Chapter 4
University Governance in Vietnam and East Asian Higher Education: Comparative Perspectives

Mai Tuyet Ngo

Abstract This chapter reports on empirical research investigating four case studies of public university governance in four East Asian contexts in Vietnam, China, Hong Kong and Thailand. Guided by the neo-institutional and resource dependency theories, each case study provided insights into its model of public university governance. The cross-case thematic comparative analyses highlight seven transferable lessons acknowledging the urgent needs for actions for Vietnam.

Introduction

University Governance as a Significant Topic for Research and Practice

University governance really matters for the advancement of modern universities. Universities that take the lead in university governance top the global rankings of high-performing universities. Nations at the forefront of university governance reforms advance their national economic growth and lead the world in the fields of science and technology. A strong connection between good university governance practices and university academic excellence has been well acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Aghion et al. 2010; Henard and Mitterle 2009; Shattock 2006). Over the past decades, countries in all corners of the world have thus attached high importance to the way their universities are governed. Vietnam is not an exception. Scholarly and practical attempts, though not many, have been made to innovate Vietnam's contemporary university governance and have caught increased attention of not only Vietnamese higher education scholars (and foreign ones) but also Vietnam's government and higher education reformers aspiring for excellence in

M. T. Ngo (✉)
College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
e-mail: mai.ngo@flinders.edu.au

N. T. Nguyen, L. T. Tran (eds.), *Reforming Vietnamese Higher Education*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 50,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8918-4_4

research (knowledge production), teaching (knowledge transfer) and innovation (knowledge application).

This chapter presents some significant findings from the author's PhD study on comparative analyses of public university governance in Vietnam and in three other higher education contexts in East Asia. The study was conducted empirically by the author over four consecutive years, from January 2010 to December 2013, and was published as a PhD thesis in 2014 (Ngo 2014). Specifically, the study made a cross-national comparison of different models of public university governance in four East Asian contexts (one in each context), including Vietnam, representing a *need-help* country because of its current low performing model, and Thailand, China and Hong Kong, representing *offer-help* countries because of their more mature and higher performing models. The findings of the study were based on cross-national comparative analyses of arrangements for university governance, as reflected in legislative and policy documents (at the *macro* levels), institutional documents and university executive leaders' interviews (at the *meso* levels), and empirical survey data from departmental leadership levels (at the *micro* levels).

It is worth noting that, for the purposes of conducting the study, official documents were collected from either relevant university websites or from individuals during the researcher's field trips to the four respective public universities in Vietnam, Hong Kong SAR, Thailand and China where one-on-one semi-structured interviews (with respective universities' executive leaders) and questionnaire surveys (among Departmental leaders) were conducted. To facilitate the data collection from different sources in each of the four different respective universities, many logistical and coordination efforts were made by the researcher prior to each field trip (see Ngo 2014).

Within its limited scope and space, this chapter presents only the most significant findings of the study in relation to cross-national comparative analyses of the two main themes, particularly of contextual and structural arrangements as reflected in analyses of governments' policy documents and respective university documents. Fuller accounts of empirical supporting data (from interviews and surveys) and more comprehensive findings for the two other equally important themes of resource/funding arrangements and university leadership can be found in Ngo (2014).

Conceptualisation of University Governance

Due to its complex multi-faceted nature, defining the concept of university governance is "a troubling task" (Kezar and Eckel 2004, p. 375). University governance can be broadly defined as *a means* of steering and supporting key stakeholders, including academics, towards achieving their dual ends of teaching and research (e.g., Corson 1975; The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education 1973). In a narrower sense, university governance is often conceptualised as formal multi-level arrangements that allow universities to perform effectively towards achieving academic excellence (e.g., Amaral et al. 2002; Bleiklie and Kogan 2007; CHEPS 2010; Kehm 2012; Salmi 2009; Shattock 2006). This study employs the narrow definition

of university governance as formal multi-level governance arrangements, which, according to Kehm (2012), consist of formal external arrangements at the macro/system level, and internal arrangements at the meso/university and micro/departmental levels. The study reported here acknowledges the importance of multi-level governance arrangements for any normative model of university governance, with a particular focus on the macro and meso governance arrangements.

University governance arrangements, as the literature suggests, can specifically refer to (i) contextual arrangements (e.g., Asimiran and Hussin 2012; Currie et al. 2003), (ii) governance structural arrangements (e.g., Clark 1983; de Boer and Goedegebuure 2007; Shattock 2014), (iii) resource or funding arrangements (e.g., Gallagher et al. 2009; Hackman 1988; Leisyte 2007) and (iv) university leadership (e.g., Boin and Christensen 2008; Hallinger 2007; Middlehurst 1993). All those four arrangements are of importance for any model of university governance (Ngo 2014). However, within its limited scope and space, this chapter puts under the spotlight only the two most significant governance arrangements, particularly, the contextual arrangements and the governance structural arrangements.

The contextual arrangements and the governance structural arrangements are the two most significant arrangements (e.g., Binsbergen et al. 1994; Clark 1983; Ngo 2014; Shattock 2014) simply because all other arrangements (i.e., resource/funding arrangements and university leaderships) are very much dependent on them as key foundations. *First*, good public university governance is *shaped* by its context and a model of good public university governance, as Ngo (2014, p. 124) argued, "cannot be decontextualised from its own context". More specifically, contexts matter for the quality of teaching and research which can be explained through contextual conditions (Bjorkman 2000). *Second*, evaluating the sufficiency of a university governance model requires significant consideration of its governance structures (Rhoades 1995; Rosovsky 2001; Silverman 1971). For improving university quality, the need for reviewing and modernising governance structures is thus highlighted (e.g., de Boer 1999; Eurydice 2008; Shattock 2014). On those grounds, it is well recommended that if an old model of public university governance puts constraints on its public universities' ability to carry out academic quality improvement, then both the contextual arrangements and structural arrangements of that model must be first under review and modernised.

The Prominent Problem Facing Vietnam's Contemporary Model of Public University Governance

Literature on Vietnam's current model of public university governance, though not extensive, has consistently suggested that its current model is an old state-centralised model adopted from the Soviet model since the 1950s that is no longer fitting for modern Vietnam (e.g., Dao and Hayden 2010; Pham 2012). The way Vietnamese public universities have been governed since the 1950s, in the broadest sense, has mostly remained unchanged, leading to various concerns raised by the country's

key actors and governance practitioners. In the preceding chapter – Chap. 3, Dao and Hayden (this volume) pointed out that the Vietnamese higher education system had copied the former Soviet Union's model since 1954 in the North and since 1975 in the South, and highlighted its instability, its slowness and its being largely intact without any dramatic changes. Despite reform attempts, Vietnamese university governance reforms have been highly centralised and slow moving (Dao 2015). In such a centralised model, Vietnamese public universities, as observed by Wilkinson (2008, p. 4), "are the worst in the region".

The most prominent problem facing Vietnam's current model of public university governance is, among others, *an absence of adequate incentives* for academic excellence, producing the sluggishness that paralyses any flexibility in positional leaders' actions, stifles the creativity and innovation of academic staff, and most seriously, impacts university performance (e.g., Dao and Hayden 2010; Fry 2009; Hayden and Lam 2010; Pham 2012). This absence of adequate incentives for academic excellence in Vietnamese public universities has also been politically acknowledged in the Prime Minister's Directive 296/CT-TTg (Vietnamese Prime Minister 2010).

From university governance perspectives, the main reason for the absence of adequate incentives for academic excellence in Vietnam's public universities, among others, is its old model of public university governance with irrelevant features of, namely, disadvantageous contexts, "out-moded" governance structure arrangements, inappropriate resource/funding arrangements and lacks of responsive university leadership. Given its limited scope, this chapter addresses only its governance contexts and its old governance structural arrangements, which are the two most significant features in most urgency of renovation in Vietnam. Vietnam's Minister of Education and Training – Dr. Phung Xuan Nha – appointed in April 2016, publicly voiced the urgent need to renovate Vietnam's current governance contexts and structures to promote incentives for universities' academic staff, managers and leaders who are implementers of fundamental and comprehensive higher education reforms in Vietnam.

Research Aim and Research Question

Given the paramount aim of this study which is to look for a new improved model of public university governance, prioritising improved contextual arrangements and more modernised governance structural arrangements that can hopefully promote more incentives for academic excellence in modern Vietnamese public universities, the main research question is: *what* can modern Vietnam learn from contextual arrangements and governance structural arrangements, as revealed from the global trends and from other more successful (or at least higher performing) empirical models of public university governance in neighbouring East Asian contexts? This research question implies an outward-looking approach placing emphases on the global trends and East Asia's public university governance practices, which are useful sources of reference and of transferable lessons for Vietnam.

Methodological Considerations

Finding answers to the research question formulated above demands an empirical, holistic and comparative study of cross-national models of public university governance, which can be conducted through the use of a case-study approach. In the field of university governance, case study is a useful "reality check", providing insights into issues of university governance (Fielden et al. 2004) and into how good governance comes about (Goedegebuure and Hayden 2007). More importantly, insights gained from an empirical case study can, as Merriam (1998, p. 19) suggested, "directly influence policy, practice, and future research".

Unlike most studies in the literature that have used single case studies which are of a descriptive or explanatory or exploratory nature, this study ambitiously and intentionally used multiple case studies to provide more compelling evidence and more robust findings (e.g., Miles and Huberman 1994; Yin 2003). Multiple case studies conducted in this particular study are of explanatory kinds and comparative by nature because comparison is highly regarded in university governance studies (e.g., Fielden et al. 2004; Shattock 2006). The importance of cross-national comparative studies into higher education governance that include Vietnam is also well acknowledged (e.g., Dao 2015; Dao and Hayden 2010; St. George 2003; Wilkinson 2008). However, there has not been much real cross-national comparison that puts the Vietnamese model of public university governance under spotlight. This study not only attempts to fill in such methodological gap, but it also selects cross-national comparison as an appropriate methodological approach to answer the research question formulated at the beginning of the study.

Despite their strengths, multiple case studies conducted in this research have their limitations. *First*, their substantive focus is limited to the set boundary within the governance of one type of university, namely, *public universities*, not all types of universities across the four territories under investigation. The findings are thus relevant for governance of public universities and should not be generalised beyond this activity, albeit one of major importance. *Second*, this study focuses on the differences *between* models of public university governance employed in different territories, not *within* each territory where each single case study was conducted. The researcher is therefore aware of the study's limited appreciation of diverse and dynamic circumstances within each territory.

Third, mixed documentary datasets in multiple cross-cultural case studies present a methodological challenge in collecting data in different language settings as well as integrating or merging data in each within-case study and across four case studies. The use of a single data source and a single case study may have addressed this challenge although it may have brought about an even more serious shortcoming related to the "single-source bias".

Finally, given the use of a limited number of four case studies, the present study's findings might be open to the charge, as Ragin (1987, p. ix) asserted, "that their findings are specific to the few cases [in this present study, only *four* case studies], and when they do make comparisons and attempt to generalise, they are often

accused of letting their favorite cases shape or at least color their generalisations". To address this charge, for delimitation, this study did not aim for a generalisation of findings in other contexts nor let any favourite case shape the findings. Efforts have been consciously made to ensure creditability and trustworthiness of each case study. After the findings of each case study revealed, the researcher sent via email the reported findings of each single case study to those executive leaders and departmental leaders who participated in the research for their final feedback and comments.

The Outline of the Chapter

This chapter is structured into four main parts. The *first* part introduces the topic of university governance, and briefly depicts the most prominent problem facing Vietnam's current outdated irrelevant model of public university governance, highlighting Vietnam's urgency to improve its contextual arrangements and modernise its governance structures which are the focus of the book chapter. The research aim, research question and the case study methodology employed in this study to address the research question are also presented in this part.

The *second* part presents the two main global thematic trends of public university governance in relation to (1) the new changing global contexts and (2) the new changing governance structures, as revealed from both the secondary literature and the good practices of university governance presented in summary reports by the OECD, the World Bank, governments and higher education institutions.

The *third* part, which is the main part of the chapter, presents cross-case thematic comparative analyses of Vietnam's current low-performing model of public university governance and three other higher performing ones employed in Thailand's, China's and Hong Kong's higher education contexts. Drawing from the cross-case thematic comparative analyses, this part highlights seven transferable lessons for Vietnam.

The *fourth* part concludes with implications for both further research and practice of modernising Vietnam's current model of public university governance that promotes more incentives for academic excellence in public universities in Vietnam and beyond.

Global Trends of University Governance: Changing Contexts and Changing Governance Structures

Many recent studies have addressed the broad topic of global trends of university governance (e.g., CHEPS 2010, 2015; Christopher 2012: de Boer and File 2009; OECD 2008) as well as the Asian trends of university governance (e.g., Chan and Lo 2008; Marginson 2011; Mok 2010; Welch 2009). Such studies indicate many

different interesting global and regional trends which are recently summarised by Ngo (2014) under four main themes: (1) the rapidly changing *contexts* forcing changes in public university governance, calling for higher education governance reforms and a new search for new models of university governance; (2) the new *governance structural arrangements* with the new changing roles of key governance actors; (3) the new *resource arrangements* holding universities accountable to allocations and use of resources; and (4) *new leadership responses* to promote incentives for academic excellence. All these four main global thematic trends capture well the four key corresponding features of university governance. However, within the limited space of this chapter, only the first two global thematic trends are chosen to be focused on as they are concerned with governance contexts and governance structures which, as indicated earlier, urgently need improving in Vietnam. These two thematic trends also provide a guiding framework for cross-national comparative analyses presented later in this chapter.

Global Trend 1: New Rapidly Changing Contexts Forcing Changes in Public University Governance

Internal as well as external contexts have been changing rapidly, impacting the national practices of university governance. *Externally*, university governance everywhere is subject to the influences of the *external* influencing forces, including globalisation of the economy and internationalisation of higher education (e.g., CHEPS 2010, 2015; Eurydice 2008; UNESCO 2006). It is therefore urgent for nations to devote much more resources to both their higher education systems and their higher education institutions. *Internally*, universities everywhere are subject to *internal* influencing forces and challenges, ranging from pressures for the rapid higher education expansion (increased student enrolment), diversification (different types of HEIs), emergence of private higher education, marketisation and commercialisation of higher education to a relative decrease in public funding (particularly, pressures for financial cutbacks or financial stringency due to reduced funding) and the increasing importance of research and innovation in the global knowledge-based economy and wider competition among higher education institutions. Notably, external and internal influencing forces are conflicting as external pressures demand for a substantial increase in resource inputs for universities while the internal influencing forces are calling for a substantial decrease in public funding due to financial cutbacks. This really presents a dilemma for national governments and public universities in many corners of the world.

In the context of globalisation and internationalisation, it can be observed that countries all over the world, including developed ones with internationally recognised universities, are not complacent with the way their public universities are governed; their models of public university governance started to be questioned as being obsolete and no longer fitting for the rapidly changing environment. National higher education policy-makers are abandoning, to a greater or lesser degree, classic

models inherited from the past (Asimira and Hussin 2012). Therefore, there is a global trend of re-examining own current models of public university governance and reorientating the higher education sectors, re-designing and embracing new models of university governance (e.g., Capano 2011; Varghese 2012).

Global Trend 2: New Governance Structural Arrangements with the Changing Roles of Governance Actors

Traditional models of university governance, as the global trend suggests, have been shifting towards *new* ones, thus demanding *new* governance features including *new* governance structural arrangements (e.g., Binsbergen et al. 1994; Eurydice 2008; Goedegebuure and van Vught 1994; Shattock 2014). In the words of Shattock (2014, p. 1), "pressures have mounted for a 'modernisation' of governance structures". This is not surprising because governance structures are one of the core features of any model of university governance that need special attention (e.g., Eurydice 2008; Shattock 2014). The new governance structural arrangements found in more mature and higher performing models of university governance are globally characterised as the new structures of more "centralised" decentralisation and deregulation, providing universities with more autonomy and less state intervention accompanied by appearance of a multiplication of intermediary (buffer) governing bodies between government and higher education institutions (e.g., Henard and Mitterle 2009; Varghese 2012); and more strengthening of appointed executive leadership at the central and middle levels of universities which is replacing structures of elected executives and affecting the powers of senates and academic councils (Marginson and Considine 2000).

In addition, it is worth noting that the new governance structural arrangements are characterised by a higher degree of governance structure clarity (reflected in clearer governance rules specifying clearer roles and responsibilities for institutions and stipulating required actions) (Binsbergen et al. 1994; Henard and Mitterle 2009) and a higher degree of governance flexibility allowing universities to adapt to meet society's emerging needs (e.g., CHEPS 2010; Dobbins et al. 2011; Fielden 2008). Empirical examination into governance structures' degrees of clarity is thus needed to see how higher degrees of governance structure clarity can come about in high-performing models of public university governance and what modifications are needed in relation to the governance structures of low degrees of clarity in low-performing models of public university governance.

Accompanying the changes in *new* governance structural arrangements, the human dynamics of university governance structures have changed accordingly. Three observations in relation to the changing roles of key governance actors are (1) the *stronger roles of governments* (more as strategy developers, goal setters, supervisors, regulators and supporters, but less as resource controllers) as the driving forces in university governance (e.g., Fielden 2008; Kehm 2012; Varghese 2012); (2) the *new configuration of actors* with the notable emergence of new actors at the different levels of governance (e.g., the new actors of the European Union and the

World Bank at the supra-national levels and the emergence of buffer governing bodies at the institutional levels, and private investment sectors); and (3) the *more strengthened internal university leadership* as universities are becoming more professionally managed organisations. The changing roles of governance actors have been well captured by Kehm (2012, p. 66, emphasis added) who noted:

> Responsibilities for higher education governance and policy making on the systems level no longer tend to be the exclusive responsibility of national governments. Some responsibilities have *"moved up"* to the supra-national level, others have *"moved down"* to the institutional level through deregulation, and again others have *"moved out"* to independent or semi-independent agencies.

To sum up, the current knowledge revealed from literature on the global thematic trends of university governance suggests that any countries with aspirations for their universities' academic excellence should neither go against such two global thematic trends nor stand still. It follows that a country with its slow-moving university governance model like Vietnam should be well informed of these two global thematic trends to practically and critically reflect on and renovate its own model of public university governance.

Comparative Analyses of Vietnam's and Three East Asia's Models of Public University Governance in the Global Context

Overview

East Asia's successful experience in university governance (Marginson 2011; Wilkinson 2008) is chosen to be under the spotlight in this study, particularly because success in East Asia, as observed by UNESCO (2006), "lies in their reliance on incentives to motivate individuals to change rather than on mandates to comply", whereas an absence of incentives for academic excellence in Vietnamese public universities, as indicated earlier, is the prominent problem facing Vietnam's current model of public university governance. Moreover, the three non-Vietnamese contexts of Thailand, China and Hong Kong, to some extent, have their cultural convergence with and geographical proximity to Vietnam, thus making the research's findings more significant, more culturally relevant and more transferable to Vietnam.

Using thematic comparative analyses, as mentioned earlier, this book chapter is interested in two key relevant themes of (1) the contextual arrangements and (2) governance structural arrangements of public university governance in Vietnam, China, Thailand and Hong Kong. Thematic comparative analyses of Vietnam's model and three non-Vietnamese models in East Asia highlight the specific problems in relation to Vietnam's contexts and its public university governance structures. However, comparative analyses among three non-Vietnamese models in East Asia reveal some converging patterns and suggest some possible solutions or transferable lessons for Vietnam. Using such cross-case thematic comparative analyses,

the present study could achieve "a structured, focused comparison" (Bleiklie and Kogan 2000) and draw transferable lessons from foreign experiences (Page 1995).

For cross-case comparison and interpretation, the present study used the four useful notions advanced by Ragin (1987) for case-oriented comparative research, namely, "illusory commonality", "illusory difference", "obvious commonality", and "obvious difference". The two notions of "*obvious commonality*" and "*obvious difference*" are straightforward in meanings; while "*obvious commonality*" refers to both apparently similar features and similar performance outcomes, the notion of "*obvious difference*" refers to both apparently different features and apparently different outcomes across cases under comparison (Ragin 1987). In contrast, "*illusory difference*" refers to "features which appear different but are causally equivalent at a more abstract level" whereas "*illusory commonality*" implies "apparently common features [that] differ dramatically in causal significance" (Ragin 1987, p. 48). All these four notions advanced by Ragin (1987) put emphasis on the *outcomes* of features being compared.

To determine whether particular features of public university governance under comparison are obviously/illusorily common or different across cases, this study uses the simple dichotomy of *low-/high*-performing models of public university governance for grouping models and refers all the three non-Vietnamese models of university governance (in China, Thailand and Hong Kong) to high-performing models with high performance outcomes, whereas the Vietnamese model is categorised as a low-performing model with low performance outcomes. This model grouping is well supported in the literature (e.g., Asian Development Bank 2012; Marginson 2011; Wilkinson 2008). Particularly, comparing models of higher education in Confucian societies of East Asia, that of Vietnam and elsewhere, Marginson (2011, p. 587, emphasis added) stressed the distinctiveness of models outside Vietnam as follows:

> Except for Vietnam, these [East Asian] systems… have created a *distinctive* model of higher education [even] *more effective* in some respects than systems in North America, the English-speaking world and Europe where the modern university was incubated.

More particularly, comparing Hong Kong with other Asian countries, Welch (2010) concluded that Hong Kong's public university governance is very much advanced and more mature. Hong Kong's success story of development of its universities is highlighted in the 2002 Sutherland Report (UGC 2002) and widely acknowledged in the literature (e.g., the World Bank 2012; UNESCO 2006). Thailand has made impressive progress in its public university governance, transforming from being a historically "low" achiever in public university governance (almost at the same level as Vietnam) to being a successful "middle" (adequate) achiever (the World Bank 2012). Thailand's middle path success in achieving a strong modern public university governance system with significant commitments in higher education and research innovation is highlighted in many recent university governance reports and studies (Asian Development Bank 2012; UNESCO 2006; The World Bank 2009, 2012). China, according to Wilkinson (2008, p. 6), "has

enjoyed great success in its development of an elite cohort of universities and research institutions".

It is also worth noting that the chosen territories of Thailand, China and Hong Kong are within geographical proximity (to Vietnam) which, as UNESCO (2006, p. iii) asserted, "can make findings more transferable and applicable to Vietnam". In addition, all the four territories of Vietnam represent "a sufficiently wide range of circumstances to allow both sharp contrasts and subtle differences in the modes of governance" (Palfreyman et al. 2009, p. xiii) and therefore to "make comparative findings significant" (Cerych and Sabatier 1986, p. 5).

To draw practical transferable lessons for Vietnam, in this chapter, special attention was paid to relevant points of *"illusory differences*" and/or "*obvious commonalities*" in terms of contexts and governance structure arrangements which contribute to high performance outcomes of the three non-Vietnamese models of public university governance. Such points of "*illusory differences*" and/or "*obvious commonalities*" among case studies in Thailand, China and Hong Kong are under the spotlight because they are at the same time points of "obvious differences" when compared directly with Vietnam. As case studies conducted in all the four territories are repeatedly referred to in comparative analyses, to save presentation space, acronyms have been used, namely, CN for the case study in China, TL for the case study in Thailand, HK for the case study in Hong Kong and VN for the case study in Vietnam.

Cross-National *Comparative Analyses of Contexts: Transferable Lessons 1, 2 and 3*

Comparative analyses of contexts, according to Fraser (2005), involve "multi-layered" contexts, which consist of (i) the territory-layered contexts; (ii) the higher education system-layered contexts; and (iii) university-layered contexts. In this chapter, only the first two layers of contexts will be cross-nationally compared for drawing relevant lessons, with particular attention paid to "illusory differences" and/or "obvious similarities" among the three non-Vietnamese contexts and the "obvious differences" and/or "illusory commonalities" between Vietnam's and three other East Asia's contexts.

Comparing territory-layered contexts and Lessons 1 and 2

For cross-national comparative analyses of territory-layered contexts, Millette (1978) highlighted the importance of historical, socio-political, cultural and economic environment and wrote:

> Anyone who undertakes a transnational comparison and analysis of higher education must at all times be mindful of the history, culture, socio-political structure, the government organization, and the state of economic development in each nation. Many of the differences in higher education must be understood in terms of the particular *historical, cultural social, governmental [political], and economic environment* of each nation (p. 15).

Following Millette (1978), the present study takes into account not only the cultural and historical contexts but also the socio-political and economic contexts in which the four studied models of university governance are employed.

Culturally, Vietnam shares many common aspects of East Asia's cultures. Together with CN, HK and TL, VN has many common features of Buddhism cultural and religious heritage. In addition, VN, HK and CN all belong to Confucian societies (Marginson 2011). It is worth noting that such cultural commonalities have put all the four higher education systems in culturally advantageous contexts attaching high importance to their higher education (e.g., Altbach and Umakoshi 2004; Do and Ho 2010; Vallely and Wilkinson 2009). However, a rich diversity of historical, political and economic contexts seems to overwhelm such cultural commonalities across cases.

Historically, Vietnam is similar to HK and has a long national history of colonisation. However, unlike VN, TL was never colonised by any Western nation while China was historically recorded to be a semi-colonised nation because in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese foreign relations with most major world powerful nations devolved into semi-colonialism. A closer investigation into the historical commonality (of being both colonised) of VN and HK and the different performance outcomes of HK's and VN's models of university governance suggests that it is an "illusory commonality". While Vietnam's long history of being colonised by the Chinese dynasties, the French and the Americans was a long-suffering or non-peaceful struggle against colonists, HK was peacefully ruled by the British for more than 150 years. In this regard, HK's model of public university governance has been situated in a more historically advantageous context of colonisation than VN's.

In addition, despite being both influenced by a long history of *colonisation*, HK has long adopted only one single sustainable model – the British model of public university governance whereas Vietnam was exposed to many different foreign models. Vietnam first adopted the *Chinese* model of public university governance during the feudal period from 938 to 1847, then the *French* model from 1847 to 1954 before adopting the *Soviet* model after gaining independence from the French in 1954. It is worth noting that the historical differences between HK (being colonised) and CN (being semi-colonised) and TL (never being colonised) is an illusory difference as all the three non-Vietnamese contexts are associated with high-performing models of public university governance. This suggests an equal possibility of developing a high-performing model of public university governance in not only a never-colonised context like TL and a semi-colonised context like CN but also in such historically colonised contexts as HK and VN.

Lesson 1: The need for Vietnam to decentralise responsibilities to university levels and to maintain a democratic administration and academic freedom under the Communist Party

Politically, there is a rich diversity across four studied contexts. While TL is a constitutional monarchy under the King with multiple political parties and is governed by a democratically elected government, HK is a capitalist constitutional

democratic society. Notably, both VN and CN are among very few countries in the world still under the ruling of a single Communist Party being the only political force constitutionally responsible for leading the state. Like CN, Vietnamese public organisations, including its public universities, are under the leadership of the grassroots committees of the Communist Party; the Communist Party Committee is embedded in public organisational structures in both VN and CN. Policy documents issued by both the Vietnamese and the Chinese Governments all record the need for the Communist Party consultation or approval.

A closer investigation reveals that the political commonality (of being both ruled by the single Communist Party) between VN and CN is an illusory commonality. Under the Communist Party ruling, while CN's model of public university governance has successfully produced such first-tier universities as the Tsinghua University, the Peking University and the Fudan University (QS University Ranking 2015; Ross and Wang 2016), Vietnam has never seen any of its best universities being internationally recognised in any World University Ranking Lists. At a more abstract level, unlike VN where responsibilities for VN's higher education governance have been borne mainly by the Communist Party of Vietnam and Ministry of Education and Training (VN), CN has decentralised and "moved down" responsibilities for its higher education governance to provincial and university levels (CN).

In addition, a deeper investigation into the administration of CN's and VN's public universities suggests that each political system in VN and CN has its own characteristics. CN's administration of the first-tier and the second-tier universities is a democratic administration laying great emphasis on academic freedom and scientific research (Jianhua 2016) though academics in CN may not enjoy as much academic freedom as their counterparts in Western universities (e.g., publications in social sciences by Chinese scholars tend to be in favour of Chinese Government's policies and suiting Chinese national interests). Whereas VN's administration of public university is still centralised and top-down with the University President as the single most important decision-maker, as at least revealed in the case study in Vietnam. Furthermore, to become a university president, it is a prerequisite that university president candidates in VN must be Communist Party members, and the elected university president is always the head of the Communist Party Committee embedded in the university governance structure. However, it is not the case in CN. University president candidates in the case study in China are not required to be the Communist Party Committee, though similar to VN, they are required to successfully complete a PhD overseas, be qualified for and experienced in university governance. This political illusory commonality between the two Communist regimes of VN and CN can convince us that a high-performing model of public university governance can exist and thrive within a Communist Party's regime though it raises a concern over who is in charge of appointing the university presidents/rectors in CN and VN (i.e., whether the university councils/governing boards or the governmental instrumentalities in line ministries/provinces appoint them) and over what level of intervention from the State/ministerial and provincial governments.

It is also worth noting that the political differences among CN, TL and HK (all associated with their high-performing models of public university governance) are

illusory differences. At a more abstract level, responsibilities for higher education governance have been decentralised and "moved down" to provincial and university levels (CN), or "moved down" to university levels (TL), or "moved out" to such semi-independent agencies like the University Grants Committee (HK). This converging trend of devolution of power and responsibilities across the three non-Vietnamese cases offers the first transferable lesson for Vietnam (Lesson 1), which is to decentralise the responsibilities to university levels and to maintain a democratic administration and academic freedom under the Communist Party, as is the case in CN. Supporting empirical data concerning how responsibilities are decentralised and how a democratic administration and academic freedom is maintained are presented more comprehensively in Ngo (2014).

Lesson 2: The need for Vietnam to launch higher education reforms as strong drivers for improving its economic competitiveness.

Economically, there is an "obvious commonality" among cases outside VN which is at the same time an obvious difference between VN's and three other East Asia's economies. Comparing the levels of economic development, HK, TL and CN's levels are all higher than Vietnam's. HK is the highest income economy (the upper income economy) with the highest Gross Domestic Product per capita, followed by CN and TL (the upper middle-income economies) while VN is the lowest income economy, with the lowest GDP per capita. VN is still considered an emerging economy, which adopted an economic policy of transition in 1986 from a centrally planned economy to a market-based economy, albeit with socialist characteristics. It is worth noting that the "higher performing" models of public university governance in TL, CN and HK are *positively* associated with stronger and more competitive economic conditions, whereas the "lower performing" model in VN is *negatively* associated with weaker and less competitive economic conditions. In this regard, Hickling-Hudson (2007) asserted, "wealth confers the *privilege* of being able to choose to pour massive resources for innovation and improvement into aspects of education [including higher education]" (p. xiv).

This comparative analysis of economic development levels across cases highlights the supportive role of economic conditions for higher education and offers the second transferable lesson for Vietnam (Lesson 2). Rather than waiting for a better economy to thrive in Vietnam, Lesson 2 suggests that Vietnam should learn from HK, CN and TL where higher education reforms have been launched as strong drivers for improving its economic competitiveness. This lesson is consistent with what Varghese (2012, p. 41) observed earlier, "in South and East Asia, the [higher education] reforms were aimed at improving the quality of higher education and at repositioning higher education to improve economic competitiveness".

Comparing higher education system-layered contexts and Lesson 3: The need for Vietnam to speed up its comprehensive quality-focused reforms in higher education governance

For comparing higher education system-layered contexts across VN, CN, TL and HK, this study puts under the spotlight their higher education system reforms. A comparison of higher education system reforms indicates that there are "obvious

differences" (between VN and three other East Asian contexts) which are "obvious commonalities" across non-Vietnamese contexts of TL, CN and HK. While Vietnamese higher education system reforms seem ceremonial, fragmented and slow-moving with its focus on quantitative goals resulting in a non-transparent higher education system in Vietnam (Dao and Hayden, see Chap. 3), system reforms in TL, HK and CN share the obvious commonalities of being better planned, more strategic, faster moving and, more importantly, more quality focused. Comprehensive quality-focused reforms of higher education were launched early in the 1990s in cases outside Vietnam, as evidenced in the *Higher Education in Hong Kong: Report of the University Grans Committee on the 1995–2001 Triennium* (Sutherland 2002) in HK, in *Action Scheme for Invigorating Education toward the twenty-first Century 1998–2002* (MoE 1998) in CN and in the enactment of *the 1999 National Education Act* in TL. However, VN delayed its comprehensive higher education reforms and it was not until 2005 when the Vietnamese Government officially declared a Higher Education Comprehensive Reform Agenda (HERA 2005) which still targeted at quantitative goals aiming for an expansion of HE system by 45% by 2020 (from 13% in 2006), and a significant expansion of the non-public sector accounting for 40% of all higher education enrolments by 2020. In Chap. 3, Dao and Hayden reported that by the end of 2015, as many as 225,500 postgraduates (both bachelor and master degrees) were unemployed, indicating that a serious HE training quality problem and the HE supplies far exceeding socio-economic demand.

It follows that if Vietnam aspires to catch up with its neighbouring countries in East Asia, Vietnam should learn a transferable lesson from them (Lesson 3), which is to speed up its comprehensive quality-focused reforms in higher education governance. In so doing, factors and underlying issues (e.g., heavy control of the state or the Communist Party, lack of university autonomy granted) that have slowed down the system and higher education governance reforms in VN need to be specifically identified and addressed. In addition, reforms in well-planned stages guided by in-depth analyses, reviews and consultations with internal and external experts and the public, accompanied by different measures and tools used in HK (e.g., introduction of Research Assessment Exercises, quality reviews, teaching audits and management reviews, Periodic Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews), in CN (e.g., Initiatives of Excellence through Project 211 & Project 985 for building world-class universities) and in TL (e.g., quality assurance management tools), all provide useful sources of references for VN.

Cross-National Comparative Analyses of Governance Structures: Transferable Lessons 4–7

Comparisons of governance structural arrangements as reflected in government policy document analyses and university document analyses across non-Vietnamese cases in TL, CN and HK suggest four "obvious commonalities" characterised by (i)

stratification and differentiation policies of university governance, (ii) increased autonomy for universities due to more centralised decentralisation and less state intervention, accompanied by (iii) the establishments of intermediary or buffer governing bodies between the government and universities and (iv) a higher degree of governance structure clarity. It is worth noting that these four obvious commonalities found in three cases outside Vietnam are all compatible with the global trends reviewed earlier in this chapter. They offer four corresponding lessons (Lessons 4 through 7) that can be practically transferable to Vietnam.

Lesson 4: The need for Vietnam to develop stratification and differentiation policies of university governance

Despite the recent effort of issuing the Decree 73/ND-CP on 8th August 2015 on the stratification and ranking of higher education institutions, the Vietnamese Government tended to treat all of their public universities in almost the same way. However, HK, TL and CN have differentiated their public universities and stratified them into two main tiers: (i) top-tier universities striving to be world-class universities and (ii) universities pursuing the goal of being universities with quality improvement. For example, TL's differentiation policies are reflected in *University Acts and Performance Agreements* between nine National Research Universities in TL and their Thai Government. Similarly, in HK, its eight UGC-funded institutions have eight different *University Ordinances* stipulating different missions for different institutions. In CN, *Project 211 and Project 985* have targeted at developing internationally recognised top universities while concurrently enhancing quality of mediocre universities. Therefore, universities in TL, CN and HK of different tiers are officially allowed to define and differentiate their own mission and goals. Such strategic stratification and differentiation policies concurrently targeting both "good to great" universities and "mediocre to good" universities in TL, CN and HK offer a transferable lesson for VN – Lesson 4 which is to develop similar stratification and differentiation policies of higher education governance for different universities for Vietnam, rather than the current classification into three tiers, as specified in the Decree 73/ND-CP, of basic research, applied research and professionally oriented research. This lesson is well recommended on the reasonable ground that resources are limited and not always available to allow all institutions in a country, regardless of its economic development level, to address all the functions of a university in the same way (Gallagher et al. 2009).

Lesson 5: The need for Vietnam to grant increased autonomy to its public universities

It was not until 2005 that the Decree on Autonomy and Accountability for Public Universities (Decree 115/2005) was issued by the Vietnamese Government to officially grant autonomy to Vietnamese public universities. However, more than a decade later, it is still now controversial over how actual autonomy should be exercised in Vietnamese public universities and concerns have still been raised over whether Vietnamese public universities are competent enough to be autonomous, whereas university governance reforms in other countries outside Vietnam have granted increased autonomy to public universities since 1990s across HK, TL and

CN. For example, in TL, since 1992, the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) has gradually delegated authority to be responsible solely by the University Council, moving toward full autonomy of universities as so desired. In CN, university autonomy was officially stipulated in China's Law on Higher Education of 1998. In HK, since the 1990s, a university in HK has been treated as a statutorily autonomous body with autonomy granted and the eight universities funded by the UGC have their own Ordinance and Governing Council. In HK, specific tasks such as the assessment of teaching staff performance and institutional policies on staff promotion "fall squarely within institutional autonomy", as stated explicitly in Notes on Procedures (UGC 2010). The common future direction for TL, CN and HK, as their government policies suggest, is to continue to grant full autonomy to public and private universities, reducing state regulations, focusing on policy formulation and post-auditing, and strengthening the governance of University Council and university management (Ngo 2014). Thus, to improve performance outcomes, experience from CN, TL and HK suggests Lesson 5 for Vietnam, which is to grant both substantive autonomy (deciding what to do to fulfil academic functions of universities) and procedural autonomy (deciding how to do it) (Berdahl 1990) to public universities.

It is worth noting that in HK, CN and TL, autonomy is not granted unconditionally. Instead, autonomy is only granted to universities in HK, CN and TL on the key conditions that universities have internal competence to exercise it and, more importantly, must be at the same time under both internal and external reviews. Real autonomy, as experienced from HK, TL and CN suggested, can be granted to universities by concurrently removing unnecessary government's intervention in micro-managing internal university affairs and empowering internal governing bodies (i.e., University Councils, the Senate, and others) to make decisions, especially those in relation to promotion of incentives for academics to achieve academic excellence. This has been clearly stated in HK's Sutherland report (2002, p. 6):

> The best research ideas are *not* the product of intrusive government direction. The best teaching builds upon the creative talents of lecturer and professor. Such ideas, such talents, are best fostered where *autonomy* is balanced by the acceptance of responsibility.

This transferable lesson (Lesson 5) is consistent with what was consistently suggested in the literature highlighting the urgency for increased autonomy for universities as an essential element of good university governance (e.g., Clark 1983; Eurydice 2008; Fielden 2008; Henard and Miterlle 2009; van Vught 1993). For example, Van Vught (1993) argued that more autonomy granted to universities can more effectively trigger innovative behaviour and thus suggested, "government should provide the *general* (not too detailed) rules within which the institutions can use their autonomy" (p. 358). More detailed government policy document analyses in CN, TL, and especially HK provide more empirical supporting evidence of such "general" rules (see Ngo 2014).

Lesson 6: The need for Vietnam to establish intermediary or buffer governing body both externally (at the macro level) and internally (at the meso level)

One of the prominent good university governance features at the macro levels across high-performing contexts of TL, CN and HK is their establishment of *"buffer"* agencies who represent the government and supervise the governing of their public universities. Examples of buffer governing bodies are the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) in TL, the University Grants Committee (UGC) in HK and Project Management Units (for Project 211 and Project 985) in CN. With the established buffer agencies, governments in TL, CN and HK play indirect roles of supervising and supporting universities by "steering from a distance" whereas the government in VN represented by Ministry of Education and Training is still playing the direct role of controlling their public universities and no such buffer agencies as those found in CN, HK and TL can be found in VN.

The establishment of "buffer" agencies and accompanied delegation of decision-making powers to them, as the global trend and practice indicates, have long been the preferences in many world countries and are now being adopted elsewhere (Fielden 2008). Particularly, the most common global practice, according to Fielden (2008), is to remove all the detailed operational issues from relevant Ministry of Education and pass all matters (relating to funding and operational management) to the buffer body or bodies which can be more than just one principal buffer body. In doing so, the government is free from charges of over-intervention in universities' internal academic affairs, focusing more on policy issues and encouraging more institutional autonomy while the buffer body is allowed to develop more in-depth understanding of the higher education sector, making better-informed decisions, providing more supervision and support for public universities.

Concurrently, at the meso/university level, in cases outside Vietnam, another obviously common feature is concerned with the establishment of University Councils, which are still in absence in Vietnam. University Councils in public universities in HK, TL and CN, as revealed from the government policy documents, are empowered by their national governments (by law) to act as the highest governing body or the highest decision-maker of the university. University Councils' engagement in university governance can help adjust the managerial self-governance dimension to a higher level. In this way, governance is distributed across the higher education institution in HK, TL and CN and does not reside in either one level of hierarchy or in one purpose-built body; collective responsibilities for university governance are thus promoted. However, in VN, although the obliged requirements for establishing University Councils was clearly stated in Vietnam's University Charter (Decision 58/2010/QĐ – TTg) issued in 2010, many public universities in Vietnam have not yet had their University Council established.

Lesson 7: The need for Vietnam to ensure a "higher" degree of governance structure clarity at both the macro levels and the meso levels for Vietnam

The case study in Vietnam suggests that the current clarity degree of both its macro and meso governance structure is low, as evidenced in both its government's and its university's documents. With reference to a legal document of the *Higher Education Law 2012*, Dao and Hayden in Chap. 3 raised concerns over its lack of clarity as to relations between the Party and the governing boards as well as to what

kind of institutional autonomy was to be given to institutions that achieve a higher rank than the others. However, the corresponding comparative analyses of governments' and universities' documents across three cases outside Vietnam reveal an "obvious commonality" of having a high degree of their corresponding macro and meso governance structure clarity. It follows that if VN wants to improve its current low-performing model of university governance, the experience from HK, CN and TL suggests Lesson 7 for VN that needs to ensure a "higher" degree of its macro and meso governance structure clarity by simultaneously ensuring consistently "higher" degrees of clarity of its "academic excellence" goals, tasks, power and incentive rules as stipulated in both its national government's and university's documents.

More specifically, to make this lesson realistically transferable, experience from TL, CN and HK suggests that Vietnam needs to specify in its government policy documents and university documents (1) a clearer *goal* toward achieving "academic excellence" or quality improvement at both the macro/meso level through the use of stratification and differentiation policies; (2) clearer and more specific *tasks* for universities to fulfil so as to promote incentives for academic excellence at the macro/meso level by providing rationale, arguments, delegations of tasks, best practices and guidance for performing such tasks; (3) clearer *power* (both substantive and procedural autonomy) granted to universities and departments so as to promote incentives for academic excellence by empowering internal university leaders (at both executive levels and departmental levels) more and reducing state intervention and (4) clearer and more specific rules specifying adequate incentives for academic excellence at the macro/meso level by linking merit-based incentives with performance assessment and reporting tasks. Empirical evidence of how such four indicators of high-clarity degrees of governance structure are reflected in governments' and universities' document analyses in CN, HK, and TL is provided in Ngo's (2014) study.

Conclusion

The two global trends and thematic cross-case comparative analyses across four case studies of public university governance in Vietnam, Thailand, China and Hong Kong in this chapter have provided answers to the original research question formulated at the beginning of the study as to *what* Vietnam can learn from contextual arrangements and governance structure arrangements in neighbouring East Asian contexts. Answers to the research question are presented in forms of seven transferable lessons, highlighting the urgent needs for action by the Vietnamese government and other concerns, and suggesting that Vietnam should give top priority to changing or at least modifying its current contextual arrangements (through Lessons 1, 2 and 3 in relation to its decentralisation of responsibilities to university levels, democratic administration and academic freedom under the Communist Party regime, improvement of economic competitiveness through higher education reforms and quality-focused higher education reforms) as well as its governance structural

arrangements (through Lessons 4–7 in relation to stratification and differentiation policies, increased university autonomy, establishment of intermediary governing bodies and higher degree of governance structure clarity).

To make these seven lessons realistically transferable, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) representing the government of Vietnam should acknowledge the needs for changing both the contextual and structural governance, as specified in each drawn lessons, and be determined to renovate its outdated model of university governance by looking outwardly at the higher performing models of university governance and taking into serious considerations how to realise those needs. Rather than tightly controlling the governing of universities, MOET should progressively grant more autonomy and freedom to universities who can make their own academic and non-academic decisions while being held accountable to MOET for all their decisions made. In doing so, Vietnam's current public university governance model of central control can be reorientated into a new modernised model of supervision and support. Such a new model will be better shaped by improved contextual arrangements and modernised governance structures and MOET's new supervising and supporting roles, rather than controlling ones, to create better mechanisms for promoting more incentives for academic excellence in public universities in Vietnam.

The present study has significant implications for both practice and further research. For public university governance practice, at the *macro level*, Vietnamese policy-makers may use the research findings (i.e., Lessons 1 through 7) to guide their design of the newly proposed model of public university governance. At the *meso levels*, it is imperative for university executive leaders to make changes in the institutional level governance structures. Unless all the seven changes (as reflected in the seven transferable lessons) are made at both the macro and the meso level, the performance of the Vietnamese model of public university governance would remain inertia and fail to promote incentives for academic excellence.

It is important to note that the findings are significant not only for Vietnam as the "need-help" country in focus but also for those three other East Asia's participating countries of China, Hong Kong and Thailand and even beyond. Given its comparative nature, the present research encourages high-performing practitioners and actors at all levels across Thailand, China and Hong Kong to appreciate their domestic models as well as to critically reflect on their own model and practices, and to learn from other studied territories outside theirs. In this way, this study facilitates the exchanges of lessons and experiences within, between and among the societies under investigation and even beyond. However, as this study is limited to a small number of four case studies in East Asia, the findings of the study, though significant, might be applicable in the limited number of countries. For further research, a larger number of case studies guided by relevant university governance theories (e.g., the neo-institutional theory, the resource dependency theory, the stakeholder theory) are needed to facilitate a generalisation of its findings on a larger scale. More in-depth comparative analyses between Vietnam and China is crucial for Vietnam because both countries share more things in common than Thailand and Hong Kong. Notably, further investigation into other factors, especially the non-governance ones that might slow down the implementation of each of the seven lessons suggested in this chapter, is highly recommended, simply because good

university governance, though a necessary and significant factor, is not sufficient in itself and not the only factor involved in assuring high-quality academic performance of universities.

References

Aghion, P., Dewatripont, M., Hoxby, C., Mas-Colell, A., & Sapir, A. (2010). The governance and performance of research universities: Evidence from Europe and the US. *Economic Policy, 25*(61), 7–59.

Altbach, P. G., & Umakoshi, T. (2004). *Asian universities: Historical perspectives and contemporary challenges*. Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Amaral, A., Jones, A., & Karseth, B. (2002). *Governing higher education: National perspectives on institutional governance*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Asian Development Bank. (2012). *Administration and governance of higher education in Asia: Patterns and implications*. The Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

Asimiran, S., & Hussin, S. (2012). *University governance: Trends and models*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press.

Berdahl, R. (1990). Academic freedom, autonomy, and accountability in British universities. *Studies in Higher Education, 15*(2), 169–180.

Binsbergen, P., De Boer, H., & van Vught, F. A. (1994). Comparing governance structures of higher education institutions: Towards a conceptual framework. In L. Goedegebuure & F. A. van Vught (Eds.), *Comparative policy studies in higher education*. Utretcht: Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies.

Bjorkman, L. B. (2000). Why universities need leaders: The importance of department leaders. In J. Brennan, J. Fedrowitz, M. T. Huber, & T. Shah (Eds.), *What kind of university? International perspectives on knowledge, participation and governance*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Bleiklie, I., & Kogan, M. (2000). Comparison and theories. In M. Kogan, M. Bauer, I. Bleiklie, & M. Henkel (Eds.), *Transforming higher education: A comparative study*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Bleiklie, I., & Kogan, M. (2007). Organisation and governance of universities. *Higher Education Policy, 20*, 477–493.

Boin, A., & Christensen, T. (2008). The development of public institutions: Reconsidering the role of leadership. *Administration and Society, 40*(3), 271–297.

Capano, G. (2011). Government continues to do its job. A comparative study of governance shifts in the higher education sector. *Public Administration, 89*(4), 1622–1642.

Cerych, L., & Sabatier, P. (1986). *Great expectations and mixed performance: Implementation of European higher education reforms*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Chan, D., & Lo, W. (2008). University restructuring in East Asia: Trends, challenges and prospects. *Policy Futures in Education, 6*(5), 641–652.

CHEPS. (2010). *Progress in higher education reform in Europe: Governance reform.* Retrieved from http://www.utwente.nl/mb/cheps/publications/Publications%202010/Governance%20Reform/GOV%20vol%201%20Executive%20Summary.pdf

CHEPS. (2015). Analysing the regional component of the influence of university's structural configuration on its performance. In M. Sanchez-Barrioluengo, & P. Benneworth (Eds.), *CHEPS working paper*. University of Twente, the Netherlands: Center for Higher Education Policy Studies.

Christopher, J. (2012). Governance paradigm of public universities: An international comparative study. *Tertiary Education and Management, 18*(4), 335–351.

Clark, B. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organisations in cross-national perspectives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Corson, J. J. (1975). *The governance of colleges and universities: Modernizing structure and processes*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.
Currie, D. J., De Angelis, R., De Boer, H., Huisman, J., & Lacotte, C. (2003). *Globalising practices and university responses*. Westport/London: Praeger.
Dao, V. K. (2015). Key challenges in the reform of governance, quality assurance, and finance in Vietnamese higher education – a case study. *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(5), 745–760.
Dao, V. K., & Hayden, M. (2010). Reforming the governance of higher education in Vietnam. In G. Harman, M. Hayden, & T. N. Pham (Eds.), *Reforming higher education in Vietnam*. London/New York: Springer.
Dao, V. K., & Hayden, M. (this volume). Vietnam's updated policies on university governance, management and quality assurance. In N. T. Nguyen & L. T. Tran (Eds.), *Reforming Vietnamese higher education: Global forces and local demands*. Dordrecht: Springer.
de Boer, H. F. (1999). Changes in institutional governance structures: The Dutch case. In J. Brennan, J. Fedrowitz, J. M. Huber, & A. Shah (Eds.), *What kind of university? International perspectives on knowledge, participation and governance*. Buckingham: SRHE: Open University Press.
de Boer, H., & File, J. (2009). *Higher education governance reforms across Europe*. Enschede: Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente.
de Boer, H., & Goedegebuure, L. (2007). "Modern" governance and codes of conduct in Dutch higher education. *Higher Education Research and Development, 26*(1), 45–55.
Do, H. T., & Ho, T. M. (2010). Governance reform in higher education of Vietnam.
Dobbins, M., Knill, C., & Vogtle, E. M. (2011). An analytical framework for the cross-country comparison of higher education governance. *Higher Education, 62*(5), 665–683.
Dudzik, D. L. (2008). English policies, curricular reforms and teacher development in multilingual, postcolonial Djibouti. Dissertaion Abstracts International, 69, 1652.
Eurydice. (2008). *Higher education governance in Europe: Policies, structures, funding and academic staff*. Brussels: Eurydice.
Fielden, J. (2008). *Global trends in university governance*. Washington DC: World Bank.
Fielden, J., Middlehurst, R., & Schofield, A. (2004). *A final report to the CUC on: Good practice in six areas of the governance of higher education institutions*.
Fraser, K. (2005). *Education development and leadership in higher education: Developing an effective institutional strategy*. London/New York: Routledge Falmer.
Fry, G. W. (2009). Higher education in Vietnam. In Y. Hiroshato & Y. Kitamura (Eds.), *The political economy of educational reforms and capacity development in South East Asia*. The Netherlands: Springer.
Gallagher, M., Hasan, A., Canning, M., Newby, H., Saner-Yiu, L., & Whitman, I. (2009). *Thematic review of tertiary education*. OECD.
Goedegebuure, L., & Hayden, M. (2007). Overview: Governance in higher education: Concepts and issues. *Higher Education Research and Development, 26*(1), 1–11.
Goedegebuure, L., & van Vught, F. A. (1994). Comparative higher education policy studies. In L. Goedegebuure & F. A. van Vught (Eds.), *Comparative policy studies in higher education*.
Hackman, J. D. (1988). Power and centrality in the allocation of resources in colleges and universities. In M. W. Peterson (Ed.), *ASHE reader on organisation and governance in higher education*. Washington, DC: Ginn Press.
Hallinger, P. (2007). 21st century school leadership development: Global trends and challenges.
Hayden, M., & Lam, Q. (2010). Vietnam's higher education system. In G. Harman, M. Hayden, & T. N. Pham (Eds.), *Reforming higher education in Vietnam* (Vol. 29, pp. 15–30). London/New York: Springer.
Henard, F., & Mitterle, A. (2009). *Governance and quality guidelines: A review of governance arrangements and quality assurance guidelines*. Paris: OECD.
HERA. (2005). Vietnam higher education reform agenda: Period 2006–2020.
Hickling-Hudson, A. (2007). Foreword. In M. Bray, B. Adamson, & M. Mason (Eds.), *Comparative education research*. Hong Kong: Springer.
Jianhua, L. (2016). The Message from the President.

Kehm, B. (2012). *What is university governance and does it matter?* Paper presented at the International conference: Responding to the 21st Century demands for educational leadership and management in higher education.
Kezar, A., & Eckel, P. D. (2004). Meeting today's governance challenges: A synthesis of the literature and examination of a future agenda for scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education, 75*(4), 371–399.
Leisyte, L. (2007). *University governance and academic research: Case studies of research units in Dutch and English universities*. University of Twente.
Marginson, S. (2011). Higher education in East Asia and Singapore: Rise of the Confucian model. *Higher Education, 61*, 587–611.
Marginson, S., & Considine, M. (2000). *The enterprise university: Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Middlehurst, R. (1993). *Leading academics*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education.
Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Millett, J. (1978). *New structures of campus power: Success and failures of emerging forms of institutional governance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
MoE. (1998). *Action scheme for reinvigorating education toward the 21st century*.
Mok, K. H. (2010). *The search for new governance of higher education in Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Ngo, T. M. (2014). *A quest for a new model of Public University governance that promotes incentives for academic excellence for modern Vietnam: Lessons from multi-site comparative case studies in East Asia.* (Doctor of Philosophy in Education). The University of New South Wales, Sydney.
OECD. (2008). *OECD thematic review of tertiary education*. Paris: OECD.
Page, E. C. (1995). Comparative public administration in Britain. *Public Administration, 73*(1), 123–141.
Palfreyman, D., Tapper, T., & Thomas, S. (2009). Series editors' introduction. In J. Huisman (Ed.), *International perspectives on the governance of higher education*. New York/London: Routledge.
Pham, T. L. (2012). The renovation of higher education governance in Vietnam and its impact on the teaching quality at universities. *Tertiary Education and Management, 18*(4), 289–308.
QS University Rankings. (2015). *Top universities in Asia and in the world*. http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2015
Ragin, C. C. (1987). *The comparative method: Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Rhoades, G. (1995). Rethinking and restructuring universities. *Journal of Higher Education Management, 10*(2), 17–30.
Rosovsky, H. (2001). Some thoughts about university governance. In W. Z. Hirsch & L. E. Weber (Eds.), *Governance in higher education: The university in a state of flux*. London/Paris/Geneva: Economica.
Ross, H., & Wang, Y. (2016). What does innovation mean and why does it matter? Innovation in Chinese higher education in global era of. In S. Guo & Y. Guo (Eds.), *Spotlight on China: Changes in education under China's market economy*.
Salmi, J. (2009). *The challenge of establishing world-class universities directions in development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
Shattock, M. (2006). *Managing good governance in higher education*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
Shattock, M. (2014). *International trends in university governance: Autonomy, self-government and the distribution of authority*. University of London, United Kingdom: Center for Higher Education Studies, Institute of Education.

Silverman, R. J. (1971). The invitational seminar on restructuring college and university organization and governance. *Journal of Higher Education, 42*(6), 442–445.
St. George, E. (2003). *Government policy and changes to higher education in Vietnam: 1986–1998: Education in transition for development?* Canberra: Australian National University.
Sutherland, S. R. (2002). *Higher education in Hong Kong: Report of the University Grants Committee*. Hong Kong: University Grants Committee.
The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. (1973). *Governance of higher education: Six priority problems*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
UGC. (2002). *Higher education in Hong Kong: Report of the University Grants Committee*. Hong Kong: UGC.
UGC. (2010). *Notes on procedures*. Hong Kong: UGC.
UNESCO. (2006). *Higher education in South-East Asia*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok.
Vallely, T., & Wilkinson, B. (2009). Vietnamese higher education: Crisis and response.
van Vught, F. A. (1993). *Patterns of governance in higher education concepts and trends*. Paris: Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies.
Varghese, N. V. (2012). Drivers of reforms in higher education. In B. Adamson, J. Nixon, & F. Su (Eds.), *The reorientation of higher education: Challenging the east-west dichotomy*. Hong Kong: Springer.
Vietnamese Prime Minister. (2010). *University Charter (Decision 58/2010/QĐ-TTg*.
Welch, A. (2009). *Higher education in Southeast Asia. Blurring borders, changing balance*. London: Routledge.
Welch, A. (2010). Internationalisation of Vietnamese higher education: Retrospect and prospect. In G. Harman, M. Hayden, & T. N. Pham (Eds.), *Reforming Vietnamese higher education* (Vol. 29, pp. 197–214). London/New York: Springer.
Wilkinson, B. (2008). *Choosing success: The lessons of east and Southeast Asia and Vietnam's future. A policy framework for Vietnam's socioeconomic development, 2011–2020*. Harvard Vietnam Program.
World Bank. (2009). *The challenge of establishing world-class universities directions in development*. World Bank: Washington, DC.
World Bank. (2012). Benchmarking the Governance of Tertiary Education Systems.
Yin, R. K. (2003). *Applications of case study research* (Vol. 34). Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.