

# Chapter 7

## University Autonomy of Higher Education in Taiwan: Developments and Consequences



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**Abstract** University autonomy is a university's ability to determine its operations independently. Taiwan experienced a democratic movement and education reform in the 1990s and is still making progress in enhancing university autonomy. This chapter collects policy documents and discourses to depict the historical development of university autonomy in Taiwan. Statistical data from MOE and MOST are also provided. Furthermore, the present work analyzes the current status of university autonomy by reviewing relevant laws and regulations based on EUA's framework. A review of the effects of higher education policies and HE's accountability movement after 1995 on the development of university autonomy is also provided. Finally, the chapter includes suggestions for both future policy and research on university autonomy.

**Keywords** University autonomy · Accountability · Higher education · Taiwan

### 7.1 Introduction

University autonomy is a university's ability to govern and manage internal affairs independently, thus being an essential indicator of a modern university's successful operations as well as university's decision-making powers on its daily operations (Chiang, 2004). University autonomy is the key to develop features and uniqueness. University autonomy relates to a university's outcomes, such as graduates' competencies and university research output (Ritzen, 2016).

Many governments in Asia want to offer more autonomy to their universities to increase their universities' financial independence, efficiency, and effectiveness (Varghese & Martin, 2013). Some countries in Asia, such as Korea (Rhee, 2007) and Japan (Yamamoto, 2004), incorporate their national universities. Taiwan experienced

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many educational reforms in its education history and tried to enhance university autonomy by amending relevant laws and implementing new policies.

The emerging concept of the accountability of higher education relates to university reforms in Asia. This concept is widely accepted by the public (Huisman & Currie, 2004) and has considerably affected universities in the past two decades. Universities are asked to provide quality teaching (Jones, 2009). Hallinger (2010) asserts that quality assurance is strongly encouraged by governments and accreditation agencies in Asia to prove that local universities can keep improving in a globalized world. In the case of Taiwan, universities receive public support and are thus responsible for their teaching, learning, and research, and have to ensure their performance to respond to public expectations (Hou, 2014).

Governments in Asia use diverse methods to guarantee the accountability of higher education, such as establishing domestic evaluation agencies (Hou, 2014), giving incentives for decent performance (Kitagawa, 2003), highlighting domestic or global rankings (Marope, Wells, & Hazelkorn, 2013), and even reducing funding for low performing universities. A long time ago, Albornoz (1991) warned that university autonomy could be harmed if too much emphasis was placed on accountability.

Chiang (2004) reminds higher education researches that university autonomy has no linear relationship with governmental sponsors. Study university autonomy involves considering contexts and political factors (Neave, 1988). Higher education in Taiwan is an important case for analysis because it is a relevant economic entity in Asia, to the extent that it has been called “Asian Four Tigers” (Midgley, 1986). Taiwan is also a country that highly emphasizes education and human resources. Higher education in Taiwan started early: it can be traced back to the Tsing Dynasty (Chan & Yang, 2017). The first modern university in Taiwan was the National Taiwan University (NTU) established in 1928. A rapid expansion in higher education occurred in Taiwan between 1990 and 2010. After 2010, the growth of higher education institutions (HEIs) became slower. In 2018, there were a total of 153 HEIs, including 127 universities, 14 colleges, and 12 junior colleges (MOE in Taiwan, 2019a). HEIs in Taiwan can be divided into three main types of institutions: junior colleges, colleges, and universities. Junior colleges can only award graduates associate bachelor’s degrees. College and universities can offer bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. In 2018, a total of 1,245,000 students were enrolled in Taiwan’s HEIs (MOE in Taiwan, 2019a). Higher education in Taiwan has been influenced by the models that are present in Japan, the US, and China (Chan & Yang, 2017). Since the late 1980s, the educational reform and democracy movement in Taiwan urged the government to decentralize its power to teachers (Law, 2004). University autonomy soon developed, which makes it a suitable case to study in its relationship with later higher education reforms of Taiwan.

Although Taiwan has experienced a significant development of its higher education system, it was previously a centralized education governance system. Before July 1987, Taiwan was under martial law. After 1987, the country went through a series of political and social reforms. As people could directly elect the country’s president, Taiwan was gradually moving to become a democratic society with greater freedoms. However, it is important to explore the current status and efforts to develop

university autonomy in the nation. Since 2000, Taiwan's government has been influenced by the neoliberal idea of higher education reforms. Neoliberalism is viewed as a strong political idea that has accompanied globalization and influenced many aspects of higher education, such as the trends to privatize universities, introduce market strategies into universities' management, and de-regulate state's control on universities (Olssen & Peters, 2005). When neoliberalism has a strong influence on national higher education policies, the government releases more autonomy to universities and instead reviews universities' performance (Layzell, 1999). As universities are viewed as agents to fulfill governmental goals in the context of neoliberalism, this chapter uses neoliberalism as one theoretical framework. Emphasizing accountability is an emergent concept of higher education policies in Taiwan. Regarding organizational theories discussing the owner of organization and its manager, there are two competing theories: agent theory (AT) and stewardship theory. Agent theory, based on economics, views the relationship between the owner and manager as one of control, distrust, and individualism. The governance mechanism occurs through monitoring and incentives to stimulate the agent's motivation to work (Puyvelde, Caers, Bois, & Jegers, 2012). Meanwhile, stewardship theory views the relationship as one of collaboration, trust, and collectivism. The governance mechanism occurs by empowering structure within the organization to stimulate the stewardship's motivation to enhance the effectiveness of the organization (Puyvelde et al., 2012). AT's assumption is similar to neoliberalism's economic approach to governing universities. Both AT and stewardship theory serve as additional theoretical frameworks of this chapter.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to review the development and current status of university autonomy in Taiwan by analyzing relevant laws and regulations. The second purpose is to depict the linkages between higher education policies and the development of university autonomy in Taiwan after 1994. The third purpose is to analyze the latest movement of science policy and its potential influences on university autonomy in Taiwan.

Data were collected from policy documents of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) websites. Discourses about the development of university autonomy in Taiwan were collected through a review of the literature. Higher education statistics were gathered from the statistical bureau websites of MOE and MOST. Some supplemental statistics data about academic publications were obtained from SCImago Journal & Country Rank database. The author utilized these documents and data to depict university autonomy in Taiwan.

## 7.2 The Development of University Autonomy in Taiwan: From the Initial Stages to the 1990s

In the initial stage of higher education in Taiwan, although leaders highlighted the importance of university autonomy, it was not entirely granted before the 1994 educational reform. The need for university autonomy was evident in the fact that Fu Ssu-nien—the fourth president of NTU (appointment time: January 1949–December 1950)—actively sought the academic independence of the university and tried hard to resist any external interference on academic affairs (NTU, 2019). As Wu (1990) points out, universities initially were like affiliated organizations under the supervision and management of a central government, and academic freedom and autonomy in the 1930s through to the 1950s were very limited. In her reviews of the history of university autonomy in Taiwan, Chiang (2004) claims that in the earlier times of China's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the Taiwanese government adopted centralized strategies to control the education system. Since national development was much more important than academic freedom and autonomy, the university's role was to transmit nationalism and offer workforce for economic development. Chou (2009) argues that before 1987 Taiwan was still under the special regulation of martial law, and the political authority of the central government was very high. Academic independence was not protected. Furthermore, most universities relied on the government's financial support; hence, university education was dependent and conservative.

According to the “White Paper on University Education Policy” (MOE in Taiwan, 2001), before 1994, universities in Taiwan had little autonomy; MOE determined all regulations about the internal practices of university education. In January 1994, the education reform in Taiwan urged the amendment of the University Act. The Taiwan government deregulated the law; since then, universities in Taiwan can manage their internal affairs about organization structure, human resources, curricula design, student admission, and faculty recruitment. The presidents of national universities, before 1994, were directly appointed by MOE. After 1994, they are elected by university committee members. In 1995, the new “Public University Institutional-Based Fund Management System” was introduced, and public universities have more flexible rights in determining their financial affairs and budget usage.

## 7.3 The Current Status of University Autonomy

In 2009, the European University Association (EUA) developed a conceptual framework to measure university autonomy in Europe. EUA (2017) divided university autonomy into four dimensions: organizational autonomy, financial autonomy, staffing autonomy, and academic autonomy. EUA listed a number of indicators to measure the status of universities' autonomy relative to those dimensions.

Organizational autonomy in EUA's framework refers to a university's ability to make decisions without external influences on its administrative leadership and internal academic structures (EUA, 2017).

Financial autonomy is about a university's ability to manage its funds and budget independently (EUA, 2017).

Staffing autonomy is about a university's ability to recruit faculty and staff independently and develop regulations on salaries, dismissals, and promotions (EUA, 2017).

Academic autonomy in EUA's framework refers to a university's ability to decide on overall student numbers, select students, introduce and terminate academic programs, choose the language of instruction, select quality assurance mechanism and providers, and design the content of degree programs (EUA, 2017).

In the second section of this chapter, relative to the development of university autonomy in Taiwan up to the 1990s, we saw that with the educational reform in 1994 and the amendment of the University Act, the rights of selecting the president and other administrative leaders inside the university went back to the universities. Article 9 of the latest University Act (2015) state that “[t]o appoint a new president to a university, the university shall organize a President’s Select Committee 10 months prior to the expiry of the present president’s tenure; after the new president is selected through a public procedure, he or she shall be appointed by the Ministry of Education or the local government”; article 8 states that “the position of president of a university may also be taken by foreign professionals according to related laws.” Thus, universities in Taiwan can organize a committee to elect their president and the presidency is not limited to domestic nationality.

### ***7.3.1 Taiwanese University Autonomy in Determining Student Numbers***

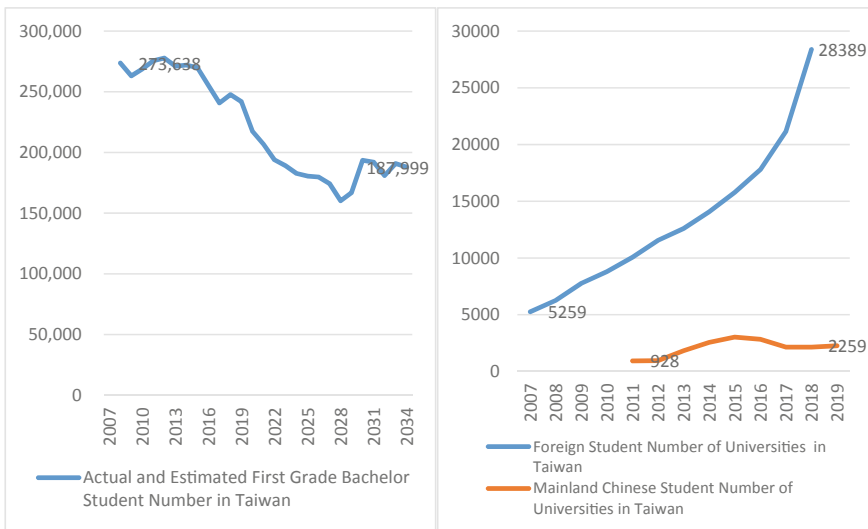
Article 12 of the latest University Act (2015) 12 states that “the number of students in a university shall be in accordance with the resources of the university; the standards shall be stipulated by the Ministry of Education, which may also be the basis for the universities to add or adjust colleges, departments, or institutes as well as the planning of courses and quota of student recruitment.” Hence, the overall student number of each university is decided by MOE, but each university has the right to determine the internal distribution of student admission to different study levels, colleges, and programs.

According to article 7 of an additional regulation published by MOE named “Standards on Quantity Development Scale and Resource Condition of Postsecondary Institutions” (2019), the “[a]dmission of indigenous students and international students is not limited by the total enrollment number of each university that is regulated by MOE.” MOE offered higher autonomy for universities when it admitted international and indigenous students.

### 7.3.2 Taiwanese University Autonomy in Selecting Students

According to article 24 of University Act (2015), “regulations on methods, quota of recruitment (including examinations) and recognition of the examinees’ identification..., treatment of students’ appeals and other proceedings shall be formulated by the university and reported to the Ministry of Education for approval before implementation.” Therefore, while each university in Taiwan has the autonomy to formulate student selection methods and examinations, MOE has the final approval.

Figure 7.1 contains the data of both actual and estimated numbers of first grade bachelor-level students in Taiwan, which show that domestic students will rapidly decrease due to the decline of domestic population. Another important trend observed in Fig. 7.1 is the rapid growth of both foreign and mainland Chinese students enrolled at Taiwanese universities. Thus, in the future, although the University Act offered universities full autonomy to set the standards for selecting qualified students, social change will limit universities’ autonomy in selecting domestic students but will enlarge universities’ autonomy in selecting international students.



**Fig. 7.1** Actual and estimated first grade bachelor student number, foreign student number and mainland Chinese student number of universities in Taiwan (Note Blue line data of first grade bachelor student number in Taiwan are estimated after 2019). Source Statistical Bureau of MOE in Taiwan (2019a); Foreign Student Statistics Website (2019); University Entrance Committee for Mainland Chinese Students (2019)

### ***7.3.3 Taiwanese University Autonomy in Introducing and Terminating Academic Programs***

In terms of the autonomy of Taiwanese university in introducing and terminating academic programs or in determining its internal academic structure, the amendment of the University Act (2015) also offered universities the right to decide on their internal academic structure in their academic affairs meeting. Article 16 of the University Act (2015) states that “the academic affairs meeting shall discuss the following proceedings: (1) Development plans and budget of academic affairs. (2) Organizational procedure and various important rules. (3) Establishment, alteration and suspension of colleges, departments, graduate institutes and auxiliary organizations...” Before 1994, the decision of organizational change at each university was made by MOE. At present, this decision is made in the academic affairs meeting at each university.

Diverse types of academic programs have been newly introduced at Taiwanese universities, such as the international program, the industrial program, the digital and online program, the double-degree program, the joint-degree program, the executive program, and the interdisciplinary program (MOE in Taiwan, 2019b). Besides academic programs, also academic degrees and course-delivery modes have moved toward diversification. MOE amended the “Degree Conferral Act” in November of 2018 to create a highly flexible university education system (Degree Conferral Act, 2018). The revision allows Taiwanese universities to replace the theses for degree completion with other professional works. Students can take courses from different levels of higher education and have more options for minors and majors. Furthermore, Academic fields have replaced the concepts of department and college. Finally, through industry-university cooperation, students can take courses when working or during practicum (MOE in Taiwan, 2019b).

### ***7.3.4 Taiwanese University Autonomy and the Ability to Choose the Language of Instruction***

Following the University Act (2015), there are no national laws or regulations to limit universities in choosing the official language of instruction. Professors and teachers of HEIs can select their language of instruction provided that students can understand the content of teaching.

According to the “Blueprint for Developing Taiwan into a Bilingual Nation by 2030,” published by the Executive Yuan of Taiwan in 2018, Mandarin Chinese and English will become equally used official languages in 2030 (Executive Yuan of Taiwan, 2018). Subsequently, MOE is gradually encouraging both schools and universities to use English as a medium of instruction and universities to hold international exchange activities and establish international colleges or programs.

English will still be the most recommended second language used for instruction and research at universities. However, it is important to know that universities have the full autonomy to choose the language of instruction and research.

### ***7.3.5 Taiwanese University Autonomy in Selecting Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Providers***

Article 5 of the University Act (2015) states that “[u]niversities shall regularly carry out self-evaluation of their teaching, research, services, counselling and guidance, academic affairs, administration, and student participation; regulations governing the evaluation shall be formulated by each university.” Taiwanese universities have the autonomy to formulate their own evaluation regulations. Article 5 also states that “... the Ministry of Education shall organize an Assessment Committee or commission academic organizations or professional accreditation bodies to carry out regular assessments of the universities...” Taiwanese universities have the autonomy to choose local or international quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies to conduct their evaluations.

### ***7.3.6 Taiwanese University and Publication Autonomy***

Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of China (Taiwan) states that “people shall have freedom of speech, teaching, writing and publication”; article 1 of the University Act (2015) states that “universities shall be guaranteed academic freedom and shall enjoy autonomy within the range of laws and regulations.” Hence, the University Act highly protects academic freedom and university autonomy in Taiwan.

Ranking and performance-based initiatives are still influencing the publishing behaviors of academics, as shown in Fig. 7.2. Between 2006 and 2016, MOE had a higher education policy called “Aim for the Top University Plan,” whose main goal was to stimulate the research performances of 10 research universities in Taiwan. To be ranked higher in the global higher education rankings is also a goal. To differentiate universities in Taiwan into “research” and “teaching” types is another hidden purpose. This performance-based policy encourages research universities to publish academic works internationally, and a significant increase in publishing is found in Fig. 7.2.

If global ranking partly represents a voice from the market, international and domestic students, too, view ranking as a guidance for selecting universities when they apply. Not only will research universities in Taiwan will pursue ranking; teaching universities will also follow this movement. Ranking and this policy may influence university autonomy.





**Fig. 7.2** Number of citable international journals or book chapters published by academics in Taiwan: 1996–2018 (Source SCImago Journal & Country Rank (2019))

### 7.4 Higher Education Policies and University Autonomy in Taiwan After 1994

Table 7.1 lists the principal higher education policies on university autonomy after 1994. That year, to respond to demands for educational reform and the social movement for democracy, the government revised the University Act and to offer universities higher autonomy rights. University-level meetings determined universities’ decisions about their organization, finances, human resources, and academic affairs from then on. MOE became a distant supervisor. In 1996, the “Institutional-Based Flexible Fund System” allowed universities to save external funds for the improvement of education. The tuition adjustment scheme allowed universities to adjust tuition fees based on their plan, followed, nonetheless, by MOE’s professional committee’s assessment. Figure 7.3 shows changes in the yearly average tuition fee in public and private universities in Taiwan and the annual adjustment ratio, respectively. The figure also shows a significant increase in the ratio of the average tuition fee at the beginning of the 1995 law revision. But after years, although universities can apply tuition adjustment autonomously to the MOE, tuition of public and private universities did not change since 2009 because the Taiwanese government persuaded universities not to adjust tuition for keeping affordability. The adjustment of universities’ tuition fees is a case that the Taiwanese government still constrains university autonomy in specific sectors, especially when it relates to financial issues that could harm public satisfaction with the government.

Before the introduction of multiple entrance exams, students’ enrollment was based on their overall scores in college entrance exams (paper-and-pen style tests). After 2002, university departments were allowed to determine what kind of students

**Table 7.1** List of important higher education policies and their relations with university autonomy

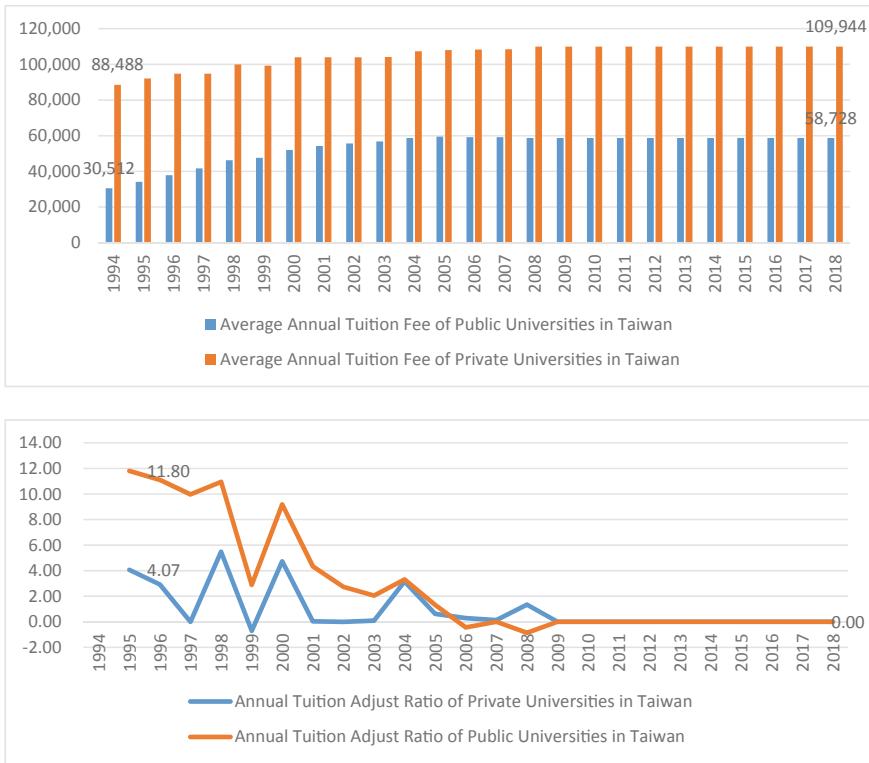
Year	Policies	Impact on University Autonomy
1994	Educational Reform	To amend the University Act and to give Taiwanese universities the authority to decide on internal affairs with less external interference (gradually)
1996	Public University Institutional-Based Fund Management System	To offer national (public) universities in Taiwan the flexibility to use external revenues for education improvement
1999	University Tuition Adjustment Scheme	Universities can propose an adjustment plan of their tuition fees every year upon the approval of MOE's committee
2002	Multiple Entrance System of University	Departments and programs at universities can set multiple criteria and standards for selecting enrolling students
2005	Aim for the Top University Plan	To give special funds to a group of research universities and to lead them to be "globally recognized"
2011	Allow Mainland Chinese Students to Study in Taiwanese Universities	To give Taiwanese universities the opportunities to recruit talented students from mainland China
2018	Higher Education Sprout Project	A revision of the Top University Plan to help universities develops both their features and unique competitiveness locally and internationally
2018	Yushan Scholar Program	To help Taiwanese universities to appoint internationally recognized scholars to work in Taiwan without the limitation of a fixed salary and to reach international salary standards

Source MOE in Taiwan (2019b)

they wanted in their programs. In 2011, the government made an agreement that allowed Taiwanese universities to recruit talented students from mainland China, thus opening a new crucial inbound student population and enlarging the capacity of Taiwanese universities.

Concerning the criticism caused by the implementation of the "Aim for the Top University Plan," most academics of Taiwanese universities "highly emphasized research and neglected teaching and learning of students." As Chou (2014) stated in her edited book, "[a]bove all, the better faculty research performance ... the more resources and social prestige universities will obtain in Taiwan," which reveals the adverse impacts of accountability and quantitative measurement of academic performance on the diverse development paths of HEIs.

The new version of the performance-based incentive policy called "Higher Education Sprout Project (HESP)" replaced the original "Aim for the Top University Plan." HESP did not highlight the importance of research but rather the one of relocating



**Fig. 7.3** Average annual tuition fee and annual tuition adjustment ratio of public and private universities in Taiwan: 1994–2018 (Source Statistical Bureau of MOE in Taiwan (2019b))

all universities in Taiwan into new roles for the society. HESP can be divided into three dimensions: the first is to comprehensively enhance the quality of university education and to promote diverse development paths in HEIs; the second is to help four universities to go after international research competitions; and the third is to encourage universities to contribute to the local communities and social responsibilities by organizing small groups of professors and students to solve local problems. This new policy is meant to reduce direct governmental control on what a Taiwanese university should be like. Governmental intervention can still be observed from this new HESP initiative as a performance-based reward policy that nonetheless created different performance indicators for research, teaching, learning, and interdisciplinary integration and cooperation.

Another recent important higher education policy on deregulating faculty recruitment of universities in Taiwan is the Yushan Scholar Program implemented by MOE in 2018. Formerly, the monthly salaries of professors in Taiwan were paid equally regardless of their academic fields or performance, whereas the new program is based on a service-year salary scale according to different ranks and years of service. Before the program was implemented, professors could receive additional payments when

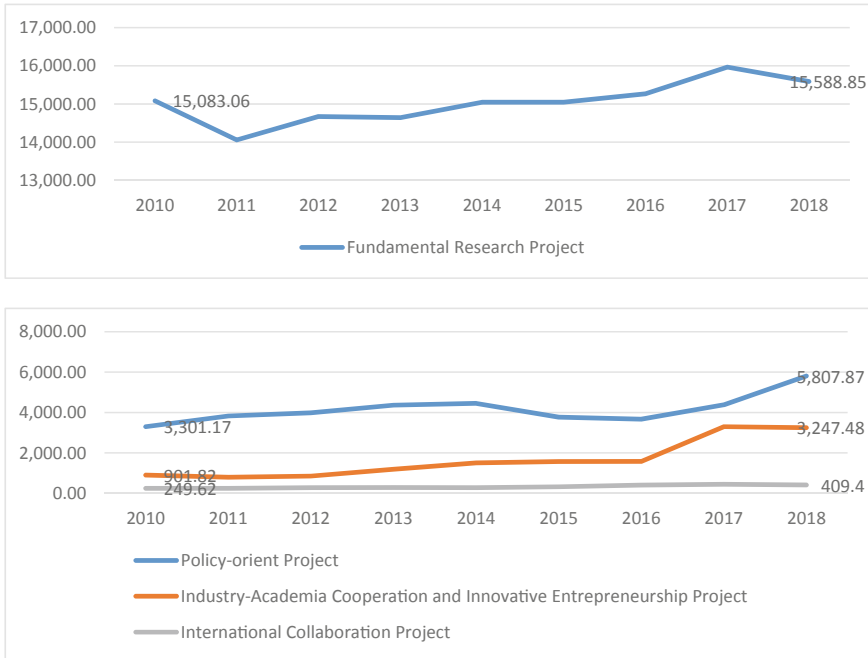
they worked for external academic or industrial projects or perform other professional services; however, their salary was limited by the standards set by the government. The Yushan Program, instead, offers additional funds and flexible authority to speed up and empower universities to attract internationally recognized scholars. Furthermore, the new program allows universities to set up flexible salary standards for high-performing professors independently.

## 7.5 Science Policy and University Autonomy in Taiwan

In Taiwan, science policy is implemented by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). MOST was established on February 1, 1959. Formerly the National Science Council, it was upgraded as MOST on March 3, 2014, and is the chief administrative unit for policy planning in promoting science and technology development in Taiwan. MOST supports academic research of public and private HEIs and other research institutes and is responsible for developing science industry parks and managing national science and technology development funds. MOST annually reviews academics' research proposals and offer them research funds based on their accumulated research outcomes. Therefore, MOST has a very high influence on faculty and staff. MOST calls research proposals annually, and research topics cover all academic fields. MOST is the leading research funding source of all HEIs and research institutes (MOST in Taiwan, 2018).

In the past 10 years, MOST has tried not only to encourage academics to choose annual research proposal topics freely but also to create additional MOST policy-oriented projects that foster industry development and help solve social problems. Specifically, MOST is willing to sponsor research based on the following criteria or projects: (1) (fundamental research project) no limitation on research areas: academics can freely apply for annual research projects to improve their research works; (2) (policy-oriented project) academics assist MOST with research on policy implementation; (3) (innovative entrepreneurship project) academics work on projects promoting collaborations between the industry and the academia and innovative entrepreneurship inside or outside universities; (4) (international collaboration project) academics work with international researchers, thus contributing to international collaboration.

Figure 7.4 shows the data collected from the academic statistics of MOST; we can observe the annual change in the total funding for the four-type projects sponsored by MOST. MOST tries to concentrate funds on the fundamental research project to maintain stable support on academics' free-topic research. At the same time, to enlarge the support for policy-oriented projects and to encourage academics and universities to help MOST work on policy issues that will have social and economic impacts for Taiwan. The report on emergent policies of MOST emphasizes the need "to engage diverse humanity values into technology development and to create social application values of academic research," "to promote industry and university joint research projects and facilitate industry and university collaboration ecology circle,"



**Fig. 7.4** Total amount of funding of four-type annual MOST sponsored projects from 2010 to 2018 (Unit: Million New Taiwan Dollar) (Source MOST in Taiwan (2019a))

and “to help industrialization of academic research outcomes and to create new enterprises for adding social benefits” (MOST in Taiwan, 2019b).

Because MOST is the leading research-fund source for academics in Taiwan, being able to work on one of its research projects is an important performance indicator for both universities and academics. Science policy implemented by MOST could influence action and decisions made by universities. Based on the analysis of the University Act amendment since 1995 until now, Taiwanese universities already have high autonomy in organization, finance, staffing, and academic affairs. Taiwan is also a country with very high freedom of expression in academic works. When observing the trend of research funds for the four types of research proposals in the past 10 years, one can see that MOST has tried to preserve the total capacity of free-research topics grants for academics while encouraging them to do research that can help solve social and industrial problems, work with industries, build innovative entrepreneurship, and strive for international collaborations.

## 7.6 Conclusions and Implications

Looking at the history of university autonomy development in Taiwan, state authority had a strong influence on universities' internal decisions before 1994. After the continuous amendment of the University Act, universities have higher autonomy in terms of organization, finance, staffing, and academic affairs, but the new forces become the market and the accountability system. Although universities have the right to decide, they have to cope with the globalization of higher education. Specifically, they have to attract more international students, encourage professors to publish internationally, and balance international standards and local traditions. These concerns will keep shaping the autonomous actions of universities' coping strategies in globalizing higher education.

The nature of meritocracy and competition for research excellence is another crucial force impacting university autonomy and faculties' behaviors in Taiwan. Almost all universities, including teaching type or locally rooted universities, were influenced by the standards of academic excellence established by national science policies. However, the new policy-oriented research, industry–academia cooperation and innovative entrepreneurship, and international collaboration—three new policy-oriented research project tracks promoted by MOST—will strengthen the future cooperation between the government and the university, between industries and universities, and between the international and the local.

Taiwan's university autonomy significantly increased since the educational reform in 1995. After continuous efforts of amending relevant laws and regulations, universities in Taiwan can now elect their own presidents, organize their academic structure, and admit students by their own standards. Furthermore, they can freely express their thinking on academic works written in different languages. A series of higher education policies since 1995 has also facilitated the range of autonomy in different dimensions of universities. The Public University Institutional-Based Fund Management System increased flexibility in the usage of the financial income of public universities. The University Tuition Adjustment Scheme offered universities the right to apply for an increase in their tuition charge; however, the scheme has been highly constrained in the last 10 years because of the public protest.

Further important policies include the Multiple Entrance System of University, the Higher Education Sprout Project, and the Yushan Scholar Program. They all help universities have more options with their student selection, institutional feature development, and faculty recruitment.

However, MOE is still playing a supervisory role when offering autonomy to public and private universities. Specifically, university autonomy in Taiwan is still influenced by the market and the state authority at present. Nonetheless, while the state authority had higher power on it previously, the market and the accountability system of higher education are the two main forces ongoingly shaping university autonomy in Taiwan at present.

Therefore, Taiwan's universities enjoy more autonomy than before thanks to the continuing efforts to amend relevant laws. These amendments could be viewed as the

responses of Taiwan's government to globalization and neoliberalism: new public management, market strategies, and privatization. However, the addition to each amendment of higher education law reserves the MOE's right of final approval. The increasing policy-oriented projects called by the MOE and MOST demonstrate that Taiwan's government may still wish to lead universities to achieve their defined accountability goals, although Taiwan is still not yet the international standard of "autonomous universities." A unique balance between autonomy and control exists in Taiwan's higher education system; its universities have autonomy on the surface in terms of regulations and laws, but to work on developing their unique features independently, universities will need more autonomy to determine their operations in all aspects without MOE approval. After years of efforts to enhance university autonomy since the major education reforms in 1994, the MOE still views universities in Taiwan as its agents instead of stewards.

Further qualitative research should be conducted on how to improve university autonomy from the perspective of the higher education stakeholders such as the presidents of leading research universities, the senior government officers of MOE and MOST, and the legislators. Specifically, further investigation would help compare their views and find out the similarities and differences between the policymakers and the practitioners of higher education.

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