic universities in response to the changing needs of economic development and workforce capacity building (Lane 2015; Owens and Lane 2014). However, under the changed circumstances in higher education characterised by the neo-liberal economic principle, internationalisation of education has been increasingly discussed from the perspective and the language of marketisation and commercialisation, detracting from its "core academic purposes of the university" (Scott 2005, p. 20). Supporting this view, Marginson pointed out in the context of Australian higher education, there seems to be a lack of balance between the commercial approach to international education through building 'a massive fee-paying enrolment to fill the revenue gap' (2007, p. 26) and the policies for the development of academic and research capacities in higher education institutions.

In Vietnam, the overall Ministry of Education and Training's internationalisation policy places emphasis on the expansion of international cooperation and an exclusive focus on outbound mobility (Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam

2011–2020). 'Internationalisation at home' to assist students with developing international knowledge and global competence, has been largely neglected. Despite MOET's repositioning of internationalisation as one of the initiatives fundamental for the development of Vietnamese education and research, internationalisation is mainly treated as a goal in itself rather than being effectively integrated in education and research as a means to enhance their quality on a sustainable basis.

A critical review of research on internationalisation in higher education by Kehm and Teichler (2007) indicates the prominent dimensions of scholarly work in this field ranging from staff and student mobility, internationalisation of teaching and learning, national and institutional strategies and policies, knowledge and policy transfer to cooperation and competition across different higher education systems. However, existing research on internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education is largely concerned with three key themes: (1) international influences on Vietnamese education, (2) student and staff mobility, and (3) international cooperation, international programs, and internationalised curriculum. The stream of research on international influences on Vietnamese education reflects the overall historical condition of Vietnam, which has been shaped by the intervention and influence of successive external forces and foreign countries. The other two key themes of research on internationalisation of education are to some extent shaped by the way internationalisation is constructed in government policy.

The key international factors that have influenced Vietnamese education are often categorised into two phases, prior and post *Đổi Mới* (Economic Reform). Prior to *Đổi Mới* in 1986, the international influences upon Vietnamese education included many centuries of Chinese incursion following the Chin dynasty invasion (221–206 BC), followed later by French colonialism between 1858 and 1954, the American occupation in the South of the country in the 1960s and early 1970s, and Soviet influence after the end of the American War (Tran et al. 2014). Since *Đổi Mới* a range of foreign influences and models have been felt. Foreign influences were and are manifest in the areas of language, education policies, institutional structures, governance and curriculum, depending on the political agenda of the external force involved and the nature of the relationship between Vietnam and the foreign country involved (Hayden and Lam 2007; Nguyen 2009a, b; Nguyen and Sloper 1995; Pham and Fry 2004; Welch 2010). International influences could range from assimilation, curriculum and policy borrowing to flexible adaptation. In some cases, foreign values in education have been creatively adapted and *Vietnamised*, to suit Vietnamese sociocultural and political conditions, while in other cases there has been more inflexible and less sensitive borrowing of foreign ideas.

Existing scholarly work notes that globalisation and neoliberal policy ideas have been key factors that have influenced Vietnamese higher education since *Đổi Mới* (Pham 2006; Tran et al. 2014; Tran et al. 2017). Since *Đổi Mới* there has been a shift towards marketisation, privatisation and massification of education, aimed at overcoming the inefficiencies of the education system and harnessing more potential investment in education to enhance human capital for the nation. One of the remarkable features of education reform post *Đổi Mới* is the introduction of the privatisation policy, termed as "socialisation of education," whereby which the cost of

education is partly shifted from the government onto the wider society, especially families (London 2011a, b). This policy is seen not only as a cost-sharing strategy but as a medium for responding to the emergence of diverse demands from the multi-sector market economy. However, Tran et al. (2014) argue that "these policies also generate tensions and downsides, and by themselves are an incomplete blueprint for a distinctively Vietnamese strategy of development in higher education and research" (p. 137).

This same post *Đổi Mới* period has also witnessed the government's move to a more active stance in internationalisation, especially in relation to off-shore mobility, with the intention of both augmenting the supply of skilled human capital and better equipping the education sector to catch up with regional and international developments. The changing landscape of student mobility in Vietnam has been accompanied by a plethora of literature focusing on the topic, which explores the rationales and nature of mobility, outbound and inbound mobility, impact of mobility, returnees and brain circulation (C. H. Nguyen 2013a; N. T. Nguyen 2013b; A. T. N. Pham 2015a; L. Pham, 2015b). The literature also notes the unbalanced character of mobility in Vietnam, with the dominance of outbound mobility; and accordingly, the way the nation is positioned as predominantly a receiver and importer of international education. The key drivers for the growth of outbound mobility in Vietnam have been identified as growing national demand for qualified human resources, expansion of the middle class, the government's active promotion of study-abroad for international integration imperatives, greater exposure to information about foreign higher education and the expansion of relations between Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and foreign institutions around the world. There were 125,000 Vietnamese students undertaking overseas study in 2013, an increase of 15 per cent compared to 2012 (An 2015). The Vietnamese government's Strategy for Education Development 2011–2020 considers outbound mobility as a crucial strategy to help augment its individual and collective human resources and accordingly enable the country to catch up with regional and international developments. Both self-funded and scholarship funded overseas study are encouraged by the government via various specific programs and policies. Up to 90 percent of Vietnamese international students were self-financed in 2012 (OECD and World Bank 2014).

Vietnamese inbound mobility, aimed at gaining regional and international recognition and generating revenue, has not grown as strongly as the outbound flows. The key factors underpinning this unbalanced phenomenon include Vietnam's current level of development and capacity, the status of its education, and its policy and bureaucratic framework (Tran et al. 2014). However, over the past few years, growing awareness and more active efforts have been placed on attracting international students, most of whom are from elsewhere in the Southeast Asian region (De Wit 2010). While the number of international students studying in Vietnam was only 2053 in 2006 (Knight 2013), MOET has set an ambitious target of 15,000 international enrolments across the higher education sector by 2020 (MOET 2008). In order to increase the number of international students in Vietnamese universities, in 2011 MOET issued a new decree, giving universities more autonomy in determining eligibility criteria for international students (De Wit 2010).

The provision of more courses using *English as a medium of instruction* (EMI) is one of the initiatives to attract more international students. Nguyen et al. (2016) found that the deployment of EMI has shown positive outcomes in terms of establishing partnerships with foreign HEIs and attracting native English-speaking academics and international students to the university's EMI programs. Accompanied with giving institutions more flexibility and autonomy in determining international enrolments and introducing EMI courses, the development of joint training programs and advanced programs is seen as another key strategy for increasing international student enrolments and enhancing internationalisation.

The existing literature highlights certain efforts at both ministerial and institutional levels, especially at the leading universities, to engage in internationalisation of the curriculum. Strategies of promoting an internationalised curriculum are often aimed at boosting institutional ranking, gaining regional and international recognition, and enhancing graduate employability, not only in the national labour market but also in the regional and international labour markets. In this regard the implementation of "advanced programs" (A. T. Nguyen 2009a, b; Tran et al. 2014; Nguyen and Tran 2017; Tran and Nguyen 2018)) is regarded as one of the key strategies for internationalising the curriculum in Vietnam. Overall, international cooperation in higher education courses and programs is predominantly oriented towards curriculum borrowing or foreign curriculum transfer.

In the last two decades, especially following the nation's WTO accession and GATS agreement, the development of joint and twinning programs has become another distinctive characteristic of internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education. At the present, there are approximately 300 joint and twinning programs provided in cooperation with 32 countries, an increase from 133 programs in 2007 (see Chap. 2 for more details). The growth of these joint and twinning programs has marked a shift from Vietnam as merely an importer of education to Vietnam as a partner in educational cooperation (Dang 2011, p. 7). This trend responds to growth in the number of families who want to expose their children to international education so as to enhance their competitive advantage, and can afford the higher tuition fees charged by internationally recognised programs located within the country. At the national level, this development facilitates international cooperation of Vietnamese Universities and the import of foreign curricula to Vietnam, with the potential to augment the country's human capacity. However, there are problems associated with these partnership models in Vietnam. Notably, there is an absence of a coherent and transparent regulatory framework for quality assurance and accreditation. Strategies to ensure the sustainability of these transnational programs are also absent. Authors have also pointed out that "the low quality of many foreign-owned programs, the profusion of empty partnerships and the 'second-rate' nature of foreign academics in Vietnam" are among the critical issues facing transnational education provision in Vietnam (Tran et al. 2014, p. 149).

The Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020 sees internationalisation as being critical for the development of Vietnamese education and frames internationalisation largely in relation to the expansion and enhancement of international cooperation in the field of education (MOET 2012). In addition to

transnational education models, other international collaborative activities include international exchange projects and research collaboration supported by international organisations and foreign countries. The government has prioritised the development of key research centres and institutes incorporating collaboration with and support by foreign partners. These activities again aim to facilitate the borrowing of policy ideas, while advancing Vietnam's research and encouraging the mobility of trans-national research and technology. It is important that the government and institutions develop transparent and systemic approaches to capitalise on and ensure the sustainability of international collaborative arrangements. However, the value of such cross-border cooperation is limited by the asymmetry between capacity in Vietnam and abroad. Authors have argued that 'Vietnam relies more on development aid style and capacity development in the conventional sense between developed and developing countries' (Dang 2011, p. 69) rather than being 'an equal partner in international cooperation in education and research' (Tran et al. 2014, p. 149). This limitation can change only slowly.

It is important to look at internationalisation in the high school context in our discussion of internationalisation in HE in Vietnam as the two sectors are interconnected. In the school sector, a new initiative of internationalisation is the introduction of the double-qualification program to seven public high schools in Ha Noi (Dan Tri 2018). This is a significant development towards internationalisation in the school sector, which is often seen as being less active than the HE sector, in internationalisation. This initiative is based on partnerships between local high schools and the UK agency, Cambridge Assessment International Education, to assist local students in obtaining double qualifications including the standard Vietnamese high school certificate and Cambridge International A Levels as the international qualifications in the medium of English. This will provide selected students with the opportunity to be exposed to an internationally recognised program and to improve their English proficiency in relation to both curriculum-specific content and communication. However, several issues are raised about this form of internationalisaion. First, this partnership impacts upon only a small proportion of students and raises a concern about equity. For example, at Chu Van An High School, only 49 students satisfy the criteria to be admitted to this new program in the academic year 2017–2018 (Dan Tri 2018; Nhan Dan 2018), which is less than 2 per cent of the total enrolment of the school. In addition to meeting the academic and English proficiency criteria, students will need to pay the annual tuition fee of 180 million đồng (approximately USD 800) to be accepted into this double-qualification program (Dan Tri 2018). This model of 'internationalisation' of schooling appears to be inequitable, with restricted access to the privileged group of students in government schools. Second, under this double-qualification program, high school students have to complete both qualifications in line with the requirements of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training for high school students and Cambridge Assessment International Education's A Level. Unless specific arrangements are

made, this model requires double workload for high-school students, which may affect their wellbeing and intellectual development, especially given that the high school curriculum in Vietnam has already been criticised for being heavily loaded. Third, the provision of Cambridge International A Levels in Vietnamese high schools can represent a pipeline for international students from Vietnam to UK universities. In line with the prominent trend of commercialising and exporting education in English-speaking countries, international students now generate approximately £25 billion to the UK economy (Universities UK 2017). While it is important for Vietnam to develop partnerships and collaborations with international partners in improving the quality of teaching and learning in all education sectors, a more holistic, equitable and sustainable approach is needed (see Chaps. 4 and 14 for more detailed discussion).

In short, the key drawbacks in internationalisation of education in Vietnam are:

(1) an absence of a national policy for internationalisation characterised by clear concepts and philosophy guiding internationalisation and specific action plans and frameworks to facilitate the implementation of internationalisation.

(2) a lack of a coherent support mechanism and coordination of investment and resources at the national, local (provincial, city) and institutional levels to facilitate the implementation of internationalisation

(3) a top-down, centralised approach in which educational institutions are subject to close bureaucratic controls and rigid mechanisms of government

(4) a lack of leadership with commitment, expertise and capacity in internationalisation to guide the process and lack of professional development and infrastructure needed to support leaders, academics and students in engaging in internationalisation

(5) an ambiguity at the institutional level about the rationales, dimensions, priorities, action plan and ways to implement internationalisation

(6) a lack of a holistic, equitable and sustainable institutional approach to implementing and maximising the potential benefits of internationalisation

(7) an absence of a coherent, transparent regulatory framework for quality assurance and accreditation in transnational programs and partnerships

(8) a mind-set that frames Vietnam's partnerships with foreign institutions from the position of a passive borrower and 'inferior' player rather than a partner with agency and autonomy in international collaboration

(9) internationalisation of the curriculum, teaching and learning focusing more on the borrowing and transposition of foreign programs rather than on enhancing the quality of the HE system through drawing on existing strengths and distinctive national characteristics while learning from and appropriating international practices/policies

(10) a lack of cooperation across institutions and with other related stakeholders outside the institutional context to support internationalisation.

Aspects of Internationalisation Highlighted in the Book

The chapters in this book highlight three prominent aspects of internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education (1) international cooperation, international programs, and internationalised curriculum; (2) international influences on Vietnamese education, and (3) student and staff mobility. In response to the crucial demand to augment a high quality workforce in line with national, regional and international developments, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) considers internationalisation of the curriculum via transnational curriculum partnerships as a core component in the internationalisation agenda, as endorsed in the Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020 (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ [Prime Minister] 2012). Successful internationalised programs reported in Chap. 2 by Hoang, Tran and Pham show the critical role played by the government in facilitating internationalisation initiatives at both the national and institution levels. The government's financial support and greater institutional autonomy granted to higher education institutions appears to be crucial to drive internationalisation activities toward the desired goals (see Chap. 1 by Tran & Marginson; Chap. 2 by Hoang et al.). Internationalisation of the curriculum, teaching and learning is considered as strategic in helping graduates develop their employability and work readiness for the changing labour market characterised by a rapid increase in international trade and private, joint venture and foreign direct investment (FDI) enterprises accompanied by the socialist-oriented market economy (Tran, Phan & Marginson, Chap. 4 and Mai, Chap. 13). In this context, it is crucial for graduates to be equipped with adequate intercultural skills, other soft skills and a good command of English. Mai (Chap. 13) further argues that it is necessary for graduates to enhance their Asia literacy and understandings of Asia to be ready for the productive integration into the ASEAN community and for the increased international and regional collaboration.

The advanced programmes or "Chương trình tiên tiến" is a signature internationalisation project initiated by the government with the goal to internationalise the curriculum and boost the quality of teaching and learning at selected universities through importing the curriculum from prestigious universities ranked in the top 200 universities in the world (see Chap. 4 by Tran, Phan & Marginson). The advanced programme is driven by the government's aspiration to overhaul the outdated curriculum, keep pace with regional and international developments and develop graduates' capacity for the increasingly globalised labour market. Using English as a medium of instruction, the advanced programme is the most notable government initiative in internationalising the curriculum, teaching and learning. Commencing in 2006, this programme has achieved some considerable successes including the provision of student access to materials and contents from innovative programmes in well-regarded universities, and enhancing the employability of the student cohorts enrolled in these courses. However, the current way to implement the advanced programme causes inequality and inequity. Its impacts on teaching and learning and graduate capacity have been fragmented and narrow, since it has

been implemented among only a small proportion of students in selected disciplines, in certain elite universities. In addition, the design and implementation of the advanced programme is underpinned by principles of curriculum borrowing and transposition rather than curriculum internationalisation (Chap. 4).

English as a medium of instruction has been used as a strategic tool to assist internationalisation of the curriculum, strengthening international collaboration, enhancing staff and student mobility and boosting institutional reputation the local, regional and international regions. Based on empirical research on the process of implementing English as a medium of instruction at a University in Northern Vietnam, Nguyen (Chap. 7) finds that English as a medium of instruction in this context was mandated in a top-down manner without institution's structured management. The author argues that academics' and students' struggle in English as a medium programmes is "a systematic deficiency in language competence for academic functions". This calls for organised attention and targeted support from the institution as well as national level of policy formulation to more adequately cater for academics' and students' language needs and more effectively support their teaching and learning in these programmes.

Student mobility is a significant dimension of internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education. The Vietnamese government's Strategy for Education Development 2011–2020 positions outbound mobility as a vehicle to help augment its individual and collective human resources, boost the national economy and enable the country to catch up with regional and international developments (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ [Prime Minister] 2012). There were 125,000 Vietnamese students undertaking overseas study in 2013, an increase of 15 per cent compared to 2012 (An 2015). Over the past three decades, the flows of Vietnamese students undertaking overseas study have been influenced by the underdevelopment of local higher education services and socio-political and economic changes in Vietnam as well as by policies related to migration and international education and job opportunities in host countries (see Chap. 8 by Nguyen and Chap. 9 by Pham). Overall, Pham (Chap. 9) argues 'the flow of outbound Vietnamese students will continue to increase but the growth rate is expected to decelerate'. The two main drivers of this combined outcome are: (1) the enhancement of quality and quantity in the Vietnamese higher education system and (2) the emergence of newly industrialised economies within the region capable of mobilising foreign students, such as Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and China (Chap. 9). Nguyen (Chap. 8) points out that the Vietnamese government has begun to realise human capital accumulated from different forms of transnational mobility, related to Vietnamese citizens possessing western educational degrees, labour migrants, and returning expatriates, as public diplomacy and a tool to support socio-political and economic development.

Vietnamese graduates who were educated overseas are valuable sources of human capital and can make an important contribution to the nation's socio-economic development (see Chap. 10 by Lien Pham; Chap. 11 by Anh Pham and Chap. 12 by Ho et al.). Pham's study (Chap. 10) finds that returnees believe they have an important contribution to make to socioeconomic development in Vietnam through their potential capacity to improve professional standards and practices in

their field. However, in reality there is a gap between their aspiration and their actual contributions, as returnees appear to be largely concerned with leveraging their "overseas-acquired resources for personal returns rather than implementing initiatives for new ways of working" (see Chap. 10). Looking from the employers' perspective, Pham (Chap. 11) notes that employers in Vietnam value returnees' mindsets and credential language competency but pay less attention to their foreign language competence and intercultural skills. Based on empirical research on the productivity and quality of Vietnamese graduates from international education programs, the author suggests that institutions should "sketch out the knowledge required in specific disciplinary curriculums, the skills expected in a specific industry, and the attitudes valued in specific work environments" and integrate them into the development of program, curriculum and pedagogy and assessment for better graduate employability.

Transnational education is another distinctive feature of internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education, associated with intense competition among top-tier Vietnamese universities and local private institutions (see Chap. 5 by Nguyen; Chap. 2 by Hoang et al.). By June 2015 there were a total of 282 joint and twinning programs offered in 82 Vietnamese universities (VIED 2015). A quarter of the programs were with Asian countries, 12 percent with Australia and 15 percent with North America (the U.S. and Canada) (see the statistics compiled by Hoang et al., Chap. 2). Key factors impacting on the exponent growth of transnational education activities include changes in the global and national policy landscapes, the urge for global integration, the need to improve higher education quality, and the increasing number of Vietnamese school-leavers opting for higher education opportunities (see Chap. 5 by Nguyen). Notably, the expansion of the middle class in Vietnam has resulted in a demand not only for international education but also for internationalised courses offered by domestic universities and internationally recognised credentials offered by joint programmes or foreign-owned universities (Tran, Phan & Marginson, Chap. 4). Nguyen, however, points out how the transnational education market in Vietnam creates both opportunities and challenges to both local and foreign stakeholders in terms of international competitiveness, market share and revenues, as well as sustainable growth and legal and ethical compliances (Chap. 5). Therefore quality assurance has become a critical aspect of the internationalisation process in Vietnam, especially given the significant expansion of joint and twinning programs in partnerships with foreign providers over the past decades. There is still much concern about benchmarking those partnership models and transnational activities against international benchmarks (see Chap. 3 by Do). The process of internationalising quality assurance itself serves several purposes, ranging from complying with Vietnamese government requirements, promoting individual institutions' transnational education programmes, boosting international cooperation, and enhancing the brand and image of transnational programmes. However quality itself is yet insufficiently incorporated as a genuine objective during this process (Do, Chap. 3).

International organisations have been among the prominent international influences on Vietnamese tertiary education system and have played an increasingly

important role in the internationalisation of higher education. In addition to foreign institutions and countries, international organisations, especially the World Bank, UNESCO and ADB, have sought to implement their perspectives and agendas by shaping Vietnamese higher education policies (see Chap. 6 by Diep Tran). However, the desired objectives of the international organisations have not always been fully realised, due to the lack of initiative and ownership from Vietnam, the top-down approach to implementation the government's inadequate capacity to manage large-scale projects, and the system's inability to absorb changes in a systematic and flexible fashion (Diep Tran, Chap. 6). To tackle the challenges associated with policy borrowing from international organisations, the ways forward for Vietnam are to develop greater self-awareness in policy borrowing; a stronger capacity to navigate, prioritise and absorb changes at the governmental level; and more coherent and systemic strategies to filtering foreign policies and programs at the institutional level (Vu and Marginson 2014; Diep Tran, Chap. 6).

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Part I
Policy and Practice in Internationalisation

Chapter 2
Vietnamese Government Policies and Practices in Internationalisation of Higher Education

Lan Hoang, Ly Thi Tran, and Hiep-Hung Pham

Introduction

In the global knowledge economy, universities are becoming more important as they assume a mediating role in transnational relationships and the flow of people, information, knowledge, technology, products, and financial capital (OECD 2009). At the same time, governments are placing more emphasis on the internationalisation of their higher education systems. Internationalisation is regarded as one of the tools to promote the competitiveness of higher education, and improve domestic universities so as to fulfil needs for economic development as well as economic competitiveness (Lane 2015; Owens and Lane 2014).

In Vietnam, the government expects its higher education system to serve national socio-economic development goals and global economic integration. The government also places emphasis on internationalisation activities and initiatives in its strategies and agenda to reform the higher education system. This comes from the awareness that, in order to reap the most benefits of globalisation, the country needs to move from a passive position to a more active and proactive approach in internationalising its higher education system.

This chapter offers an analysis of Vietnam's government policies and practices in the internationalisation of higher education in the globalised context. Based on the

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analysis of policy documents and case study of specific internationalisation programs and universities, the chapter shows that despite the government's growing awareness of the crucial role of internationalisation in higher education reform, many internationalisation policies do not seem to be consistently and effectively translated into practice, especially when delineation is made between the system and the institution levels. Overall, internationalisation activities and programs remain fragmented, ad-hoc and imbalanced across faculties within an institution as well as across different institutions and regions. Although internationalisation has contributed to diversifying the system in terms of forms of institutions, programs, activities, and curricula, there is a prevalent isomorphic trend at the institution level. Institutions behave in a mimicking fashion and seek legitimacy through internationalisation without necessarily improving performance or quality.

The chapter starts with a brief overview of the literature on higher education internationalisation and the prevalent characteristics of internationalisation in Asia. The second section analyses the evolvement of Vietnamese government policies in internationalisation, identifying the major activities and priorities in the government's policies. The next section details internationalisation activities at three levels: the students, the institutions, and the government. This is followed by an analysis of the effectiveness of the government policies manifested in those activities. The final section showcases new positive developments in the internationalisation of Vietnamese universities, and highlights the role of the universities in their innovative engagement in internationalisation.

Overview of the Literature on Internationalisation of Higher Education

Defining Internationalisation in Higher Education

According to Knight (2012), the term "internationalisation" is commonly used to describe the international dimension of higher education, ranging from international activities, academic programs and research initiatives, to branch campuses, development projects, and regional knowledge hubs. Such diversity in internationalisation is captured in Knight's (2004) definition of internationalisation. Knight (2004) defines internationalisation in higher education as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 11). There are three important aspects in Knight's definition. First, it is emphasised that internationalisation is an ongoing effort. Second, it not only involves the integration among nations, it also recognises cultural diversity and worldwide scope. Third, the process of integration is manifested in multiple aspects of postsecondary education, including the roles, missions, characteristics, and program offerings in the higher education system as a whole and in a higher education institution in particular.

Knight (2012) also identifies two pillars of internationalisation, "internationalisation at home" (or "campus-based internationalisation") and "cross-border education" (p. 34). The two pillars are closely related to each other. The former refers to campus-based strategies to integrate international, intercultural, and comparative perspectives into the campus and the student experience, which is sometimes referred as "traditional internationalisation" (Altbach and Knight 2007, p. 293). Examples of internationalisation at home are new programs with international themes, foreign language study, international student and diaspora academics engagement, and international conferences. Cross-border education indicates "the movement of people, programs, providers, policies, knowledge, ideas, projects, and services across national boundaries" (p. 36). Other terms that are used interchangeable are transnational, offshore, and borderless education. Knight (2012) emphasises the shift in cross-border education trends, from focusing on student mobility to program and provider mobility, and from development cooperation (aid) to competitive commerce (trade).

Globalisation and Internationalisation

Altbach and Knight (2007) make a distinction between globalisation and internationalisation. The former refers to the reality of the twenty-first century, whereas the latter denotes policies and practices that emerge in such a context. In other words, "internationalisation is seen as something higher education institutions do while globalisation is something that is happening to them (Mitchell and Nielsen 2012, p. 3).

According to Altbach and Knight (2007), elements of globalisation play an important role in the internationalisation of higher education. Globalisation has facilitated the increasing global capital investment in knowledge industries, including higher education and advanced training. Such investments contribute to the emergence of the knowledge economy, the growth of the service sector, and the increasingly important role of knowledge products and high-skilled workforce in economic development (Altbach and Knight 2007).

In such a context, international higher education is seen as a tradeable commodity in services (Altbach and Knight 2007). The World Trade Organization (WTO) offers a regulatory framework for international trade in education through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). WTO member countries can decide to enter certain provisions in GATS. Trade in education under GATS is facilitated through four modes: cross-border supply of the service, consumption abroad, commercial presence of the provider in another country, and presence of persons in another country to provide the service (Varghese 2007).

Rationales for Internationalisation

It is important to identify the driving forces for internationalisation as they influence the outcomes of the process (Knight 2012). Knight and de Wit (1999) categorise the rationales for internationalisation into four groups: social/cultural, political, academic, and economic. As internationalisation is becoming more complex and involving multiple actors, Knight (2008, cited in Knight 2012) updates the categorisation into two levels, the national level and the institutional level. At the national level, the rationales for internationalisation include human resource development, strategic alliances, commercial trade, nation building, and social cultural development. At the institutional level, higher education institutions participate in the internationalisation process for the purposes of international branding and profile, income generation, student and staff development, strategic alliances, and knowledge production. In terms of forms of internationalisation, at the national level, government is often involved in areas such as student exchange programs, marketing campaigns, cultural centres at colleges and universities, and importing institutions. At the institutional level, higher education institutions that have emerged into international actors often engage in areas such as international branch campuses (IBCs), joint and double degree programs, international consultancies, research sites and outreach offices, and accreditation (Lane 2015).

At the national level, Lane (2015) also offers a set of rationales for government involvement in internationalisation which includes economic competitiveness, public diplomacy, and national security. However, Lane's categorisation seems to come from the perspective of developed countries such as the U.S. The countries using educational programs as a public diplomacy tool are those with economic resources and political interest in maintaining and increasing their global influence. Similarly, national security is seen as a concern in countries that receive major in-flow of international students. Nonetheless, the economic competitiveness rationale identified by Lane seems relevant to both developing and developed countries and overlaps with the rationales at the national level identified by Knight. Internationalisation helps increase countries' economic competitiveness through the contributions of international talents to the countries' economy, facilitating foreign direct investment, and fostering innovation (Lane 2015). Therefore economic competitiveness is one of the important driving forces for internationalisation, especially in the context of globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge economy (Owens and Lane 2014).

Internationalisation of Higher Education in Asian Countries

Internationalisation of higher education in Asia can be categorised into three distinctive types: import-oriented, import and export, and transitional (Huang 2007). According to Huang (2007), in import-oriented country systems, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, higher education internationalisation occurs mostly through

importing foreign educational programs and institutions, especially those from Western countries, as a way to introduce advanced standards and norms to the countries' higher education system. The import and export systems includes Hong Kong and Singapore which not only import education activities from Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. but also export their higher education activities to other Asian countries, especially mainland China. The transitional type is salient among countries such as China and Japan which are import intensive but in recent years have made strong efforts in increasing their export activities and influence on other countries (Huang 2007). Also according to Huang (2007), the rationales for internationalisation in Asian countries are influenced by the countries' national policies and strategies. He identifies three salient governmental approaches among these countries: the government-regulated approach (China, Malaysia, and Korea), the market-oriented approach (Hong Kong), and the transitional approach, moving from state-controlled to market oriented (Japan and Taiwan).

Vietnam's Higher Education Internationalisation: Government Policy

Internationalisation, referred as "integration" in Vietnamese policy discourse, has become one of the priorities in Vietnamese higher education development and reform (Tran et al. 2014). Since the country transformed from central planning to a market oriented economy though the *Đổi Mới* policy in the mid-1980s, Vietnamese higher education internationalisation policies have evolved alongside and in conjunction with other socio-economic areas. In 1996, a decade after *Đổi Mới*, the need for international economic integration was first mentioned in the Communist Party of Vietnam's (CPV) eighth national congress. Five years later, the CPV's ninth national congress marked the transition from recognising the need for integration to emphasising active and proactive participation in international economic integration. It was not until the CPV's tenth national congress in 2006 that international integration was expanded beyond the economic area to include other areas such as education. This set the stage for the country's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and entrance into the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in 2007.

Vietnam's government rationales for internationalisation of higher education can be described as two stages, integration with socialist countries prior to the *Đổi Mới* period and global integration after *Đổi Mới* (T. P. Nguyen 2014). Indeed, as noted by Huang (2007), from 1945 to the 1980s, influenced by the Cold War, internationalisation of higher education in Asia saw the division of countries into two groups, one following the Soviet Union model and the other following the American model. Table 2.1 illustrates the shift in the Vietnamese government rationales for

Table 2.1 Vietnam's government approach to internationalisation of HE (Source: Authors compiled from T.-P. Nguyen (2014))

Integration among socialist countries	Global integration
The mission of international cooperation in higher education is to train human resources according to state planning and the demands of state agencies and state owned companies.	International cooperation serves to train a wide range of human resource demands, supply high quality graduates for the country's socio-economic organizations.
	Current international cooperation and integration is charged with high quality human resource with international standards who can work in home country or abroad.
International cooperation framework is limited in ODA projects that have close relation to UNESCO and non-profits.	The framework is expanded to include educational competitions and for-profits as Vietnam joined the WTO and signed GATS.
	WTO accession and GATS help promote transnational education and create legal basis and resource to enhance international cooperation and integration.
International cooperation and international integration in education based on a simplistic equality rationale resulting in a level approach and reluctant to stratification.	International cooperation with priorities, accepting stratification, emphasising on effective international competitiveness.
Education is a pure social welfare.	Education is a prioritised area of development with comparison to the region and the world.
Assessment of achievement based on comparing with the country's own past.	Assessment of quality relative to international standards.
Indifference to international integration. Neither encourage nor discourage.	Proactive and active in international integration with strategic planning.
Focus on external influence on international cooperation.	Pay attention to creating internal impetus for international cooperation.
Cooperation, if any, only pays attention to pure academic and scientific matters.	Cooperation expands to more complex and sensitive matters such as social equality, gender equality, religions, sovereignty, and human rights.
Cooperation is done by state management agencies.	Delegate and allow more institutional autonomy in international integration.

internationalisation, from a reluctant, passive, and simplistic approach to proactive engagement and strategic planning.

The transformation of the Party's rationale is reflected in the country's policy agenda for higher education reform. Along with the accession into the WTO and commitments to educational trade in GATS, over the past decade Vietnamese internationalisation policies have moved from one-sided reactive integration in the face of globalisation to a more proactive approach, including ambitious goals and strategies to bring higher education to world level.

The Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) 2005 lays out strategies to comprehensively and fundamentally reform the higher education system in the 2006 to

2020 period.[1] HERA 2005 expects higher education reform to correspond with the country's socio-economic development strategies and meet the demand for a high-skilled workforce and international economic integration. By 2020 Vietnam's higher education is expected to achieve high competitiveness, attain regional standards, and approach world advanced standards, including the establishment of a few world-class universities. In general, internationalisation in higher education is specified in three areas: preparation for implementing international agreements and commitments, internationalisation at home, and cross-border higher education.

Specifically, first, the government undertakes to develop international integration strategies and higher education competitiveness in order to implement international agreements and commitments. Second, internationalisation at home encompasses the implementation of programs with English as the language of instruction, attraction of international students, learning from advanced programs in the world, reaching agreements on degree equivalences with international higher education institutions, encouraging joint programs and faculty exchange, facilitating the return of Vietnamese diaspora, and increasing study abroad programs. Third, in promoting cross-border higher education, the government is committed to creating the conditions and mechanisms for international investors and high-ranking universities in the world to open international branch campuses in Vietnam or cooperate with local universities.

Subsequent government policies and Party guidelines concerning the internationalisation of higher education have been consistent with the agenda set in HERA 2005. Both the government's 2012 strategies for education development in the period of 2011–2020[2] and the 2013 CPV's resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training[3] reinforce HERA 2005's areas of internationalisation. These strategies aim at expanding and improving the effectiveness of international cooperation in education. Besides increasing the budget for sending faculty in key universities and national research institutes to study abroad, the government also identifies sciences and technology as areas of priority, and encourages local universities to cooperate with international institutions to improve capacity in management, training, research, and technology transfer. Importantly, the government will focus on establishing a small number of modern universities and research centres to attract Vietnamese and international researchers and scientists.

As part of implementing HERA 2005, in 2013 the government developed a plan for international integration in education and vocational training by 2020.[4] The plan details specific goals to be reached in two periods, 2014–2015 and 2016–2020 (Table 2.2).

Since the early 2000s, the government has opened up the higher education system to foreign investment and cooperation, albeit with reluctance, as part of the

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[1] Resolution No. 14/2005/NQ-CP by the Government dated November 2, 2005

[2] Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg by the Prime Minister, dated June 13, 2012

[3] Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW by the 8th plenum of the CPV's 11th Central Committee dated November 4, 2013

[4] Decision No. 2448/QĐ-TTg by the Prime Minister dated December 16, 2013

Table 2.2 Higher education internationalisation goals set by the government 2013 (Source: Authors compiled from government's strategic plan for higher education international integration 2013)

Types of Internationalisation	2014–2015	2016–2020
Mobility of students and faculty	Send 3000 university lecturers to study abroad at master's and doctoral level	Send 7000 university lecturers to study abroad at master's and doctoral level
	Receive about 300 international students and 300 international lecturers and researcher annually	Receive about 500 international students and 400 international lecturers and researcher annually
	Students in the 3 excellent universities are able to continue studying or work in countries in the region and the world.	Students in the 5 excellent universities are able to continue studying or work in countries in the region and the world.
Internationalisation at institutional level	Have about 50 programs accredited by international accreditation agencies	Have about 150 programs accredited by international accreditation agencies
Internationalisation at the national level	Have at least 3 "excellent universities" established	Increase the number of "excellent universities" to 5 institutions

agenda to encourage foreign investment[5] and to promote the "socialization" policy in education.[6] Foreign investment and international cooperation was restricted to fields such as sciences and technologies, economic management, and languages. It was not until 2012 did the government create a more comprehensive regulatory framework in foreign investment and cooperation in education[7] in order to implement its commitments in GATS. Specifically, Decree 73 removed the field restrictions in the previous regulations and provided regulations on internationalisation in higher education in the forms of foreign direct investment, joint venture with Vietnamese entities, foreign universities' branch campuses in Vietnam, and foreign representative offices.

The Vietnamese government's policies on internationalisation of higher education now encompass a diversity of activities and forms, which is manifested at three levels of internationalisation: the student level, the institutional level, and the governmental level. The following section will detail internationalisation at the three levels in four broad categories: (1) student mobility at the student level, (2) advanced programs and (3) joint/twinning programs at the institutional level, and (4) the establishment of excellent universities by the government in cooperation with foreign governments.

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[5] Decree 06/2000/NĐ-CP by the government dated March 6, 2000 on foreign investment and cooperation in health care, education and training, and scientific research.

[6] Decree 18/2001/NĐ-CP by the government dated May 4, 2001 on establishment and operation of foreign educational and cultural institutions in Vietnam.

[7] Decree 73/2012/NĐ-CP by the government dated September 26, 2012 on foreign investment and cooperation in education, commonly known as Decree 73. This decree replaces the two previous decrees.

Internationalisation at Three Levels: Student, Institution and Government

Student Level: Student Mobility

Research evidence suggests that Vietnamese student mobility has been closely shaped by the historical, political, economic and social circumstances of the nation (Welch 2010; H. L. Pham and Fry 2004; Tran et al. 2014). France, China, America, Russia and the former Eastern European bloc were among the key host countries for Vietnamese students and scholars prior to *Đổi Mới* (D. T. Nguyen and Sloper 1995; Welch 2010; Tran et al. 2014). The historical trend of student mobility in Vietnam prior to *Đổi Mới* was largely driven by the political agenda of different parties at a specific historical stage and the purposes for mobility might contradict one another due to different parties' conflicting agenda. Tran et al. (2014), for example, pointed out that "during the French colonial period the mobility of scholar and student served different purposes, depending on whether the process was initiated by the French coloniser or the Vietnamese nationalists" (p. 131). The French government, as the coloniser of Vietnam at that time, provided educational mobility for Vietnamese young men in order to teach them about French civilisation and thus to serve colonial aspirations. In contrast the Vietnamese nationalists used educational mobility as a vehicle to educate young Vietnamese so as to serve the liberation of Vietnam from the French colonial regime (Tran et al. 2014). Between 1955 and 1975, more than 50 per cent of 30,775 Vietnamese international students studied in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (Dang 1997, p. 11, cited in Welch 2010, p. 201) via various scholarship schemes. The USSR, led by Russia, was a key ally in providing economic and military support for Northern Vietnam's government during the Vietnam war. Prior to the reunification of the country in 1975, the US-backed government of South Vietnam granted study-abroad scholarship for 6000 Vietnamese students (Green, 1973, cited in Pham and Fry 2004) and the United States offered additional scholarships enabling Vietnamese students to study in U.S. higher institutions.

After *Đổi Mới*, there was a massive growth in outbound mobility in Vietnam. In 2013, Vietnam had 125,000 students studying overseas, 15 per cent more than in 2012 (An 2015). Four important background factors shaped this growth. First, the Vietnamese government promoted study-abroad more actively than before because of international integration imperatives. The aspiration for international integration for enhancing the nation's diplomatic, economic, and social development was all the stronger after the long period of warfare followed by the post-victory embargo imposed by the American government. Second, economic growth and government's plan for industrialisation and modernisation of the country after the Vietnam war created a critical need to augment the supply of educated and skilled human capital. Study-abroad was seen as a practical response to this human resource need, a strategic vehicle enabling the nation to catch up with regional and national developments. Thus outbound mobility is positioned by the Vietnamese government's

Strategy for Education Development (2011–2020)[8] as a strategy to help Vietnamese nationals develop skills, knowledge, and attributes at universities in advanced countries around the world. Third, the growth in outbound mobility has been made possible by strategic policies to encourage both self-funded and scholarship funded overseas study. Accordingly, approximately 90 percent of Vietnamese international students are self-financed (Clark 2013). Fourth, there has been a significant growth of middle class families in Vietnam who can afford investment in study abroad for their children. The outbound mobility trend also has the additional benefit of easing the pressure on the domestic tertiary sector, where there is an unbalance between supply and demand (Tran et al. 2014; Nguyen and Tran 2017; Tran and Marginson 2018a, b).

The US, China and Australia are the most popular host countries for Vietnamese students. In 2014, there were 30,121 Vietnamese students enrolled in Australian education (AEI 2014). Figures from the Institute for International Education (IIE) 2012 and Australian Education International 2013 suggest the majority of Vietnamese university students in the USA and Australia are undertaking undergraduate studies (72% and 65% respectively) (Ziguras and Pham 2014). Approximately 27 per cent of Vietnamese international graduates migrate to the host country or another country (Docquier and Rapoport 2012). Vietnamese students engage in study-abroad programs across different educational levels from schooling to doctorate. According to Tran et al. (2014), the Vietnamese government's main initiative to promote staff and students' overseas study includes the project "*Training scientific and technical cadres in overseas institutions with the state budget,*" often referred as "Project 322″ and its replacement, Project 911. Project 911 aims to fund academics in Vietnamese higher education institutions to pursue doctoral study at a cost of 14,000 billion VND, of which 64 percent is for overseas study, 14 percent for "sandwich" program,[9] 20 percent for in-country study, and 2 percent for resource (Nguyen 2012). As such, Project 911 aims to provide about 10,000 awards for doctoral studies overseas. In addition to the government and provincial scholarships, a significant number of Vietnamese doctoral students enrolled in overseas institutions are funded via scholarship programs such as the Fulbright Program, the Vietnam Education Foundation – VEF (US), Australian Award Scholarships – AAS, Endeavour Program (Australia), Eiffel (France), Erasmus Mundus (Europe), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (H. Pham 2011).

Institutional Level

Advanced program: The interface between Western and Vietnamese ways of 'doing' and 'thinking' has been regarded as fundamental to the design and implementation of *Chương trình tiên tiến* (the advanced program). Under the increased pressure to

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[8] Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg by the Prime Minister, dated June 13, 2012

[9] *Sandwich programs* are programs offered by local universities but involve a component of study abroad

enhance human resource capacity for Vietnam in line with national, regional and international developments and to increase its labor force's international competitiveness (T. T. H. Pham 2006; Tran et al. 2018), the Vietnamese government initiated the advanced program in 2006. Advanced program offerings have been core to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)'s internationalisation agenda as reflected in the Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020.[10] This program aims to offer 'advanced' education and training in chosen disciplines at selected universities in accordance with the world standard and accordingly ensure the quality of teaching and learning be internationally and regionally recognised. To achieve this aim, MOET has been determined to increase the use of English as the medium of instruction for advanced programs. These programs are designed by importing the curriculum of universities ranked in the top 200 in the world. These programs give students access to materials and contents from the most innovative programs in well regarded universities. These programs are also aimed to produce graduates who are more proficient in English than those enrolled in mass programs or *Chương trình Đào tạo Đại trà.* Advanced programs are expected to assist institutions in building their own capacities and bringing the quality of selected programs closer to regional standards.

However, Tran et al. (2014) argue that "there are a couple of critical issues regarding these advanced programs that need significant research and investment to ensure its missions be effectively realised" (p. 99). First, the advanced programs have been fragmentally and inconsistently implemented, concentrated in only some specific disciplines within selected universities. There has been little evidence regarding the impact of the advanced programs on the entire enterprise of selected universities (see also chap. 4 by Tran et al. 2018). Second, only high academically achieving students are selected into these programs, thus raising a serious question concerning access and equity. The notion of education as either local or global has been challenged by authors such as Shams and Huisman (2012) who endorse a hybrid approach that does not lead to a polarised view of global education. Designed to be hybrid programs that marry core elements of 'American'/'Anglo-Saxon' programs and Vietnam's local demands, the reality of such hybridity has been questioned (Tran et al. 2017). For example, based on research on internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education, Nguyen (2009a, b) notes aspects of curriculum content, pedagogy, structure and educational management of the advanced programs have been largely borrowed from partner foreign universities. The hybrid aspect is less apparent than the borrowed aspect.

Joint and twinning programs: Joint and twinning programs in Vietnam are either certificate or degree programs. These programs may use foreign curricula, or curricula jointly developed by the foreign institutions and the Vietnamese institutions. Government regulation requires that the language of instructions in these programs is English. While joint programs' degrees and certificates can be conferred by either the foreign institutions, or the Vietnamese counterparts, or both, the degrees and certificates of twinning programs are conferred by the foreign institutions. Students in twinning programs study part of the program in Vietnam and part at the

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[10] Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg by the Prime Minister, dated June 13, 2012

Table 2.3 Distribution of joint and twinning programs by source region[a]

Source region	Number of programs	Percentage of programs
Asia	73	26%
Australia & New Zealand	35	12%
Europe	132	47%
North America	42	15%
Total	**282**	**100%**

Source: Authors compiled from VIED 2015

[a]Note: The figures do not include joint and twinning programs in two national universities and three regional universities as these institutions are not under VIED's supervision and can implement international cooperation programs without going through VIED

foreign institution. Twinning programs are often referred as, for example, 3 + 1, 1 + 1, 1.5 + 0.5 (of which the first figure refers to the number of years students spent in Vietnamese institutions and the second denote the years spent at the foreign institutions), with the precise ratio determined by the program structure. Joint and twinning programs in Vietnam are regulated under Degree 73.[11] MOET's Vietnam International Education Development Office (VIED), and MOET's Department for International Cooperation, are the two central government agencies that oversee the establishment and operation of joint and twinning programs.

According to the VIED, by June 2015 there were a total of 282 joint and twinning programs offered in 82 Vietnamese universities.[12] The majority of these programs are at the bachelor or postgraduate level (122 bachelor programs, accounting for 43 per cent and 115 postgraduate programs, making up 41 per cent). The rest are associate degree (24 programs, 9 per cent) and certificate programs (21 programs, 7 per cent). In terms of source region, almost half of the programs are in cooperation with institutions from Europe. A quarter of the programs are with Asian countries, almost half of which are with China and the rest associated mostly with Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Korea. Australian programs accounts for 12 percent and North America (the U.S. and Canada) 15 percent (Table 2.3).

Table 2.4 shows the distribution of joint and twinning programs by field of study. The distribution is dominated by professional programs in business, management, accounting, and finance and banking, accounting for 66 percent of all the programs. Although there are several programs in sciences and technologies, as well as social sciences and humanities (17% and 14% respectively), professional programs remain overwhelmingly predominant.

The tuition fees for joint and twinning programs range from about 25 million VND to 280 million VND per year (equivalent to about 1,200 USD and 13,000

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[11] Decree 73/2012/NĐ-CP by the government dated September 26, 2012

[12] VIED 2015, accessible at http://www.vied.vn/index.php?lang=vn#. Note that the reported figure by VIED dated June 10, 2015 is 273 programs. However, the authors' compilation of VIED's data shows more programs (282) as VIED counted programs according to the permissions issued while one permission can include more than one program.

Table 2.4 Distribution of joint and twinning programs by field of study[a]

Field of study	Number of programs	Percentage of programs
Business, Management, Accounting, Finance & Banking	185	66%
Social sciences & Humanities	39	14%
IT, Computer science, Technology, Engineering	49	17%
Others	9	3%
Total	**282**	**100%**

Source: Authors compiled from VIED 2015

[a]Note: The figures do not include joint and twinning programs in two national universities and three regional universities as these institutions are not under VIED's supervision and can implement international cooperation programs without going through VIED

USD) with an average of about 95 million VND (about 4,300 USD) per year.[13] Programs associated with North America and Australia (including New Zealand) tend to be more expensive with an average tuition of about 120 million VND per year (about 5,500 USD). The average tuition for programs associated with European institutions is about 90 million VND per year (4,000 USD) whereas programs with Asian institutions seem to be the lowest among the source regions with an average tuition of 68 million VND per year (3,000 USD). The tuition levels of these programs are a lot higher than private university tuition in Vietnam but lower than the cost of studying overseas, suggesting that the market for such programs in Vietnam is aimed at students whose academic achievements are not high enough to take advantage of the advanced programs or other presumably high quality public university programs, and for whom studying abroad might be an unaffordable option.

Government Level: Excellent University—A Government-Led Initiative with World-Class Ambition

The "Excellent university" (*Đại học xuất sắc*) project is an ambitious governmental project that was launched in 2006 under the tenure of former Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Thien Nhan. The primary purpose of the project is to establish institutions or upgrade existing institutions to become research universities delivering education and research of global standards with academic support from developed countries. One ultimate purpose of the project is that at least one of the participating universities would be ranked among the top 200 universities worldwide by 2020.

Under this scheme, there are four participating universities: the Vietnamese-German University established in 2008 in Ho Chi Minh City; the University of Science and Technology Hanoi or Vietnamese-French University created in 2009;

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[13] Rough estimation by authors based on tuition information available online by 186 programs.

Table 2.5 Universities established in the "excellent university" project

Institution	Partner country	Newly establish or upgrading from existing institution	Location	Year of establishment	Level of education	Enrollment 2015
Vietnamese-German University	Germany	Newly established	Ho Chi Minh City	2008	Bachelor Master	5000
University of Science and Technology Hanoi	France	Newly established under the auspice of Vietnam Institute of Science & technology	Hanoi	2009	Bachelor Master PhD	–
Vietnamese-Russian university	Russia	Upgraded from Le Quy Don Technical University	Hanoi	2013	Bachelor Master PhD	–
Vietnamese – Japanese University	Japan	Newly established under the auspice of Vietnam National University – Hanoi	Hanoi	2014	Master	–

the Vietnamese-Russian University upgraded from Le Quy Don Technical University in Hanoi in 2013; and the Vietnamese-Japanese University, housed within Hanoi National University established in 2014 (Table 2.5).

All four institutions operate under a special regime for academic management. The foreign government partners arrange with their own universities the provision of textbook and curricula, and send professors and managers to Vietnam. The host Vietnamese faculty and students conduct internships or undertake postgraduate education.

However, there is skepticism about the success of this project. First, financial sustainability is a crucial challenge that threatens the future of these "excellent universities." At the first stage of the project financial support appears to be adequately catered for. All four participating universities are dependent on funding by the Vietnamese and foreign governments, or loans from international financial institutions such as World Bank or Asian Development Bank. However, it is not certain whether the Vietnamese government would be able to continue to provide enough financial resources to subsidise the project in the long run. Thus, diversifying the sources of income, for example through tuition fees or R&D services, is an imperative task for participating institutions. Second, another challenge that "excellent universities" are facing is a shortage of qualified fulltime faculty. At the current stage,

all participating institutions seem to be over-dependent on their partner countries for provision of lecturers. Foreign lecturers only come to Vietnam teach on a part-time basis. In the long term, developing a fulltime faculty base, especially attracting back talents from the Vietnamese diaspora, is one of the primary priorities for "excellent universities."

Discussion

The previous sections presented Vietnamese government policies concerning the internationalisation of the higher education system, the implementation of such policies, and the actual practices at the student, institution, and government levels. While the government attaches importance to internationalisation in its higher education reform agenda and issues policies facilitating the internationalisation process, these policies seem to have produced mixed results.

At the student level, outbound mobility continues to increase. Along with international scholarship programs, there are several Vietnamese government-funded programs to send government employees and university lecturers to study abroad with the objective of improving government and university capacity. However, these programs are not accompanied by policies to attract the return of these students or the Vietnamese diaspora, including the creation of attractive working conditions for those who have the choice to work overseas. At the institutional level, while advanced programs increase the use of English as the language of instruction, there is little evidence of the extent to which these programs have helped improve the curricula of institutions, as most of them are borrowed from foreign programs. According to Tran, Phan and Marginson (see Chap. 4), doubt remains in the sustainability, feasibility, and practicality of internationalisation of curriculum through advanced programs.

Previous research indicates that the internationalisation of Vietnam higher education is ineffective due to the lack of competition. In this chapter, we have shown empirical evidence of a certain level of emerging market in Vietnam higher education. With the WTO accession and GATS agreement, Vietnam government seems to have adopt a market driven approach to the internationalisation of its higher education system, as higher education has become seen as a tradeable service. On the one hand, this aspect of internationalisation appears to have facilitated the inflow of international curricula into Vietnam's universities, serving a niche market of students and families who can afford relatively higher tuition fees for in-country foreign education. Moreover, there is diversity in these programs, with a total of almost 300 joint and twinning programs at about half of Vietnamese universities, in cooperation with 32 countries, though a majority of these programs are in demand absorbing fields. Competition can be observed, though whether these programs are helping Vietnam universities to improve their own curricula and management for better education quality remains a debatable question.

On the other hand, if the Vietnamese government expects the development of these programs to help domestic universities absorb advanced knowledge and management practices from foreign countries in order to improve domestic university quality, it seems that such expectations have not been met. Furthermore, it appears that the Vietnamese government did not fully foresee the directions and impacts of joint and twinning programs. These programs mostly use foreign curricula. For the most part they have not been jointly developed by Vietnamese institutions and foreign partners. Foreign lecturers in these programs only come to teach for a short period of time and often do not collaborate with Vietnamese lecturers. Even when there are Vietnamese lecturers participating in teaching courses in these programs, it is difficult to assess whether they have learned something from these programs for adaptation in the courses they teach in Vietnamese programs. In addition, academic programs in Vietnamese universities are strictly regulated by MOET, leaving little space for program innovation and reform.

As discussed above, joint and twinning programs in Vietnam focus predominantly on demand-absorbing programs such as business administration and accounting. Accessibility to these programs is limited to a small population of elite students who can afford high tuition. Unlike advanced programs, admissions to joint and twinning programs sometimes raises questions of quality, as these programs often do not require entrance exams, and offer places on the basis of lower academic credentials than are required in other programs in Vietnamese public universities, as Nguyen suggests in Chap. 5. Furthermore, Do (see Chap. 3) points out that even when institutions take advantage of their relationship with international partners for quality assurance purposes, these efforts have not translated into establishing effective internal quality assurance system within the institutions. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese economy requires more high-skilled workforce and high level managers, while there is an oversupply of graduates in business administration and accounting (FETP 2013; Wilkinson et al. 2010). In this respect, the joint and twinning programs are not serving the country's economic development needs. This reality is similar to that of China. While the Chinese government expects joint programs to help improve the quality of domestic programs and meet the workforce demand for graduates with international perspectives and quality (Huang 2007), these programs in Chinese institutions are overwhelmingly concentrated in professional education (Ennew and Fujia 2009) and only serve a limited population of elite students (Huang 2007).

At the government level, the excellent university project ambitiously designed to create world-class universities came to its formal end in August 2015.[14] According to the government's announcement, no more excellence university shall be established under this scheme. Similar to the diagnosis in joint and twinning programs, these universities have not been able to develop fulltime faculty. Most of the teaching faculty are from the foreign partner institutions who only spend a short amount of time in the host institutions, resulting in a lack of commitment and limited

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[14]Announcement No. 292/TB-VPCP dated August 27, 2015 regarding the conclusions by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung at the Government's regular meeting on excellence universities.

research activities in Vietnam. Funding is heavily dependent on external sources, mostly from foreign governments (such as Germany and France) and World Bank loans. Cost is high due to dependence on visiting teaching faculty, while their contribution is limited. Due to high tuition levels, these universities have not been able to attract the best students who would otherwise choose public institutions or study abroad.[15] If the world class status of research universities are signified by student selectiveness and research performance (Marginson 2006), these government-led university initiatives in Vietnam are far from achieving world class status.

Showcase Success Stories

Although government policies directed at enhancing the internationalisation of Vietnamese higher education seem to have been ineffective, internationalisation success stories can be found in Vietnam higher education. Although these initiatives are not the direct results of government policies, they have received strong support from the government or taken advantage of the supportive policy environment. This section showcases three examples of such programs: the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program, the Center for Molecular and Nano-architecture (MANAR) at the Ho Chi Minh City National University (VNU-HCMC), and the FPT University.

Fulbright Economics Teaching Program[16]

Established in 1994 with core funding by the U.S. Department of State,[17] the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP) is a joint program between the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) and the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH) to provide public policy research and education for Vietnam. FETP initially offered the one-year post graduate certificate program in applied economics for Vietnamese government officials, which, in 2008, replicating the Harvard Kennedy School's master in public policy program (MPP), evolved into a full fledge MPP with curriculum advised by Harvard Kennedy School faculty and degree conferred by UEH. The name of the Program conveys its core mission: to teach Vietnamese policy makers about the market economy. In the past two decades,

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[15] This diagnosis was presented to the government at its regular meeting on the excellence universities, serving as one of the bases for the abortion of the project. This information was provided by Dr. Vu Thanh Tu Anh, Research Director at the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

[16] With supports from the U.S. Department of States and Harvard, FETP has gone through an institutional transformation, serving as a core for the development of the Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV). It is now the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM) within FUV.

[17] Approximately 1.9 million U.S. dollars per year

FETP has established itself as a center of academic excellence with a proven track of record, offering the first public policy program and, by far, the only full time masters program in Vietnam.[18]

The FETP experience shows that building a Vietnamese academic institution of excellence requires what can be summarised as "localising the global knowledge to serve the Vietnamese society." The process took place in three main areas—curriculum development, faculty development, and research, during which teaching and research responsibilities initially carried out by Harvard Kennedy School have gradually been transferred to FETP through the building of a core fulltime faculty base and the development of FETP-based research capacity. During the first five years, the one-year program in applied economics was offered with text-book based economic courses using Asian development cases. The lead instructors were foreign faculty (with in-class Vietnamese interpretation) while Vietnamese faculty served as co-instructors and tutors. During this period, research activities were based at Harvard Kennedy School and carried out by the then Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID) researchers as part of the institution's policy consultancy services. During the next five years, the teaching program evolved into a one-year program in applied economic for public policy with policy-focused economic courses using case studies from Vietnam. The teaching teams now included Vietnamese faculty joining foreign faculty as lead instructors, and young Vietnamese faculty as co-instructors and tutors. Since 2008, with the inception of the two-year Master in Public Policy, the teaching component has been expanded to policy-focused and case-based courses in policy analysis, management, leadership, and law with full-time faculty consisting of both foreign and Vietnamese instructors. The research component has now become FETP-based, with key activities including the case program, policy paper series, and policy dialogue with the Vietnamese government.

In the hindsight, a number of factors made this process of localising the global knowledge possible: a proven track of record, transparency, commitment, partnership, and investment in human capital. First, FETP, with the credibility of Harvard Kennedy School's overseas policy consultancy, has been able to build a proven track record of engaging in critical and contributing policy dialogs with the Vietnamese government. Second, transparency has proved to be one of the most important factors that helps build trust in the government. This has eventually earned FETP a level of academic autonomy uncommon to other Vietnamese academic institutions. FETP ensures its transparency in several ways. For example, all of its teaching materials and research are accessible to the public online through its OpenCourseWare. Third, institution-building requires an extended time horizon: the current FETP is a result of two decades of continuous commitment. Fourth, the partnership support from key stakeholders has been essential. Besides the administrative role, the role of Harvard Kennedy School's academic support in developing FETP's academic capacity is clearly key to FETP's academic excellence. Last but not least, investment in individuals is critical. FETP's human capital is a result of continuous efforts in attracting, retaining, and developing talents.

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[18] See more at http://www.fetp.edu.vn/en/

Center for Molecular and Nano-Architecture (MANAR) at the Ho Chi Minh City National University (VNU-HCMC)

The Center for Molecular and Nano-architecture (MANAR) was established in 2011 at the Ho Chi Minh City National University (VNU-HCMC) in collaboration with Professor Omar M. Yaghi's research group, previously based at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) but currently at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) following Professor Omar M. Yaghi's move to UC Berkeley. MANAR offers Master's and Ph.D. programs in the design, synthesis, and structural characterisation of novel materials. Regarding research, the Center focuses on areas such as materials science, inorganic chemistry, and nanotechnology, with research specifically aiming at developing new crystalline, porous materials for clean energy storage and generation, elimination of environmental pollutants, biomedicine, and catalysis applications.[19]

Unlike other international cooperation programs in Vietnam, the MANAR initiative is not a formal university-to-university collaboration. While the Center is hosted at VNU-HCMC and receives financial support from the Vietnamese government, its partner is not UCLA or UC Berkeley but the institutions' individual professor, Prof. Omar M. Yaghi, a highly cited scientist in novel porous material design (Service 2012). VNU-HCMC, in the search for an international partner to establish a chemistry research center for the institution, was able to enter an arrangement with Professor Yaghi, in which VNU-HCMC would establish MANAR as satellite labs for Yaghi. In exchange, Prof. Yaghi provides his expertise and network in research and mentorship in the Center's research and training programs (Service 2012). VNU-HCM has secured a total investment from the government of about 62 billion VND (approximately 3 million U.S. dollars) to build two labs at MANAR (VNU-HCMC Science and Technology Council 2014). Notably, the Center's collaborations are not limited to Yaghi's research group. It also collaborates with research groups at other Vietnamese institutions, including HCMC University of Technology and HCMC University of Natural Sciences (VNU-HCMC Science and Technology Council 2014). In terms of training, following a global mentoring model in which postgraduate students receive mentorship from international researchers, MANAR promises to offer its students with opportunities to collaborate with scientists from UC Berkeley, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST, Korea), King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM, Saudi Arabia), and National Institute for Material Science (NIMS, Japan).

MANAR was established as part of the VNU-HCMC's strategies in creating excellent centers to improve its research and training capacity and internationalisation (VNU-HCMC Science and Technology Council 2014). As such, MANAR enjoys high autonomy in its research agenda, finance, organizational structure, staff and researcher recruitment, and domestic and international cooperation. The MANAR experience offers important insights for effective internationalisation,

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[19] See more at http://www.manar.edu.vn/about-manar/about-manar.html

including the institutional leadership's vision in achieving its educational goals; identification of research agenda that helps solve the country's challenges; development of human resources, including attracting capable researchers and securing international scientists' supports; and flexible management structure (VNU-HCMC Science and Technology Council 2014).

FPT University: A Born-International Institution

FPT University was established by Vietnamese ICT-based Corporation FPT in 2006. Unlike most of other private higher education institutions in Vietnam which are owned by family business or former senior higher education leaders and senior governmental officers, FPT University is a for-profit and corporate-owned institution with shareholders similar to private companies. Another crucial feature that makes FPT University different from other universities and colleges in Vietnam is that it can be characterised as a "born-international institution."

Along with the globalisation and internationalisation of the parent company, FPT University's board of rectors envision globalisation and internationalisation as key strategies when competing with "senior" institutions with more than 50 year history such as Vietnam National Universities or Hanoi University of Science and Technology, and foreign universities such as RMIT Vietnam University or British University Vietnam.

The internationalisation of FPT University can be observed in relation to four aspects. First, since its establishment, the University has always used foreign textbooks and materials developed in, for example, the U.S., the United Kingdom, Japan, or India. With this adoption, it can ensure that its students will be trained in terms of the world's state-of-the-art knowledge Second, FPT University's internationalisation is manifested in its international staff. Indeed, it might be the first Vietnamese higher education institution to actively hire fulltime foreign lecturers. Foreign lecturers are currently delivering approximately 7 percent of the overall teaching workload at FPT University. Third, since 2012, FPT University has been following the QS star system as a tool to benchmark itself against international counterparts. In fact, FPT University is one of the first two institutions in Vietnam to be rated by QS (the other is the Ho Chi Minh City-based Ton Duc Thang University). FPT University is now rated 3 stars under QS rating system and is striving to obtain 4 stars in the near future. Finally, international students are considered one of the most important international factors at FPT University. In 2013, the institution opened the so-called FPT University's Global Office, aiming specifically to recruit international students to study at FPT University. By the end of 2015, there were approximately 400 international students studying at FPT University, one third of whom were fulltime and the rest studying as part of study-abroad programs and international student exchange programs.

In the long term, FPT University expects to open an offshore campus, either in neighboring ASEAN countries such as Laos or Myanmar, or in Africa where cooperation with local partners has already been established.

Conclusion

The chapter presented Vietnamese government policies and practices in the internationalisation of the higher education system and evaluated the effectiveness of these policies as reflected in four internationalisation activities at three levels—individuals, institutions, and government. The chapter has shown that these activities seem to offer little impact on Vietnamese higher education with regards to helping improve domestic universities' educational quality. In other words, empirical evidence provided in the chapter suggests that internationalisation activities in Vietnam higher education are developing in a direction that either does not meet the government's expectation or is not foreseen by the government. The Vietnamese government treats these activities as one of the tools to help the higher education system contribute more effectively to the country's economic development and meet high-skilled workforce demands. However, without policies in place to attract and retain talents, or incentives to drive internationalisation at the institution level so that it contributes to expected outcomes, internationalisation activities are mostly concentrated in demand-absorbing professional fields and cater for a small population of elite students. The government-led initiative to establish world-class universities also came to an end in government's realisation of its ineffectiveness.

However, there are new developments in internationalisation, with success stories that can be observed at institutional level. Although the programs showcased in this chapter are not a direct result of government policies, their success can be partly credited to the supportive environment, and to the government's financial support as in the case of MANAR. One important insight offered by these stories is the important role played by the government in facilitating initiatives at institution level. The government, after all, cannot afford to directly involve itself in all aspects of internationalisation, but it can provide incentives, either in the form of financial support or greater institutional autonomy to higher education institutions, in order to drive the internationalisation activities toward the desired goals.

The chapter reaffirms that the Vietnamese government has moved from a passive approach to a proactive approach in internationalisation of its higher education system in order to take advantage of globalisation and the global knowledge economy. Evidence from the analysis suggests that the Vietnamese government needs to reposition the role it plays in the internationalisation of higher education in order to develop its higher education system in particular and in the country's economic development in general. Repositioning includes recognising the roles played by individual institutions and focusing more on creating a supportive environment and incentives for individuals and institutions to engage in and take advantage of internationalisation, in a way that meaningfully contributes to improving the country's higher education system and better meeting the socio-economic demands placed on it.

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Chapter 3
Current Perspectives on Internationalisation of Quality Assurance at the Institutional Level

Quyen T. N. Do

Introduction

A national quality assurance system has been developed in Vietnamese higher education since the early 2000s when accreditation was introduced. The launch of the accreditation system in the heart of national higher education reform made accreditation the centre of interest and helped it to penetrate rapidly into universities and colleges. Accreditation quickly became trendy and so far has been seen as a pathway to international cooperation. Accreditation is for promoting mutual recognition and student exchange with foreign institutions. Accreditation is also a basis for international joint programmes. Accreditation by prestigious foreign accreditors is preferred for these purposes.

Institutional quality assurance activities are driven by multiple motives. Apart from quality, many other issues of concern can have an effect on institutions' quality assurance purposes, process and procedures. HEIs have shown that they are very strategic when internationalising quality assurance activities in this field. They have also tended to combine quality assurance with international cooperation activities to make use of existing relationships with foreign partners. Universities and colleges take different approaches to realising these strategies.

This chapter looks into the internationalisation aspects of quality assurance in Vietnamese universities and colleges. It aims to capture the tendencies in quality assurance with a view to providing a picture of institutional quality assurance in Vietnamese higher education in the era of globalisation. The argument is based on results of an investigation of quality assurance and improvement at three top public universities in 2013. The original study, from which the data here are drawn, is a

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quasi-ethnographic study exploring the possibilities of applying benchmarking as a method for continuous improvement in Vietnamese HEIs. Part of the study investigated QA practice, including accreditation, in local public universities.

The study was conducted at three member universities of a national university. These are among top public universities leading in many fields such as training, research, internationalisation, and quality assurance. They often react to changes more quickly than other public institutions and are more responsive to new developments in the world higher education. They are trend-setters in the local higher education system, especially in the public sector. Therefore, these institutions often go ahead of other institutions in almost all fields, and the practice at these institutions can have spillover effects on other institutions in the system. In terms of resources, these institutions also have better financial conditions and expertise to implement quality assurance.

Data were collected through working sessions and interviews with managers and leaders of participating universities during a period of approximately 3 months. Altogether, 15 leaders and managers of key departments and offices were interviewed. The working sessions were organized with all departments, sections and units in the universities with a focus on quality assurance, organizational affairs, and governance. Apart from the interviews, an important source of data was observation of the attitudes of staff and leaders towards QA and their behavior in QA-related issues.

University Leaders' Perspectives on Quality and Quality Assurance

Leaders' Awareness of Quality Issues and Quality Assurance

Educational quality in Vietnamese higher education is defined as the "fitness for purpose" (Circular 62 and 38, Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], 2012, 2013). The term educational quality and quality assurance were officially introduced in the system in 2004 in Decision 38 regarding the temporary regulations on the accreditation of universities. In the literature of quality assurance, QA is defined as "an all-embracing term referring to an on-going, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programs" (Vlăsceanu et al. 2007, p. 74). As can be seen from this definition, quality assurance also covers quality improvement.

Among common QA methods are accreditation and benchmarking. Accreditation is "the process by which a (non)governmental or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognise it as having met certain pre-determined minimal criteria or standards" (Vlăsceanu et al. 2007, p. 25). Benchmarking is a process that "involves analysing performance practices, and processes within and between

organizations and industries to obtain information for self-improvement" (Alstete 1995, p. 20).

Educational quality and accreditation were not widely popular until Education Law 2005 was promulgated. During 2005–2007, a pilot accreditation project was implemented as the first step to launch accreditation in the local higher education system. Accreditation became more popular than quality assurance, and so, for many university staff and leaders, accreditation is quality assurance and vice versa. The difference between the two concepts has been clearer to relevant staff and leaders during the past several years.

Accreditation has become more popular since 2007 and attracted much attention of university leaders. Accreditation soon became an important task of university life and of the national higher education agenda. The ten-year period of approaching and implementing accreditation gives universities and colleges an opportunity to see how this method meets their needs for quality assurance.

Top universities are looking for other quality assurance instruments offering features that accreditation does not have.

This group of universities, including national, regional and key universities, is more conscious of quality assurance and holds a leading role in this field. They react more quickly to quality assurance requirements of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) as well as changing global and regional higher educational contexts. They are highly responsive to the development of quality assurance in the world higher education. Many of them have actively participated in activities organized by international and regional quality assurance agencies. Nonetheless, limited resources and capacity have withheld their participation at a very modest level, as observers only in some cases.

Even though quality assurance has received greater attention, it is not considered as an area of focus in universities and colleges. Quality assurance activities are not prioritized. To assure the quality of educational services has not yet been recognised as educational providers' responsibility. This perception has affected institutions' approaches to quality assurance.

Drivers of Institutional Quality Assurance

Compliance-Driven Quality Assurance

As noted, quality assurance was introduced into the local higher education through accreditation, a state management instrument. This is a top-down approach to quality assurance at the systemic level. Because of this approach, institutions tend to deploy QA activities to comply with MOET's QA requirements rather than to manage their educational quality. They do not often initiate QA activities without MOET's requests or guidelines. The reasons can be multiple, for instance, lack of funding for quality assurance, low awareness of quality assurance, and lack of knowledge and expertise in quality assurance.

The focus of quality assurance activities is to meet MOET's requirements, but not quality and performance improvement. Such a compliance-driven QA system can generate adverse outcomes. Shah and Jarzabkowski (2013, pp. 104–105) conclude that 'the danger of compliance-driven quality is a lack of focus on enhancement and rewarding excellence in core and support areas of the university as more energy is devoted to meeting external compliance requirements rather than building internal capacity for quality assurance and ongoing improvements'. This scenario is happening in many local institutions. There seem to be many concerns other than quality and excellence. There are different factors affecting institutions' decision-making on quality assurance issues.

Quality Assurance for Publicity and Marketing Purposes

Leaders of top universities have found out that quality assurance can be deployed for other purposes. QA activities can be linked to other operational areas such as training and publicity. For example, having the stamp 'accredited' on a programme is an effective way to advertise that programme. Accreditation status is undoubtedly useful in gaining prospective learners' trust. This status can be presented to the public as a proof of quality to attract students and parents. Though accreditation is mainly about meeting preset requirements on the conditions for program operations and does not guarantee quality, the status is the only form of certification that students can refer to when choosing programs and universities. This form of certification helps to enhance the image of not only the programme but the university as well. That explains why more and more universities are eager to have their programmes accredited and publicize accreditation results.

Interviews with leaders and managers of some top public universities prove this trend. A manager of human resources commented that the fundamental motive for institutions' joining accreditation was branding, not quality improvement. Indeed, given state funding cuts, branding and publicity are becoming increasingly critical to the development of universities and colleges. There is a close link between public image and reputation and student recruitment, which ultimately affects the revenues from tuition fees. Apart from this motive, there are more practical reasons. For instance, accreditation status, especially granted by foreign accrediting agencies, has been used a basis for an increase in tuition fees. For whatever reasons, the choice of accreditation seems to be linked with financial rather than academic and professional issues.

Practicality and Effectiveness of QA Activities

Quality assurance is not a conventional operational area in local universities and colleges, so the implementation of QA in the recent years has affected all other institutional activities. For instance, the management and governance of higher education institutions have changed significantly since the introduction of

accreditation. The addition of quality assurance to regular institutional operations also affects institutional planning, both financially and academically. Indeed, the deployment of accreditation and student surveys requires extra budgets. Given the tight state control and close oversight of public institutions in terms of finance and expenditure, the allocation of budget for quality assurance and accreditation is a challenge for university leaders. Performing QA tasks also requires expertise and qualified personnel. For example, most higher education institutions have established a QA unit to accomplish MOET's QA requirements and accreditation-related tasks. Running a new functional unit obviously requires extra staff with appropriate qualifications. It should be noted that QA has not always been an area of priority for resources investment in universities.

Given the resources that universities and colleges must invest in QA, it would be a waste if the implementation of QA is for compliance only. Universities tend to seek ways to combine or incorporate quality assurance tasks with core areas such as training and international cooperation. The interaction between these activities possibly helps to improve the performance and cost-effectiveness of QA tasks. Nevertheless, how to combine activities in these areas is a question of concern. Universities and colleges have adopted different approaches and strategies to solving this issue. The next sections of this chapter will look into these approaches and strategies in more detail.

Internationalisation in Quality Assurance and Improvement

Combination of Quality Assurance and International Cooperation

Taking advantage of existing international relations and cooperation with foreign universities for quality assurance and performance improvement is an emerging trend. This process has happened in different ways.

One is to request foreign scholars visiting one's university within the scope of some cooperative project to examine and evaluate the university's existing processes, practices, and policies and to give recommendations. The following case illustrates this approach. The Rector of University A (Nguyen P.) wanted to improve management practices at his university and asked a visiting staff member from one of the top Australian universities to analyse the current practices at the university. The visitor examined the practices and put forward a list of recommendations for improvement, which the Rector found very useful. He said it helped him identify problems and possible solutions.

This Rector also took advantage of a visit to universities in a close-by Asian country to consult a manager experienced in fundraising in that country. When returning to his university, he applied the strategies shared by the manager and was

successful. Both examples show that consulting foreign scholars, often experts in some areas, about relevant problems for improvement purposes is another approach.

Another way of combining internationalisation and quality assurance is reflected in a Vice Rector's comment:

> In certain circumstances, benchmarking is definitely necessary. Benchmarking not only helps to improve performance but also assists in developing international cooperation in training. To develop a joint programme, we need to have good knowledge of the counterpart, and so do they. Benchmarking facilitates the 'knowing' and 'understanding' process. If two parties do not know each other well, it is impossible to cooperate for joint delivery of programmes or student exchange. (Do T., Vice Rector)

Recent developments in international relations and various forms of international cooperation provide universities and colleges with more opportunities to incorporate activities in the two fields. This approach enables universities and colleges to carry quality assurance tasks in a practical way to solve their problems directly. Nevertheless, it does not help to develop a systematic internal quality assurance system, and so, may not be sustainable in the long run.

Strategies in Internationalising Accreditation

The practicality and institution's marketing purpose in deploying quality assurance have affected universities' strategies in accreditation. Two major trends have emerged. They will be discussed in more detail.

Programme and Institutional Accreditation by Foreign Accreditors

After several years familiarizing themselves with local accreditation method, procedures, and standards, many institutions have explored the possibility of being accredited by foreign accreditors. They are interested in both foreign programmatic and institutional accreditation.

Nevertheless, for most of these institutions, foreign accreditation of programmes is more achievable and practical than accreditation of institution. The self-evaluation of programmes is confined within a programme only, and so, more manageable. Given limited resources, opting for programmatic accreditation is a wise choice.

Foreign accrediting agencies, including regional and American organizations, have attracted the attention of local universities. AUN-QA programme accreditation provided by the ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance, a higher education co-operational organization in the Association of South East Asia Nations, is the most sought-after foreign accreditation scheme. Dozens of local programmes in different disciplines, such as business and economics, technology, and engineering, and teacher training, have earned AUN-QA accreditation. Many of these are honor programmes provided by public Vietnamese universities, including national, regional and key universities. Vietnam National University-Hanoi (VNU-HN) and

Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC) are leading in this trend with approximately 15 programmes accredited and registered for AUN-QA accreditation in each institution. Notably, VNU University of Science, a member of VNU-HN, registered for AUN-QA institutional accreditation in early 2015. This case was the first time a local university had registered for AUN-QA institutional accreditation. The case also started a race for international recognition through regional accreditation at the institutional level in the system.

Apart from AUN-QA accreditation, universities and colleges are also seeking US programme accreditation. Specialized accreditation has been the next target that some universities set for their faculties and schools. Examples of specialized accrediting systems include ACBSP for business, economics and accounting programmes, and ABET for programmes of applied science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology.

As of October 2014, ABET accreditation had been granted to two bachelor programmes, in Computer Science and Computer Engineering, delivered and awarded by University of Technology, VNU-HCMC (ABET 2014). Programmes in this discipline in VNU-HN are also conducting self-evaluation for ABET accreditation. Hoa Sen University, a private provider, has pioneered ACBSP programme accreditation. Its programme(s) is working toward obtaining ACBSP accreditation (ACBSP 2015). French engineering programme accreditation - CTI – has been granted to four PFIEV programmes (Honour Engineer programmes). Recently, four polytechnique universities in Vietnam were also awarded with HCERES institutional accreditation.

Seeking regionally and internationally recognised accreditation is a common trend for HEIs in the South East Asia. Since the launch of AUN-QA initiative, 118 undergraduate and graduate programmes in 27 universities (within AUN-QA Member Universities, AUN-QA Associate Members, and non-Member Universities) in eight ASEAN countries have been assessed and accredited against AUN-QA standards. The number of programmes that are AUN-QA accredited rose four times in 2013 and five times in 2014, according to AUN's update in 2015 (ASEAN University Network Secretariat 2015). Many higher education programmes in Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Mongolia, the Philippines and Indonesia, have obtained ACBSP and ABET accreditation as well. Many are working toward being accredited by these two agencies.

Jointly Delivered Programmes with Foreign Accredited Programmes

In addition to pursuing foreign accreditation, universities and colleges have also sought opportunities for joint provision of foreign accredited programmes with foreign institutions in Vietnam. Specifically, a foreign programme, accredited by an internationally recognised accrediting agency, is imported to a local university. The local university delivers the programme jointly with a foreign partner without having to invest resources in accreditation. Upon agreement between the local and foreign institutions, in some cases they jointly award degrees to graduates.

In most cases, the quality assurance of joint programs must comply with the foreign institution's policies for all their programs on campus. Thus foreign partners are often responsible for arranging accreditation of these programs. They register for program accreditation with a specialized accreditor of which they have already been a member, organize the self-evaluation and site visits, and pay for the entire process.

For local institutions, they can enhance their image and brand, save the cost of international accreditation, and learn about quality assurance practices and policies of the imported programme. The foreign programme can be a point of reference for deploying quality assurance practices at the programmatic level.

The provision of ACBSP-accredited programmes of local universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (listed on ACBSP's website) are examples of this approach. One case is the joint provision of masters and doctorate programmes between Maastricht School of Management and School of Industrial Management, HCMC University of Technology. These programmes, in International Business and Business Administration, have been accredited since 2010.

The University of Economics and Business, VNU-HN, has jointly delivered baccalaureate and masters programmes with Troy University for 14 years. Troy University, Hanoi campus, offers programmes in various specializations such as Accounting, Finance, Global business, and Marketing. These programmes have been accredited by ACBSP since 2009. Troy University, Ho Chi Minh City campus, also provides similar ACBSP-accredited programmes at its campus in Saigon Technology University.

Amongst the three local universities, two (HCMC University of Technology and University of Economics and Business, VNU-HN) are public, and one (Saigon Technology University) is private. Both public and private institutions are interested in adopting this approach.

Approaches and Strategies to Benchmarking

In addition to accreditation, which has already been in place though not yet complete, benchmarking as a method for quality improvement has gained greater attention of university leaders and managers. While accreditation is a macro, top-down approach to quality assurance, benchmarking is more of a bottom-up method, which can be applicable at macro, meso, and micro levels. Benchmarking has proved to be effective in quality assurance and improvement in many systems (Hazelkorn 2011; Jackson 2001). Benchmarking is also believed to be a quality assurance instrument of the future in the world higher education (Barak and Kniker 2002; Sidhu 2008).

Given the lack of quality assurance instrument at the institutional level, local universities are interested in benchmarking, particularly against international benchmarks. Nevertheless, they also show hesitation in initiating benchmarking activities. Their approach to benchmarking reflects the influence of different motives of quality

assurance activities in local universities and the practicality of the local higher education context.

Interest in International Benchmarks and a Step-by-Step Approach to Selecting Points of Reference

Vietnam higher education is undergoing extensive reforms from structural governance, finance and funding, student selection to curriculum design and organization at the systemic and institutional levels. Given the systemic changes, foreign higher education has attracted the attention of local university leaders, managers and administrators. Advanced higher education systems, such as those of the US, the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany, have been external points of reference for reform efforts in the system. Local policy makers and practitioners have been looking 'out of the box' for good practice, models and policies in foreign systems with a view to seeking performance improvement solutions.

Benchmarking is 'a performance improvement technique which helps to give certainty to managers attempting to draw up strategies for change in very confusing and unpredictable external environments' (ESMU 2010, p. 36). It is a process that 'involves analysing performance practices, and processes within and between organizations and industries to obtain information for self-improvement' (Alstete 1995, pp. 20). It is, therefore, no surprise that all leaders and managers, who were interviewed in the research study underlying this chapter, showed their interest in using benchmarking to search for good practice in different areas. The point of reference they wished to use as benchmarks is foreign institutions and programmes.

Even though the participants were all interested in benchmarking against foreign, advanced institutions and programmes, their approach to international benchmarking varied. Some (vice) rectors and managers did not hide their ambition targeting at well-established universities in developed countries. For them, local institutions were no longer within their range of interest (Nguyen A, HR manager). Their intention was directed at higher education institutions in developed countries such as Germany and Belgium.

Nevertheless, for other leaders and managers, it was not practical to target at prestigious institutions in developed countries due to big gaps between the local and foreign systems. Instead, they proposed a step-by-step pathway, starting with a regional university in the ASEAN, and then, moving gradually to Europe and America. The reason for this choice is reflected in the following comments:

> I want to benchmark against a specific university, whose background is close to Vietnam's context […] Conducting benchmarking against an institution in a highly developed system, even if problems were pointed out, we would not be able to implement recommendations. (Tran B, IT Manager)
>
> … I like Singaporean universities since I like their strategies. They approach original models directly, examine and apply American models and technologies without bridging through European models or else. For us [Vietnam], this approach is impossible due to a heavy influence of cultural factors; we have to do it step by step. (Phan H, HR Manager)

Some managers (for example, Nguyen Thi C and Pham Thi E, QA managers, and Le Van G, Dean) are more cautious and hesitant, suggesting benchmarking against a local university before against an international institution.

Puzzlement in and Approaches to Selecting Benchmarking Partners

Even though the interviewed rectors, vice-rectors and managers have chosen to benchmark against foreign institutions and programmes, in practice it is not simple to find a specific university with which to do this. There are many issues to consider. The following comment indicates a certain puzzlement in the face of the problem of selecting a foreign institution for benchmarking:

> At the moment, there exists a debate over which model to follow, an Asian or a European one. I am standing in between, so it is very difficult to say which model to select for benchmarking. A local partner is not what I want. I like benchmarking against a foreign university because their model is update and advanced, but such a model requires a more developed background than ours, and thus, it is not feasible. It's a paradox. Benchmarking against our traditional model is not necessary since I already know its strengths and weaknesses. (Hoang D, Rector)

As suggested previously, challenges in selecting a foreign university with which to form a benchmarking partnership, arise from the gaps in development between the local institution and the foreign universities that the local institution wants to use as a point of reference. Group or pair benchmarking only works in a 'win-win' situation, in which both local and foreign institutions benefit from the benchmarking activity. In most cases, foreign institutions will not be interested in benchmarking against local universities if they do not see any gains from it.

Given these difficulties, leaders and managers have come up with a practical approach to selecting benchmarking partners, which is to take advantage of existing internationalisation developments. This approach is reflected in the comments that follow:

> In fact, we have conducted indirect benchmarking, looking for a university to learn from. An advantage is that our internationalisation grows strongly. (Nguyen A., HR Manager)
>
> … Finding a benchmarking partner can be easy, in both Asia and Europe, […] through personal contacts or on the basis of our international cooperation, for example, foreign institutions with which we have signed MoUs[1]. (Tran D., QA Manager)

This approach is, indeed, practical and may help to enhance the feasibility of benchmarking efforts. Nevertheless, due to the limited choice, local universities may not be able to find the counterpart most appropriate for benchmarking.

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[1] Memorandum of understanding.

Adoption of Private, Independent Benchmarking

The difficulties in selecting a benchmarking partner due to the gaps between local and foreign institutions have promoted the adoption of private, independent benchmarking. As per definitions given by Jackson (2001), benchmarking without partners is referred as independent benchmarking. This mode of benchmarking enables local universities to carry out benchmarking activities on their own without the participation of foreign institutions.

Local universities can still select a foreign institution as an external point of reference. In local public universities, this approach accompanies private benchmarking. That is, local universities do not have to make their benchmarking efforts and results public. Leaders can deploy benchmarking activities silently and use benchmarking results in the way and to the extent they wish without any external pressure. The adoption of private course of action in benchmarking arises from the need of not having to show the analysis results with weaknesses and issues, which may affect the 'political lives' of university leaders.

It should be noted that private benchmarking has not been reported in the literature of benchmarking in both theory and practice in the world higher education. The adoption of this approach in the local public higher education contexts emerged in the midst of low transparency and low accountability in the system.

The following comment partly shows this tendency:

> The challenge is when benchmarking against foreign institutions, we are too far from them. This acts as a hurdle preventing us from deploying benchmarking officially, though we have conducted it quietly. (Nguyen A., HR Manager)

Private, independent benchmarking allows a high level of flexibility but tolerates a lack of commitment to quality assurance. The lack of commitment may result in low accountability and low efficiency of the activities. Private, independent benchmarking helps to identify good practices (what) but limits the understanding of contexts and rationale (why and how). One-way investigation may generate biased information, which is not beneficial to benchmarking actors. The adoption of these approaches to benchmarking and quality assurance reflects a compromise between practicality and the benefits of benchmarking.

Conclusion

In summary, quality assurance practices at Vietnamese universities reflect the responsiveness of university leaders and managers to MOET's QA requirements and changes in local and international higher education contexts. They have attempted to internationalise their quality assurance activities in many ways. The motives for the internationalisation of quality assurance are, of course, beyond quality issues. As Steiner-Khamsi (2014, p. 158) points out, 'a reference to international standard is good for business'; in education, it is good for attracting students. Internationalising quality assurance activities in the current contexts for local

institutions serves as a stone to kill several birds: complying with MOET's requirements, promoting their programmes, boosting their international cooperation, and enhancing their brand and image. Quality is yet touched on as a genuine and practical objective.

Particularly, the trend of making references to other educational systems or to international standards in education, which is defined as 'externalisation' in Steiner-Khamsi (2014), has also been observed in other systems. Nonetheless, the approaches and strategies that Vietnamese universities and colleges have adopted or tend to take, such as private benchmarking, may not resemble those in other countries. And despite universities' various efforts in internationalisation of QA activities, quality remains an issue to be addressed.

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Chapter 4
The 'Advanced Programmes' in Vietnam: Internationalising the Curriculum or Importing the 'Best Curriculum' of the West?

Ly Thi Tran, Huong Le Thanh Phan, and Simon Marginson

> *"The raft is used to cross the river. It isn't to be carried around on your shoulders."*
>
> — *Thích Nhất Hạnh, The Miracle of Mindfulness*

Introduction

In Vietnam, internationalising the curriculum has emerged as an important topic over the past few years and has been influenced by four key political, economic and socio-cultural drivers. Firstly, an expanding middle class has created a strong demand not only for overseas study but also for internationalised courses and internationally recognised credentials offered by joint programmes or foreign-owned universities. Secondly, a rapid increase in international trade and private, joint venture and foreign direct investment (FDI) enterprises accompanied by the socialist-oriented market economy means more qualified human resources with a good command of English capable to work in a more 'internationalised' labour market

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are needed. Thirdly, internationalisation of the curriculum is also driven by the nation's aspiration to overhaul the outdated curriculum, keep pace with regional and international developments in education and enhance graduates' capacity to work not only in the local labour market but also in the region and the world. Fourthly, internationalisation of the curriculum is seen as a strategic approach in the government's political agenda with the aim of boosting the international ranking of the nation's elite universities.

The Vietnamese government introduced the 'advanced programmes' in 2006. This project aims to reform the HE curriculum and lift the quality of teaching and learning to an internationally recognised level via cross-border curriculum partnerships. This initiative has been seen as core to MOET's internationalisation agenda, as endorsed in the Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020 (MOET 2012). The advanced programmes have been implemented in selected areas, mainly STEM and business education, across almost 20 universities in Vietnam, by importing the curriculum from prestigious universities ranked in the top 200 universities in the world and using English as a medium of instruction.

The advanced programmes have yielded positive results, including the provision of student access to materials and contents from innovative programmes in well-regarded universities, and enhancing the employability of the student cohorts. However, issues and challenges remain.

The analysis of the advanced programmes in this chapter reveals that the introduction of this national project was both politically and academically driven. First, it was driven in symbolic reputational and political terms. Vietnam's government wanted to lift the international ranking of the nation's elite universities, especially to reach the top 200 of the world universities by 2020 (MOET 2008). Now, this goal appears unrealistic. Second, the project sought to lift teaching and learning quality and enhance graduate competitiveness in regional and international labour markets. However, its impacts on curriculum reform and graduate capacity have been fragmented and narrow, since it has been implemented among a small proportion of students in selected disciplines, in certain major universities only.

In this project less attention was paid to internationalising the student experience from a university-wide approach and to incorporating values and international dimensions into the curriculum from a holistic perspective, in order to create an internationalised institutional culture on a broad basis. Though enhancing students' English competency is one of the objectives of the advanced programmes, developing students' global outlooks and intercultural competence has not been a main priority. With the top-down approach controlled by MOET, this programme stands in insolation from the regular curriculum applied in other disciplines of each university. Advanced programmes have not operated on the basis of a coordinated institution-wide approach and thus have had quite limited effects in lifting institutional capacity for internationalisation.

There are continuing challenges, in relation to local resources for accommodating the demand of the foreign-born programmes, especially in terms of access to foreign materials as core references for the programmes; local handling of faculty from foreign partner universities; and the need for local faculty capable of teaching

in English. In addition, following the pilot phase of 2006–2008, supported by government funding of 860 billion VND, the advanced programmes have been no longer mainly subsidised by government. Universities have had to determine the fee level for their programmes, with some universities charging an annual tuition fee of almost 26 million VND, almost ten times the fees for a normal university course. Therefore many universities have had difficulties in meeting the enrolment targets for advanced programmes (Ha Anh 2013).

This chapter begins with an overview of the Vietnamese HE curriculum as a background for understanding the introduction of the advanced programmes. It then proceeds with a discussion of curriculum internationalisation and curriculum borrowing. The next part focuses on the nature, impacts and limitations of the advanced programmes, looking at them through the conceptual lenses of curriculum borrowing and curriculum internationalisation. The section that follows provides two examples of the advanced programme in International Economics and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The chapter concludes with reflections on the practical implications of the appropriation and localisation of foreign curriculum within Vietnamese HE.

The Vietnamese HE Curriculum

In order to understand why the 'advanced programme' is regarded as a signature initiative in the Vietnamese government's agenda for reforming HE, it is important to situate it within the background literature on Vietnamese HE curriculum. This section will provide an overview of the characteristics, tensions and challenges facing the current Vietnamese HE curriculum. Vietnamese HE curriculum appears to place emphasis on formal academic learning, theoretical knowledge and political indoctrination at the expense of providing students with practical knowledge and exposure to real life experiences (Tran 2013; Tran and Swierczek 2009; Tran et al. 2014). As a compulsory core component of the curriculum in all disciplines, political indoctrination accounts for about 25 per cent of the curriculum (Vallely and Wilkinson 2008). Insufficient attention is given to nurturing students' soft skills and ability to apply knowledge and theories into real life and work situations. As a result, up to 60 per cent of Vietnamese graduates are either unemployed or unable to secure employment in their area of specialisation (Tran n.d.). More recently, statistics from the International Labour Organization indicates an alarming unemployment rate for graduates, doubling between 2010 and 2014, with up to 162,000 university graduates currently unemployed (Ngan 2015).

There are a couple of key factors often cited to explain the high unemployment rate of graduates in Vietnam. The most common reason cited in the literature and government documents is the disconnect between the curriculum and the actual demands of the labour market (Hoang Tuy 2007; Vallely and Wilkinson 2008; Tran et al. 2014). Vu Minh Giang, the former Vice-President of Vietnam National University-Hanoi, pointed out that graduate employability should be seen as a core

mission of the reform of higher education in Vietnam. Poor investment in higher education quality that affects graduates' attributes and work readiness contributes to the paradox of high unemployment rate among university graduates but 'unfilled positions in trades' (World Bank 2012). In addition, economic crisis, the demand of the market economy and Vietnam's changing social and employment structures might create challenges for graduates seeking employment in a crowded and competitive labour market, to find jobs relevant to the major discipline they studied at universities, or just to transit into the labour market at all (Tran et al. 2014). Accordingly, these authors argue that the Vietnamese HE curriculum reform should prioritise 'the need to help learners develop a capacity to navigate the knowledge, skills and attributes to perform effectively across a broad range of sectors of society and professional fields, and in particular to secure employment and stay employable in a fast developing economy and society' (p. 15).

To deal with the long-lasting mismatch between the curriculum and the labour market, in 2005 the government articulated the goal of providing access to career-application programmes for between 70 and 89 per cent of HE students through the Higher Education Reform Agenda (Thủ tướng chính phủ 2005). However, up to date there has been little indication of the extent to which this goal has been achieved. Vietnam's Strategy for Education Development 2011–2020 identified strategies for adapting the curriculum in order to augment its responsiveness to the labour market (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ 2012). As noted, one of the key initiatives here has been to introduce the advanced programmes, using English as a medium of instruction, which aims to develop graduates' competency in English and their capacity to effectively to perform and engage in both the local and international labour market.

Another key problem facing the current curriculum is that it is largely centred around principles of knowledge reproduction, surface learning, rote memorisation and compliance rather than knowledge generation and capacity building for learners. This has commonly positioned learners as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active agents or co-constructors of knowledge and skills and 'collaborators in solving real world problems' as expected and demanded by today's society (Tran et al. 2014). These authors further point out the paradox between the exam-driven curriculum and the demand for independent and critical thinking. They argue that 'students' creative thinking and critical reflection, which are at the heart of a responsive, flexible and learner-centred education, are compromised by the pressure for teachers to prepare students to pass exams and tests' (p. 106). However, efforts have been recently made by MOET to shift from rote and surface learning to deep, creative and flexible learning, by integrating into national examinations tasks that require students to display critical and creative thinking**.**

Internationalising or Borrowing the Curriculum?

Internationalisation in Vietnamese HE has been strongly influenced by the nation's political agenda and historical context (see Chap. 2 by Hoang, Tran and Pham on government policy on internationalisation for more details). Policy documents often

define internationalisation in Vietnamese HE as the expansion and enhancement of international cooperation in the field of education (MOET 2012). In practice, the promotion of student and staff mobility, international cooperation in programme development and delivery, and the establishment of international schools and institutes, have emerged as key dimensions for internationalisation in Vietnamese HE. These activities aim at enabling the curriculum and the system to catch up with regional and world standards and augmenting human capacity building for the nation (Nguyen 2009a, 2009b; Dang 2011; Welch 2010; Tran et al. 2014; Nguyen and Tran 2017; Tran and Marginson 2018a, b). Scholars in the field note that internationalisation activities are largely fragmented and the Vietnamese HE sector has not been able to reap the potential benefits ò the process of internationalisation (see Chap. 2 by Hoang et al. 2018). Internationalisation at the core of HE reform is clearly embraced in the government policy document 'Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020'. Within this document, internationalisation is one of the eight key initiatives for the reform of HE. The National Strategy identifies three specific goals for internationalisation:

- Using state funding to increase the number of teaching and research staff and students trained overseas, especially the staff of top-tier universities, major research centres and in the key science and technology disciplines. Encouraging Vietnamese citizens to pursue overseas study through self-funding;
- Expanding cooperation with foreign institutions to enhance Vietnamese institutions' capacity in both management and education. Facilitating and supporting research, technology transfer and staff professional development;
- Attracting international organisations, groups, individuals and overseas Vietnamese to invest in and support education, participate in teaching, research and technology transfer, and to contribute to education reforms. Developing modern research centres and institutes to attract domestic and international scientists to join teaching and research activities. (MOET 2012, pp. 14–15).

The advanced programmes were introduced in 2006 with the aim of enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, keeping pace with regional and international developments, and opening up further opportunities for human capacity building for the nation. In Vietnam the introduction of the advanced programmes is often cited as a signature initiative of 'internationalisation of the curriculum' (quốc tế hóa chương trình đại học). But the principles underpinning the advanced programmes and its implementation process appear to reflect aspects of curriculum borrowing and appropriation, as opposed to internationalisation of the curriculum. Citing her 2009 definition, Leask (2015) defines internationalisation of the curriculum as 'the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a programme of study' (p. 9). In the context of Europe, the term 'internationalisation at home' tends to be more commonly used and is understood as "the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum" (Beelen and Jones 2015). These definitions tend to place emphasis on the *process* of internationalising

teaching and learning practices through purposeful acts of embedding international elements in the curriculum content and pedagogy. However, internationalisation of the curriculum, as is internationalisation of education in general, is shaped by the specific local characteristics and local demands across different regions of the world. In Vietnam, the so-called internationalisation of the curriculum via the implementation of the advanced programmes gears towards curriculum borrowing and appropriation.

Curriculum Borrowing

In the current globalised world, learning from and borrowing 'best practices' from a different context is becoming more and more common. In response to the demand for reform of the local HE systems and especially for solutions to the weaknesses of the domestic education system, education leaders "increasingly look to international trends, ideas and standards" (Spreen 2004). Bodies such as the OECD assume best practice is occurring and thus, learning from successful experiences of other countries and transferring good models across different regions should be encouraged. However, others are cautious about borrowing and transferring models of education and programmes from one system to another on the ground that education reflects, and thus, cannot be separated from its specific, unique context (Sadler 1990; Cowen 2000). In a similar vein, Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow (2012) warn against borrowing tendency as this process entails a neo-colonial characteristic, imposing a so called best practice system in various local systems regardless of the different political, socio-cultural and economic situations that apply—different to the conditions of the original best-practice case, and different to each other. Policy borrowing in education can be seen as a 'quick fix' approach based on the assumption of using a model from a 'superior' education system to solve problems of the domestic system (Morris 2012). The broader context within which education and training systems are embedded potentially limits the success of transfer (Turbin 2001). Thus 'selective borrowing' and local adaptation or indigenisation is seen as being essential to effective borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow 2012).

Selective borrowing and local appropriation, as opposed to rigid transfer, appears to align closely with some of the fundamental principles of education promoted in the Vietnamese education system. 'Opening to the world' and 'learning from the world' are often cited as being core to the nation's general orientation for education development. For example, Vu Minh Giang, former Vice-President of Vietnam National University-Hanoi, argues, in response to the changing need of the country and the demand for reform, that the Vietnamese philosophy of education should be reflected in five words *Ái, Tôn, Vị, Trọng, Khai*. This means 'promotes patriotism and nationalism, serves human life, values talents, liberates the people and opens to the world' (Vu 2009; cited in Tran et al. 2014, p. 91). Giap (2011) suggests the importance of embracing the following principles in the reform of education in

Vietnam: *Mở, Sáng tạo, Toàn diện, Hiện đại, Hội nhập.* This means open, creative, holistic, modern and integrative.

Historically, Vietnamese people have a well-established tradition of flexibly and creatively adapting foreign values and practices, including Chinese philosophies such as Confucianism and Taoism, and religions such as Buddhism--rather than being simply colonised by these systems of thought. Local appropriation aims to ensure that the foreign ideas align with the Vietnamese context, Vietnamese cultural heritage and Vietnamese values.

The Advanced Programme

Background of the Programme

As mentioned above, the "advanced programme" is considered one of the most important initiatives in MOET's HE reform agenda. It is legitimized by the Government's Resolution Number 14/2005/NQ-CP that established the foundation for the incorporation of foreign advanced curriculum into Vietnamese universities. The Resolution explicitly encourages institutions to import the curriculum from prestigious universities ranked in the top 200 universities in the world, and to use English as the medium of instruction (Duong 2009; Nguyen, Nguyen 2009a, 2009b). The aim of the advanced programme initiative is to completely renovate the university curriculum by transplanting entire foreign degree programmes into selected disciplines of chosen Vietnamese universities (Department of State and MOET 2009). In other words, not only the content but all other aspects of the foreign programmes such as course design, teaching methodologies and assessment are imported.

This access to and capture of already-proven "best practices" is expected to quickly achieve international standards in higher education. Such programme transposition is expected to be a remedy for the long-lasting weaknesses of Vietnamese higher education, especially the out-dated curriculum out of tune with technological innovations and international developments (Hoang Tuy 2007; Vallely and Wilkinson 2008; Tran et al. 2014, 2017). The implementation of the advanced programme is also considered the government's solution to deal with the traditional, ineffective method of lecturing, note-taking and reproducing memorised content for exams. Besides, as noted, the updated knowledge and the English competence acquired throughout the advanced programmes are expected to enhance Vietnamese graduates' competitiveness in the globalised labour market. Importantly, the "advanced programme" project is a critical initiative to realise the country's aspiration of "having some Vietnamese universities being ranked in the top 200 of the world universities by 2020" (MOET 2008) and to ultimately "contribute to the enhancement of educational quality and the fundamental and comprehensive renovation of Vietnam's higher education"(ibid.).

The "advanced programme" project is phased into two stages. In the 2006–2008 pilot stage, ten advanced programmes in three disciplines, namely natural sciences, technology and business, were implemented in nine universities. This discipline selection reflected the disciplines' relatively universal nature. The curricula of these programmes were entirely imported from renowned American universities, including the content, teaching method, organization and training management method as well as the language of instruction (MOET 2008).

Although Government's Resolution No. 14/2005/NQ-CP generally endorsed institutions' freedom in choosing international programmes and partners, MOET reserves its right to approve institutions' programme proposals. A critical criterion for MOET's approval is the programmes' responsiveness to Vietnam's current demands on all three levels, i.e. society, institution and students (Kieu Oanh 2005). Firstly, the programmes should enhance human resources in high-demand fields affecting the socio-economic development of the country. Secondly, institutions must meet all the infrastructure and personnel requirements for the quality delivery of their proposed programmes, as most courses will be taught by Vietnamese lecturers in latter stages of the programme. Thirdly, the imported programmes must suit the students' needs, academic characteristics and financial capacity. In addition, the extent to which the imported programmes are compatible with the Vietnamese higher education framework is also an important criterion. In spite of essentially comprising an entire imported American curriculum, the approved advanced programmes also must include a small number of compulsory courses such as Marxist-Leninist philosophy, Ho Chi Minh ideology, physical education, and military training (MOET 2006).

After 2 years of implementation, the government found that the basic content of the advanced programmes was generally good, in relation to preparing Vietnamese graduates for employability (Department of State and MOET 2009). In 2008, the project entered its second phase with MOET's official proposal of "Training by advanced programmes at some Vietnamese universities in period 2008-2015", approved by the Prime Minister's Decision No. 1505/QD-TTG dated October 15, 2008. In this second phase, the programmes were expanded to other fields, with the addition of fourteen disciplines ranging from electrical and electronics engineering, biomedical technology to construction. There was also an increase in the number of Vietnamese higher education institutions participating in this project and a diversification of foreign institution partners. In addition to American universities, the second phase of the project welcomed the curriculum offered by three universities from the United Kingdom, i.e. University of Oxford Brookes, University of Nottingham and Leeds University, as well as two Australian universities, the University of Sydney and University of Queensland (Table 4.1).

Generally, admission to advanced programmes is based on the student's scores in the National University Entrance exam and the level of English proficiency. For example, for the academic year 2015–2016, University of Technology (Vietnam National University, HCM City) only accepts applications from students who scored 20 out of 30 points for the three subjects of mathematics, physics and chemistry in

Table 4.1 List of advanced programmes, participating institutions and partner institutions

No.	Vietnamese University	Major	Partner University	First Intake
1	University of Natural Sciences, Vietnam National University, Hanoi	Chemistry	University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (USA)	2006–2007
2	University of Natural Sciences, Vietnam National University, Hanoi	Mathematics	University of Washington (USA)	2008–2009
3	University of Sciences, Vietnam National University, HCM City	Computer science	Portland State University, Oregon (USA)	2006–2007
4	University of Technology, Vietnam National University, HCM City	Electrical and computer engineering (major in power and energy system)	University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (USA)	2006–2007
5	University of Information Technology, Vietnam National University, HCM City	Information system	Oklahoma State's university (USA)	2008–2009
6	Can Tho University	Biochemistry & Molecular Biology/ Bio-technology major	Michigan State University (USA)	2006–2007
7	Can Tho University	Aquaculture	Auburn University, Alabama State (USA)	2008–2009
8	Hue University	Physics	University of Virginia (USA)	2006–2007
9	Hue University	Agriculture economics - finance	University of Sydney (Australia)	2009–2010
10	Da Nang University	Electronics engineering	University of Washington (USA)	2006–2007
11	Da Nang University	Embedded computing system	Portland State University (USA)	2008–2009
12	Thai Nguyen University	Mechanical engineering	State University of New York at Buffalo (USA)	2008–2009
13	Thai Nguyen University	Electrical engineering	Oklahoma State's University (USA)	2010–2011
14	National Economics University	Finance	California State University – Long Beach (USA)	2006–2007
15	National Economics University	Accounting	California State University – Long Beach (USA)	2006–2007
16	Hanoi University of Technology	Mechatronics engineering	California State University – Chico (USA)	2006–2007

Table 4.1 (continued)

No.	Vietnamese University	Major	Partner University	First Intake
17	Hanoi University of Technology	Material science and engineering	University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign (USA)	2006–2007
18	Hanoi University of Technology	Biomedical system engineering	Duke University – Durham (USA)	2008–2009
19	Hanoi University of Agriculture	Crop science	University of California – Davis (USA)	2006–2007
20	Hanoi University of Agriculture	Agriculture business administration	University of Wisconsin – Madison (USA)	2008–2009
21	University of Architecture, HCM City	Urban planning	University of Oxford Brookes (UK)	2008–2009
22	Nong Lam University – HCM city	Food science and technology	University of California – Davis (USA)	2008–2009
23	Nong Lam University – HCM city	Veterinary medicine	University of Queensland (Australia)	2010–2011
24	Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry	Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry	University of California – Davis (USA)	2008–2009
25	Water Resources University	Water resources engineering	Colorado State University (USA)	2008–2009
26	Water Resources University	Civil engineering	University of Arkansas (USA)	2010–2011
27	Foreign Trade University	International economics	Colorado State University (USA)	2008–2009
28	Foreign Trade University	International business administration	California State University, Fullerton (USA)	2010–2011
29	University of Transport and Communications	Civil and structural engineering	University of Leeds (UK)	2008–2009
30	Hanoi Architectural University	Architecture	University of Nottingham (UK)	2008–2009
31	Hanoi University of Mining and Geology	Chemical engineering	University of California Davis (USA)	2010–2011
32	Vietnam Maritime University	Global studies and maritime affairs	California Maritime Academy (USA)	2008–2009
33	Vietnam Maritime university	International business and logistics	California Maritime Academy (USA)	2008–2009
34	Hanoi Medical University	Nursing	California State University - Long Beach (USA)	2010–2011

Compiled from sources: Department of State, and MOET (2009), Final report: US - Vietnam Education Task Force, Hanoi: Embassy of the United States, Universities' websites

the National University Entrance exam[1] and obtained a satisfactory IELTS result of at least 6.0 (or other equivalent English tests). Students who have not met the English requirement will have to take the Pre-University language course.[2] Similarly, the admission requirements of Vietnam Maritime University include standard admission point of the university's common programmes and pass grade in the English exam organised by the university. Students who have TOEIC score of at least 450 or IELTS score of at least 4.0 are exempt from the university's English test.[3]

Implementation of the Advanced Programmes: Success and Challenges

Overall, the advanced programmes project has been embraced by Vietnamese universities. In terms of programme expansion, MOET's target of "having at least 30 advanced programmes across the sector by the end of 2015" (MOET 2008) was met 3 years earlier than planned. The facilities at participating universities, e.g. libraries, laboratories, classrooms, have been upgraded and the programmes have to some extent help provide Vietnamese faculty' and students' with an exposure to internationally recognised curriculum content and intellectual environment. Many universities have been sending their faculty to the United States for professional development in teaching methodology and management (Department of State and MOET 2009). According to the Dean of Chemistry Faculty, University of Natural Sciences (Vietnam National University, Hanoi), the most appreciated aspect of the advanced programmes is that students are exposed to an international learning environment with foreign lecturers and through internships or fieldwork in partner institutions. As a result, not only their disciplinary knowledge but also their critical thinking and communication skills has been significantly enhanced (Hung and Ngan 2011).

In a survey by MOET, the proportion of students achieving good and distinction grades accounted for 72% for the first cohort and 75% for the second cohort (Pham Thinh 2010). Some foreign lecturers compared the result of Vietnamese students at University of Natural Sciences and that of foreign students undertaking the same programmes at the partner university. Their statistics showed that overall Vietnamese students gained equal results and their scores in some specific subjects were even higher (Pham Thinh 2010). The Vice Minister of Vietnam commented that "after

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[1] Official Website of University of Technology (Vietnam National University, HCM city) http://oisp. hcmut.edu.vn/tuyen-sinh/pho-diem-xet-tuyen-2015.html

[2] Official Website of University of Technology (Vietnam National University, HCM city) http://oisp. hcmut.edu.vn/chuong-trinh-dao-tao-dai-hoc/chuong-trinh-tien-tien-illinois.html

[3] Official website of Vietnam Maritime University: http://ise-vmu.edu.vn/tuyen-sinh-47/dao-tao-dai-hoc-119/thong-tin-tuyen-sinh-chuong-trinh-tien-tien-lien-ket-voi-hoc-vien-hang-hai-california-hoa-ky--490-2.html

five years of implementing the advanced programmes, we [Vietnam] can be confident about the English competence of the advanced programmes graduates" (Pham Thinh 2010). In addition, the implementation of the advanced programmes has strengthened the partnership between Vietnamese and foreign universities involved. Several United States universities agreed to award degrees to Vietnamese students and many institutions have agreed to support the quality assurance of the programmes in Vietnam (Department of State and MOET 2009).

In terms of graduates' future prospects, the advanced programmes have enhanced graduate employability and provided students with excellent access to the labour market and/or further study. By 2010, almost all graduates of the advanced programmes were employed and highly evaluated by employers (Hung and Ngan 2011). This is a positive sign, especially in a context where up to 60 per cent of Vietnamese graduates are either unemployed or need re-training (Tran n.d.). Some students even received job offers prior to their graduation. For example, among 35 students of the first cohort of advanced programme in Chemistry at the University of Natural Sciences, five students secured their employment with Japanese companies, ten students received PhD scholarships from Illinois University (USA), five students received PhD scholarships from a Japanese university and some others received scholarships from a French university. All 35 students of this programme have either pursued further education in a foreign institution or worked for an international organization (Hung and Ngan 2011). Despite the recognised impact of the advanced programmes on enhancing graduate capacity and employability, it is important to keep in mind that such impact is at a very small scale level and affects a limited number of students only, as mentioned above. The advanced programmes are only implemented in certain disciplines within selected universities and for selected students within chosen disciplines.

The fact that the project has been carried out for almost 10 years with more participating institutions and programme offerings indicates its positive reception at the sector level. However, concerns have been raised about the long-term quality and sustainability of the advanced programmes.

Firstly, there is again the point that although various advanced programmes have been implemented in many major universities across the country, they target only a very small proportion of the student population (Duong 2009). For example, in 2014, Foreign Trade University accepted 3200 students across its three campuses, of which only 184 students enrolled in the International Economics and International Business Administration advanced programmes.[4] National Economics University

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[4]GD&TD (2014, March 21). ĐH Ngoại thương công bố thông tin tuyển sinh 2014. *Bao moi.* Retrieved from http://www.baomoi.com/DH-Ngoai-thuong-cong-bo-thong-tin-tuyen-sinh-2014/c/13365570.epi

Official website of Foreign Trade University: http://qldt.ftu.edu.vn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=661:thong-bao-im-xet-tuyn-cac-chng-trinh-cht-lng-cao-va-chng-trinh-tien-tin-nm-2014&catid=116:tuyn-sinh&Itemid=249

announced its 2015 admission quota of 4800 students, of which only 220 entered the two advanced programmes, in Finance and Accounting.[5]

Second, even though the advanced programmes target a limited student population and the quality of graduates has been encouraging, the number of enrolments has declined over the years. Universities are struggling to meet their enrolment targets. In the first year of the project, 2006, there were 55 students enrolled in the advanced programmes at the University of Natural Sciences (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City). The following years witnessed a sharp drop of enrolment: 49 students (2007), 33 students (2008), 34 students (2009) and 25 students (2010). Besides, some students dropped midway. For example, the 2006 class started with 55 students but there remained only 36 students in the last year of study (Pham Thinh 2010). Similarly, the number of 2007 class dropped from 49 students in the first year to 33 students in the fourth year. A similar circumstance can also be observed at Hue University. In 2006, the university accepted 30 students to its advanced programmes but only 25 students actually enrolled. In 2009, the enrolment rate was 7 students out of 21 students accepted (Pham Thinh 2010). These are high wastage rates.

There are a number of reasons that explain the decreasing attractiveness of the advanced programmes. Firstly, the entrance English requirement is a great barrier for many students, especially those from provincial and rural areas and who major in the STEM disciplines, which tend to be the focus of the advanced programmes. Secondly, students and their parents do not seem confident about the objectives and the promised outcomes of the advanced programmes, allegedly due to the limited marketing and promotion of the programmes. Thirdly, the advanced programmes appear to be less attractive than joint degree ones with overseas institutions or programmes offered by foreign-invested educational institutions in Vietnam. Most of the current advanced programmes only award Vietnamese domestic degrees to their graduates, while students of joint programmes or foreign-invested programmes can receive an internationally recognised degree from the foreign partner institution. The advanced programmes are less attractive in reputational terms even though the graduation certificates state both in English and Vietnamese that the student has graduated from the advanced programme. Fourthly, the high tuition fee is a great concern for students when considering undertaking the advanced programmes. For example, the tuition fee for the advanced programme at University of Information Technology (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City) in 2013 was 21 million Vietnam Dong (VND) per academic year, Nong Lam University 18–20 million, and Foreign Trade University 25.5 million (Ha Anh 2013), compared to the average tuition of 4–6 million VND per year for students enrolled in regular courses at public higher education institutions (Tran Huynh 2015). High tuition fees creates a great barrier for students from low social and economic backgrounds, as student loans are not yet in place and common for Vietnamese students.

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[5] Official website of National Economics University http://www.thongtintuyensinh.vn/Truong-Dai-hoc-Kinh-te-Quoc-dan_C50_D630.htm#.VfOvrWORKKg

The last point raises equity concerns. The advanced programme model tends to privilege students who are from affluent families, have satisfactory command of English and excellent academic scores. Capable students from rural areas or disadvantaged backgrounds are likely to be excluded from the advanced programmes not just because of cost but because of the standardised selection criteria.

Limited and decreasing student numbers generate a further problem concerning the structure of the programmes. As the advanced curriculum is entirely imported, the programmes' structure must conform to the credit system. However, the limited number of enrolment makes it impossible to strictly follow the credit model (Ministry of Education and Training 2008). This means that students are not able to choose their classes or preferred timetable, except for a small number of electives.

Another frequently reported problem of the advanced programmes is the English ability of the Vietnamese teaching staff and students. Although all universities require English competence as an admission criterion, the level is set low. A TOEFL score of 450, TOEIC score of 450 or IELTS score of 4.0 hardly allows students to carry out a rich conversation, let alone to follow lectures, to participate in class discussions or to conduct high quality written assignments in English. For universities which provide their own English tests such as the National Economics University and Vietnam Maritime University, the exams cover very basic English knowledge, reflecting a low level of command of English (Duong 2009). Regardless of the built-in intensive English courses, the English barrier nevertheless still reduces the quality of students' learning, especially in discipline-specific subjects. In fact, some universities have to arrange extra classes in Vietnamese to support students' comprehension of the content of some challenging modules (Ha Anh 2013).

The fact that all subjects are taught in English means that academics involved in the advanced programmes must have a relatively good command of English. However, that additional requirement for staff poses great difficulties for universities in finding academics who possess both disciplinary expertise and sufficient English competence. Although faculty members are sent overseas for short training courses, often it is still difficult for them to effectively lecture in English. Besides, new teaching methods and assessment system required in the advanced programmes create more challenges for and pressure on teaching staff. Many advanced programmes are reportedly facing difficulties in inviting foreign faculty from the partner institutions, due to the tight schedules of the foreign faculty as well as the very high rate of pay. The typical period of time that foreign faculty can spend at Vietnamese institutions is between 2 and 3 weeks, which is too short a time in which to complete a subject. The cost of inviting an American academic to teach for a typical period of between 2 and 3 weeks ranges from 100 million to 120 million VND, equivalent to a year salary of a Vietnamese academic. The cost of inviting an Asian academic is around 50 or 60 million (Ha Anh 2013). To resolve this problem, MOET has urged the universities to cooperate with each other to arrange course schedules so that a foreign academic can give lectures in several universities during his/her one single business trip (Ministry of Education and Training 2008).

Another problem concerning teaching and learning is the lack of educational resources. As all the textbooks must be imported through importing companies,

which is costly and time-consuming, many universities have not been able to obtain an adequate number of textbooks required for the programmes when required (Department of State and MOET 2009).

Another frequently reported problem facing advanced programmes is funding. According to the project proposal, during the first 3 years from 2008 the programmes received substantial support from the government, with 60 per cent of total expenses funded by government, 25 per cent from student tuition and 15 per cent from other institutional sources (Quang Phuong 2011). The total expense for the first three intakes was 1432 billion VND, of which 860 billion came from the government budget (Ha Anh 2013). However, this government assistance only helped to facilitate the initial stages of the project. From the fourth intake onwards, participating universities had to sustain the advanced programmes. Until 2013, they mainly relied on tuition fees. Tuition had to increase over the years, placing heavy financial burdens on students and creating greater challenges for universities in recruiting students, as discussed. In fact, the average tuition level of 20–30 million VND per academic year is unaffordable for a large proportion of student population. However, even with such a high rate of tuition, universities are still far from being able to fully resource the advanced programmes. Given the decreasing numbers of students enrolling, the Vice President of Ho Chi Minh National University once expressed his concern that "Although the programmes have been set, universities will fail to sustain their advanced programmes if the government terminates the financial support" (Quang Phuong 2011).

Case Studies

University of Technology – Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMUT)

HCMUT's advanced programme in Electrical and Electronic Engineering partnering with Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) of Illinois University – Urbana Champaign (UIUC) is one of the first ten programmes of the "advanced programme" project.

The programme aims to bring about "critical changes in perceptions" and to "boost student creativity" by applying advanced learning technologies from the U.S. partner university (HCMUT 2016a). The programme is expected to equip students with modern professional knowledge and skills, English language as well as informatics and communication literacies so that they are ready for national and global work in the future.

The rationales for HCMUT to partner with UIUC include the American university's high reputation in the field of engineering, the existing relationships between the two engineering departments and between faculty members, the larger number of Vietnamese-Americans in Urbana Champaign and a growing presence of

Vietnamese students studying at UIUC (Gudeman 2008). In August 2008, the two universities signed an agreement that allowed HCMUT to use Illinois's ECE curriculum. Thus, the 'advanced' curriculum at HCMUT fully complies with the American one, with all subjects taught in English. In addition, the agreement also formalises an exchange programme for undergraduates between the universities, providing flexible options for Vietnamese students undertaking the advanced program.

The first option is to undertake the whole 4 year programme at HCMUT. During the first 3 years, students will focus on learning the interdisciplinary foundation knowledge. In the last year, students will be able to choose one of the three majors to study, including Power and Energy System, Communication System and Control Engineering. Upon graduation, they will be awarded the Bachelor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering degree by HCMUT.

The second option involves the opportunity to transfer to a number of foreign partner universities. After completing 2 years at HCMUT, students who are academically and financially eligible, may undertake the last 2 years of study abroad. Remarkably, these foreign partner universities extend beyond the university offering the curriculum, i.e. Illinois University, to include Catholic University of America (CUA), Rutgers University in the USA and the University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia. Students who take this path will receive a bachelor degree issued by the foreign university. This 2 + 2 program helps lessen the financial burden for students, compared to pursuing the whole undergraduate degree abroad, while still providing students with the advantage of obtaining an internationally recognised qualification. However, the two different degree outcomes of these study options would imply a quality in-equivalence between the borrowed curriculum and the original one.

The admission to the HCMUT's advanced programme is based on the students' scores in the National University Entrance exam, the Grade Point Average (GPA) of five semesters at high school and the level of English proficiency. For the academic year of 2015, for example, in order to be accepted to the advanced programme, students must obtain: (i) the total score of 20.0 (out of 30.0) for three subjects of mathematics, physics and chemistry in the National University Entrance Exam (Le Huyen 2015); (ii) the GPA of K10, K11 and first semester of K12 at High school being at least 6.5 (out of 10); and (iii) IELTS (or equivalent tests) score of at least 6.0. If students do not meet the English requirement at the time of application, they will have to take the Pre-University English course (HCMUT 2016a).

During the first 2 years of the implementation of the advanced programme, the courses were taught by strictly recruited Vietnamese professors, who had obtained their qualification from overseas, especially from ECE-UIUC. Since 2007, UIUC professors have travelled to Vietnam to teach.

Despite the fact that students are required to obtain a minimum IELTS score of 6.0, many of them struggle in the first year of studying entirely in English. As a result, the university incorporates an intensive English course, i.e. ENG100 – Engineering Lecture and English for Electrical and Electronics English, into the first year curriculum. Remarkably, this English course, together with Military training (undertaken in semester 1) and Physical Training (undertaken in the first three

successive semesters) do not count toward the total 142 credits of the programme. As mentioned in the previous part, the 'advanced' curriculum stands in isolation from the 'regular' ones except that it also includes a few compulsory courses taught in Vietnamese such as Ho Chi Minh ideology, History of Vietnamese communism and Sciences of Socialism. At HCMUT, each of these subjects accounts for 2 credits. There has been an effort to localise the imported curriculum with the addition of a course about Vietnamese law, i.e. 008001- Introduction to Vietnam law system, into the first year curriculum. However, such local appropriation is minimal and limited to one or some additional courses rather than throughout the whole curriculum.

Cognisant of the programme's financial unattractiveness, i.e. 2016 tuition is 30 million VND per year compared to 6.5 million for the regular programme, the university attends to communicating the advantages of the advanced programme to the students. Emphasis has been placed on the modern and innovative aspects of the programme such as modern classrooms, English medium of instruction, imported textbooks and especially the opportunities of study transfer, post-graduate education and career in the fields of Computer and Information Technology. Upon graduation, advanced programme's students can enjoy various privileges offered by both MOET and partner universities when applying for postgraduate scholarships.

The collaboration between HCMUT and UIUC (and the other universities) can be regarded as an opportunity to renovate the longstanding, old-fashioned model of engineering education that nurtures memorization instead of innovation. It also provides HCMUT with opportunities to increase the capacity of existing faculty through the strengthening connection with UIUC. The recent grant of the Quality assurance of Higher Education Institutions in ASEAN (AUN-QA) for the period 2015–2019 (HCMUT 2016b) is a positive indication of quality improvement which would potentially attract more regional and international students and lecturers to the advanced programme. However, the effect is still too limited to lift the whole institution's capacity for internationalisation and for becoming a world-class university by 2020.

Foreign Trade University (FTU)

Foreign Trade University (FTU)'s advanced programme in International Economics is the first programme in the field approved by MOET via Decision No. 8651/QD-BGD-DT dated 24/12/2008 (Foreign Trade University 2016).

As part of MOET's curriculum development initiative, since 2008 FTU has been in partnership with Colorado State University (CSU) - US to operate the CSU-FTU Vietnam Economics Curriculum Project to internationalise its undergraduate curriculum. During the first 6 years (Phase 1), the project was a multi-dimensional partnership with a substantial share of funding provided by MOET. The success of the first phase enabled its evolution into a long-term self-financed inter-university programme (Phase 2) with formal activities continuing until at least 2019.

As discussed earlier, the neo-colonial approach of the advanced programmes has generally put the programmes at stake in terms of sustainability, feasibility and practicality. However, the advanced program at FTU has overall exhibited a certain degree of flexibility and practicality. This manifests in the program structure which is a combination of International Economics major and Business minor. Besides typical compulsory subjects of the two disciplines such as microeconomics, macroeconomics, development economics, international business transactions, risk management and insurance, etc., a wide range of electives are offered. The addition of a contextually specific subject, Tax and Taxation system-Vietnam, is deemed meaningful in increasing the graduates' work readiness. Moreover, the program incorporate various seminars and talks with businesses as well as internship opportunities brought about by the university's strong alumni and business partner networks, which tackles the long-lasting problem of the disconnect between the curriculum and the actual demands of the labour market. Upon graduation, the type of degree to be awarded depends on where certain parts of the program are undertaken. More specifically, students who study the whole 4 year program at FTU will receive a degree from FTU and a certificate issued by CSU, on which both the major and the minor are clearly stated. Those who spend at least one or two semesters at CSU will be awarded two degrees issued by both universities. This international dimension in FTU's degree awarding policy suggests that graduates' attributes are in accordance with the 'standards' established by the foreign university, thus increasing the credibility and attractiveness of the advanced programme.

Over 8 years, the advance programme has offered various opportunities of study transfer and scholarships to FTU students. More specifically, the two universities have established a program called "FTU-2-CSU" under which FTU students can either combine 3 years at FTU with a final year at CSU, 2 years at each university or 3.5 years at FTU and half a year at CSU. A tuition fee deduction of 8000 USD per year was applied to students who study two semesters at CSU. Even students undertaking only one semester transfer can also enjoy a tuition scholarship of 4000 USD per year. The flexible transfer options and scholarship opportunities have to some extent addressed the practical financial issues faced by current students concerning the cost of overseas study as well as motivated prospective students to consider the advanced programme, given the high tuition fee of 31.5 million VND per academic year. However, while access to the advance programmes in general is limited to a small proportion of students, opportunities of real exposure to an international education environment through study transfer are limited to an even smaller proportion of students who are more socially and economically advantaged. In two academic years 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, for example, there were 30 and 28 transferred students respectively, compared to around 3400 students university-wide (Foreign Trade University 2012).

In terms of faculty exchange, as of December 2013, a total of 58 courses at FTU were lectured by 33 different CSU professors, each of whom also plays a mentoring role for a FTU faculty member being the Teaching Associate. By the same time, there were a total of 34 FTU instructor coming to CSU for 2 month training during which they observed how CSU standard is delivered in terms of both content and

pedagogy and participate in teacher training and curriculum consultation. This has reflected an effort to build upon and to develop the capacity of existing faculty; however, the impacts are still fragmented and on a small scale rather than spreading to other 'regular' programmes and boosting the capacity of the whole institution.

Conclusion

The Vietnamese government has undertaken various reforms to improve the country's higher education. Advanced programmes have been implemented over 10 years with a clear rationale and explicitly articulated objectives. However, the difficulties and challenges still outnumber positive results. Even though the advanced programme is often explicitly referred to as a strategic initiative to internationalise the curriculum, this chapter has shown that the implementation of this programme tends to reflect curriculum borrowing and transposition rather than curriculum internationalisation. The current situation of the advanced programmes suggests that MOET's target of having world-class universities by 2020 is still far from being achieved. It is important to look for ways to tackle the fundamental issues of quality and sustainability so that the advanced programmes will not become, in the final outcome, an unsuccessful project. It is also important to find ways of building constructively on the experience of these programmes, so that their gains can become more widely distributed.

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Chapter 5
Transnational Education in the Vietnamese Market: Paradoxes and Possibilities

Nhai Nguyen

Grace is given of God, but knowledge is bought in the market.

Arthur Hugh Clough (1848)

Introduction

The phenomenon of transnational education (TNE) reflects the current trend of globalisation in education. Since education was extended as a source of service, novel methods of delivering education emerged. In "The General Agreement on Trade in Services" (GATS) the World Trade Organisation (WTO) classifies the modes of international education into cross-border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence and the physical presence of people (WTO 1994). A large number of international students are traversing national borders to pursue higher education. Together with international students, institutions and programmes are potentially mobile worldwide. Transnational education is constructed when institutions and programmes cross borders.

However, TNE has not been researched or documented broadly or deeply. Most of the current research on TNE centres on hotly debated issues of the quality assurance framework (Knight 2010; McBurnie and Ziguras 2001, 2007), the commercialisation of TNE, the regulatory environments (Lim 2011; McBurnie and Ziguras 2001), teaching and learning (McBurnie and Ziguras 2007; Onsman 2010), and the business models of Australian branch campuses (Macaranas 2010). To date, there is little research devoted to other angles of TNE, such as its practices and its impacts on the local societies and the students pursuing offshore degree programmes.

Cited in Clough's work, *The Bothie of Tober-na-vuolich*. Retrieved from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Arthur_Hugh_Clough as of 14 July 2012

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This chapter analyses the TNE market in Vietnam and includes a body of literature, serving as a background for this section. It critically discusses the TNE market structure via attending closely to its built-in characteristics with interlacing layers of power and regulating bodies. Coupled with market structure is the flexible mode of global production and consumption in the TNE market whose interactions between producers and consumers of TNE are conditioned by, and thus conditional to, market relations. The last section discusses paradoxes in the Vietnamese transnational education market.

Transnational Education

Transnational education emerges out of globalisation, and globalisation in higher education, and is seemingly postulated by advances in technology. As early as in the nineteenth century, intellectual debate focused on compression of time and space when steam transportation, specifically the railroad system, was first introduced to the public and later became massified. This advance in transport technology shrunk remarkably the distance between spaces, leading further to changes in different segments of life and social structure. The notion of time-space compression was initially featured in the intellectual work of Henry McClure (1902), entitled *Shortening Time across the Continent.* There was extensive expansion of this debate after 1960, with the notion developed and polularised globally. David Harvey (1990) refers it to any phenomenon that changes the reciprocal qualities and relationship between time and space, whilst Doreen Massey (1994) extends this concept to globalisation and links it with the internationalisation process. She argues that as space and time shrink and merge, it leads to the emergence of cultures and communities. Our perceptions of what constitutes identities of a place are shifted. Multiple layers of histories coalesce together.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) literally defines 'transnational'[1] as nation-states being extended beyond their boundaries or frontiers. In its Latin root, 'trans' denotes beyond, across, crossing or from one state to another. Being compounded, the term 'transnational' suggests the transcendence of state and territory by cross-cutting the nation's border. Thus, it approximates globalisation, which pinpoints time-space compression manifest not only in a variety of TNE modes, but also TNE's dynamics, flexibilities and innovation in higher education.

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[1] The term 'transnational' was first used by R.N. Angell in 1921 to refer to the strength of the European economy which was, literally, trans-national (Online Oxford English Dictionary). This terminology was widely used in the literature on multinational corporations prior to the mid-1990s when it became popularised by the Global Alliance for Transnational Education who applied it in relation to education. Since 2000, this term has been adopted by OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. It generally refers to the international mobility of programmes and institutions. In Australia and New Zealand, the term 'offshore' is often replaced with the term 'transnational' when referring to overseas programmes or branch campus.

'Transnational' is variously constructed as an arena of robust activity across national borders. UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and the Council of European Convention (COEC) in the "Code of Good Practice for the Provision of Transnational Education" define transnational education (TNE) as:

> All types of delivery of higher education study programs, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programs may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system. (UNESCO/ Council of Europe 2000, p. 1)

This definition of transnational education is commended as a comprehensive and significant addition to the existing depiction of TNE. It incorporates awarding institutions together with learners and, additionally, refers to the 'stateless' nature of programmes and, by inference therefore, institutions (Knight 2005a, p. 6). For example, one institution in Australia can deliver an assortment of degree programmes to a number of participating countries, providing the Australian institution complies with local government regulations of the participating countries. Alternatively, the Australian institution can operate independently from any state control by offering online programmes.

However, the definition offered by UNESCO and COEC tends to over-emphasise the essence of TNE from the exporting institutions' perspective, thus fundamentally disengaging local complexities. It seems to squeeze out the 'new types' of providers whose physical presence in the hosting country is established and who have gained permission from the host country to offer 'recognised' qualifications. This perspective effectively dislocates the credentialing institutions from the host country (McBurnie and Ziguras 2007).

Market and Marketisation in Education

The concept of *market* is far from novel, nor is that of *the market in education.* Generally, the concept of a market in education came into existence as the direct result of the drastic policy shift into neoliberalism that promotes the private sector operating in parallel with the public sector, and the corresponding actors, which implicitly informs production and consumption and, by effect, social relations.

In his most influential work, *Markets in Education,* Simon Marginson (1997) offers an 'eagle's eye view' of the conceptualisation of markets in education, with a particular focus on the Australian market. Marginson argues that a market is defined not as a physical place for exchange but a set of behavioural relations. Meanwhile, Kenway and colleagues conceptualise market in education from a different perspective. These scholars advocate that "[the market] is simply a process of exchange between producers and consumers, sellers and buyers" (1995, p. 11). Given this

emphasis on market exchange, these scholars characterise the education market as one identified by competition and choice, whose reciprocal interactions are assumed to enhance its quality and keep prices under control. Arguably, the market can function effectively as "the sum total of purposive (active, informed and goal-directed) individual choices only if it is kept off outside interference" (p. 11).

Related to these productive understandings of markets in education are subordinate concepts, of commercialisation (commodification), privatisation, commodity, commodity fetishism, production, consumption, and education goods. Specifically, Marginson sees the commercialisation of education as "the introduction or extension of one or another characteristic of markets; such as user charges, or competition for public funds previously distributed by formula, or the establishment of a commercial research centre, or the creation of an entrepreneurial management required to increase private income" whereas privatisation is differentiated from commercialisation, as being "the transfer of production, or means of production, from government (public) sector ownership to private ownership" (1997, p. 36). He argues that, in education, the commercialisation of the government sector tends to facilitate privatisation by opening up markets for private institutions to operate in.

In a similar vein, Kenway et al. (1995) argue that commodification is "the movement which turns complex social relationships and processes into objects and inserts them into the sphere of market exchange and/or ascribes to them exchange values" (p. 53). To paraphrase this idea, commodification tends to objectify all complex social relationships and reduce them to market exchange values. Thus, it becomes paramount ontologically and epistemologically in a market society. Such a definition of commodification is therefore useful in identifying the hidden connectivity between market exchange, the core identity of the market society and social relationships.

Apple (2004) directs his critique towards the economic rationalisation of education as commodity. For him, education is converted into an extension of the economic tools for economic prosperity of individuals and societies. As a private good, education privileges certain social groups while excluding others through the act of maximising competitive advantage. To accumulate these competitive advantages, individuals, corporations and governments are thrown into a cycle of education investment and/or return on investment. Understood so, education has performed the economic function so well that it seems to normalise consumption on the one hand, while exoticising such activities on the other.

The above conceptualisation of markets in education, with its core concepts explained in detail and with its useful categorisation of education goods unpacked, is fundamental to, and therefore largely informs my analysis of the TNE market in the following section. As Kenway and colleagues observe: "Markets are invariably imperfect, complex and far from neutral" (1995, p. 35). It is then imperative to extend the discussion beyond conceptualising the education market, to investigate another critical body of literature, concerning TNE market structure and market relations.

TNE Market Structure

While it is true that the market is typified by its behavioural relations, Marginson further explains that market relations and the market structure are mutual and conditional to the existence of one another (1997, p. 29): "Market behaviour cannot be read off market structure. Rather, market structure and behaviour affect each other, and both are necessary if a market is to function". Furthermore, implicit in the literature of postmodernism and the postmodern market is that it is impossible for market relations to arise from nowhere. Market relations are tied to a very specific context, a complex network of inter-related economic, cultural, political and historical determinants (Marginson 1997; Sidhu 2009).

In the mounting complexity of contemporary globalisation and the rise of Asia (particularly China), the TNE market needs to be understood critically in terms of the global-local nexus, taking care not to simplify or romanticise the power of either the local or the global. For the TNE market, now operating in the global arena, the market itself is suppressed by multi-layered powers, no longer reducible to the hand of any single market actor. The winners-take-all rule of the game becomes invalid. Instead, the international education market attracts an array of market actors who are pushed forward to struggle for their individual benefits, to negotiate conflicting benefits and/or to accommodate one another.

In his analysis of the relationship between schooling, market and the auditing culture in the US, Michael Apple (2004) scrutinises the 'odd combination' of marketisation and centralisation of control, a phenomenon emerging not only in the US but around the world. So it is in the case of TNE market. What distinguishes TNE markets from the international education market (albeit they are interrelated), is the way the TNE market is constituted by, and constitutive of, intersecting forces of market components: regulatory bodies, producers, and consumers.

Since the international education market deals primarily with the mobility of international students as pursuers of overseas degrees in a country other than their country of origin, the host countries have absolute power to regulate this type of market. For example, in Australia regulations determining the size and character of the international education market are in line with Australia's immigration laws (Marginson 2011; Marginson and Sawir 2011). Interventions by source countries have very little impact on this market.

In contrast, the TNE market is constructed by more complex power forces. The market relations become more equitable and equal. This is because many regulatory bodies operate in the same pool. Within this pool, importing countries account for the most powerful and important regulatory systems because they can either widen or restrict TNE market access and conditions to selected qualified TNE providers. However, market access is largely reliant on how mature is the TNE market in the host country.

In Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, the market has reached maturity and become a highly selective importing market under tighter government regulations.

Similarly, Vietnam's transnational market, previously perceived to be young, dynamic and 'ripe for picking' by both import and export institutions (OBHE 2005; Mok 2007) is approaching the maturity phase where increasing competition is clearly felt in both public and private higher education sectors.

As an emerging market in the region, the Vietnamese government has embraced internationalisation (see also Hoang et al. 2017; Tran and Marginson 2018; Nguyen and Tran 2017) and transnational education by introducing neoliberal educational policy (Nguyen 2013). For instance, the Decree No.06/CP/2000ND-CP (Vietnam Government 2000) provides the regulatory framework on foreign investment in trade and service including the education and training sector.[2] This Decree officially endorses 'foreign-invested educational establishments' on the condition that such establishments obtain an Investment License, which stipulates the extent, content, objective and time of the training programme. This Decree is further supported by Decree No.18/2001/ND-CP of May 4, 2001, Stipulating the Setting Up and Operation of Vietnam-Based Foreign Cultural and/or Educational Establishments[3] (Ministry of Education and Training 2001). In this way, the Education Law amendment permits for-profit operation of private and foreign education providers in Vietnam (Ministry of Education and Training 2005).

In 2005, the Vietnamese government promoted a five-year strategy for higher education to boost the capacity of the existing system, which seemed to fall short of demand and lacked efficiency (OBHE 2005 December). This strategy aimed to establish more than 100 new higher education institutions by 2010, and expand, to a significant degree, the involvement of foreign and private institutions. The emphasis of this plan showed the particular interest of Vietnam's government in importing transnational education (OBHE 2005). Since the first fully foreign-owned university was licensed, RMIT Vietnam, and the promulgation of the regulatory framework for foreign investment in education, TNE has escalated in both scope and scale. It is geographically located in the country's economic hubs, Hanoi (Vietnam's capital) and Ho Chi Minh City.

These government policy changes meant that a state monopoly of higher education was no longer viable. Private and foreign education providers made their way into the market. In the same year, the government introduced the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA), a comprehensive reform package and its vision for 2020. The HERA specifies the government's ambitious target to promote private education sector, evident by its effort to increase enrolments at private universities and colleges to 40 per cent of total higher education enrolments by 2020 (Harman et al. 2010; Hayden and Lam 2006; Hayden and Lam 2010; Pham 2010).

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[2]The Decree states that "Foreign-invested educational establishments set up and operating in Vietnam must strictly observe prescriptions of the legislations on education and on foreign investment in Vietnam and related provisions of Vietnamese law legislations on education and to foreign investment in Vietnam and related provisions of Vietnamese law." See http://en.moet.gov.vn/?page=8.6&view=4564

[3]See http://en.moet.gov.vn/?page=8.6&view=4563

Apart from the regulatory bodies of importing countries, an exporting country like Australia has a number of legal bodies. Australia's include the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 1992, the Code of Ethical Practices in the Provision of Education to International Student (AVCC 2005), professional association accreditation, institutional self-review processes, national protocol for quality assurance in higher education and the Australian Quality Framework abbreviated as AQF (AQF 2013), which used to be Australian University Quality Assurance (AUQA) agency, and which underpins regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for educational and training(apart from independent consultancy agencies, for example, NSW ICAC (New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption).

Flexible Mode of Global Production and Consumption

In her doctoral thesis, *Selling Western dreams: Australian transnational education in Vietnam market and the Vietnamese students' identities*, Nguyen (2013) indicated the correlation between postmodern market and TNE market. Following analysis, the TNE market features "fragmented niche markets, general flexible machinery, multiskilled workers, 'human relations' management strategy, decentralised local or plant-level bargaining, geographically concentrated new industrial districts, flexible specialist communities" (see Kenway et al. 1995, p. 44).

Consequently, education is 'restructured' and 'repositioned' and becomes "less a force for reproducing the social relations necessary for the capitalist economy and more closely aligned to the production itself" (Kenway et al. 1995, p. 45). Subsequently, there has been intensified international competitiveness, which has drenched educational institutions and their students. Kenway and colleagues note that there is growing emphasis on 'really useful knowledge' (especially that of mathematics, science, technology, commerce, business studies and Asian languages) that 'serves and expands the market economy', and for which education institutions and students have been striving, consuming them with a great deal of both effort and finance. Ball (1990) adds that education is dramatically shifted away from mass production and mass markets to niche market and flexible specialisation. This is particularly true for TNE market in Vietnam.

For instance, TNE adds various appendices to the traditional form of education delivery via the specific modes it tenders. As noted above, in GATS, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) classifies the service trade into four major categories (WTO 1994). Mode 1 refers to *cross-border supply mode* which consists of distance education (e-learning) and franchising courses or degrees without necessarily requiring the physical movement of the consumer or provider. Mode 2 centres on *consumption abroad* in which consumers cross their border to the country of the provider to consume goods or service. So, this mode portrays the traditional mobility of international students. Mode 3 describes the *commercial presence* of the service providers who establish their facilities in another country, such as branch

campuses and joint ventures with local institutions. Mode 4 concentrates on the *presence of natural persons*, involving professors or researchers who, for the interim, travel to another country to provide educational services (Altbach and Knight 2007; Cunningham 2000; Larson and Nielson 2004; Naidoo 2009; Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). This typology serves as the basis for further development of TNE classification.

Anthony Welch (2010, 2011a, b) interrogates the blurring of borders emerged out of the Australian TNE (ATNE) phenomenon, which, argues the author, vigorously engages Australian HEIs in delivering TNE service outside of Australian borders, especially in South East Asia. Taking RMIT Vietnam as a useful showcase, the author argues that while RMIT University operates as a public HEI in Australia, its branch campus in Vietnam – RMIT International University, Vietnam – is a private higher education institution. Welch (2011a, b) emphasises the delivery of consultancy abroad, the critical initial stage which has assisted some Australian HEIs in gaining currency and legitimacy in the overseas local market. RMIT University Australia is considered to be ahead of the game via their strategic delivery of consultancy in Vietnam. The author concludes "it is not just cross borders that is important here, but also the blurring borders – both geographical and sectoral" (Welch, personal communication, February 3, 2014).

Precisely, the model is dependent upon programme mobility. The most common modalities of TNE (Adams 1998; Knight 2005a, b; Naidoo 2009) comprise the following elements:

Franchising

Grant McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) define franchising as an arrangement whereby an institution/provider in source country A authorises a provider in another country, B, to deliver their course/programme/service in country B or other countries. Franchising is very often a profit-making, commercial arrangement and is the most extensive form of international outsourcing in higher education. The exceptional feature of this mode of delivery is that franchising universities often have minimal involvement in curriculum, assessment moderation and quality assurance. Paramount to franchising and transnational agreement between Australian HEIs and commercial partners is that Australian institutions have full execution and control over the quality assurance process involving their strict moderation of assessment and the delivery of their prescribed curriculum (AVCC 2005; Lim 2011).

In Vietnam, franchising manifests in the form of a strategic alliance or partnership between an Australian institution and a Vietnamese local partner, being either a Vietnamese higher institution, a local company, private college or a professional association (see also Hoang et al. 2017).

McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) suggest franchising presents an exceptionally attractive research site. This is because TNE is commonly perceived as paradoxical but promising, with potentially growing levels of enrolment due to escalating

unmet demand for higher education in Vietnam. This demand is caused by the limited capacity of local suppliers and the incomprehensible nature of available educational product packages. On one hand, franchising boosts the international expansion of Australian institutions, providing lower-cost programmes for offshore international students. On the other hand, franchising poses numerous risks for all partners. Hence, it creates a multiplicity of 'push-pull' forces for both the exporting Australian institutions and importing Vietnamese partners and its student-customers. This stimulates curiosity about the impact of Australian franchising programmes and their expounded value on the identity formation of their Vietnamese student-customers.

Twinning

In a twinning (or joint-degree) programme, an Australian institution collaborates with an institution located in Vietnam to develop a linked system (articulation). This articulation system grants greater flexibility to local students by allowing them to take course credits in Australia and/or in Vietnam. The system consists of two phases of study. In the first phase, students can study at a Vietnamese institution accredited or franchised by the Australian institution. Students accumulate credits for their study which lead to the option of transferring their study location from Vietnam to the Australian institution's campus in Australia. If not, they can finish their remaining study phase in Vietnam and obtain credits to be admitted to that Australian institution. However, only one qualification is awarded by either the institution in Vietnam or the Australian partner.

This type of programme is introduced typically in the form of '1 + 2', '2 + 1', '2 + 2' or '3 + 1' or '1 + 3',[4] 1.5 + 0.5 which means Vietnamese students spend the first phase of studying in their home country (the length of the phase depends on the mutual arrangement between the Vietnamese and Australian partners) and then transfer to the host institution in Australia in their second phase (OBHE 2008a; Hoang et al. 2017). Often, the Vietnamese partner has a number of twinning programmes with not only Australian institutions but also with other institutions worldwide, offering a variety of choices to their student-customers. These alternatives give students the chance to change their programme to another if, for example, they fail to qualify for their preferred programme or if there are not enough students enrolling in that programme for it to proceed. Hoang et al. (2017) in Chap. 2 take one step further by examining the distribution of these programs based on source regions. These scholars conclude that three major source regions in order of ranks are Europe, Asia and North America. Meanwhile, Australia and New Zealand rank the fourth as a source provider of joint and twinning programs in Vietnam.

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[4] Referring to the number of years spent at each location, e.g. '2 + 2' = 2 years in Vietnam followed by 2 in Australia

There is a parallel growth in twinning and franchising. However, there are limited accessible, up to date, official and comprehensive statistics on these modes of TNE delivery in Vietnam. According to Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (2008a) Vietnam's government has approved the development of many twinning (2 + 1) programmes in collaboration with foreign institutions. Australia reports it has nine institutions involved, delivering 36 programmes ranging from undergraduate to postgraduate levels (OBHE 2004). As well as Australia, other countries have entered this playing field. For instance, Hanoi University of Technology is delivering joint-degree programmes with Belgium (1), France (8), Germany (1), Singapore (2), and the US (1). The International School, Vietnam National University, is launching their joint-degree programmes with the UK, Canada, the US, France, Australia, Malaysia, and China.[5] On 14 September 2012, the Vietnam International Education Department under the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, reported 205 joint-degree programmes currently licensed by MOET, with 184 joint-degree programmes under operation, 15 programmes suspended and six programmes terminated. There are 70 Vietnamese institutions (mostly higher education ones) engaging in this type of partnership.[6]

While the student-customers are swamped with abundant options and back-up plans offered by the Vietnamese partners, there are certain adverse risks implied for all related stakeholders. Malpractices (e.g. lower-entry requirements to maximise enrolments, soft marking, lenient assessment moderation and ill-regulated quality assurance) and ambiguous contract agreements between the exporting and importing institutions may well jeopardise the market standing and reputations of both partners. These malpractices create 'dodgy' weaknesses in which student customers become victims. Worryingly, these programmes sometimes become known as part of a 'sheep-shearing'[7] industry. Metaphorically, the sheep (students) naively come into the programme to be shorn (by both local Vietnamese and Australian professionals) and subsequently cast aside. This presents an extremely interesting site: full of dilemmas, contradictions and 'nightmares' of Australian TNE practices in Vietnam that contrast strongly with the glossy and glitzy advertising.

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[5] See http://www.is.vnu.edu.vn

[6] See http://www.tinmoi.vn/205-chuong-trinh-lien-ket-dao-tao-duoc-bo-gddt-cap-phep-101049214.html 12/10/2012

[7] The metaphor, 'sheep-shearing' is interestingly discussed in the book entitled *Financial Repression: A Sheep Shearing Instruction Manual* written by Daniel Amercan (2011). He notes (ibid) "You and I, along with the rest of the savers and investors of the world are the sheep, and the goal of Financial Repression is to shear as much savings from us as the governments can, year after year, without triggering excessive unrest, and while keeping us producing the resources that can be politically redistributed." (retrieved from the website: http://www.financialsense.com/contributors/daniel-amerman/financial-repression-a-sheep-shearing-instruction-manual)

Branch Campus

A branch campus is a subsidiary or satellite campus established by a source country's education institution in a host country to deliver the source country's education programmes. Branch campuses can be established either through wholly owned subsidiaries or via joint venture partnerships with local host country partners. Australian institutions seem to be keen on promoting their international image by setting up offshore campuses. For example, Monash University has established branch campuses in Malaysia in 1998 and in South Africa three years later in 2001, RMIT University has branch campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, in Vietnam, and Swinburne University of Technology has a branch campus located in Sarawak, Malaysia.

According to Slaughter and Leslie (1999), motives behind the physical appearance of an institution overseas are two-fold (see McBurnie and Ziguras 2007): setting up a branch campus is not purely profit-driven. The benefits of branch campuses are a combination of maximizing revenues and enhancing the image of the institution in the international market. For long-standing institutions, a branch campus adds considerable substance to its image and ambitions in the global arena: it is an 'add-on' to the high profile of the institution. It represents the institution's outreach to the global community as well as signifying its Internationalising activities in higher education, regardless of time-space compression.

Taking the argument of Slaughter and Leslie further, McBurnie and Ziguras make a critical comment that the ethical commitment of the institution towards boosting regional and international community development is publicised by the offshore campus in such a way that its presence moves beyond a market enterprise to a 'de facto aid project'. For example, RMIT University branch campuses in Vietnam (RMIT International Vietnam) are consistently committed to contributing to the host nation's capacity building by generously offering scholarships (for both undergraduates and postgraduates) to enhance the quality of human resources in Vietnam.[8] To date, RMIT International Vietnam has offered nearly 600 scholarships to Vietnamese citizens out of its total 6500 students (approaching 10 per cent of the total number of students). This is in addition to its incentive tuition scheme available only to local Vietnamese students. Taking a different tack, Monash University poured in AUD 55 million between 2001 and 2005 to recover the mounting losses of its branch campus in South Africa, shoring it up as existing ostensibly to provide education in a 'needy' nation[9] (McBurnie and Ziguras 2007).

Vietnam has seen the secure establishment of offshore campuses including RMIT Vietnam, Thailand's Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), the US Roger Williams University campus, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP), and the International College of IT (Information Technology) and Management (OBHE 2004; OBHE 2005; OBHE 2008a).

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[8] See http://www.rmit.edu.vn/about-rmit-vietnam

[9] One unsuccessful examples of ba ranch campus, UNSW Singapore, was calculated to have cost the institution around $30 million (see Jarvis and Welch 2011)

RMIT Vietnam, a branch campus of RMIT Australia, first obtained its investment license in 2000 and has grown to now have around 7000 students who are trained mainly in the disciplines of business, accounting and finance and information technology. Thailand's Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) established a multinationally funded specialist institution in Vietnam in 1993. It has since opened its second campus (at the cost of US $20 million) to accommodate 3000 more students, and its third campus is reported to be on track. In 2005, an overseas campus of the US-based Roger Williams University (RWU[10]) erected its first non-profit, offshore campus in Hanoi with an initial intake of 500 and an expectation to increase its intake to 6000 in five subsequent years (OBHE 2005 December). It offered a variety of programmes ranging from high school, undergraduate and pre-Master certification. Another branch campus is the British University Vietnam[11] (BUV), established in 2009. A US branch campus, the International College of IT and Management (whose parent university is Troy State University), was set up in cooperation with Coventry and Hertfordshire Universities in the UK (OBHE 2005 December).

Besides the partners from Australia, US and the UK, Vietnam has collaborated with France, a traditional and historically-influential partner, to grant an investment license. A bilateral agreement was signed between the French and Vietnamese governments to open multiple campus business schools in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in 2006. The French Vietnam Centre for Business Administration (CFVG) instigated a Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP) offering two-year business programmes in French and targeting Vietnamese working professionals who seek to upgrade their entrepreneurial skills (Welch 2011b).

Additionally, according to OBHE (2008 October), South Korea's Seoul National University planned to open an offshore campus in Vietnam, offering courses in Korean culture, language, business administration, and IT at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Meanwhile, Germany became a new TNE provider opening the first German university in South East Asia in Ho Chi Minh City, offering undergraduate degrees in civil and electrical engineering and Master degrees in business and health care. This new institution set a target of 3000 students by 2020 (OBHE 2008 October). Apollo University was granted an investment license in March 2008. It provides courses in commerce, accounting, finance and banking, and English[12] (The University of London 2008). With its partnership with the University of London, it offers full degrees in these programmes. Apollo University has its premises in Hanoi and aims to enrol 3000 students by 2020.

International exchange activities, including offshore campuses, twinning and franchises, are progressing at a considerable pace. On 5 December 2005, the Dutch government, sharing the Vietnamese government's concern over quality assurance of higher education, allocated €5.5 million to two projects in an effort to improve the quality of tertiary education. The first project commenced in collaboration between six Dutch universities and eight Vietnam institutions to offer teacher train-

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[10] RWU is a university in Bristol, New England

[11] See http://dantri.com.vn/c25/s25-649773/dai-hoc-anh-quoc-vn-ghi-dau-an-trong-moi-quan-he-giao-duc-anh-viet.htm 09/10/2012; see also: http://www.buv.edu.vn/vi/xet-tuyen-dai-hoc.html

[12] See http://www.ngoisao.net/News/Du-hoc/2008/03/3B9C3C7D/)

ing programmes, to develop new curricula more responsive to the labour market. The second project supports the establishment of quality assurance centres at five universities in Vietnam, albeit limited to public institutions (OBHE 2005 January). Subsequently, the Netherland Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education (NICHE) allocated €13 million in 2010 to Vietnam towards curricula development, teaching methodologies and quality assurance.[13] OBHE (2010a, Issue 198, emphasis added) reports that: "As NICHE focuses especially on capacity development and the needs of the labour market, the financial assistance is expected to concentrate on Vietnam's local labour market needs via *specialised knowledge from the Netherlands*".

Apart from franchising, branch campuses and twinning programmes, other modes of TNE include double/joint degree, articulation, virtual or distance learning. Although these modes are not included as part of my research agenda, it is still important to mention them so as to gain a general picture of all the TNE modes.

Double/Joint Degree

Analogous to twinning programme, a double or joint degree programme is an arrangement whereby institutions in different countries collaborate to offer a programme in the host country. The students pursuing these types of programmes can receive a qualification from each institution or a joint award from the collaborating providers at the end of the programme. Normally this is based on an academic exchange model, not a commercial model. But this is changing and becoming more commercially driven, especially in the case of MBA programmes.

Articulation

Similar to twinning, articulation includes various types of linking arrangements between institutions in different countries which permit students to gain credit for courses or programmes offered/delivered by collaborating institutions.

Virtual/Distance Learning

Virtual or distance learning is an attribute of TNE whereby the education provider from a source country delivers the education service to students in a host country via a communication interface (usually via post and/or Internet-based solutions). The students self-direct the learning process, within the framework of learning programme and assessment requirements.

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[13] See   http://www.mpi.gov.vn/portal/page/portal/mpi_en/32343?pers_id=417323&item_id=9564835&p_details=1

Even though there has been a proliferation of foreign providers offering distance or online programmes, it is hard to obtain an accurate assessment of foreign online/distance learning in Vietnam. This is because to date, there have been limited documents released by Vietnamese and Australian governments reporting accurate statistics of Vietnamese students enrolling in Australian higher education offshore degree programmes, except for DIISRTE's (2012) account of Vietnamese students in the VET (vocational education and training) sector.

Corporate Programmes

Corporate programmes exist in addition to university-oriented TNE modalities. Some major multinational corporations have their own higher education institutions or programmes of study. They offer qualifications that might not necessarily be affiliated with any national education system.

With regard to responsibilities, Australian institutions are in charge of curriculum, teaching assessment and quality assurance whereas their local partners are mainly responsible for financial administration, recruitment, marketing and advertising and the provision of the study location (Adams 2007; McBurnie and Ziguras 2007; Miliszewska 2009). In the case of the branch campus, source institutions have full autonomy to run their standardised curriculum and assessment across both onshore and offshore campuses and hold full responsibility for marketing, recruitment, finance and the study premises. Local governments, international organisations and partner institutions have been actively participating in the quality assurance of Australian TNE programmes although Australian institutions bear the main responsibility.

Paradoxes of TNE in Vietnam

Challenges still await the local and international TNE regulatory bodies. Prominently, lack of transparency and corrupt practices in higher education in Vietnam remain commonplace (Chow and Dao 2013; McCornac 2012; World Bank 2013a), holding back the education system while presenting numerous difficulties for regulatory parties in the battle against legal issues of quality control, finance transparency and consumer rights. In 2012 a world survey on corruption in education conducted by the Global Transparency Education Network (GTEN) reports nearly half of Vietnamese research participants perceive their education sector to be 'corrupted' or 'highly corrupted'. The World Bank (2013b, p. 5), in its publication on Vietnam titled *Corruption from the Perspectives of Citizens, Enterprises and Public Officials*, comments "Corruption is now one of the most serious problems that draws the attention of nearly everyone... It is like the tip of the iceberg on the sea." In a word, corruption practices and intransparency illustrate clearly difficulties of regulations of the phenomenon by the Vietnamese government and its regulatory bodies.

The scandalous Bachelor and Master of Business and Administration (MBA) degree programs, involving the Educational Technology Centre (ETC), Vietnam National University and Griggs University and International Academy in 2012, generated serious public attention and thus, public concern over the quality, corrupt practices and legal risks in this TNE market. The scandal went viral and was subsequently covered widely in national and regional media and publication outlets in Vietnam (Tuoi Tre News 2012).

Public criticism was directed towards the bending of admission requirements, the soft marking, and the unregulated, unqualified university partner, that is, Griggs University and International Academy. It was further investigated by the Vietnamese Governmental Inspector in the same year. The findings embarrassed the public as it was reported there had been over 2000 MBA students between 2008 and 2010, even those with their MBA degree conferred, who were the victims of these malpractices. Their degree was unrecognised by the Governmental Inspector's Report (Tuoi Tre News 2012).

Upon investigating 118 twinning programs between 94 foreign providers and 18 Vietnamese universities, the Inspector also confirmed that out of 20 twinning programs at Hanoi National University, 16 failed to provide sufficient documents to verify the legal status of the partner institutions.

Another finding shocked the public. It was reported that the VND 177.8 billion (an equivalence of $8.12 million) had been transferred to Griggs University through a third-party bank account in Singapore, though these transfer documents did not have legal signatures of the person-in-charge, and more worsening, Griggs University completed only 30–40 per cent of what had been agreed in their cooperation agreement (Tuoi Tre News 2012).

The dilemmas is, corruption is not only associated with import countries like Vietnam. International education exporters including Australian institutions are under severe public scrutiny. This is because there are detrimental gaps conducive to corruption and visible legal risks associated with their campuses and activities operated interstate or overseas. For instance, Besser et al. (2015) reveal in their article titled *Universities embroiled in foreign student 'feeding frenzy' driven by corrupt middlemen* published with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation website that an average of $250 million was paid by Australian institutions to dodgy middlemen although these intermediary agencies had bad reputations for corruption and document fraud.

This shocking issue was further exposed by a Four Corners investigation that found that education agents in China, authorized by Australia's first-tier universities such as Sydney, Melbourne and the Australian National University, had been caught submitting fraudulent documents. In fact, the commissions identified in one university annual report was defined as an "aggregate figure", as admitted by Richard Davis, James Cook's spokesman. He stated that: "A very small portion of that $19M is agent commissions. The exact figure is commercial-in-confidence".[14]

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[14] Source: abc.net.au

This dilemma is also elaborated in a report released by the NSW ICAC (New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption) in 2013, entitled *Learning the Hard Way.* The report raises similar issues in capability gaps in relation to international students onshore and its linkages with corruption (ICAC 2013). Risks and gaps, are more intense in the offshore market, encompassing nepotism in offshore campuses, menace of intellectual property loss to the local partners, the "unwitting involvement in offshore bribery" and academic misconduct which involve both academic staff and offshore students. The situation is precisely remarked by the ICAC: "These problems have been costly and, when made public, embarrassing" (ICAC 2013, p. 12).

Given that opportunities for higher education providers in Vietnam arise from the huge number of school leavers wanting to pursue higher education, there is an increasing tension between the demand side (i.e. the rapid increase in the number of school-leavers) and the supply side (i.e. the difficulties within Vietnam higher education.) Paradoxically, it is no longer only a matter of system capacity falling well below demand (as occurred the pre-2010 period), but, additionally, the predicament of the masses of higher education providers (ranging from private semi-public to public higher institutions). This has led to, borrowing Marx's term, 'commodity fetishism' in the higher education market. Both public and private institutions are racing against each other to recruit students: otherwise, they will be either left behind or, worse, collapse under severe market competition. Hoang Tuy (2009) expresses his concern over the realities of higher education commercialisation which has become more visible in Vietnam than ever before.

The reality of marketisation of Vietnam's higher education has painted a totally contradictory picture over the past three years. As private universities flourish (Ngo 2006; Pham and Fry 2002; Welch 2011a, b), recruitment quota[15] allocated to public universities relax and a massive introduction of high-demand programmes occurs, universities across public and private sectors have been struggling to recruit students. Some universities have been forced to abandon their programmes due to insufficient enrolments.[16] In contrast, never before have students been inundated with such an abundance of acceptance letters sent by universities, colleges, or private universities,[17] although this has led to rumours in the mass media and a negative public discussion about softening entry requirements by universities and colleges.

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[15] See http://tuyensinh.dantri.com.vn/c704/s704-619725/xet-tuyen-dh-cd-2012-thi-sinh-mung-truong-lo.htm 17/07/2

[16] See: http://hanoimoi.com.vn/newsdetail/Tuyen-sinh/556290/nhieu-chi-tieu-nhung-khong-de-tuyen.htm 14/08/2012

   See also: http://kenhtuyensinh.vn/chat-vat-tuyen-sinh-nhu-truong-ngoai-cong-lap 27/09/2012

[17] In 2010, it was reported that each school graduate in Dac So precinct, Hoai Duc province, Hanoi received an average of ten acceptance letters from universities and colleges. Some of these universities and colleges were completely strange to the student and their family. See Dan Viet online: *Crisis of Universities' Acceptance Letters and Paradoxes* 16/08/2010 http://danviet.vn/11880p1c28/loan-giay-bao-nhap-hoc-va-nhung-chuyen-bi-hai.htm.

   See also http://kenhtuyensinh.vn/giay-bao-trung-tuyen-ua-ve-nha-thi-sinh 23/08/2012 and http://vtc.vn/thethao/200-344077/the-thao/loan-nhu-cai-cho-hoc-dai-van-vao-dai-hoc.htm 10/08/2012

In the meantime, the quality problems of Vietnam's higher education remain unsolved. These tribulations have fuelled a boiling debate amongst academia, government sectors, and international organisations (e.g., WB and UNESCO) as well as causing public concerns. Arguably, the problems lie in an out-dated curriculum, poor teaching quality, overload of the content, theoretically-based knowledge and disengagement with practical job skills, soft skills and life skills[18] (Tran et al. 2014; Nguyen and Tran 2017), producing low quality graduates (Welch 2011a).

Conclusion

The discussion so far paints a clear picture of Vietnam's transnational education predicament. As shown, the scenarios of this market present opportunities on the one hand and threats on the other hand to all TNE providers. Opportunities occur in Vietnam's higher education market that is growing comparatively rapidly. There is still huge market demand for high quality education products. Spaces for TNE providers are there, lucrative but risky[19] in the sense that the Vietnamese TNE market, despite its escalation in both scope and scale, is approaching the maturity phase. This is evidenced by the intense competition from local higher education providers, both top-tier Vietnamese universities and private institutions. Correspondingly, a generation of Vietnamese consumers are becoming more critical (and selective) of available higher education choices and accessibility. It could be said that, in contemporary Vietnam, as Karan Khemka (2012) concludes, the "TNE market was 'rational' and that students purchased value".

The focus of this chapter has been on the deconstruction of the market structure and market relations in the Transnational Education (TNE) market in Vietnam, known to be controversy-rich and data-poor. Conceptualising transnational education is imperative since it assists a deeper theoretical understanding of the TNE phenomenon. Throughout the chapter discussion, it has become clear that the concept of transnational education is value-laden and implies hidden links with the broader context of globalisation and globalisation in education. It is connected to global time-space compression and aspects of innovation in education. Understanding these connotations of TNE, therefore, becomes useful for further deconstruction of the TNE market which hinges on a different market structure and relations when compared with the onshore international market. Two instances of adverse risks residing in the TNE market in Vietnam and the extent to which they have negatively

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[18] Insights from university graduates highlight their disappointment and dissatisfaction with the training quality of their university. See *The Vietnamese Youth's Disappointment of Vietnam Higher Education Quality* 11/09/2012 http://vnexpress.net/gl/xa-hoi/giao-duc/2012/09/noi-buon-cua-ban-tre-ve-giao-duc-viet-nam/

[19] Associated risks include corruption, fraud, unlicensed and illegal programmes, etc. See: http://www.tinmoi.vn/bat-nhao-chuong-trinh-lien-ket-dao-tao-08619366.html 14/10/2011, http://www.tinmoi.vn/lien-ket-dao-tao-nuoc-ngoai-toi-nguoi-hoc-linh-du-10706765.html 04/01/2012, and http://www.tinmoi.vn/nhap-nhang-lien-ket-dao-tao-nguoi-hoc-chiu-thiet-10937590.html 21/06/2012.

affected both local Vietnamese and Australian institutions suggest the pivotal role of agency of these actors, and how agency is played out in their battle, in which they juggle not only for increasing international competitiveness, market share and revenues, but also for sustainable growth and legal and ethical compliances. Such recognition of agency seems, unfortunately, to be either under-researched or negligent in TNE practices and the research literature.

Approaching the TNE market from a different angle, that is, from a postmodern market perspective, may blow fresh air into the current TNE research parlance and discourse. The TNE market should not be reduced to a superficial analysis of market structures as is commonly done in recent research. Rather, the inquiry must be extended to a critical discourse of market relations where hidden connectivities, complexities and its unique characteristics set it apart from other types of market. It is therefore necessary to highlight that the TNE market has its own unique features. These are linked with the power forces of various market actors, that combine formulate the multi-layered structure of the TNE market, a structure that is not governed by one single market power. It is perceived as a site of resistance, negotiation and appropriation for all stakeholders partaking in this type of market. Discourses of the logic and structure of this market thus extend far beyond any simplistic assumptions made in relation to it.

Overall, the policy context in which TNE operates is multifaceted and remains under-researched. It is often typified by market structure and market relations. Essentially, market relations are even more complex and intricate than the manifestation of market structure. Market relations are often implicit, obscured, transformative and dynamic. It is not easy to expose these subtle connections without adequate critical discourse analysis devoted to distilling what conditions market relations operate under and how these conditions transform market relations at a deeper level. Further, analysis is required to determine how market relations actually drive the process of education production and consumption, as well as oversee their internal reciprocities.

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Chapter 6
Impacts of International Organizations on Vietnam's Higher Education Policy: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Diep-Ngoc Tran

Introduction

International organizations have become vital players in the sphere of global higher education (Shahjahan 2012). Their role goes beyond that of a mere policy advisor. Rather, international organisations are seen very active in seeking to penetrate their agendas into a nation's policy (Henry et al. 2001; Leuze et al. 2008). This leads to an increased interest in understanding the process in which international and national forces interact, and the outcomes as a result of such interaction. This chapter serves to contribute to this body of knowledge. More specifically, it examines the extent to which international organizations have impacted Vietnam's higher education.

Since *Đổi Mới*, the country's education reforms have received enormous attention from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Bank. Recently, it has seen the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a regional active player in secondary education, become more engaged in Vietnamese higher education. They intervene through large-scale projects that address a wide range of issues with various scopes. The scopes range from four-year undergraduate training to vocation-oriented training to lifelong learning. Each has different entry points: from macro-level issues such as policy, governance, finance and the regulatory framework to micro level issues such as faculty's research capacity, institutional governance and autonomy, to name a few.

With such an influx of interventions, it is important to comprehend how these external forces have been injected into the system, how the system has absorbed or reacted to them, and what impacts have accordingly been created. This chapter will elaborate on these issues. To start with, it reviews each organization's agendas and

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their underpinned drivers and rationales. The organisations will be compared and contrasted as applicable. It will then look at the extent to which these organizations have managed to impose their agendas on Vietnam's higher education policy. It will discuss key aspects of the organizations' agendas. Then it will examine the World Bank's the Second Higher Education Project as an example on how the internal and external players interact in a specific context.

Theories of implementation serve as a basis to account for external influences that have not yet been fully integrated into Vietnam's system. Data have been collected from the official sites of the World Bank, ADB and UNESCO. From the World Bank, these data include project documents, progress reports, evaluations and final reports of the First Higher Education Project, Second Higher Education Project, the Higher Education Development Policy Program, and project documents of the on-going New Model University Project. In relation to the ADB, there are documents relating to RMIT University, its Higher Education Sector Development Project, which has now joined the World Bank's New Model University Project, and its archives of education-related projects in Vietnam. The materials from UNESCO consist of its strategic documents and reports by the national office in Vietnam. Additionally, personal communication with a key member of the Teaching and Research Innovation Grant Management Unit under the Second Higher Education Project at Vietnam National University, Hanoi provides insightful viewpoints about impacts at grassroots level.

A Theoretical Snapshot

The work of implementation theory began in the late 1960s in the United States. At the time, mainstream theories of public policy analysis, which focused on the rationality, process and timing of policy, failed to explain how and why a number of programs fell short of their promised results despite their articulate theories and well defined objectives. Since the publication of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), the study of public policy has recognised implementation as a key element to maximize the success of a policy. Jenkins (1978, p. 203) defines the study of policy delivery as

> A study of implementation is a study of change: how change occurs, possibly how it may be induced. It is also a study of the micro-structure of political life; how organizations outside and inside the political system conduct their affairs and interact with one another; what motivates them to act in the way they do, and what might motivate them to act differently.

For a long time, the rational or top-down model prevailed. This model views implementation as a chain of command that gets people to do what they are told. The model thus emphasises the capacity of an organization to coordinate and control. Hood (1976), one of the three authors of this top-down model looks at implementation as an 'army-like' organization where all the commands are conducted with absolute obedience. Based on Hood's ideas of five conditions for perfect

implementation (1976), Gunn (1978) expands these conditions into ten pre-conditions that form a framework for inquiry into implementation. Half of these conditions are particularly relevant to the discussion of this chapter:

1. There is a single implementation agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success. If other agencies must be involved the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance.
2. There is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved; and these conditions persist throughout the implementation process.
3. In moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant.
4. There is perfect communication among, and coordination of, the various elements or agencies involved in the program.
5. Those in authority can demand and obtain perfect obedience.

This top-down model is criticized for putting too much emphasis on the commander while neglecting the role of those at the front line, the bureaucrats. As Davis (1969, p. 4) expresses it: "A public officer has discretion wherever the effective limits on his power leave him free to make a choice among possible courses of action and inaction". Therefore, viewing implementation as control over a process and of people's obedience can hardly lead to effectiveness. Rather, implementation, as suggested by bottom-uppers, should be considered as a series of human interactions in dealing with a policy. Thus effective implementation involves a process of negotiation and consensus-building. These processes are influenced by the management skills and cultures of the organizations involved in the implementation and the political environment in which they work.

The bottom-up model is further enhanced by the viewpoint of implementation as a political game in which "self-interest" influences and directs how interested people play. As Bardach (1977, p. 56) argues in his book *The Implementation Game,* implementation is a game "of bargaining, persuasion, and manoeuvring under conditions of uncertainty".

Implementation theories will guide the flow of this chapter. International organizations and national institutions are outside and inside players, interacting in the political system to shape the country's higher education landscape. Understanding each party's positions, interests and bargaining powers is the first step to make sense of how they play. In the next section, the chapter paints a comparative picture of the motivation of three international organizations to intrude in Vietnam's higher education.

International Organisations and their Penetration into Vietnamese Higher Education

UNESCO – Standard Setter and Knowledge Broker in Regional Higher Education Issues

UNESCO is the only United Nations organisation that is directly concerned with education. In the first higher education policy paper (1995) it positioned itself as an informing higher education policy body by supplying data, analyses and monitoring trends. It has created UNESCO Institute for Statistics that serves to collect and provide comparative statistics on higher education systems at international level (Mundy and Madden 2009). It also has regional centres which facilitate discussion among government and scholars on higher education issues of mutual interest. The UNESCO's Office in Bangkok plays a role as Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, providing technical assistance, policy advice and capacity development for country members including Vietnam.

As stated in its mandate "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information" (UNESCO 1945), UNESCO, specifically its higher education division, fosters regional networks and cross-border policy exchange through sponsoring forums about conflict or emergent global issues. Since the early 1990s, UNESCO has been working to create regional networks in which Southeast Asia countries gather to discuss challenges in their higher education sector. One example is the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization[1] (SEAMEO), of which Vietnam is a country member. UNESCO has funded SEAMEO's conferences and travel costs to enable government officials of ASEAN countries to attend. Additionally, it supports the creation of a mechanism for credit transfer across regions, such as across Europe, the Caribbean and now ASEAN. The organization's interest in regionally influential projects is shared by the ADB, despite differences in underlying motivations. This will be elaborated further under the discussion of the ADB.

An important influential role of UNESCO upon global education policy is to set standards through regional conventions ratified by 100 member nation-states (UNESCO 2004). These conventions are about recognition of qualifications, which are legally binding and thus enables cross-border transfer in a region such as Europe or ASEAN in the foreseeable future. The establishment of University Twining and Networking/UNESCO Chairs Program puts this into practice.

In Vietnam, UNESCO plays out the role of a pioneer in lifelong learning and quality assurance and accreditation, both of which serve to foster regional mobility and access to learning regardless of ages and forms of education. UNESCO has

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[1] The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) is an international organization established in 1965 among governments of Southeast Asian countries to promote regional cooperation in education, science and culture in Southeast Asia.

been very active in promoting lifelong learning to high-profile policy makers and advocating it as a national priority in the country's socio-economic development. The organization appears to know the country so well that UNESCO and its partners hosted an exhibition on Ho Chi Minh and his lifelong learning in three cities across the country. It has funded for Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) officials to attend international conferences to learn from international educationists, policy makers and practitioners (UNESCO 2011a). In relation to quality assurance and accreditation, UNESCO has been working with MoET since 2010 to develop a comprehensive mechanism for higher education based on international standards (UNESCO 2011b).

The World Bank – A Proactive Policy Actor

Originally established to support post-war construction in Europe, the World Bank has shifted its objective to prioritize development goals in developing countries. It has become the largest international development research institute and the world's largest funder (Samoff and Carrol 2003; Spring 2009). The World Bank's perspective on higher education was dramatically changed in the mid-1990s when in its policy documents, higher education moved "from zero to hero" in its contribution to human development for economic growth (World Bank 1994, 2000, 2002).

The World Bank is known for implicitly embedding discourses of marketisation, privatization, flexibility and deregulation (Griffin 2007), which orient its approach to higher education across the globe (Kamat 2012). Such discourses can be found in a series of its policy documents on higher education such as *Higher Education in Developing country: Peril and Promise* (2000), *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience* (1994), and *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* (2002).

In Vietnam, such an approach fits nicely with the Government's reform plan for higher education. More specifically, the Bank's promotion of privatization aligns with Government's socialisation policy. Vietnam used to be a state-socialist in education until the 1990s. In the 1980s the country reached a hyperinflation rate and was on the verge of collapse. Economic hardship significantly cut off the available funding for education. Not long after *Đổi Mới* 1986, socialist mechanisms in education came to a halt, and the market-based orientation to educational finance began to take root. This reform did not lead to enormous withdrawal of state funding for education – indeed, it remains the primary income source for most higher education institutions - but it did establish the basis for the commodification of education. Since then an increasing share of education payments have shifted from the state budget to the household purse. The household share of financing takes different forms, including tuition, non-academic fees, extra-classes and especially, the establishment of private schools. Market-based practices are applied throughout the system from compulsory to higher education. The practice was enhanced by the introduction of socialization policies, or *xa hoi hoa,* in the 1990s. This label can be

confusing as in Vietnam the term 'socialization' is interpreted in a completely opposite way to the common understanding of the rest of the world. In Vietnam, socialization implies that all segments of the society have a responsibility to contribute to various social areas including education, health and cultural activities. In other countries, socialization refers to the state undertaking the cost or ownership of a private entity or activity. The country's transition from a centrally-planned economy to a market economy has resulted in the marketisation and commodification of education.

The time when Vietnam reformed its education coincided perfectly with the moment that the World Bank changed its policy on higher education globally. The Bank intervened shortly after Vietnam announced the country's reform. It conduced the first analysis of Vietnam's education system in 1994, and suggested an increase in cost-sharing and cost-recovery fiscal management. It has since influenced Vietnam's reform further through large-scale multi-goal projects. The First Higher Education Project, effective from 1988 to 2006, was designed with ambitious goals for increasing the responsiveness, quality and efficiency of Vietnam's higher education institutions. It was followed by the simultaneous implementation of the Second Higher Education Project, Higher Education Development Policy Program and the New Model University Project, with the intention of fulfilling the unaccomplished objectives of the First Higher Education Project (World Bank 2009). This combination was developed to support the Government of Vietnam in materializing its Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA). These projects have five areas of intervention: governance, financing, quality improvement, quality assurance and financial reporting/auditing (World Bank 2014, pp. 7–8) (Fig. 6.1).
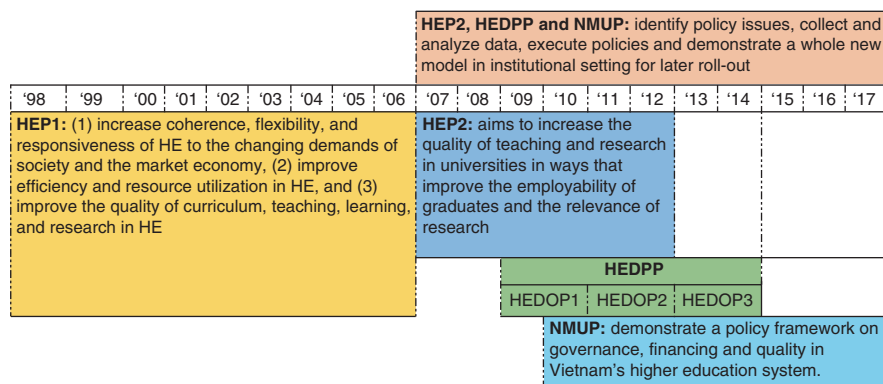
Fig. 6.1 The World Bank's involvement in Vietnam's higher education from 1998 to 2017 (World Bank 1998, 2009, 2014)
HEDOP1: Higher Education Development Policy Program – First Operation
HEDOP2: Higher Education Development Policy Program – Second Operation
HEDOP3: Higher Education Development Policy Program – Third Operation
HEP1: The First Higher Education Project
HEP2: The Second Higher Education Project
HEDPP: Higher Education Development Policy Program
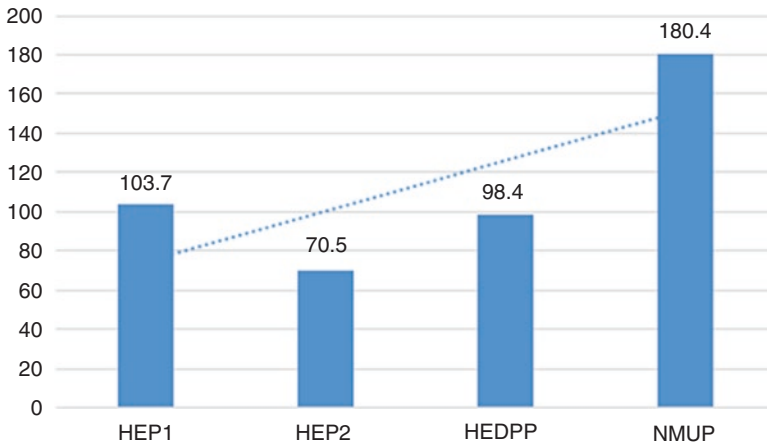*NMUP:* New Model University Project

Fig. 6.2 The World Bank's investment in Vietnam's higher education from 1998 to 2017 (World Bank 1998, 2009, 2014)

It is fair to comment that the Bank has been heavily involved in Vietnam's higher education sector. Over nearly two decades from 1998 to 2017, the Bank has lent Vietnam more than 450 million USD. The data trend shows that financing is still on the rise. The Bank has gone beyond its role of a donor, and an impartial policy advisor, to become a policy actor. It works to formulate, analyse and test a policy measure for advocacy. It advocates a range of policies that are embedded in its ideology and human capital theory (Dang 2009; Kamat 2012). The Bank states (World Bank 2014, pp.18–19):

> (…) the Second Higher Education Project will take the policy development from the definition of the problem, through the collection and analysis of information, to the development and discussion of policy options; HEDOP [three operations of the Higher Education Development Policy Program] will cover the promulgation and execution of policy measures; New Model University Project would then provide for the demonstration of these policy measures in specific institutional settings. HEDPP [Higher Education Development Policy Program] consists of a series of key policy measures, each set financed by a separate operation, linked to the Government's higher education reform strategy (Fig. 6.2).

The Bank takes full advantage of its financial capacity. It invested in a million-dollar project to demonstrate how a new modality of public university, the Vietnam-German University, who has greater autonomy in governance, financing as well as in planning and implementing its academic strategies and policies, and who has adopted an international standard of campus and facilities development compared to other national universities, would function. Lessons can be drawn from this case, with potential application to other higher education institutions (World Bank 2014). This is a costly solution to collect evidence for a policy change. Yet, the gain could be invaluable. It could provide considerable weight to support the full application of new approach to governance, financing and quality assurance policies that the Bank

is endeavouring to bring about. This project therefore implies a high level of commitment from the Bank to intervene at the institutional level.

Asian Development Bank – A Practical Policy Enforcer at Regional Level

ADB is relatively a late comer in Vietnam's higher education sector compared to the other two players. The organization has placed more priority on compulsory education, specifically secondary education, teacher training and vocational education. Not until the *Education by 2020 - A Sector Operations Plan* published in 2010 did ADB announce a larger share of its education sector portfolio to be allocated to postsecondary education "in response to the growing demand from students completing secondary education, and to labour market requirements" (ADB 2010, p.vi). ADB's major projects relating to Vietnam's higher education are probably the RMIT project in 2001 and recently, the New Model University Project, which is a joint effort with the World Bank. The World Bank supports the Vietnam – German University and Can Tho University and the ADB supports the "Ha Noi Science and Technology University project" located near Hoa Lac High Tech Park, and Da Nang University in Dien Nam Industrial Zone.

Similar to UNESCO, Asian Development Bank has an interest in regional collaboration and development. It acclaims "supporting regional cooperation is a unique institutional strength of ADB as a regional development bank" (ADB 2010, p. vi). As such, ADB has highlighted credit transfer and alternative financing options as its focused areas of interventions in the higher education sector (ADB 2012). Credit transfer would enable student mobility across the region while cost sharing would help widen Vietnamese higher education system and increase the number of trained workers (ADB 2009).

This approach rolls out nicely in the context that Vietnam has been embracing the commodification of education as explained above.

Fry (2009) argues that ADB's deep concerns about the region's human resources comes from the needs of Japan's economy. Bearing the pressure of a high wage cost structure, Japanese companies need to outsource part of their businesses offshore. They need qualified staff to operate their businesses there. Therefore, Japan holds a strong interest in attaining skilled employees in its important offshore sites, especially China, Thailand and Vietnam. During the boom of the 1980s, a new Japanese factory was established every three days in Thailand. Most recently, a joint venture university between Japan and Thailand, Thai Nichi Institute of Technology, was established to ensure the supply of skilled engineers needed by Japanese businesses operating in Thailand. However, it is dangerous for Japan to be too dependent on any one country. Thus, it needs to diversify its offshore production possibilities, and there is a high likelihood this will result in further expansion into Vietnam.

Blended Roles and Impacts

Given the aforementioned analyses, it is clear that the World Bank has appeared so far the most influential player. It has invested heavily in and covered a wide range of issues in Vietnam's higher education system. UNESCO has stayed relatively focused in lifelong learning and quality assurance and accreditation. ADB prefers national projects that have region-scale application, shows more interest in providing technical assistance to implement policy measures. Its emphasis on regional credit transfer and quality assurance crosses UNESCO's.

The World Bank's projects also have higher visibility to the local public. It is easy to spot Victoria Kwakwa, the World Bank's Country Director for Vietnam talking about the Bank's support for the Government of Vietnam in reforming its higher education on mass media. Meanwhile UNESCO's presence is conspicuously missing.

The strongest difference amongst these organizations is probably their underpinning ideology. By nature, the two Banks are driven by economic benefits, while for its part UNESCO is bound by its mandate to bring peace and cultural exchange through education. Accordingly, UNESCO focuses on inclusion, lifelong learning and the removal of barriers, including financial barriers, that can affect individual access to learning in any form. The Asian Development Bank shares a similar stance with the World Bank in relation to cost-sharing and the expansion of higher education on a commercial basis. UNESCO's approach could be considered as a check-and-balance against the two Banks' even though the latter seems to be dominating at present.

Despite certain differences, the international organizations have complemented each other in various ways, either directly or indirectly. First, they all encourage and contribute to an expansion of the system. Both lifelong learning and commercialisation of higher education increase the system's size and complexity. This invites the participation of non-traditional service providers, namely the private sector, employers, community organizations. The extended boundary requires different frameworks for validation and controlling of both process and quality. The availability of these institutions in turn sets conditions for further growth of private providers. Such expansion is a key policy set by all three organizations. Second, despite different objectives, intermediate outcomes that the international organizations have to achieve often overlap or enhance one another. UNESCO's lifelong learning program creates opportunities for citizens to get the education they need at every stage of their life, including during professional and career development. This is a condition to have a better quality workforce – which is a key objective of ADB's intervention. A better access to any form of education could contribute to closing a gap in equality and increasing diversity, which are among the highlighted issues that the World Bank aims to address in its *Master Plan for Vietnam's Higher Education Reform* (Hayden et al. 2012). The mixture of convergence and divergence in the agendas of international organizations has considerably contributed to the current policy landscape of Vietnam's higher education (Fig. 6.3).
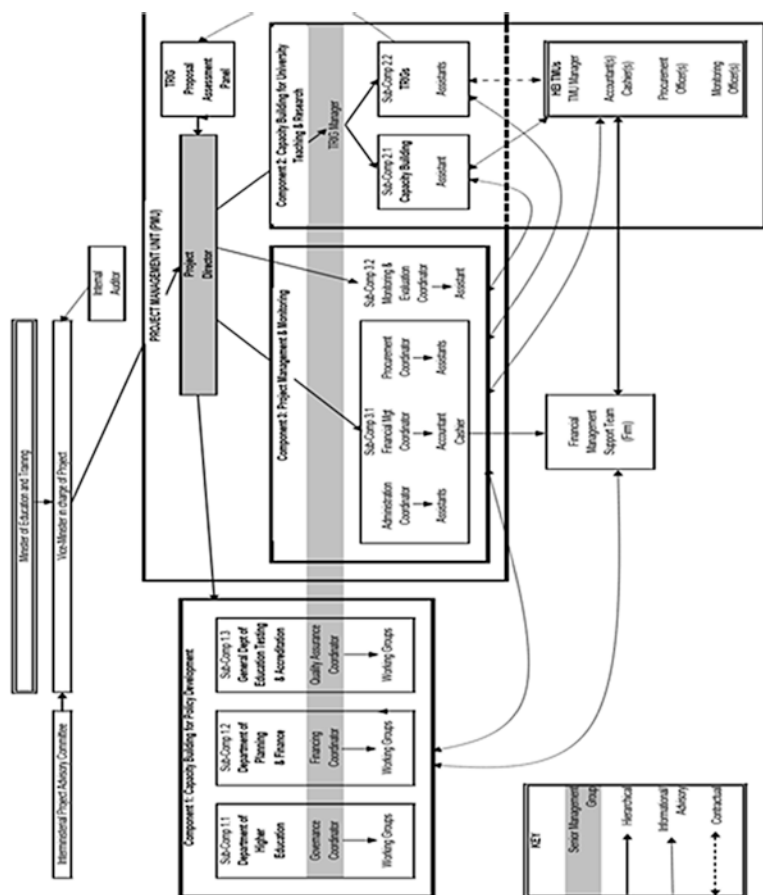
Fig. 6.3 Second higher education project organizational chart (Dang 2009, p. 64)

Degree of Impacts: From Policy Perspectives

Each international organization has been successful in incorporating their agendas into the nation's policies. UNESCO has been able to make lifelong learning a national goal and a popular word in the national policy discourse. The Minister of Education and Training asserted that "lifelong learning has become an inevitable trend worldwide, from developed to developing countries, across Europe, Asia, and South East Asia in particular" (Pham 2013). A decision to build a learning society by 2020 was approved, upon his request, by the Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. The Decision requested state-owned organizations such as *Hoi Khuyen Hoc* (the Association of Learning Encouragement), Peoples' Committee, the Education Publisher, and even state-owed enterprises to incorporate lifelong learning activities in their social activities agendas (Chinh phu 2013). MOET initiated the Lifelong Learning Week as an annual event, and assigned People's Committees and the Education Publisher to implement it nationwide. High-profile officials also attend regional and international conferences about lifelong learning and exchange experiences in developing learning society with scholars and practitioners. Similarly, the World Bank has triumphed in accelerating the commodification and marketisation of higher education in Vietnam. Among its many achievements, the fact that many of its suggestions from the *Master Plan for Vietnam's Higher Education System* were adopted by the Vietnam's government in the revised Higher Education Law was significant (World Bank 2014). The government stated that it would rely more on the private sector to expand the system. Private higher education institutions received formal recognition and a clearer (compared to a brief mentioning in the 1998 Law on Higher Education) legal context to operate, and non-for-profit private higher education institutions (HEIs) were defined for the first time. The government also decided to invest in million-dollar projects to develop excellent universities with an entirely different governance system from the current institutions. The Bank is one of the architects of this project.

Impressive as all of this may sound, the extent to which these strategic policies have taken effect is debatable. Take the lifelong learning policy for example. If we look more closely into the policy discourse associated with the key decision to build a learning society by 2020, it is not hard to see that the key substance of lifelong learning is not in place. The decision primarily focuses on the formal education system, with emphasis on the roles of the state, traditional educational institutions and state-owned enterprises. There appears to be little concern about establishing an enabling environment for non-formal and informal training, or a framework for involvement of non-traditional educational institutions. There is no article concerning participation of non-state actors in the protraction of learning. The backbone of lifelong learning policy, which is recognition, validity and accreditation, is conspicuously absent. Adjustment to a borrowed policy is not uncommon in the world of education policy making. However, the adopted policy cannot be a valid copy of the original if its essence is missing. It is fair to argue that despite the frequent usage of terminology related to lifelong learning in many national initiatives, Vietnam

appears to interpret that terminology as a statement of preference or convenience rather than following the original meaning.

Another example is the operating framework for private higher education institutions. In order to further rely on the private sector to expand the system, the government needed to establish an operating environment for private entities. It acknowledged the equal status of private HEIs with their public peers, and for the first time adopted the modality of not-for-profit private HEIs in the 2012 revised Law on Higher Education. However, this definition of not-for-profit HEIs is more or less all that has been achieved so far. An enabling environment for that modality to develop, or a regulatory framework to protect private institutions from being unequally treated, is missing. Even worse, existing legal documents conflict with each other in determining whether or not it is legal for private HEIs to make a profit (Tran 2014). Many other similar accounts can be mentioned. One is the establishment of university governance boards, and their real power in the university governance system (Hayden et al. 2012).

The implications of the abovementioned examples are three fold. First, the interaction between international and national players is anything but one-way manipulation. Even though international organizations are tactful in advocating for their policies (Dang 2009), Vietnam has shown that it knows how to dance the fine line between successful international partnership and achievement of national objectives: it both gets what it wants – the funding and the technical assistance – and keeps its donors satisfied enough. Second, there is a disconnection among the three policy dimensions: strategy, operation and implementation in Vietnam's system. At the strategic policy arena, top leaders decide the direction that the country would march towards. They support reforms to meet the demand of the economy but at the same time are known for being sceptical of overly liberal policies. Therefore, they have a preference for incremental change. At the operational level, the MOET has the most important role as the authorised body that develop action plans to bring about the expected results set by strategic policies. However, they have certain economic interest relating to their position (Dao and Hayden 2010), which provides room for conflicts of interests to occur. For instance, the establishment of independent quality assurance entities, which has been slowly progressed, would challenge the current role of MOET as the only accreditor. At the implementation level, not all universities are willing and ready to take up changes. For example, many have not yet prepared to become financially autonomic (Huy and Ho 2014) whereas others, often thanks to their strong innovation-inclined leadership, are making full advantages of their increased autonomy to adopt internationally recognised curricula to draw students in or develop new channels to generate revenues (Pham and Fry 2002; Fry 2009; SMEC 2010).

Amalgamation of for-and-against reforms inside the system together with diverse interests of external players, the international organizations, requires extraordinary capacity to negotiate and manoeuvre different interests to achieve the expected results. This leads us to the third point, which questions the effectiveness of the top-down implementation approach and MOET's capacity to navigate, monitor and manage large-scale projects with different foci.

In the following section, we will look at the design for implementation of a specific project that will enable us to further explore the interactions between the World Bank and other players in the Vietnam's system.

Degree of Impacts: From Implementation Perspective

When executing the Second Higher Education Project, the World Bank identified implementation as one of the hardest parts to get right. It paid due attention to this task. It identified three categories of risk: policy-related risk, institutional risk and fiduciary risk (World Bank 2012). The first refers to MOET's weak capacity in developing coherent policy, a risk that could be mitigated by the provision of technical assistance and capacity building. The second concerns the ineffectiveness of MOET and HEIs in applying the regulations in their full potential, which could be remedied by the creation of New Model University Program. The third involves a lack of trust, which was envisaged to be addressed over time through responsible financial management.

Notably, the Bank designed a separate component of monitoring and evaluation, through which a Project Management Unit was established. The Unit was in charge of the project accounting and management, advising universities regarding funding applications and monitoring project progress. This management style was present all the way down to all universities that received the Teaching and Research Innovation Grant, hereafter the Grant. Each university established a management unit to take charge of the Grant implementation. Together with the Project Management Unit, more than twenty university management units created a comprehensive network of agency-principal. The Project Management Unit was held responsible to the Bank, and university's management units acted in accordance to the Project Management Unit's guidance and advice. Dang (2009) argues that with this new setting, the Bank changed the nature of relationships in the system, moving from a "hard authoritarian" management style to "soft corporatist manner". She even goes further by stating that "the World Bank has, in fact, created another network of qualified people who actualize the World Bank's ideas on a daily basis (whether they know it or not!)" (p. 63).

This mechanism has satisfied the Bank. The project's evaluation reads:

> The Project Management Unit was well staffed with a team of qualified professionals who had appropriate administrative experience and were respected by the Ministry, businesses and universities. The Unit provided active management and effectively and quickly corrected implementation bottlenecks or weaknesses. The project nearly fully disbursed within the original time frame. The Unit implemented M&E functions well and went beyond project requirements, which contributed to the project's smooth implementation. It coordinated

and provided training on procurement activities for participating universities (….) The Unit monitored the university grants to ensure compliance with reporting requirements (Table 6.1).

Effective as it may appear, this top-down approach had several critical shortcomings that were missing in the Bank's evaluation report. There were too many management units for the Grant at each grantee university, each of which had its own bureaucracy. For example, according to Pham, a key member of the Grant management team at Vietnam National University Hanoi (VNU), a lecturer at VNU had to go through five levels of authority to get approval for his research exchange under the Grant: the Head of the Program, the Dean of his School, the Rector of the university member, the Director of Training at VNU, and the President of VNU. Being approved at the lower level did not guarantee an automatic approval from the higher levels of authority as each person could act on his or her own discretion. This time-consuming process could easily demotivate academics, making them feel that the Grant is no better than other government scholarships.

Another shortcoming was limited communication down through the system. One important condition for successful implementation is that objectives be clearly defined, specific, and preferably quantified, understood and agreed throughout the organization. All of the World Bank's projects in Vietnam's higher education have an ambitious goal to reform the system, which inevitably includes changes in institutional settings. This message should have been communicated to each and every individual of the universities, especially those who directly implemented the policies. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Overall observation suggests a breakdown of communication between those at the policy-making level and those at the front line executing the policies. Pham, in a personal communication, said, "they [public officer] did not integrate the utmost goal of the project into their everyday work". He continued to explain: "they were not aware of the Second Higher Education Project nor received any benefit from the changes. Rather, they have to do extra work for others, say, lecturers, to gain [go abroad]". Therefore, "It did not come as a surprise to me," he concluded "that these officers see little point in carrying the extra burden adding to their daily tasks". Such an attitude would adversely affect the actual process of implementation that has been discussed earlier. Moreover, this situation could build up an attitude of hesitance or even resistance from public officers whenever a change is introduced. This is arguably not a good sign for any substantial reform in the future.

Conclusions

International organizations, especially the World Bank, have been very successful in leveraging their agendas onto Vietnam's higher education policy. However, the impacts have been less valuable than expected. There are at least three reasons for this: lack of initiative and ownership from Vietnam, MoET's inadequate capacities to manage fragmented large-scale projects, and the system's inability to absorb changes in a systematic fashion.

Table 6.1 Summary of three international organizations' drivers of intrusion in Vietnam's higher education

	The World Bank	Asian Development Bank	UNESCO
Focused areas of intervention	A wide range of areas: governance, financing, quality assurance, quality improvement, research relevance, financial management	Credit transfer, alternative finance options	Lifelong learning and quality assurance and accreditation
	Intervene at both national government policy and institutional levels	A latecomer in higher education yet catching up by collaborating with the World Bank in a certain area. Work at ministerial level.	Intervene mainly at national level
Motivation	Promotion of human capital theory and private return to investment in higher education	Regional collaboration and development.	Interest at cross-nation issues
	A world free of poverty which is believed to achieve through the promotion of liberal markets, cooperation between government and the private sector and civil society sector.	Arguably due to the demand of Japan's economy for high quality employees at offshore production sites	Reach the end goal of peace, poverty eradication, sustainable development through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information
Agenda	Decentralization, privatization and commercialisation of higher education, sound financial management and independent quality assurance.	Regional collaboration and mobility, increased number of trained workers	Inclusive society, access to postsecondary education regardless of ages, ethnics and forms of education
Approach	Acts as an active policy actor. Not only architecture but also enforcer for policy measures.	Provide technical assistance besides loans.	Advocate at national level policy and foster implementation through development of guidelines
	Get accepted into the system by tailoring approaches and policy measures to fit national agendas while gracefully maintains its loan conditions	Collaborate with the World Bank in a certain area.	Finance public officers at ministerial level to attend international conferences and go on study tours to learn from international practices and policy makers.

Table 6.1 (continued)

	The World Bank	Asian Development Bank	UNESCO
	Establish well-staffed management units to implement and management the Bank's projects.	Employ experienced former public officers who have intensive networks in the public sector as specialists to implement ADB's projects.	
Tools	Economic muscles (policy-based lending programs)	Economic muscles and technical assistance, research	Research and analysis
	Technical advisory with sector research and country reports	Technical advisory with sector research and solutions mapping	Facilitate establishment of regional networks on mutual interested issues
Achievements against agenda	The most influential IO out of the three measured by its achievements in issuance of a series of legal documents that shape the current direction of Vietnam's higher education in an aligning agenda with the Bank.	Establishment of a wholly-foreign university governed	Making lifelong learning one of the nation's socio-economic priorities.
	Detail the GOV's strategic policies into implementation plan and enforce that implementation through specific projects and programs.	Remains to be uncovered in the future	Development of quality assurance and accreditation mechanism based on international standards.

In many cases Vietnamese players at policymaking level are presenting a relatively passive role in the country's higher education reform picture. They are heavily influenced by policy ideas imposed by international organizations. They can have – and indeed have had reaction and adjustment to the imported ideas, but overall they are yet fairly dependent on external players in developing operational plans and executing the policies. Additionally, they sometimes do not have the required tools. MoET's data collection is very poor and has not been maintained properly. Despite the World Bank's initial assistance to develop an institutional monitoring collection and a graduate tracer survey, MoET failed to overtake the task (SMEC 2010). The implementation process implies little communication throughout the system, and thus understandably, a lack of ownership from the frontline implementers.

MoET's capacities have always been questioned, and even regarded as a risk by the World Bank. Not only is it unable to develop a concrete action plan and follow through (as in the case of Higher Education Reform Agenda), nor it can control the implementation lines at lower levels. An absolute obedience and consensus throughout the system is required to succeed in top-down implementation, yet it has not

been reached. Uncontrolled process can be problematic, especially given that Vietnam is notorious for its practice of corruption on a wide scale. The involvement of corruption, particularly in any stage that deals with resources allocation or decision making, as discussed in the case of the Second Higher Education Project, can be seriously harmful.

On top of everything, the system is weak at navigating, prioritising and absorbing impacts from the influx of big projects pointing at different directions. The reform of the higher education sector in Vietnam has received much attention. Upon receipt of a large amount of external resources, the system has to stretch its capacities to respond and absorb the changes at, in many cases, a faster speed than its own. Some changes can be quickly adopted, for instance, curriculum borrowing. Others require a longer timeline. When disruptive changes are imposed top down, and the institutional apparatus for ensuring the functionality of such changes is missing, the consequences are likely to be detrimental. Take an example, a whole national initiative on lifelong learning was created when the demand for lifelong learning was absent. This made the policy irrelevant to the public. Public indifference is in no way a boon companion to any reform in society.

In conclusion, this chapter agrees with the argument that Vu and Marginson (2014) put forward. Vietnam is exposed to the practice of policy borrowing and simultaneous intrusion into its policymaking authorities. This situation has both opportunities and challenges that require the country to be alert and cautious at opting what policies to borrow in consideration to the local context. In addition to greater self-awareness in policy borrowing, as Vu and Marginson (2014) pointed out, this chapter has emphasised that Vietnam ought to adjust its implementation approach – top-down implementation has been posing a lot of shortcomings as discussed above, and pay due attention to the system's capacity to absorb changes. Necessary institutions required for changes to happen need to be put in place before any disruption is brought about.

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Chapter 7
English-Medium-Instruction Management: The Missing Piece in the Internationalisation Puzzle of Vietnamese Higher Education

Huong Thu Nguyen

HE Reform, Internationalisation and EMI in Vietnam

Higher education is considered as a key drive to national economic development in Vietnam (General Secretary 2013). However, despite substantial improvement in the primary and secondary education, contemporary HE of Vietnam is grappled with crisis in governance, quality insurance, curriculum, research, etc. (Tran et al. 2014a, b). Well-off families have been sending their children overseas in search of better tertiary education despite the significantly higher cost of studying abroad compared with that of domestic education (see Chap. 8). Within this context, the government of Vietnam mandated Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) in 2005 to revamp the sector and to reverse the flows of students and money overseas (Harman et al. 2010).

As delineated in HERA, internationalisation was central to improving the quality of the domestic HE sector, as argued by Tran and Marginson (Chap. 1). However, there are some issues with internationalisation in HERA. In particular, the internationalisation of HE in policy documents was referred to as *international integration* – a term used in the economic globalisation agenda of Vietnam – because *internationalisation of HE* is unavailable in the political lexicon in Vietnam. By *international integration*, the government referred to the following activities:

- involving more international commitments and agreements
- improvements in the teaching and learning of foreign languages (especially English)
- the development of conditions favourable to increased foreign investment in the higher education system (Harman et al. 2010, p. 3).

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Table 7.1 Types of EMI-Based Programs in Vietnamese HE

Types of EMI-based programs	Program nature	Degree conferred	Program nomenclatures in Vietnamese HE
Foreign programs	In corporation with foreign partner HEIs	Local degree	Advanced programs
		Foreign degree	Joint programs
Domestic programs	Locally-developed with reference to foreign programs	Local degree	High quality programs

As listed in the second point in HERA's *international integration*, underlying the internationalisation agenda is the need to enhance the foreign-language capacity of the Vietnamese population, which is considered essential for pursuing the government's economic and political aims. To support this need, the government has initiated a number of changes in the national language policy and planning. In HE sector, the newly promulgated HE law in 2012 allows a foreign language to be the medium of instruction (MOI) of HEIs (National Assembly of Vietnam 2012, Article 10). With this change in the language policy, Vietnamese HEIs have been establishing linkages with foreign institutions to develop EMI-based programs for quality improvement and internationalisation (The Government of Vietnam 2008b, 2012).

Although EMI was formally approved in 2012, EMI-based programs had been offered at Vietnamese HEIs at the postgraduate level since the 1990s and at the undergraduate level since the 2000s, in collaboration with foreign institutions (Vietnam International Education Department 2015). In more recent developments, EMI programs can be foreign or domestic (see Table 7.1).

As can be seen in Table 7.1, in operating foreign EMI-based programs, or *Chương trình Đào tạo Nước ngoài*, Vietnamese HEIs have input from partner HEIs in terms of curriculum, materials and assessment (T. A. Nguyen 2009). Qualifications in these foreign programs can be awarded by Vietnamese or overseas providers depending on the negotiation between institutions (see Chap. 5 for detailed classification of transnational education types in Vietnam higher education). There are two sub-types of foreign programs, Advanced Programs (APs) or *Chương trình Tiên tiến* and Joint Programs (JPs) or *Chương trình Liên kết*:

- APs are supported by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)'s project for capacity building in HEIs, which has the aim that by 2020 a Vietnamese HEI will be in the world's 200 leading universities (Marginson et al. 2011, p. 451). Vietnamese HEIs that hope to run APs have to satisfy a number of conditions such as academic staff, library, physical conditions, etc. Most importantly, they have to search for a partner HEIs in the world's 100 top universities to negotiate the cooperation.
- JPs are legalised by the government for Vietnamese HEIs to develop transnational education programs (G. Nguyen and Shillabeer 2013), aiming at attracting Vietnamese students to enrol in foreign style of tertiary programs provided at domestic HEIs. Foreign partner HEIs do not have to be of high ranking as in APs.

As for domestic EMI-based programs, only HEIs coordinating foreign programs (i.e. JPs and APs) can develop their own EMI-based programs because they can use the curriculum, materials and assessment schemes of foreign partner HEIs as reference. These programs are known as High Quality Programs (HQPs) or *Chương trình Đào tạo Chất lượng cao*. Currently, Vietnamese HEIs are coordinating approximately 290 JPs, 34 APs and 55 HQPs.

Similar to many HEIs in other non-English-dominant contexts, the introduction of EMI serves as one internationalisation strategy undertaken by Vietnamese HEIs (Dang et al. 2013; Doiz et al. 2013; Hamid et al. 2013; McKay 2014). With EMI, local HEIs can collaborate with partner institutions in more advanced HE systems such as those in Western countries (Australia, the UK, the US, etc.), enhancing student-academic-program mobility as in the cases of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, etc. (Altbach and Knight 2007). In Europe, EMI programs are offered to internationalise students' study and experiences (Dimova et al. 2015). However, concerns have been raised about the ELP level of local academics and students to function in English in these programs (Hughes 2008). This is a shared concern in non-English-dominant countries such as Hong Kong (Evans and Morrison 2011), Japan (Toh 2014), Korea (Cho 2012) and Vietnam (Duong 2009; Le 2012; Vu and Burns 2014).

In addition, EMI has been regarded as a multi-purpose strategy not only to enable international collaboration but also to improve students' ELP (Hu and McKay 2012; The Government of Vietnam 2008a). This is but a falsification because empirical evidence has shown that EMI does not imply a teaching methodology to contribute to students' ELP development (Coyle et al. 2010) and that in order to achieve such an objective, content teachers need to be well-equipped to deliver the disciplinary knowledge in English and support students' ELP development (Toh 2014; Wilkinson 2013). To fulfil this aim, HEIs that operate EMI programs need to have an organised management of the English-language aspects, including student entry requirements, students' English support, teachers' training, etc. Otherwise EMI establishment would stand the chance of being at the surface or even a failure (Cho 2012; Saarinen and Nikula 2013).

Implementation realities have revealed, however, that such language management is often overlooked and not visible in the national language policy (Ali 2013; Hamid et al. 2013). Taguchi (2014), in reviewing how EMI has been implemented on global scale, states that the management of English in EMI programs/institutions and the development of students' ELP are often taken for granted. The same situation is evident in the context of Vietnam in that national documents do not regulate language aspects in EMI-based programs (MOET 2014; The Government of Vietnam 2008b, 2012) and it depends on institutions to decide how English is used as MOI. In the same vein, institutions' EMI stipulation tends to neglect the importance of an institutional English language management scheme for internationalisation and improving students' ELP. As will be demonstrated through a case study in a Vietnamese university in this chapter, EMI in Vietnamese HEIs is being implemented without the base for sustainable development for its intended purposes.

Towards that end, the study adopted the perspective of Language Management Theory as the framework for discussion.

Language Management Theory

Language Management Theory (LMT) refers to the theory developed mainly by J. V. Neustupný and B.H. Jernudd (1987) in which *management* indicates a wide range of acts attending language problems. Developed alongside classical language planning which mainly focuses on macro language issues of post-colonial nation-states and which claims that language management tasks only rest with governments, LMT postulates that language problems occur at both micro as well as macro levels which require both simple (individual) and organised (institutional) management (Nekvapil and Sherman 2015). While governments might be concerned with the complexity of managing language behaviours of a polity (e.g. mandating national language), on individual levels, speakers may face with a number of language problems in communication such as pronunciation and spelling that requires attention but not entangle an organised mechanism of management. Indeed, Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) point out that LMT implies an ecological approach in that its management takes account of micro, meso and macro levels, regarding individuals, organisations, governments, etc.

In terms of implementation, LMT proposes that the process of management proceeds through certain stages: when a problem occurs, it can be noted, evaluated, and probably adjusted (Nekvapil and Sherman 2015). In the most simple sense, language management acts involve problem identification and implementation strategies (Kaplan and Baldauf 2005), and implementation may involve simple and/or organised adjustment (Marriott 2015).

Previous studies have employed LMT framework to highlight the interplay between levels of management and the importance of having an explicit language policy for EMI enactment (Ali 2013) or the micro - macro level (simple and organised) language support for students from non-English backgrounds studying in English-speaking environment (Marriott 2015). For this particular study, the mandate of EMI and its implementation in Vietnamese HE is problematised as it is not accompanied by systematic planning (including human resources and approaches); therefore, LMT provides a useful tool to investigate the management of EMI in Vietnam HEIs ranging from macro to meso and to micro levels.

The Study

For illustrative purpose, a case study of EMI implementation at a Vietnamese HEI is presented following the framework of LMT. The study was undertaken at Vietnam International University (VIU, a pseudonym). VIU is a reputable university in

Vietnam, providing graduate and postgraduate programs on Business, Business Law, Business Management, Economics and Finance and Banking. VIU institution-alised EMI for graduate level in 2006 while maintaining Vietnamese-medium instruction (VMI) programs. To the date of data collection (for four months in 2012–2013), VIU had eight EMI-based programs in all of its disciplines except for Business Law. These programs were either developed by VIU academics or in cooperation with HEIs from Belgium, Denmark, the UK and the US. In the academic year of 2012–2013, VIU had 2 APs, 4 HQPs and 2 JPs.

Major data source was from interviews with 12 executives, 26 academics (17 Vietnamese, 7 from the US and 2 from Denmark) and 17 student focus groups (66 Vietnamese students across Year 1 to Year 3 and 5 international students, including 3 from the US and 2 from France). The interviews with local academics and students were in Vietnamese, the first language of both the researcher and participants. Necessary quotes were translated into English by the researcher for analysis and discussion. Interviews with foreign academics and students were conducted in English. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, their names are ano-nymised in the study.

In addition, government policy scripts on EMI in Vietnam HE is referred to as the starting point for the interpretation and implementation at institutions. The main focus of the chapter is the language management for EMI-based programs in Vietnam HE, following LMT, so the analysis will focus on simple and organised management of language problems instigated by the new language policy at micro (class-room), meso (institutional) and macro (national) levels. Government and institutional policies on academics and students' ELP in EMI-based programs

Policies on EMI Academics' ELP

Government documents require that academics teaching in EMI-based programs must (1) hold a postgraduate qualification (master's or doctor degree) in the area that they teach, (2) attain level C1 (proficient user) in ELP scale of European Common Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2014) or has accomplished a degree program from abroad and (3) have at least three years experiences teaching the course in VMI (MOET 2014; The Government of Vietnam 2008b, 2012).

At VIU, the requirements were institutionalised to include (1) obtain a postgrad-uate qualification abroad and (2) have extensive experiences teaching the course in VMI. By way of VIU requirements, it was not necessary to organise English tests to assess academics' proficiency but to take graduation *overseas* as sufficient for teaching in EMI setting. However, the *overseas* criteria was applied rather loosely; for example, academics graduating from universities in Czech Republic and Germany who did not do their degree in English were still considered as eligible to teach in EMI programs by VIU executives. Such selection policy was a short cut to human resources preparation for EMI programs because there was no screening for

academics' ELP. What was done in VIU was not uncommon in other Vietnamese HEIs where *overseas* is often mistaken as Western or English-native countries. In addition, Vietnamese are generally in favour of anything Western or *Tây*, which is also the credence that neighbouring Asian countries have for Western labels (Cho 2012; Toh 2014). It was found that not all EMI academics at VIU were ready to teach in English given the fact that they had graduated from the West or overseas, as will be revealed in what was actually happening in the classroom in later sections.

Policies on EMI Students' ELP

At the national level, there is not consistency in language requirements for student intake to EMI-based programs. In particular, the document regulating APs only mentions that students need to have *sufficient ELP* (The Government of Vietnam 2008b). JP document (The Government of Vietnam 2012) requires students to demonstrate their ELP equivalent to CEFR B2 (Council of Europe 2014). HQP document leaves such decisions at HEIs' discretion (MOET 2014).

At the institutional level, VIU stipulated that student admitted to EMI-based programs to: (1) achieve the National University Entrance Examination (NUEE) benchmark to VIU and (2) obtain Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) (ETS 2014b) result of 500 points. TOEIC result can be substituted by Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOELF) (ETS 2014a) paper-based of 477 points, or internet-based of 53 points, or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (IELTS 2009–2012) band 4.5.

There are several issues demanding further considerations in these requirements. First, as students will use English for disciplinary study, they need to demonstrate that they possess adequate ELP to handle academic learning. For that purpose, admission tests should be on academic rather than professional English test of TOEIC. The issue has been discussed in Japanese context where TOEIC is also used as the screening method, which causes dilemmas in student learning and outcomes (Toh 2014). In European context, proficiency screening is done through TOEFL or IELTS (Saarinen and Nikula 2013) which is the same requirement to universities in Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. Second, the requirement of TOEIC 500, or TOEFL paper-based 477, internet-based 53, or IELTS 4.5 denotes a low intermediate user of English who can hardly deal with university study (Cots 2013).

Policies on the Use of English in EMI-Based Programs

In government scripts, English is regulated as *the language of instruction* in EMI-based programs. When it comes down to the institutional level, VIU brochures, websites and introductory sessions of EMI-based programs stated the same scripts. Academics shared that EMI policy was then known to them through faculty and

division meetings. In these meetings, the only concern being discussed was what to teach in EMI-based courses. In this regard, the institution neither has specific policy or strategy nor provide preparation or professional development in terms of language and pedagogy for academics. There is also an absence of language development for students including the explanation of requirements and description of English use in lectures, assessment and consultation.

After two years of implementation, VIU reviewed the operation of its EMI-based programs. Academics proposed that it was too difficult for students to listen to lectures in English. A solution was provided:

> The president then announced that academics did not have to teach 100% in English. The proportion could be 80–20 between English and Vietnamese, providing that students understood lectures, as it was the highest program's objective. (Executive 6)

The institutional diversion of EMI policy in classroom showed that implementation reality was more complicated than what executives had expected. The shift from Vietnamese into English demanded a more structured mechanism of institutional management. As will be clearer in the discussion of what was actually happening in the classroom, especially with the presence of international students, the employment of EMI in Vietnamese academic context was premature.

Academics and Students' ELP in EMI-Based Programs

Academics' ELP

Issues relating to academics' proficiency to teach in EMI-based programs in Vietnam HE have been a matter of great concern (Le 2012) but measures are not yet in place in institutional and government policies (Duong 2009). Below is a VIU student's comment on EMI academics' ELP:

> Personally I think all academics are good. They are experts in their fields and they are supportive of students. However, their English is not up to our expectation. Their teaching in English is not good, their language proficiency regarding their field [e.g. terminology] is not satisfactory. (HQP—Business Administration—Year 2)

Information gathered from student focus groups revealed that the most burning issue facing EMI students was their academics' ELP because it directly impacted their learning. The overall impression that students had about Vietnamese academics was that they did not possess sufficient ELP to deliver a good lecture with clear presentation and satisfactory explanation for students to deeply comprehend the content. In fact, in students' observation, many academics were rather confused during lectures. Listening to local academics' teaching in English worn many students out because it was 'more tiring, more difficult to understand and to remember and easier to lose concentration' (HQP—Business Management—Year 3).

When VIU welcomed the first international students to its EMI-based programs, the weakness of academics' ELP revealed itself as telling evidence of institutional

under-preparedness as regard to personnel to implement internationalisation at the classroom level:

> I know what he is saying but just the way he phrases things not as natural as it would be for the English speakers obviously and he tends to talk simpler on tops of words and phrases and a lot of repetition so sometimes I just feel it bad and it's very hard to pay attention when it is very slow. (Foreign student 3)

Obviously, it is too difficult to have the flexibility, creativity and variety in terms of language resources to present an effective and interesting lecture in a foreign language. Even academics from Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands where people's ELP is considered the best in Europe report the challenge to provide nuanced explanations of disciplinary content in English (Jensen and Thøgersen 2011; Klaassen 2008). It was understandable for the language difficulties that Vietnamese academics encountered when teaching through English. However, it also reveals that *overseas* graduation does not guarantee effective teaching in English (Cho 2012) – the handy regulation that VIU stipulated on teaching staff in EMI-based programs as mentioned earlier.

Students' ELP

Students' English competence has presented another entanglement (Le 2012; Vu and Burns 2014). With various and vague policies regulating student admission to EMI-based programs (MOET 2014; The Government of Vietnam 2008b, 2012) together with 'low' requirements set by HEIs (Duong 2009), at VIU students' ELP covered a spectrum. Simply put, AP students possessed highest competence, followed by HQP and JP students. In the observation of US professors in VIU, AP students' English was 'more than enough for academic study.' Some students could amaze the English-native academics with their English skills demonstrated through exams, which was 'even better than my American students.' In the low end was JP students who were often 'lost in translation,' and could not participate in group-discussions or answer the questions in English. As regard with HQP students, the class was rather 'mixed with different proficiency levels.'

In general, only a small number of students in EMI-based programs attained sufficient proficiency to learn in an EMI setting. The rest encountered much difficulty. Part of the reason was the institutional admission policies which required rather low ELP entry and were done through an inappropriate English test. This led to the fact that many English-incompetent students were admitted to the programs, causing tremendous challenges for both students and academics.

English Use in EMI-Based Classroom

The possession of limited proficiency by academics and students prescribed the use of English in classroom. On the part of academics, they tended to resort to translation, code-switching and code-mixing to 'translanguage' when teaching (Shohamy 2013). However, what happened in VIU classroom was:

> Not all lectures are 100% English or Vietnamese but…sometimes they teach in English, sometimes in Vietnamese. The way teachers teach is like a meal of different dishes mixed together…which is very difficult to digest. (HQP—Business Administration—Year 3)

At the individual levels, switches between local language and English in teaching could be considered as academics' strategies to enhance students' comprehension. But as shown through the student's observation in the above extract, it did not sound like a management strategy that academics took to aid students' understanding of the lecture but as the lifebuoy to make up for their own deficiency in English when teaching. Even if it meant to help students, it ended up confusing them.

As regard to students' use of English in class, both local and foreign academics noted that students were rather hesitant to use English:

> Most of them use Vietnamese in class. For example, they may ask me a question in Vietnamese, I answer in English, they ask further questions in Vietnamese, I clarify my explanation in English. Group work is always in Vietnamese but presentation is in English because they have prepared. (Vietnamese academic 13)

Even though academics encouraged students to use more English in class, it seemed that they were not comfortable doing so. The limited use of English in class and outside class by local students really upsets international students:

> Technically, I just work on my own because most groups around us have already been formed, they know their friends, so we currently form a pocket. These people know each other, we just speak in English while others speaking in Vietnamese. I don't know, I feel that I need help sometimes. That's why when I don't know something, I feel worse. Not knowing Vietnamese is a big frustration. (Foreign student 1)

> When I was in France, there was a partnership between French students and foreign students. That's why I was with Nhung, the Vietnamese student. We had to offer help and something like this… Here it is difficult. No one talked with us. I could not invite anyone to our house warming party. (Foreign student 4)

At VIU, Vietnamese was the lingua franca among students. Like many non-English-dominant contexts, such as Hong Kong (Evans and Morrison 2011), Japan (Toh 2014) and Korea (Cho 2012), Vietnamese students and academics do not have a major interest of using English with each other in their own environment because English is the foreign language rather than a second language in Vietnam. The institutionalisation of EMI was taken as a top-down policy change for academics and students. They both felt 'weird, uncomfortable, and ineffective' in English. Therefore, the use of English was very limited among Vietnamese for daily communication:

> When we have group discussions, of course, we speak in Vietnamese. If someone starts speaking in English, others will look at him/her like *Are you trying to show off?* (AP—International Business—Year 3)

Without sufficient government and institutional policies and strategies to increase the effective use of English in EMI-based programs, local academics and students stumbled upon language barrier for both academic and social functions. As illustrated through classroom happenings, it also undermined the internationalisation of students' experience of the institution.

Academics' and Students' Individual Management to Improve their ELP and Performance in EMI Programs

Academics' Strategies

Academics' action toward English management was done on two aspects: to improve their ELP for teaching and to enhance their students' comprehension and ELP. However, more often than not the goal to enhance students' proficiency through EMI is implicit in HEIs' policies (Airey 2012; Coyle et al. 2010), which does not require VIU academics to be attentive to students' language development.

Despite possessing postgraduate qualifications from EMI institutions overseas, most local academics considered the biggest challenge was to teach in a foreign language. Some expressed the wish to join an English course to improve communicative skills to handle academic teaching:

> I really want to learn a course, a kind of training to improve my daily communication in class… I often attend the lectures conducted by foreign academics to observe how they use English in class and I note down some of their expressions. But I want to attend a course. Teaching the content is easy for me but teaching in English is too difficult. Why the institution with many projects [much money] can't organise a training course like that? (Vietnamese academic 2)

As shown through the above extract, an academic tried different ways to improve her ELP through her simple management of her language skills that she needed to improve her EMI teaching. However, as individual effort was not enough to drastically change teaching quality in EMI, she demanded the type of institution's organised management. This example also questioned the policy that even when an academic found teaching in English 'too difficult' they were still eligible to teach in EMI just because of their overseas degree.

To enhance students' comprehension, academics' most useful strategy was to re-teach parts of the lecture in Vietnamese:

> I used to teach everything in English, but after the president's decision in the university conference on teaching in EMI-bases programs, I now switch to Vietnamese when students do not understand the content that I am teaching. But not much, only when they require, or when I see confusion from their facial expression. (Vietnamese academic 14)

Students reckoned that such practice was of great help for them. However, the aim to improve ELP was not attainable for students because of several reasons. First, academics' ELP was not high enough so students could not learn much English from their lecturers. Second, academics' teaching approach did not include the objective to improve students' English, such as:

Do you pay attention to students' English development?

I think students have English courses from Year 1 to Year 4. Each teacher is responsible for one aspect in the courses that they teach. English teachers improve students' English. My main job is to teach the disciplinary content. Of course I want them to improve their English skills by asking questions and encouraging them to answer in English, or giving them English materials. I'm teaching in English as well. So students are emerged in an English environment. (Vietnamese academic 13)

This academic did not consider her role as 'surrogate language teachers' (Toh 2014, p. 314) but a content teacher (Airey 2012). This situation was not managed properly in the absence of government and institutional regulations on EMI pedagogy. For example, when marking assignments, VIU academics tended not to comment on the language aspects of students' work because they were not trained as language teachers and they were not required to do so. There was only one exception of an academic (Vietnamese academic 16) whose background was an English teacher. As she obtained a second degree in International Business, she moved on to teach disciplinary content in EMI. Her teaching practice aimed at both getting students to understand the content and improve their English skills (e.g., she provided extra tutorials for students on how to handle book chapters, do group projects, write reports and prepare for presentations). Two more academics provided detailed guidance and feedback on students' written assignments and presentation. These instances illustrate the need for extra language and pedagogy training provided through institutional organised management for content teachers so that such practices will become the norm for all EMI academics (Klaassen 2008).

Students' Strategies

With all the obstacle of learning in EMI, students' management was to improve their ELP and how to learn best in EMI. The most common strategy was self-study and self-effort, which was mentioned by all interviewed students because 'learning in EMI required double or triple effort to understand and to retain knowledge in long term memory in English' (HQP—Finance and Banking—Year 3). For instance, to better understand the course content, most students read Vietnamese as well as English materials (e.g. textbooks), some connected with senior students for advice (on courses and programs, academics' teaching styles and ELP, future careers, etc.) and materials, some sit in VMI classes of the same content, some Googled for more explanation either in YouTube or websites. Towards the end of the semester, they searched for past exam papers to prepare themselves with the tests. In class,

students often requested their academics to re-teach parts of the lecture in Vietnamese if they felt it was important to understand these parts. Out of class, students helped each other through pair or group learning. To improve ELP, some paid for courses in language centres, some juniors organised group meetings when everyone had to speak in English. In general, they did not attribute their ELP improvement (if any) to EMI-based programs. To sum up, a student said 'We have hundreds of ways, thousands of tactics to deal with our EMI study (trăm phương, nghìn kế)' (HQP—Finance and Banking—Year 3).

What VIU students were doing to improve their ELP and learning outcomes carries some implications. First, their difficulties were not individual instances but it seemed that all EMI students found it much more demanding learning in a foreign language. Therefore, the institution should have plans to support them in improving the academic English skills they need to learn best in EMI education. Second, an institutional support system was not yet in place for these students. For instance, tutorials, consultation and English language support centres should have been available instead of students having to find information relating to their study through their grapevines (e.g. past exams should be accessible).

Institutional Language Management Regarding Academics and Students' ELP

In this section, the type of language management provided by the institution will be scrutinised, including the management for academics' and students' ELP development and language use in EMI-based classroom.

Institutional Language Management for EMI Academics

In most Vietnamese HEIs additional training is not available to the academics even though empirical evidence has revealed the lack of Vietnamese academics equipped with both disciplinary knowledge and ELP to teach in EMI-based programs (Duong 2009). At VIU, additional English training had once been offered through British Council but it failed to attract academics because of two reasons. First, the content they provided was general English skills, for example, presentation skills or English grammar while what the academics needed was to accommodate their EMI teaching and communicating with students (Freeman et al. 2015). The course was offered without needs analysis or consulting the type of English skills that the academics wanted to improve their work. Second, given the dense teaching timetable that academics had to handle at VIU, it was too difficult for them to arrange extra time travelling to British Council. The course was finally abandoned.

There were two other activities at VIU that were considered professional development for EMI academics. First, as some of the core courses of APs were taught by US professors from partner institutions, Vietnamese academics could come and observe these lecturers to learn not only the subject matter but also teaching approaches from a Western academic perspective. Second, with the government funding for APs, VIU could send some of its academics to US partner institutions to audit some of the courses of their discipline. The purpose was for the local academic to be emerged in the English-speaking environment to refresh their English skills and to mingle with foreign colleagues. In general, these activities were appreciated by local academics but these opportunities were only limited to a certain number of staff.

Institutional Language Management for EMI Students

Before analysing the language management intended for students, it is necessary to note that even though VIU made students' ELP development as one of the dual goals of EMI-based programs, reality of practice showed that VIU took it as the by-product of students' studying in EMI rather than a strategic process. In particular, executives at VIU asserted that when students studied in one of EMI programs, they would 'naturally' become fluent speakers of English without academics' specific attention to language aspects. Therefore, VIU academics were not required or trained to attend students' ELP development and it was the responsibility of English teachers as revealed in the previous sections. This belief is also common for academics in other contexts such as in a Sweden university (Airey 2012). In addition, there was not a connection between English faculty and disciplinary faculties when EMI-based programs were developed at VIU. For example:

> I'm not happy with the current English curriculum for JPs because my students' ELP is low. Now I'm in charge of revising JP English curriculum. Problems arose because the curriculum developer [from English Faculty] did not teach in JPs so she couldn't know what English skills that JP students need. I teach JP students so I know [their English weaknesses]. I will include the feedbacks of academics and students into the new English curriculum. My colleagues from Hanoi University, College of Foreign Languages will help comment on the content. (Executive 11)

This executive officer was also an academic and she had a sharp observation of the English curriculum for JP. Her demand was not unreasonable with academics' and students' needs analysis and feedback to incorporate into the revised curriculum. What was regrettable was her distrust of the English Faculty which should have been in charge of the English-subject curriculum to support EMI students' language needs.

As a consequence of the disconnection between English and academic faculties, the English courses available at VIU for EMI-based programs were not appropriate. For HQPs, English teachers continued to use their current syllabus to teach for both VMI and EMI programs. For example, EMI students learned with package business

English books published by MacMillan or Pearson. In these courses, students learnt business content like marketing, organisation and leadership and practised generic English skills for job application and for the potential workplace such as interviews, presentation, telephone, negotiation and correspondences. In addition, students were taught academic writing and presentation skills. A more recent change was a shift to the teaching of IELTS, focusing only on reading and listening. Both students and academics found this change inappropriate because it did not train students with necessary skills for academic learning.

For APs, students were provided with training in academic English skills of reading, writing, listening and note taking. The fact was that many AP students were ready to study the content in English. Therefore, students recommended that English courses should be provided on demand basis in APs, that is only for those in need.

For one JP, the vice director of the centre had the initiative to invite academics with language background to teach academic course in English (e.g. the case of Vietnamese academic 16 mentioned in previous section). In addition, they had a clear direction that in the first year, students would learn the introductory courses in English and academics would use very simple language to teach the course. The main purpose was to get students understand the content, and at the same time develop basic vocabulary of the discipline. The level of complexity would increase in the coming years. The problem of this approach was that many JP students did not even have the basic ELP to deal with the most basic disciplinary learning. In the other JP, students learnt English in the first year and moved on to the academic majors in the second year. The interview extract provided at the beginning of this section was about the ineffective English-subject curriculum of this JP. Students in these programs also said that they did not have the direction in learning English throughout Year 1 and recommended to integrate some disciplinary learning their first year of university.

The diverse pictures of English-subject curriculum for different EMI-based programs at VIU revealed that cooperation between English and disciplinary faculties was needed to devise appropriate English-support programs for EMI students. English support for students should have been provided in a systematic manner after the screening results for first year students. This could be done through needs analysis surveys, interviews and informal communication between students, academics, and administrative staff in the institution.

Concluding Discussion

The chapter is about the mandate of EMI in a Vietnamese HEI for the purpose of quality improvement and internationalisation. Through EMI, the institution could link up with overseas partners to enhance academic-student-program mobility and to upgrade its position in local as well as regional and probably international HE. In this process, ELP of academics and students played a crucial role as it posed direct impacts on teaching and learning outcomes and the internationalisation of HE at the

classroom level. Therefore, it was expected that the institution had thorough preparation in terms of human resources and approaches to implement EMI. However, realities of practice revealed that the institution only took EMI as the measure to achieve its goals without a strategic language management for academics and students. That reflected the comment that internationalisation activities at Vietnamese HEIs are still 'fragmented, inconsistent and ad hoc' (Tran et al. 2014a, b, p. 128).

Using LMT (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987) as the framework of analysis, the study revealed that EMI in Vietnam HE was mandated in a top-down manner without institution's structured management. The reality of insufficient ELP of academics and students as illustrated through the case study at VIU was not a simple deviation from language norms in communication (Nekvapil 2009) but a systematic deficiency in language competence for academic functions, which demanded organised attention from the institution as well as national level of policy formulation. In particular, when the policy of allowing a foreign language to be the MOI was effective (National Assembly of Vietnam 2012, Article 10) regulations and resources should have been provisioned for personnel development, i.e. teacher training and English support for students for EMI programs. Instead, what was actually done was the encouragement that Vietnamese HEIs to mandate EMI and establish linkage with overseas institutions (N. H. Nguyen 2010). How HEIs have undertaken EMI initiatives depended on their own resources and development agenda. Macro and meso levels of policy formulation should pay attention to what is going on in classroom to empower the academics and students rather than cripple their activities. An academic at VIU bluntly stated:

> Obviously the biggest difficulty in EMI-based programs is language barrier. When I teach in English I have the difficulty of speaking in English. When students listen to my teaching, they have difficulty listening to my lecture. So actually students encounter double difficulties learning in EMI. (Vietnamese academic 7)

The academics' struggle of using English in teaching topped up the difficulty for their students, a scenario that has been considered by Hughes (2008). Therefore, institutions and government have to support academics and students in reducing these language difficulties and increasing the quality of their academic performance. Specifically, as found in this study, disciplinary lecturers need to be equipped with both English-for-teaching proficiency (Freeman et al. 2015) and language-teaching skills (Toh 2014; Wilkinson 2013) to perform well in EMI class and to contribute to the goal of developing students' ELP. English teachers and disciplinary lecturers can work together to improve each other's work: English teachers share English-teaching experiences while disciplinary lecturers can comment on the English-subject curriculum to make it more relevant to EMI students. Collaboration between local and foreign academics should be continued. Seminar and workshop should be organised for all academics to share their difficulties and experience. For the students, it is found that only those with good ELP can learn well in EMI programs (Joe and Lee 2013). Therefore, it is suggested that EMI programs should require students to have high ELP, for example, level C in CEFR (Unterberger 2012). Therefore, in the context of Vietnam, HEIs should review their screening policy and

abandon the use of TOEIC test as the language entry test. In addition, more relevant English-subject curriculum should be in place.

Along with globalisation and internationalisation, English is going to be mandated in increasing number of HEIs worldwide (Doiz et al. 2013). In the same vein, Vietnam is going to see a rise rather than a fall in the number of EMI-based programs in HEIs. In this mission, Vietnam HE has some potential with Vietnamese academics well-equipped with both disciplinary knowledge and English:

> The [Vietnamese] professor I have for [course name] …, his English is very clear. He keeps saying pretty slow, very clear, not talk too fast so if there's a kind of pronunciation that I don't understand then I can understand through the context because he keeps paraphrasing so I can fill in the blanks. He can also add more humour to class than other Vietnamese professors. So I like that. (Foreign student 2)

and students with high proficiency:

> Every day, every week, I've been quite impressed. They write in some way even better than my American students. They write quite well. There're a few of them you can see they're struggling but most are good at writing. (Foreign academic 4)

What is needed is institutions' organised language management, attending academics and students' language needs to support their teaching and learning in the new language environment. Of course it is always easier said than done but if such manner of management does not start now the issues mentioned will continue to problematise academics, students and the internationalisation of Vietnamese HE in the future.

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Part II
Student Mobility, Employability and Contributions

Chapter 8
Historical Trends of Vietnamese International Student Mobility

Chi Hong Nguyen

Introduction

Among the extant literature on Vietnamese student outward mobility, Nguyen (2013) has analysed Vietnamese international student mobility since the early twentieth century. As a continuation of this publication, this chapter further elaborates these trends, and aims to achieve two objectives. First, the author summarises these student outflows since the early years of the twentieth century, concurrently arguing that the mobility of Vietnamese students has always been affected by socio-political and economic transformations. This issue has been similarly discussed in a book chapter by Tran, Marginson and Nguyen (2014), who pointed out that current Vietnamese student outbound mobility has been shaped through the state's attempts in diversifying and internationalising its tertiary education system with flexible and practical governance. Second, the author argues in this chapter that this governance is reflected in the state's ambivalent approach to human capacity building for modernization and industrialisation.

In particular, Vietnamese student outward mobility from the early twentieth century to the national reunification in 1975 accorded with political agendas of political parties who wanted to enhance diplomatic relationships with other countries for economic and military support. The post-1986 period that involved major economic and diplomatic restructurings has observed the current Vietnamese Government's efforts in sending students to study overseas for global integration. Tran and Marginson (see Chap. 1) noted that student and staff mobility has been considered as one of the eight fundamental initiatives employed to improve the quality of the workforce and speed up the process of economic integration into the world's market, though these authors notice that this internationalisation strategy remains as a

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"goal" rather than a "process" (p. 10). Within the global discourse of human capacity building for economic growth, Vietnam has encouraged and, in some cases, financed a large outflow of students to study in western countries to fuel economic growth. The Vietnamese Government has anticipated and encouraged students' return, as well as attracted diaspora contributions for economic development. The ambivalent 'go and return' approach to human capital management of the Vietnamese Government shows their attempts to participate in the global labor market and improve their political image as an 'open' and progressive communist country. Simultaneously, the enforcement of various regulations on selections for students to study overseas and their return after graduation characterises the state's control over international student mobility.

To illustrate these changes in Vietnamese international student mobility, the author begins this chapter by presenting a succinct history of Vietnamese student outflows from the early twentieth century to 1975. The sections that follow show that while the early movements were largely politically driven, recent flows have been shaped by socio-political and economic transformations in both Vietnam and host countries, and by changes in the practices of higher education internationalisation policies in host countries. An ambivalent approach to managing human capital has been adopted to accelerate the modernization process of the country.

Outflows of Vietnamese Students from the Early Twentieth Century to 1975

As noticed by various authors (e.g. Hoang et al. 2017, Chap. 2; Nguyen 2013; Tran et al. 2014), the outflows of Vietnamese students studying overseas emerged during the French colonisation in Vietnam from 1858 to 1954 for political and social status purposes. In terms of political purposes, as noted by Tran et al. (2014, p. 130), the student mobility during this period was directed by the French coloniser who expected to indoctrinate Vietnamese young people with political ideologies and understandings about civilization to serve the colonial regime in Vietnam. The student outflow at that time was also initiated by Vietnamese nationalists who wanted to liberate the country from colonisation through international education. Approximately 200 patriotic young people participated in the 1905–1908 Đông Du (Traveling to the East). As a patriotic nationalist, Phan organized the Hội Duy Tân (Renovation Association) to liberate the country from the French domination through these returning students' dissemination of advanced knowledge from Japan. Through his world-wide sojourns in many countries, Nguyễn Ái Quốc (Hồ Chí Minh) wanted to liberate Vietnam from the French domination by calling for international cooperation, solidarity and assistance from laborers and proletarian workers around the world. This assistance could be obtained through his relations with some emerging communist countries at that time. Following this, to prepare for the foundation of the Vietnam's Communist Party in 1925 and later the Viet Minh Front

(Mặt trận Việt Minh), he sent a group of young people to Qanzhou, China, to study Marxism and Leninism, and another group to Russia to study military (Institute of History Studies 2007).

In terms of social status, a small number of students from royal and wealthy families, usually with political connections to the French administration in Vietnam, studied in France, either by scholarships provided by the French Government or by their families' financial sources. Most talented students and students from these families were attracted to France as "the root of Vietnam's civilization" (Phan 2009, p. 15). McConnell (1989, p. 63) noted that in 1927, there were 150 Vietnamese students gathering at a student conference in Aix-en Province.

After Nguyễn Ái Quốc read the Independence Declaration of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north on September 2nd, 1945, Vietnam was divided into two main parts: the north followed communism, the south and some sections of the central region were placed under the French administration until 1954. The north extended foreign relations to socialist countries, and to Sweden, Senegal, Switzerland, Ceylon, India, Chile, and Pakistan (Nguyen 2006a, b). Accordingly, students were sent to study in the socialist countries with the communist government's careful screening of their political and family background (St. George 2010, p. 34). This flow was seen as a strategy to consolidate relations among the communist countries (Ngo 2011).

In 1970, 725 Vietnamese students studied in Poland, accounting for 28% of all foreign students in this country (Chilczuk 2011, p. 27). During the Cold War, the Soviet Union hosted an estimated number of 50,000 Vietnamese students, many of whom were relatives of war martyrs and those with contributions to the revolutions against France and the US (Embassy of the Russian Federation in Vietnam 2012). These students were expected to become "seeds" that would disseminate knowledge, skills and communist ideologies that they had obtained in their international education journeys to Vietnam upon their return. While most were known to take undergraduate and postgraduate programs, younger students studied at high school and proceeded to university or returned to Vietnam after completion of high school.

International student mobility in the south was directed towards the political agendas of the American-backed government, although the number of students sent to study in western countries was smaller than that in the north. This small number partly resulted from the wider accessibility to the domestic higher education system in the south, as the 1967 Constitution emphasised that higher education was important for development and social equity (Dommen 2001). This was also explained in terms of the Saigon Government's attempts to sustain foreign relations for political and military support from capitalist countries through the Colombo Plan.

After the Commonwealth foreign ministers' meeting in Colombo in 1950, this scholarship program was designed as a measure taken to prevent Asian countries from the domination of communism (Meadows 2011). Instead of popularizing the scholarship program to the wider population, the American-backed administration selected a limited number of talented students with political affiliations to their regime to study in western countries. In 1964, France and the US hosted 1522 and

399 Vietnamese students from the south respectively (Smith et al. 1967, p. 146), and there were around 6000 being subsidized to study in the US until the mid-1970s (Tran et al. 2014, p. 131). In 1975 Australia received the total number of 335 Vietnamese students under this program and another 130 private students (Andressen 1993, p. 228). In general, the outflows of students in the south were largely managed as the government's mechanism in seeking political assistance through their sustainment of foreign relations with western countries. Students' future contributions and the state's attempts to become an ally with western countries were expected to enable the Saigon Government to prevent the invasion of the communist troops from the north.

In 1975, communism spread over to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, making many people who had had socio-political connections with the former American and French administrative regimes leave their home countries as refugees (Thomas 1999). After the war ended in Vietnam in 1975, like all wars, this one ruined the economy, causing mass poverty and starvation. Poverty was exacerbated by the Vietnamese Government's ambition to develop heavy industry for subsequent wars first with China in the north from February to March in 1979, and then against Khmer Rouge in the western south from 1975 to 1989. These events created conditions for super-inflation, reaching its peak of 774.7% in 1986 (The Central Government 2014, p. 4). Rates of unemployment ranged between 20 and 30% in the same year (Cima 1989, p. 786). The 1977 income per capita was only 70 US dollars (USD), and rice production fell 4.5 million tons short of domestic requirements due to lack of fertilizers and insecticides (Nguyen 1983, pp. 27–28).

In terms of political life, from 1975 to the early 1990s, professionals, politicians, and militants working for the former American-backed administration in the south were imprisoned in 're-education camps' (trại cải tạo) in mountainous or forested areas to 'cleanse their brain' of western capitalist ideologies. Owners of private enterprises who were classified as 'bourgeoisies' (tư sản) were sent to 'new economic zones' (vùng kinh tế mới) in uninhabited forested areas to clear land for agricultural production. After 1975, the Vietnamese Government established new economic zones in remote and infertile land to 'tame' professional officials working for the Saigon Government (Hardy 2000, p. 24). Their property was confiscated and transferred to military officers and members of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) (ibid.). Their children were not admitted to university, because the government screened their political and family histories within three immediate generations by using a "class-based principle" (Vasavakul 1994, p. 343). This principle discriminated those with political involvement in the former Saigon regime, bourgeoisies and Chinese-heritage citizens.

The incoming communist leadership and ideology produced dramatic changes in the circumstances of those who were connected with the former political and administrative regime in the south before 1975 (Hardy 2000, p. 24). Many decided to leave the country in fear of northern communists and poverty resulting from changes enforced by the new communist government (Viviani 1984, pp. 5–7). Those who initially departed were army officers, business people, administrative workers, and academics who had worked for the former regime in the south. Later, a broader

section of the population joined this exodus, "ranging from the educated urban elite to farmers and ethnic minorities" (Thomas 1999, p. 6). The number of Vietnamese refugees increased dramatically, from only 5247 departures in 1976 to 3.5 million towards the end of the 1980s (Hitchcox 1990, p. 72). This outflow included an unrecorded number of students in families with connections to the American-backed administration and of Chinese-origin who had difficulty in gaining admission to local universities (Hawthorne 1982).

Demands for Highly Skilled Human Capital after the Vietnam War

To deal with the economic crisis, the Vietnamese Government 'opened' the door with the Đổi Mới Policy in 1986. Perhaps by mimicking China's economic reform focusing on privatization and foreign investment in the late 1970s, the Đổi Mới Policy shifted the centrally planned model of socialism to a "market-oriented socialist economy under the state guidance" (VCP 1986, p. 3). The target of this policy was to industrialise the country by developing a market economy with the participation of multi-economic sectors and economic ownership types, maintaining the substantial control of the state in economic operation towards social equality, and participating in the international market (ibid. pp. 3–10). Like China, Vietnam resisted political reforms towards a democratic multi-party state. Instead, the country embarked on the path to market socialism with the leadership of the VCP and cooperated with the communist bloc as an ally (Beresford 2008, p. 221).

After the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR resulting in the withdrawal of financial and technical support, Vietnam adopted a multilateralism policy in foreign relations to seek economic opportunities in the global market. Politburo Resolution Number 13 issued in 1988 is viewed as an important landmark in Vietnam's foreign relations by withdrawing army troops from Cambodia in 1989, normalizing the foreign relations with China in 1991, and establishing foreign relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as well as other Western, Northern European countries and Japan. This resolution aimed to "expand Vietnam's relations to more developing countries and private enterprises in the capitalist world" (Politburo Resolution Number 13 in 1988 as cited in Thayer 1999, p. 11). Western capitalist countries were no longer seen as 'enemies' but 'friends'.

The 1996 Economic and Social Development Plan announced the government's project for industrialisation and modernization by 2020 (VCP 1996, pp. 2–3). However, despite the large population, in 2010, 6.4% of the population was reported to hold college and university degrees with 0.2% holding postgraduate degrees (General Statistics Office of Vietnam 2010). This skilled shortage is seen to be primarily caused by the low accessibility to higher education and the low quality of teaching and learning at tertiary level (Hayden and Lam 2010; Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2009 & 2010; Nguyen 2002; Vallely and Wilkinson 2008).

According to MOET's 2009 report (MOET 2009, p. 5), the number of Vietnamese student enrolments in 2009 was 1,752,561 within which there were 2505 doctoral students and 30,638 Master's students. In 2015, it was reported that 1.1 million people were unemployed nationwide, with an increase of those holding university and postgraduate degrees but being jobless from 162,000 to 178,000 (VnExpress 2015). This situation has constantly been reported to be caused by the disconnection between curricula and the market demands, as well as the heavy political indoctrination in the curricula, low foreign language skills, insufficient practical experiences, and poor understanding of international regulations (Nguyen 2002, p. 400; VnExpress 2015). In other words, while the demand for highly skilled workforce is growing, the quality of the existing skilled workforce remains low.

To prepare for the industrialisation process, the government expected to increase applications of science and technology in economic production by considering human capacity as the "foremost priority for development to advance the country in the international arena, integrate globally and stabilize the society" (The Central Government 2013, pp. 1 & 13). The 2008 World Bank's report (World Bank 2008, p. xviii) has shown that in Vietnam, an increase of one percentage point in the proportion of tertiary graduates is likely to enable an increase of 0.6% in firm labor productivity. Put another way, the demands for a workforce with university education have played one of the key roles in the industrialisation and modernization process in Vietnam. By prioritizing the development of human capital for this process, the Vietnamese Government aims to participate in the global knowledge economy.

The dominant discourse of the global knowledge economy has argued for greater emphasis on highly skilled workers who are believed to increase economic productivity through their "production, distribution and use of knowledge and information" in high-technology industries, which lead to economic growth (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 1996, p. 7). Similarly, the 2001 Plan for Socio-economic Development in Vietnam from 2001 to 2006 set targets to improve the quality of the workforce to 30% with formal training to "meet with the global technological revolution and build a solid foundation for industrialisation by 2020" (VCP 2001, p. 18).

To improve the quality of the workforce, the government issued Decision Number 579/QD-TTg on Vietnam's Human Capacity Building Strategy in 2011. This decision specified the government's plans to train 2,170,500 highly skilled workers and tertiary lecturers in public administration, policy planning, international law, science, technology, healthcare, finance, banking and information technology from 2010 to 2020 (The Central Government 2011, p. 3). In preparation for steps to achieve the target of this decision, the government expanded the number of higher education institutions from 103 in 1993 to 322 in 2007, with 212 twinning training programs with foreign universities (Hayden and Lam 2010, pp. 16–17; MOET 2009, p. 9; Vietnam International Education Development [VIED] 2013). One of the objectives of this transformation is to universalize higher education to a wider population to meet the demands for a skilled workforce during the preparation process for industrialisation (World Bank 2008, p. xii).

Further, expenditures on education have been prioritized as the third largest social investment from less than 10,000 billion Vietnamese dong (VND)[1] before 1996 to 12,677 billion VND in 2000 and 63,547 billion VND in 2008 (The Central Government 2012, p. 1). However, the World Bank's report (2008, p. xxxi) has noted that funding in higher education remained relatively small, with only 0.5% of the GDP in 2002, whereas the higher education reform might need an annual amount of 2.3% in the period between 2006 and 2020. Since 2005, the reform agenda has also targeted to increase the gross enrolment rate in higher education to 45% in which, by 2020, 20% of students will attend selective research-oriented universities (Harman et al. 2010, p. 3).

In addition, as discussed by Hoang, Tran and Pham (see Chap. 2), the Vietnamese government has employed several strategies and measures to increase global integration and higher education competitiveness by offering programs using English as a medium of instruction and joint programs, obtaining agreements on educational credential equivalences with foreign educational providers. These programs encourage the return of Vietnamese diaspora, as and improve faculties' teaching and research capacity. Sending students to study overseas has been practiced at student, institution and government levels. The author of this chapter further adds that this strategy has also been employed in concert with the international level which is facilitated through the government's multilateralism policies. Specifically, aiming to improve the quality of teaching and research as stated in Decision 579/QD-TTg, the government has attempted to reach up to 35% of academics with doctoral degrees in 2020 by sending 1000 lecturers and students to foreign countries every year to undertake Master's and doctoral programs through the government's scholarship schemes (Projects 322 and 165), local governments' scholarship programs, and international scholarships (see also Chap. 2; MOET 2009, 2010). International scholarship sources are sought through bilateral agreements in technical and economic assistance between Vietnam and other countries. VIED, the management division of the Vietnamese Government's scholarship, is also actively seeking tuition exemption and reduction from universities in foreign countries.

The government also established the Center for Vietnam's Human Capacity Development and its website publishing regulations, decisions and decrees on human capital building.[2] Many successive regulations on human capacity building that have been announced on this website aim to encourage students to study in Asian and western countries that have bilateral relations with Vietnam. Utilizing the expansion of diplomatic ties with 176 countries and trade ties with more than 120 countries (Nguyen 2008, p. 1), the state has employed a "go" approach in increasing its domestic human capital stock (Nguyen 2014, p. 186) by allowing freer permission for outbound student mobility.

The Vietnamese Government has also sent unskilled labor surplus and skilled workers to other countries as a measure to participate in the global market and

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[1] At the time of this book chapter writing, one VND = 0.00006 Australian dollar (AUD) and 0.00004 euro.

[2] Available at: http://ptnlvn.gov.vn/baiviet.aspx?id=350

improve the quality of the workforce after laborers return (The Central Government 2011, p. 2). Decree 152/1999/ND-CP described sending laborers and skilled workers to work overseas as a "social and economic activity" which contributes to human capital development, employment solutions, increasing national revenues, and enhancing bilateral relations between Vietnam and the world (Ministry of Justice [MOJ] 1999, p. 1). Encouragement for professionals to seek employment overseas on a self-initiation basis was also included in the latter part of this decree as a strategy for the government to "go deeper in the multilateral relations with other international friends" (ibid. p. 5).

In the year 2000, unskilled and skilled labor export produced a revenue of 1.5 billion to two billion USD, equivalent to 6% of the country's total export value (Dang et al. 2003, p. i). In 2011, Vietnam received a total amount of 9 billion USD from international remittances generated by both Vietnamese refugees and migrants, accounting for 8% of the GDP (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC][3] 2012, p. 1). While international mobilities used to be associated with betrayal to the nation after the war, recent movements of students as well as skilled and unskilled people have been directed under the government's dual project for improving the quality of the workforce and changing the political image of a communist "troublemaker" in the international arena (Thayer 1999, p. 11). This project is enacted for regional and global integration.

In this context, current professional migration has taken place through designated labor export programs and personal initiatives. In the latter tendency, skilled workers with their foreign language proficiency, usually English, and professional knowledge can migrate to another country which has bilateral relations with Vietnam, such as Australia, the US, the UK, Italy, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada (Dang 2007, p. 8). This group also includes students who have studied overseas but do not return after graduation, or return but migrate again for work (Nguyen 2013).

However, the number of self-initiated professional migrants is not properly recorded due to the separate management mechanisms between three ministries: Ministry of Labor – Invalids and Social Affairs (responsible for work contracts and arrangements), Ministry of Public Security (responsible for issuing passports and recording arrivals and departures), and MOET (responsible for student scholarship management). In some sense, the unrecorded (or perhaps, unpublished) number of self-initiated skilled migrants shows the Vietnamese Government's ambivalent governance of talent. On the one hand, this governance represents the VCP's efforts in improving democracy for global integration in which mobilities are internationally recognised as a part of human rights. On the other hand, the government may attempt to conceal the outflows of skilled people that could be judged as one of the failures of the nation in the global race for talent. This failure, which is commonly referred to as 'brain drain', is often seen as ineffective socio-political governance.

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[3] The Department of Immigration and Citizenship of Australia (DIAC) has changed its name to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) since September 2013.

This ambivalent governance of human capital is also reflected in the ways brain drain is created as a political discourse for national development projects. Since 2000, references to brain drain have become ubiquitous in official Vietnamese media coverage (e.g. Duong 2002; Huynh 2004; Kotze 2012; Song 2007; The 2011). However, there is little available statistical information on the number of professional emigrants and non-returning students, except the findings by Docquier and Rapoport (2011, p. 7) which briefly mention that Vietnam is one of the countries with the highest rates of brain drain, amounting to 26.9% of the trained stocks.

To confront the possibility of students' non-return, the government employs two main strategies to call for the return of students. First, in order to mitigate the non-return of students and migrant workers, the government issued several decrees (e.g. Decrees 81/2003/NĐ-CP and 144/2007/ND-CP), which impose financial penalties to their families in Vietnam, confiscating the deposit fees and prohibiting them from working abroad for five years if they return later (MOJ 2003, p. 15). In terms of students studying overseas through international and Vietnamese scholarships, MOET requires them to sign a contract of work in Vietnam after return for three times longer than the students' study durations in foreign countries. A violation of this contract may lead to prosecution and confiscation of their relatives' properties (see e.g. VIED 2011). The second strategy aims to call for the return of Vietnamese refugees and non-returning privately-funded students as a measure to mitigate the current brain drain.

While brain drain has happened as a worldwide phenomenon since the 1960s (Bhagwati 2004; Olesen 2002), sending countries have begun to call for the return of expatriates by offering attractive incentives. Vietnam is no exception. In addition to the practice of diaspora engagement policies, the Vietnamese Government also uses public media to tell stories about 'successful returnees' including high-ranking officials working for the former American-backed administration before 1975, entertainers who left as boat refugees or in family reunion programs, academics who have won international prizes, successful entrepreneurs, and tycoons residing overseas (see also Chap. 2; Nguyen 2013, p. 130). On the one hand, the Vietnamese Government uses the media as a tool to discipline the internal population by perpetuating nationalism and patriotism to discourage people from leaving the country for work and residency. This rhetoric can serve as a strategy to retain the domestic skilled workforce to prevent brain drain. On the other hand, aiming to become a modern and democratic country, the government seeks to discard its former image as a 'communist trouble-maker'. Attracting diasporic contributions as 'brain gain' for development is one strategy.

One of the objectives of the multilateralism politics of the Vietnamese Government is to reach out to Vietnamese refugee communities and non-returning students who are called to return for contributions in the guise of "ethnic solidarity" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA] 2007, p. 1). The government has created favorable conditions for the returns of expatriates by providing them with legal status and practical incentives. For example, Decree Number 135/2007/QD-TTg allows overseas Vietnamese residents to have their visas exempted because the government wants "to create favorable conditions for overseas Vietnamese to come back, visit their

homeland and relatives, and worship their ancestors" (ibid. p. 1). Further, since Decree Number 24/2008/QH12 was put into effect, Vietnamese expatriates have been able to retain their Vietnamese citizenship in case they live in countries which accept dual citizenships (MOJ 2009). Then, not only are Vietnamese citizens but also those who are spouses or children of Vietnamese citizens now permitted to enter Vietnam without visa following the effect of Decree Number 82/2015/ND-CP in 2015 (MOFA 2015). In practice, the diaspora strategies offer generous incentives in terms of salaries, accommodation, tax, and academic research to overseas Vietnamese people upon their return (The Central Government 2011).

Current Vietnamese International Student Mobility

Under the influences of the current ambivalent governance of human capital, the number of Vietnamese students studying overseas has increased. The government has reported that the number of students studying overseas was 60,000 in 2008 and reached to 125,000 in 2013 in 49 countries (An 2015; Foreign Press Centre 2008). This current number accounts for approximately 3.1% of the global number of more than 4 million tertiary students studying overseas in 2013 (OECD 2015, p. 352). Despite the incomplete data on the number of Vietnamese students in various countries, especially in northwestern Europe, Nguyen (2013, p. 134) provides an overall picture of this trend in some most popular host countries, with the largest outflows to the Asia-Pacific region.

Being the most popular study destination for international students in the world, the US hosts the largest number of Vietnamese students, with 14,888 students in 2011 and 18.722 in 2015 (Institute of International Education 2015, p. 1). Nguyen (2013, p. 133) assumed that because the US was the most popular receiving country for Vietnamese refugees after 1975 and family reunion immigration, amounting to 1.5 million people in 2010 (US Census Bureau 2010, p. 14), the established Vietnamese communities in the US may have certain impacts on the Vietnamese student inflow to this country. The attraction of the US to Vietnamese students may also result from the international reputation of US higher education and the high rankings of some US world-class institutions. The Vietnamese student inflow may be further shaped by the US skilled migration programs that give priority to foreign workers with at least a Bachelor's degree in demanded specializations through the assessment of H-1B Visa scheme. As Knight (2011) posited in Australia's education-related immigration policies with implications to the US skilled migration schemes, "there will always be a link between study and migration – even if only in the minds of prospective migrants" (p. 4). Similarly, Vietnamese students may aspire to choose the US as a study destination first, and permanent residency later. In Vietnam's context, permission to study in the US is open to Vietnamese students of all backgrounds, as far as they can secure financial sources through self-funding or scholarship programs, as well as obtain admissions from US educational institutions and meet visa requirements. The Vietnamese Government's relaxed impositions

on selecting students to study in the US have been further enhanced by the removal of the US trade embargo against Vietnam in 1994, normalization of diplomatic ties in 1995, and successive bilateral agreements in socio-political, economic and educational aspects (Embassy of the United States in Vietnam 2010). The international student mobility schemes from and to Vietnam in the US (and other internationalisation practices in education such as permission granted for US universities to run campuses in Vietnam, and run joint or twinning programs at Vietnamese universities) are the effects of the two governments' foreign relations and the Vietnamese Government's commitment to consolidating its image of a democratic state in the international arena.

A similar scenario may too happen to the Vietnamese student mobility to Australia. The foreign relations between Australia and Vietnam were established in 1973, and have been strengthened through the Comprehensive Partnership signed in 2009 (Australian Embassy in Vietnam 2009). As indicated in this governmental document, both countries have agreed to "deepen and expand cooperation on public policy planning and development" as well as expand political ties through information exchanges, exchanges of personnel, training and human capital development (ibid.). The Australian Government's commitment to providing technical and financial support to Vietnam through education aspects is explicitly present in the large outflows of Vietnamese students in Australia. As the 2nd most popular destination country for Vietnamese students, Australia has received an increasing number of Vietnamese students from 1851 in the program year 2002–2003 to 8376 in 2010–2011 and to 20,693 in June 2015, making Vietnam currently the 3rd largest source country of international students in this country (DIAC 2011; Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP] 2015a, p. 66). With its internationally recognised higher education and education-related migration systems, Australia has emerged as one of the major players in the world's international education industry. The international recognition of Australian education credentials was reported as one of the key drivers among Vietnamese students' choice to study in Australia (Nguyen 2006a, p. 10). Another reason that contributes to the growth of Australia's international education export results from its education-related migration schemes. The Australian Government has targeted to attract skilled immigrants and retain Australia-educated graduates to work on a permanent basis to promptly fill in the domestic skilled labor shortage and strengthen national competitive edge in building the knowledge economy (Shah and Burke 2005, p. 5). The link between Australian international education and skilled migration schemes has been explicitly manifest in the skilled migration policy put into effect since July 1999 (Koleth 2010, p. 5). Accordingly, Australia-educated applicants have been given priority over other skilled foreigners through the points test – a mechanism used to select skilled migrants who are expected to fill in skilled labor shortages in Australia (DIAC 2011, p. 1). This test has awarded additional points to applicants who obtained their diplomas or degrees from Australian institutions, plus 15 points for a Bachelor's or Master's degree and 20 points for a doctoral degree (DIAC 2011). This priority enhanced the ability of eligible former and current overseas students to migrate to Australia from 1999 to 2009 (Koleth 2010, p. 8), producing an increasing

number of 283,000 students-turned-migrants from 2001 to 2010 (DIAC 2010, p. 49), with recent density in Northern Territory and the state of South Australia (DIBP 2015b, pp. 30 & 38). In other words, the Australian Government has embraced a dual national project of education export and skilled immigration for economic growth. Therefore, international students may choose to study in Australia first, and apply for permanent residency visas after graduation by achieving the passing score in the points test. Accordingly, Vietnamese skilled migration to Australia is increasing, making Vietnam the 9th largest migrant-sending country in Australia in 2006–2010 with 2228 Vietnamese skilled migrants many of whom hold Australian qualifications (DIAC 2010. p. 68).

France was another large host country for approximately 2500 Vietnamese students in 2004 and 6000 in 2011 (Nguyen 2013, p. 134; Vietnamese Diplomatic Missions 2004). Each year, France receives 400–600 Vietnamese students with scholarships. The introduction of the French language has recently rolled back to Vietnam's education system, since Vietnam joined the International Organization of the Francophonie of 220 million French speakers in 1970 and received a large injection of financial aid mainly from France (Embassy of France in Vietnam 2012). Within the period between the late 1990s and mid-2000s, France annually provided around 10 million euros for Vietnam to assist in French language teaching and learning, postgraduate training in economic management and aviation law, as well as other aspects of social development (Vietnamese Diplomatic Missions 2004). Since the late 1990s, Vietnam has sent 17,000 students to France, with 10% through the Vietnamese Government's and bilateral scholarships (Wright 2008, p. 60). Nguyen (2013, p. 135) acknowledged that a majority of Vietnamese students choose France as a study destination because of the high international rankings of its higher education. Students' preference of France is also enhanced by the French Government's subsidy of 90% of tuition fees, as well as permission for international students to work up to 964 hours a year, allowing them to self-finance their living expenses.

Russia received 4917 Vietnamese students in 2006, a lower figure than the period during the Cold War (Nguyen 2013, p. 134). From 1950 to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia constantly provided significant support to the north government from 1954 to 1975 and to Vietnam's development process after 1981, although some support was assigned as long-term debts (Chesnokov 2011). The current Vietnamese student flow to Russia is largely managed by the two governments through the scholarship schemes, with 1500 Vietnamese students being sponsored by the Debt Processing Agreement between Russia and Vietnam, the Russian Federation scholarships, Projects 911 and 165, and another 3500 being sponsored by inter-governmental agencies and companies (Embassy of the Russian Federation in Vietnam 2012).

Within the Asia-Pacific region, Japan has become another popular study destination for Vietnamese students, with more than 5000 in 2011 (Nguyen 2013, p. 134). The current student mobility to Japan is shaped through the influences of the foreign relations between the two countries established in 1973 that are enhanced by high-level visits and signings of bilateral economic agreements (Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Japan 2012). Further, driven by the Vietnamese Government's strategy to improve the quality of the internal workforce and to improve economic returns since 1991, many Vietnamese students have been sent to Japan under the industrial traineeship, reaching a peak of 14,305 in 1994 (Nguyen 2013, p. 136). The growing number of Vietnamese students and trainees in Japan accords with Japan's attempts to increase competitive advantage in the global international education industry. In particular, Nguyen (ibid.) noted that the Japanese Government launched the *"300,000 Foreign Students Plan"* to remain competitive with Germany and France in terms of international education. Because the number of international students accounts for 10% of the total enrolments, which is lower than that of Germany and France, Japan has aimed to increase this figure by another 3% in 2020. The expansion of international education enables the Japanese Government to enrich the domestic skills pool, expand international networks, enhance mutual understanding, and contribute to global stability and world peace (Study in Japan 2012). Japanese international education has been widely advertised through public media and at a growing number of Japanese language schools in Vietnam. As Nguyen (2013, p. 137) added, learning Japanese and going to Japan for study and work has become a fashionable trend now in Vietnam.

Since 2009, China has received 12,500 Vietnamese students with a majority taking Chinese language programs (Nguyen 2013, p. 134). The growth of Vietnamese students in China shows Vietnam's diplomatic strategies in sustaining the friendship with this neighboring country, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam once aimed to "sell relatives who live far, but buy close neighbors" [which means people who live far are not as important as those who live nearby] (MOFA 2012, p. 3). In addition, according to Nguyen (2013, p. 137), the large number of Vietnamese students with many taking Chinese language programs results from the cultural attachments to China among Chinese-origin Vietnamese people that accounted for more than 1.13% of Vietnamese population. China has also emerged as a popular choice for Vietnamese students because of the affordable tuition fees, subsidized accommodation, and close geographical proximity. This growth also reflects China's attempts to internationalise its education as an export industry (Verbik and Lasanowski 2007, p. 22). In the international education market, China is known to mimic successful practices of higher education internationalisation in other countries by shortening the "exploratory period" (ibid. p. 23) in developing competitive recruitment strategies. Further, the Chinese Government has attempted to enhance its international reputation in through large investments (of 4% of their GDP in 2012) in higher education, enabling several universities in Mainland China to obtain high rankings in the league of top 100 universities in the world (Wang 2010). However, little is known about how Vietnamese student flows to China may be affected by the territorial dispute between Vietnam and China over the South China Sea that has recently escalated.

Like China, Taiwan hosted 3282 Vietnamese students in 2010, with 42% taking Mandarin language programs (Nguyen 2013, p. 134). In addition to attracting international students to study Mandarin, Taiwan offers international postgraduate programs conducted in English with a low requirement of English and competitive

tuition fees of around $3600 a year (National Taiwan University 2012). With the attempt to internationalise its education system through using English as a medium of instruction, Taiwan aims to create a rich culture with an English-friendly speaking environment that can be served as one of the platforms for this island to reach out to the world (Taiwan Ministry of Education 2006).

In Southeast Asia, Singapore is the most popular host country Vietnamese students, with 10,000 at all levels since 1992 (Nguyen 2013, p. 134). In addition to the geographical proximity to Singapore, Vietnamese students find Singapore's internationally recognised qualifications beneficial for their future employment prospects. International student inflows to Singapore are also enabled by the Singaporean Government's investment in education, aiming to establish a knowledge and education hub through the Global Schoolhouse Project launched in 2002. This project has attempted to create networks of creativity, ideas, knowledge, and technology by drawing in world-class universities with global talents who can create knowledge and drive the knowledge economy (Old and Thrift 2004 as cited in Sidhu 2005, p. 52). As such, Asian students can study either with Singapore's universities or world-class universities. International students can also apply for Singapore's scholarship programs which are designed to attract talented students and enrich its human capital for economic growth.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the author has sketched the historical trends of Vietnamese international student mobility by reviewing one of his former publications (see Nguyen 2013). Vietnamese international student mobility has gone through a long history of more than a century, although there are significant differences in terms of scale and intension between the periods. The author pointed out that the recent outflows of Vietnamese students to western and Asian countries have been shaped by sociopolitical and economic transformations in Vietnam, as well as by migration policies and changing practices of higher education internationalisation in host countries. As such, understanding international student mobility requires us to go beyond the national scape to the broader transformations happening in host countries and the region.

In Vietnam's context, international student mobility in the past was shaped by political agendas among political parties. Recent outflows have been initiated and controlled through the current Vietnamese Government's ambivalent governance of human capital for the industrialisation process. Aiming to improve the lack of a highly skilled workforce, the current government has increased the accessibility to higher education, and sent students to study overseas through scholarship programs and students' self-financing sources. I also argued that the lack of data on the movements and return of students currently causes a supposed brain drain. To mitigate brain drain, the government has employed various diaspora strategies and requirements upon students' return to attract their contributions in terms of technological

transfer, economic capital, and professional networks. The government considers outbound Vietnamese students as politicized subjects through their governance of student mobility for social and political development purposes. Rather than being assessed through a set of skills and knowledge, human capital is indirectly quantified through the numbers of people who have (Western) degrees. Thus, credential inflation, particularly with western degrees being associated as a recognition of social status, becomes an inevitable consequence of this quantification. In sending students to study in western countries as an internationalisation measure for integration into the global market, the government values western countries as models, sources of knowledge and civilization that Vietnam wants to mimic, so that they can pay little cost for experiment and speed up the improvement of human capital. This perception, in some sense, further classifies western universities as hierarchical points of reference.

The author has also noticed in this chapter that human capital in Vietnam has been considered as a diplomatic, socio-political and economic commodity to increase national competitive advantage for development. This public commodity is socially shared, and is used by the government to improve the image of the democratic society in the global labour market. It is produced by the cooperation efforts among the state, governments in other countries, domestic and foreign universities, as well as students. Human capital accumulated from the number of citizens obtaining western educational degrees, labour migrants, and returning expatriates represents the government's successful efforts in improving democracy, enriching the nation's revenue, and reaching out to the global market. In this way, highly skilled human capital can allow Vietnam to extend its image as a 'friendly' communist country in the international market and politics. Therefore, investment in education is not just *good* for individuals, but it is also *good* for the whole nation.

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Chapter 9
International Students' Choice of Destinations for Overseas Study: A Specific Push-Pull Model for Vietnam

Hiep-Hung Pham

Introduction

Aside from China and India, too big to compare to other nations, Vietnam is one of the biggest sources of international students across the world. According to data of Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, there were 125,000 mobile Vietnamese students across the globe (An 2015). In another estimation conducted by OECD (2012), Vietnam contributed 55,551 overseas students, 14th among the source countries for overseas students.

In relation to the growth rate, the comparative figure for Vietnam is even more impressive. The number of Vietnamese people leaving the country for degree/certificate-seeking purpose has increased markedly. Between 2006 and 2010, this number grew 2.1–fold. Within the same period, among other sourcing countries, only Nigeria had a greater growth rate of departing students (see Table 9.1).

Examination of student decision making over foreign study destinations should be an inseparable part of the discussion on the Internationalisation of the higher education system in Vietnam. This chapter investigates macro-environmental factors influencing the outflow of Vietnamese students leaving their home country to undertake education abroad. The first part of the chapter adapts materials from the literature review to develop a model exhibiting the main push-pull factors underpinning students' decision making about offshore education. Students are "pushed" to study abroad by a variety of factors in their home countries, and in the same time, are also "pulled" by attributes pertaining to the host country (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). The model reflects a typical pattern of student outflow from developing nations. Due to the underdevelopment or unavailability of the tertiary education at home and attracted by the superiority, advancement and opportunities from developed economies, a substantial number of Vietnamese students choose North

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Table 9.1 List of top sourcing countries of international students in 2006 and 2010

Sourcing countries of international students	Number of overseas student 2006	Number of oversea student 2010	Growth rate between 2006–2010
China	451,526	636,354	1.4
India	148,116	226,056	1.5
Korea	103,825	136,592	1.3
Germany	78,242	123,229	1.6
Turkey	56,984	78,968	1.4
France	65,780	77,653	1.2
Russia	49,200	68,626	1.4
Malaysia	43,969	60,624	1.4
Italy	40,265	59,024	1.5
Morocco	55,189	57,007	1.0
US	49,325	56,987	1.2
Iran	28,811	55,956	1.9
Kazakhstan	36,628	55,713	1.5
Vietnam	26,278	55,551	2.1
Nigeria	23,574	54,591	2.3

Source: Author synthesized from OECD (2008), OECD (2012)

America and Europe as destinations for their educational purpose, while fewer outbound students choose countries with similar level of development to Vietnam, or more proximate in terms of geographical location.

In the second part, anecdotal evidence is provided; revealing that in recent times, the relative importance of the influential factors discussed in the first half of the chapter has slowly but steadily changed. The drivers of these changes will also be discussed.

A Specific Model of Pull-Push Factors Underlining Vietnamese Students Studying Abroad

Over the past three decades, factors impacting students' decision to study abroad have been robustly examined. Agarwal and Winkler (1985) focused on the flow of students from the developing world who studied in US during Cold War era. McMahon (1992) proposed one of the first pull-push models to illuminate student outflow from developing to developed countries during the 1960s–1970s. Recent studies investigate the flow of mobilised students not only from South to North countries as previously (Chen and Zimitat 2006; Chen 2007); but also from South to South countries (Bodycott and Lai 2012; Lee 2014); North to North countries (McCarthy et al. 2012); or a mixture of multidirectional flows, that is South to South, South to North, North to South and North to North (Barnett et al. 2015).
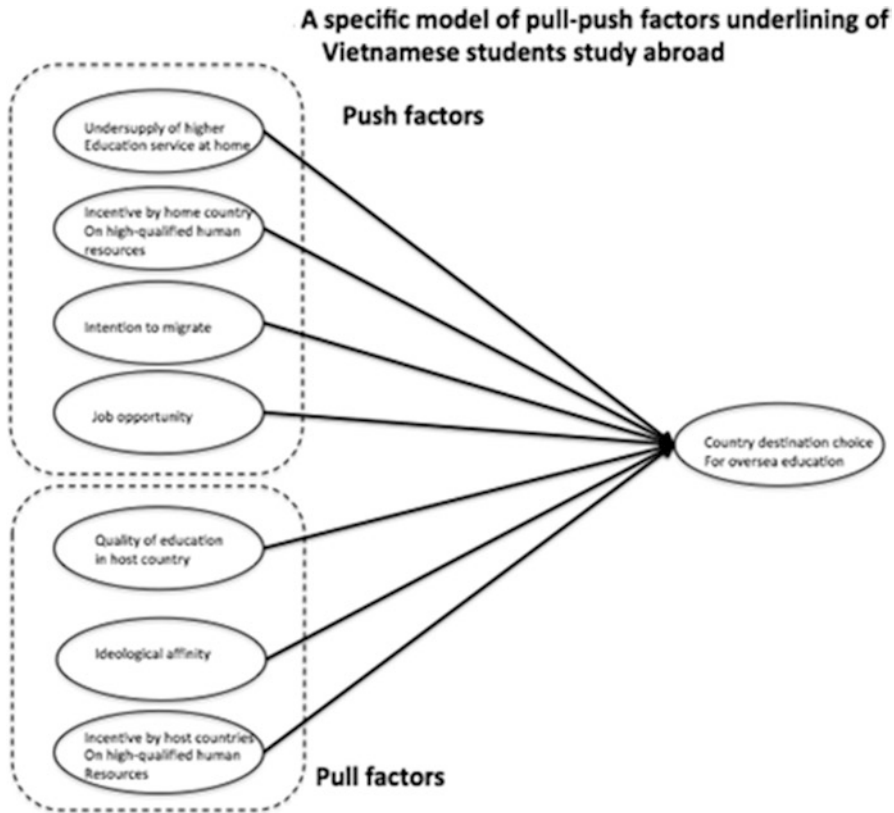
Fig. 9.1 A specific model of pull-push factors underlining of Vietnamese students study abroad

In this chapter, a specific push-pull model has been built, which deploys the most significant factors affecting the study abroad decisions of Vietnamese students (see Fig. 9.1). This model may also be applicable to other developing countries.

Push Factors

Undersupply of Higher Education Service at Home

Low accessibility of higher education in the home country is a traditional reason for the outflow of students from developing to developed countries (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). Vietnam is not an exception. Despite the sharp expansion of the higher education sector over the previous three decades, Vietnam has not yet provided sufficient places for high-school leavers who want to undertake higher education at home (Ashwill 2006). According to data issued by World Bank, in 2013, among 100 people between 18 and 23 years old, only 25 were students at post-secondary level

(The World Bank 2016). A feature article published by VTC News (VTC 2015) estimated that universities and colleges in Vietnam would provide 400,000 places for new intake students in academic year 2015–2016, while 1,000,000 candidates were registered. When the domestic capability of higher education does not satisfy demand, students, especially those from middle and high-income classes, will tend to choose cross-border education as an alternative.

Another aspect of inaccessibility is the unavailability or undersupply of courses in Vietnam in certain fields, especially new, state-of-art and interdisciplinary fields. This problem partly stems from the centralized regulation of curriculum management and development. The Ministry of Education and Training still controls the portfolio of degree-granted courses in both public and private higher education institutions. In almost all cases, universities and colleges do not have full authorization to open courses by themselves, and as a consequence are passive in responding to new and emerging demands from prospect students and industry. Some students leave Vietnam to access courses that may satisfy their specific educational requirements. For instance, a survey conducted by Center for Human Resource Forecast and Labour Information in 2013 revealed that the choice of non-traditional courses such as food technology, biotechnology or petroleum has bring better jobs with higher salary for graduate returnees from abroad than those who selected traditional courses such as banking, finance or accounting (VnExpress 2013).

Incentive by Home Country on High-Qualified Human Resources

In many emerging countries, encouraging and supporting young people to study abroad, in the hope that they will return to the motherland or someday contribute to the development of the home country "remotely" through remittances or via the diaspora network, is seen as a key measure for the long-run development of higher education as well as the economic system. Examples of countries that have successfully used such a policy of "strategic brain drain" or "labour export" include India, the Philippines and Oman (Ziguras and McBurnie 2015).

The government of Vietnam has made extensive use of the aforementioned strategy. With consistent emphasis upon the importance of skilled young manpower, in the last decade the Vietnamese government has introduced a number of programs to send staff working in academic and public sectors abroad to undertake cross-border education.

In 2000 the so-called '322' Program, was launched under the auspice of Ministry of Education and Training. This aims to send young faculty staff and government officers to developed countries for the attainment of mostly Master and PhD degrees. By the end of 2011, an estimated 4590 young high performing Vietnamese had been sent to study abroad under the '322' Program (Thanh niên 2012). In addition there is the '911' program, considered as the second phrase of the '322' and started in 2012. This has a similar objective to '322' but eligible recipients have been nar-

rowed down to among faculty and staff working in the academic sector only. Using a similar strategy to program '322' and '911', project '165' was introduced in 2009, with a plan to send about 200 central and provincial young officials annually to study in developed countries, mostly in public administration and public policy fields (Tạp chí Cộng sản 2014).

It has been estimated that, all in all, in the 2000–2011 period the Vietnamese government invested 4000 billions VND (approximately equal to 200 million USD) to send high-performing youngers to pursue education overseas (Tin mới 2012).

This policy has brought young people opportunities to enjoy superior education abroad and then return and contribute to the development of the country. But there are limitations and troubles pertaining to this policy that have been identified by education observers. One example is the argument of Professor Pierre Darriulat, a famous French physicist and astronomer, who has spent more than 10 years teaching and conducting research in Physics in Hanoi. Answering *University World News* in 2013 (Pham 2013b), Professor Darriulat said: "[programs to send young faculty abroad] would lead to a catastrophic brain drain … if there is no follow-up to make a good use of their skills and talents at home". Indeed, data issued by Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnamnet 2011) indicate that between 2000 and 2010, there were 33 recipients of '322' Program support who eventually never come back, although returning to the home country after graduation had been set as conditional requirement of their acceptance of support under the Program.

Intention to Migrate

The end purpose of students from low-income countries is often migration and residence in the host country after graduation. Douglas and Edelstein (2009) note that in the case of the United States as a receiving country, several thousands of immigrants from developing countries had initially entered the US in search of engineering education degrees, but eventually decided not to return to home countries and took jobs in Silicon Valley instead.

In Vietnam, migration is an increasing motivator for parents to invest in cross-border education. Many hope that their children would obtain citizenship or permanent residency in host countries in the future. This tendency is matched by the ubiquity of advertisements issued by overseas education consultant agencies, who encourage such thoughts of migration after graduation. For example, an advertisement achieved from *duhoc.dantri.com.vn* (Du học Dân trí 2015), a supplement site of Dân trí, a heavily trafficked online media agency in Vietnam dedicated specifically to "overseas education", illustrate this: "At this moment, the Canadian government is loosening its policy on employment and immigration for international students. Students are allowed to stay in Canada for working up to three years after their bachelor's program. They are also eligible to submit their documents for immigration in Manitoba [Canada] after only six months".

Job Opportunity

Job opportunities after graduation are another important push driver that has encouraged the outbound flow of Vietnamese students. Job opportunities have two aspects: (i) job in host country or in a third country after graduation and (ii) job in Vietnam when the students return. To some extent the former aligns with the "intention to migrate" push factor, as discussed. The later driver, job opportunities in Vietnam upon graduation from overseas education, is the focus of this section.

Although there are no available data in Vietnam confirming that on average, people holding foreign education degrees have found better jobs after graduation than their peers with only domestic degrees, anecdotal evidences supports this view. Vietnamese recruiters, either from public or private sector, normally appreciate people with foreign degrees more than domestic ones. There is implicit or explicit favouritism for foreign-degree holders not only in the recruitment process but also in staff promotion. For instance, in early 2015, the People Committee of Hanoi implemented a new regulation in officer recruiting, promulgating that candidates holding distinguished degrees from overseas institutions would be exempt from regular entrance tests and would be recruited directly. Other candidates would have to go through the whole recruitment procedure (Vietnamnet 2015).

Pull Factors

Quality of Education in Host Country

The quality of higher education in developed countries is superior to the average standard of higher education in Vietnam. The absence of Vietnamese universities in global ranking tables such as those of the *Times Higher Education*, or the Academic Ranking of World Universities, and the scarcity of Vietnamese courses that are accredited by reputable international quality assurance bodies, reflects the comparative underdevelopment of Vietnam's higher education system.

Thus it is not surprising that, in a recent study conducted by the Institute of International Education (2010), among other factors, "quality and type of academic programs" were selected as the most significant reason cited for Vietnamese students undertaking post-secondary education in the US. Perception of the advanced quality of foreign degrees is the number one factor that impinges on the choice of destination country for education.

Ideological Affinity

Ideological affinity was the traditional factor in the selection of countries to study abroad during the Cold War period and previously in the colonial time (Varghese 2008). According to Healey (2008), both Western and Eastern great power countries

sought to maintain close relationships and interdependency by providing scholarships and fellowships to young children of the elite class in students' home countries. France, Russia and US are the three countries that had the strongest political and economical tie to Vietnam. During the colonial era (1850s–1950s), some thousands of young people were sent to study in France on the basis of self-funding or with fellowships offered by the French government. Notable figures that studied in France during this period were Trần Đại Nghĩa (former President of Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology), Tạ Quang Bửu (former Minister of Education), Nguyễn Văn Huyên (former Minister of Education) and Nguỵ Như Kon Tum (former Rector of Hanoi Comprehensive University) (see Chap. 8).

During the Cold War Vietnamese students were diverted into two opposite directions (Ziguras and McBurnie 2015). While in the North, young people were sent to the Soviet Union (the former name of Russia) and other countries in Eastern Europe via government-to-government programs, their peers in the South went o to the Western World. The major group was selected to go to US, both with scholarships and through self-funding, while some others chose France or other high-income capitalist countries such as the UK or Australia. After the Cold War's end, and notably after the implementation of 'Đổi Mới' (Economic Reform) that started in late 1980s in Vietnam, though young people have had a wider range of destination countries in which to undertake cross-border education, the US, Russia and France are still predominant in attracting the Vietnamese student enrollment (see Table 9.2). Apart from self-financed students, comprising the biggest slice in the overall student population, a considerable number of students still enjoy scholarships and fellowships from US, Russia and France with which to pursue their education. Notable scholarships and fellowships that are still active currently include the Fullbright scheme, and the Vietnam Education Foundation (US); the government-to-government program (Russia) and the Agency of Francophone University, and Effeil (France).

Table 9.2 Examples of newly opened, non-traditional courses in recent years

Institutions	Courses	Year of opening
Vietnam National University- Hanoi	Master in Sustainability Science	2012
Ton DucThang University	Bachelor in Sport Management	2015
Banking Academy of Vietnam	Bachelor in Management Information System	/
University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City	Master in Public Administration	2014
Academy of Journalism and Communication	Bachelor in public relations	2006

Source: Author synthesized from Đại học Quốc Gia Hà Nội (2012), Trường Đại học Tôn Đức Thắng (2015), Học viện Ngân hàng (2016), Trường Đại học Kinh tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh (2014) and Học viện Báo chí Tuyên truyền (2006)

Incentive by Host Countries on High-Qualified Human Resources

The lack of a skilled workforce, especially in relation to Science and Engineering (S&E) majors, is considered an issue of great concern facing developed countries. According to the American National Science Foundation (NSF) (National Science Board 2012) in 2010, for every 100 foreign graduate students in the US, almost 60 majored in S&E. Analogous situations occur in other high-income countries such as Australia (Marginson et al. 2013; Pham 2013a). Recruiting foreign students from the developing world into S&E programs, through scholarships and fellowships, in hope that they will not return home after graduation, is a measure commonly employed by developed countries to fill the void in S&E.

In this regard, the main providers for developed countries have been India and China. For the US in particular, from the 1970s to the early 1990s Korea and Taiwan were also important sources. However, in the last two decades long term recruitment from these countries has declined, due to the advance of the domestic economies in Taiwan and Korea. This factor has also triggered some reverse brain gain, with some highly skilled migrants into the US later returning home (Altbach 1991). Under this circumstance, Vietnam and other developing countries become new sources of skilled human resources. To a certain extent, this also helps developed economies to avoid becoming overdependent on Chinese and Indian human resources (Pham 2013b).

The Recent Transformation in Factors Determining the Oversea Study Decision of Vietnamese Students

The push-pull model expounded above has been robust over time. But the relative weights of factors in the model might have changed. In addition a number of new factors have emerged and gained increasing impact, due to the recent transformation of the ecosystem of higher education and more generally, the evolution of the broader socio-economic system. These changes, reshaping both push and pull factors, have affected both the student source country (Vietnam) and the host countries.

The Reshaping of Push Factors

In Vietnam, although there are no official data, the recent development of higher education has encouraged the retention of a larger number of students at home as they now have more diverse and higher level choices than their counterparts a decade ago. In other words, the advance and expansion of domestic higher education system has alleviated the factor "*Undersupply of higher education service at*

*home".*This transformation stems from initiatives at both macro (i.e. governmental) and micro (i.e. institutional) levels. A notable governmental endeavor was the launch of *Chương trình tiên tiến* (The Advanced Program), which started in 2008 (Tran, Phan and Marginson, Chap. 4). The idea is to borrow curricula and textbooks from top-notch partner institutions to use in domestic programs. At the same time, the selected programs are also resized, with smaller number of student per class and increased government financial allocation compared to that received by regular students.

Another high-profile reform program at macro level is the project *Dự án các đại học xuất sắc* (Universities of Excelence), launched in the same year as *Chương trình tiên tiến*. The purpose of *Dự án các đại học xuất sắc* is to establish new universities or upgrade existing higher education institutions with academic sponsorship from leading economies aiming at delivering education and research with international quality. To date, the project involves four universities, including the University of Science and Technology Hanoi, the Vietnamese-German University, Le Quy Don Technical University and Vietnam Japan University; with partnerships with French, German, Russian and Japanese governments and universities, respectively.

The government also openly welcomes foreign institutions that wish to operate and invest in education in Vietnam. While in mid-1990s, transnational education was unfamiliar to most Vietnamese, this concept is now widely accepted and recognised by all high school-leavers and their parents as an alternative to regular domestic programs and offshore overseas education. According to MOET's statistics, in 2015 there were 282 transnational or jointly collaborated programs, and two foreign-owned institutions. Unofficial data reveals that these programs/institutions provide more than 24,000 places for Vietnamese undergraduate and graduate students (see Chap. 5).

From the bottom up perspective, a number of avant-garde institutions have renovated their training courses. Despite some differences in implementation practice, common strategies of these ventures are two-fold: (i) to open new non-traditional courses[1] that meet the increasing and changing demands of students and industry; and (ii) to get courses accredited by international quality assurance bodies (Do, Chap. 3). (Tables 9.2 and 9.3 provide examples that illustrate these two strategies).

The Emergence of New Pull Factors

In relation to the host countries, the international student market is no longer dominated by a small number of traditional host countries such as the US, the UK or Australia. A number of other high-income countries are playing a role (Chen and

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[1] In Vietnamese regulation, MOET strictly controls the course name portfolio and all newly opened courses must have MOET approval to be opened. However, in special cases, universities with prior concensus of MOET or with higher decree of autonomy may open new courses, which are not included in MOET's portfolio. These are called "non-traditional" courses.

Table 9.3 Examples of courses get accredited by international bodies

Name of institutions	Name of courses	Accreditation agencies
Vietnam National University, Hanoi	Bachelor of Business Administration	Asian University Network (AUN)
Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor in Vietnamese Studies	Asian University Network (AUN)
Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor in Computer Science	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor in Computer Engineering	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)

Source: Author synthesized Trường Đại học Kinh tế - Đại học Quốc Gia Hà Nội (2016), Trường Đại học Khoa học xã hội và Nhân văn – Đại học Quốc Gia Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh (2011), Gia Thuận (2014)

Barnett 2000). This includes some newly emerged high-income countries. In the last 10 years the transformation of the socio-economic system across the developed word has changed the international education landscape. In addition, a common pattern in some wealthy countries is that of ageing population and oversupply of higher education places. Such countries must close a number of higher education institutions if they cannot enroll enough international students to compensate for the deficit in domestic students. South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore have aggressively penetrated the cross-border student market and are competing with the traditional hosting countries in recruiting students from the developing world.

Locating at the heart of Asia Pacific and with population over 90 million people, Vietnam undoubtedly is regarded by all competitors in the cross-border education market as a fruitful source of international students.

Among determinants that entice Vietnamese students to these new host countries, apart from the traditional factors mentioned in the first half of this chapter, are a number of new factors.

The case of Taiwan R.O.C illustrates the argument. The state island is well recognised because of its economic miracle over previous decades. Among other attributes, export processing zones, government industrial policies, and a strong work ethic are regarded as principal factors contributing to economic growth (Yang 2007, p. 50 cited in Roberts et al. 2010). Since the mid-2000s, Taiwan has introduced a number of measures to enroll international students, part of an ambitious project to transform Taiwan into a hub of advanced higher education in Asia. Available data reveals 48,000 overseas students registered in Taiwan's universities and colleges in 2012 (Pham 2012). This is twice and four times higher than the corresponding figures accounted in 2007 and 2005, respectively. Among sourcing countries that send students to Taiwan, Vietnam tops the list. Data in 2012 indicated that for every 12 students undertaking education in Taiwan, there was one Vietnamese citizen. The Taiwanese government and universities have promoted themselves in Vietnam. Emblematic programs include the Taiwan Education Center in Da Nang, the economic metropolis of Central Vietnam in 2010 with a mission to facilitate the information exchange of higher education between the two countries; and the Taiwan Higher Education Fair, which is organized annually in big cities in Vietnam.

Table 9.4 Tuition fees for international students at some Taiwanese universities in academic year 2014–2015

Name of institutions	Tuition fee per semester (in USD)
Chinese Culture University	735–750
Fu Jen Catholic University	761–800
Minh Chuan University	836
National Taipei University Education	806

Source: Du học Đài Loan (overseas study in Taiwan) (2014)

Table 9.5 Examples of exchange programs between Vietnamese and Taiwanese universities/colleges

Name of Vietnamese institutions	Name of Taiwanese institutions
FPT University	Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology
University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City	Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages
Dai Nam University	Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology
Nong Lam University	National Chung Hsing University
Ton Duc Thang University	National Penghu University of Science and Technology

Source: Author synthesized from Trường Đại học FPT (2016), Trường Đại học Sư phạm Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh (2011), Trường Đại học Đại Nam (2016), Trường Đại học Nông Lâm (2016), Trường Đại học Tôn Đức Thắng (2014)

On the one hand, as a newly industrialised economy with ageing demography, Taiwan carries similar pull factors to the traditional host countries for Vietnamese overseas students, such as advanced quality of education and the need for a highly-qualified workforce. On the other hand, there are other factors in Taiwan, appealing to Vietnamese students in particular and Asian students in general.

First, many Vietnamese students choose Taiwan to pursue their higher education because of the relatively low tuition fees and living expenses. For instance, an advertisement issued in 2014 indicated that the average tuition fee for international students at Taiwanese universities is approximately 800 USD/semester (see Table 9.4). The fee was even lower than the tuition fees at almost all cross-border programs and of some private institutions in their homelands.

Second, with the distance of only 3 to 4 h in flying time flight from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Taiwan is an ideal destination for Vietnamese who want to get a foreign degree and at the same time, visit family frequently. Geographical proximity is an advantage for Taiwan, compared to North America, Australia or Europe.

Third, there is increasing evidence of Vietnamese students flying to Taiwan with acquisition of foreign language and culture, rather than the academic degree, as the primary objective (see Table 9.5). A high profile case is the student exchange program launched in 2014 between FPT University, a Vietnamese private university headquartered in Hanoi, and Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology.

Under this program, students from both sides would spend several weeks in the partner institution's country to experience the culture and tradition of the host country. This reverses the traditional emphasis associated with South-North student mobility, on academic rather than hedonic purposes.

It can be hypothesized that *learning a foreign language and experiencing a new culture* is a pull factor, apparent also in the Erasmus program in Europe.

Conclusion

This chapter addresses the phenomenon of rising outbound students in Vietnam. The first half of the chapter introduces a model of the push-pull macro-environmental factors that drive Vietnamese overseas students' choice of destination country for study. This model largely fits the traditional pattern of outflow of international students from low to high-income countries. Due to underdevelopment of higher education services at home, demand for a high-qualified workforce, and opportunities for migration and job opportunities abroad, students are pushed to leave their homeland. Meanwhile they are pulled by a number of elements from host countries, such as superior educational quality, ideological affinity or incentives in the host country to recruit skilled human resources, especially science and engineering majors.

This chapter also provides anecdotal evidence showing that the model is undergoing a reshaping process, due to two factors: (1) the enhancement of quality and quantity in the Vietnamese higher education system and (2) the emergence of newly industrialised economies within the region, capable of mobilising foreign students, such as Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and China. Although, currently, this reshaping process has not rendered the push-pull model inappropriate or unfit, it reflects a reversed trend that is expected to evolve steadily in the short run. The flow of outbound Vietnamese students will continue to increase but the growth rate is expected to decelerate. The biggest host countries of Vietnamese students will remain the traditional host countries of international students such as the US, UK, France or Australia but these destinations are going to lose their "market pie shares" due to the salient emergence of newly host countries of international students in the East Asia region.

These two reshaping factors, indeed, have been foreseen in the literature. For instance, Healey, in his conceptual work published in 2008, pointed out the first reshaping factor while predicting a deceleration of oversea student outflow from South to North countries due to the development of higher education in the developing world. Besides, Roberts and his colleagues, in 2010 also used Taiwan as an example of new receiving countries of international student. And this work, indeed, illustrated the second abovementioned-reshaping factor.

Given the importance of international students both in terms of finance (e.g. international students' contribution to revenues for higher education institutions) and human resources (e.g. international students as future qualified manpower of the economics), the changing trend of Vietnamese students in particular and oversea students in general, would provide a number of implications for policy makers and university's managers.

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Chapter 10
International Students' Aspirations to Contribute to Socioeconomic Development in Vietnam

Lien Pham

Introduction

Employability is often associated with international students' motivations for studying abroad. Yet studies about international graduates and returnees remain scarce with fragmented findings about their aspirations and opportunities for relevant jobs and career pathways when they return home. This chapter aims to understand Vietnamese international graduates' aspirations to contribute to socioeconomic development in Vietnam upon returning home. The chapter explores the Vietnamese returnees' conception and development of aspirations for themselves and their local communities in their work and community participation. It analyses the nature of aspiration as a *process of aspiring* in two dimensions. First, aspiration is a process of *being* - where a person expresses her selfhood in relation to her society. Second, aspiration is a process of *functioning* - what a person does and can achieve in that society. These two dimensions operate dialectically in that what a person does is determined by her aspiration, which in turn, shapes what she can aspire to. Understanding aspiration as a dialectic process, not just a state of being, is helpful in telling us how aspirations are conditioned, as well as telling us about the opportunities that a person might have to pursue her future. The chapter extends on the goal-oriented idea of aspirations as determining factors in achievement (Hart 2013).

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of literature about aspirations of international students broadly, and specifically for returnees. The next section discusses Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in guiding the analysis of the process of aspiring. This is followed by the discussion of the Vietnamese returnees' aspirations at three levels of social fields: the national State level, the institutional level of work place, and the individual level of interactions with others. The chapter concludes with

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some implications for research about returnees' aspirations to contribute to socio-economic development of their country.

Current Literature About Aspirations of International Students, Graduates and Returnees

With a goal-oriented focus, the literature about international students' aspirations often centre on motivations for studying abroad in terms of what they will be able to achieve as a result of their education. The majority of such research focus on student mobility and often draw attention to the push-and-pull factors from home countries to host countries. Pull factors are job opportunities in the local and global markets; push factors are lower educational quality or lack of access to universities in their home countries (Altbach 2004; Li and Bray 2007; Mazzarol and Soutar 2001). These push-and-pull factors are viewed as external forces that are often presented as generalised interests, rather than attending to the individuals and how they may respond to these push-and-pull factors. Using such a viewpoint, there is an assumed homogeneity of international students' aspirations, and their capability to aspire and take actions to realise their aspirations.

Similarly, research about graduates' aspirations when they return home tends to focus on job outcomes and employability. Within a small and highly fragmented body of research that enquires about returnees, the emphasis is around the benefits of acquired international education - particularly Western universities - in providing graduates' positional advantage in the employment markets. International education is often framed as a status marker in home countries, and valuable cultural capital for returning Asian students - especially those in East Asia (Chen and Zimitat 2006; Matthews and Sidhu 2005; Ong 1999; Waters 2006). Furthermore, international education is seen as returnees' aspirations for positional opportunities for work and employment because of its potential to change professional and personal identities (Pyvis and Chapman 2007).

However, as Lewis (1992) noted, while there tends to be positive reports in regards to jobs and employability for graduates as a result of the elite status of overseas education, the assumptions in this body of research tend to be about benefits of overseas-acquired work-related skills which are beneficial for jobs access - and the findings remain fuzzy in establishing directions and connections between accessing local jobs and overseas-acquired skills. Furthermore, there are also studies that point to the insignificance of international education prestige in the local environment, or that positional advantage is dependent on various other institutional, cultural, social and political factors (Campbell 2010; Cannon 2000; Crossman and Clark 2010; Kiley 1999). It is these factors in the local contexts that actually contribute to transformative benefits of studying overseas such as fostering career goals, personal and professional development, and new perspectives on life and work.

Another dominant theme in research about the outcomes of international education is international students' changed viewpoints, beliefs and attitudes. Again, the discussion of personal changes emphasises returnees' adaptability for the industrialised workforces such as communication skills, flexibility to work in different environments, international mindedness or flexible citizenship (Ong 1999). The idea of overseas education as conducive to "self" transformation has also been put forward as potential for returnees to act upon their acquired self-actualisation attributes to modernise their society (Marginson 2014; Morris and Sweeting 1995). Drawing on Adler's (1975) idea of personal growth and transformation, Shougee (1998) claimed that international students develop self-awareness and self-discovery which lead to self-control, self-direction, self-reliance and self-confidence. Other studies have noted the autonomous identity and ability to form self-trajectories, gained from living in new culture and speaking new language (Alred 1987; Barber 1983; Gill 2010; Ka et al. 1992; Ip 2006; Murphy-LeJeune 2003). However, these studies often focus on international students from Western countries, where there are similar cultural values in the host country of education. Furthermore, despite the transformative focus on selfhood, these changed attitudes are seldom linked with returnees' aspirations for social development beyond personal economic pursuits.

Similarly, as Marginson (2014) noted, self-formation is inherently contradictory where international students are pulled between cultural flexibility and cultural uncertainty and confusion, and they may not all achieve confidence to realise their self-actualisation. The idea of self-orientation and self-trajectory that might lead to self-transformation thus depends on individuals' positions with their social relations within specific social settings, which are historically grounded. As Campbell (2010) noted, the relevance of self-attributes in shaping motivations and goals, depends on the extent to which the home culture has similar values to those underlying attributes of foreign societies of host universities, and the extent to which the graduate has invested in acquiring those overseas attributes. So while there is some evidence of students' self-discovery and development of some form of systemic thinking about their identities and practices (Carlson et al. 1990), there is not enough research evidence about whether these changes relate to academic, work or community integration upon re-entry, or how they shape returnees' aspirations in their work or in civic life. Likewise, Carruthers (2002) argued that research have yet to come to grips with embodied aspects of citizenship (indigeneity) and how can they be reconciled with flexible aspects of citizenship (international mindedness) acquired from overseas studies as advocated by Ong (1999). There is much needed research about the aspirations of international graduates from their self-formation perspective, as well as the opportunities and practices that they engage in, as a result of their aspirations and awareness of their local environment. As noted by Cuthbert et al. (2008), the focus of research on international outcomes and benefits can be situated from the graduates' perspectives, and within the context of their local communities: what they aspire to do in respect of their acquired international education and what they can achieve for themselves and their local communities in the long run.

Against this research landscape, the chapter explores the aspirations of Vietnamese overseas-educated returnees to contribute to Vietnam's socioeconomic

development. The discussion considers the influence of the historical, social, political, economic and institutional contexts in shaping the Vietnamese returnees' aspirations, and how they respond to these conditions as they see their "self" in relation to the State, the workplace, and the people they interact with in their daily experiences. The focus is on understanding the conditions that shape returnees' aspirations, which influence their capability to aspire to contribute to Vietnam's socioeconomic development.

Case Study and Data Collection Methods

This chapter draws on the findings of a larger research project about the experiences of Vietnamese overseas-educated returnees in their workplace and community work in Vietnam. The research adopted a case study approach using a mixed method of data collection conducted over two stages. The first stage involved online surveys with overseas-educated Vietnamese nationals living in Vietnam (N = 280). Based on a non-probability sampling approach, invitations to participate in the surveys were sent using social media to associations of Vietnamese students abroad and overseas universities' Vietnamese alumni groups. The researcher also visited some large public and private universities in Vietnam to invite potential participants. The second stage involved semi-structured interviews with selected survey respondents from the first stage, and members of their local networks (N = 48). The interviewees were selected to achieve a purposive sample of gender, place of living, employment sector and community group. Each interview took approximately 50–60 min. The discussion of the findings in this chapter draws primarily from the interview data with the returnees. A brief outline of the conceptual framework that guides the analysis of these interviews is presented in the next section, followed by the discussion of the findings.

Conceptual Framework of Aspiration and *Habitus*

There are three dimensions of Bourdieu's *habitus* which are useful for the analysis of aspirations. First, *habitus* emerges from a "practical evaluation of the likelihood of the success of a given action in a given situation [which] brings into play a whole body of wisdom, sayings, commonplaces, ethical precepts" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 77). For Bourdieu, people adjust their motivations and needs based on their assessment of their chances of success and failure common to them as members in the same social groups. This adjustment is "practical" rather than "conscious" because *habitus* predisposes actors to select forms of conduct that are most likely to succeed in light of their resources and past experiences (Swartz 1997). In other words, *habitus* orients actions according to anticipated consequences in practical situations. In

these practical situations, individuals are predisposed to conceive and develop their aspirations.

The second dimension of *habitus* that Bourdieu emphasises is time. He argues that actions must include time as an essential component because *habitus* is the linking of past experiences to present experiences (Bourdieu 1980). Bourdieu (1977) describes individuals' behaviour as *strategic* as they move through constraints and opportunities that they grasp through past experiences and through time.

The third dimension of *habitus* is its collective basis, where individuals bring a *habitus* to their interactions with others in social situations (Collyer 2014). Individuals who internalise similar life chances share the same *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). Thus, it is worthwhile to examine *habitus* in order to understand how aspirations are formed and realised by individuals within their social fields.

Through Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, aspiration is the dispositions (*habitus*) of returnees to take choices and actions, and at the same time, aspiration also acts to construct a system of dispositions, or *habitus* of returnees (Pham 2016). The dialectic nature of aspiration is that while individuals have to contend with *habitus* that may seem deterministic, their actions also serve as a means, or *strategies* for them to create future possibilities of change (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Aspirations, thus, should be seen as artefacts of culture - but not in static and deterministic ways. Rather, aspirations are part of the process of establishing and re-establishing culture (Billig 1994) as individuals interact with others, and in response to surrounding economic, social and political, and institutional conditions. Using *habitus* to understand actions and dispositions as corresponding to past experiences and time, we can come to understand the nature of aspiration as a dialectic process that structure people's motivations; and at the same time their actions (to realise their motivations) shape the conditions that produce those motivations in the first place (Bourdieu 1977).

In this chapter, aspiration is examined through the *habitus* of the Vietnamese overseas-educated returnees. The focus is on understanding the returnees' conception and development of aspiration as a *process of aspiring*, rather than a fixed state of aspiration: how might returnees appropriate and negotiate their overseas-acquired skills, knowledge and attributes as cultural capital to conceive their aspirations; and how might their choices and practices in realising their aspirations construct and reconstruct those aspirations that determine their goals in the first place. As suggested, analysing aspirations as a process highlights that aspirations are not context free. They are contextualised and formed from and through a person's recognition of, and her interactions with surrounding social structures and relations. At all times, a person has to negotiate aspirations that are cultivated in relation to societal norms, as well as renegotiate those aspirations to make her own decision. In turn, and depending on the agency process and opportunities presented to her, she can develop her own aspirations, share them with others, conceal them from others, or adapt to the aspirations as expected or imposed on her (Hart 2013).

The *process of aspiring* is therefore located within one's social relations and interactions with others. Noting the work of Hart (2013) on aspirations, there are two aspects within the *process of aspiring* that can be seen as separate yet immanently

linked. First, the *being* aspect of aspiration: how one sees oneself in relation to one's society shapes one's dispositions to choices and practices. Second, the *functioning* of aspirations: what one does in society as one interacts with others in social fields; it is goal-oriented. Understanding aspirations as a process allows for identification of the social conditions of aspirations, how individuals respond to and shape those conditions, in order to create alternative conditions for them to aspire.

Literature about aspiration tends to view aspiration in terms of the *functioning* aspect that is goal driven. For example, government policies for education and training often view individual achievement and outcomes as determined or constrained by aspirations. As discussed in the previous section, literature about international education outcomes that focus on jobs and employability often assume that international students' aspirations are somehow raised due to their ability to utilise their acquired skills, knowledge and attributes to achieve their objectives of jobs and employability. Acquiring international education is thus seen in research literature as a means to encourage international students to function in a particular way, that is to work in industrialised economies and in terms of Western ideals of neoliberalist flexible workforce. Somehow they are able to do this anywhere and everywhere as if it is a linear process of creating aspirations, which then leads to pursuit and achievement of goals (Pham 2015). In this chapter, the analysis of the returnees' aspirations takes account of the functioning of aspirations or the returnees' goals, as well as how and why these aspirations are constructed. This is achieved through the relational analysis of their perception of their "self" in their society, at the three levels of national, institutional and individual.

Self and the State

Economic Actor

At the national level, the main aspirations of the Vietnamese returnees seem to be about acquiring jobs and career advancement for personal economic betterment rather than improving Vietnam's social development. Almost every returnee interviewed views wealth accumulation as the main purpose of education in Vietnam, to accord with his or her family or community expectations about overseas education. Minh says:

> The view about education in Vietnam is to get a degree and a good job in society, which will lead to having a lot of money. In Vietnam, people do not really choose a job based on their career direction, or passion but more because of high salaries because of their need for money. They would choose whatever job that gives them a good income. (Minh, female, Education, Ho Chi Minh City)

Minh's comment suggests that education is a means to achieve jobs and income. Choices of job are based on an instrumental goal to accumulate wealth rather than individual interest and direction. This idea of wealth attached to education also echoes Pham Minh Hac's (2012) claim that wealth is valued for personal benefits

rather than for the whole society (personal includes family in Vietnamese society). Such aspirations reveal the embedded economic values of education in general, and particularly the idea of international education as a step towards job opportunities and economic benefits. Minh's comment is similar to many returnees interviewed. Their expressions overwhelmingly reflect the sentiment of economic pragmatism of Vietnamese society broadly, as a societal response to the *Đổi Mới* economic reform to foster a market-based economy, incentivised by their perceived positional advantage of overseas education in the labour market (Pham 2016).

More than half of the returnees said that they returned to Vietnam because they would be more advantaged in Vietnam's labour market compared to overseas, in regards to accessing jobs and business opportunities with high economic rewards:

> For me, I returned to Vietnam because there are many more opportunities here for me. (Thanh, male, Banking, Ho Chi Minh City)

> To a certain extent, overseas educated people have more jobs opportunities here than overseas. (My, female, Education, Hanoi)

As Long comments below, the pursuit of wealth is beyond economic necessity as most Vietnamese international students are well established in society. Rather, such desire reflects the fervent materialist outlook in society, which predisposes returnees to taking choices that prioritise economic benefits:

> The focus on money is now habitual. Even if their salary is raised, their greed also rises. They would do anything to gain material benefits. The more money there is for them, the better it is. (Thu, female, Information Technology, Hanoi)

While Long comments on the possibilities of institutional factors like salary scales as a driver for economic motivations, he seems to emphasise an internalised set of values about economic betterment as a cultural disposition. Long's idea of materialism is close to Bourdieu's (1998) idea of "economic necessity as a virtue". His expression of "greed that rises with salary as habitual" is similar to Bourdieu's idea that economic betterment is cultivated from internalised experiences, rather than a result of exogenous conditions of actual economic needs (Bourdieu 1998). These comments of Minh and Long suggest that returnees are predisposed to view overseas education as opportunities to gain economic betterment.

Many other interviewees also speak about the Vietnamese society's value of overseas education for money making opportunity. Moreover, they perceive the instrumental value of education to be embedded in societal values, not just something newly acquired from overseas studies. As Thu says:

> Economic necessity has to be questioned in terms of the broader social context. Material needs have always been around, but why is it that in olden times, people study overseas and come back and want to do something for their country, but now the young generation come back and want to earn high salary for themselves? (Thu, female, Information Technology, Hanoi)

Thu's comment suggests there are conflicted objectives between the materialist view of education and the traditional view of education to develop a person's substance. This is a point of vigorous debate in the Vietnamese literature. Hoang

Tuy, a public intellectual noted the contradiction in Vietnam's current vision of education between the economic value of education in modern Vietnamese society and abstract knowledge as the substance of a person in the Confucian era where education was valued for the sake of education (Hoang Tuy 2011). Similarly, the private benefits undergirding the motivations for international education have also been questioned by some Vietnamese nationalists. Le Thi (2011) argued that the public intellectuals who studied in France in colonial times had higher ideals of nationalism compared to those who studied and grew up in the socialist world of the Soviet Union or in the current education system despite the State's promotion of nationalism and national identity (London 2010; Salomon and Vu 2007). For these scholars, the seemingly lack of desire to contribute to Vietnam's national development diverges from the historical trajectory of overseas-educated anti-colonialists in the early twentieth century.

While the aspirations of the returnees in this study may echo the economic goals often noted in the literature about student mobility and the emphasis on jobs and employability, they seem to be contested rather than uniform, and are embedded in how they view themselves in relation to the State. Nga says:

> That's all there is, getting a good job whether or not it pays back the investment by their parents. That's because that is all we could do. (Nga, female, Education, Hanoi)

Nga's comment suggests seeking a return on investment of education is not the main reason for aspiring to jobs and economic benefits, but that a lack of possibilities for social development engagement beyond jobs. Other returnees also question the economic objectives of education generally, and resolve their own questions by reasoning their aspirations as a response to their scepticism about the State's intention to provide a social safety net for citizens, which force them to seek opportunities to secure their own economic wellbeing. The consistent expression of economic objectives among returnees reflects Bourdieu's idea of *habitus* as "transforming social and economic necessity into virtue by leading individuals to a kind of immediate submission to order" (Bourdieu 1977, p 82). While for some returnees, this kind of submission legitimates economic aspirations, the fit between dispositions to and positions of economic wants are varied between individuals, and seem more than just unconscious adjustment in practical situations (Bourdieu 1977). In other words, returnees are conscious of their economic objectives, the competing ideals of economic betterment, and how they influence their aspirations.

Civic Actors

Despite a high level of membership in community organisations, the majority of returnees neither aspire to participate in political or community activism, nor do they see these activities as goals or expectations for overseas education. Ngoc says:

> The focus for most returnees is upon benefits from jobs brought about from studying abroad rather than reforming society. I myself do not care about the society. (Ngoc, female, Information Technology, Ho Chi Minh City)

Ngoc is an active volunteer in an informal community group educating young people about AIDS and HIV. In this comment, she notes that overseas education is not an impetus for making social reform. In talking about "reforming society", she is referring to national development issues, rather than the types of community activities that she does in her close networks of families and friends. This highlights the need to understand motivations for community work in the context of Vietnamese *habitus* where families are viewed as part of small communities, rather than through organised civil groups (Pham 2016). As Kim explains:

> Helping people in need is part of our culture. It is reflective of the traditional Vietnamese culture of looking after each other, as the laudatory proverbial "*La lanh dum la rach*" [meaning whole leaves protect torn leaves]. It is not because of overseas education. (Kim, female, International NGO, Hanoi)

According to Kim, the value of doing community work is embedded in the *habitus* of Vietnamese people - part of the culture - rather than newly acquired. However, overseas education has brought about her sense of opportunities, confidence and willingness to engage in community work:

> I can see how I may realise my values, what I can do to help students to achieve those things, to follow this career. Maybe it's the confidence. Before I did not dare to try, did not know how to try. But after studying overseas, I can see something as opportunities and I grasp those opportunities. I also feel that I want to improve and change myself. In Vietnam, I feel that there are many people like me, who initially had dreams but they cannot realise their potential. They are not given the opportunity to develop that drive to change them or find out things to change themselves. I think it's the opportunities. I think the opportunities that I had overseas gave me more advantages than those trained in Vietnam. The advantage is that when you are overseas, you are able to find your values, realise those are your values and follow though. (Kim, female, International NGO, Hanoi)

Kim is talking about her recognition of opportunities and self-determination to take on those opportunities, which she sees as more important than the aspirations themselves. What is insightful in this comment is that opportunities are also derived from her perceived advantage compared to others. There seems to be a sense of strategic motivation that combines bounded agency in civic activities and personal desire to develop new forms of knowledge and skills that Lan Thi Quynh Mai referred to in Chap. 13. Kim's civic values have always been within her, but it is her sense of advantage over others that enables her to perceive and take opportunities to engage in community work. This suggests aspiration is shaped by one's actions and perception of opportunities to act - a *functioning* process of aspiration.

The returnees' views about community participation also reflect contested perceptions about their loyalty to the State, which stem from the State's strict policy on political activism, and their scepticism about the State's responsibility for social development of Vietnam. The returnees seem to view the State as the authority that has the legitimacy, and actual power to make rules, set directions and policies about social development, rather than citizens at the grassroots level. As Hoang notes:

> It is very difficult to do any advocacy work here. To get your group registered requires much scrutiny and surveillance by the authorities. It becomes a burden and deters people from engaging. People also distrust any formal group because they are seen to be affiliated with

the State, to be driving the State's political ideology, rather than enabling social change. (Hoang, male, Education, Danang)

Hoang's comment suggests a reluctance to be involved in civic activities because of the rigorous administrative processes involved. Moreover, he perceives the lack of possible achievements in social change as a result of the State involvement in formal community groups.

On the rare occasion, as in the case of Quan below, his sojourn in Germany changed his political viewpoint and political aspiration. For Quan, political participation as an instrument of social change and social justice has always been valuable to him, but overseas education seems to influence how he sees the direction and deliberation of his political aspirations:

> After a period of time that I lived in Germany, I understood that a one-party regime will not be able to develop society in socially just ways. Making change to bring about social justice is impossible if I continue to be conservative with those thoughts. Actually, I also realise that history also has its right and left sides. Of course because this State is protecting this regime, it must make this regime appears beautiful. Sometimes we Vietnamese people are blind to its left side. When I lived overseas, I looked back and saw Vietnam and I saw that our society has too many injustices. That was a great change in me, my political outlook changed dramatically. (Quan, male, Education, Hanoi)

In this comment, Quan expresses a change in political viewpoints and a perception that Vietnam's society can actually be changed. This propelled him to later on engage in social media blogging to express his political voice. Quan's values for political participation may not be newly acquired from overseas studies as he comes from a Party-affiliated background, which predisposes him to see and take up opportunity to participate politically. However, living overseas and observing the German society allowed him to see how political regimes can function in different ways to achieve different outcomes, which changed his political ideology. His comment about "society's blind to the State's political regime" is a metaphor for the lack of citizens' political voice against the State. Rather than following set pathways along the Party's political career structure, Quan now has the aspiration to use his political voice to encourage others to see that public discussion about the State's political regime may bring about different social outcomes.

Self and Workplace

Cultural Capital of Overseas-Acquired Skills and Attributes

There is a generally accepted viewpoint and expectation by the Vietnamese returnees that overseas education develops work-ready generic soft skills and attributes that will be advantageous for employment because of the experiential learning that

integrate work experiences with theoretical learning. In the quote below, Hien talks about various skills sets that overseas-educated staff have:

> Vietnamese people value overseas education because of better education systems in the West. For example, the format of education delivery, the types of training, the skills they instil like creative thinking and critical thinking. They can solve problems better with their lateral thinking. (Hien, female, Education, Hue)

In this comment, Hien directly attributes Western universities to equipping creative and critical thinking skills. Her perception of advantage arises from the lack of quality higher education and production of quality human resources in Vietnam. This is similar with research that found that beneficial skills for employability often relate to generic soft skills such as communication, problem solving, and attributes such as responsibility, positive attitude, interpersonal skills and ability to work independently and in a team (Adams 2002; ADB 2001; Brabant et al. 1990; Cassidy 2006; Cox and King 2006; Leckey and Mcguigan 1997). The majority of interviewees also acknowledge the benefits of these types of skills. Bang and My say:

> Overseas education gives graduates better communication skills, especially presentation skills. The overseas education systems prepare students well in these areas. (Bang, male, Education, Hanoi)

> It is without a doubt that overseas-educated graduates can think more laterally and openly. That means they can see problems from different perspectives and can solve problems too. It comes from living overseas and having to encounter different people from different cultures. (My, female, Information Technology, Ho Chi Minh City)

My's comment resonates with other returnees in claiming that openness in thinking is a significant attribute acquired from living overseas, which gives them the flexibility to work in different environments. The ability to see things from different perspectives comes from living in diverse cultural contexts. This is similar to other research findings about international graduates gaining more open and flexible ways of thinking and communicating, which is beneficial for improving their commitment to their workplace and attainment of work related goals (Kim 2011). What seems to be different in the case of the Vietnamese returnees in this study is that they perceive their lateral thinking to be advantageous only in certain social contexts, mainly where there are foreigners and other overseas-trained workers:

> Certainly these types of skills and attributes are much better appreciated in foreign firms. Foreign firms also employ us because they perceive that we have these skills because we studied overseas. (Hien, female, Manufacturing, Hanoi)

Hien's sentiment is also expressed by many returnees in industries where there are large foreign companies operating, suggesting that overseas-acquired attributes are not perceived as forms of cultural capital that can be mobilised in all workplaces, notably challenging in Vietnamese-owned organisations:

> Overseas-trained people might think that their assertiveness is good for work but not necessarily. It can be a disadvantage because other Vietnamese people might not receive it well. They have to be careful that they use their skills appropriately in certain environments. (Trinh, female, Banking, Ho Chi Minh City)

Overseas-trained people are very good in expressing their views, but this is not always good in Vietnamese firms. Vietnamese bosses prefer to have their say rather than being told by young graduates what to do. Whether these skills can be seen as good skills depend on the company. (Chien, male, Banking, Hanoi)

These comments highlight that the idea of advantage rests in the "distinction" or cultural capital of these skills and attributes in the social situations, which is granted by members of the social group, not with the returnees even though they may have full knowledge of the types of skills and attributes they have. It is this perception of distinction that fosters the value of international education. In other words, the values that inform job decisions are embedded profoundly in returnees' perception and grasp of social norms. The point here is that cultural capital is about positional goals that a person takes up, rather than making a person a better person.

English is another overseas-acquired skill that returnees perceive as significant in providing them with employment advantage. As Nga and Thu say:

It is for sure that English is our biggest advantage because we can read English rather than having to wait for translated text. (Nga, female, Education, Hanoi)

Since I came back, my position in my firm is enhanced because people think that my English skills are better. (Thu, female, Information Technology, Hanoi)

Returnees aspire to seek jobs in foreign firms, particularly with multinational corporations (MNCs), because these workplaces are perceived as sites where they can utilise their overseas acquired skills and attributes - especially English skills - to enhance their positional advantage. As shown by Anh Pham in Chap. 11, Vietnamese graduates who worked in a large US-based IT company in Vietnam wrote their resumes to demonstrate their good communication skills to potential employers. In addition, they are willing to take on soft management roles in trade-off for technical roles to leverage their language and generic soft skills, rather than developing their technical skills:

To be honest with you, I just want to work for foreign firms. So I don't care so much that I don't use my technical skills in engineering. I am happy doing quality assurance. It gives me management skills. (Khanh, male, Manufacturing, Hanoi)

Khanh's comment suggests that cultural capital (of soft skills) may be seen as overriding technical knowledge because the former enable him to work in foreign firms. Yet, many returnees also appreciate the technical skills for improving their professional practices, even though they cannot fully utilise them. Khanh's willingness to trade off his technical skills for a management job in a support role may also be reflective of the lack of job opportunities to apply technical skills that are geared towards advanced economies. In Vietnam, MNCs operate mainly in manufacturing or information and technology sectors, and are generally in production, supply chain, and distribution rather than research and development.

These findings suggest that the economic aspirations of overseas education, as discussed in the previous section, also stem from the returnees' perception of advantage associated with their overseas-acquired transferable skills and work-ready attributes in the workplace. Their perception of advantage seems to arise from their

consciousness of society's high regards for these skills and attributes, which they internalise as embodied cultural capital. This, in turn, instils their expectations about their acquired overseas education. In other words, aspirations are constructed by returnees' perception about opportunities to mobilise their skills, which they then seek to realise. In pursuing their goals, they also reinforce the conditions and experiences which construct the aspirations in the first place. This finding reflects Bourdieu's model of choice and actions that draws on *habitus* of past experiences and time (Bourdieu 1977). The analysis gives insight into how the process of internalising anticipated consequences becomes activated into a process of externalisation. Returnees externalise their preference for foreign firms, which is based on their predispositions to select foreign firms because they are likely to succeed in utilising their overseas acquired resources in these settings.

It is also worthwhile to note that the returnees' ideas of positional advantage rest in the cultural capital of these skills, which is associated with what is accepted by employers, not with the returnees themselves. Their aspirations to work for certain employers – particularly foreign firms - are constructed by their perception that these foreign employers view their owned skills and attributes as cultural capital, and that they can mobilise these forms of cultural capital. Again, this highlights that it is the perception of advantage that gives rise to perception of opportunity, rather than the opportunity itself, which in turn construct aspirations. For these returnees, aspirations that inform their decisions or justify their actions are embedded profoundly in their perception and grasp of their power positions within the institution they operate in. This puts power and legitimation at the heart of structure of *habitus* in shaping people's aspirations. For Bourdieu, "the virtue-of-necessity dynamic of *habitus* stresses that not all social worlds are equally available to everyone. Not all courses of actions are equally possible for everyone; only some are plausible, whereas others are unthinkable" (Swartz 1997 p. 107).

Symbolic Capital of Western Education

Symbolic capital also seems to be associated with overseas education - particular Western education - that is beyond the utilitarian application of overseas-acquired skills and attributes for work application. The interviewees' comments seem to reflect a societal sense of superiority in Western education and workplace. Tam's comment below about Vietnamese employers' willingness to recruit foreigners instead of Vietnamese staff suggests a high regards for foreigners. Here, she talks about the trust in foreigners as embedded in the mindset of Vietnamese people:

> Why do Vietnamese employers hire a foreigner instead of a Vietnamese person even though the foreigner might not be as good in dealing with the government? Because they have more trust in a foreigner, because in their mind, a foreigner is better than a Vietnamese. (Tam, female, Education, Hanoi)

Khang, in the below quote, reflects on Vietnam's colonised history by the West which has continued to cultivate a preference for the West.

> Preference for Western things is natural thinking for Vietnamese people. I think there is a historical reason as well. Vietnamese people love anything overseas, *sinh ngoai*. Part of it comes from that history of being colonised. (Khang, male, Banking, Ho Chi Minh City)

Khang's comment implies the sense of "West is best" is internalised as tacit knowledge. His recognition of the colonial history suggests that the motivations to study overseas also have a historical trajectory of colonialisation that create a "pull" of the West, that is beyond the exogenous economic pull factors of host countries as often discussed in the literature. It also highlights that the symbolic capital of overseas education - particularly in Western countries - is linked with economic capital because of a societal high value of the West. It supports the idea that time is an essential element in shaping dispositions for certain aspirations (Bourdieu 1977).

Self and Others

Family Responsibility and the Virtue of Filial Piety

Reflections by the interviewees in this study suggest that their economic drive is embedded in their family commitments and expectations. Thus, they are predisposed to hold economic aspirations for international education, rather than a result of acquired international education. Duy, in the below quote speaks from a parent's perspective. He explains the wish to ensure economic prosperity for his daughters as a sense of responsibility that is embedded in the Vietnamese values of filial piety:

> From a cultural perspective, parents in Vietnam buy houses for their children so they [returnees] as members of society have to follow that norm. He has a house but he needs to also buy and give a house to each of his two daughters. (Duy, male, Education, Danang)

This comment suggests that filial piety imposes responsibility upon Vietnamese people to acquire wealth for their families. Duy considers the social status of his families to be a "*structured and structuring structure*" (Maton 2008). It is structured by the traditional values of filial responsibility, and social position ascertained by families' achievement of education and wealth. It is structuring in that such values shape returnees' economic motivations and goals. In this regards, the returnees' aspiration for wealth is not simply a consequence of international education but dispositions to thinking about the values of international education. This is distinctly different to the literature on international students' motivations that often attribute economic goals as exogenous push-and-pull factors of host countries and universities (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). As argued by Pham (2013) in her analysis of the economic motivations of Vietnamese students in Australia, filial piety is an important factor in international students' perception of the economic value of inter-

national education, which in turn shapes their aspirations for international education. Similarly, Hong comments:

> Parents will try to give their children the opportunity to study overseas because it is seen as their responsibility to provide a good education for their children, in order for them to get good jobs. (Hong, female, Education, Hanoi)

In the above comment, Hong regards family responsibility to be the reason why parents seek to provide international education opportunity for their children. She seems to imply that having wealth is a good life; international education is about materialist values of jobs; provision of material well-being is parents' responsibility, and thus international education is about gaining the advantage to ensure their children's wealth accumulation.

These comments suggest that the root of returnees' economic drive is anchored in the intrinsic value of family commitment and expectation. In addition, the social status connected with international education fosters their aspirations to achieve social distinction for their families. Their economic objectives reflect not only individualistic wants but embedded aspirations for social standings of their families. They see themselves as part of their families, which anchor their materialist aspirations and systematically order their goals and choice of jobs and employers. This finding supports Bourdieu's emphasis on the collective basis of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990). The integration of the Vietnamese family value in constructing aspiration for overseas education, suggests aspiration is a product of a class situation (Bourdieu 1977). As Bourdieu says, *habitus* represents a cultural matrix that generates the returnees' motivations according to their class opportunities, and their want to maintain the social class standing that structure their motivations (Bourdieu 1977 p. 79).

Professional Identities

Returnees who work in professional services and industries also see themselves as having professional identities with responsibility to improve work standards. However, they tend to observe differences between the work culture in foreign firms and Vietnamese organisations, rather than aspire to making real changes in the workplace. Their choice of working for foreign firms (as discussed above) is based on their goals of better salaries, as well as to mediate the working culture in Vietnamese firms that present barriers to utilising their overseas-acquired skills and attributes. Duy and Thien say:

> Relationships with colleagues (in foreign firms) also place importance with relationships with other people, but they are not personal. These relationships focus on how we may solve problems, how we mix in with others and motivate others. These are professional relationships. (Duy, male, Manufacturing, Hanoi)

> In general, the overseas trained employees are very clear in dealing with any problems in job or we can say they are very professional. It shows a higher awareness, if we cannot

cooperate with each other, we are still friends. We still keep a standard. For overseas trained people, they can deal with things in a more professional way. (Thien, male, Manufacturing, Ho Chi Minh City)

Duy and Thien's comments suggest that embedded in these returnees' conception of professionalism and ethical high quality standards of work, is a sense of superiority of foreign firms. They view the relations between Vietnamese-trained colleagues to be more personal, rather than professional, which they see as resulting in a lack of clear standards, and a lack of adherence to standards. Foreign firms are perceived as sites where there are shared responsibilities and ethical work practices. The returnees see themselves to be different to locally-trained colleagues and leaders in terms of professionalism and having work ethics. Thus they prefer to work in an environment where there are foreign-trained colleagues. Nhu comments:

On the basis of working style of foreigners, they are ready to take all responsibility for their work or task. Instead of shifting blame on the other, they will focus on solving problem. Finally, they care about reasons why these incidents occur. Passing the buck to the others is not good way to find out good solutions for problems. Those who study abroad and foreigners are similar in that aspect. They have more ethics. However, because I am in business so I have to go along with the Vietnamese ways. (Nhu, male, Information Technology, Ho Chi Minh City)

In the above comment, Nhu notes his dispositions to adapting to the Vietnamese working culture and how he has to mediate that culture of "personal relationships". The kind of responsibility that Nhu is talking about is responsibility to society (or community at large) - a form of personal accountability - which he sees as different to the kind of responsibility owed to families and personal relations. There seems to be an implicit recognition of competing aspirations, on the one hand to meet his professional responsibility to improve work practices, and on the other hand his responsibility to further family interests. This comment suggests a paradox of cultural adjustment in that affiliation with social networks and family fosters Nhu's aspirations in accordance with his responsibilities to these relations; but in adapting to the culture, he precludes himself from implementing practices that he sees as enabling for his professional identities. The fit between dispositions and positions that Bourdieu's *habitus* presupposes is not so clear here, because returnees have to appropriate different cultural attributes.

Academic Identities

The overseas-educated academics in this research aspire to transfer their acquired knowledge - particular Western ideas - in their teaching practices. For some overseas-educated academics, the use of Western texts and pedagogy in their teaching is a step towards delivering better quality education. My's quote below shows a sense of affiliation with the intrinsic value of research knowledge and skills that she

wants to cultivate in Vietnamese students, and with that, the attention to foreign scholars as subjects of knowledge:

> Vietnamese students here don't really understand what research methodology is. They talk about things like dialectical materialism, historical materialism, which are very general and are in every thesis but they do not really know how to apply. From these workshops that I hold with foreign scholars, it's slowly changing. So I can say that I am happy to have been able to learn from these programs and share it with a small group and then bigger groups. (My, female, Education, Hanoi)

The superiority of the Euro-Western pedagogical models of universities may be perceived by these returnees partly by their own desire to utilise what they learnt overseas and reflect the embedded 'West is best' mindset discussed in the previous section. It could also be their response to the imported models of programme structure, design, and management and curriculum ideologies and content that Tran, Pham and Marginson note in Chap. 4. Even though they aspire to Western knowledge, the overseas-educated academics in this study have to use material acquired from overseas learning selectively to make that material relevant to the Vietnamese students. This allows them to be involved in the process of knowledge construction in their engagement with their students, rather than simply importing Western ideas without thought:

> I cannot use everything because the case studies used in overseas universities are very different. In Vietnam, firms do not have data that we can use. So what I can apply is the methods, for example accounting methods, which I then ask students to apply using Vietnamese firms. It is hard and creates more work for me, but I get a sense of satisfaction. (Mai, female, Education, Hue)

Mai's comment suggests that the need to appropriate her overseas learning to make it relevant for her Vietnamese students fosters her sense of being an education reformer. There is a connection between personal economic betterment and social development vis-à-vis application and transfer of overseas-acquired skills and knowledge. While some returnees may see their teaching using overseas-acquired material as contributing to the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA), they also see their aspiration of being an education reformer laden with practical challenges in which their teaching takes place (Pham 2016).

Returnees' interactions with others in the space of families and communities suggest an embedded Vietnamese *habitus* which shapes their identities and uphold family values. In the workplace, their identities are shaped by their overseas-acquired ideas of independence and professionalism. They encounter tensions in trying to appropriate their newly acquired attitudes in their interactions with Vietnamese colleagues, which for some, lead to a preference for working in foreign firms. Similarly, those who work in universities see themselves as reformers because they can transfer knowledge gained from overseas. However, they also have to engage in teaching Western texts and pedagogy reflexively in order to accommodate to the Vietnamese teaching and learning environment. The findings point to the complexity in managing individual desires to apply overseas-acquired content and pedagogies within practical situations that straddle differences (as noted in Chap. 4

by Tran et al.) in regards to educational cultures and institutional structures between Vietnamese universities and foreign universities where graduates studied.

Conclusions

Summary of Findings

The aspirations of the Vietnamese returnees in this study are constitutive of their perception of the value of their overseas-acquired skills, knowledge and attributes in their work and community work, and undergirded by their views about their place in society, the State, their workplace, and their responsibilities to their families. The *functioning* aspect of aspiration refers to how they appropriate and mobilise their overseas-acquired resources to gain positional advantage in their workplace, which influence their choice of job, role, and employer. The *being* aspect of aspiration is reflective of their moral obligations to their families and economic instrumentality of overseas education. Both of the *functioning* and *being* aspects of aspiration are underlined with economic pragmatism for survival necessity, as well as the social status associated with Western education and workplace. This suggests an interdependence of Western superiority and instrumentality of international education, and for these returnees, contested aspirations between developing the substance of person, cultivating professional identities, and gaining economic betterment.

The returnees adjust their aspirations to accord with the social relations of their families, communities and workplace. They have to mediate between conforming to family values and norms, and finding a cultural fit in their organisations to gain acceptance and allow them to do what their social relations impose on them as aspirations. These findings explicate Bourdieu's idea that *habitus* of aspirations "continuously transforms necessity into virtue by instituting "choices" which correspond to condition of which it is the product" (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). For these returnees, "the freedom to aspire" is constituted within their social relations in specific social fields. Across all sectors, the returnees view their contribution to socioeconomic development through their ability to improve the working standards and professional practices. However, their choices and actions seem to focus on negotiating the conditions of their workplace to leverage their overseas-acquired resources for personal returns rather than implementing initiatives for new ways of working.

Implications for Further Research about Returnees' Aspirations and Higher Education in Vietnam

The implications of these findings are significant for further research about international education and higher education in Vietnam, and are three fold. First, orientation towards Western ideals which shape returnees' aspirations for work practices

has to be considered in the context of the colonial period and its influence on Vietnamese society, as well as postcolonial perspectives. In reasoning about their aspirations, these returnees come to understand that their motivations and expectations of international education stem from a perception of positional advantage associated with overseas-acquired skills, knowledge and attributes, which they seek to mobilise. In turn, their choice of foreign firms, or teaching Western texts and pedagogy, normalises the cultural capital of international education within the social structures of their workplace (Bourdieu 2000). International education has always been highly valued in the Vietnamese society (Pham 2016; Tibbetts 2007). The contemporary dynamics of studying overseas have been propelled by Vietnam's economic growth and its middle class emergence; however, the aspirations for international education are embedded in returnees' historical trajectory of economic goals of better jobs based on neo-colonial perceptions of superiority of overseas education systems that are deeper than economic needs. As this chapter has shown, policies for internationalisation of Vietnamese higher education to develop the country's required workforce to be part of the global labour market, ought to consider and leverage aspirations that are embedded within the Vietnamese *habitus* of graduates and families, in addition to external push and pull factors of contemporary global job markets and neoliberal framing of Western education.

Second, the nature of materialist emphasis on education is embedded and driven by the Vietnamese traditional values of social distinction between families that have historical trajectory, as well as contemporary social, political and economic influences. Their aspirations for the West embed the instrumental value of economic betterment and compelled by the Vietnamese ideas of social distinction and economic pragmatism. Rather than a Western import of neoliberalism, or that these Vietnamese returnees take the ideas of the West when they study overseas and import it into Vietnam, their economic aspirations arise from the values that are embedded in their unconsciousness and consciousness of tradition, and take shape in complex ways through their *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). The Western hegemony of knowledge and work practices may risk dominating the minds and souls of these returnees not because of a real cultural subscription to the Euro-West, but because of their economic aspirations. This chapter points to the need for further research to consider postcolonial as well as neoliberal discourses of international education for emerging economies, particularly the role of multinational corporations in Vietnam's economies and impacts of internationalisation policies of universities in Vietnam.

Third, the returnees' conception of low civic values and political participation is not simply due to lack of democratic freedom; nor are their economic motivations simply responses to economic push-and-pull factors (such as return on investment of their overseas education). Their aspirations carry other complexities and unique nuances of the Vietnamese values - past and present - for family, community, civic and political actions, and loyalty to the State. Thus, political, civic and economic aspirations need to be evaluated in the local political, social and economic contexts of each nation in order to understand their impacts on people's actions towards national development. This also points to the need for further research about graduates' and returnees' aspirations in civic engagement and how might they utilise their

higher education (local or overseas) to participate in community work and other forms of social development in their home country.

Even though the aspirations of these returnees seem either unshared by locally-trained colleagues and leaders, or are adapted to foreign employers' environments to gain positional advantage, there is a space for recognising possibilities for aspirations for social change. The power structures of the workplace and relations are clear to these Vietnamese returnees. Along with the aspirations for economic betterment, they also desire to improve the quality and standards of their workplace, particularly for those teaching in universities.

From a conceptual standpoint, the findings highlight the importance of considering both the *being* and *functioning* aspects of aspirations, in order to understand how and why a person has such goals or motivations. Looking at the *functioning* aspect of aspirations as goal oriented alone misses out on understanding the opportunities or lack of opportunities that a person has to aspire to something else. It is more fruitful to understand the systemic yet dialectic *process of aspiring* to see whether aspirations are created or adapted, and to understand the freedom and possibilities of aspiring as something that a person may develop and enjoy. To understand aspiration as a true enabler of individual goals, attention has to be paid to the opportunities that individuals have in the process of aspiring, not just the aspirations themselves, because their agency to do what they see as valuable is compromised, or can never be truly understood and realised otherwise.

This research is limited by the boundaries of the case study of Vietnamese overseas-educated returnees. However, the concepts and ideas of aspirations that arise from the findings can be applied to any society or group. The chapter presents significant insights about the aspirations of Vietnamese international graduates upon returning home. It highlights the importance of understanding the nature of aspirations of these returnees that takes account of local economic, political and cultural values. Much more research is required to further understand the systemic challenges and opportunities that returnees encounter when they return home, their sense of identities in their society, and what they do in establishing conditions to aspire to contribute to socioeconomic development of their country.

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Chapter 11
Employers' Perspectives on Vietnamese Returnee Students

Anh Pham

Introduction

The capacity of university graduates to find jobs and their immediate readiness to perform in the work positions have a highly intuitive resonance: usually, the more graduates have engaged in learning activities of international education programs, the better their employability is presumed to be (McNamara and Knight, 2014). Crossman and Clark (2010) suggest that "international experience appears to support the development of cultural sensitivity and adaptability as well as enhancing graduate attractiveness in a globalised and internationalised labour market" (p. 609). However, employers sometimes do not value this type of experience highly when they are asked to list the qualities and attributes they look for in graduate employees (Fielden 2007). It is argued that although the experiences and skills that graduates developed through their international learning experiences may be the necessary conditions or preconditions for a productive employability, it is often not sufficient in some cases. This chapter discusses whether or not these internationally learned skills support graduates' personal and professional life in a contemporary society of work in their city and/or their home country such as Vietnam. The chapter firstly reviews the various discussions in the recent literature on graduate outcomes and graduate employability. It then discusses the findings of a recent study (Pham 2014) about employers' perspectives on the employability of recently returned Vietnamese international students.

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Graduate Outcomes and Graduate Employability

Graduate outcomes describe the knowledge and capabilities graduates have acquired and are able to apply at the completion of their courses (Deakin University 2016) while employability, in general terms, refers to the capacity of graduates to survive and thrive in the labour market (Rothwell and Arnold 2007; Thijssen et al. 2008). In this regard, graduate employability is the achievement of "the skills, understandings and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure employment and be successful in their chosen occupations to the benefit of themselves, the work-force, the community and the economy" (Yorke 2006, p. 8). It relates to whether higher education alumni have the developed capacity to obtain or entrepreneurially create work domestically and internationally (Hillage and Pollard 1998; Jones 2013; Kinash and Crane 2015).

Mellors-Bourne et al. (2015), using a global outlook, reported on the "paucity of literature relating to general graduate outcomes from international education and transnational education in particular...and that the development of generic transfer-able employability skills is almost entirely absent from studies into transnational education" (p. 9). As the scale and array of both onshore and transnational educa-tional programs have significantly grown in Vietnam (Ziguras and Pham 2014; Ziguras 2013) institutional concerns about graduate outcomes have emerged and employers' opinions of graduate employability are of great interest.

Looking at international students who have graduated from Australian universi-ties, Cuthbert et al. (2008) pointed out that there was little known about their gradu-ate outcomes. Even less sustained research has been done on the medium-to-long-term outcomes of the graduates' efforts in finding and maintaining jobs. The fact is that we do not know much about the actual employability outcomes of international graduates from both Australian onshore and offshore higher education programs over time. Therefore, further research on this issue is needed to ensure that Australian universities are providing education of quality and relevance to the many thousands of international students from all over the world now studying Australian higher education programs.

Australian Education International's latest relevant report (2010) describes inter-national graduate outcomes and employers' perceptions of international students who have graduated from Australian institutions. The report showed positive employment outcomes of Australian-educated international graduates. It high-lighted employers' satisfaction with their performance at work, and found that their attributes were a preferred choice and they were valued as a good source of labour for both Australian and offshore employers. It specifically noted more than half of the big Chinese employers who were interviewed preferred overseas graduates for management positions over students graduating from local Chinese universities. The main reasons cited included English proficiency, effective communication skills, and creative ability. Similar educational credentials in the workplace were also reflected in Cai's conceptual framework (Cai 2013), listing many highly-sought transferable graduate employability skills, with commitment/motivation, teamwork,

communication skills, foreign language proficiency, networking, leadership, customer service, willingness to learn, interpersonal and intercultural skills among others (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2015, p. 17). These outcomes aligned with the findings found of Koda and Yuki (2013) on the outcomes of the Malaysia-Japan Higher Education Loan Project, which stated that most of the graduates were absorbed for work in Japanese firms which operated in the Malaysian manufacturing sector.

However, there remains the concern as to whether or not the skills and attributes embedded in international curricula are relevant for returnee graduates to succeed in their home country. In fact a gap existed between employers' requirements of graduates with intercultural skills and those graduates from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (Ilieva 2012, cited in Jones 2013). To fill the gap, Jones and Brown (2007) suggested contextualising the curriculum toward the required learning outcomes. Specifically, Campbell (2010) recommended to position graduates' employability skills within their own culture and /or society, considering the influence of the cultural, ideological, economic and political contexts on educational process and exercising some degree of caution before assuming that foreign generic skills are globally relevant since learning experiences among international students were varied. In fact, it was reported that the experiences of Asian graduates from transnational education programs, with wide exposure to the educational traditions of their own culture, and those who relocated to another country to undertake an international degree were very much different (Dunn and Wallace 2008). This leads to the need for further research on each group's graduate employability. A case study of Singaporean students engaged in Australian transnational programs, for example, found that offshore international students were "subject to culture shock" which affected their learning, but this was not more of a problem than for those engaging in onshore international education (Chapman and Pyvis 2005, p. 6).

Other concerns included the impact of re-entry shock facing 'returnees' from overseas study (Robertson et al. 2011) once they graduated, came back, obtained employment domestically and tried to put the knowledge and skills acquired from their international education experience into practice in their home country's work environment. Significant to this is the concern about the gap between the graduate outcomes that institutions and students target and the expectation of employers, and the difference between students' voices and those of institutions and employers (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2015; Naidoo et al. 2011).

Students' opinions of an Australian offshore program in Singapore were explored in Hoare's study (2012). The findings regarding the forms of adaptation made including those by 'second chance' students and those in lifelong learning identified high-level locally-valued outcomes and internationally-adapted learning habits among the graduates. While it was unclear whether these positive results were replicated at other sites of offshore provision, negative responses were reported in Robertson et al. (2011) in terms of career advancement, leading to the urge of changing the language of internationalisation in order to emphasise the employability skills developed through mobility and an internationalised curriculum at home (de Wit and Jones 2014). Unanswered questions remain whether employers nominate differences, if any, between degree and professional capabilities in describing

graduate employment satisfaction. If so, what are employers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills of these graduates? This leads to the important question on employers' opinions about the employability of returnee Vietnamese international students as proposed in this research project, whose employability is briefly described in the next section.

Research Design

This chapter presents part of the findings of a PhD research project conducted from 2011 to 2014 at the School of Global, Urban & Social Studies, RMIT University, entitled 'The Contribution of Cross-Border Higher Education to Human Resource Development in Ho Chi Minh City' (Pham 2014). The project explored employers' perspectives on the employability of Vietnamese returnee graduates, especially on their ability to seek employment locally in the context of skill demand in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The research project's key question was "To what extent are graduate attributes of Vietnamese graduates from international education programs aligned with the demands of locally-based multinational employers?"

Graduate attributes as perceived by employers in key industries in Vietnam were mainly explored at face-to-face interview discussions with HR managers of locally-based multinational companies. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced senior HR managers working for selected Vietnamese and/or multinational employers in various key internationally exposed industries to identify industrially-valued graduate employability. These managers had many years of experience and were extensively involved in sourcing, staffing, and coaching newly-graduated employees. Above all, they were working in and had great knowledge of the skill demands of the local labour market.

It is worth noting that the number of twelve HR managers as participants may be small but their views were significant in many ways. Their perceptions, on the one hand, reflected the local HR requirements of each industry for educated and skilled workers. Their long-term work experiences in skill sourcing for international and national employers, on the other hand, helped to provide a better understanding of the employability skills required in the labour market and, more importantly, revealed returnee employability discussed in the following sections.

Returnee Employability

The overall findings of the research showed most of the employers were satisfied with returnee employability regarding key job specific knowledge and skills. This echoes what was recently found in Mellors-Bourne et al.'s (2015) and in Pham's (2014) research regarding employers' preferred choice of returnees, which highlighted their greater satisfaction on graduate employability of students from the

transnational education sector. This affirms the findings from previous studies about the internationalisation of the higher education curriculum at home (Jones and Brown 2007; Leask 2009; Fielden 2007), the capacity of international education in preparing students for the world of work (Jones 2013), and the value of embedding employability skills into internships locally and internationally (Bisland et al. 2014; Tran and Soejatminah 2016). Some of the employers' perspectives including returnee knowledge, mindset, skillset, language competence and cultural alignment were as follows.

Knowledge

Employers' requirements of graduates varied. However, their main requirements focused on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the graduates can potentially bring into their roles (Fielden 2007; Hillage and Pollard 1998; Jones 2013; Leask 2009). In this research, the HR managers broadly agreed with the World Bank's (2013) view that graduates from the international sector were described as having updated work-integrated knowledge and skills while those graduating from the domestic sector were "full of knowledge irrelevant to the employers' expectation"(World Bank 2013). These findings were consistent across key fields of international education, including business management, IT, banking and finance. The knowledge the graduates obtained during their international education sojourn, especially with overseas study, was highly valued by both foreign and local employers with prominent profiles as exporters. This outcome supports the findings acclaimed in the above mentioned Australian Education International's report (2010) on employers' perceptions of the positive outcomes of international students who have graduated from Australian institutions. The main theme emerging in every interview of this research concerned the knowledge that the graduates obtained from their international education. One HR manager working in one of the important industries of Vietnam, coffee industry retailing, observed:

> The graduates from foreign education programs understand good practice of foreign enterprises such as ISO standards. This is what we are after from the applicants with an educational background of overseas study or transnational education programs (HR Manager, Vietnamese Employer).

Crossman and Clarke (2010) stated that "in a global environment graduates with international experience would seem to have an employability advantage over those with only local knowledge" (p. 603). Yet this is not the case in Vietnam since although several HR managers who were interviewed expressed satisfaction with graduate knowledge, this did not equate with relevance to the local workplace. In some cases they explained that international graduates' knowledge is more up-to-date but the work environments in Vietnam were sometimes behind in their practices, and so up-to-date knowledge was not so important among educational indicators of graduate outcomes. This suggests that although knowledge is globally

valued, graduate skills should fit the regional and/or local work environment to enhance graduate employability, and as such, internationalisation at home and/or contextualisation for offshore delivery should be both globally and locally positioned (Jones and Brown 2007; Jones and Killick 2013; Knight 2004; Leask 2009). This finding makes sense in reference to de Wit's newly proposed definition of internationalisation which demonstrated the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education for a meaningful contribution to society (de Wit 2015). In this regard, employers' views of skill set gaps in Vietnam's labour market and of graduates from foreign education programs should be considered in the context of skill shortages of great concern across Southeast Asia (World Bank 2013)

Skill Set

Graduates from domestic universities received strong criticism for their poor graduate employability assets (Tran 2014). Specifically their competency and skills, especially their interpersonal skills for effective teamwork, were below standard (Tran and Swierczech 2009). The results from this research showed that the skill sets of graduates of international education programs reached the standards expected by employers. Their communication and presentation skills were very persuasive to employers and the communication skills detailed in resumes were core to their employability. According to the HR manager of a large US-based IT company, the way that graduates from this group wrote their resumes reflected their good communication skills; they knew how to demonstrate their skill set to potential employers. For example, by describing their contribution to small projects, they highlighted their skills in project management, teamwork and negotiation. They knew how to sell their soft skills as well as their knowledge and work styles. They emphasised their career aspirations and level of commitment, as well as their long-term and short-term objectives. With regard to the ways they undertook job-interviews, they took advantage of this precious time for marketing their skills, and initiating and leading conversations in a comfortable and relaxed way instead of being frustrated. Since presentation skills were listed among the four main components of employability, and described as the graduate's ability to demonstrate their employability assets and present them to the market in an accessible way (Hillage and Pollard 1998), this finding suggests the higher employability of graduates from international education programs over their local counterparts. Another comment by a HR manager in the plastics industry on their overall soft skills was as follows:

> It is quite clear that most graduates from foreign education curriculums overseas or in-country are persuasively outstanding in terms of soft skills (HR Manager, Vietnamese Employer).

Reasons for better market outcomes in terms of workplace performance of the graduates with international experiences are many. According to the HR manager of

a company in the cosmetics industry, graduates' engagement in internship and/ or family business contributed greatly to graduate skill development. This finding is aligned with the preliminary findings reported in Bilsland et al. (2014), which appraised transnational university internships as offshore practice in developing employability skills. In fact, many of these graduates are from elite families with family-owned private enterprises. Through taking part in their family business, they have gained the necessary skills to be better communicators. While student performance and graduates' part-time experience can also contribute significantly to improving competencies in terms of skills of students from domestic higher education (Tran and Swierczek 2009), this is also true for a small number of elite graduates with high distinctions from top local universities. Many of those who won places in the trainee programs of recognised global companies listed their work experiences as interns or managers of their own small family business while they were still students. The descriptions of the mindset of this group provided some further insights.

Mindset

The importance of commitment, motivation and obedience were spoken of in the interviews with HR managers. However, assessment of the performance of graduates with different mindsets is difficult as the graduate outcomes of students engaged in international education programs have not been sufficiently measured (Murray et al. 2011). One way that these HR managers evaluate graduates' mindsets is through their demonstrated 'work commitment', which most of the HR managers explained as employee loyalty. The graduates from overseas programs were described as having the least work commitment since their employment background showed very quick shifts between jobs. However, according to a HR manager working in the electronics industry, it is worth differentiating between different overseas study groups. For the graduates who had worked prior to their overseas study, a positive mindset change could be seen in their work performance. They were very confident and effective in communication at work. However, those who went for overseas study just after their high school education usually had a slower pace of favourable mindset development.

In other cases employers were sometimes not sure of the employee's commitment. Since the investment in a potential talent to a position in the management stream requires quite a big budget, employers will not provide training if they find it risky. As mentioned above, the graduates from foreign education were considered among the most mobile groups and showed the least commitment to corporate development. Their employers might therefore be very careful in not putting them in very important positions in the first stages of their work contracts.

Another feature which these HR managers observed in a graduate mindset was their 'work motivation', translated from a common Vietnamese term, *'nhiệt tình trong công việc'* [this is the researcher's translation]. Those who have graduated from foreign and transnational programs were described as having a less

work-motivated attitude. Regarding this, graduate family income background might provide an explanation. A middle-income family background turns into a workplace advantage – and one shared by most HR managers. One of their comments described the graduates' mindset as follows:

> The graduates from families with middle-incomes and with family-owned companies tend to come for trying out the position rather than for work or for exploiting the position for their own family company interest. Some may join internship programs for fun or for being pushed by institutions while employers didn't want them to come to try out and to be trialled (HR Manager, Indian Employer).

Graduates of overseas programs were described as being over self-confident in their demands in terms of salary and work conditions while those from transnational groups were somewhat more flexible. However, the latter groups were still described as "too confident and putting too much value on themselves due to their international qualifications" (AEI 2010, p. 14). A shared characteristic of these two groups was that they usually put themselves on a higher rank of employability compared with those who graduated from the domestic sector. However, some HR managers were concerned about a lack of core values displayed, such as 'eager to learn' and 'quick to learn' which were among key skills requirements of employers (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2015). The selection criteria for one senior staff of a well-known global head-hunter business were:

> to identify attitude toward work and career development before making decision to invest in the applicants. Since it is only the right attitude to work that can bring full potential to fulfil their job duties (HR Manager, US Employer).

In general, there exists a gap in the way graduates' mindsets were described by corporate managers and graduates. Being hard-working, obedient, and patient, graduates were highly valued by employers, while being innovative and proactive were identified as graduates' characteristics. In some cases, new employees might feel as if they were outsiders in their local work environment, and as such, their ideas of innovation were not welcomed. In such cases they might feel disrespected and quit their jobs. This indicates one of the difficulties facing graduates who have undergone an internationalised curriculum, especially returnee graduates from overseas study; there is a tension between the understandings acquired in international education settings and those required or expected in daily local workplace settings. Analysing the available data showed a somewhat paradoxical finding: that the skills gained might, in fact, be very standard. However, these skills might not be applicable or welcomed in a particular local work situation. In fact, it is cited in Mellors-Bourne et al. (2015, p. 48) that "the need for intercultural skills has grown significantly over recent years, presumably as their economies and international trade have developed" (Ilieva 2012) and the economic, social and cultural contexts of their nation demand that graduates have the skills for working in an international context (Lunn 2008). This is a challenge to efforts in adapting to the culture of the corporation where they wish to work. Since most employees of a company, whether an international or local company, are Vietnamese with local educational and work backgrounds, their ways of thinking might be much different. However, graduates'

motivation for teamwork and their modes of reporting and making presentations are diverse; their styles of raising issues and finding solutions for a problem are various.

Language Competence

Central to the discussion on the outcomes of international education is institutional concerns on the language competence of international students. Enhancing interaction between international and domestic students was suggested to improve graduates' language competence (Arkoudis et al. 2014). The results of this study revealed that several HR managers appraised the English language competence of graduates from overseas institutions. Some of them expressed concerns about graduates from transnational education programs in HCMC; for the others this was not considered a major issue. However, some HR managers of local companies involved in international business ventures with foreign partners showed surprisingly little interest in the foreign language proficiency of the graduates with an overseas education. They explained that although they have an international business, their interaction and communication with foreign partners are limited. Their international business activity focused on imports and exports, and usually required only routine paperwork responsibilities while the cost to hire graduates with a foreign education background is much higher than those with local qualifications. As a result, these companies felt that it did not make sense to spend more money for overseas-educated employees. At this point, guidelines for contextualising and/ or localising curriculum discussed in Jones (2013) are critically important.

From the standpoint of a specific industry, the concern of HR managers of foreign companies in the IT industry was not for the foreign language competence of returnee graduates but for their local language proficiency. This suggests challenges to language competence at their workplace such as in making presentations about their own fields as below presented, and as such, strategies of internationalisation of the curriculum are institutionally relevant (Fielden 2007; Jones and Killick 2013).

> Graduates from international education programs face difficulties of finding the equivalents for the terminologies in their mother tongue. In formal writing, they struggle to write a formal business letter and to put this letter in the right format and/or standard writing mode. What they write seems "weird" to local business practices (HR Manager, US Employer).

There are variations in requirements for English skills among these graduates. Graduates from international education programs overseas in IT or engineering satisfy employers' requirements for English skills needed for successful communication at their workplace. As the jobs in this field require using English for communication with global team members and clients, these graduates are on a priority list. A HR manager of an Australian software corporation in HCMC shares:

> Our experiences tell us that the English communication skills among IT graduates from overseas study are very good. They are capable of being quickly adaptive to our corporate culture and progress well. This group of graduates are preferred as our staff need to engage

in global interactions through teamwork with colleges in our Australian headquarters (HR Manager, Australian Employer).

Looking beyond the IT industry, the critical point is that English competence is not unique to, nor advantageous for those graduating from international education programs at home and abroad, since it is sometimes not considered a strong selection criterion in current local job markets. Many HR managers explained that this did not mean English language proficiency was not valued by employers, but that their English language proficiency in general was improving due to their engagement in international education. This suggests, at a certain level, an imperative for transforming assessment of learning outcomes and graduate language competence (Arkoudis et al. 2014; Coates 2015).

Experienced HR managers who had significant experience interviewing the job-applicants graduating from international education programs shared in the observation that the local labour market provided an over-supply of experienced people who had previously worked in banking and finance and other industries that were shedding staff. These applicants' industry knowledge and business English for communication and negotiation were demonstrated in local work settings. This suggests some limitations on employment opportunities for recent graduates, challenges the capacity to gain jobs in their chosen fields, and downgrades graduate employability. One HR Director commented:

> The HR market now seems saturated. We have less and less contracts to employ and/or training for those newly graduated from multinational companies. Instead we receive orders to employ among available unemployed and/ laid-off staff from other companies in closely related industries (HR Director – Vietnamese HR Employers).

In contrast to graduates from overseas study, graduates from collaborative programs were described as having weak language competency in both English and Vietnamese. One of the explanations for this, with respect to English competence, is the missing piece of the management of English language teaching and learning across various foreign-related educational programs in Vietnam (Nguyen 2017) (see Chap. 7 for detailed explanation). One HR manager recounted being invited to an Industry Guest Speaker program for students of a foreign-linked education program. She was surprised to find that the language of the lecture was Vietnamese though this lecture is part of a UK program. This lecturer was asked to present in Vietnamese as these students were not sure that they could understand her lecture in English.

Many employers were concerned with overall communication skills rather than English language fluency. This concern was affirmed in Jones (2008, p. 1) that "familiarity with another culture or language does not automatically result in the ability to communicate across cultures". A HR manager of a big employer in the chemical industry explains:

> We highly value applicants' fluency and communicative sensitivity in their mother tongue when recruiting for some particular positions in sales and marketing since our products are for clients with very limited literacy knowledge. The friendlier communicative skill they possess, the higher revenue they can get (HR Manager, German Employer).

In such a complex local labour market, different employers are seeking different sets of skills and prioritising applicants with overseas, transnational, and domestic qualifications depending on the nature of the position and the organisation in which they will be working. The next section will present findings regarding graduates' cultural alignment and adjustment to local workplaces.

Cultural Alignment

Crossman and Clarke (2010, p. 603) suggested that "in a global environment graduates with international experience would seem to have an employability advantage over those with only local knowledge". However, returnees' English competency, soft skills and international mindset were commonly appraised, but this does not mean that these skills can help them to adapt well to a local workplace since the workplace environment of an international company is very complex in terms of multicultural work style, ownership, and business. The HR managers who were interviewed often spoke of difficulties in cultural alignment that some overseas-educated graduates face. Graduates with foreign higher educational backgrounds in some cases did not demonstrate their understanding of the local social context. They did not only lack networking knowledge with local business but also local work experience. Since they were absent from local social life while studying overseas, they were out-of-date with the local society and economy; they also had not had the chance to build up their own network with local business, or develop experience in the local work style. While networking is previously highlighted as one of the core highly-valued employability skills (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2015), this finding is remarkably significant.

Other challenges facing the graduates could come from the fact that an international work culture does not necessarily mean a Western-dominated culture. This was explained by one HR manager as follows:

> Many global companies are originally from Asia. They are of a more Asian style in nature and sometimes are very different from the Western style. In problem solving of technical procedures, for example, Asian bosses tend to be flexible rather than strictly following the expected guidelines (HR Manager, Korean Employer).

In such cases, culture shock at work might be avoidable, and cultural adaptation to a new work environment can take time where the 'cultural zone' also includes differences in management culture and ways of thinking across different work cultures.

While most students who study overseas showcase the knowledge they have gained in their resume and at job interviews (Koda et al. 2011), some professional fields, including banking and engineering, require less knowledge about working across cultures than graduates may have gained. According to one employer in engineering, in many ways graduates from foreign programs were better than those who graduated locally but it would be a mistake to place them in the highest rank of applicants for all vacancies. For those who graduated in business management

from foreign education programs with strong points of English, problem solving and soft skills, they were often considered for positions in a support department such as logistics, administration, or purchasing while those who graduated in engineering were placed in an operational department.

The above discussion of HR managers' perceptions of the attributes of students engaged in international education suggests that an international education experience can only partially satisfy international and local employers. The important point demonstrated in this section is that the perceptions of the representative HR managers of the graduate attributes of the students who had graduated from international programs shared many similarities with the key skills requirements which are generally expected by global employers as cited in the above section (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2015).This significantly informs the job satisfaction of these graduates. It should be noted that the interview method used here can only provide employers' views on the 'output' of the educational process, that is, graduate attributes. To ascertain the relevance of these attributes to skill development strategy as a whole, the findings should be read in the particular socioeconomic and educational contexts of the city and/or country where educational programs were delivered, especially in relation to its national strategies of the internationalisation of higher education.

Another important point is that the mismatch between institutional and organisational cultures is also an issue for graduates entering multinational firms in HCMC as the major sources of foreign direct investment in the city are remarkably Asian-based multinational countries. The HR manager of a Korean employer in the electronics industry explained that "all employees stand up and deeply nod to greet the boss of the company whenever he comes and visits their work stations". While interaction between international and domestic students are created to support international students in gaining their knowledge of cultural differences and developing their employability skills (Arkoudis et al. 2013), such cultural traditions at work might be shocking to the graduates who had gone through internships and graduated with a Western work style. This challenges the internationalised curriculum and also the returnee graduates from overseas study when they are employed to work in an Asian global setting. Similarly, conflict can emerge from a teamwork style involving putting views forward, for example for innovation and research, in a firm manner. Again local work culture can throw up a kind of cultural barrier for internationally educated graduates, as was suggested by the above mentioned HR manager of the Korean company who explained: "It is not a big surprise if their voices of innovation and/or new ideas are not welcomed by the old and experienced managers who have been working for over ten years." The value of their ideas is sometimes not the problem; rather it is their direct style of voicing the issues that can matter in such an Asian work environment.

Concluding Remarks

The findings suggest that although notable inconsistency is evident in the quality of graduate capabilities across different modes of delivery of international education, returnees and transnational education graduates' employability skills are recognised not only to locally-based multinational employers and also to well-known domestic companies. While overall language, ICT and intercultural competences were highly appraised attributes among graduates, the unexpectedly interesting points drawn from this research were actually employers' preferences for transnational graduates' mindsets and credential language competency and, in some cases, their lack of interest in returnees' foreign language competence and intercultural skills.

Critical implications are suggested for public and institutional policies of internationalising higher education. The opinions of locally-based multinational employers on graduate employability, particularly on the graduate assets in terms of industry-valued knowledge, skills and attitudes, provide new and valuable information into the function, productivity and quality of Vietnamese graduates from international education programs from across sectors. These opinions also provide insights into graduate supply that has the potential to assist system-and-institution level monitoring and planning. Drawing on these opinions, institutions may sketch out the knowledge required in specific disciplinary curriculums, the skills expected in a specific industry, and the attitudes valued in specific work environments. Institutional reflections on these can hopefully shed light on university vision and mission, program and/or curriculum design, and pedagogy and assessment for better graduate employability of all students across sectors.

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Chapter 12
From Brain Drain and Brain Gain to Brain Circulation: Conceptualizing Re-Expatriation Intentions of Vietnamese Returnees

Nga Thi Thuy Ho, Pi-Shen Seet, and Janice Jones

Introduction

Over the last few decades, several Asian emerging economies have transformed themselves to become more market-based economies, and this has enabled them to attract a greater share of foreign direct investment (FDI) and become fast growing economies. Similar to other Asian emerging economies, FDI into Vietnam over the past two decades has increased significantly (see Fig. 12.1) and Vietnam continues to be listed as one of the top 20 emerging markets for attracting FDI at least until 2020 (Kvint 2009). Following the introduction of the reform policy in 1986, Vietnam has achieved a high rate of economic growth (Anwar and Nguyen 2010; Quang 2013) (see Fig. 12.2). Among Asia's emerging economies, Vietnam's annual growth rate ranks second only to China (Mai et al. 2009).

Vietnam's rapid economic growth and the increased FDI inflow into Vietnam has resulted in a growing demand for more highly skilled, networked and entrepreneurial individuals (Thanhnien News 2013). Meanwhile, Vietnam's education system has not kept pace with its economic development to provide sufficient high-quality human capital to meet the labour demand of Vietnam's economic growth (Schulmann 2014; Thanhnien News 2013). These factors contribute to a growing number of

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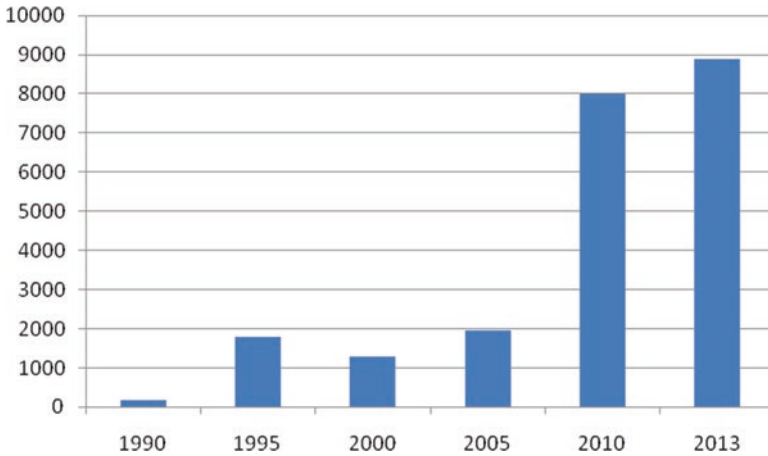
Fig. 12.1 FDI inflows into Vietnam. (US$ million, Source: UNCTAD (2015))
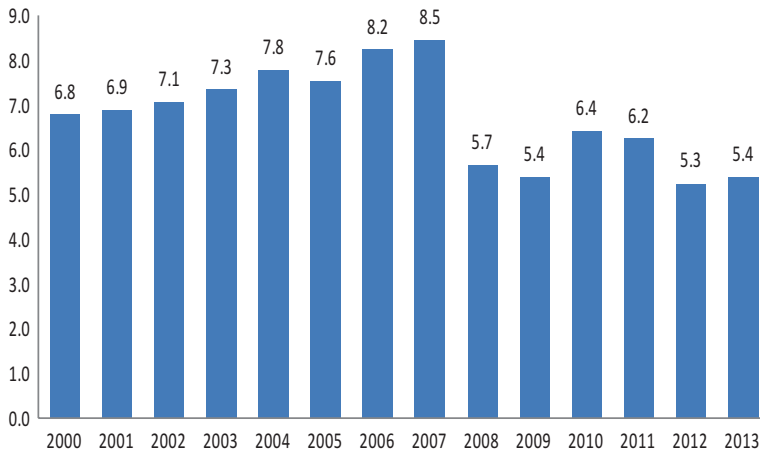
Fig. 12.2 Vietnam's GDP growth rate in 2000–2013 (%). (Source: The World Bank (2015))

Vietnamese students seeking overseas study with the hope of having international experiences and advanced knowledge and skills in more developed countries (Gribble 2011; Le 2014; Nguyen 2013). According to the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, the total number of Vietnamese students studying overseas (both secondary and postsecondary) was 125,000 in 2013 (ICEF 2014). By 2013, the number of Vietnamese studying tertiary abroad was about 53,000 (UNESCO 2016). From a historical and longitudinal perspective, Fig. 12.3 shows the number of Vietnamese studying tertiary abroad increasing from approximately 8000 in 1999 to more than 50,000 students in 2013.

The relative rapid economic growth of emerging economies vis-à-vis developed economies, mainly in the West, has meant an increasing number of graduates/ professionals are returning to their home countries in search of better opportunities. In
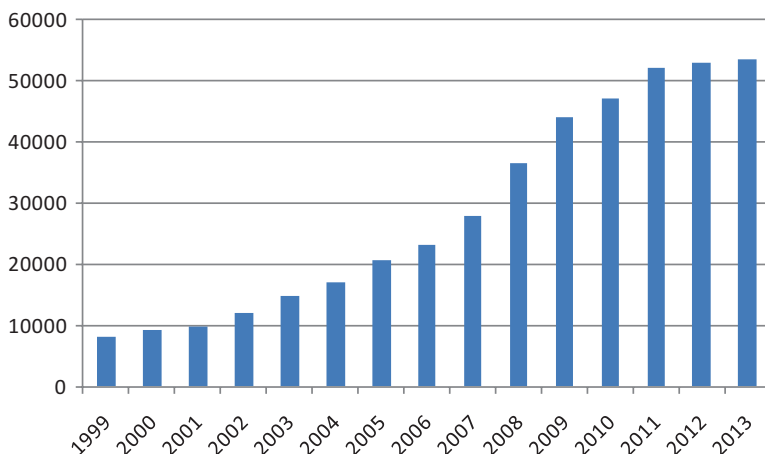
Fig. 12.3 Outbound mobile Vietnamese students studying tertiary abroad. (Source: UNESCO (2016))

China, for example, according to National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011), the return rate of Chinese overseas graduates was between 40 to 47 percent from 2008 to 2010, compared to only 30 percent from 2005 to 2007 and between 14 to23 percent from 2000 to 2004. Similar to China, the relative high economic growth rates and FDI inflows into Vietnam have created a stronger labour market, better career opportunities, and demand for more advanced skills, which has attracted more overseas Vietnamese back to their home country (Le 2014; Vietnamnet 2011).

The growth in number of returnees, who have overseas qualifications and/or work experiences, is reversing the brain drain that emerging economies have been experiencing, by attracting attracted back talented or skilled people from the Diaspora. This reversal, however, may be temporary as returnees may go abroad again (in other words, re-expatriate), if for example, they are unhappy and do not adjust well to their home country (Tharenou 2015; Tharenou and Seet 2014). Several studies (e.g. Tharenou and Seet 2014; Tung 2007; Wadhwa et al. 2009) indicate that a large proportion of Chinese returnees (up to 40 percent) express that they will definitely re-expatriate or consider doing that. Although there are not available official data on number of Vietnamese returnees re-expatriating, various reports (e.g. Pham 2011; Pham 2013) show that many research institutions, universities and states in Vietnam lose a sizable number of Vietnamese returnees who go back abroad after returning to work in Vietnam.

Losing these highly skilled human capital causes major problems for Vietnam, especially its ambitions to transition from a socialist-oriented market economy to modern, industrialised country by 2020 (Quang 2013; The World Bank, 2012). Meanwhile, Vietnam is negotiating access to the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (TPP) in the near future (Krist 2015). Although the TPP promises many opportunities for Vietnam, such as a wider export market for Vietnam's products, it will also bring challenges for Vietnamese enterprises which

will face higher foreign competition as foreign products, services and capital will be able to access Vietnam's market with greater ease (The Vietnamese Ministry of Finance 2015). In order to prepare for these significant changes, Vietnam needs to not only attract but also retain highly talented Vietnamese with strong global competencies, given the growth in importance of human capital as a source of competitive advantage which underscores the importance of talent in the economy (Jones et al. 2012). Vietnamese returnees who possess advanced skills, knowledge, international experiences and foreign language proficiency from developed countries, are vital for Vietnam's continued economic growth (Gribble 2011; Pham 2010). These returnees may also bring international linkages and technologies from the host country (Pham 2010). Thus, finding the reasons why returnees intend to re-expatriate will be critical for the Vietnamese Government in order to develop and implement appropriate policies to help returnees settle down and retain talent in Vietnam. While the Vietnamese Government has employed many reverse brain drain policies to encourage overseas Vietnamese to return and stay in Vietnam, the effectiveness of these policies is questionable (Pham 2010). As Tran & Marginson (2018) pointed out in Chap. 1, their newly acquired skills and knowledge are not drawn on effectively in national development.

In attempting to understand the phenomenon of re-expatriation among Vietnamese returnees, we find that much of the extant literature on overseas Vietnamese or Vietnamese returnees has tended to focus on talented individuals leaving Vietnam (brain drain) (e.g. Gribble 2011; Nguyen 2005, 2013, 2014; Schulmann 2014) and or talented graduates/ professionals returning to Vietnam (reverse brain drain/ brain gain) (e.g. Anh 2003; Le 2014; Nguyen 2012). Research on brain drain in the Vietnamese context has focused on why Vietnamese students choose to study abroad and why they stay in the host country (Gribble 2011). Meanwhile, research on reverse brain drain has found that overseas Vietnamese return because of family attachment and better career opportunities in Vietnam (Le 2014).

However, both brain drain and reverse brain research depicts these international movements as one way flows of skills, technology and capital (Tung 2008). As such, it neglects the increasingly dynamic nature of international mobility as an ongoing process where repatriation is not an end point of the process and that returnees may move or re-expatriate several times in their careers in a phenomenon known as 'brain circulation' (Saxenian 2005). There has been a lack of research on brain circulation in emerging countries in general and particularly in the Vietnamese context, which leads to some significant gaps in understanding. Specifically, the question of why some of the returnees intend to re-expatriate is especially interesting in light of the fact that most returnees are in fact holding better positions in their home country, by virtue of their overseas experience (Zweig and Han 2010).

This chapter addresses some of these gaps by reviewing research as to why Vietnamese returnees who have studied and/or worked abroad in more developed countries, and have returned to Vietnam, may intend to re-expatriate on their own initiative. We develop a conceptual framework model explaining such intentions by incorporating pull-push theory to help explain the economic, social and psychological

pull or push forces from the home and the host countries that motivate movements of people across borders (Chia 2006; Finlay et al. 2011; Glavac 2000; Gmelch 1980; Parutis 2013; Toren 1976). We also integrate the theories of reverse culture shock (RCS) and cross-cultural readjustment to explain how returnees' negative reactions on re-entry to their home country are likely to prompt them to consider re-expatriating. In so doing, this chapter adds to the limited number of studies on brain circulation and re-expatriation of returnees in emerging economies and contributes to theoretical understanding of re-expatriation by developing a conceptual framework of factors affecting the re-expatriate intentions of returnees in the context of an Emerging Economy, notably Vietnam.

This chapter is structured as follows. The chapter begins with theoretical justifications for why returnees intend to re-expatriate. In the following section, development of a conceptual framework explaining motivations for re-expatriation among Vietnamese returnees as well as research propositions are presented and discussed. This chapter concludes with a discussion of theoretical, policy and managerial implications.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Pull-Push Theory

Pull-push theory explains intentions to re-expatriate with push factors encouraging individuals to leave their home country and pull factors attracting people to a particular country (Toren 1976). Push factors are generally negative and related to the home country (such as unemployment in the home country), while pull factors are positive and associated with the destination country (such as good job opportunities in the destination country) (Toren 1976). Pull-push theory has been used to explain the antecedents for expatriation and repatriation for more than three decades (Glavac 2000; Gmelch 1980; Toren 1976) including in different contexts, such as emerging East European, African and Asian economies (Chia 2006; Finlay et al. 2011; Parutis 2013). Pull-push theory is applied, as it is a generalized theory that we can conceptualize both economic (e.g. job opportunities) and noneconomic factors (e.g. family encouragement) under pull-push forces (Tharenou and Caulfield 2010).

In Chap. 9, Pham (2017b) argues that push-pull theory provides a robust explanation for understanding decisions of Vietnamese students in terms of their choice of destination for overseas study. The majority of such research focuses on student mobility and often draws attention to the push-and-pull factors from home countries to host countries. However, by itself, pull-push theory is limited in its ability to fully explain the association between the home and the host country in studying returnees' intentions to re-expatriate. Pull-push theory does not take into account the psychological variables that explain returnees' re-entry experiences when they return to their home country. Thus, we propose to integrate pull-push theory with theories incorporating re-entry experiences, namely reverse culture shock (RCS)

theory and cross-cultural readjustment theory to provide a better explanation of returnees' re-entry experiences and their re-expatriation intentions.

Theories Explaining Re-Entry Experiences

Re-entry experiences are responses of returnees to their home country after returning from their host country (Adler 1981; Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1963; Szkudlarek 2010; Uehara 1986; Ward et al.2001). Negative re-entry experiences lead to negative feelings about life and work in the home country which prompts returnees to consider re-expatriating (Tharenou and Seet 2014). The most common reactions include RCS and cross-cultural readjustment (Tharenou 2015), which will be discussed in the following sections.

Reverse Culture Shock (RCS)

RCS refers to the emotional and psychological difficulties experienced by individuals who return to their home country after a significant period living in another country and culture (Adler 1981; Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1963; Sussman 2000; Szkudlarek 2010; Ward et al. 2001). RCS includes negative feelings about the home country, such as alienation, not belonging, loneliness, isolation, inferiority, depression and general anxiety (Gaw 2000; Seiter and Waddell 1989). RCS also involves the feelings of less freedom in their home country, feelings of conflicts, discomfort and disappointment when re-entry does not meet returnees' expectations (Christofi and Thompson 2007).

Studies on RCS largely focus on affective aspects, such as health problems, psychological distress, anxiety, depression and emotional difficulties (Searle and Ward 1990). Much of the research on RCS has also focussed on micro-level psychological studies with few studies examining the relationship of this concept with the movement of human capital across international borders. We address this gap by examining the extent to which RCS explains intentions to re-expatriate.

Cross-Cultural Readjustment

In contrast to RCS, cross-cultural readjustment is described as a positive response (Sussman 2000; Ward and Searle 1991). Black and his collegues (Black 1994; Black and Gregersen 1999; Black et al. 1992) argue that cross-cultural readjustment includes work, general and interaction readjustment. Work readjustment refers to the adjustment of individuals to a job position. General readjustment concerns the overall adjustment of the individual's general psychological comfort with the home

nation environment, including food, housing, climate and living conditions. Interaction readjustment is defined as an individual's psychological comfort in interpersonal communication and social relations.

Returnees in the Vietnamese context need to adjust to not only their home life, but also working aspects in their home country (Begley et al. 2008; Hansel 1993; Pritchard 2011). Pham (2017a) (see Chap. 11) pointed out that the skills and competencies that Vietnaese returnees pick up while overseas do not necessarily help them to adapt well to a local workplace. Therefore, we find that the model developed by Black and his colleages (Black 1994; Black and Gregersen 1999; Black et al. 1992) is appropriate in applying in research to understand how Vietnamese returnees re-adjust to their work, interat with locals and their culture in Vietnam. We also apply the theory of Black and his collegues (Black 1994; Black and Gregersen 1999; Black et al. 1992) to understand the association of poor cross-cultural readjustment with re-expatriation intentions.

Figure 12.4 presents the conceptual framework derived from factors that may influence the re-expatriation intentions of Vietnamese returnees. It includes pull forces from the host country, push forces from the home country and negative re-entry experiences.

The propositions outlined in the figure are developed in the following sections.

Development of Propositions

Pull-Push Forces

Host-Country Pull Forces

Career opportunities, education for children and quality of life in the host country are the most frequently cited reasons by Vietnamese graduates/professionals as having pulled them to abroad (Le 2014; Nguyen 2005; Pham 2013). Vietnamese people often expect they will have better professional development and better-working environment in the host country (Le 2014). Better education and future for children are also main pull forces in the host country for most Vietnamese returnees (Gribble 2011; Tran et al. 2014). They often place education and the future for their children as significant family considerations for re-expatriation. This is because Vietnamese ascribe to a collectivistic culture where family factors play an important factor in making decisions to relocate to another country (Carr et al. 2005). This is also combined with the fact that education system in Vietnam currently faces many problems and deficiencies in meeting the needs of highly skilled talent or human capital for a rapidly developing and internationalising economy (Gribble 2011; Schulmann 2014; Tran et al. 2014). This encourages Vietnamese returnees to consider re-expatriating to seek better education for their children and a better place to bring up their children. Additionally, Vietnam has been struggling with other side-effects of economic growth like physical environment problems, unsafe food, increasing traffic congestion and rising crime rates in most big cities. A better quality of life in the

Pull forces in the host country
- Higher salary
- Better career development
- Better working condition
- Better quality of life
- Better education for children

P1 (+)

Intention to re-expatriate

Push forces in Vietnam
- Dissatisfaction with career factors (e.g. low salary and poor working environment)
- Dissatisfaction with non-career factors (e.g. negative lifestyles)

P2 (+)

P3 (+)

Negative re-entry experiences
- Reverse culture shock
- Poor repatriation adjustment

P3 (+)

Fig. 12.4 A conceptual framework explaining the re-expatriation intention of Vietnamese returnees

host country (cleaner air, safer environments, and less traffic congestion) may attract Vietnamese returnees back to the host country or other similar host countries (Nguyen 2012). In sum, host countries are more likely to pull Vietnamese returnees back by positive aspects, such as better career opportunities, better education for children and quality of life. Therefore, the following research proposition follows:

Proposition 1 Host-country pull forces are positively related to intention to re-expatriate.

Home-Country Push Forces

Compared to host-country pull forces, home-country push forces are more silent predictors of returnees' intention to re-expatriate (Tharenou 2010; Tharenou and Seet 2014). Home-country push forces are negative aspects about the home country that drive returnees away from their country of residence (Toren 1976). The push forces from the home country includes undesirable things in the home country that returnees are not satisfied with and want to escape from (Selmer and Lauring 2012). The significantly important role of home-country push forces is caused by the expectation of returnees (Tharenou 2010). Returnees with advanced overseas education and fluency in foreign languages normally have an edge in terms of better skills and knowledge as compared to locally-qualified Vietnamese graduates/ professionals. They often have high expectations in terms of getting good jobs, high salaries, quicker promotions and better lifestyles in their home country (Zweig 2006; Zweig and Han 2010). As Pham (2017b) noted in Chap. 10, more than half of the returnees in her study said that they returned to Vietnam because they would be more advantaged in Vietnam's labour market compared to overseas, with regards to accessing jobs and business opportunities with high economic rewards. However, returnees are usually dissatisfied with their home country when their expectations are not met (Suutari and Brewster 2003). Thus, dissatisfaction with their home country will encourage returnees to relocate to host countries.

For Vietnamese returnees, undesirable career paths in Vietnam are the most frequently mentioned push forces by returnees (Nguyen 2005; Pham 2013; Tran et al. 2014). Vietnamese returnees often expect that employers in Vietnam will value their advanced skills, such as innovative thinking and teamwork, and their advanced knowledge from international degrees, which they consider superior to local graduates (Nguyen 2012). However, local employers, especially in the government sectors, normally do not fully recognise Vietnamese returnees' international experiences and they are not willing to offer better salary packages for Vietnamese returnees (Nguyen 2012). Besides low salaries, lack of autonomy and unsatisfactory working environments are also strong forces that push Vietnamese returnees overseas again (Pham 2013). Vietnamese returnees claim that relatively outdated, slow and bureaucratic work environment as the main reasons why they want go back abroad (Gribble 2011; Nguyen 2005; Tran et al. 2014; Zink 2013). Vietnamese returnee researchers and lecturers also state that lack of recognition of their capabilities, poor research facilities, libraries and research environments are major concerns for them (Gribble 2011; Tran et al. 2014). This is reinforced by a lack of independence in the ability to conduct research leading to returnee researchers being dissatisfied with the research culture in Vietnam (Pham 2013; Zink 2013). Vietnamese returnees in other sectors report that their jobs do not meet their interests and qualifications or that they cannot utilise their knowledge gained from studying abroad to their current jobs (Le 2014; Nguyen 2012). Some felt the lack of motivation and inability to exercise creativity in the work place (Chan and Tran 2011).

Besides career factors, Vietnamese returnees claim that some non-career related factors may also influence their decision to leave Vietnam again. As mentioned above, they are dissatisfied with their lifestyle conditions in Vietnam which is relatively more crowded, more polluted, with a lack of respect of personal space, with unsafe food, lower security and poorer housing conditions.

In sum, returnees may grow increasingly dissatisfied with both their career and non-career factors in Vietnam when their career and life back home do not meet their expectations (Begley et al. 2008; Tharenou 2010). The negative evaluation about their career and non-career factors when they return to Vietnam would contribute to a negative attitude toward Vietnam (Lidgard 2001). Therefore, this dissatisfaction will be the home country factors that push returnees to consider re-expatriating to another country. Hence, the following research proposition follows:

Proposition 2 Home-country dissatisfaction is positively related to intention to re-expatriate.

Re-entry Experiences

Re-entry experiences include different reactions of returnees after repatriating (Szkudlarek 2010). We theorize that the negative experiences to re-entry (such as RCS, and poor cross-cultural readjustment) may lead to negative feelings about their life and work in home country (home country dissatisfaction), and that these may affect returnees' intentions to re-expatriate.

Vietnamese returnees report that they face RCS due to different lifestyles, conflicting values and difficulties in social and interpersonal relationships with others (Le 2014). Their lifestyle changes during the time in the host country and upon return, they do not always accept the ways of life in Vietnam (Chan and Tran 2011; Le 2014) which may be reflected in dissatisfaction with the lifestyle in their home country (Gill 2010; Wadhwa et al. 2009). Vietnamese returnees often return home having developed different thinking styles from non-returnees and they view the local practices via lenses modified from their time overseas (Chan and Tran 2011). They may experience reintegration problems when faced with differences in ethics at work and modes of communication (Nguyen 2012).

Vietnamese returnees are also likely to experience different levels of work readjustment after returning home (Pham 2017a). Vietnamese returnees experience job search problems when domestic employers do not really value their international experience (Nguyen 2012). They are unable to adapt to Vietnamese administrative practices that are complicated and bureaucratic (Le 2014) and become dissonant from some local ways and habits, such as work and communication practices (Chan and Tran 2011). The differences in work ethics and modes of communication in working between the home and host country also make the cross-cultural readjustment process increasingly difficult (Le 2014). For example, Vietnamese returnees from the United States claim that they had difficulties in adjusting to their work in Vietnam when working style in Vietnam differs from their host country (Le 2014).

While working in the United States, these returnees are acculturated into Western working culture and practices, such as straightforward verbal communication and open and collaborative working relationships among colleagues. When they returned to Vietnam organizations, they have to change to the different working styles in Vietnam which are based more on emotional and personal relationships.

Vietnamese returnees also report that they have poor non-work adjustment with family, friends and Vietnamese lifestyles (Chan and Tran 2011; Le 2014). They experience problems in re-negotiating relationships with their friends, particularly when their friends have moved on and taken on different life courses (Butcher 2002). They also have problems in interacting with Vietnamese locals due to conflicting values and different worldviews among those who did not go overseas for study or work (Chan and Tran 2011). Some returnees claim that they have difficulties re-adjusting to the Vietnamese weather and its heat and humidity (Le 2014). Others have problems re-adjusting to low salaries in Vietnam relative to what they were earning overseas which has been made worse through price escalation as a result of high inflation in Vietnam recently (Le 2014).

Returnees who experience more RCS would have more psychological difficulties and negative feelings about living in their home country, and may therefore intend to re-expatriate. A smooth cross-cultural readjustment process generally leads to positive attitudes toward their firms and their jobs (Gregersen and Black 1993). RCS and poor cross-cultural readjustment would generate dissatisfaction or negative attitudes toward the country and people, an essential element for decision to leave a country (Baruch et al. 2007; Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. 2005). Therefore, the following research proposition follows:

Proposition 3 Negative re-entry experiences (RCS and poor cross-cultural readjustment) are positively related to home-country dissatisfaction and intention to re-expatriate.

Conclusions

Theoretical Implications

This paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of re-expatriation by developing a conceptual framework of factors affecting intentions to re-expatriate of returnees in the Vietnamese context (see Fig. 12.4). This conceptual framework has not been fully explored in literature as previous studies (e.g. Anh 2003; Gribble 2011; Le 2014; Nguyen 2005, 2014) only focus on brain drain and reverse brain drain while little is known about the brain circulation in Vietnam.

By developing the conceptual framework, we firstly highlight that intentions to re-expatriate among Vietnamese returnees are affected by a variety pull forces in the host country and push forces in Vietnam. These include not only career factors (e.g. salaries, job opportunities), but also non-career factors (e.g. education and quality of life). We propose that future research needs to be conducted to assess the relative

importance of different pull and push factors that are related to the home and host country in determining intentions to re-expatriate.

Secondly, we apply the concepts of RCS and cross-cultural readjustment to understand how Vietnamese returnees experience at home. Our review of existing research shows a sizable number of Vietnamese returnees would have had negative re-entry experiences. We theorize that their negative re-entry experiences could lead to home country dissatisfaction and then encourage Vietnamese returnees intend to re-expatriate. Future research needs to examine whether negative re-entry experience lead to intentions to re-expatriate.

Much of current research on returnees in emerging countries is qualitative in nature. Future research could use quantitative methods to test this conceptual framework. Although quantitative data does not provide an in-depth exploration of a small group of individuals, it allows us draw conclusions from a much large sample of populations (Cameron and Price 2009; Thang et al. 2007). Thus, this method designed to identify level of RCS and cross-cultural readjustment, and to investigate causal relationship between constructs identified in this model.

Finally, possible extensions of current research are examining whether push forces from the host country and pull forces from the home country influence returnees' intention to re-expatriate. The most common push forces from the host country include lack of job opportunities (Gill 2010; Le 2014), lack of cultural assimilation resulting from language barriers and discrimination (Wadhwa et al. 2009). The pull forces from the home country include the family ties, friendship, cultural fit and career opportunities in Vietnam (Anh 2003; Le 2014).

Implications for Vietnamese Higher Education Policy and Management

Vietnamese returnees who possess skills, advanced knowledge, international experience, and foreign language proficiency are valuable sources of talent and human capital for Vietnam (Gribble 2011). Further, the successful recruitment, motivation and retention of such employees will help firms gain significant competitive advantage (Björkman and Xiucheng 2002). Acknowledging the significant contribution of Vietnamese returnees toward Vietnam's development, the Vietnam government has recently put in a greater effort to encourage Overseas Vietnamese to return and remain in Vietnam, by developing a number of policies aimed at Vietnamese returnees (Dang et al. 2010; Gribble 2011; Nguyen 2014). However, the effectiveness of these policies is yet to be proven and their implementation cumbersome (Dang et al. 2010; Nguyen 2014). This study has a number of implications for the Vietnam government and managers with respect to retaining Vietnamese returnees.

First, the Vietnam government and managers need to encourage returnees to stay by ensuring returnees' re-entry experiences are positive. In particular, they need to develop repatriation programs and consultancies that help returnees to deal with the

issue of RCS and poor cross-cultural readjustment. The main cause of RCS and poor cross cultural re-adjustment is that returnees are unprepared for the changes that they have to adjust back to in their home country as returnees think that their home country is not a new place to them (Thompson and Christofi 2006). Returnees may expect to return to their former life-styles and former relationships with friends and colleagues. In reality, their expectations are not always met (Suutari and Brewster 2003) and the unmet expectation leads to RCS and poor re-adjustment. Another reason for RCS and poor re-adjustment is that returnees have changed during their overseas experiences (Christofi and Thompson 2007; Gill 2010). The new cultural values acquired abroad may be in conflict with the culture of the home country. In addition, their home country may have changed (e.g. economic and political changes) while returnees were abroad (Christofi and Thompson 2007; Haines 2012). Returnees may not be aware of changes to themselves and their home country, which may lead to their discomfort on re-entry and their frustration and discomfort with the home country environment (Martin and Harrell 2004).

Therefore, repatriation programs should focus on providing critical information that will help returnees have realistic expectations during repatriation. The information may include economic and political changes in the home country. Further, it also should involve information and even re-entry orientation or induction sessions on how returnees can utilise the skills and knowledge acquired abroad to achieve or advance their career goals. The programs should also help returnees understand how they have changed in terms of their values, life-style and views, which may help them avoid RCS and ensure a smooth re-adjustment when they return to Vietnam.

Second, incentives and repatriation schemes are another way to lure back overseas Vietnamese and retain them in Vietnam (Gribble 2011). The case from China illustrates one way to attract and retain returnees by repatriation schemes. In 2007, the Chinese government allocated funds to attract Chinese overseas graduates with urgently needed skills (Gribble 2011). They also have the 'Hundred Talents program which aims to attract up to 2000 top-level academics over 5 to 10 years by offering competitive salaries and research funding (Zweig 2006). China's repatriation schemes have attracted a large number of Chinese returnees and have helped them settle down in China (Zweig 2006). These Chinese returnees have contributed to the development of science and technology in private sector and to the research quality of top Chinese universities (Zweig and Han 2010). The Chinese government have also developed incentives which have been effective in attracting Overseas Chinese talents back to China as these incentives help overcome barriers to return in a tangible and extrinsic manner (Tharenou and Seet 2014). Further, these incentives also help narrow the salary gap between China and the West which reduces prospect of re-expatriation (Tharenou and Seet 2014).

Offering incentives (e.g. high salaries and housing allowance) is rare in Vietnam. There was an initial proposal by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2008 which aimed to attract Overseas Vietnamese scientists back to work in Vietnamese universities and institutions by offering attractive salary packages and research funding, but this proposal has not yet been implemented. In 2009, Vietnam set up the National Foundation for Science and Technology (NAFOSTED) with an annual

budget of VND200 billion (US$9.6 million) to fund Vietnamese researchers and encourage them to conduct world-class research in Vietnam (Le 2013). Among awardees of NAFOSTED grants, many had already finished their studies abroad and published research in top international scientific journals (Le 2013). However, the funding of NAFOSTED is limited and only helps a few selected research institutes and universities to attract and retain returnees in their organizations. This scheme needs to be enhanced and expanded to other institutions in Vietnam to help reverse the brain drain and encourage more returnees to return and remain in the country.

Third, the Vietnamese government and managers need to create a good working environment for returnees as many returnees claim that they fail to stay in Vietnam because of a poor work environment. The Vietnamese government and managers need to provide better work conditions (e.g. research facilities), utilise their skills, and recognise their contribution to retain these Vietnamese talents, and also to promote their contribution to the development of Vietnam (Dang et al. 2010; Gribble 2011; Tran et al. 2014). The Vietnamese government can also learn from China and Taiwan which are countries that had strong government policy initiatives to successfully attract talented returnees through creating good work environments in special zones or parks for returnees. Taiwan established the Hinschu Industrial Park which was developed to create a comparable work environment with that of Silicon Valley in the US, and this has been effective in attracting many Taiwanese returnees back (Gribble 2011). Similarly, many cities in China that have built technology incubators and accelerators in their development zones as special centre for attracting returnees and these have been effective in enticing a large number of returnee scholars and scientists from overseas (Saxenian 2005; Zweig 2006).

Finally, given the importance of education and family in the Vietnamese society, the Vietnamese government needs to support the education of returnees' children. For example, it should consider providing priority entry admission for returnees' children to key schools. The analysis of this study indicates that Vietnamese returnees have favorable attitudes toward re-expatriation in order to seek better education for their children in the host country.

Taken together, these suggested measures for returnees can help 'pull' them back to their home country, Vietnam, but also reduce any subsequent 'push' by improving their re-adjustment process and helping them settle down in Vietnam, thereby reducing their likelihood of re-expatriation. This will contribute in efforts to reverse the brain drain by attracting and retaining highly talented Vietnamese with strong global competencies as a source of competitive advantage for the sustained development of the country.

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Chapter 13
Vietnamese Students' Transition to International Non-Government Organisations

Lan Thi Quynh Mai

Introduction

Globalisation widens, deepens and speeds up worldwide interconnectedness in terms of geo-spatial relations. It leads to growing inter-dependence and convergence among nations throughout the world or within a region (Marginson and van der Wende 2009). In contemporary Vietnam, such forces of change are discernible in the context of national economic reform (*Đổi Mới*), not only in radically changed, competitive, 'open' job markets but also in the disjunction between traditional modes of theoretical focus education and the diversity of knowledge and skills required in a globalised job market. During the 1980s, Vietnam suffered an economic crisis when the post-war hardship together with natural disasters struck the country with severe hunger and malnutrition.

The Vietnamese government conducted a significant renovation of its economy (Đổi Mới) to change from a planned economy to a market orientated economy in 1986. Before the Đổi Mới policy, Vietnam had only one gateway to the world through the Soviet Union. This gateway was destroyed with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, and thus restricted even more tightly Vietnam's international access. Đổi Mới facilitated new aspects of the Vietnamese society, namely, multilateralisation and diversification, marked by an influx of international non-government organisations (INGOs) to Vietnam to provide humanitarian services such as disaster relief, hunger alleviation, and community development. PACCOM[1] enlisted 465 INGOs operating in Vietnam in 2015. Depending on the scale of work, each INGO

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[1] People's Aids Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) – http://comingo.gov.vn, accessed 2 March 2016

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office often has around 10–15 staff among which 1 or 2 are foreigners who usually hold the highest positions as Director or Country Representative (VUFO-NGO Resource Centre 2012).

INGOs, by the nature of the work they undertake, need employees to team up with people from different cultures, to mediate between different structures, and to align development models with specific local contexts. In such workplaces, graduates need high levels of intercultural competence, as well as skills such as teamwork, negotiation, and communication. INGOs perform like some political institutions in the way they compete or co-operate with political actors to 'mediate between the State, society and citizens' (Ghosh 2009, p. 491). INGOs in Vietnam operate in a particular socio-political context that distinguishes their work from NGOs in some other countries. They work within the framework created by the state, collaborating with line ministries and technical agencies, local authorities or local government agencies, and mass organisations to assist local people to have a greater say in what activities are carried out for them. INGOs in Vietnam are characterised by the short-term nature of their projects that require multi-disciplinary knowledge, and their projects, and hence the organisations themselves, are embedded in traditional contexts of Vietnamese culture and society. The challenges of working in an INGO would most likely be intensified, especially in the early stages of employment or career, and raise questions about how universities and employers can assist new graduates to make the transition from formal education to such a workplace.

While the traditional view of university education as training for life-long work within one profession is no longer appropriate for all graduates, the traditional, profession-focused training structure at universities in Vietnam has persisted, even within a broader context of reform (see Chap. 2, Hoang et al. (2018), for more detailed discussion). The rigid hierarchical management system in education from Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) to universities makes it inflexible to respond to the demands of the new context. MOET implements the regulations of the Higher Education Law 2012 (National Assembly of Vietnam) that require higher education to train Vietnamese people for perfect development in all aspects including morality, knowledge, health, professional skills. MOET regulates the core curriculum for teaching and learning and leaves the universities to develop curriculum specifications. An authoritarian view of the roles of teachers and students in the classroom persists that results in a significant power differential between teachers and students (Le 2013, p. ii; Pham and Tran 2013). Recent diversification in higher education had included internationalisation of universities - 'the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service of the institution' (Knight 1997, p. 8). Internationalisation of higher education entails the mobility of teaching and learning through cross-border education, farmiliarising Vietnamese students and faculty members with new skills, knowledge, research and teaching methods (Altbach et al. 2009, Marginson and van der Wende 2009, Tran et al. 2014) (see Chap. 2, Hoang et al. (2018), for more detailed discussion). However, the emergent non-traditional work market, has challenged the skills and abilities that young people typically developed from their university studies in

Vietnam. Pragmatic skills and knowledge including not only independent, critical thinking, but also a set of interpersonal skills for engaging across disciplines and in diverse work environments with cultural sensitivity (e.g. Byram 1997; Ting-Toomey and Kurogi 1998), had to be acquired on the job (Nguyen 2002). It is likely that new graduates will find the transition to the rapidly changing world of work challenging.

This paper presents findings from the interviews with 19 graduates (four males and 15 females) working in INGOs in Vietnam to give insights into how they develop a new type of attributes for this intercultural context. The interviews were conducted in two phases, from December 2010 to November 2012. An approach that draws on three bodies of literature - graduate attributes (Bennett et al. 2000), intercultural competency (Byram 1997) and agency, structure, dispositions and reflexivity (Bourdieu 1990b; Evans 2007) promises to shed light on how graduates apply their knowledge and skills, and experience to respond to this workplace. This chapter explores these issues of graduate attributes, intercultural competencies, and intercultural work context. Finally, it suggests a way for improving strategic application of graduate attributes in the context of internalisation of higher education.

Graduate Attributes

Barrie (2006, p. 262) defines graduate attributes as an orienting statement of education outcomes, that are the core abilities and values graduates should develop at the completion of their university studies, 'the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts'. However, Harvey (2005) points out that there has not yet been a consensus on a common definition on graduate attributes, which may deter efforts to focus, beyond the university, upon the application of graduate attributes in varied work contexts.

Bennett and his colleagues (2000) argue that graduate attributes should be understood to be generic for all disciplines. They recognise the influence of particular circumstances upon the way graduates use their knowledge, from directly applying specific skills to strategically thinking about application of more abstract knowledge. Transfer of learning 'occurs when a person applies knowledge or skills acquired in one context in a new context' (Bennett et al. 2000, p. 16). Depending on the context of transfer, these authors classify attributes into near transfer and far transfer attributes. Near transfer attributes involve 'fast automatisation' for 'skills that are identical in different task situations'; they are the attributes that enable graduates to transfer knowledge and skills to contexts similar to educational contexts (Bennett et al. 2000, p. 17). Alternatively, far transfer attributes are those that infuse and enable all scholarly learning and knowledge, transcend disciplinary boundaries, enable students to reshape and transform knowledge to meet new challenges in contexts far from the original discipline, vary over task situations, and

require more conditional and deeper disciplinary content knowledge (Bennett et al. 2000, p. 17).

These authors also argue that transfer can be distinguished according to the mechanisms of the transfer, into 'low road' and 'high road' transfer. Bennett et al. argue that low road transfer is when near transfer happens in contexts similar to the learning context. It results in 'well learned automatic responses' without much reflective thinking. High road transfer is far transfer, and requires abstract comparing and contrasting the knowledge from the context of learning and the application context, seeking 'common patterns', 'abstractions' and 'general principles or procedures' (Bennett et al. 2000, p. 17).

Different from Bennett et al., Barrie (2006, p. 218) suggests that universities need to interpret graduate attributes within disciplinary contexts in order to develop them. Importantly, it seems that there is not any model of graduate skills implicit in the research literature that accommodates the diverse views and policies of different staff and institutions (Barrie 2006). According to the result of Barrie's research, academics' understandings of graduate attributes can be categorised into a four-level framework, in which the higher levels are understood to encompass attributes from the lower levels. These four levels, arranged according to their increasing complexities, are: precursory, complementary, translational, and enabling attributes (Barrie 2006, pp. 223–224).

Of significant interest in the current study are the two higher levels of attributes in Barrie's framework. In level three, the translation conception includes the generic attributes as abilities that let graduates make use of, or apply, disciplinary knowledge, thus potentially changing and transforming disciplinary knowledge through its application. Included in this level are clusters of linked personal attributes, cognitive abilities and skills of application, which are the learning outcomes that graduates possess in partnership with disciplinary knowledge (Barrie 2006).

In level four, the highest level of Barrie's hierarchical framework, and perhaps of most relevance for the current study on graduates' experiences of the workplace, are the enabling generic attributes that are integrated in the learning outcomes. These are abilities that infuse and enable all scholarly learning and knowledge. These attributes are of significant importance as they provide the building blocks for discipline knowledge but are more long lasting and important than the discipline knowledge they support. Once developed, these graduate attributes are perceived to provide a reusable framework that enables students/graduates to acquire and shape new knowledge as required – even in the context of other disciplines. These generic attributes are seen as transcending disciplinary boundaries even though they are initially developed within disciplinary contexts (Barrie 2006, pp. 229–230).

Elements of both Bennett et al.'s (2000) and Barrie's (2006) schemas can be seen also in Eraut's (2004) classification of graduate attributes. Similar to Bennett et al.'s (2000) categorisations of graduate attributes according to the similarity of the contexts of application (near and far; or low road and high road), Eraut also classifies the knowledge transfer process into five levels, depending on the context where it is applied. Eraut differentiates between the levels of transfer, as either being easy and short in a similar situation, to being long and challenging in quite an unfamiliar and

complex context. The latter involves: the extraction of potentially relevant knowledge from the context(s) of its acquisition and previous use; understanding the new situation, a process that often depends on informal social learning recognising what knowledge and skills are relevant; transforming them to fit the new situation; integrating them with other knowledge and skills in order to think/act/communicate in the new situation (Eraut 2004, p. 212). Transfer is not seen as a discrete event but a process of learning. In general, among models of graduate attributes, both Eraut's categorisation and Barrie's (2006) classification link graduates attributes with the processes of acquiring discipline knowledge. However, Eraut conceptualises the processes by which graduates use the knowledge in work contexts, post-graduation.

The work market seeks graduates who have the ability to work in a team and relate with co-workers, clients, and collaborators - skills that, in many cases, 'prove to be just as important as, if not more important than, the graduate's technical knowledge' (Hernández-March et al. 2009, p. 7). Andrews and Higson (2008, pp. 419–420) clarify that employers expect 'hard' business skills – discipline focused knowledge and know-how, and 'soft' interpersonal competencies - graduates' problem-solving abilities, and specifically, high level discipline specific skills, generic interpersonal and communication competencies. Interestingly, the majority of graduates perceived themselves as lacking the necessary communication skills (Andrews and Higson 2008).

In Australia, Gow and McDonald (2000) demonstrated that both employers and academics highly valued four essential graduates attributes for the modern workplace, namely 'adaptability to changing work environments', 'business management skills', 'accountability' and 'cross-cultural competence', although they argue that 'cross-cultural competence' has not received much attention in empirical research on graduate attributes. It has, however, been investigated theoretically in several research studies and models of intercultural competencies have been developed (Byram 1997; Deardorff 2006), in recognition that intercultural interaction in the contemporary globalised workforce is of increasing importance. Knight (1997, p. 11) argues that in internationalisation, graduate intercultural competencies such as 'strong knowledge and skill base in intercultural relation and communications' are essential. Intercultural competence has been conceptualised in Byram's (1997) work as the attributes a person needs to become interculturally, communicatively competent, to be able to see relationships between different cultures, both internal and external. Of particular importance, an interculturally, communicatively competent person needs to have a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures - 'someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural' (Byram 1997, p. 9). Deardorff (2006) generated a list of highly agreed specific skills for being interculturally competent, including skills to analyse, interpret, and relate, listen and observe; cognitive skills, comparative thinking skills and cognitive flexibility.

However, caution should be exercised in considering use of the conceptual frameworks on graduate attributes of Bennett et al. (2000), Barrie (2006) and Eraut

(2004), or the work on intercultural competence (Byram 1997; Deardorff 2006; Ting-Toomey and Kuragi 1998) in the specific context in Vietnam today. Firstly, in the existing graduate attributes frameworks, the individual learner is emphasised; for example, Barrie's (2006) model focuses on explaining how high level cognitive skills such as strategic and critical thinking are developed during the discipline knowledge learning process and potentially influence the future learning aptitude of graduates. However, teaching and learning in Vietnam is influenced by the Confucian principle of hierarchical social relationships, which is manifested in the way that learners accept information from teachers readily and rarely express their opinions or ask questions (Nguyen et al. 2006). As the result, learning relies on memorising and imitating instructions (Nguyen 2008) with less focus on attributes such as critical analysis. This mismatch between the models of higher education implicit in the graduate attributes literature and educational practice in higher education settings in Vietnam makes it difficult to apply models such as those developed by Bennett et al. (2000), Barrie (2006) and Eraut (2004) to the reality of new graduates' experience as they enter the workplace in Vietnam today.

Secondly, the radical changes within Vietnamese society in combination with the changes brought by globalisation present particular challenges to new graduates as they enter the workforce. Many new professions are emerging due to technological and social changes (World Bank 2008). There is high possibility that learnt knowledge and skills for traditional professions will become non-applicable in newly emerged professions. As employees leave the state sector for the jobs in the foreign or joint-venture sector, they find that the work-related skills and abilities acquired in the latter sector are 'indispensable and are increasingly in demand by businesses'. This change of workplace requires 'pragmatic skills and knowledge', for which they were not trained at the universities (Nguyen 2002, pp. 231–237). In this context, high-level cognitive skills are necessary to facilitate graduates gaining new knowledge and skills in these new future jobs.

Thirdly, individual agency (Bourdieu 1990b) in a changing society should be taken into account. Bourdieu argues that agents respond to the structure according to their dispositions, however, in crises and times of social change, agents act purposefully and strategically for calculated immediate and future benefits (Bourdieu 1990b). When the social structure changes so rapidly or radically that the agency of habitus fails to respond, reflexive agents develop strategies referring to new norms, regulations and rules to adapt to the changes in the society (Evans 2007; Titma et al. 2007). Under normal conditions, institutional and cultural discourses and practices are internalised by individuals (Bourdieu 1990a). When there are major historical shifts, such as the transformation from a state-socialist society to a market-based society, new norms, regulations and laws emerge that challenge 'the institutional and sociocultural underpinnings of people's beliefs and behaviours' (Titma et al. 2007, p. 103; Evans 2007). Evans has applied an agentic approach to understanding the transition from university to work in a time of radical social change in post-Soviet Europe. She argues that the political changes in Germany, which have interrupted career pathways of young people, have encouraged their personal agency.

Some young people have been quick to pick up the 'signals' of these changes and develop active transition behaviours such as 'going for it' (Evans 2007).

Drawing upon the work on agency by other sociologists, Evans identifies three dimensions of 'bounded agency' in the relationship between structure and agency. Evans sees the actors as having a past as well as imagined future possibilities, which guide and shape actions in the present, together with subjective perceptions of the structures they have to negotiate, and the social landscapes that affect how they act (Evans 2007, p. 92). Evans identifies four transition behaviours - 'strategic', 'step-by-step', 'taking chances' and 'wait and see', according to activity patterns that young people have adopted when moving along trajectories into labour markets. If a young person is independent in making decisions about his/her qualifications, he/she tends to bring stability to the unfolding life course; if he/she adopts a 'taking chances' form of behaviour, that includes short-term sequence of activities to react to immediate job demands and upheavals, he/she is likely to take higher risks. Specifically, Evans conceptualizes 'strategic' and 'taking chances' approaches to be the expressions of active individualization. Meanwhile 'step by step' or a 'wait and see' transition behaviour pattern is linked to passive individualization (Evans 2007, p. 86).

To understand how Vietnamese graduates apply their university knowledge and skills, acquired in such a traditional setting, in the modern workplace, it is also necessary to position the graduate as a potentially reflexive agent in relationship with the changing structure of the Vietnamese society to understand the changes in their agency in the contemporary socio-economic context.

Research Method

In-depth interview techniques were used as they allow a researcher to understand the interactions of the informants through informants' accounts of the past events, when the researcher does not have the opportunity to observe participants in those events (Atkinson and Coffey 2001). The interviews were arranged into two phases, of which the first one explored different perspectives of those involved in the training and employing graduates, and the perspective of the graduates about how they work in INGO setting; and the second phase explored graduates' experiences in more depth. The stories of young graduates' about their work experiences gradually clarified the strategies they had developed to respond to the requirements of their jobs. Analysis of the interviews in this first phase revealed various problems or challenges for the young graduates, rooted in their inexperience, their lack of knowledge and skills, and a lack of high level intercultural communication skills which they found were necessary in an INGO intercultural workplace. To develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of young graduates, the second phase of interviews with 14 more young graduates were conducted from September to November 2012, using an interview protocol based on a 'sense-making interview' strategy developed by Dervin (1992).

The group of young and recently graduated staff were 20–30 years old, 4 are males and 15 are females. The gender mix of the informants reflected the overwhelming number of female staff at INGOs that result from INGOs' priority to empower women. All young Vietnamese informants graduated from Vietnamese universities within last five years before the interviews, and were either working at INGOs, or got promoted or left within first three years of their work at INGOs.

Findings

The recollections of young graduates about their university study position them, as students, predominantly in passive receiver roles with limited opportunities provided to explore extra knowledge and skills, and thus, limited opportunity to develop 'far transfer' skills (Bennett et al. 2000) or 'enabling' attributes (Barrie 2006) to help them to work in new contexts. At the start many graduates did not have suitable disciplinary knowledge for the work. Therefore they had to learn the necessary skills and knowledge for the work through a variety of ways, including formal mentoring, learning local knowledge from local partners, and new models introduced by international expatriates. The strategies the graduates developed and applied to meet challenges in the workplace depended not only on the ways they reflected upon their knowledge and skills to address the specific task, but also on external contextual factors such as opportunities to learn, as in the cases of Ms Hong, Mr Pham, Ms Vu and Mr Ta (their names are pseudonyms). Their stories were unique because of the strategies they apply 'near' and 'far-transfer' attributes in different work contexts.

(a) Ms Hong

Ms Hong majored in public health. After graduation in 2011, wishing to pursue a career pathway in research she chose to work for INGO. She was interviewed in 2012.

In her first job, she assisted an international researcher to conduct interviews about the satisfaction of patients in hospitals. On her first day at work she encountered some embarrassment:

> On the first day at work, my boss gave me the set of questions and asked me to comment on whether the questions were OK. I could hardly understand any of the questions (Ms Hong, Research Assistant).

Although she had completed a public health degree, which meant she was specialized in carrying out public health related surveys and research, Ms Hong still assumed that her future boss would provide training about what to do in the job. In her words:

> I did not think that I had to do that task on the first day of work. I thought they would train me first, give me some orientation first … Everyone in my office was busy doing his/her tasks; nobody told me anything (Ms Hong, Research Assistant).

Like many other young graduates, Ms Hong thought someone would tell her what to do in her position. This comment suggests that the attitude of students towards their teachers carries over to their work. This resulted from the persistence of traditional approaches in teaching and learning and the central control of education. When it turned out that nobody was there to instruct her, she changed from being passive into being proactive in seeking relevant information about her job, and making decisions about what to do to fulfil her tasks. These research skills were her discipline skills and hence, could be categorised as 'near transfer' attributes in Bennett et al.'s (2000) model. Wishing to continue improving her research skills and to broaden her knowledge, when the first job finished, Ms Hong moved to a second job in a local NGO working to protect wildlife. She was required to check the authenticity of the cases through police, courts, and rangers, which helped her develop good negotiation skills and but dedicated interpersonal skills. This second job enhanced her investigation skills.

> Just learn and read …, I had to read a lengthy guideline, about what to do when you received information, and how to report the case (Ms Hong, Research Assistant).

Nonetheless, she could not use her public health knowledge so much in that job. She decided to move to an INGO research project to study the impact of the introduction of television facilities to an ethnic minority area, to assess how this modern means of communication affected people's life and health in that project site.

Ms Hong's strategy for becoming specialised in research methods appeared to match well with her agentic approach of 'taking chances' (Evans 2007) since doing research work meant exploring the unknown. She had adapted research methods developed elsewhere to her situation in the Vietnamese mountainous locales of particular ethnic minority groups. Ms Hong's research skills, which can be regarded as 'the aptitudes that lie at the heart of scholarly knowledge' that can 'both support the creation of new knowledge and transform the individual' (Barrie 2006), assisted her to have insights into this new field of anthropology research. In Ms Hong's case, these research skills would be more aptly categorised as 'far transfer' attributes (Bennett et al. 2000) because it was her high level cognitive skills including critical thinking and analysing, that assisted Ms Hong to learn new knowledge or to apply her disciplinary knowledge in a different context (Bennett et al. 2000; Barrie 2006).

(b) Ms Dao

Ms Dao majored in international relations and graduated in 2011. She was interviewed in 2012. Although traditional teaching-learning approach prevailed, where teachers lectured, and students took notes, Ms Dao had had different experiences at university. She had opportunities to study with several international teachers in some subjects. Their non-traditional teaching approach including discussing the background of the issue and expanding beyond the textbook content encouraged her to explore information relating to the lesson content.

> If I did not conduct independent study I could not understand the lessons. It is difficult to explain why, but the international teachers helped me to become interested in study. For example, I had to read a thick English book on micro economics, because the teachers

taught knowledge beyond the textbook. This helped me to be independent, to have critical thinking skill and to know how to raise questions (Ms Dao, interpreter/Project Assistant).

Although she did not study agriculture at the university, Ms Dao successfully collaborated with a Swedish student to conduct an agricultural research project in a mountainous district in Vietnam. When she got a job as interpreter for a bear protection project, she experienced 'shock' at her lack of relevant knowledge. Like Ms Hong, she had to read a lot about the new work. She learnt about bears and veterinary practices to understand the messages being transferred between the international veterinarians and the local workers. In her words:

> The veterinarians had to report to the headquarters weekly about each bear. I had to translate those reports … I had to understand all situations (Ms Dao, interpreter).

Ms Dao was able to understand not only the cultural underpinnings of English, but also those of other languages such as Swedish. She did not just apply theoretical knowledge learnt at university, but take chances (Evans 2007) to develop this strategically for specific contexts, to find solutions for problems in specific interactions. She is a particular case of an interculturally competent communicator who has developed a critical and analytical understanding of (parts of) her own and other cultures (Byram 1997).

(c) Mr Pham

Mr Pham graduated in 2005 as an English translator. He was interviewed in 2010. Whilst at university he enhanced his interpretation skills by observing and following what his teachers did when they conducted actual conference interpreting. After graduation, he got a job as an English interpreter in an INGO education project. His competent translation skills allowed him to conduct his duties successfully:

> I was an interpreter for an adviser on education. Communication in English was not a matter because she was British. About speaking skill, the foreigners were aware that in foreign country where people didn't speak English, they talked very slowly, and very clearly, so that I could translate (Mr Pham, Project Assistant)

When the project ended, he changed to an INGO on reproductive health in the project assistant position which required skills other than interpretation. He did not feel competent in interpersonal skills required for this work. For example, he felt confused about indirect feedback from other Vietnamese staff, and international consultants' direct feedback:

> …when I entered [the second INGO] I was confused by indirect feedback from other Vietnamese staff (Mr Pham, Project Assistant).

That confusion reduced the effectiveness of his communication with other staff. He then sought for advice from some senior staff who experienced similar situations. This is also the strategy that he applied in his first INGO job:

> [in the first INGO] I had to ask other staff, who had worked there [for long] and got used to the working style there, and they advised that I really should not ask too much (Mr Pham, Project Assistant).

[in the second INGO] when I was confused like that, there was a man, a program officer there, who was very kind to me. He advised me very enthusiastically (Mr Pham, Project Assistant).

Taking a 'step-by-step' strategy (Evans 2007) Mr Pham decided to move to a new development project which focuses on health, education, vocational training, and integrated local development, in which he could use his successful experience sat the previous INGO. This strategy appeared to be the most effective approach for him to move on in his career.

(c) Ms Vu

Ms Vu graduated in 2009 in international trade, and was interviewed in 2010. She encountered a traditional learning approach at her university, similar to the finding in Nguyen's (2008) research that the learning methods used by students at university were frequently characterised by 'notetaking, combined with reading textbooks and reference material', 'learning by memorising the lecture notes given in class', and 'learning according to what has been set out by the course outline and syllabus':

> …the teacher asked us to write 20 pages long assignment, and we wrote up to 20 pages, then submitted to the teachers, and that was done; there was no sharing between students and teachers…For the majority of subjects, the teachers still lecture, and the students take notes thoroughly, so as to study those notes for the final exam (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

Nonetheless, Ms Vu was proactive in searching for extra-curricular opportunities to learn about knowledge and skills on project management. She participated in a project with an INGO outside her university and was then selected for an exchange trip to the UK. She came back with the idea to organise a summer language camp for children in difficulties, then developed a project to teach English for those children. In her words:

> We [Ms Vu and international students from UK] held an English speaking summer camp for those students to come to teach. Then we used the cash income from that camp to fund the charity work…We used the money to open English classes for visually impaired students or students with parents in difficulties…. The project activity lasted for more than 2 years. ….At the final year, we conducted a workshop to train a generation to continue the project (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

The impact of this project led to her decision to choose INGO for her future career:

> That [volunteer] project [of teaching English for the poor children during the university time] has showed me that there are many issues in the community unsolvable by business but solvable by development projects. I had more confidence that the development work is meaningful. I decided that after graduation I would find a job at NGOs (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

Right after graduation Ms Vu gained an internship position at an INGO focused on education and gender equality. Just three months later, she was offered the position of Project officer for an education program similar to her experiences during her university time. Her project improved the well-being of children, particularly

girls in ethnic minority communities by raising the awareness of the value of schooling, building capacity for a core group of teachers on child-centered teaching methods and advocating local and national authorities to replicate project ideas.

To make the project activities acceptable to the local people, Ms Vu was very cautious in interpreting the practices of local communities. She started by trying to understand their practices and rules, to identify the differences between her organization's regulations and those of the local partner organization so that she could mediate between them. Although she was very straight forward in implementing her education project, she tried to be patient in contacting the local partners:

> In my organization when we had any problem, we usually went straight to the point, to directly solve that problem. However, while talking to partners, sometimes that way of doing things was not applicable, because they did not want to go directly to the problem (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

She took account of everyone's idea as a potential source to generate project activities and compared her own approach, her organisational rules and regulations with those of the local communities, to identify the differences and causes. In so doing, she articulated the hidden cultural values within the practices of the local community.

> … at times there might be some kinds of conflicts that I did not pay much attention. Nonetheless, while working with local partners, they were more serious on those things. They didn't like conflict (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

Ms Vu was able to comprehend the complicated social construct and pointed out that the structural constraints were the major problems:

> …. My difficulty happens when working with the Vietnamese authorities…. Sometimes their work culture is so different from ours [organizational rules]. First, in terms of time and working hours; Second, their work approach, and working atmosphere is also different from ours [organizational rules] (Ms Vu, Project Officer).

Reflecting on these experiences has enabled Ms Vu to develop effective strategies for future situations. This 'strategic' approach (Evans 2007) directed Ms Vu to seek for alternative opportunities, such as extra curriculum activities to gain skills that she presumed the future workplace would need, and to decide which knowledge and skills needed, and how to gain. Her approach continued to be effective in her workplace.

(d) Mr Ta

Mr Ta graduated in 2011 in public health. He was interviewed in 2012. He got a position of field project officer for child rights promotion. His project aimed to reduce early marriage among girls of ethnic minority community living in a mountainous province. The baseline survey of Mr Ta's project proved that law enforcement may not be an effective intervention, so his project applied a behaviour change approach to change the custom of early marriage.

> We did not approach the early marriage problem from a legal perspective but from a 'better' viewpoint, which meant [we assessed] which was better [early marriage or later marriage].

> Actually, from the baseline survey, a legal approach was not so effective (Mr Ta, Project Officer).

Mr Ta facilitated the training courses in the way he thought the learners and international consultants needed:

> I provided translation and interpretation. Even more, I assisted in creating a more open environment among the learners. If the learners kept silent when the consultants raised questions, I warmed them up, or clarified the questions so that the learners understood the questions and could answer. The most important thing was the learners' answers. That was what the consultants wanted to hear (Mr Ta, Project Officer).

In so doing, he was promoting a new concept of marriage age in this locality, realising the goal of his project to change the behaviour pattern of the local community. His case illustrates the 'step-by-step' strategy (Evans 2007) and the success in applying disciplinary knowledge and 'near transfer' skills in similar contexts, and 'far transfer' skills (Bennett et al. 2000) in unfamiliar contexts.

Discussion

Young graduates' transition from university to INGOs demonstrates a clear change in the way they prepare for future work and apply their knowledge and skills in the uncertain labour market in Vietnam. The need for understanding practices of the local communities in INGOs projects has facilitated graduates to develop 'far transfer' skills (Bennett et al. 2000) for gaining new knowledge. This demonstrates a necessity to ably transcend a range of knowledge and skill boundaries (Barrie 2006), the need to have chances to interact with cultures (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi 1998) other than just the Vietnamese and the importance of developing high level interpersonal and interpretive skills (Bennet et al. 2000).

In the specific INGOs' context, graduates in my research could rarely apply their specific discipline knowledge and skills into their new jobs, they all gained work-related skills through informal learning opportunities. Although their agency was bounded by the constraints of the traditional learning approach at the university, they were not completely constrained. All graduates were strategic, at different levels, in diversifying their studies and in developing new knowledge and skills for their work, similar to what observed in the research of Nguyen (2002). They strategically re-rout their own career directions by 'taking chances' or 'step by step' and being strategic (Evans 2007). It is notable that the 'wait and see' mode of behaviour in Evans' model was not observed in any young graduate who participated in my study. This mode, as Evans explains, is available in a society which has set up a system to support young people looking for jobs, which does not currently exist in Vietnam. Young graduates' bounded agency also encompasses the abilities to reflect upon existing knowledge and skills to develop strategies to apply in new and unfamiliar contexts. This suggests that when university education is not keeping up with radical social change, the social context generates conditions that require individual

agency to adapt, and thus also produces individuals with abilities to respond in the future. This emergence of new modes of behavior will continue to be enhanced through different cohorts of graduates.

Conclusion

Internationalisation impacts were becoming clear in Vietnam society, through the emergence of non-traditional work environment, and the way that new teaching and learning approaches were gradually introduced into universities (see Pham, L.'s (2018) Chap. 10 and Nguyen's (2018) Chap. 5 for more detailed discussions). Experiences of graduates working at INGOs in cultural mediation role and cultural intermediary role proved the valuable function of cultural competencies for working in intercultural environment. In my research, employers expected young graduates to have far transfer attributes to learn new knowledge and skills necessary for work, meanwhile young graduates expected to learn new skills of the non-conventional work environment. However, they were not aware of employers' expectations or that intercultural competencies were required for working in such a work environment.

Tran & Marginson (2018) (see Chap. 1) point out that cross-border internationalisation of higher education (Marginson and van der Wende 2009; Tran et al. 2014) and Nguyen (2018) (see Chap. 5) argues that 'internalisation at home' model (Altbach et al. 2009) entail the mobility of skills, knowledge and research. The findings of my research demonstrated that internationalised teaching and learning approaches particularly developed graduate intercultural competencies. The university experiences of Ms Dao point out that international teachers brought in with them the student-center approach, which developed students' independent thinking, critical analytical skills and team work skills. Similarly, Ms My's international-graduated teacher applied the teaching skills and approach he learnt abroad, which helped Ms My to become independent in critically solving a research problem. These graduates' university experiences confirm what Pham, L. (2018) (see Chap. 10 for more detailed explanations) points out in her research that international-graduates aspire to improve the education quality through their university teaching. The influence of internationalisation education upon graduates' mindset that Pham, A. (2018) points out in Chap. 11 is also confirmed through Ms Vu's case. During her study trip to UK, Ms Vu compared and contrasted her tradition university study approach with the new one of the international students, and strategically picked up the applicable strategies to apply to her study. This mindset change was the most valuable benefit she gained from her trip to UK and which continued to influence her future work. The stories of young graduates showed different ways to learn intercultural competence and skills for working in intercultural environment. Importantly, all these skills were related to the internationalisation process in Vietnam in one or another way.

Implications for Universities

At universities, there are joint programs with foreign universities which familiarise students with different methods of teaching and learning. There are also programs that attract foreign students coming to study in Vietnam. These are the opportunities for Vietnamese students to interact with perspectives from different cultures, and hence, develop their intercultural communicative competence. These opportunities can also create chances to collaborate with people having different discipline knowledge in the inter-discipline project work. Bennet et al. (2000) argued that this allowed students to develop their competencies to apply their discipline knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. In other words, students developed their 'far transfer' skills. The findings of my research suggested that Vietnam universities should internationalise their programs to develop intercultural skills and skills such as critical analytical thinking for the graduates. As the ASEAN Community has been set up, it is important for graduates to understand the cultures of the Asia Region too, to be ready for the increased international and regional collaboration.

Further Research

My research has expanded the knowledge on intercultural competencies by providing evidence on how important these competencies are and how they are acquired and used for working in intercultural work environments. In particular, my research has explored intensively how cultural mediation and cultural intermediary roles, as two key positions in the intercultural workplace, are performed through young graduates strategically developing their intercultural competencies in different settings. It highlights the importance of the intercultural dimension of the 'global' workplace, which has mostly been overlooked in previous research on graduate attributes.

The relatively loosely 'bounded' (*cf* Evans 2007) structures and intercultural practice environments of INGOs evidently provide effective contexts for young graduates to reflect upon their discipline knowledge and skills and to develop and accumulate new knowledge and skills (Barrie 2006) that are needed in the course of their work. Importantly, this meant strengthening their intercultural competence. These findings point to the need for further research into the acquisition of graduate attributes, in different higher education contexts, including internationalised programs at Vietnamese universities, in order to determine which existing practices enable or constrain the development of high level transferable skills and graduate attributes, particularly those relating to intercultural competency.

The limited scope of inductive qualitative research based upon in-depth interviews also suggests directions for future research. Since this research focuses on young graduates working at INGOs which, in Vietnam whose operations remain closely linked to state structure (Plipat 2006) and whose projects are targeted

specifically at vulnerable, local communities, it is difficult to generalise from the experience of the young graduates in this study. Future research about graduates' usage and development of their knowledge and skills at the workplace might explore other economic sectors such as private and state ones in which the number of international organisations are increasing.

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Chapter 14
Internationalisation of Vietnamese Higher Education: Possibilities, Challenges and Implications

Ly Thi Tran and Simon Marginson

The Strategy for Education Development for Vietnam 2011–2020 positions internationalisation as one of the eight initiatives fundamental for the development of education in the country (Thủ Tướng Chính Phủ [Prime Minister] 2012). In national policy internationalisation is understood mainly in terms of the expansion and enhancement of international cooperation in program development and delivery, in research and in student and staff mobility. Internationalisation is seen as a key strategy for lifting education quality, keeping pace with international standards and fast moving developments in the Asia-Pacific region, and augmenting the supply of skilled human capital for the nation. Internationalisation is considered as a crucial approach to enhancing institutional performance and international ranking. In implementing these perspectives, the Vietnamese government has begun realising the potential of internationalisation. The internationalisation of Vietnamese higher education system has partly moved from a passive to a pro-active approach.

Nevertheless, taken overall, the internationalisation of Vietnam higher education is still rather ineffective and in some cases, unrealistic. The main weaknesses include lack of coherent approaches and lack of leadership focus on the promotion of internationalisation (see Chap. 2 for more detailed discussion), lack of resources for implementing internationalisation, lack of capacity, and lack of effective competition (see Hoang et al., Chap. 2; Tran et al., Chap. 4; Diep Tran, Chap. 6). Both Chap. 4 and Chap. 2 noted that internationalisation activities in Vietnamese universities are largely concentrated in demand-absorbing professional fields and cater for a small population of students in selected programmes and selected universities.

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The government-led initiative to utilise internationalisation as a vehicle to have world-class universities by 2020 is still far from being achieved.

Despite the emergence of a market in Vietnamese higher education itself, in many respects, Vietnam still operates mainly as a receiver and importer of higher and vocational education. Internationalisation is referred to as a 'goal' rather than as a 'process'. Internationalisation activities occur at various Vietnamese universities that either do not meet the government's expectations or are not foreseen by the government (Hoang et al., Chap. 2). The inefficiency of some internationalisation programmes and activities in Vietnamese higher education (for example, the advanced program) appears to be a significant weakness of policy making. Quality assurance is an important dimension of the internationalisation process in Vietnam, especially given the exponential growth of joint and twinning programs in partnerships with foreign providers over the past decade. There is still much concern about benchmarking those partnership models and transnational activities against international benchmarks (Do, Chap. 3).

Authors such as Nguyen (2010), Tran et al. (2014) and Welch (2010) generally agree that the internationalisation of higher education in Vietnam is predominantly motivated by the cooperation-for-capacity-building driver, or the borrowing-and-importing-for-development driver, rather than the revenue-earning driver. International cooperation in program development is limited mainly to curriculum borrowing (Tran et al. 2017, Chap. 4). Fragmented and inconsistent internationally-financed initiatives do not add value and valuable resources are being frittered away. Large numbers of students study abroad, some government financed and others privately supported. Many of these students progress very well in educational terms when they are abroad, benefitting from the strong educational foundations they acquired in Vietnam, in the family and schooling. However, the skills and knowledge they acquire when abroad are not drawn on effectively in national development when they return.

For emerging higher education systems in growing nations, internationalisation, effectively handled, offers a vital mechanism for accelerated development. However, only some nations are successful in their internationalisation strategies. Many have lost their way. For some outside observers, Vietnam's failure to use internationalisation strategies effectively in higher education —in contrast with regional neighbours China, South Korea and Singapore — is a mystery. Internationalisation in Vietnam seems to be stuck, inhibited by the poor level of development and capacity, by the inadequate policy status of tertiary education within the country, and by the mechanisms of government. Vietnam still uses a top-down, centralised approach in which educational institutions are subject to close bureaucratic controls. Further, government policy and regulation are not always insightful or internally consistent.

Transnational mobility, research and curriculum partnerships are no doubt crucial for Vietnamese higher education, as means to reform the HE system, lift the quality of teaching and learning to internationally recognised levels and enhance local capacity building in research and innovation. However, Vietnam needs to combine openness and engagement with partners abroad, with a strong sense of evolving

Vietnamese identity and more coherent, structured and targeted strategy to facilitate effective appropriation and filtering of foreign policies and practices. This is referred to as "self-determining global engagement" (Tran et al. 2014) which allows the country to reap the potential benefits resulting from new ideas and approaches developed abroad while at the same time tailoring and appropriating them to suit the local practice, culture and traditions (Nguyen and Tran 2017). In addition to foreign institutions, international organisations, especially the World Bank and UNESCO and ADB, have been successful in incorporating their agendas into the government's higher education policies. However, their various impacts have been less valuable than they could have been, due to the lack of ownership on the part of Vietnam, the top-down approach to implementation, and the system's inadequate capacities to manage large-scale projects and to flexibly and efficiently filter foreign influences (Tran, Chap. 6). Empirical research reveals that the structural conditions of the higher education system, its values and traditions, its leadership and the agency of teachers, are the key factors driving how foreign practices are adopted and modified in Vietnamese universities (Tran, Tran & Ngo, Under review). It is important to remember, also, that a nation that largely depends on other nations for education models and programs and for capacity in science and technology will become increasingly dependent over time (Tran et al. 2014).

International student returnees are an important but often neglected group in the literature and policy discourse in international education. Graduates returning from overseas study as highly skilled human capital can make a significant contribution to the nation's revenue, and reach out to the regional and international community, assisting the country to develop its cross-border relations as a 'friendly' communist country in the international market and politics (Nguyen, Chap. 8). Over the past few years, the Vietnamese government has developed strategies to attract back overseas Vietnamese graduates and professionals and tackle the nation's skill shortages. However, to maximise the potential contributions of returnees, and retain them in the country, it is crucial to ensure returnees' re-entry experiences are positive (Ho et al., Chap. 12). The government needs to develop effective repatriation programs, consultancies and policies aimed at facilitating returnees' re-adjustment processes, assisting them to deal with reverse culture shock, and creating a positive working environment, thereby reducing their likelihood of re-expatriation (see Chap. 12 for further details). As have other authors (for example, Ho et al., Chap. 12 & Nguyen Chap. 8), Gribble and Tran (2016) argue that without transparent, specific and targeted support structures to address some of the diaspora's key concerns—including employment opportunities, local bureaucracy and corruption—many overseas Vietnamese will continue to seek opportunities elsewhere. Further, in addition to policy initiatives and incentives designed to facilitate the return of overseas Vietnamese and retain them, a larger effort, in terms of investment and policy, should be directed to engaging with those Vietnamese international graduates who choose to remain overseas (Gribble and Tran 2016).

In sum, internationalisation is a key strategy whereby the Vietnamese government can enhance the capacity of the higher education system, enable the sector to contribute more effectively to national development and augment human capacity

building for the country. However, the expected outcomes cannot be achieved without appropriate policies and structures to support institutions and individuals in the process of internationalisation. To overhaul the outdated curriculum, keep pace with regional and international developments in education and enhance graduates' capacity to work not only in the local labour market but also in the region and the world, it is important to facilitate staff and student mobility, expand international cooperation and support trans-national curriculum, research and technology exchange (Tran, Phan & Marginson, Chap. 4; Tran et al. 2014). Hoang, Tran and Pham (Chap. 4) also call for the repositioning of internationalisation that "includes recognising the roles played by individual institutions and focusing more on creating a supportive environment and incentives for individuals and institutions to engage in and take advantage of internationalisation, in a way that meaningfully contributes to improving the country's higher education system and better meeting the socio-economic demands placed on it." For internationalisation activities to operate effectively, it is necessary to develop a long-term strategic plan along with transparent, coherent and systemic approaches and targeted support structure. A national policy for internationalisation characterised by explicit vision and mission aligning with the current context of Vietnam and specific action plans and frameworks to facilitate the implementation of internationalisation is needed. It is essential not only to encourage and facilitate greater activity but to make the best use of the resources and insights available. Finally, good practices in designing, administrating and implementing internationalisation activities and programs at the institutional level, across the different regions of the nation, should be disseminated and promoted through a holistic channel set up by MOET. In this manner institutions can share, support and learn from each other in the course of internationalising and improving the operations of higher education.

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