

Academic Staffs' Participation in University Governance Towards Autonomy: Practice at Two University Models in Vietnam

Pham Thi Thanh Hai
Hanoi University of Science and Technology

Dao Ngoc Tien
Foreign Trade University

Nguyen Quoc Tri
Hanoi National University of Education

Vietnamese universities are now in a state of “diverse governing bodies” and the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for their expertise. This model can cause overlapping or loosened management by many agencies simultaneously managing. Vietnamese universities need to promote autonomy and accountability in management. This study was conducted in 2018-2019 with 322 lecturers and educational managers working at two Vietnamese public universities governed by different autonomy policies. This research analyses the academic staff’s participation in university governance toward autonomy. The research results show that (i) there is no difference between the two universities in the level of participation in governance activities; (ii) The academic staff’s participation levels are positively correlated from low to moderate levels according to the effectiveness of participating in activities; (iii) The higher the participation level, the higher the scientific research results are for domestic publication. However, it is not a significant case for international publication.

Keywords: governance, university, autonomy, faculty, participation

RATIONALE

The overview of the trend of university governance in the world summarizes four models with different levels of autonomy, from the state control model in Malaysia to semi-autonomous models in France and New Zealand, semi-independent models such in Singapore, and independent models in the UK and Australia (John, 2008). However, for the state control model, HE institutions still go through a certain degree of autonomy for financial and practical reasons, the State cannot control all activities of the institutions. Besides, even in the independent model, there are still implicit assumptions about the State’s right to hold some strategic control and the right to require high accountability in HE institutions.

To demonstrate changes in modern university governance towards multilayer governance with the participation of many stakeholders and the influence of market competition, instead of governance with direct government intervention, De Boer, Enders, and Schimank (2007) had developed a model of

university governance with 5 dimensions: state regulation, school autonomy, outside leadership, market competition, and academic autonomy.

Because institutional autonomy can take many forms and there is no one-size-fits-all solution (Hayden & Lam, 2007), Vietnam must embark on a journey to explore, build, or create its own type of institutional autonomy (Tran, 2014). In the traditional university governance models, there is always a clear presence of state management, even though the degree isn't the same in different countries (Pham, 2015).

Vietnam currently has some different types of universities (Pham & Le, 2021) which are operating under policies that allow universities governance in the direction of autonomy with some conditions. The university shared governance-run autonomy at different levels with the faculties' participation. This research is conducted at two public universities which are governed by two different autonomy models to point out if there are any differences among faculties' participation in university governance since there are no studies done before.

University Governance and Autonomy

Rym & Salah (2021) pointed out that the role of HE governance has a significant impact on the success of HE systems. Many institutional surveys that conducted nationally, revealed a growing acceptance of the shared governance norms sought by the American Association of University Professors. The results show that there is a statistically significant correlation between the governance level of lecturers and the academic status of that HE institution (Gerber, 2015).

Autonomy is considered the basic value of a university in the Declaration Magna Charta Universitatum at Bologna. Institutional autonomy, which is important for the development of the university and HE system, is known as having the right to appoint teaching staff, admit students choose content and teaching methods. In addition, HEIs can decide for themselves to control standards, set priorities, allocate funds within existing amounts, and develop strategies for the future Kayrooz (2007). European University Association (2014) asserted: "in order to be successful, universities need to be able to take their own decisions."

Vietnamese universities have autonomously restricted. The thought of "governing ministry" shows the decentralization in the management of HE institutions, but it has created a lot of consequences, namely: the block in operation; dependency, less dynamic, creative in management ... leading to the loss of autonomy of universities (Trinh, 2017). In Vietnam, there are researches on university governance that focus heavily on the autonomy and social responsibility issues of the university (Pham, 2006) and Autonomy of universities in the context of educational innovation – A case study of VNU (Pham et al., 2018) affirmed the autonomy of universities is a common trend of universities in the world, the basic concept of university social responsibility, which is a necessary condition for implementing advanced university governance methods to improve the quality of training. Bui (2013) said that university autonomy is the relative independence of the university over the control of state management agencies. Varghese and Martin (2014) added that the positive influence on good governance is due to increased autonomy. For the autonomy and social responsibility of HE institutions to be effective, the first and necessary condition is to strictly comply with the provisions of the HE Law (2012) on the institution of the Council of HE with public universities and the Board of Directors for private universities (Trinh, 2017).

Shared Governance and Faculty Participation

Flynn (2005) said that shared governance means the shared responsibility between management and faculty for primary decisions about the general educational policy as in the HEIs charter. Before making final decisions, under shared governance, each stakeholder must think and act for the best interests of HEIs and involve others in the process to reach agreement or consensus (Charles & Martin, 2011).

Hollinger (2001) found in American HE, when faculty participation in university governance has represented the norm, the scholars focus on studying faculty governance. In HEIs, most staffs strongly support shared governance which is an important part of their institution's values and identity (Tierney and Minor, 2003). However, the results of another study by Leach (2008) showed that less than 50% of faculty at public universities agree that faculty members participate fully in campus decision-making.

In Vietnam, Nguyen et al. (2019) discussed that shared governance has become a trend in the HE system since Vietnam transformed into a market economy. Accordingly, policies are issued and monitored by state offices and agencies, and HEIs are under shared governance with the participation of parties such as faculties and students.

The Aims of the Research Purposes

Many studies have shown that University governance and autonomy is an international trend. The positive influence on good governance is due to increased autonomy (Varghese & Martin, 2014). Therefore, this trend is suitable for Vietnam in the context of comprehensive reform of higher education. There have been some studies suggesting that shared governance and Faculty participation has become a trend in the HE system since Vietnam transformed into a market economy (Nguyen et al., 2019). More specifically, Pham & Le (2021) has published research on the practice of lecturers' participation in university governance. In fact, Vietnam has many different models of university governance. The purpose of this research is to indicate the differences of lecturers' participation in two public universities governance.

VIETNAM CONTEXT: TRANSITION FROM CENTRALIZED PLANNING TO AUTONOMY – BASED UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Background of Vietnam Higher Education Reform

Vietnam has been renovated since 1986 to seek the development path for the country in accordance with the circumstances, conditions of the country and with the world trend/trend of the world; The policy of the education sector during this period was to diversify different types of schools and classes, forms of training, and regulations on people-founded and private schools and classes.

Before the renovation, in Vietnam, managing the whole society is made under the centralized administrative orders, bureaucratic, HE governance was done according to the management model of top-down governance. This is also a state-dependent model of HE governance, but this top-down governance model has two different characteristics from all variants of the same model from other countries. Firstly, all universities are public universities, they belong to certain ministries that act as “governing ministries” to directly manage the universities. Secondly, the relationship between the managing ministry and the university is a dependent relationship in the “attached – managing” style. In which, the governing body acts as the administrative “governance apparatus” of the universities (including faculties, departments, and subordinate units) making decisions of the “administrative apparatus.” In this huge university, the state, through its governing ministries, directly makes/gives decisions and guides all activities of each university including budget allocation, enrollment, personnel, organization, training, scientific research, cooperation, graduation, and facilities.

After the renovation, the Government had a policy of increasing opportunities to access HE, and the increasing number of students leads to the explosion of the number of HE institutions (In 2000, there were 118 students per 10,000 people; By 2020, reaching 350–400 students/10,000 people). The Government found that the centralization model is no longer suitable for the current HE system of Vietnam as well as the limitations of the MoET in managing the entire system and the budget burden on the whole system (Tran, 2014). Therefore, the decentralization of responsibility in decision-making to HEIs for the efficient use of resources is desirable by the Government in that context (Hayden & Lam, 2007). Vietnamese HE institutions are now in a state of “diverse governing bodies” and the MoET is responsible for their expertise. This model of operation can cause overlapping or loosened management by many agencies simultaneously managing. HE institutions need to promote autonomy and accountability in management (Pham et al., 2019). Currently, the MoET has officially put into practice university autonomy in the spirit of Resolution 77 / NQ-CP (2014). Up to now, there are 23 universities implementing autonomy mechanisms in university administration.

A Number of Guidelines and Policies for Higher Education Reform Towards Autonomy

The issue of university autonomy was first mentioned in the Education Law of Vietnam (1998, 2019) which stipulates: “The universities have the autonomy and self-responsibility according to the regulations of the law and according to the school charter in the training activities for admission to the organizational structure of the financial school.” Higher Education Law (2012, 2018), university autonomy is regulated: “Autonomy HE institutions in the main activities in the fields of organization and personnel, finance and assets, training, faculties learning and technology, international cooperation, ensuring the quality of HE. HE institutions exercise a higher level of autonomy in accordance with their capacity, ranking results, and educational quality accreditation results.” This statement is confirmed in the University Regulation (2014) such as the tasks, powers, autonomy, and accountability of the university are quite specific.

National and regional universities in Vietnam’s HE system which consist of HEIs and research institutions, is organized as two-tier institutions; These systems are performing national strategic tasks and regional development tasks of the country. Other universities belong to different governing ministries in operation but academic is dependent on the MoET.

The Further Discussion About How the Autonomy Policies in the Different HEI Model

VNU was established in 1995 with the goal of becoming a high-quality scientific research and training HEI that allowed autonomy governance. (Different from other HEIs at the same time were under the supervision and management of the state in all aspects of governance). After that, university autonomy was applied as an inevitable trend, and FTU was one of the universities that piloted the university model. Although both universities are autonomous in 3 activities (i) organizational and personnel; (ii) academics; (iii) finance (Bui & Pham, 2017; Pham & Le, 2021) but this research is conducted to point out if there are any differences between faculties’ participation in university’s governance.

RESEARCH METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at VNU Hanoi and FTU which are the typical examples of changes in university governance in the autonomy direction.

In Vietnam, there are two unique National Universities, one based in Hanoi and the other based in Ho Chi Minh City, which were established in 1995. Vietnam National University (Hanoi) is one of the two VNUs in Vietnam under Vietnamese Government. Currently, VNU is running 126 undergraduate training programs, 131 master’s degree programs and 107 doctoral training programs in the fields of natural sciences, technology, social sciences, humanities, and economics. education, foreign languages.

VNU implements autonomy according to the three following activities: (i) personnel organization (National University Council established by the President of National University; National University Director decides to establish, merge, divide, separate and dissolve units under the National University on the basis of the Council’s resolution); (ii) academics (allowed to open pilot fields not included in the list of State training as prescribed) and (iii) finance, equipment procurement and management (National University implements the mechanism specific finance is stipulated by the Government, has high autonomy in financial activities). Different from other university models in Vietnam, VNU operates under a mechanism of autonomy and high self-responsibility (Decision 26/2014/QĐ-TTg). VNU member universities and research institutions operate with high autonomy and full legal status in accordance with the Law on Education, the Law on Science and Technology. VNU works directly with ministries and ministerial-level agencies and the government on issues related to governance, operations, and development.

Foreign Trade University (FTU) was founded in 1967 under the Moet. Currently, FTU is running 24 undergraduate training programs, 5 master’s degree programs and 2 doctoral training programs in the fields of banking and economics.... Every year, FTU trains more than 14475 bachelors, 700 masters, 200 doctorates, and those who meet international standards.

FIGURE 1
VNU'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (2020)

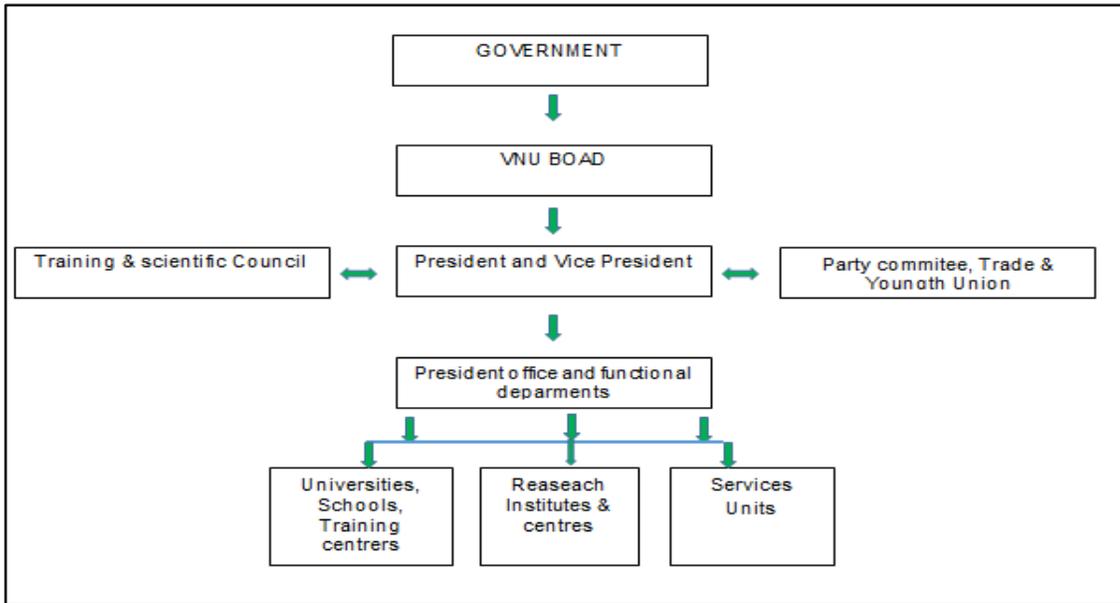
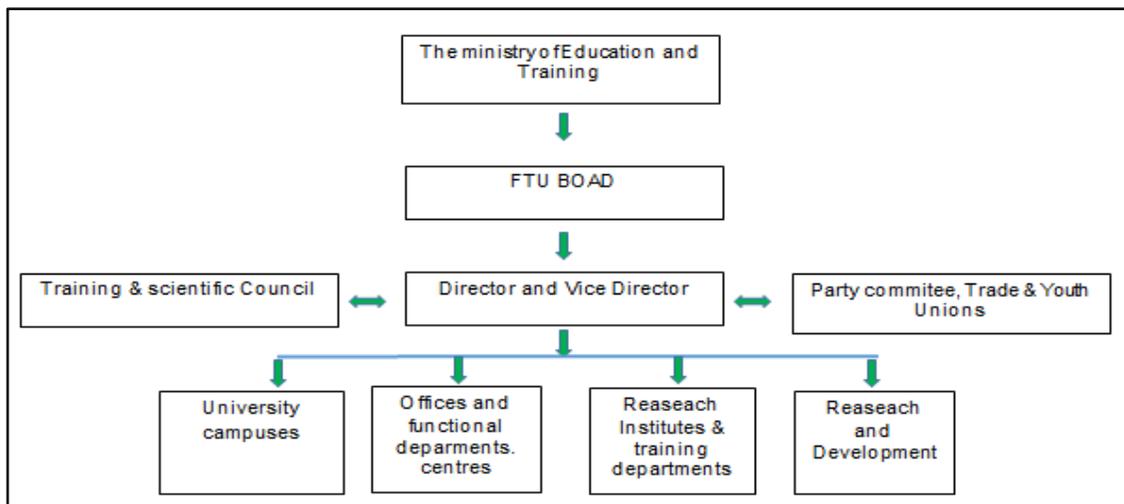
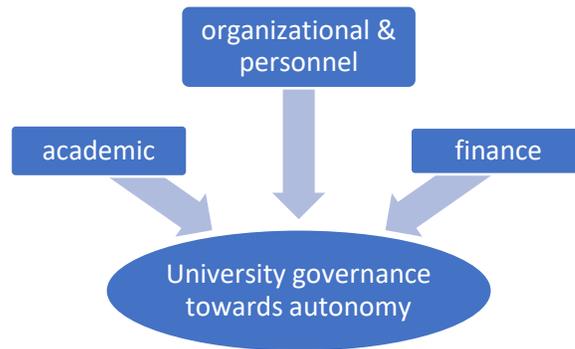


FIGURE 2
FTU'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (2020)



In 2005, FTU was one of the first 5 public universities in Vietnam to be allowed to pilot financial autonomy. After 10 years of piloting financial autonomy, FTU has been approved by the Prime Minister for a pilot proposal to renovate the operational mechanism in the period 2015-2017 (Prime Minister, 2015). This initial proposal drastically changed how the university governed, creating the basis for fundamental innovation in HE, improving the quality of the University's training. FTU is autonomous in 3 activities (i) organizational and personnel; (ii) academics; (iii) finance (Bui & Pham, 2017).

FIGURE 3
FRAMEWORK OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE TOWARDS AUTONOMY



Bui & Pham, 2017; Nguyen, et al 2019

Based on the theoretical framework of university governance includes 3 activities organizational and personnel, academic, and finance (Bui & Pham, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2019), this research analyzes the participation of faculties in the university governance in the context of autonomy. There existed 3 questions (i) Are there any differences between the two universities in terms of the faculties’ participation in university governance activities; (ii) Is there any relationship between the faculties’ participation levels with the effectiveness in university governance activities; (iii) Are there any faculties’ participation levels in university governance activities impact to the scientific research & for domestic and international publication ISI / SCOPUS.

The study was conducted in 2019 at two autonomous universities in Vietnam: VNU Hanoi and FTU. There are 322 faculty members out of the total faculty members of VNU (total of VNU faculty members are 206) and FTU (total FTU faculty members is 116).

The study sample was randomly selected from VNU and FTU faculty members according to Yamane Taro’s (1967) simplified formula for the ratio, $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$. With faculty members sampling, population size (N) is the total sample population, and an acceptable sampling error (e) is 0.05, corresponding to a 93% confidence level.

TABLE 1
FACULTY MEMBERS’ INFORMATION

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	137	42.5
	Female	185	57.5
Qualification	Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma	26	8.1
	Master’s degree	219	68.0
	Doctorate	77	23.9

Working experience (years)	0 - 4	72	22.4
	5 - 10	100	31.1
	11 - 15	129	40.1
	More than 15	21	6.5

Based on the classification of university governance activities (Bui & Pham, 2017; Nguyen, et al, 2019), the purpose of the study is to evaluate the level of participation of faculty and effectiveness in the three university governance activities. In detail: (i) The organization and personnel field include issues related to strategies, regulations on organization and operation, establishment/dissolution of related units, salary and income policies for cadres, appointing administrators, administrators, departments, recruiting lecturers & staff of the units; (ii) The academic field includes contents related to training regulations, training programs, university plans, enrollment quota, and educational quality assessment; (iii) The financial field includes investments for the university, financial regulations for training & research activities.

The research used the questionnaire on the faculty's participation in 3 areas of university governance (i) Organizational and personnel activities (ii) Academic activities (iii) Financial activities. The surveys used the questionnaires of 2 parts participation level and effectiveness level of faculty members. (i) The extent of faculty participation in university governance is measured by a scale of 3 participation levels: 1 is never, 2 is sometimes, and 3 is usually; (ii) Efficiency is measured on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest. The processed data of this study used SPSS 22 software, and the main tools used in this study are Descriptive, Correlation and Multiple Response calculations.

At the participation level, there are 3 sub-scales: Organization and personnel activities (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81); Academic activities (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.920) and Financial activities (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81) with values Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.35 in both sub-scale; The effectiveness level includes 3 scales of the effectiveness of organization and personnel activities (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.874); The effectiveness of academic activities (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.949); The effectiveness of financial activities (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.941) with the values Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.55 on all 3 sub-scales. The reliability values of the sub-scales show that the scales have good reliability of the Items in the sub-scales that correlate well with the total variable.

The descriptive statistics and inference statistics are used to process data through SPSS software. Descriptive statistical analysis is used to describe demographic information such as age, gender, etc. Inference statistical analysis is used to examine the relationship between variables. Specifically, we used the independent sample t-test to compare the identifiers and continuous variables. To compare the identifiers and continuous variables, we employed the independent sample t-test. We use ANOVA post hoc to compare identifiers with more than two components to continuous variables, considering the difference between each component and the rest of the identifiers. Then, Pearson correlation is used to consider the relationship between continuous variables with each other. The p values will be the determination whether the difference or correlation is statistically significant. The value of $p < 0.05$ was determined as the difference or correlation was statistically significant.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There Is No Difference Between the Faculties of the Two Universities in Terms of Participation in University Governance

VNU is composed of many multi-disciplinary universities with training programs in basic sciences, engineering, and natural sciences, society, economics, education, medicine. The FTU is a single-discipline university majoring in economics. Whether they are national universities (multidisciplinary) or single-discipline universities, there is no difference in the level of participation in governance activities in the

above three fields. Two public universities are operating under the Law on HE (2012, 2018) and the University Regulations (2014). Level of participation in organization and personnel activities (FTU.M: 1.69; FTU.SD 0.51; VNU.M1.71; VNU SD.0.47) at the moderate level of sometimes participation. Level of participation in academic activities (FTU.M: 1.78; FTU.SD 0.53; VNU.M1.87; VNU SD.0.56) at the moderate level of participation. Level of participation in financial activities (FTU.M: 1.52; FTU.SD 0.52; VNU.M1.43; VNU SD.0.53) at the moderate level closed to never participation.

The level of faculty involvement in the academic activities of this research is similar to the research results of Gerber (2001) referred to Inextricably linked: Shared governance and academic freedom. However, regarding to the participation in university budgeting decisions, Kissler (1997) indicates that about 7% of faculty members influence budget and resource decisions. Most studies have shown that there is a strong influence of faculty members on academic activities, while conversely, there is a weak influence on decisions related to finance and facilities.

To compare the variables identified for the level of participation of faculty members in the three governance activities above, the study used an independent sample t-test. The results are shown in the following table.

TABLE 2
COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO UNIVERSITIES: THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE SEPARATED ACTIVITY GROUPS

		M	SD	t	df	p
Organization and personnel activities	FTU	1.69	0.51	-0.322	315	0.748
	VNU	1.71	0.47			
Academic activities	FTU	1.78	0.53	-1.436	316	0.152
	VNU	1.87	0.56			
Financial activities	FTU	1.52	0.52	1.43	303	0.154
	VNU	1.43	0.53			

Similar to the level of participation of lecturers in university governance by 3 groups of activities, there is no difference between the two lecturers' level of effectiveness when participating in activity groups. The level of participation in Organization and personnel activities (FTU.M: 5.82; FTU.SD 2.18; VNU.M.5.39; VNU SD.2.16) was effective at higher than average. Level of participation in academic activities (FTU.M: 6.04; FTU.SD 1.86; VNU.M5.61; VNU SD.1.87) was effective at higher than average. Level of participation in financial activities (FTU.M: 4.90; FTU.SD 2.26; VNU.M.4.59; VNU SD.1.99) was effective at lower than average.

Analysis using an independent sample t-test to compare among continuous variables for the effectiveness of participating in the above activities. The results are shown in the following table.

To compare among continuous variables for the effectiveness of faculty members' participation in the three governance activities above, Analysis using an independent sample t-test. The results are shown in the following table.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO UNIVERSITIES: THE LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS WHEN PARTICIPATED IN UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE OF ACTIVITY GROUPS

Activities groups	University	M	SD	t	df	p
Organization and personnel activities	FTU	5.82	2.18	1.537	266	0.125
	VNU	5.39	2.16			
Academic activities	FTU	6.04	1.86	1.853	281	0.065
	VNU	5.61	1.87			
Financial activities	FTU	4.90	2.26	0.980	185	0.328
	VNU	4.59	1.99			

The middle-level leaders of VNU and FTU agreed that this data is a reality at two public universities. Lecturers are complying with regulations on requirements for professional titles of lecturers at public universities (Moet, 2014 & Inter Circular 2014). Therefore, the level of faculty members' participation and the effectiveness of governance activities groups on similarities are correct.

Regarding the organizational structure and personnel, the participation of lecturers in developing university strategic plans, regulations on organization and operation, establishment/dissolution of related units, the regime of the salary/income policies for staff, the appointment of the administrators, the head of the department, ... is not as high as the managers. On the contrary, lecturers are more involved in the recruitment of lecturers through the assessment of lecture hours and the results of lecturers' work.

For the Academic, this study shows that the lecturers' participation is higher than the other due to the involvement of the Teaching Standards of Teaching Title and the teacher's working regime (Moet, 2014; Inter Circular 2014). Faculty members are responsible for engaging in activities such as program development, school year planning, and evaluation of educational results. In a national study of over 900 HEIs about faculty governance, faculty authority appears to be concentrated in the areas of degree requirements, curriculum, tenure, appointments, and degree offerings (Kaplan, 2005). Same as tradition, Brubacher & Rudy (1997) found that faculty influence has been relegated to primarily academic areas such as curriculum and the establishment of teaching standards. In term of Financial, the participation of lecturers is lowest due to the strict regulations from the government on the Law on Public Investment, the Law on State Budget, the salary regime, and policies for teachers (Moet, 2014; Inter Circular, 2014).

The Relationship Between the Level of Participation and Effectiveness

The faculties' participation levels are positively correlated from low to moderate levels with the evaluation of the effectiveness of participating in 3 activities (Organization and personnel, academic, and financial). The data pointed out that the higher the level of participation, the higher the effectiveness.

Analysis using correlation: Participation level X efficiency levels of 3 activities (Organization and personnel, academic, financial)

TABLE 4
CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES

		Organization and personnel activities	Academic activities	Financial activities
The effectiveness of organizational and personnel activities	Pearson Correlation	0.251**	0.203**	0.173**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
The effectiveness of academic activities	Pearson Correlation	0.347**	0.417**	0.333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000	0.000
The effectiveness of financial activities	Pearson Correlation	0.377**	0.374**	0.478**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	0.000	0.000

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Especially, the level of participation in organizational and personnel activities, academic activities and financial activities are positively correlated at a lower level with the level of efficiency assessment of organizational and personnel activities. Accordingly, in a small number of lecturers, the more these lecturers participate the more they appreciate the effectiveness of these activities. Similar to lecturers from universities around the world, compared with academic activities, Vietnamese lecturers are more active and influential than in organizational and personnel activities (Minor, 2004). Next, the level of participation in organizational and personnel activities, academic activities and financial activities are positively correlated at a moderate level for the level of assessment of the effectiveness of the academic activities. Therefore, the more a lecturer participates, the higher the appreciation of the effectiveness of these activities. This statement is added to the research result from Pham (2015). Based on the international HE governance model, the government needs to reduce its direct involvement in HE. In Vietnamese HE, university governance policies must take academic freedom as the primary principle to guide organizational and operational activities.

Relationship Between Participation Level and Academic Results

The data shows a low positive correlation level between participation in organization and personnel activities, academic activities, financial activities, and scientific research results, that is, in a small number of lecturers, the higher the level of participation, the better their scientific research results are. Results show

that only the relationship between the level of involvement with all domestic journals is statistically significant, and they indicate that the correlation is not significant between the level of participation in activities with international journals (Scopus / ISI).

Analysis using correlation: (i) Number of domestic journals X participation level in 3 activities (Organization and personnel, academic and financial); (ii) Number of international journals X participation level in 3 activities (Organization and personnel, academic and financial).

TABLE 5
CORRELATION BETWEEN PARTICIPATION LEVEL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH RESULTS

		Organization and personnel activities	Academic activities	Financial activities
Number of Domestic scientific Journal articles	Pearson Correlation	0.225**	0.135*	0.220**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.016	0.000
Number of foreign scientific journal articles	Pearson Correlation	-0.015	-0.011	0.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.788	0.843	0.709

*Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

** Significant correlation at point 0.05 (2-tailed)*

The statistical data at the University of Education (VNU) on the rate of international publication (Scopus / ISI) compared to the domestic publication is: 22%. Currently, this explains the low number of international publications by lecturers.

According to Le's investigation (2016) of the development of academic identity in Vietnamese study, the 'desire for an affinity with global disciplinary communities' was informed by academics across disciplines. Academics in the applied social sciences, particularly teacher education, were the least globally involved, with only a few connections to worldwide scholarly networks. In most cases, in the field of teacher education, a recognition of the necessity to define intellectual territory by publishing research findings in peer-reviewed journals was accepted, but it was also seen to be completely out of reach in terms of practicality.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost, there are no differences between the faculties of the two universities in terms of participation in university governance. This result is similar to what Miller, M. (1996) referred to as Faculty participation in governance at small and big universities: Implications for practice. This study is about participation in university governance, and it is considered according to the level of faculty involvement according to organization and personnel, academic and financial activities. There is a small number of

faculties involved in university administration, so there is no significant impact on the university's governance. In order to enhance the effectiveness of university governance, the university should engage more faculty members into its governance.

The study recommends that Vietnamese universities need to mobilize lecturers (not in charge of management tasks such as deputy, department head, and deputy's head), participating in university governance, particularly in financial activities and personnel organization, to reach the effective level. A task force or ad-hoc committees (but not permanent positions) composed of highly qualified faculty members should be used to solve specific issues/problems of universities.

Lecturers have difficulty participating in university governance in academic activities, especially in publishing international publications. In terms of university ranking criteria, research activity, citation index and level of internationalization are important criteria. There are very few Vietnamese universities in international rankings. In 2020, VNU Hanoi takes 801-1000th World University Ranking 2020 by the criteria of overall, teaching, research, citations, industry income, international Outlook. Similar to Pham (2010), Vietnam produces a relatively small number of peer-refereed international publications per one million of the population.

According to Le & Hayden (2017), Vietnam's research is underperforming, compared to international standards. The difference in publication performance between Vietnam and two of its surrounding ASEAN member states, Thailand and Malaysia, has been expanding since 2001, according to bibliometric indices based on the Scopus database. While the participation level can promote domestic publication, it has no correlation with international publication.

Based on the data analyzed above, the study recommends that Vietnamese universities should have policies to encourage lecturers to increase international publication. At the institutional level, the university needs to establish research teams and budget investments through research teams, which aim particularly at international publications.

CONCLUSIONS

The world's HE in the last decades has been under pressure of innovation to adapt to the rapid and diversified changes of the age. However, all the innovative efforts focus on developing the autonomy rights of HE (Nguyen, 2016). At the institutional level, university governance with the components, structure and governance processes takes place inside and outside the university. In the context that Vietnam is gradually moving towards autonomy in universities, the research result shows the operational progress towards autonomy of Vietnam's HE system and the participation of stakeholders in management activities. FTU & VNU are typical examples of leading the innovation in university governance towards autonomy. The research results show that (i) there is no difference between the two universities in the level of participation in governance activities; (ii) The Faculties' participation levels are positively correlated from low to moderate levels with the evaluation of the effectiveness of participating in activities; (iii) The higher the participation level, the higher the scientific research results are for domestic publication but not significant for ISI / SCOPUS international publication.

This study is conducted within the framework of two universities that are allowed autonomy in university governance. The study shows practical implications in the early years of piloting university governance according to the autonomy trend in Vietnamese context of HE reforms.

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