



**ACADEMIC STAFF RECRUITMENT AND  
DEVELOPMENT IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM:  
IN COMPARISON WITH PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

*by*

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## **Abstract**

Quality of education remains a problem in higher education in Vietnam and can be considered one of the most crucial and greatest challenges that institutions are now facing and which they need to make great efforts to resolve. Among the various factors that influence this is the quality of the teaching staff in higher education institutions. Due to the shortage of highly qualified academic staff, higher education institutions of both public and private are competing both with each other, and with organisations outside the educational sector, in recruiting academic staff. The thesis explores current issues of staffing and academic staff development in private universities in Vietnam, the policies implemented by them to promote academic staff development, and the extent to which these policies have proved to be effective in raising teaching quality.

A comparative and qualitative method with multiple case studies was used for the research. Six higher education institutions in Vietnam, three public and three private, were chosen as case studies. Standards of staffing in public institutions were used as the bench mark for the comparative study, as public higher institutions in Vietnam have a longer history of establishment and operation, which have helped them build up cadres of highly qualified and experienced teaching staff. Data on higher education policies and issues relating to academic staff development and the quality of education in these institutions were gathered using a mixed methods approach. The results of the study showed that institutions of both sectors were facing similar issues in recruiting and developing their academic staff. With financial support from government, public universities are more advantageous than private ones in recruiting and retaining academic staff, thus whilst private universities used economic benefits as their core policies, public institutions attracted and retained academic staff by providing them opportunities for professional development. The research shows that there are still many decisions to be made in the establishment of an effective policy on academic staff development to overcome challenges facing institutions of both the public and the private higher education sector in Vietnam.

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## GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

<i>Ban cong</i>	Semi-public
<i>Bien che</i>	Permanent or tenure-track
<i>Cu nhan</i>	Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science
<i>Dan lap</i>	People founded
<i>Doi moi</i>	Renovation reform starting in 1986 in Vietnam
<i>Giang vien cao cap</i>	High-ranked lecturer
<i>Giang vien chinh</i>	Senior lecturer
<i>Giang vien Co huu</i>	Full-time academic staff
<i>Giang vien thinh giang</i>	Visiting lecturer
<i>Hop dong ngan han</i>	Short-term contracts
<i>Huy chuong vi Su nghiep giao duc</i>	Medal of Educational Contribution
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
<i>Nha giao Nhan dan</i>	Lecturer of the People
<i>Nha giao Uu tu</i>	Outstanding Lecturer
<i>Nong Lam University</i>	Formally University of Agriculture and Forestry in Ho Chi Minh City
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development
<i>Pho tien sy</i>	Candidate of Science/ Kandidat
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation
SEAMEO RIHED	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development

SEAMEO RETRAC	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, Regional Training Centre
<i>Sinh vien he boi duong va dao tao lai</i>	Specialised and retraining students
<i>Sinh vien he chinh quy</i>	Full-time students
<i>Sinh vien he tai chuc</i>	In-service students
<i>Sinh vien he mo rong</i>	Open students
<i>Sinh vien he ngan han</i>	Part-time students
<i>Sinh vien he ngan han- chuyen tu</i>	Short-term Training students
<i>Thac sy</i>	Master
<i>Tien sy</i>	Doctorate
<i>Tro giang</i>	Assistant lecturer
<i>Truong Cao dang</i>	College, Junior college, Community college
<i>Truong Dai hoc</i>	University
<i>Tu thuc</i>	Private
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
<i>Vien nghien cuu</i>	Research Institute

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about academic staff recruitment and development in private universities in Vietnam. It considers how private universities in Vietnam can improve the quality of higher education by identifying and analysing policies on academic staff recruitment and development.

### **The Context of the Research**

Since the introduction of ‘*doi moi*’, a renovation policy that was introduced and approved by the Communist Party of Vietnam at its Sixth Congress in December 1986 in response to requirements of the social and economic development of the country, Vietnam has witnessed several important changes which have affected the education sector in several important ways. In a report on *The Higher Education System in Vietnam*, Kelly (2000) identified three major changes in the education sector. These included an increase in governmental spending on education and training, the right of public institutions to levy tuition fees, and, most important of all, many new official decrees and resolutions that encouraged the private sector’s expansion. The third change of policy took place in response to the need to diversify and increase resources for higher education from the state budget. This was because of the inability of the state to support higher education. Another reason for this change of policy was the inability of public universities to meet the growing social demand for higher education.

In Vietnam, as in many other developing countries, education is seen as the foundation of a good and productive society and as a means to a better society. Traditionally, schooling is education. However, as a consequence of the development of the society, much of the schooling turns out to be for qualification earning (Dore, 1976). A person with a certificate, diploma or degree may have better chance than others in obtaining a good and well-paid job. This explains the growing demand for higher education, as well as the need for more higher education institutions in Vietnam, because this is where people come for knowledge, as well as for certificates, degrees and diplomas. Obviously, there is a relationship between the labour market and the social demand for higher education. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter Two, which provides a literature review and a theoretical framework for considering private higher education in developing economies.

After more than twenty years of renovation since *'doi moi'* was introduced, the Vietnamese higher education system has important achievements in student enrolment, quality of education, modes of delivery and school infrastructure. The proportion of students in higher education institutions has steadily increased, as illustrated in Table 1.1 below, from 893,754 (1.12% of the total population of 79,596,700) in 1999-2000 school year to 1,540,201 (1.83% of the total population of 84,108,100) in 2006-2007 (Statistics of students are from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)<sup>1</sup> and total population from The World Bank Group<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.moet.gov.vn>

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.worldbank.org>

**Table 1.1: Students in Higher Education and Total Population in Vietnam,  
1999 – 2007**

School year	Total students*	Total population	Percentage**
<b>1999-2000</b>	893,754	79,596,700	1.12
<b>2000-2001</b>	918,228	77,635,400	1.18
<b>2001-2002</b>	974,119	78,685,400	1.24
<b>2002-2003</b>	1,020,667	79,727,400	1.28
<b>2003-2004</b>	1,131,030	80,902,400	1.40
<b>2004-2005</b>	1,319,754	82,031,700	1.60
<b>2005-2006</b>	1,363,167	83,104,900	1.64
<b>2006-2007</b>	1,540,201	84,108,100	1.83

Source: MOET and The World Bank Group, 16 January, 2009

\*This included students of full-time (*chinh quy*), in-service (*tai chuc*) and other training programmes [e.g. open (*mo rong*), part-time (*ngan han*), short-term training (*chuyen tu*), and specialised or retraining courses (*boi duong va dao tao lai*)], but did not include overseas students. The figure in 2006-2007 did not include students of other training programmes.

\*\*Percentage of total higher education students per total population.

The number of students in higher education in Vietnam is small relative to the total population. In 2006-2007, for example, the number of students enrolling in higher education occupied only 1.83% of the total population. In South-East Asia, this percentage of students per total population enrolling in higher education in Vietnam was only higher than that in Indonesia (1.59%), but was lower than the Philippines (2.87%), and Thailand (3.68%) (See Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2: Students in Higher Education and Total Population in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, 2006-2007**

	<b>Enrolment in higher education</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Indonesia</b>	3,657,429	228,864,479	1.59
<b>Philippines</b>	2,483,988	86,263,714	2.87
<b>Thailand</b>	2,338,572	63,443,952	3.68
<b>Vietnam*</b>	1,540,201	84,108,100	1.83

*Source:* United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, 17 January, 2009

\*The statistics of Vietnam was not available on UNESCO Institute for Statistics; the enrolment number was taken from the MOET and the total population from The World Bank Group.

According to the results of the Vietnamese population census in 2006, of the total population aged five and above, 3.5% were studying at higher education institutions (General Statistics Office, 2006). However, taking into account those who could possibly be in higher education, it may occupy a higher percentage. Considering the age structure of the Vietnamese population in the year 2006-2007 for example, about 8.8% of the total population (84,108,100) were between twenty and twenty four (General Statistics Office, 2006). Although this age group may not include all people at the age of entering higher education (a normal student finishes high school and enters higher education at the age of eighteen, See Figure 1.1 on page 9 below), the percentage of students who fell in this group aged 20-24 kept rising, from 17.7% in 2004 to 20.8% in 2006 (see Table 1.3). As this percentage was still very small, it showed an extremely promising number of potential students in the population of Vietnam.

**Table 1.3: Population at the Age of 20-24 and Percentage of Student Population in Higher Education (2004-2006)**

	Total population*	Population at the age of 20-24 **		Total students in higher education***	Percentage of student per total population aged 20-24
		Total number	% per total population		
<b>2004</b>	82,031,700	7,415,665	9.04	1,319,754	17.7
<b>2005</b>	83,104,900	7,712,134	9.27	1,363,167	17.6
<b>2006</b>	84,108,100	7,401,512	8.8	1,540,201	20.8

Source: \* The World Bank Group, 16 January 2009

\*\*Vietnamese General Statistics Office, 19 April 2009

\*\*\*MOET, 16 January 2009

The quality of education has changed positively, as stated in the *Education Development Strategic Plan for 2001-2010* developed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET):

the majority of graduates from higher education institutions have the ambition to be persons of virtue, to make a living reliant, dynamically spirited. The training quality in some science and technology fields has been improved by one step (sic). Higher education is growing step by step, training numerous contingents of scientists and technicians from bachelor to doctoral levels... (MOET, 2004: 20)

It cannot be denied that the expansion of the private segment of higher education has contributed significantly to the development of national education to obtain the objectives set in the 2001-2010 Educational Development Strategy. The strategy aims:

to provide high quality human resources in line with the social-economic structure of the industrialisation and modernisation of the nation; to enhance the competitiveness in fair co-operation for Vietnam in its international economic integration; to facilitate the expansion of post secondary education through the diversification of educational programmes on the basis of a path-way system that is suitable for the

structure of development, careers and employment, local and regional human resource needs and the training capacities of education institutions; to increase the appropriateness of the training to the employment needs of the society, the ability to create jobs for oneself and for others. (MOET, 2004: 90)

However, although private higher education in Vietnam shares the opportunities and challenges facing public higher education, there are some important differences. Despite the new decrees and resolutions that have been passed to encourage the private sector's expansion, these institutions still have to face many problems and issues concerning financial shortage, effective administrative and human resource management, efficient training programmes, facilities, and unified standards for evaluation and accreditation while competing with other public and private universities both inside the country and overseas. Private universities receive little or no financial support from the government. According to the *Regulations on Organisation and Operation of Private Universities* signed by the Prime Minister on Jan 2005, private universities may be provided, or rent, public premises; they also receive concessions such as relief from taxation. However, private universities depend largely on the tuition fees paid by students. As operating costs in these private institutions are covered mainly by tuition fees, students normally have to pay a large amount of money compared to very low or free tuition fees in many public universities. In addition, due to financial shortages, private institutions fail to invest in and upgrade their fundamental facilities as the public universities are able to do. In human resource management terms, private institutions are always facing problems relating to staff recruitment and development, especially considering Vietnam is still short of highly qualified teaching faculty in higher education in general.

In short, together with the socio-economic changes of the country, higher education in Vietnam is constantly changing, aiming at serving not only the state and the collective economic sectors, but also all other economic ones. The budget for higher education is based not only on the allocation of finance by the state, but also on the mobilisation of other resources. The scope of higher education has developed on the basis of diversity of training forms, including formal training, in-service training, and distance training. Formal training, also known as full-time or long cycle (*chinh quy dai han*), is for students who passed entrance examinations and gained admission to public higher education institutions. The graduation diplomas or degrees for this training programme will be endorsed with the term '*chinh quy*' (IIE, 2005). In-service training is for civil servants who need to upgrade their skills for their current or higher positions upon completing the training programmes. These students are often nominated and sponsored by government offices. As admission to in-service programmes is easier than the traditional path (full-time), and courses are more practical than theoretical or academic, graduates receive diplomas or degrees endorsed with the term '*tai chuc*' to set them apart from their counterparts of the usual channel (Ngo, 2006). Distance training is provided by the two designated open universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Admission to these is open to students who are able to pay fees, irrespective of their academic credentials (IIE, 2005).

In addition to the above three training forms, there are also short-term training (*ngan han chuyen tu*) programmes for those who already have secondary technical education or vocational education training and want to upgrade their degrees; and specialised or retraining programmes (*boi duong va dao tao lai*) for those who already have bachelors' degrees, but want to pursue courses that were not available in the past so

that they can prepare themselves for their current or new jobs (IIE, 2005). Higher education in general has to ensure the quality to satisfy the emerging requirements of the society and economy. In order to give the readers a better understanding of the current structure of the higher education of Vietnam, the next part will describe briefly the national education structure of Vietnam and the position of higher education in the system.

### **The Structure of Vietnamese Higher Education**

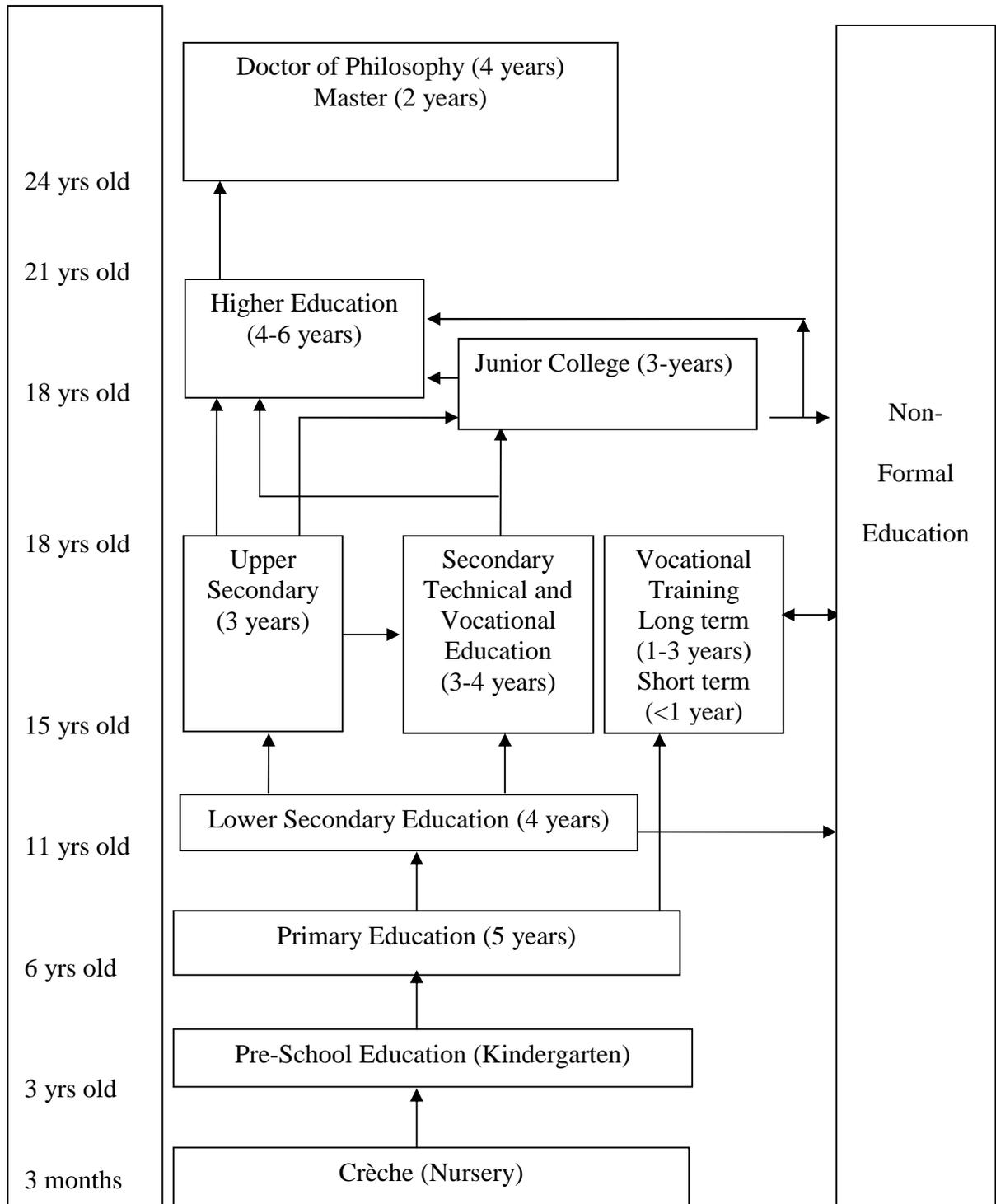
In Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is the main governmental body responsible for the management and administration of the education system. The national education system of Vietnam comprises four sub-systems: pre-school education, general education, vocational education and higher education<sup>3</sup>. Pre-school education consists of crèches and kindergarten, the former admitting children from three months to thirty six months of age, and the latter for children from three to six years old. General education consists of primary education (grades 1-5), lower secondary (grades 6-9), and upper secondary (grades 10-12), with children starting to go to primary at the age of six. Vocational education consists of vocational training (from one to three years) to train skilled workers, and secondary technical and vocational education (from three to four years) to train technicians with an intermediate level of techniques. Higher education in Vietnam consists of undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The duration of higher education studies varies from three years (to obtain certificate or diploma degrees), to four or five years (for bachelor degrees), or even up to eight years (for doctoral degrees, totally). Undergraduate studies include programmes that can lead to diplomas and bachelors'

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<sup>3</sup> Under the Decision 93/CP of the Government, this system of Vietnamese national education has been reconstructed and put into operation since 1993.

degrees while postgraduate can lead to masters' or doctoral degrees. Figure 1.1 shows the position of higher education in the national education system of Vietnam.

**Figure 1.1: Structure of the Education System in Vietnam**



*Source:* Vietnam Education and Training Directory (MOET, 2004, p.15)

### ***Academic Qualifications***

It should be noticed that, before 1999, in the national higher educational system, there was a diversity of recognised academic qualifications, including bachelor degree (*Cu nhan*), master (*Thac Sy*), candidate<sup>4</sup> (*Pho Tien Sy*), and doctorate (*Tien Sy*). Apart from the bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees which are similar to those offered by Western higher education systems, the candidate degree is derived from the term ‘*kandidat*’ in the educational systems of the former Soviet Union. The candidate degree is equivalent to the ‘*kandidat nauk*’ in the Soviet Union, the ‘*doktor eines wissenschaftsweiges*’ of East Germany, the ‘*kandidat na naukite*’ of Bulgaria, and the ‘*kandidat ved*’ in Czechoslovakia (Doan, 2000). In order to get a candidate degree, students need to take a three or four year course after completing a bachelor programme. Whether or not this degree is equivalent to the doctorate offered by Western higher education systems remains controversial. However, on 20 September, 1999, the government decreed that all Vietnamese holders of candidate degrees (*Pho Tien Sy*) would be recognised as full doctorate holders (*Tien Sy*)<sup>5</sup>. This decree ended the disparity between the two existing levels of doctorates (candidate or associate and full doctorate) in the national higher education system. The system of only one doctoral degree made it easier for graduates to be adaptable to the learning process and to the needs of the labour market.

### ***Types of Institutions***

The Vietnamese school infrastructure has been upgraded and the education system has begun to diversify in forms, modes of delivery and resources. Recognising that education is the key to creating a globally competitive workforce, the Government of

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<sup>4</sup> Candidate can also be referred to as associate doctorate, known as *Pho Tien Sy* in Vietnamese.

<sup>5</sup> Decree 1013/CP-KG signed on 20 September 1999, by the Prime Minister. The MOET Announcement 12267/SDH dated 29 December 1999.

Vietnam has liberalised private sector involvement in higher education since 1986. Private higher education institutions established since 1986 consisted of *Thang Long* University, *Ha Noi* Business Management University, *Hai Phong* University, *Ho Chi Minh* City Open University, and *Binh Duong* University, to name only a few. The Government of Vietnam has also encouraged foreign participation in developing education and training services in Vietnam. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University Vietnam<sup>6</sup>), for example, is the first 100% foreign-invested university established in Vietnam since 2000. The university has two campuses; the main one located in *Saigon* South, *Ho Chi Minh* City, and the other in downtown *Ha Noi*. RMIT University Vietnam currently provides higher education opportunities for over 2000 students, five percent of which come from eighteen countries all over the world such as Australia, China, France, Germany, Korea, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, South Africa and the USA. Recently, *Bac Ha* International University was established in *Bac Ninh* Province under the decision No 1369/QD-TTg signed on 4 November 2007.

The establishment of the private sector in the higher education system was previously forbidden in the Marxist-Leninist system. It has shown that the spirit of the economic reforms of *doi moi* also applied to universities and colleges as a way to meet the rapidly growing demand for tertiary education (Le & Ashwill, 2004). From 1986, in the education system, beside the public higher education institutions, mainly funded and managed by the government, there existed other non-public higher education institutions. These were namely semi-public (“*ban cong*”), people-founded (“*dan lap*”), and private (“*tu thuc*”). *Semi-public* referred to those institutions with

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<sup>6</sup> Information about RMIT International University Vietnam is retrieved from <http://www.rmit.edu.vn/> on 22 October 2006.

fundamental premises provided by the State and managed by a public authority. Examples of this kind are *Ho Chi Minh City Open University* and *Ton Duc Thang University*. The operating costs of these *semi-public* institutions were mainly covered by tuition fees. *People founded* institutions were owned and managed by non-government organisations or private associations. Some of these were *Binh Duong University*, *Hai Phong University*, and *Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology*. Similar to semi-public institutions, all of their operating costs were covered by tuition fees. The final term *private* indicated both non-profit and for-profit institutions, such as *Thang Long University*, *Phuong Dong University*, *Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology (HUFLIT)*, *The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)*, and *Bac Ha International University*. *Private* universities were owned, managed and financed by individuals, groups of individuals, or foreign higher education institutions.

Since the first private university, *Thang Long University*, was founded in 1988, there have been forty seven non-public higher education institutions established in Vietnam (up to 2008) thanks to the educational reform of the MOET and in response to the demands of the market-oriented economy. Since June 2006, there are now only two main types of Vietnamese higher education institutions. These are either public or private, as all of the *people founded* and *semi-public* universities have been transferred to either private or public sector accordingly<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Nineteen *people founded* higher education institutions were transferred to the private sector under the Decision 122/2006/QĐ-TTg signed on 29 May 2006, and the transformation of semi-public higher education institutions (four into private and one into public) was signed under the Decision 146/2006/QĐ-TTg on 22 June 2006 by the Prime Minister.

As indicated above, higher education in Vietnam still largely follows the model of the former Soviet Union. This generally separated teaching from research activities. This separation still remains an issue in the Vietnamese higher educational system. Higher education institutions are structured as follows (MOET, 2004) (See Figure 1):

- Colleges or junior colleges (*Truong Cao dang*)<sup>8</sup> offer short-cycle programmes of three to three-and-a-half years' duration.
- In addition to short-cycle programmes, there are long-cycle bachelor degree programmes and postgraduate programmes at master and doctorate levels, offered by universities (*Truong Dai hoc*).
- Doctoral programmes can also be offered by research institutes (*Vien Nghien cuu*). These research institutes, in cooperation with universities, can also offer master programmes subject to the necessary permissions from the government.

Most of Vietnam's junior colleges specialise in training teachers for lower levels of the education system. Universities consist of three main types: specialised universities, multi-discipline universities, and open universities. The first two types are more traditional in their ways of teaching with classroom lectures as their principal medium of instruction, whereas the third provides an open training network, using mass media for education purposes. The specialised universities focus on a single area of study, such as economics, foreign trade, fine arts, law, medicine, pharmacy, engineering and agriculture. Not until 1993 did Vietnam have multi-discipline universities, formed by the amalgamation of a number of small specialised institutions. These include *Ha Noi National University* (December 1993), *Ho Chi Minh City National University* (January 1995), and three regional universities in *Da*

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<sup>8</sup> The English term 'junior college' or 'community college' is used to indicate the non-university-level tertiary institutions, or '*Cao dang*' as in Vietnamese.

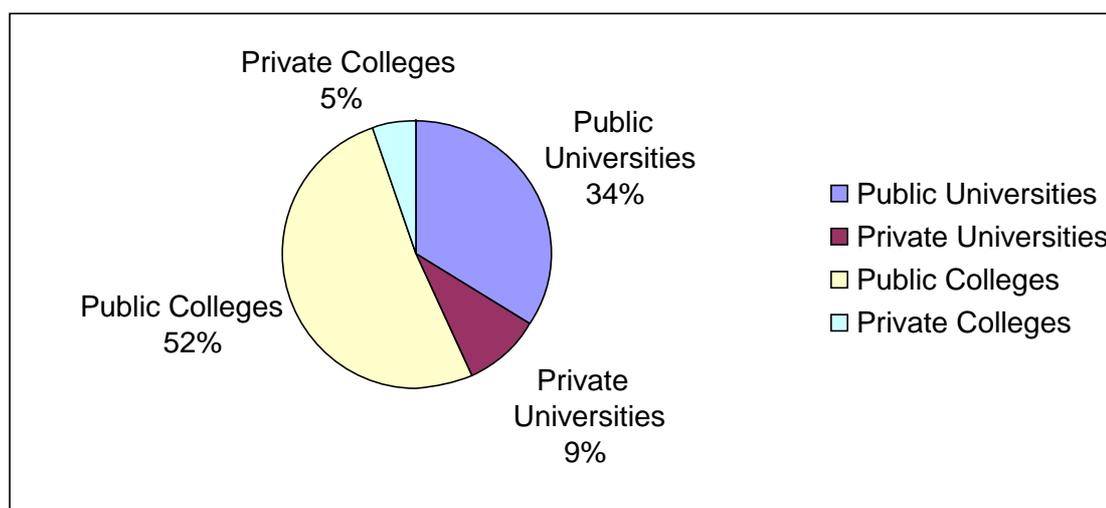
*Nang, Hue, and Thai Nguyen* (April 1994). These multi-discipline universities aim at enhancing the links between research and university teaching and make use of the existing highly-qualified academics. The open universities, the newest category of university education in Vietnam, include *Ha Noi Open University* and *Ho Chi Minh City Open University*<sup>9</sup>. These two institutions offer a variety of specialties mainly designed for intellectual enrichment, rather than professional development (Kelly, 2000). They provide opportunities of study for students who fail the entrance examinations to public universities as admission is not restricted to these two designated open universities.

By the academic year of 2006-2007, there were one hundred and thirty nine universities and one hundred and eighty three colleges. Thirty universities (9% of the total number of higher education institutions) and seventeen colleges (5% of the total number of higher education institutions) were private (See Figure 1.2).

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<sup>9</sup> *Ho Chi Minh City Open University* was initially a semi-public university when founded on 26 July 1993. On 22 Jun 2006, this institution was transferred into public under the Decision 146/2006 QD-TTg signed by the Prime Minister *Pham Gia Khiem*.

**Figure 1.2: Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam 2006-2007**



Source: Vietnam Edu.Net<sup>10</sup>, 10 January, 2009

The total enrolment in higher education, in general, expanded from 893,754 in 1999-2000 to 1,540,201 in 2006-2007, as shown previously in Table 1.1. The enrolment of students in universities and colleges in 2006-2007 (1,540,201 students) was 1.67 times more than that in 2000-2001 (918,228 students). The enrolment in the private sector was relatively small, in comparison with that in the public sector. Table 1.4 gives the proportion of students in public and private higher education institutions in Vietnam from 1999 to 2007. The enrolment in public higher education institutions was 6.96 times more than that in private in 2006-2007. Private enrolment in both colleges and universities occupied only 11.35% of the total enrolment in higher education in 2000-2001 and modestly rose to 12.56% in 2006-2007.

<sup>10</sup> Vietnam Edu.net is a webpage of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. Available at <http://www.edu.net.vn/>

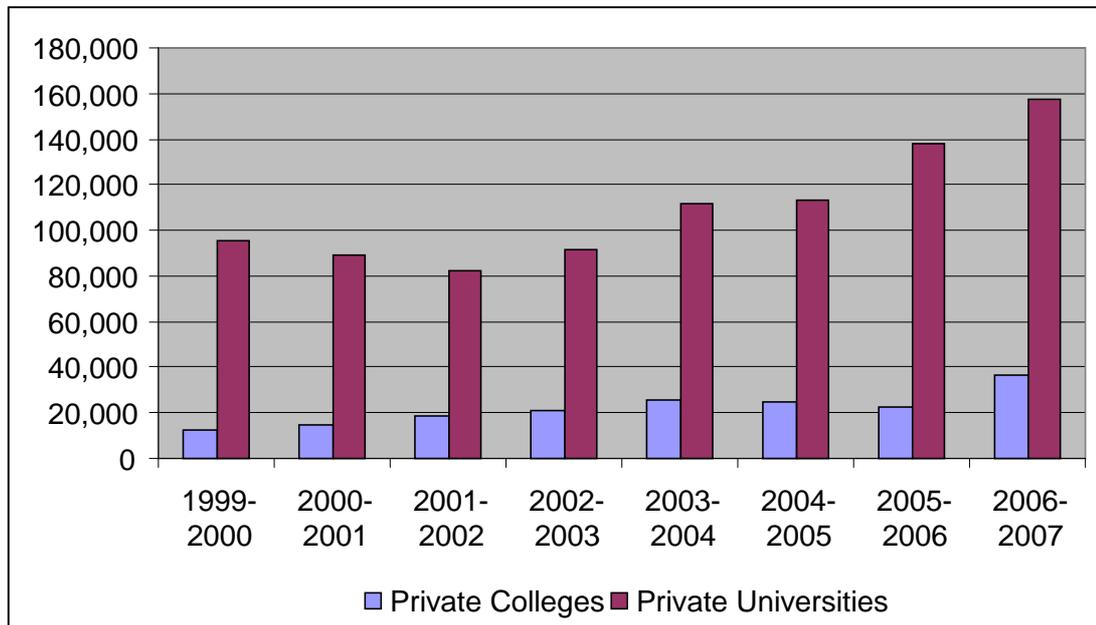
**Table 1.4: Numbers of Students in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam from 1999-2000 to 2006-2007**

School Year	Total Number of Students in				Total Students
	Public Colleges	Private Colleges	Public Universities	Private Universities	
<b>1999-2000</b>	161,793	12,119	624,423	95,419	893,754
<b>2000-2001</b>	171,922	14,801	642,041	89,464	918,228
<b>2001-2002</b>	192,466	18,397	680,663	82,593	974,119
<b>2002-2003</b>	194,856	20,688	713,955	91,168	1,020,667
<b>2003-2004</b>	206,795	25,468	787,113	111,654	1,131,030
<b>2004-2005</b>	248,642	24,821	933,352	112,939	1,319,754
<b>2005-2006</b>	277,176	22,118	949,511	138,302	1,387,107
<b>2006-2007</b>	330,753	36,301	1,015,977	157,170	1,540,201

*Source:* Vietnam Edu.Net, 10 January, 2009

Figure 1.3 describes the number of students enrolling in private higher education institutions from 1999-2000 to 2006-2007 (Statistics of Vietnam Edu.Net). Within only eight years, the number of students enrolling in private colleges was nearly tripled, rising from 12,119 in 1999-2000 to 36,301 in 2006-2007. Similarly, private university enrolment was also increasing slowly but steadily, from 95,419 in 1999-2000 to 157,170 in 2006-2007.

**Figure 1.3: Student Enrolment in Private Colleges and Universities  
from 1999-2000 to 2006-2007**



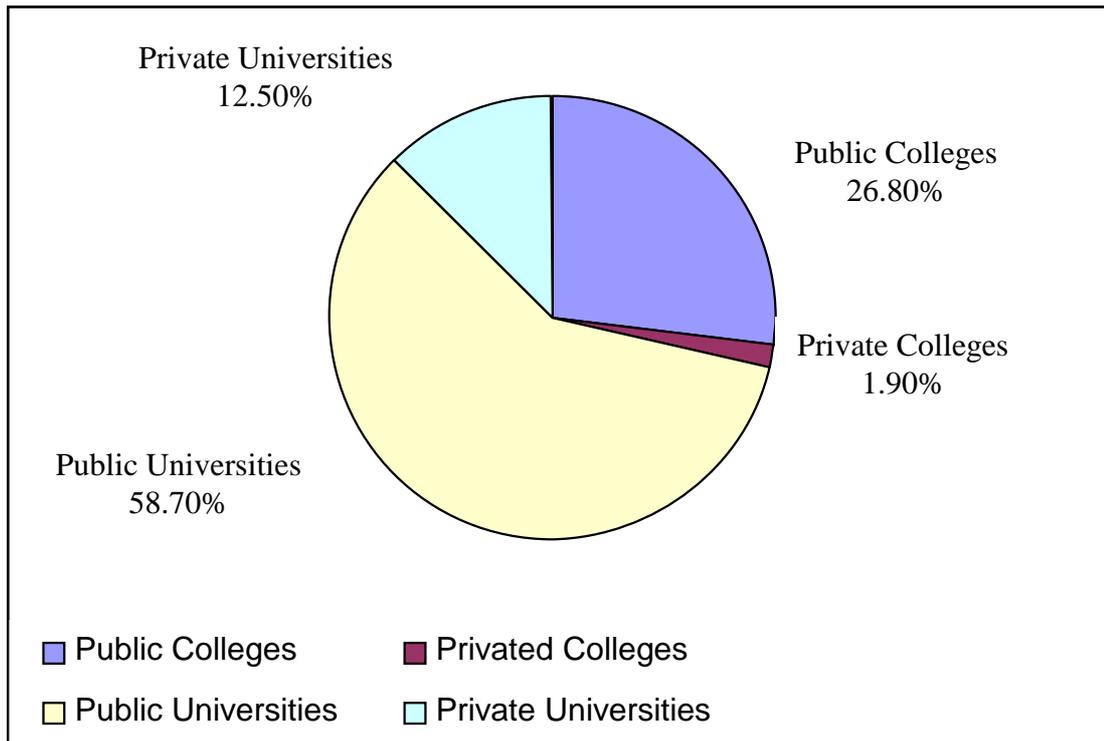
*Source:* Vietnam Edu.Net, 10 January, 2009

### *Academic Staff*

The teaching staff in higher education institutions, in general, has also received much attention from the MOET and has been gradually upgraded. By 1996, in the Vietnamese higher education system, there were 21,142 teachers, of which 14 % had doctoral degrees and 6% were associate professors or professors (Dang, 1997). Within ten years, the number of teaching staff in the higher education system increased 2.5 times. In 2006-2007, the teaching staff consisted of 53,518, of which 5,882 had doctoral degrees (10.9%) and 18,272 had masters' degrees (34.1%). Among these, there were 1,012 lecturers teaching at private colleges (1.9%) and 6,706 at private universities (12.5%) (See Figure 1.4). Of the total number of lecturers, 463 were awarded the title of professor (0.9%) and 2,467 associate professor (4.6%). The average ratio of teacher to students in higher education was 1:29 in 2006-2007

(Vietnam Edu.Net). However, the ratio of teacher to students varied among universities, public and private, and among different fields of training in each institution.

**Figure 1.4: Academic Staff in Higher Education Institutions in 2006-2007**



Source: Vietnam Edu.Net, 10 January, 2009

In a report prepared for the Fifth SEAMEO RIHED<sup>11</sup> (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development) Governing Board Meeting, Dang (1997) stated that despite the government's attention to the training and upgrading of its higher education teaching staff, the country lacked

<sup>11</sup> The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) is a regional education organisation, which has fifteen centres located in eleven countries in the Southeast Asia. Each of the centres is responsible for a specific area in education. SEAMEO RIHED, located in Thailand, serves as a regional centre for higher education with an emphasis on the management and administration of higher education in the respective Southeast Asian countries. More information can be retrieved from <http://www.seameo.org>

institutions specialising in upgrading teachers for universities and colleges. In addition, teachers and other education staff received relatively low salaries, which were not keeping pace with increases in the cost of living. This resulted in many teachers seeking income from work outside their teaching responsibility. As a consequence, this influenced the quality of their work, their dedication to teaching and the time they should have reserved for extra assistance that students might need outside class timetabled hours, e.g. tutorial opportunities.

In general, higher education in Vietnam culturally has still been reserved only for the minority, the élite, not for the majority of the population, the masses. As mentioned earlier, the total enrolment of students in higher education in 2006-2007 occupied only 1.83% of the total population (See Table 1.2 above), or 20.8% of the population aged from twenty to twenty four (See Table 1.3 above). It is expected that student enrolment in higher education will increase in the coming years. One of the development goals for higher education in *The Education Development Strategic Plan for 2001-2010* was to increase the number of higher education students per 10,000 from 118 in 2000-2001 to 200 by 2010 (MOET, 2004: 36).

As there is greater demand than supply for higher education places, there seems to be no need for competition among higher education institutions within Vietnam, nor between local institutions and international ones in recruiting students each academic year. This does not mean that all of these higher education institutions are equally regarded. The fact that the number of students enrolled in public higher education institutions increased steadily and was always higher than that of the private sector, showed that public education was considered by many students and their parents as

their first priority. Private education was thus considered as their second choice, should they fail the entrance examination to public ones, regardless which school, level of study or field of study would be most appropriate to their real interests and level of knowledge. International higher education institutions seemed to be reserved to those who could afford the high cost charged at these institutions, and would like to receive a so-called 'international' educational quality, or hoped that they would be able to transfer to overseas universities later on. This, consequently, led to the issue of quality of higher education.

It is clear to all concerned that the Vietnamese Government is making efforts to re-organise the higher education system to better serve the requirements of a developing society. Multi-discipline universities have been established, offering a greater variety of programmes for learners; community colleges have also been developed to meet the needs of the community; and various forms of non-public universities have been put into practice. In this period of transition, the Vietnamese higher education system is inevitably facing a great number of crucial issues, ranging from the structure to finance and policy. These issues will be discussed in detail in the following section.

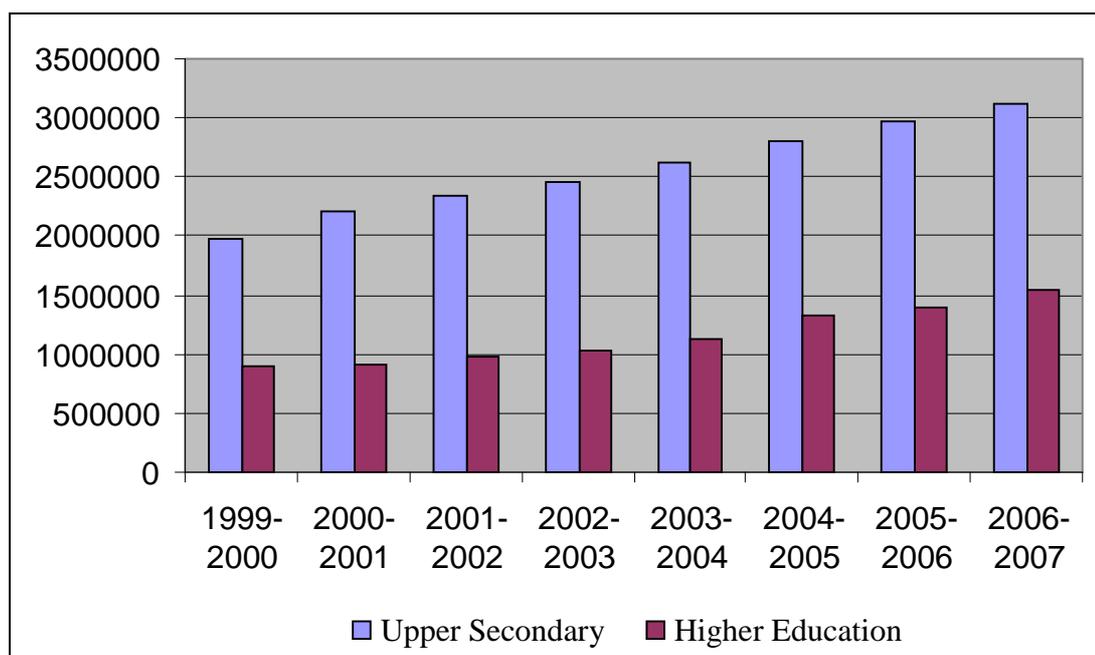
### **Issues Facing Vietnamese Higher Education**

Since Vietnam's 'open door policy' or '*doi moi*' in 1986, the country has witnessed many changes in government policies with an attempt to shift from a bureaucratic centralised economy to a free market-oriented model. These social, political, and economic changes, as a result, inevitably affected all aspects of society. Education was not an exception. Together with the development of the society, the demand for high level human resource was increased. Education became one of the crucial

national issues; the concern of all citizens. As a matter of fact, education had more and more opportunities to develop. Much had been done to improve the quality of education, to bring education to everybody, and to gradually build up ‘a learning society’ in which every one of all ages and all levels were provided with conditions to pursue continuing and lifelong education. However, despite many efforts made to improve the quality of education to meet the needs of the society, higher education in Vietnam still revealed many weaknesses and had a lot of challenges to face.

First, there was a contradiction between the ‘increasing learning demands’ of the population and the limited capacity of the higher education system (Dang, 1997; Tran, 1999). In reality, the number of upper-secondary students increased in recent years, from 1,975,835 in 1999-2000 to 3,111,280 in 2006-2007, while university enrolment remained fairly stable at just over one million and a half (See Figure 1.5).

**Figure 1.5: Enrolment Trend in Higher Education Relative to Upper Secondary Education**



Source: Vietnam Edu.Net, 12 January, 2009

Although a variety of school forms, from public to semi-public (*ban cong*), people-founded (*dan lap*), and private (*tu thuc*) came into being and helped provide a solution to the lack of supply by adding to the system a considerable number of available spaces for study, they did not yet satisfy the increasing demand for places. Moreover, the current teaching staff were judged not to be sufficient in quantity and quality (Dang, 1997; Pham, 1997; Tran, 1999). The ratio of teacher to students in 2006-2007 was 1:29. This ratio should be reduced to 1:20 by 2010, of which 1:10-15 for science and technology, 1:20-25 for social studies, humanities and economics, as stated in the goals of the *Education Development Strategic Plan for 2001-2010*. The higher education system was really in need of highly qualified teachers in order to supplement highly qualified manpower for universities and colleges.

Considering qualifications, for example, in 1997, the teaching staff holding bachelor degrees dominated the academic community, amounting to 67% of the total academic population (Doan, 2000). This figure went down slightly in recent years. In 2006-2007, there were 28,267 teaching staff with bachelor degrees, accounting for 52.8% of the total number of lecturers (53,518) (Vietnam Edu.Net). The number of teaching staff with masters' degrees (18,272) occupied 34.1% of the total number of lecturers. Thus, there was a need to increase the proportion of lecturers with masters' degrees from 34.1% (in 2006-2007) to 40% by 2010, and doctorates from 13% to 25% (MOET, 2004). In reality, in order to deal with the shortage of teaching staff, many higher education institutions currently had to invite retired professors and teaching staff back to school or to recruit newly graduated students to supplement the teaching staff.

Secondly, *quality* assurance in higher education generally remained a problem for Vietnamese higher education. It has become one of the controversial issues for many of the national workshops, seminars and forums on higher education throughout the country. In a workshop on *University autonomy and accountability* held in *Ha Noi* in 1999, organised by the MOET in cooperation with the UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP), the question of how the educational system could adjust from a subsidised system to a market-oriented economy was raised (Do & Morgan, 1999). The issue of quality of higher education was also the main topic of discussion in another workshop on *Basic Solutions of Enhancing Higher Education Quality*, held by *Ho Chi Minh City University of Education* in cooperation with *The Education and Times Magazine* in November 2004.

Recently, an online roundtable conference on the *International-level Higher Education Institution in Vietnam* was held on 5 January 2006, attracting representatives of 270 universities in the United States as well as many Vietnamese educators. At the conference, different issues relating to public and private universities were discussed, such as the role of government in guiding, managing and supporting higher education development, and the evaluation system of higher education quality implemented in the USA. As a response to this issue of higher education quality, which was a concern of both the education sector and the society, the MOET approved an accrediting system for higher education in December 2004. This included ten standards and fifty three criteria which certified the country's standardised universities<sup>12</sup>. These standards included the university's missions and objectives, management, training programmes, training activities, finance, student

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<sup>12</sup> Regulations on University accreditation was promulgated in the Decision No 38/2004/QĐ-BGDĐT, signed by the Minister of Education and Training on 2 December 2004.

life, research and technology, international co-operation, library and fundamental facilities, and staff development. These fifty three criteria would be applied in future to determine which universities should be granted certificates of operation.

Ten universities, from different parts of the country, public and private included, voluntarily participated in the pilot period of the evaluation programme between March 2005 and December 2005. The programme had three processes of evaluation. The first stage was the self-evaluation by the university itself, based on the established standards and criteria. The second stage included independent assessment by specialists from outside the universities and also by the educational quality accrediting agency. The last stage was the granting of certificates to universities that met the standards. Another cohort of ten institutions completed the self-evaluation in 2006, and it was expected that between 2007 and 2020 the rest of Vietnamese higher education institutions would have completed their self-evaluations using this system of accreditation (Vietnam Education Foundation, 2007). The results of the evaluation would be made public. The objective of the evaluation was not to rank schools in the system, but to let schools know their current level, and the criteria that would be used as a guide for schools' self-evaluation and development. Thus, it was expected that the quality of education may be improved thanks to the implementation of this system of evaluation, though the activity was facing some difficulties; such as a lack of accrediting specialists, or the hesitation of education units to participate in the evaluation programme, and the difficulty of financing the programme. For the time being, higher education institutions are not forced, but only encouraged to take part in the evaluation project for the sake of their institution's educational quality assurance and self-development.

Thirdly, Vietnamese higher education was not yet able to meet the increasing demand for highly qualified labour required by the socio-economic development of the country, especially since Vietnam became a member of the World Trade Organisation on 11 January 2007. Curricula were academically and classically biased, designed mostly for examinations and not linked with social economic development practice and the needs of learners (MOET, 2004). As a result of a lack of linkage between university training objectives and social needs, there was a mismatch between the curricula taught at higher education institutions and the labour market. Due to limited fundamental facilities and teaching staff, many universities found it hard to have new programmes which met the requirements of the market economy, not to mention the out-of-dated course curriculum and a gap between theory and practice. This caused an artificial surplus of human resource in one place but a lack of human resource in others.

As a result of the low quality and efficiency of higher education, according to Dang (1997), most of the students graduating from universities did not have adequate capacity and could hardly adapt themselves to the rapid changes of industries and technologies. Most university graduates did not seem to have the relevant knowledge or skills needed for work. The average unemployment rate of the labour force at working age of the whole country was 4.82% in 2006 and 4.64% in 2007 (Statistical data of population unemployment, General Statistics Office<sup>13</sup>). It was urgent for many universities to renovate their curriculum and teaching methodology in accordance with the needs for social economic development and international integration so that they could provide students with enough guidance in careers, the practical skills and

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<sup>13</sup> Available at [http://www.gso.gov.vn/default\\_en.aspx?tabid=467&idmid=3&ItemID=7339](http://www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=467&idmid=3&ItemID=7339)

the adaptability to the professional world, the ability in creative thinking, and the ability to make a living.

In addition to these weaknesses, higher education in Vietnam, especially private higher education, is now facing a great number of challenges relating to quality assurance and accreditation, limited educational budget, lack of government support, inadequate legislative and regulative mechanisms, lecturer's capacity and shortcomings in management, despite the fact that it has more and more opportunities to develop than it had two decades ago. The country's openness to foreign collaboration, which was marked by the Government's efforts in joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in January 2007, significantly impacted the country's higher education market demand. There has been greater and harder competition within domestic universities or between domestic and regional or international higher education institutions in terms of provision of higher education, cost of study, quality of education, facilities, programmes offered, as well as degrees awarded. It is, therefore, necessary for higher education to renovate and reform as it enables learners to be equipped with knowledge to be prepared for the increasing demands of the social economic development.

### **The Statement of the Problem**

As indicated above, Vietnam had made every effort to join the World Trade Organisation. On 7 November 2006, the General Council of The World Trade Organisation (WTO) approved Vietnam's accession package. Vietnam became the WTO's 150<sup>th</sup> member on 11 January 2007. As a result of the process of globalisation, like other developing countries, Vietnam certainly has to face both new challenges

and opportunities. Entering the new stage of development oriented to industrialisation and modernisation, Vietnam has created progress in economy, culture, politics, society and education, particularly in the field of higher education. Recognising that its plentiful human resource has now become the most valuable resource for the country, higher education is considered as one of the priorities in the strategy for development of education and training towards the year 2020. Together with the public higher education system, the private higher education sector has contributed significantly to the development of the country's human resource of a high level, providing good opportunities for individuals of various backgrounds to keep up with their studies in higher education. However, although the country's higher education system has proved the capability of adjusting itself to the changes taking place in technology, culture, politics, and society, there are still a variety of higher demands to be met by the country's higher education system in terms of numbers of students, quality and effectiveness of education.

Quality of education and training remains a problem in higher education in Vietnam and can be considered one of the most crucial and greatest challenges that higher education institutions are now facing and need to make great efforts to solve. Enrolling in private universities in Vietnam is the second choice for those students who fail to pass the entrance examination to public universities. It is the quality of education and the limitation of areas offered by these institutions that are blamed. In order to help these private institutions to better meet the needs of the society, as well as to be able to compete with other universities in the region in the future, quality of education in these institutions should be quickly improved. For these reasons, I have

chosen to investigate the topic of the quality of education and training, with a focus on academic staff recruitment and development, in private universities in Vietnam.

Higher quality in education is the key factor in ensuring better educational outcomes and the enhancement of competitiveness of the whole country. Quality of higher education is influenced by various elements, ranging from teaching staff, curricula and teaching materials, management, library, laboratory and other fundamental facilities. However, as pointed out by Professor Vu, Vice President of the Vietnamese National University in Hanoi, Vietnamese higher educational renovation should start with its teaching staff (Vu, 2006). It is essential to focus on the teaching staff to enhance the quality of the higher education system, because the methods of teaching and learning, and ways of evaluation and assessment, which are being implemented by teachers and students daily, are elements that have direct influence on the quality of education. This thesis, therefore, focuses on staffing, including academic staff recruitment and development, in private universities.

A comparative and qualitative method, using multiple-case studies is used for the research. Four universities in Vietnam, including two public and two private ones, are chosen as case studies for this research. Standards of staffing in public institutions are used as the bench mark for the comparative study as public higher education institutions in Vietnam have a longer history of establishment and operation, which have helped them build up cadres of highly qualified and experienced teaching staff. Data on higher education policies and issues relating to staff development and the quality of education in these institutions are collected using a mixed methods approach.

It is expected that the results of the research will assist private universities create the radical change in quality to satisfy the needs of the new economy. On the other hand, the government, specifically the MOET, can also take advantage of these results in making renovations in policy making in the effort to expand the private higher education system to meet the people's growing demands for higher education.

### **The Aims of the Research**

This research aims to explore: (1) existing issues of staffing and academic staff development in private universities in Vietnam, (2) the policies implemented by private universities in order to promote academic staff development, and (3) the extent to which these policies have proved to be effective.

The ultimate purpose of the research is to provide academics, institutional leaders, administrators, and policy makers with information on the current status of private universities in terms of academic staff development and the quality of education on offer, to help these institutions to reinforce their human resource in order to improve the quality of education, with which the image and prestige of these institutions might be built up and developed.

### **The Research Questions**

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the crucial issues of staffing and academic staff development facing public and private universities in Vietnam?
2. What academic staff development policies have private universities implemented?

3. To what extent have these policies proved to be effective, as perceived by the leaders of private universities and their academic staff?

### **The Significance of the Research**

The results may be used by government, specifically the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, in consolidating the existing university network through expanding private universities, and for private universities to improve themselves so that they will meet the needs of the society. On the other hand, this thesis will also provide an account of private higher education in Vietnam for foreign and local education organizations which are looking for feasible plans for future cooperation, assistance, and development of the private higher education sector in Vietnam.

### **Summary of the Chapters**

The thesis comprises seven chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter Two provides a review of literature concerning higher education in developing economies in general and in Vietnam in particular. This chapter presents the important role that higher education plays in the development of developing countries, issues facing higher education systems, and how developing countries, including Vietnam cope with these issues. The chapter also develops a theoretical perspective on human resource development, based on the human capital theory.

Chapter Three describes the emergence of private higher education in Vietnam. The chapter also discusses the current staffing issues facing Vietnamese private higher education institutions. As the thesis focuses on the policies for academic staff development in private universities, the chapter provides a description about the

system of academic staff recruitment, appointment, appraisal and incentives, and how these affect the academics.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology and methods used in this research. There is a brief explanation of why the qualitative method with multiple comparative case studies is chosen as the method of data collection. As the thesis aims to compare the policies on academic staff development implemented in both public and private higher education sectors in Vietnam, the comparative nature of the research is also discussed. The chapter clarifies the research ethics, as well as the main research questions, data collection procedures and the purposes of each research instrument. The chapter also describes how and when the pilot study is conducted, and how the data are going to be analysed.

Chapter Five presents data collected in the research about the current staffing and policies of academic staff development in the selected universities in Vietnam. The chapter focuses on the analysis of the data presented. Comparison between the two systems of higher education in Vietnam is made based on the data collected, with standards of staff development in the public sector used as the benchmark for the comparison. This chapter also investigates the influence of the academic staff development policies implemented by private universities on their academics' professional development.

Chapter Six brings together the findings of the research. The chapter synthesises the crucial issues that private universities in Vietnam are now facing in order to promote academic staff development, as well as the current staff development policies

implemented by these institutions and the extent of effectiveness of these policies. The chapter underlines the overall objectives of the thesis, evaluating the current system of academic staff management in private universities, and providing the implications for the empowerment of the teaching staff in these institutions.

Chapter Seven provides a short conclusion, followed by bibliography and appendices. This chapter summarises the findings of the thesis and identifies any limitations and possibilities of further research. The chapter also makes claims for the thesis as a PhD, concerning its originality, contribution to knowledge, substance based on the research, and publishable standard.

## **Conclusion**

This introductory chapter has placed the research in perspective by briefly describing the higher education system of Vietnam, its challenges and possibilities, as well as the issues it is now facing, with a focus on the private higher education sector. An overview has also provided some insight into the research problems, the questions being raised, the methodology, as well as the aims and significance of the thesis. The next two chapters review the literature on the private higher education in developing countries, current issues facing Vietnamese private higher education in the contemporary period, as well as current policies on academic staff development implemented by these private universities.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is structured around the key themes emerging from the research aims shown earlier (p.30). For the purposes of this thesis, when reviewing literature on academic staff development in higher education, it is necessary to look at higher education in developing countries, which have similar characteristics and patterns in the development of higher education to those of Vietnam. By considering what others have done on academic staff development in higher education institutions in developing countries, how they have done it, and what their findings are, I can identify gaps in knowledge and indicate which gap this research will fill.

The chapter begins with a review of the importance of higher education, considering its human capital and social capital aspects. The chapter is then followed by a presentation of why higher education is important in developing countries, and what are the current issues facing higher education in these countries. The next section considers why higher education is important in Vietnam and how the country copes with issues facing the higher education system. There is an indication of a gap in knowledge about academic staff development in private higher education institutions compared with those in the public sector. It is this gap, which this thesis intends to fill, that leads to the research questions as stated in Chapter One.

## **The Importance of Higher Education**

Since the beginning of this century, there have been significant transformations and reforms taking place in higher education systems all over the world. The role and functions of higher education have been heavily influenced by more and more challenges. In his paper entitled *Tertiary Education in the Twenty First Century: Challenges and Opportunities*, Salmi (2000) reviewed international trends of tertiary education from a policy analysis point of view. Salmi (2000) assessed the impact of the following three key challenges on tertiary education<sup>14</sup> systems worldwide: the convergence impacts of economic globalisation, the increasing importance of knowledge as a main driver of growth, and the information and communication revolution. Globalisation, as demonstrated by the increase in international trade and the growing interdependence of capital markets, affected every country in the world (Salmi, 2000). It could be said that globalisation created a unique challenge to every country as economic and finance were closely connected between countries and the rise and fall in economic well-being would be closely interlinked (Djojonegoro, 2005).

In the context of the global economy, knowledge became an important factor in development (Djojonegoro, 2005; Holm-Nielsen, 2001; Salmi, 2000). In his paper presented at the *International Conference on Higher Education Reform* in Jakarta on 15 August 2001, Holm-Nielsen (2001) emphasized the role of knowledge as a key factor of development in the global economy. The development of the economy is closely linked to a nation's ability to acquire and apply technical and socio-economic knowledge. Comparative advantages, according to Salmi (2000), increasingly came

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<sup>14</sup> Both terms *higher education* and *tertiary education* were used in his paper, indicating education at a level of studies beyond secondary education. Such studies are undertaken at colleges, universities, and higher education institutions, both public and private.

from technical innovations and the comparative use of knowledge, rather than from the abundant natural resources and cheaper labour. In other words, there was a trend in the manufacturing sector changing from manual industries to service industries, resulting in millions of workers who needed to be retrained for a knowledge based process (Djojonegoro, 2005).

The growing importance of knowledge has actually been recognised as vital to the economic, political and social development of a country (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000; UNESCO, 1998b). In contrast with *Education For All's* goal of universal primary education, the *World Declaration on Higher Education* affirms in its Preamble that 'society has become increasingly *knowledge-based* so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations' (UNESCO, 1998b: 2). The Declaration also states that:

Without adequate higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development and, in particular, developing countries and least developed countries cannot reduce the gap separating them from the industrially developed ones. (UNESCO, 1998b: 2)

At the same time, the rapid progress in information and communication has greatly influenced the way knowledge was stored, transmitted and accessed. In other words, the revolution in information and communication could be said to have lifted the barriers to information access and communication among people and countries all over the world (Salmi, 2000).

These trends in the global environment might offer tremendous opportunities and, at the same time, constitute terrible threats for higher education systems worldwide. While the growing role of knowledge might be the cause of leapfrogging in selected areas of economic growth as well as the resolution of social problems (such as food security, health, water supply, energy and environment), it might also increase knowledge gap among nations (World Bank, 2002a). Similarly, the revolution of information and communication might make it easier to access knowledge and information, but there was also a threat of a growing digital divide among and within nations. Finally, globalisation might make it easier to access expertise, skills, and knowledge embedded in professionals, however, it might also be the cause of brain drain and the loss of advanced human capital (World Bank, 2002a). These challenges certainly affected the role, function, shape and mode of operation of higher education systems all over the world. In other words, in order to successfully respond to the multifaceted demands placed on them, higher education institutions needed to transform themselves to the changing education and training needs, to new forms of competition in the context of a borderless market, and to rapid changes in information and communication technologies.

In the knowledge-driven economies, there was a continuing rising demands of higher-level skills in the workforce, such as high-level scientists, professionals, technicians, and basic and secondary teachers, to name a few. In many countries, especially in the developed economies, the trend of jobs requiring tertiary education grew continuously (World Bank, 2002a). However, the proportion of labourers with tertiary education qualifications did not prove to meet the demands. In addition, the rates of return on tertiary education grew significantly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, even in

developing economies, resulting in the rising demands for higher education in the labour force. Thus, at higher education institutions, there were not only young secondary graduates who demanded tertiary education but other diverse types of adult learners who returned periodically to university education to acquire work-related skills, new competencies, or relearn the knowledge and skills needed throughout their professional lives (World Bank, 2002a). These could be considered the pull and push factors that required higher education systems to contribute to human capital formation by training a qualified and adaptable work force. Just as physical capital is created by changes in materials to form tools, machines, and other productive equipment to facilitate production, human capital is created by changes in persons who invest time and resources in bringing about skills and knowledge that make them act in new ways. Individual human capital can bring about ‘benefits in the form of a higher-paying job, more satisfying work or higher-status work, or even the pleasure of greater understanding of the surrounding world’ (Coleman, 1988). It is tertiary education that brings such benefits to individuals as they can obtain from tertiary education not only the certificates required but, more importantly, knowledge and skills as demanded in the labour market.

Examining various efficiency and equity aspects related to investment in human capital of young people and adults by analysing quantitative data obtained from national sources of ten Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) countries, Blondal, Field, and Girouard (2002) found that human capital investment was associated with significant labour-market gains for individuals. Specifically, individuals with higher education benefited higher post-tax earnings, better employment prospects, and stronger attachment to the labour market. The study

also showed that there were strong incentives for the average student to invest in higher education upon completing compulsory secondary education. In addition, society as a whole also benefited from such educational attainments.

It was higher education that contributed to the formation of human capital of a country as it helped provide larger segments of the population with higher-level skills required by the knowledge-driven economies. Besides, higher education also played a crucial role in formatting social capital and promoting social mobility. While physical capital existed in the form of observable materials, human capital in the skills and knowledge acquired by a person, social capital came about in the relations among people (Coleman, 1988). Social capital also facilitated productivity, like the former two forms of capital. During higher education and after graduation, social cooperation and relationships emerged, linking individuals, fostering networks and stimulating voluntary activities. In a study on the effects of education on trust and social engagement, the two key measures of social capital, Helliwell and Putnam (2007) investigated the sources of differing results or previous studies [carried out by Dee (2004), Milligan, Moretti, and Oreopoulos (2004) and Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry (1996)] in an attempt to reconcile and resolve the question whether education has positive or negative externalities for accumulation of social capital. Helliwell and Putnam (2007) found that increases in own-education and average education led to significant increases in social trust, and that individuals with more education tended to be more engaged citizens. These results were consistent with results of similar studies on the association between educational attainment and social capital carried out by Dee (2004) and Milligan, Moretti, and Oreopoulos (2004) and Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry (1996).

In short, with regards to the human capital and social capital aspects, higher education proved to play an increasingly important role in many countries all over the world, in the context of challenges facing it at the start of the twenty first century. The next section explores the role of higher education in developing countries. In particular, the section looks at the important role that higher education played, the current issues facing higher education in these developing countries, the reforms implemented and its trends of development, as well as the emergence of private higher education institutions in the higher education system of developing countries.

## **Higher Education in Developing Countries**

### ***The Importance of Higher Education in Developing Countries***

According to UNESCO, it was higher education that could produce high quality human resource, central to the growth and sustainable development of a country (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000; UNESCO, 1998b). However, as shown in a report prepared by the *Task Force on Higher Education and Society* (2000), higher education in developing countries did not receive adequate attention, since much more emphasis was put on elementary and secondary education. Universal elementary education and the reduction of illiteracy had been the goal of the *Education for All* movement launched at the *World Conference on Education for All* in Jomtien, Thailand between 5-9 March 1990 (UNESCO, 1990). Following the message from Jomtien, with a focus on basic education, governments in many developing countries as well as many bilateral donors reduced their funding for higher education (Fielden, 1998). In addition, studies on the rate of returns in the sixties and seventies, carried out by Psacharopoulos (1994), showed that there was a higher rate of return to the primary level than to other levels of education. This rate of return

analysis provided a theoretical support to a diversion of public resources from higher to primary levels of education (Varghese, 2005).

These trends, however, changed in the 1980s in many developed countries and in some of the developing countries in the Latin American, Asian and African regions (World Bank, 2002b). The decisive shift in priorities from basic to higher education in developing countries had been endorsed by the World Bank and UNESCO through the *Task Force on Higher Education and Society* (hereafter *Task Force*) convened by both organisations in March 2000. The report of the *Task Force* was not primarily a research document, as stated by Rosovsky (2000), co-chair of the *Task Force*, but the arguments were based on specific information, which was gathered through hearings in different parts of the world with members of the higher education community, and an extensive literature review. The report warned that, in order for developing countries not to be left further behind, higher education in these countries needed to receive greater attention because without more and better higher education, these countries would find it difficult to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy. In other words, developing countries needed primary, secondary, and tertiary education, not two out of three, as all of these three were ‘vital to the human, social and economic development of a country’ (Bloom, 2001: 22).

In a paper prepared for the *Policy Forum on Institutional Restructuring in Higher Education in Asia* held on 23-24 August 2004 in Hue City, Vietnam, Varghese (2005) presented the compulsions of change in higher education in developing countries. The five major sources of change in higher education in developing countries included: a) pressure to expand the system, b) the globalisation of the economy, c) high rates of

return in investment in higher education d) emergence of private higher education and e) pressures due to reduced public funding (Varghese, 2005).

In his paper entitled *Meeting the Changing Demand of World of Work: Challenges for Human Resource Management*, presented at the *Regional Seminar Report on Human Resource Management for Global Competitiveness*, conducted in 2005 in Thailand by the SEAMEO RIHED<sup>15</sup>, Professor Djojonegoro (2005) also discussed the role of higher education in developing countries. Djojonegoro (2005) argued that, as a result of the global trend in which the workforce was based upon knowledge, science and technology, the role of higher education in developing countries was becoming more and more important. The evolving knowledge-based economy required the workforce to be trained and re-trained in a knowledge-based process. Consequently, higher education became an important factor, serving as a driving force for the development of a knowledge based society.

In addition to the knowledge revolution, the demography in developing countries also played an important role in the restructuring and development of higher education. Nearly eighty percent of the world's population was in developing countries and more than half of the world's eighty million higher education students lived in developing countries (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). The age profile in poor, least developed and low income countries, as illustrated in the Table 2.1 below, showed that more than half of the total population in these countries was aged between fifteen and sixty four.

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<sup>15</sup> SEAMEO RIHED (Southeast Asian Ministers of Educational Organisation Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development), available at <http://www.rihed.seameo.org/publication.htm>

**Table 2.1: Population Aged 15-64 (% of Total) in Poor, Least Developed and Low Income Countries, 2003-2007**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC)</b>	53	53	53	53	53
<b>Least developed countries: UN classification</b>	55	55	55	55	56
<b>Low income countries</b>	56	56	57	57	57

*Source: World Development Indicators 2007 (World Bank Group), 19 January 2009*

In some southeast Asian countries, the percentage of population aged 15-64 ranged from 61% (in Cambodia and the Philippines) to 73 % (in Singapore) (See Table 2.2). Vietnam was also among the countries with a high percentage (66%) of population in the age of higher education.

**Table 2.2: Population Aged 15-64 (% of Total) in Southeast Asian Countries**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Brunei Darussalam</b>	67	67	67	68	68
<b>Cambodia</b>	58	58	59	60	61
<b>Indonesia</b>	66	66	66	66	67
<b>Malaysia</b>	64	64	64	65	65
<b>Philippines</b>	60	60	60	60	61
<b>Singapore</b>	71	72	72	72	73
<b>Thailand</b>	70	70	71	71	71
<b>Vietnam</b>	63	64	65	66	66

*Source: World Development Indicators 2007 (World Bank Group), 19 January 2009*

However, not many of these forty million higher education students in developing countries could access high quality higher education, according to the report of the *Task Force* (2000). This sizeable population of higher education students showed a

thirst for education, especially in an era when higher education was considered as 'basic education' and was 'no longer confined to a tiny élite' but was much more open to the masses (Bloom, 2001: 20).

Another factor that added to the challenges facing higher education in developing countries was globalisation (Bloom, 2001; Djojonegoro, 2005). Globalisation made the world economy more and more competitive. It was obvious that globalisation brought benefits to many countries, most of which were developed (Bloom, 2001). As mentioned above, the competitiveness that globalisation created also brought challenges and impacts on the higher education system in many developing countries. Djojonegoro (2005) argued that countries in the developing world were facing challenges of catching up in higher education. According to Djojonegoro, in order not to be left behind in the global world, developing countries needed:

... to create through education a broad based, skilled and technology-literate workforce; to utilise the knowledge generated within (the workforce) in activities that yield the highest economic returns; to raise the spread (access) of higher education in the country's economy; and to train the workforce into knowledge-based mode. (2005: 14)

This was, however, not an easy task to be accomplished for developing countries, especially in the competition with developed countries for talented students and faculty (Bloom, 2001). Mun (2005) argued that as globalisation made geography less of an obstacle and as universities tended to look for overseas students to compensate for national under-funding, there was a tendency of students to go to developed countries for higher education and to settle there for employment after graduation. This tendency, according to Mun (2005), caused a brain-drain from developing countries and simultaneously posed a challenge to local universities within these countries. The phenomenon of brain drain, which referred to the mobility of highly

skilled manpower (with university or post-secondary education) from developing countries, received much discussion and analysis since 1960s, when it was first noticed (Glavan, 2008; Meyer, 2003). In a report prepared for the project on *Skilled Labour Migration (the 'Brain Drain') from Developing Countries: Analysis of Impact and Policy Issues*, conducted by the International Labour Office, Albuero and Abella (2002) showed that the international migration of skilled persons reflected the impact of globalisation on developing countries in the process of integrating into the global economy. The migration of skilled persons posed a threat of a brain drain to these developing countries, which could slow their future economic growth and hamper their economic development (Lowell, Findlay, & Stewart, 2004). In the Philippines, for example, Albuero and Abella (2002: 20) found that in the 1990s, the 'number of professional workers who went abroad *exceeded* the net additions to the professionals in the workforce' and that 'the proportion of overseas Filipino workers with tertiary education was far greater than the proportion in terms of secondary education.'

Most studies of brain drain suggested that the negative effects of this phenomenon involved 'a loss of vital resources' (Meyer, 2003) or 'the loss of human capital in the origin countries' and 'the waste of a substantial part of the public funds invested during the emigrants' capital formation' (Glavan, 2008: 720). However, the impacts of highly skilled migration could be viewed as both negative and positive. Many new terms, such as 'brain strain' (Lowell, Findlay, & Stewart, 2004) or 'brain circulation' (Meyer, 2003) were introduced to describe the potential for both positive and negative effects of this movement. Lowell, Findlay, and Stewart (2004: 33) argued that the migration of the skilled persons from developing countries 'might create feedback effects that promise significant advantages for developing countries', and the

migration showed that ‘these countries are successfully integrating in the global economy’. In terms of ‘brain circulation’, the positive effects included the compensation mechanisms, which might be the scientific cooperation and co-authorship, or the transfer of technology that countries of origin might have from migration of skilled persons (Meyer, 2003).

In order to deal with this ‘brain-drain’ phenomenon, which deprived developing countries of the high level expertise that they needed in order to accelerate their socio-economic progress, developing countries must direct their efforts towards a process of ‘brain gain’, as stated in Article 16 of the *World Declaration on Higher Education* (UNESCO, 1998b: 14). Specifically, developing countries needed to build up long-term international cooperation between institutions in the South and the North; training programmes in the developing countries with short periods of specialised and intensive study abroad; collaboration programmes that enhanced the building and strengthening of institutions and facilitated full use of endogenous capacities; and an environment conducive to attracting and retaining skilled human capital, facilitating highly trained scholars and researchers to return to their countries of origin (UNESCO, 1998b: 14). These could be seen as part of academic staff development in universities in developing countries. As a result of the shift in employment prospects from manufacturing to service sectors, there was an increase in the intensity of knowledge in production, which led to an increase in qualification levels of employees in the labour market, and an increase in the demand for higher education (Varghese, 2005). Under such a condition, there raised a question concerning which staff development policies that higher education institutions have implemented in order to deal with such issues as well as to raise teaching quality.

It also needs to be noted that the economic crisis in Asia, which started in Thailand in 1997 (Varghese, 2001a), significantly affected the development of higher education in both developed and developing countries in Asia. In 2000, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning launched a regional research project on *Economic Crisis and Higher Education in East Asia* in five selected countries: Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. As stated in the research, the impact of economic crisis could be observed from three perspectives, namely individual or household, institutional, and country wide or macro.

At the individual level, the economic and financial crisis led to losses in employment and assets and, as a result, a sharp decline in household incomes. As a response of households during the crisis period, there was a shift from private provision to public provision, especially in health and education services. The impact of crisis could be seen more at post-compulsory levels of education than at other levels, according to Varghese (2001a). Many countries saw children in less well-off families drop out of secondary schools or colleges to work and help their families to survive the crisis, eg. in the cases of Indonesia (Purwadi, 2001) and Thailand (Varghese, 2001b). In Malaysia, where the traditional clientele of higher education came from middle-income groups, which could no longer afford to support their children to continue their overseas higher education, there was a trend of students shifting from overseas to local universities (Hassan, 2001). In Indonesia, economically better-off students, who were studying in private universities before the crisis, had to enroll in public universities that were subsidized, whereas students from poorer economic background lost their chance to pursue higher education in public universities and dropped out

(Purwadi, 2001). A similar trend was found in Korea where fees in private universities were very substantial (Yu, 2001).

At the institutional level, there were budget cuts in many universities during the crisis period. This could be seen in the public sector as allocations from the government to all sectors were declined. As a response to budget cuts, many public institutions adopted measures such as reducing administrative staff (in Korea), freezing on staff recruitment (in Indonesia and Thailand) or not replacing retired staff (in Thailand) (Varghese, 2001a). Although there was a trend of dropping out due to a decline in household incomes, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, enrolment in higher education in some countries increased. This was the case of Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. The reasons for the increase in enrolment differed in these countries. In Thailand, the widespread unemployment was the cause that drove secondary graduates to universities where higher education was subsidized, in stead of being unemployed. In addition, as fellowships from the Government of Thailand were cancelled, students who were studying abroad returned and enrolled in the domestic universities (Varghese, 2001b). This trend could also be seen in Malaysia. The fall in the value of currency resulted in an increase in domestic demand for higher education since middle-class parents found it hard to support their children to pursue higher education abroad (Hassan, 2001). In Singapore, the increase in higher education enrolment was mainly in post-graduate level due to the governmental effort to attract foreign students to the country. The new fee structure was implemented to reduce the cost of education for foreign students, in addition to scholarships, fellowships and opportunities for employment in Singapore offered to Asian students (Shantakumar & Mukhopadhaya, 2001).

Private universities, however, were more severely and adversely affected than public universities as the latter could obtain support from the government. The report on the *Impact of the Economic Crisis on Higher Education in East Asia* showed that Korean private universities were the worst affected in the region during the economic crisis period (Varghese, 2001a). While there was an increase in enrolment in public universities, many private universities and colleges (eg. in Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines) experienced a decline in enrolment, because a substitution of public for private education was used as a mechanism for many families to cope with the economic crisis. In addition, there were drop-outs in many private universities, as in the cases of Indonesia and Korea. Responding to the phenomena of drop-outs and a decline in enrolment, private higher education institutions adopted a variety of measures, such as restructuring the courses and delivery (in Malaysia), reducing cost by adopting a policy of freeze on new recruitment of administrative and academic staff (in Korea and Thailand), or introducing new market-friendly courses and income-generating activities (in Thailand) (Varghese, 2001b).

At the macro level, impact of the economic crisis could be seen through cuts in government public expenditure on educational budgets. During the 1997 economic crisis, budget for higher education declined in Thailand (Varghese, 2001b), and also in other crisis-affected countries. In Indonesia, for example, budget priority was for primary and secondary education rather than higher education (Purwadi, 2001). In Malaysia, generous financial support from the government through overseas scholarships was cut off or reduced drastically (Hassan, 2001). However, governments in many countries responded to the crisis through public policy

measures, which provided support to protect those affected by the crisis. In Indonesia, for example, a *Social Safety Net* (SSN) programme co-ordinated all efforts to provide food security, social protection and employment creation. Another social protection programme, funded by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Government of Indonesia, provided scholarships targetting at university senior year students who might drop out without any financial help (Purwadi, 2001). In Malaysia, in an effort to provide tertiary education locally and to transform Malaysia into a regional centre for higher education, the government promoted franchise arrangements between local public and private institutions, as well as set up off-campus and distance learning programmes (Hassan, 2001). In addition, corporatisation of public universities and privatisation of tertiary education were also initiated in Malaysia in 1998, which, however, raised a lot of concerns among academicicans on academic quality and equity offered by Malaysian higher education institutions (Hassan, 2001).

In short, higher education has changed due to the impacts of the knowledge-based economy, the economic globalisation, huge demographic population, the revolution of information and communication, high rates of return in investment in higher education, and the financial and economic crisis in Asia. These challenges strongly impacted and required higher education institutions in developing countries to be more responsive if they wanted to be able to compete effectively in the global economy. As a matter of fact, in responding to higher education demand, many countries made efforts to improve their higher education. As argued by Cheng (1999), in countries in southeast Asia, including both developed and developing countries, such as Singapore, Korea, Mainland China, Taiwan, the Hong Kong Special

Administrative Region (SAR), Malaysia and Thailand, there was an awareness of the importance of education to the development of their societies. Actually, these countries initiated important policies to expand and improve their higher education systems.

In Lee's (1999) article, entitled *Education in Malaysia: Towards Vision 2020*, there was an analysis of the relationship between educational development and the socio-political and economic context of Malaysia. As pointed out in the national *Vision 2020* plan, proposed by the Malaysian government, education played an important role in helping the country meet the challenges of becoming a developed nation, promoting national unity, social equality, as well as supplying human resources for economic growth (Lee, 1999). With this *Vision 2020* plan, education developments in Malaysia were scheduled to follow a process of democratisation, privatisation and decentralisation of the educational system. Privatisation of education in this country, especially at the post-secondary level, was encouraged in response to the growing demand for higher education, the limited number of places in public institutions and the greatly increased cost of overseas education (Lee, 1999). The number of students attending private institutions in Malaysia rose from 15,000 in 1985 to 250,000 in 2008, accounting for less than 50% of the total tertiary student population (Tierney & Sirat, 2008).

Similarly, in Korea in 1995, the *Education Reform Plan for the Establishment of a New Education System* was proposed by the Presidential Council for Education Reform to improve the educational system and to address the new challenges of the next century (Kim, 1999). The Korean *Education Reform Plan* was based on the

following three points: (1) knowledge and information society (2) globalisation and (3) localisation. Significant education reforms were also introduced in Singapore after the *Report of the Economic Committee* of the Singapore Government in 1986, which demanded substantial educational expansion and improvement to meet the needs of Singapore's economic development (Ho & Gopinathan, 1999).

In the Hong Kong SAR and Singapore, for example, realising that the only way to keep pace with rapid social and economic changes was to maintain a higher education level, the governments of these two Asian economies placed strategic importance on education. As stated by Mok and Tan (2004), privatisation, marketisation, and corporatisation were the three major practices adopted to reform schools and higher education systems to make education more effective and efficient.

Discussing the importance of education in the global competitiveness, Professor Wichit Srisa-an (2005) stated that it was the knowledge based revolution that drove higher education in many developing countries, including Thailand, to be reformed and developed. Therefore, in Thailand, three major reforms had been carried out by the Acts of Parliament in the last ten years: political, educational and bureaucratic. The aims of the *Higher Education Reform* in Thailand were to make higher education serve as: (1) a *Driving Force* for the development of knowledge-based society (2) an *Academic Pool* providing the source of knowledge and wisdoms of the country (3) a *Producer of Qualified Graduates* to meet the needs and demands of the society especially in the fields of science and technology and (4) an *Institution of Good Governance*, supporting institutional autonomy and academic freedom of higher education institutions (Srisa-an, 2005: 22-23).

### *Issues Facing Higher Education in Developing Countries*

Despite efforts, there were still difficulties in expanding higher education in developing countries. First of all, higher education in many developing countries was not given a proper role in preparing the workforce for the future. This low priority given to higher education was shown by the poor funding that higher education received from many governments (Djojonegoro, 2005). As a matter of fact, many higher education institutions suffered from insufficient resources, most of which came from government. As state spending per student on higher education was already higher than spending on other levels of the education system, namely elementary or secondary, it was impossible for these countries to redirect money to higher education from other levels of the system (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000).

Depending largely on the government for financial resources, many public universities found it hard to raise their budget. Private universities also faced the same problem as almost all of them depended largely on tuition fees, which were often not very high in these countries. Both public and private universities had difficulties in looking for funding from donors, as it was believed that returns from investment in higher education were smaller than returns from investment in elementary and particularly secondary education (Djojonegoro, 2005). As a result of being underfunded, in many higher education institutions, laboratories were not properly equipped (Djojonegoro, 2005) with libraries and school facilities inadequate for overcrowded classes (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). Under-funded universities also saw their research capabilities diminish because a large proportion of their budget was reserved for personnel and student maintenance costs, and only a small amount was used for the maintenance of infrastructure, libraries, equipment and

supplies necessary for carrying out and maintaining research (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). A study of *Higher Education Staff Development: A Continuing Mission* by Fielden (1998) showed that under financial constraints, resulting in the incapacity of governments to fund higher education to the same extent as previously, institutional budgets for human resource development were often the first to be cut in many higher education institutions.

Another issue facing higher education in most developing countries was the need for high-quality academic staff. The lack of such staff of the right quality and expertise was the central issue facing many universities in developing countries, especially when they had to serve a growing number of students, pursuing their studies in the increasing diversity of the programmes offered by their institutions (Mun, 2005). In addition, academic staff in higher education in developing countries were often under-qualified, poorly motivated and poorly rewarded (Djojonegoro, 2005; Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000).

It was found by the *Task Force* (2000) that academic staff in many universities had little graduate-level training, which, as a consequence, would limit the knowledge transferred to the students as well as their ability to access knowledge from their teachers. A teacher-centred approach was still a main method of pedagogic instruction in many universities. These passive methods of teaching did not encourage students to actively engage in the quest for knowledge, and to initiate their creativity and flexibility, which were highly valued in an industrialised and globalised world. The World Bank report *Accelerating Catch-up: Tertiary Education and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* in 2009 (World Bank, 2009) also posited that in order for African

tertiary institutions to transform themselves into networked, differentiated and responsive institutions, these institutions needed to address not only the academic staffing issue but also the pedagogical reform. The delivery models of academic staff should be changed, using interdisciplinary rather than disciplinary perspectives, creating flexibility in learning, communication skills, and computer literacy through applying group work instead of lectures, problem solving instead of memorizing facts and using project work for learning assessment instead of multiple choice examinations (Saint, 2009; World Bank, 2009).

In addition to the out-moded methods of teaching, the curricula were under-developed. As there was a growing demand for relevance in the curriculum from employers, governments and students, tertiary institutions needed to be attuned to market demands to reduce the mismatch between skills and demands when graduates entered the labour market, which simultaneously helped reduce the waste of public resources and human capital. What made it worse in the current higher education situations in many developing countries was the ‘ill-conceived incentive structures’ (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). Academic staff were not very well paid, in comparison with the other professional occupations. As a result of low pay, many academics were not committed to teaching or to the institutions employing them; nor were they committed to doing research to improve their academic knowledge and competence. Instead, they conserved their time teaching another course, working part-time at another institution or doing other jobs out of their specialisation in order to increase their income.

In addition to low pay, bureaucratic recruitment procedures hindered many universities in attracting intellectually talented academics and students to join institutions of higher education in the developing countries (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). This was viewed as an issue of human resource management in Indonesia which, according to Professor Supeno Djanali (2005), had many state-owned universities where university staff held civil servant status. Most of these universities hired more staff than they actually needed, because of the low salary of civil servants. This led to the issue of overstaffing, which made the situation worse than it might otherwise be (Djanali, 2005).

The issues discussed above provide a general picture of the current situation of higher education in developing countries. The next part of the review is an account of the basic trends affecting higher education in developing countries.

### ***Trends in Higher Education Development in Developing Countries***

As a response to the increasing demand for higher education from the populations of developing countries, the last decade witnessed major changes in higher education. These changes included structural changes at the ministerial level, changes in the government financing system, in the status of the public university and changes in the increase of the number of private or non-government universities (SEAMEO RIHED, 2005). These changes were reflected in the movement of reforms carried out by many countries in the developing world.

Many countries restructured their higher education system through the process of expansion, differentiation and knowledge revolution, which were viewed as ‘new

realities' facing higher education in developing countries (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). Expansion was a process in which many existing higher education institutions grew in size in order to deal with the tremendous increase in the number of students. This could be seen in developing countries such as China and India, as well as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Russia, where higher education systems had to serve more than two million students (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). As a consequence of the greatly increased demand for higher education, many '*mega-universities*' such as the National University of Mexico and the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina were established, according to the report of the *Task Force* (2000). Many traditional institutions were also replicated by public and private means. At the same time, new types of institutions were born with new providers entering the sector as a result of the process of differentiation. Joining the traditional universities were a range of vocational, professional schools and institutions that granted degrees but did not conduct research. These newly created institutions were often operated by private providers, including for-profit entities, philanthropic and non-profit organisations including religious groups (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000).

In their paper *Challenges of the University in the Knowledge Society, Five Years After the World Conference on Higher Education*, prepared for the UNESCO *Forum Regional Scientific Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean*, Bernheim and Chaui (2003) considered responses of higher education in developing countries to the challenges of contemporary global society and knowledge. According to Bernheim and Chaui (2003), the main challenges facing present-day higher education included *quantitative* challenge of absorbing a constantly increasing student intake, the

*relevance of studies* which emphasised the dialectical relationship that should exist between society and higher education; the *balance between the basic functions of teaching, research and service*; the challenge of *quality*; the challenge of *improving the administration of higher education* for the sake of better performance of its basic functions of teaching, research and extension; the challenge of *knowledge generation*; and, finally, the challenge of the *internationalisation of higher education*, which was a reflection of the global nature of knowledge, research and learning (Bernheim & Chaui, 2003: 16-20). All these challenges gave rise to the new paradigm for the teaching and learning process, which was described by Bernheim and Chaui (2003: 20) as a 'shift of emphasis' from teaching processes to learning processes. As a consequence of this shift of emphasis, teachers were no longer the main centre of the process but were 'turned into guides, tutors, promoters of learning, capable of generating in the classroom a learning environment' (Bernheim & Chaui, 2003: 20).

In Thailand, specifically, frameworks for educational reform were stipulated in Section 81 of the Constitution. As mentioned earlier, the reform on higher education in Thailand aimed at making higher education *a driving force* for the development of a knowledge based society, *an academic pool* serving as a source of knowledge and wisdom, *a producer of qualified graduates* who can function as global citizens, and *an institution of good governance* supporting institutional autonomy and academic freedom of higher education institutions (Srisa-an, 2005). In order for these aims to be achieved, Srisa-an (2005) argued that higher education reforms had to be carried out in structure, administration, finance, manpower production and opportunity for educational provision, teaching-learning and research, staff development system and private participation in the management and administration of higher education. In a

recent national report, part of a series of national case studies involving eight south-east Asian countries in an in-depth analysis of their higher education systems, Bovornsiri (2006) identified *academic excellence* and the *quality of education* as the key goals for higher education development in Thailand. Bovornsiri also concluded that an increase in university autonomy and the continued expansion of private higher education were considered as the major trend for Thai higher education development.

Similarly, in Indonesia, the need for higher education reform derived from the growing concern over the quality of higher education in the country (Djanali, 2005). University autonomy, according to Professor Djanali, was an essential element of higher education reform. In implementing the reform on university autonomy, there were two determining factors: the *regulatory framework*, which related to funding and staff status, and the *internal culture*. The regulatory framework was more an issue in public higher education institutions than in private institutions as the latter were more financially autonomous than the former.

In Singapore, higher education underwent rapid expansion and structural reorganisation over the past four decades (Tan, 2006). In order to deal with the shortage of qualified individuals, there was a policy providing staff development opportunities for local teaching staff since the 1990s (Tan, 2006). These included sponsoring programmes for post-graduate studies overseas, particularly in North American universities, and academic staff exchange programmes for local teaching staff. There was also a trend of recruiting foreign born teachers and researchers from all over the world, who were considered as 'foreign talents' (Tan, 2006: 174) and obtained their doctoral degrees at North American universities. In addition, the

Singaporean government provided generous support for research funding, paying relatively higher salaries and granting permanent residence status to such 'foreign talents.' With these policies, as reported by Tan (2006), Singapore obtained a distinct advantage in staff recruitment compared with many countries in East Asia.

Recently, research on the restructuring processes in higher education institutions was carried out by Varghese (2005) in five selected countries in southeast Asia, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam. The study was based on documentary evidence, interviews with university authorities and decision makers, and questionnaire-based information collected from different leaders of the universities such as deans of faculties, heads of departments, academic and administrative staff and students. The study identified significant features of the institutional restructuring process that took place in different universities in Asia. The study also showed that institutional transformation and restructuring did not always need to be associated with financial difficulties faced by institutions. Transformations in higher education in these developing countries marked an important phase in its development. Changes in higher education institutions could be seen through new positions introduced in the hierarchy. For example, in Indonesia universities became legal entities, with a new governance structure including a Board of Trustees, Academic Senate, Board of Auditors and a Professorial Council. New operating rules were formulated in universities in Malaysia. Structures for decision-making and reform implementation were also created in Mongolia and Vietnam. A credit system was introduced in universities in these two developing countries, which influenced the teaching-learning process, as well as the re-organisation of curriculum and teaching and student evaluation methods.

The next section describes private higher education in developing countries, including the reasons for the emergence of the private higher education sector in the educational systems and the different types of private higher education institutions in the developing world.

### ***Private Higher Education in Developing Countries***

The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed fundamental changes in the development of higher education in developing countries: the emergence of private higher education. The growth of private higher education institutions in developing countries has been rapid. In Sub-Saharan African countries, for example, private higher education institutions grew from thirty in 1990 to eighty five in 1999 (World Bank, 2002a). Between 1999 and 2009, private tertiary institutions in Sub-Saharan African countries expanded to 450 (out of the total 650), enrolling 18% of the total student population in the region (World Bank, 2009). In China, private higher education institutions grew much faster, from zero private tertiary institutions before 1980 to forty three private degree-granting universities and colleges by 1999, and up to 278 by 2006, apart from more than 1,000 other private higher education institutions (Li & Morgan, 2008). Similarly, in the former socialist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, within a decade from the beginning of the 1990s, private higher education institutions grew from zero to nearly 350, enrolling a quarter of a million students (World Bank, 2002a).

In other south and east Asian countries, private tertiary institutions also rapidly developed in response to the demand for tertiary education. Specifically, in Thailand, the number of private universities and colleges has increased from one in 1969 to fifty

four in 2006 (Savatsomboon, 2006). In Malaysia, in the early 1990s there were approximately 150 private tertiary institutions, but by 2007 there were over 500 *non-public*<sup>16</sup> higher education institutions enrolling nearly half of the total tertiary student population (Tierney & Sirat, 2008). Similarly, in the late 1990s, India and Indonesia had more than half of all students enrolling in private higher education institutions. The number of enrolment in private tertiary education accounted for 75% of the total student population in Korea and up to 80% in the Philippines in the early 2000s (World Bank, 2002a).

Analysing the distribution of enrolments in tertiary education in some developing and developed countries in the early 2000s, Tilak (2005) found that in many advanced or developed countries, more than 80% of the students were enrolled in public institutions (70% in the USA, 90% in France and Finland, 100% in Australia, Canada, Denmark and Germany, to name a few). On the contrary, there was a much larger proportion of student enrolments in private higher education in developing countries, such as the Philippines (73%), Indonesia (68%), Brazil (63%), Chile (43%), Peru (37%) and Jordan (30%) (Tilak, 2005).

There were several reasons that led to the rise of private higher education in developing countries. The World Bank report on *Knowledge Societies* (World Bank, 2002a) showed that the trend of state monopoly on tertiary education in developing countries had been altered by the trend of privatisation in finance and provision of higher education. According to the report, there was a fast growing of the private

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<sup>16</sup> Due to a lack of a clear delineation of private and/or for-profit, the term *non-public* is used purposefully, indicating higher education institutions other than public ones, such as institutions established in co-operation with universities abroad, or by some political parties and other providers (Tierney & Sirat, 2008).

institutions in these countries due to a rising public demand for tertiary education as a result of the increased access at lower educational levels, which was accompanied by the limited capacity of governments to pay for provision of tertiary education.

In a later article on the development of higher education in developing countries, Tilak (2005: 156) also pointed out the two main reasons for the emergence of private higher education: the 'lack of resources' and the 'changes in attitude towards higher education, and towards private... for-profit higher education'. As mentioned above, there were an increasing number of secondary graduates who wanted to continue their tertiary education. Obviously the rapid increase in student numbers was affecting the public sector. The rapid growing enrolments in higher education 'outstripped governments' capacity to pay for provision of education' at the tertiary level (World Bank, 2002a). Additionally, there was a trend of reducing public funding for higher education. Although the trend of cutting public budgets for higher education existed in countries all over the world, it was more prevalent in developing countries than in developed countries (Tilak, 2006). The need for expanding higher education logically led to the development of private higher education as the state monopoly on tertiary education in many developing and transition countries was under pressure to change, according to the World Bank's strategy paper on tertiary education in 2002 (World Bank, 2002a). Governments in developing countries promoted the growth of private higher education institutions through many new educational policies which called for investments in tertiary education. This was done due to the decline in government funding for tertiary education and the inadequate provision of public higher education (Li & Morgan, 2008; World Bank, 2002a)

Also, globalisation and the trends toward knowledge-based economies strongly affected the development of higher education in developing countries. Governments and the public changed their attitude toward tertiary education. Higher education, which had traditionally been considered a 'public good', was now seen as a 'private commodity' (Altbach, 2001; Knight, 2009). In this light, it was reasoned that individuals must pay the cost of higher education as they would for any other service, as higher education enabled its users to increase their earning power (Savatsomboon, 2006). While higher education was provided for free in a few countries, such as Brazil, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and some European countries, the introduction of tuition fees have been implemented in many countries, eg. since 1998 in China and Britain and since 2001 in Austria (Tilak, 2006).

The major contrast between public and private higher education was that private higher education, with regard to finance, depended overwhelmingly on tuition and fees whereas public HE depended mainly on government funding (Levy, 2009). However, the change in attitude of the public towards higher education and investment in higher education, as presented above, strongly affected the march towards privatisation of higher education in developing countries. Alongside the emergence of newly established private institutions, some of which operated with government support or self-financing (non-government support) or with profit-making purposes, in many traditional public institutions, there were also changes in their purposes, ownership and norms of management (in finance and governance) or sources of revenue (Tilak, 2005).

In many countries, new financing strategies had also been implemented, even in the public sector, advocating the recovery costs of higher education through mobilising additional resources from students and their families, calling for donations from third-party contribution or generating revenues from public assets. Students in the public sector could be charged fees in one form or another, depending on the country and the institution (World Bank, 2002a). In some countries, such as Pakistan or Vietnam, where students who passed the entrance examination to public universities did not have to pay tuition fees, those who did not achieve the required scores might also enrol in tertiary education on a fee-paying basis (World Bank, 2002a). Likewise, in Thailand, restricted by budget constraints and affected by the philosophy of cost-recovery, public universities introduced adjunct and full-fee programmes to attract students who failed the universities' entrance examinations (Savatsomboon, 2006). These trends in financing higher education, however, resulted in a transformation of institutions on 'academic' status to an 'entrepreneurial and commercial' one (Tilak, 2005).

Private tertiary institutions existed in different forms, ranging from non-profit institutions, such as religious organisations, to for-profit companies, franchises, and sole proprietorships. The two major forms of private higher education institutions, however, were for-profit and non-profit. In many countries, higher education in the form of for-profit was not allowed or simply not mentioned in the education context (Levy, 2009). In Sweden and Finland, for example, the national constitution did not allow the application of tuition fees in higher education (Tilak, 2006). In other countries, however, private for-profit and non-profit tertiary institutions were permitted to operate side by side and freely compete in the same market (World Bank,

2002a). The major difference of the two forms of private institutions was that non-profit institutions did not have to pay tax on surplus income and other revenue because they must operate under special financial requirement which did not allow them to distribute surpluses and profits they might generate to the shareholders (Levy, 2009; World Bank, 2002a).

However, there was a blurred distinction between for-profit and non-profit higher education, or even between private and public higher education (Levy, 2009). On the one hand, many legitimately labelled non-profit institutions operated as for-profit in practice, commercialising themselves more than ever. On the other hand, many public higher education institutions took 'commercial routes', partnered with for-profit colleges domestically, or with private entities abroad where they operated like for-profit institutions. Private higher education in China, for example, was defined as 'the full-time alternative to public higher education' due to a lack of a consensus on the definition of private higher education (Li & Morgan, 2008: 28). Also, almost none were research universities because higher education institutions in China were restricted to the college level (Li & Morgan, 2008). In a study of private higher education in Bangladesh, Alam (2007) analysed the different types of private higher education, including not for profit and for profit institutions. Alam (2007) identified five types of not for profit private institutions. These were semi-government private schools, schools managed by religious group, trustee, NGO and internationally-managed schools. On the other end, there were four types of profit making private institutions: private ownership, company ownership, franchise basis and distance education (Alam, 2007).

A common feature of private higher education provision was that the main source of revenue came from tuition fees. Those enrolling in private higher education were often students who could not gain admission to public higher education. Although private higher education institutions served both the rich and the poor, many of their potential students often came from higher-income family backgrounds (Li & Morgan, 2008) or from urban-based middle to upper-class families. There were more part-time teachers in private than in public higher education; many of them were trained professionals, practitioners and professors from public institutions. The full-time teachers in private higher education institutions in China, for example, were categorised in the two age groups which were either younger than thirty or older than sixty; thus they were considered as lack of experience or lack of energy and commitment (Li & Morgan, 2008).

Like other developing countries in south-east Asia, Vietnam also faces issues and realities in the development of its higher education system. These issues facing higher education in Vietnam were indicated in the previous chapter (pp. 20-26). However, in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of higher education of Vietnam, the next section considers through an examination of the literature why higher education is important in Vietnam and how the country copes with issues facing higher education.

## **Higher Education in Vietnam**

### ***The Importance of Higher Education in Vietnam***

It could be said that higher education in Vietnam turned to a new page in its history of development in 1986 when the country introduced a policy termed '*doi moi*', or

renovation, which resulted in many socio-economic and political changes that shifted the country from a centrally-planned to a market oriented economy (Nguyen, 2006). The study carried out by Varghese (Varghese, 2005) also showed that changes in higher education in Vietnam were part of the political changes taken place to meet the requirement of a transition economy from a centrally-planned to market economy. Given the changes taking place during industrialisation and modernisation in Vietnam since 1986, the national education in general and the higher education system in particular needed to be reformed. Higher education had to meet ever greater demands in terms of numbers of students and the quality and effectiveness of academic and other staff (UNESCO, 1998a).

The important role of higher education in Vietnam has been emphasized in the *Vietnamese Education and Training Development Strategy to Year 2020* prepared by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in 2001. Education has been realised as the determining factor for economic growth and social development. Like other developing countries, Vietnamese higher education has been faced with challenges resulting from the process of globalisation, the acceleration of modern scientific and technological revolution, and the formulation of knowledge economy and information society (UNESCO, 1998a). While other countries have quickly integrated themselves in the worldwide trend towards knowledge economy and information society, Vietnam still lagged behind, as an agricultural nation with a large population, low productivity, and low GDP per capita. Thus, Vietnam needed to make use of its basic advantage, which was human resources, to overcome vital challenges facing the country, and to catch up with other countries all over the world. In order to push up the industrialisation and modernisation, to make the country's economy grow and to

improve the people's living standard, the country needed manpower with highly qualified knowledge and skills in different areas, namely socio-economic fields (for industrial and construction or agriculture, forestry and fishery); service industry (transportation, post office and telecommunication, trading, tourism, and finance and banking); or other social fields (community health care staff, cultural and support staff, and civil servants). These could only be obtained through tertiary education.

Higher education in Vietnam during the beginning of the *doi moi* process underwent a period of deterioration or degradation because, with a structure designed to serve the centrally planned economy, it could not adjust itself to the rapid changes and suffered a lot of difficulties (Nguyen, 2006). As pointed out by Nguyen (2006) in his report entitled *Vietnam's Education in the Transition Period* presented at the *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Conference* in Vietnam in 2006, the higher education system faced a decrease in quantity and quality during the early period of transition. There were weak links between technical and vocational training with production and employment, weak teaching staff as well as weaknesses in teaching and learning, school mapping and research (Hayden & Lam, 2006; Nguyen, 2006). In addition, resources for education and training were not effectively utilised and the structure, management and legislation of education and training were irrelevant. It should also be noticed that higher education in Vietnam used to follow the model of the Soviet Union, universities in Vietnam therefore were more oriented to teaching than doing research. In the higher education system, there were research institutes alongside the universities which carried out the main responsibilities of teaching undergraduate and post graduate programmes. As a result, most academic staff in universities were not involved in research (Hayden & Lam, 2006). There was a shortage of academic staff

in terms of quantity, quality and qualifications while the number of students enrolling in higher education institutions were constantly increasing, resulting in the high ratio of students to academic staff (Ngo, 2006).

In addition, higher education institutions of both public and private sectors had to face with financial constraints, receiving limited funding from the government and society. Investment in higher education was inadequate, focusing mainly on quantitative expansion at the expense of qualitative improvement (Ngo, 2006). Therefore, infrastructure of higher education institutions was obsolete and backward. There was also a lack of legislative and regulative mechanism for the rapidly expanding private sector as well (Hayden & Lam, 2006).

Despite recent developments, higher education reforms in Vietnam have shown successes and failures and were still facing with many challenges (Doan, 2000; Ngo, 2006). There were still many renovations and adjustments to make so that Vietnamese higher education could meet the requirements of the socio-economic development of the country and the world (Ngo, 2006). In her doctoral thesis on foreign-trained academics and the development of Vietnamese higher education, Doan (2000) investigated major factors affecting Vietnamese policies on overseas training based on the review of documents, in-depth interviews with policy makers, leaders and foreign-trained staff at twelve selected universities and research institutes in Vietnam, and a questionnaire survey conducted with 188 academic foreign-trained staff at these institutions. The study found that one of the most crucial issues facing Vietnamese higher education in this period of transition was staff management and that the

absence of an efficient system of human resource management critically affected the effectiveness of foreign-trained personnel in higher education (Doan, 2000).

In an investigation into the development of the higher education sector of Vietnam within the globalisation discourse, T.H.T. Pham (2006) pointed out the three weaknesses of higher education in Vietnam, with a focus on vocational and technical universities. According to T.H.T. Pham (2006), the shortage of teaching staff in terms of quantity and quality remained the severe problem for Vietnamese higher education institutions. Outdated curricula were also a big concern since higher education institutions still used curricula designed tens of years ago, which certainly did not meet the needs and demands for new skills in all industries while the country was entering the industrialisation and globalisation period. The final matter of concern lay in the infrastructure of these institutions since they failed to provide enough laboratories, libraries, teaching and learning equipment, and workshops (T. H. T. Pham, 2006).

Another project entitled *Observations on Undergraduate Education in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Physics at Select Universities in Vietnam* was conducted in 2006 under the auspices of the Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF), an independent U.S. Federal agency (Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, & Silvera, 2006). Four Vietnamese universities (two in *Ha Noi* and two in *Ho Chi Minh City*) were selected to participate in this multiple case study, qualitative research. The constant comparative method was used to analyse the data collected through online (web sites of the four universities) and other archival documents (from MOET and the four universities), interviews (with administrators, academic staff and students of the

four universities), observations, and follow-up correspondence. The research aimed to assess the current conditions of teaching and learning in computer science, electrical engineering, and physics opportunities at four selected universities and to identify opportunities for improvement and model for change.

Primary issues were highlighted in relationship to the following five critical areas of Vietnam higher education indicated as in need of change: 1) undergraduate teaching and learning (ineffective teaching methods and inadequate facilities and resources); 2) undergraduate curriculum and courses (too many courses in terms of credits required to graduate, out-of-dated content of individual courses, imbalance between theory and practice, lack of opportunities to transfer between majors); 3) instructors (lack of qualified teachers, academic staff overworked and underpaid, no incentives for staff to upgrade teaching skills and research ability); 4) graduate education and research (little opportunities for Ph.D.s to pursue research and apply teaching methods learned abroad when they return to Vietnam, separation of research institutes and laboratories from teaching department); and 5) assessment of student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness (institutional effectiveness not evaluated in terms of student learning, programme and course quality not based on evaluation of student learning). Potential solutions for each of the issues were offered for consideration at national level. Recommendations offered in this report were expected to benefit not only the four participating universities and the three targeted disciplines of computer science, electrical engineering, and physics, but also other higher education institutions and disciplines in Vietnam in an effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning in higher education in general.

In short, in the transitional period, like other developing countries, higher education in Vietnam also faced with problems relating to finance (limited budget, depending largely on governmental funding), academic staff (shortage of qualified staff, out-of-dated teaching and learning method, low paying salaries, low motivation and incentives, high student-teacher ratio) and governance and management (teaching rather than doing research, centrally controlled, lack of adequate legislative provisions, autonomy, and incentives). A more detailed description of these problems could be found in Chapter One, page twenty to twenty six. The next section considers how the country copes with these issues facing its higher education system.

### ***How the Country Copes with Issues Facing its Higher Education***

Entering the period of '*doi moi*' and the transition to a market-oriented economy, the Vietnamese higher education system began a series of important policy initiatives in keeping with national policies for renovation. The function of higher education was changed, aiming at serving not only the state and collective economic sectors, the two main economic sectors in Vietnam before *doi moi*, but also all other economic sectors including the private and small business sector, the private capitalist sector, the state capitalist sector, and the economic sector with foreign investments (Nguyen, 2006).

The financial resources for higher education were also diversified. Apart from the allocation of funding by the state, higher education relied also on the mobilisation of other resources. These sources included payment of tuition fees, money offered by foreign countries and international organisations, earnings from the scientific research production of goods and involvement in different forms of social services conducted by the universities (UNESCO, 1998a). The scope of higher education and training

developed on the basis of diversity of training forms, including regular-irregular training, open-university and correspondence training (UNESCO, 1998a). The credit system has also been implemented in many higher education institutions, aiming at providing greater flexibility in study and making it easier for students to transfer to other institutions (Varghese, 2005). This credit system was first applied by the University of Technology in *Ho Chi Minh* City in 1993-1994, and was later implemented by other institutions such as *Thang Long* University, *Da Lat* University, *Can Tho* University, *Ha Noi* University of Civil Engineering, *Nha Trang* University of Fishery, and University of Agriculture No.1 (Ngo, 2006)

Higher educational institutional structures and systems were also fundamentally reorganised. Influenced by the Soviet model, the dominant pattern of higher education institutions was mono-disciplinary (Ngo, 2006). As a result of this single-field model, according to Ngo, higher education institutions faced many difficulties in the development of basic infrastructure and teaching staff. Improvements in the quality of higher education and specialised training were hindered, the organisation of education and training on a wide scale was limited, and so was the link between research and public service. In order to enhance the overall quality of training and research, to make efficient use of resources, and to meet the requirements of the transition towards a market economy, relatively large numbers of small specialised institutions were consolidated into pivotal national universities (Ngo, 2006). Two national multi-disciplinary universities were founded, one in *Ha Noi* (in December 1993) and one in *Ho Chi Minh* City (in January 1995), through the amalgamation of some leading mono-disciplinary higher education institutions and reorganisation into constituent colleges within the national universities (Ngo, 2006). Simultaneously, three other

regional universities were established in 1994 by the same process of amalgamation. These are *Thai Nguyen University*, *Hue University* and *Da Nang University*. Universities during this time also carried out the responsibilities of both teaching and doing research, though there still existed research institutes in the national education system.

It should also be noticed that since 1990 the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has been responsible for the management of the integrated system of national education including all levels from pre-school to post-graduate programmes (Ngo, 2006). In 1998, vocational and technical education was transferred to the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs. Although the MOET has been in charge of the management of all universities and colleges, the two national universities mentioned above operated independently and as separate entities, reporting directly to the Prime Minister. In addition, many other specialised universities were supervised by other ministries and governmental agencies, such as the universities of medicine and pharmacy were under the Ministry of Health, or art schools and conservatories were under the Ministry of Culture and Information (Ngo, 2006).

Together with the establishment of multi-discipline universities, higher education has also expanded with the opening of the non-public sector, including the semi-public, people-founded and private institutions. A series of regulations relating to these non-public higher education institutions were issued: private in 1993, semi-public in 1994 and people founded in 2000 (Ngo, 2006). The first non-public university in Vietnam was established in 1988 under the name *Thang Long People-founded Centre for*

Higher Education, which was later on renamed *Thang Long* University in 1994. The first private higher education institution was established in *Da Nang* city in 2005 under the name *Duc Tri* Private Junior College (Ngo, 2006).

The fact that the number of higher education institutions and the student enrolment in these institutions were constantly increasing (See Table 1.4, Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1) reflects the important role that these institutions played in meeting the needs of society and the economy. However, these institutions were still weak compared with the universities in the public sector. There were several reasons that account for the weaknesses of these private higher education institutions: shortages of high quality academic staff, facilities and equipment, libraries and budget. As a result of this, private higher education institutions could not offer programmes in areas of specialisation such as law, architecture, journalism and medicine. The programmes offered by these institutions were those in demand such as foreign languages, business administration and informatics, which did not require much investment in equipment (Ngo, 2006).

As the research aimed to investigate issues of academic staff development in private higher education institutions, the analysis of the data collected will be according to the theoretical perspective of human resource development (HRD) theory. The next section considers theoretical perspectives on human resource development, with an emphasis on human capital theory.

## **Theoretical Perspectives on Human Resource Development**

The theoretical foundations of human resource development (HRD) include economic, psychological and system theories (Swanson, 2001). Among these theories, economic theory, specifically human capital theory, has been considered one of the key foundations for human resource development (Swanson & Holton, 2001). The section will start with a consideration of the theory of human capital, which will be followed by the definition part of HRD and the theoretical foundations of HRD.

### ***Human Capital Theory***

The concept of human capital refers to investments in and by human beings through education, training or other activities so that they get ‘the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes’ that ‘facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being’, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Keeley, 2007: 29). Among the factors that formed human capital, education was considered the vital or key one (Keeley, 2007). The rate of return to these investments in education and training was related to the increase in future income generation (Woodhall, 1997). The economic benefits of human capital, as seen by Keeley (2007), varied according to the investment in education of an individual. That is to say, the higher levels of education people obtain, the higher rates of employment they might have, and thus the better they might do in economic terms (Keeley, 2007: 33). Reporting the relationship between human capital and economic returns at the individual level, *Education at a Glance* (OECD, 2006) noted that there was a positive link between education and earnings. It was found that, in all countries, university graduates could earn substantially more than graduates with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (OECD, 2006). Similarly,

people completing secondary education (typically leaving school at the age of eighteen) could earn more than those leaving school at an earlier age (OECD, 2006).

The concept that investment in human capital promoted economic growth dates back to the time of Adam Smith, a classical economist, who identified the link between the economy and the education and training system and emphasised the importance of investing in human skills (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). As pointed out by Smith (1776), education helped to increase the productivity of workers in the same way physical capital increased the productive capacity of a factory or other enterprise.

The importance of education was expressed in his concept of ‘fixed capital’:

The acquisition of such talents, by the maintenance of the acquirer during his education, study, or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, which is a capital fixed and realised, as it were, in his person. Those talents, as they make a part of his fortune, so do they likewise of that of the society to which he belongs. (Smith, 1937: 265-266)

Similarly, Alfred Marshall (1890), another classical economist, also emphasised the importance of education in his book entitled *Principles of Economics*, as he considered that investment in human capital was the most valuable of all capital. It was not until the 1960s that the theory of human capital was fully developed and dominated the economics of education. The theory was developed by Theodore Schultz (1961) who showed the direct contribution of education to the growth of national income by improving the skills and productive capacities of the labour force. According to Schultz (1963: 40), ‘schooling increases the capability of people to adjust to changes in job opportunities associated with economic growth’ and that ‘investment in schooling is presently, ..., a major source of human capital’ (p.46). Later, Gary Becker, in his book *Human Capital*, published in 1964, developed a theory of investment in human capital and analysed the rate of return to investment in

education and training. Becker (1964) defined investments in human capital as activities that increased the resources in people for the purpose of future monetary and psychic income.

Since the time of Schultz and Becker, investments in human capital and the rate of return to these investments have attracted considerable research activity. In his survey of research on the returns to education, Psacharopoulos (1973) analysed the results of cost-benefit analysis of education in forty four countries and found that the expenditure on education did represent investment in human capital, and that this investment was profitable for both individual and society. While an educated individual benefited by increasing his or her chances of employment and by increased lifetime earnings, society also benefited from the increased productivity of educated workers.

There is an emerging question that is of vital concern to economists and planners. This is whether investment in human capital is more profitable than that in physical capital. The answer to this question is not easy and simple. Psacharopoulos (1973) examined estimates of the returns to physical capital in developed and developing countries, and found that the returns to both forms of capital were higher in developing countries. It was also found that the average rate of return to human capital was higher than the rate of return to physical capital in developing countries, and vice versa in more developed countries (Psacharopoulos, 1973). The evidence in Psacharopoulos's study suggested that human capital was a superior investment in developing countries, and investment in education often complemented investment in physical capital and made it more productive (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985).

There were different forms of investments in human capital: schooling, on-the-job training, work experience and the process of job search, medical care and migration (Woodhall, 1997). These were regarded as investments in human capital because they not only improved skills, knowledge and health, but developed the personal attributes that helped to determine a worker's productivity and thus can increase earning capacity. However, the two major forms of investments, as viewed by Belfield (2000), include education or schooling and training. According to Belfield, the returns to human capital were generated through these two forms of investments. The term education, as defined by Belfield, referred to formal education while training was distinguished from formal education and related to *on-the-job* training, or training directly relevant to work tasks. With a significantly positive rate of return, education was suggested to be a worthwhile endeavour for individuals (Belfield, 2000). However, as the evidence on the economic benefits from training was less persuasive, and as training had benefits for both individuals and the firms, it was suggested that firms might fund training and obtain the benefits (Belfield, 2000), or general training might be funded by employees and specific training costs might be shared (Ashton & Green, 1996).

In his paper entitled *Building Human Capital in East Asia: What Others Can Learn*, prepared for a project on *Social Development in East Asia*, Professor Jandhyala B. G. Tilak (2001) of the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration, India, also considered education as the most important of all components of human capital. Tilak argued that 'investment in human capital contributed to high economic growth and also to better income distribution in east Asia; and human capital, in turn received dividends from these two gains on the economic front' (2001: 3). In his

paper, Tilak analysed the performance of the east Asian economies concentrating on a few important indicators of educational development in Japan, and in the four Asian ‘tigers’, namely Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and Taiwan. The analysis was based mostly on data available from international sources, which were supplemented with data collected from research studies<sup>17</sup> and national sources of information. Through the analysis of the paper, some important lessons had been drawn from the east Asian experience for other developing countries. As Tilak (2001) concluded, the important lesson for developing economies was that ‘better performance will depend on, among other things, investments in human capital, specifically education’ (p. 42).

However, formal education was not the only factor in forming human capital. In a discussion on the value of school enrolment rates at all levels of education in east Asian countries, Koo (1999) raised the issues of whether education was able to improve the so-called hard and soft skills, such as professional skills and abilities to meet the challenges of self-organisation, front line work and inspiration. Apart from the formal education provided by the public sector, there was a need for private-sector companies to improve the human capital of their employees through on-the-job training (Koo, 1999).

In conclusion, human capital theory emphasises the role of learning in improving individual and organisational performance and productivity. With the assumption that the purpose of learning and of any other HRD interventions is for increasing return on investment, human capital theory emphasises the social implications of learning and

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<sup>17</sup> The number of the research studies is not mentioned in the article.

draws on the economic side of learning outcomes. The role of human capital theory is evident in HRD theory and practice. Based on the theoretical perspective in human capital theory that views human beings as costs and benefits and that learning is an investment to gain future returns, HRD can perform its role as a developer of human capital.

### ***Definition of Human Resource Development***

Human Resource Development can be defined as ‘a process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organisation development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance’ (Swanson, 1995: 208). In his definition, Swanson asserted that HRD consisted of two major components: (1) organisational development, and, (2) training and development. The first emphasised the process of systematically implementing organisational change whilst the second was the process of systematically developing expertise in individuals. The purpose of both processes was to improve organisational performance. The domains of performance included the organisation, work process and individual levels. In addition to the two major components, there were three critical application areas of HRD: human resource management, career development and quality improvement (Swanson, 2001).

Another way of viewing HRD, apart from Swanson’s performance view of HRD, was from the learning perspective which asserted that HRD should develop individuals who ultimately contributed to organisational prosperity (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). However, no matter whether HRD was viewed from the performance or learning stances, learning was a vital component of HRD research and practice (Yang, 2004).

This led to another way of defining HRD. Gilley and Maycunich (2000) combined organisational learning, performance and change in their definition of HRD as:

... the process of facilitating organisational learning, performance, and change through organised interventions and initiatives and management actions for the purpose of enhancing an organisation's performance capacity, capability, competitive readiness, and renewal (p.6).

In short, there are various definitions of HRD. However, for the purpose of facilitating learning, performance and change at both individual and organisational levels, HRD has to deal with the questions of how individuals learn and its relation to their behaviour performance and to change at their workplace.

### ***The Theoretical Foundations of Human Resource Development***

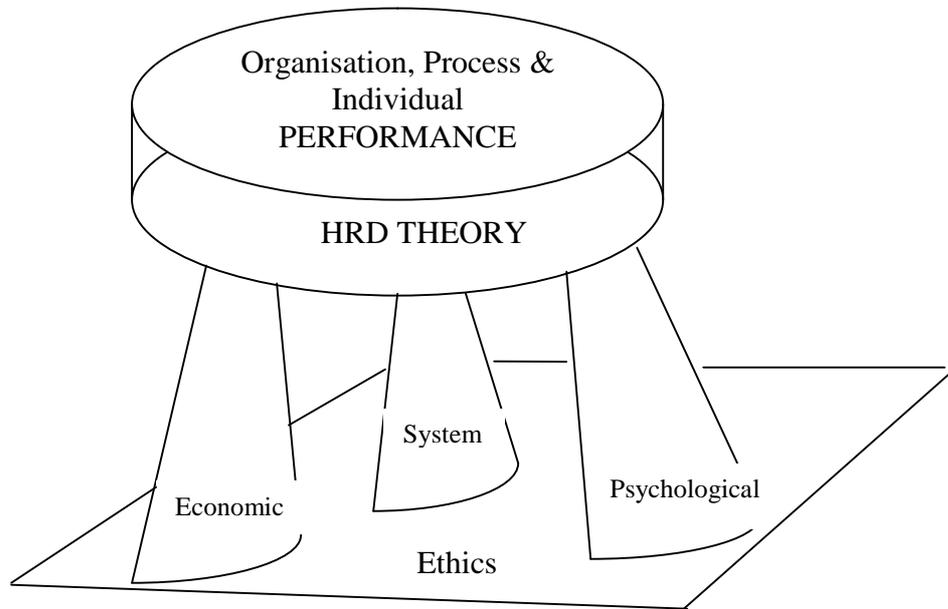
At present, there is no universal agreement on the theories that support HRD. Swanson (2001) argued that HRD was still a young academic field of study and it must continue to mature as a discipline. Recognising the importance of clearly specifying the underlying theory of an emerging and growing discipline such as HRD, Swanson (2001) proposed a logical set of foundational theories for HRD. These included psychological, system and economic theories. Swanson (1999) believed that

...economic theory is recognised as a primary to survive along with its financial metrics at the organisational level; systems theory recognises purpose, pieces, and relationships that can enhance or strangle systems and sub-systems; and psychological theory acknowledges human beings as brokers of productivity along with their cultural and behavioural nuances (p.11).

It was believed that the HRD theory was an integration of these three foundational theories. Each of the foundations was believed to be unique, robust and complementary to the others. The three foundations were portrayed in a vivid metaphor of a *three-legged stool* model (See Figure 2.1). In this model, the three legs

represented the component theories and the top of the stool represented the key purpose of HRD: organisation, process and individual performance.

**Figure 2.1: The Theoretical Foundation of Human Resource Development**



Source: Swanson (2001: 208)

*Economic theory* deals with the question of the financial benefit of capital investment. The benefit was defined as equal to the performance value resulting from the capital investment minus the cost of the intervention. This theory was recognised as a primary element along with its survival metrics at the organisational level, and it captured the core issues of the *efficient and effective* utilisation of resources to meet productive goals in a competitive environment (Swanson, 2001).

As identified by Swanson (1999), the following three economic theory perspectives were the most appropriate for performance improvement: *scarce resources theory*, *sustainable resource theory*, and *human capital theory*. In the scarce resources theory,

the use of scarce resources must be justified. This theory contended that there were limitations to everything such as money, raw materials, time, and human resources. In the sustainable theory, value to creating sustainable long-term economic performance must be added. This theory was much like scarce resources theory; however it focused on the long term instead of the short term. In the human capital theory, however, HRD must add short-term and long-term value from investments in the development of knowledge and expertise in individuals or groups. This theory has been one of the key foundations for HRD as it suggested that investment in human resources was essential to organisational success.

*Psychological theory* considers whether people have the capacity, expertise, and motivation to perform in the organisation and in the process in which they are expected to function. In this theory, human beings were viewed as brokers of productivity along with their cultural and behavioural nuances, and thus it captured the core human aspects of developing human resources as well as the socio-technical interplay of humans and systems (Swanson, 2001).

The psychological theory principles were related to the mental processes of humans and the determinations of human behaviour. The three psychological sub-theories, as Swanson (1999) suggested, were *Gestalt psychology*, *behavioural psychology* and *cognitive psychology* (or *purposive behaviourism*). These psychological theories guided the principles for the practice of HRD as they were appropriate to performance improvement. In Gestalt psychology, HRD must clarify the goals of individual contributors, work process owners and organisation leaders. This theory was based on the belief that people saw stimuli which were gathered together in meaningful

configurations. Behavioural psychology was concerned with what could be seen and thus it required HRD to develop the behaviour of those people. In other words, actual human behaviour was studied in the behavioural psychology. Cognitive psychology asked for the harmony of the goals and behaviour among those people. This theory was used to explain goal-directed behaviour.

*Systems theory* refers to the complex and dynamic interactions of environments, organisations, work process and group or individual variables. This theory recognised the purpose of the larger system, its parts and the relationships between the parts that could maximise or strangle systems and sub-systems (Swanson, 2001). As viewed by Katz and Kahn (1978), as every organisation was part of larger systems, systems theory stressed the organisation's connection to the larger system of which it was a part.

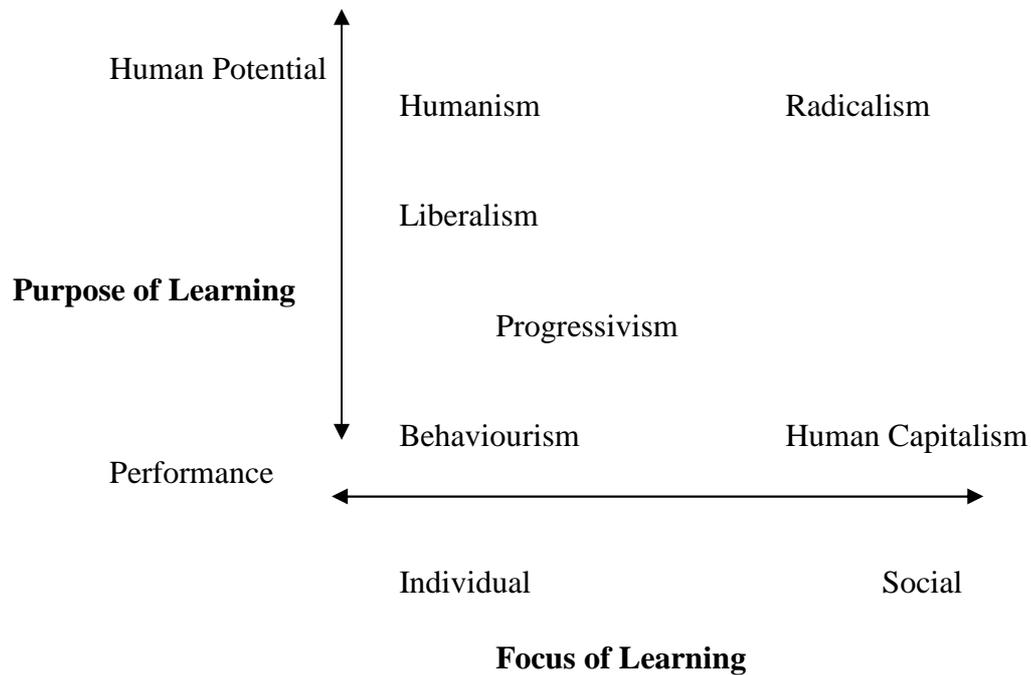
The systems theory principles called for serious thinking, sound theory-building research and the utilisation of new tools for sound practice. In the *general system theory*, according to Swanson (2001), an understanding of how HRD and other sub-systems connected and disconnected from the host organisation was the main focus. HRD was also required, in the *chaos theory*, to help its host organisation retain its purpose and effectiveness given the *chaos* it faced. Another theory in the system theory, the *futures theory*, required HRD to help its host organisation shape alternative *futures* (Swanson, 2001).

Besides these three conventional theoretical foundations of HRD, there are several other theories that support HRD such as *learning theory*, *organisational theory* and

*change* theory (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000). *Learning theory*, as viewed by Gilley and Maycunich (2000: 81), was a prerequisite to change and thus this theory served as an essential pillar in the foundation of HRD. Gilley and Eggland (1989: 120-121) defined learning as 'knowledge obtained by study and/or experience; the art of acquiring knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, and ideas that are retained and used, and a change of behaviour through experience'. According to Gilley and Eggland (1989), several theories of learning, namely Behaviourist theory, Cognitive theory, Gestalt theory, and Humanist theory, were applicable to HRD as each of these theories had a different view of and orientation to the nature of human being.

Yang (2004) also argued that *adult learning theory* was claimed to provide a foundation for HRD. According to Yang, HRD and adult learning theory shared several philosophical foundations to various degrees. Through an examination of the six philosophical foundations: humanism, radicalism, behaviourism, progressivism, liberalism and human capitalism (sic), Yang (2004) suggested that learning was vital to all aspects of HRD. The dominant philosophies in HRD and adult learning theory tended to be different, with human capital theory and behaviourist theory prevailing in HRD, and humanism and radicalism in adult learning theory. However, these two fields shared some commonalities in the philosophies of liberalism and progressivism. According to Yang (2004), the liberal perspective recognised the importance of acquiring formal knowledge and developing a rational perspective whilst, from the progressivism perspective, more value was put on knowledge and skills derived from observation and experience. The relationships among different philosophies along these two dimensions were described in a figure created by Yang (See Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2: Relationships among Philosophical Foundations of Learning**



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*Source:* Yang (2004: 137)

Figure 2.2 suggests that although there were different philosophies of education, all of them were concerned with learning. Learning, as viewed by humanists in the adult education discipline, was to fulfil human potential as it emphasised the development and growth of human beings. On the contrary, HRD, with an orientation towards performance, assumed that the purpose of learning was to fulfil the needs of existing tasks and roles. The role of individual and society in the process of learning was also presented in the figure. Even within each of the disciplines of adult learning theory and HRD, there were different beliefs in the main focus of learning. Humanism and behaviourism emphasised the individual implications of learning while both radicalism and human capital theories believed that social implications should be the main focus.

Another important foundation element of HRD, as Gilley and Maycunich (2000: 83) argued, was *organisational* theory which studied ‘various configurations of people, structures, and processes and how these variations impact the achievement of goals and the delivery of results’. According to Gilley and Maycunich, organisational behaviour was a term referring to human behaviour, attitudes, and performance within organisational settings. It was, therefore, necessary for HRD to learn about individual perceptions, values, learning capacities and actions through the application of theories, methods and principles from psychological, sociological, and cultural and anthropological disciplines.

Gilley and Maycunich (2000) also considered *change* theory as critical to the success of HRD. As described by Lewin (1951), change consisted of three phases: unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. In the unfreezing period, when organisations created environments conducive for employees to examine their own work performance, employees looked at the attitudes, beliefs, and values of their behaviour. Gilley and Maycunich (2000: 84) suggested that HRD professionals work with employees during this period to ‘guarantee a slow and deliberate approach to changing behaviour’. As change was often related to resistance because it disrupted employee’s equilibrium, HRD professionals should introduce it in ways that reduced resistance by talking to participants of learning interventions and by introducing it to employees in small, manageable units (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000). It was the organisation’s responsibility to refreeze behaviour by creating an environment that would help them do it. Organisations should provide reinforcement and follow-up activities after a performance improvement intervention or change initiative, and develop reward systems that recognise new behaviour (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000).

In short, HRD could be said to be supported by a set of foundational theories as suggested by Swanson (2001). HRD was also closely related to adult learning theory because both of these disciplines shared some commonalities in their philosophies (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000; Yang, 2004). Organisational and change theories were also viewed as foundational theories for HRD, according to Gilley and Maycunich (2000). However, among those theories underlying HRD, human capital theory seems to emerge and overweigh the others. As mentioned earlier, human capital has been considered one of the key foundations of HRD as it emphasises the role of learning in improving individual and organisational performance.

### **Conclusion**

In the 1960s and 1970s, higher education did not receive adequate attention from policy makers in education, because of a belief that there was a higher rate of return to the primary level than to other levels of education. The trend changed in the 1980s. The review of literature has shown that not only in developed countries, but also in developing countries nowadays, policy makers and the general public have realised the important role of higher education in the economic, political and social development of a country. Many developing countries have witnessed major changes in higher education through the movement of reforms.

A number of researchers have touched the topics relating to issues facing higher education as well as current trends of development of higher education systems in developing countries, as presented above. The common issues that both public and private higher education institutions in developing countries were now facing include low funding that higher education received from many governments, human resource

management, limitation of research capabilities, out-of-dated methods of teaching and under-developed curricula. In many developing countries, the higher education system was restructured through the process of expansion, differentiation and knowledge revolution. University autonomy and the expansion of private higher education were also considered the major element in the trend for higher education development in many developing countries. Joining the governments in the management and operation of higher education institutions were private providers, including for-profit entities, philanthropic and non-profit organisations and religious groups.

The chapter also explored issues facing Vietnamese higher education and how the country copes with those issues and challenges. In reality, Vietnam has witnessed great changes since 1986. Like other developing countries in the region, higher education in Vietnam has continuously been reformed with the establishment of multi-disciplinary universities, regional universities, community colleges in provinces and specialised colleges and universities. In addition, the higher education system has been diversified in forms, mode of delivery and resources. Private higher education institutions have also been established and developed quickly.

As stated earlier, academic staff in higher education institutions in Vietnam are oriented more on teaching than on research. This explained the few research outputs that could be found published in prestigious international and national journals. Most of the information relating to Vietnamese higher education could only be retrieved from the UNESCO, the World Bank, the MOET, working papers presented at conferences, or unpublished masters and doctoral theses. These unpublished masters'

and doctoral theses focussed on aspects of higher education, including policies on privatisation of Vietnamese higher education, foreign-trained academics and the development of Vietnamese higher education, or on the roles of private universities as non-profit organisations in Vietnam. None has investigated policies of academic staff development, especially in the private sector. Recognising that there is a gap in knowledge about academic staff development in private universities compared with public ones, this thesis therefore intends to fill this gap by raising the following questions:

1. What are the crucial issues of staffing and academic staff development facing public and private universities in Vietnam?
2. What academic staff development policies have private universities implemented?
3. To what extent have these policies proved to be effective, as perceived by the leaders of private universities and their academic staff?

The chapter also presented the theoretical perspective on human resource development, with human capital theory considered one of the key foundations for human resource development. Philosophical background of the human resource development (HRD) theory, with an emphasis on human capital theory has been explored and presented, explaining for the use of this theory as the framework for the research. The current staffing issues facing private higher education institutions in Vietnam, as well as the system of academic staff recruitment, appointment, appraisal and incentives implemented in the private sector will be explored further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a short description of the emergence of private higher education in Vietnam. Issues and challenges facing private higher education institutions in Vietnam are also explored. With a focus on the policies for academic staff development in private higher education institutions, the chapter provides an account of the system of academic staff recruitment, appointment, appraisal and incentives, and how these affect the academics and private higher education institutions.

#### **The Emergence of Private Higher Education in Vietnam**

As stated in Chapter One and Two, in order to respond to the demands for human resources with high technical capability and new management skills to meet the needs related to the development of a market oriented economy, the higher education system in Vietnam has been reformed since the introduction of the open *doi moi* policy in 1986. Like other countries in the region, the reform of higher education in Vietnam could be seen in two categories: the autonomy or privatisation of public institutions and the establishment of new private institutions. In the centrally-planned economy, public higher education institutions were mainly funded by the government. However, with limited national funds for education, public higher education institutions failed to develop to meet the needs of increasing new entities, especially in the private sector. A flexible new policy on education was, therefore, established to mobilise diverse sources of investment for education. A system of new ideas on renovation in education was reflected in the Decree 90/CP issued by the Government in 1993

(Vietnamese Government, 1993), addressing the structure of national education and expressing commitment to the concept that all should have the right to study and pursue higher education. Public higher education institutions were then allowed to seek alternative sources of funding rather than rely on the state funding. Many public universities were able to adopt cost-recovery strategy through the introduction of tuition fees. In other words, they were able to provide paid-for education services to the sizeable direct beneficiaries of education, namely the students.

In addition, higher education also expanded with the emergence of the non-public sector, including the semi-public, people-founded and private institutions<sup>18</sup>. It is worth noticing that the term *non-public* was used in most contexts in stead of *private* since the notion '*privatisation*' was not publicly accepted. The reason was the general public was not used to the idea of private education yet, as Vietnam had a long history of free or relatively low cost education which was subsidised by public funding (Ngo, 2006; Pham & Fry, 2002). In addition, there were arguments against the privatisation of higher education since the establishment of private higher education institutions was considered a manifestation of capitalism. Opponents of privatisation of higher education argued that the establishment of the private higher education sector would create social inequity between the rich and the poor, and would lead to anarchy because it would be less influenced by the government (Pham, 1997). This explained the suspension of the temporary regulation on private higher education institutions, which was signed by the Prime Minister in May 1993, but was not put into practice until 2005 when the Prime Minister issued official regulations on the organisation and operation of private higher education institutions (Ngo, 2006).

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<sup>18</sup> A detailed description of these terms of non-public HE institutions could be seen in Chapter One, page 11-12.

The first non-public higher education institution in Vietnam was established in 1988 under the name *Thang Long* People-founded Centre for Higher Education, which was later on renamed *Thang Long* University in 1994 (Ngo, 2006; Pham & Fry, 2002). Following the experiment of *Thang Long* University was the establishment of a number of other non-public universities and colleges. The first private higher education institution was established in *Da Nang* city in 2005 under the name *Duc Tri* Private Junior College (Ngo, 2006). Other non-public higher education institutions were established in big cities such as *Dong Do* University, *Phuong Dong* University, and The Management and Business University in *Hanoi*; *Van Lang* University, *Hung Vuong* University, the *Ho Chi Minh* City University of Technology (HUTECH), *Hong Bang* University and the *Ho Chi Minh* City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology (HUFLIT) in *Ho Chi Minh* City (Pham & Fry, 2002).

There were also foreign-owned institutions such as the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in *Ho Chi Minh* City and recently established *Bac Ha* Private International University<sup>19</sup> in *Ha Noi*. There was also foreign-collaboration between national and international institutions such as: Taiwan Asian International University in partnership with *Ha Noi* University of Foreign Languages, University of Hawaii MBA programme with *Ha Noi* School of Business, Washington State University with National Economics University, University of Houston, Clear Lake with *Ha Noi* University of Technology, Troy State University with the International College of Information Technology and Management (IIE, 2005). Other examples of foreign institutions establishing joint programmes with Vietnamese national institutions

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<sup>19</sup> Decision No 1369/QĐ-TTg was promulgated by the Prime Minister on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007, allowing the official establishment of Bac Ha International University.

included the University of the Philippines in the Visayas and Vietnam National University and Dalhousie University of Canada and *Hue University* (Varghese, 2007).

However, there are now only two sectors in the national higher education system: public and private, since all the people-founded, semi-public and private higher education institutions were categorized as private under the decisions signed by the Prime Minister in 2006<sup>20</sup>. The number of private higher education institutions grew quickly, from twenty in the year 1999-2000 to thirty four in 2005-2006, and forty seven in 2006-2007. In the academic year 2006-2007, there were thirty private universities and seventeen private colleges. Student enrolment in these private higher education institutions was about twelve percent of the total student number nationwide each year (Statistics from *Vietnam Edu.net*). In the 2006-2007 academic year, of the total student number 1,504,201 nationwide, private institutions enrolled 193,471 students (See Table 1.4 in Chapter 1). As proposed in the national resolution 14/2005/NQ-CP on *Higher Education Reform for the Period 2006-2020* signed on 2 November 2005 by the Prime Minister, it was expected that the enrolment in the private higher education sector would increase to 40% by 2020 (Hayden & Lam, 2006; Nguyen, 2005; Varghese, 2007).

With the increasing number of students enrolling, private institutions proved their important role in the development of higher education in the country. Although private higher education only played a small role in the higher education system, overall, it nevertheless contributed to meeting the excess demand for higher education

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<sup>20</sup> Nineteen *people founded* HE institutions were transferred to the private sector under the Decision 122/2006/QĐ-TTg signed on 29 May, 2006, and the transformation of semi-public universities was signed in the Decision 146/2006/QĐ-TTg on 22 June, 2006 by the Prime Minister.

that the public sector could not do. As all the activities of private universities were funded from non-governmental resources, these institutions contributed to solving financial problems confronting education. In other words, the opening of private higher education institutions helped the government reduce pressures on the national budget (Pham & Fry, 2002). However, private higher education institutions were still weak compared with universities in the public sector.

In a qualitative research on private higher education institutions in Vietnam, Pham Thanh Nghi (1997) studied the content, process, and outputs of the policy on privatisation of higher education, using a triangulation of three principal methods of data collection: documentary concerning policy on non-public higher education; interviewing senior officers from the MOET and twelve leaders from four non-public higher education institutions; and statistical data from non-public higher education institutions concerning finance, income, expenditure and number of students enrolled. The study showed that there were several reasons for the weaknesses of these private higher education institutions: inappropriate political social and economic environment, shortages of high quality academic staff, poor infrastructure, facilities and equipment, poor libraries and budget, shortage of finance and poor performance of students enrolled (Pham, 1997).

Consequently, private higher education institutions could not offer programmes in areas of specialisation such as law, architecture, journalism and medicine (Ngo, 2006). The programmes offered by these private institutions were those in demand such as foreign languages, business administration, accounting and informatics, which did not require much investment in equipment such as laboratories and special

facilities (Ngo, 2006; Pham & Fry, 2002). Nevertheless, private higher education institutions had more flexible teaching programmes, in comparison with the public counterparts, as they enjoyed more autonomy in deciding what to teach and how to teach. The issues and challenges facing private higher education institutions will be further explored in the next section.

### **Issues and Challenges Facing Private Higher Education**

In recent years, a number of studies of private higher education in Vietnam have been carried out, investigating different aspects relating to the privatisation of higher education in Vietnam. In a study of *The Role of the Private Sector in Education in Vietnam: Evidence from the Vietnam Living Standards Survey*, Glewwe and Patrinos (1999) examined the nature of private schooling in Vietnam by analysing statistical data from the 1992-1993 *Vietnam Living Standards Survey*. Glewwe and Patrinos (1999) pointed out one role for private education (for all levels of education) in Vietnam: the expansion of educational opportunities for students who failed the entrance examination to public schools and were excluded from the limited spaces offered by public institutions. Similarly, with a focus on the higher education sector, T.X.P. Pham (2006) studied the roles of private universities as non-profit organisations in Vietnam in a qualitative research analysing official documents concerning non-public higher education institutions. In her study, T.X.P. Pham (2006) confirmed the important role that higher education played in the education system: providing access to ever expanding numbers of students while there was a restriction in student intake in the public sector. T.X.P. Pham (2006) concluded that private higher education served as an agent of higher education that satisfied the needs related

to the socio-economic development of a market economy, the demands that were unmet by the public sector.

However, although private higher education in Vietnam, as seen by Pham (1997) and T.X.P. Pham (2006), only played a relatively peripheral role in the higher education system, it helped fulfil the task of expanding higher education, brought diversity and created a competitive environment within the educational system, and met the diverse needs of various social strata in the society. In a study of the emerging of private higher education in Vietnam, Pham and Fry (2002) argued that beyond the most important role of preparing graduates for the new market economy, private higher education institutions also reflected their social role, which was to serve the people, through various activities and movements aiming at disseminating knowledge to farmers and workers to help them improve their lives.

Apart from studying the role of private higher education institutions, these studies also explored issues and challenges facing private higher education institutions. Pham (1997) stated the three major disadvantages of private higher education in Vietnam, namely its politically disadvantaged position, poor infrastructure and shortage of finance. The first issue, according to Pham (1997), was related to the lack of clarity in the regulatory framework that governed the operation of private higher education institutions. With regards to legal authority and governance concerning private higher education, T.X.P. Pham (2006) pointed out that guidelines for private higher education operation were simply temporary measures and did not encourage capital contributors or investors. With a lack of official legal and governance regulations, it was hard for these private institutions to function effectively (Pham & Fry, 2002). The

first private higher education institution, the *Thang Long* University, for example, was established as a pilot private university in 1988 when there was no regulatory framework governing operations of private higher education institutions. It took more than five years to complete the experimental stage since the institution only received the full legal status as a ‘university’ in August 1994 (Pham, 1997). Not until 18 July 2000 were the temporary regulations about operation for private universities issued by the Prime Minister (Pham & Fry, 2002). The regulations<sup>21</sup> on organisation and operation of private HE institutions were not officially promulgated until Jan 2005 (T. X. P. Pham, 2006).

In addition, the implementation of policies on private higher education institutions was affected by the social psychology, the cultural and economic conditions of the people in different regions of the country (Pham, 1997). According to Pham (1997) and Glewwe and Patrinos (1999), privatisation in higher education in Vietnam was still a new phenomenon, especially with residents in the north of Vietnam, as they had not experienced private universities for years since the end of the war with France. In addition, there was doubt about the quality and outcomes of education of private institutions. Since these private institutions could only enrol students who failed the national entrance examination to public universities, the quality of their graduates may negatively be affected (T. X. P. Pham, 2006). As parents were not accustomed to the notion of private universities, they preferred to pay for their children’s tutoring classes, which were expected to enable them to pass the following year’s national entrance examination to public universities, rather than enrolling them in private

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<sup>21</sup> Decision 14/2005/QĐ-TTg concerning the regulations on organisation and operation of private HE institutions was signed by the Deputy Prime Minister on 17 Jan 2005.

universities once they failed the entrance examination to public universities (T. X. P. Pham, 2006).

With regard to infrastructure, the study carried out by Pham (1997) showed that private higher education institutions possessed a very poor infrastructure, equipment and learning facilities. As indicated by Pham, of ten universities investigated, only two semi-public universities had their own campuses and buildings while all others had to use limited rental space. Most equipment and learning facilities used at these private universities were hired from public institutions. In a later study, Pham and Fry (2002) also showed that there was a lack of adequate facilities and laboratories in private universities in Vietnam, which made it difficult for academic staff to teach and do research. However, as found by Pham and Fry (2002), only after five years of operation (up to 2002), private higher education institutions contributed to the construction of new infrastructure for higher education as some private institutions did not only stop renting classrooms, but built and developed new buildings, laboratories and large libraries for their students.

Shortage of finance is another challenge facing private higher education institutions. As argued by Pham (1997), with a not-for-profit status as regulated by the government, private higher education institutions found it hard to mobilise finance from private investors or even gain assistance from public sources. The limited financial source, which came mainly from tuition fees, was a challenge for development of these private higher education institutions (Pham & Fry, 2002).

Apart from the challenges mentioned above, the other persisting problems facing Vietnamese private higher education, according to Pham and Fry (2002), included curricular and pedagogical issues, inadequacies related to teaching staff, evaluation of students' educational quality, and the research function of these private higher education institutions. In terms of curricular, private higher education institutions failed to provide teaching programmes that met the practical needs of the market economy due to an excessive theoretical content (Pham & Fry, 2002; T. X. P. Pham, 2006). Due to the lack of learning facilities and teaching equipment, private higher education institutions offered programmes that did not require laboratories or special facilities such as business administration, accounting, foreign languages, informatics and technology (Ngo, 2006; Nguyen, 2005; T. X. P. Pham, 2006). In addition, the methods of teaching were obsolete and traditional, with a high dependence on lectures and rote memorisation of factual knowledge, and little use of conceptual learning, active learning techniques and higher order thinking abilities such as analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation. As a result, students' learning was passive, as they were only required to listen to lectures, take notes and reproduce memorised information in examinations (T. X. P. Pham, 2006). The traditional methods of teaching prevented students from becoming active, critical thinking and self-learning learners.

The issue concerning pedagogy was part of the issues related to teaching staff. In his study, Pham (1997) considered several staffing issues in private higher education. First of all, concerning the supply and demand of academic staff, there was a predicted shortage of academic staff due to the high demand for new staff to meet the need of the increasing enrolment, and the limited source of staff for recruitment.

According to Pham and Fry (2002) and T.X.P. Pham (2006), the critical issue facing private higher education institutions was the shortage of university teaching staff as the increase in the number of students enrolled exceeded that of staff recruitment numbers. Old age and uneven age distribution of academic staff might also create some problems among academic staff and hinder institutions in recruiting new staff in senior positions (Pham, 1997; T. X. P. Pham, 2006). However, as there was no legal base for teaching staff who work for public universities to enter into a contract with private higher education institutions, private higher education institutions were able to access outstanding and experienced lecturers from public universities, research institutions and enterprises due to a high compensation (high payment per period taught) that private higher education institutions offered.

Full time academic staff in private higher education institutions accounted for only 20% while more than 70% were part-time, coming mainly from public institutions, according to T.X.P. Pham (2006). With a heavy load of work, both from the main and subordinate institutions, part-time academic staff in private higher education institutions were more committed to teaching rather than to engaging in research (Pham & Fry, 2002). Private higher education institutions also experienced difficulties in recruiting highly qualified lecturers with the required degree status. The majority of full time academic staff that private higher education institutions recruited were young and had just graduated from universities, most of which only possessed a bachelor's degree (Pham & Fry, 2002). Another issue was the capital reserved for staff salaries and awards. As funding for staff represented the largest single item of expenditure in many institutions, when institutions coped with financial constraints, the budget for academic staff development was the first to be cut. In the meanwhile,

academic staff had to cope with more and more pressures concerning larger class sizes, increased work loads and administrative responsibilities.

Another staffing issue facing private higher education institutions was the capability for carrying out research, which was assumed to be one of the two main tasks of the universities, as stated by Pham and Fry (2002). This failure was the result of a lack of adequate facilities and laboratories, the weak link between universities and companies, and a severe shortage of state funds. In addition, as mentioned above, academic staff could hardly reserve time for research due to the heavy load of teaching. It was not to mention the lack of research capacity of young academic staff in private higher education institutions. In fact, these issues and challenges facing private higher education institutions were similar to those facing public higher education institutions, as presented in Chapter One and Two.

In short, there are various issues and challenges facing different aspects of private higher education institutions, involving management, financing support, infrastructure, curricular, quality of students' input and output, and quantity and quality of teaching and doing research. As this thesis aims to explore issues and policies concerning academic staff development in private universities, the current policies implemented in private higher education institutions will be further considered in the next section.

## **Policies on Academic Staff Development in Private Higher Education Institutions**

As stated in the previous section, although the first private higher education institutions in Vietnam were established more than two decades ago, the regulations on the establishment and operation of private higher education institutions failed to attract investors, as some aspects in the regulations were not clear and concrete enough (Ngo, 2006). It is worth noticing that although private higher education institutions were financially independent from the government, the operation of these institutions was subject to the management of state education bodies, specifically the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), as regulated by the Law on Education (Ngo, 2006). As stated in the regulations on organisation and operation of private higher education institutions, promulgated by the Prime Minister on 17 May 2005, private higher education institutions had to follow policies on education regulated by the MOET. The following sub-sections describe the policies on academic staff recruitment and appointment, appraisals and incentives for professional development, and how these policies affect academic staff in private higher education institutions.

### ***Academic Staff Recruitment***

Private higher education institutions had more autonomy than their public counterparts in recruiting academic staff. A rector in a public higher education institution, for example, could not dismiss an academic who did not perform well if that person had already been an official state employee. A rector of a public institution could not even promote a promising candidate into a leading position in the institution as these decisions should be made by a senior line manager (Pham, 1997; Vu, 2008). Permanent academic staff in public higher education institutions,

therefore, remained in their positions until they retired, regardless of their performance (Doan, 2000). In private higher education institutions, rectors could make a decision on recruitment and dismissal of academic staff based on the operational demands of the institution and the performance of academic staff. However, as stated in the regulations<sup>22</sup> on private higher education institutions, rectors of private higher education institutions must recruit an adequate number of academic staff who could meet the demands of teaching and research activities at the institution. In the first year of establishment, for example, a private higher education institution must have permanent academic staff who could cover not less than 30% of the teaching load at the institution; after five years of operation, this institution should have a number of permanent academic staff who should be able to cover at least 50% of the teaching load (Vietnamese Government, 2005).

Unlike their public counterparts, where academic staff could be recruited under different categories: permanent or tenure-track (*bien che*), visiting lecturers (*thinh giang*) and short-term contracts (*hop dong ngan han*) (Doan, 2000), rectors of private higher education institutions could recruit academic staff on the basis of employment contracts (for permanent and visiting lecturers). The main supply of academic staff to private higher education institutions was from public higher education institutions and research institutions. Permanent or full-time academic staff in private higher education institutions were eligible for health insurance and social welfare as were full-time and short-term contracted lecturers in the public counterparts. Full-time academic staff in private institutions were also eligible to be assessed for promotion to Professor or Associate Professor, or other honourable titles such as Lecturer of the

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<sup>22</sup> Regulation 14/2005/QĐ-TTg, signed on 17 May 2005 by the Prime Minister

People (*Nha giao Nhan dan*), Outstanding Lecturer (*Nha giao Uu tu*), Medal of Educational Contribution (*Huy chuong vi Su nghiep Giao duc*) (Vietnamese Government, 2005).

The recruitment of academic staff in private higher education institutions needed to follow the working regulations<sup>23</sup> for lecturers at higher education institutions, as promulgated by the MOET on 28 November 2008. As stated in the articles four to seven of the regulation, lecturers at higher education institutions had the following four major responsibilities: teaching, conducting research and transferring technology; administrative tasks, and studying for professional development. This regulation also regulated the working hours and standard teaching hours of lecturers in correspondence with their teaching status. The total working hours of a lecturer were regulated at 1760 hours in an academic year. The working hours were allocated differently, depending on the titles of lecturers and their responsibilities (See Table 3.1)

**Table 3.1: Working Hours of Lecturers at Higher Education Institutions**

<b>Titles</b>	<b>Lecturers</b>	<b>Associate Professors and Senior Lecturers</b>	<b>Professors and High-ranked Lecturers</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	900 hours	900 hours	900 hours
<b>Conducting research</b>	500 hours	600 hours	700 hours
<b>Professional activities and others</b>	360 hours	260 hours	160 hours

*Source:* Decision 64/2008/QD/BGDDT

<sup>23</sup> Decision number 64/2008/QD-BGDDT, concerning the working regulations for lecturers at HE institutions, was signed by the Deputy Minister of Education and Training Banh Tien Long on 28 November 2008.

As illustrated in Table 3.1, lecturers of all titles had the same allocated hours for teaching responsibilities (900 hours). However, professors and associate professors had more time (between 600 and 700 hours) reserved for research activities while other lecturers had to spend more time (360 hours, compared to 260 hours for associate professors and 160 hours for professors) on professional and other activities. The time allocated for teaching responsibilities would be transferred into standard teaching hours per academic year. Table 3.2 shows the regulated standard teaching hours for different titles in a higher education institution.

**Table 3.2: The Standard Teaching Hours of Lecturers at Higher Education Institutions**

<b>Titles</b>	<b>Standard teaching hours</b>	
	<b>General regulations for all subjects</b>	<b>Physical Education, Security and National Defence in Non-specialised Institutions</b>
<b>Professors and High-ranked Lecturers</b>	360 hours	500 hours
<b>Associate Professors and Senior Lecturers</b>	320 hours	460 hours
<b>Lecturers</b>	280 hours	420 hours

*Source:* Decision 64/2008/QD/BGDDT

The allocation of standard teaching hours for academic staff varied according to the teaching titles of lecturers. Lecturers at a higher rank with a higher salary would have more standard teaching hours. Therefore, it can be seen that professors and associate

professors had more standard teaching hours in comparison with those of lecturers. The transformation of working hours into standard teaching hours was based on the working hours needed for completing the tasks of teaching, including the time before, during and after a lecturer carried out an in-class teaching hour. For example, one in-class teaching hour equalled from 1.0 to 1.8 standard teaching hours, depending on the specific subjects and specialised areas of teaching; or one in-class teaching hour for post-graduate students (master or doctoral levels) equalled 1.2 to 2 standard teaching hours. Supervising an undergraduate student's dissertation would be calculated at twelve to fifteen standard teaching hours. Supervision of a master's thesis would be calculated at twenty to twenty five standard teaching hours and forty five to fifty standard teaching hours for a doctoral thesis in an academic year. Lecturers in apprenticeship in private higher education institutions only had to teach at most 50% of the standard teaching hours as presented in Table 3.2 above.

### ***Appointment***

In a higher education institution, academic staff might be appointed with different titles, depending on the experience in teaching or servicing in the national education system. As promulgated in the resolution No 133/LD-QD on 7 March 1986 by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs, a classification scheme for teaching staff stipulated four levels: assistant lecturer (*tro giang*), lecturer (*giang vien*), senior lecturer (*giang vien chinh*) and high-ranked lecturer (*giang vien cao cap*). This scheme however was amended by the resolution No 72/LD-TBXH-QD on 2 March 1990, stipulating five levels in the classification scheme: assistant lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and professor (Nguyen & Sloper, 1995). Assistant lectureship was given to university graduates who were required to spend two years

on apprenticeship, undertaking teaching and other administrative tasks. Promotion to lectureship could be made when an assistant lecturer has finished his/her two year apprenticeship and achieved supplementary qualifications such as foreign language, political training, philosophy, computer literacy and higher education studies (psychology and teaching methodology at higher education level), as required by the MOET and the institution (Doan, 2000).

In 1995, a decision No 538/TCCP-TC signed by the Minister of Governmental Organisation was made on the changing of the names of lecturers' ranks. There were then three main ranks of lecturers: lecturers, senior lecturers (for the ranks of associate professors and senior lecturers), and high-ranked lecturers (for the ranks of professors and high-ranked lecturers). As regulated in decision No 538/TCCP-TC, in order to be appointed a senior lecturer, a candidate needed to satisfy the following four criteria: having a postgraduate degree (at least master's), having at least nine years' working experience as a lecturer in a higher education institution, having a foreign language proficiency (a second foreign language proficiency for lecturers of foreign languages), having research or projects' outputs recognised at departmental or institutional level.

Candidates for high-ranked lectureship needed to meet the following requirements: having a doctoral degree, having been a senior lecturer for at least six years, having proficiency in two foreign languages, having at least three projects or scientific researches' outputs recognised by the scientific committee at the institutional level. While the appointment of assistant lecturers and lecturers was carried out and recognised by the institution, the process of appointing associate professors or senior lecturers and professors or high-ranked lecturers was initiated at the institutional level,

and approved at ministerial level through councils for academic appointment (Doan, 2000). In order to be upgraded to the ranks of senior lecturers or high-ranked lecturers, candidates who satisfied the criteria mentioned above must pass oral and written examinations held by the MOET (Document No 1790/BGDDT- NG signed by the Deputy Minister of Education and Training on 6 March 2008).

The nomination procedures and criteria for professorial appointments are recently regulated at Decision No 174/2008/QĐ-TTg signed by the Prime Minister, cum Minister of Education and Training *Nguyen Thien Nhan* on 31 December 2008. In order to be appointed associate professors and professors, candidates should have a doctoral (or associate doctoral<sup>24</sup>) degree and can only apply for the associate professorship three years after the degree was granted. Candidates for associate professorship need to have at least six years' experience in teaching at undergraduate and/or higher levels. Candidates for professorship should be those who had already been appointed associate professors for more than three years. In addition, research outputs and publications on accredited national and international scientific journals and conferences were considered the important criteria in accessing for nomination to professorship and associate professorship. Specifically, candidates for associate professorship needed to have carried out at least two research projects at the institutional level or one research project at the ministerial level with satisfactory outputs, supervised successfully at least two masters' dissertations or at least one doctoral thesis. Candidates for professorship needed to have supervised successfully at least two doctoral theses, edited and published textbooks for undergraduate

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<sup>24</sup> See page 10 in Chapter One for the description of *associate doctoral* degree, or also referred to as *candidate* degree, a term known as *Pho Tien Sy* in Vietnamese.

education purposes and carried out at least one scientific research at the ministerial or higher levels (Vietnamese Government, 2008).

Promotion procedures to professorship and associate professorship operated on a national basis. Applications for promotion should be sent to and assessed at institutional level by Institutional Committees for Academic Title Appointment. Nominations would then be sent to the National Council for Academic Title Appointment, the Chairman of which was normally the Minister of Education and Training. At this stage, the National Council would transfer the applications to respective councils of discipline areas. Based on assessment results from councils of discipline areas, the National Council for Academic Title Appointment would make the final decision on appointment for those candidates who were approved and eligible for the appointment.

### *Appraisal and Incentives*

Salaries for academic staff in education in Vietnam remained low, if not the lowest, and could not keep pace with the increasing living cost. Although official basic salaries for academic staff in public higher education institutions had regularly been increased (at least four times within five years, between 2003 and 2008), the monthly basic salaries of academic staff were still low: VND 450,000 (= USD 28) in 2006 and VND 540,000 (= USD 31) in 2008 (Vu, 2008). The official monthly salary that academic staff received was calculated by multiplying the basic salary by a scale of salaries relevant to the personnel classification scale at which an academic staff was categorized. However, according to Vu (2008), the actual income of academic staff was much higher (nearly double) than the official monthly basic salaries as academic

staff often received non-official payments (or bonuses), apart from part-time jobs many of them might have taken.

Promotion and salary increases were based on seniority, not merit or performance (Doan, 2000; Q. S. Pham & D. Sloper, 1995; T. N. Pham & D. Sloper, 1995). As salaries did not represent the value of work in terms of qualification and experience, many academic staff left the higher education sector. The government issued regulations on assessing and granting academic titles as presented above enabled the lecturers to have a more positive attitude to their professional work. However, there was still a lack of appropriate material and spiritual treatment, which discouraged lecturers in upgrading their levels of lectureship and improving their professional skills as lecturers and researchers. There were still arguments about whether there should be a higher salary scheme for academic staff with titles of professors or associate professors as remuneration for their contributions and responsibilities.

### ***How These Policies Affect the Academics***

Private higher education institutions were more autonomous than public institutions in employing academic staff only on their own needs and paying staff according to their performance. Financial resources in private higher education institutions, therefore, were used in the most effective way, stimulating academic staff to work successfully and increasing students' competence effectively. In most private higher education institutions, academic staff were rewarded financially primarily for the amount of teaching, but not for conducting research. With regards to academic activities, as regulated by the MOET, the division of lecturers' working hours as illustrated in Table 3.1 showed that the major task of university lecturers was teaching rather than

doing research. As lecturers at a higher rank (associate professors or professors) received higher payment in the salary scales, they were required to have more standard teaching hours.

In addition, the majority of academic staff in private higher education institutions were visiting lecturers who came to work on contracts and did not have any incentives other than the high payment on the basis of teaching hours. The inadequate income of academic staff strongly affected the professional commitment to university responsibilities as academic staff spent a great amount of time on supplementary income earning activities rather than on activities related to professional competence or to the central purposes of the institution (Hayden & Lam, 2006; T. N. Pham & D. Sloper, 1995). Furthermore, as private higher education institutions depended mainly on tuition fees, they had restricted budget for academic staff development and doing research as the largest component of their budget was spent on salaries and administrative expenses.

## **Conclusions**

Vietnam has experienced an expansion of the private higher education sector in the last two decades. There were many reasons for the emergence and the fast growth of this sector. Among them were the increasing expansion of upper-secondary education, the inability of the public sector to meet the growing social demand for higher education, the inability of public universities to offer market-friendly and employment oriented courses that prepare graduates for demands of highly skilled labour in the market-oriented economy. In addition, the limited public funding of the state, and the willingness of many households to invest in the higher education of their children,

also contributed to the expansion of the higher education system through the establishment of private higher education institutions.

In comparison with the public counterparts, private higher education institutions in Vietnam were much younger in operation and less experienced. These private institutions had to face a number of challenges and issues concerning the political governance, financial management, and professional organisation of the institution in a society where privatisation in higher education was still a new phenomenon and not widely accepted in the public. Of all the issues confronting private higher education institutions, academic staff issues were the most severe. Although private higher education institutions enjoyed more autonomy than their public counterparts, they were also subject to the management of the MOET. The lack of a regulative framework and effective supervision of governmental agencies, however, hinders the development of these private institutions.

Although research has been carried out on private higher education, studying the emergence of the private sector, its role in the higher education system, the policy of privatisation in Vietnamese higher education, none has considered the issues of and policies on academic staff development. This thesis therefore aims at exploring staffing issues and policies on academic staff development in private universities from the perspectives of their own leaders and academic staff. It is hoped that the results of the thesis will fill the knowledge gap concerning academic staff development in these private universities, providing a detailed picture of these institutions for policy makers, educational leaders and investors who are interested in the development of the private sector in the higher education system in Vietnam. The next chapter

presents the methodology and methods implemented in answering for the questions raised in the research.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter One, the research questions were presented and the focus identified as staffing and academic staff development in private universities in Vietnam. To understand the issues concerning staffing and academic staff development that private universities in Vietnam are now facing, what staff development policies have been implemented by private universities and the extent to which these policies have proved to be effective, it is necessary to explain how this research was conducted. As stated by Wellington (2003: 22), ‘no-one can judge the value of a piece of research without knowing its methodology’. This chapter focused on the methodology and methods considered appropriate to the questions asked in this research.

The chapter starts with an overview of the methodology of the research, including the ontological and epistemological positions of the researcher and an explanation of the use of qualitative research as a paradigm. The next part is the description of the comparative multiple-case study, which is adopted as the research design in relation to the qualitative research strategy. An overview of research methods is also included, followed by information on the techniques of data collection, the purposes of each research instrument, data collection procedures including the pilot study, and the way the data collected are analysed. The final section of this chapter refers to the ethical issues and considerations of the research.

## **The Methodology**

Methodology refers to the nature of research design and methods. Methodology guides the way researchers gain knowledge about the world and instructs the researchers in the way the research is constructed and conducted (Sikes, 2005). Methodology is, therefore, a vital part of any research project because it reflects upon, evaluates and justifies the methods used in the research (Wellington, 2003). The methodology used in a research project is often influenced by the practicality, feasibility, situational factors and also by personal predilections and interests (Sikes, 2005). The methodology and methods employed in research usually rely on the purpose and area of inquiry. The best methodology and methods should be those which meet the research purpose and answer the research questions. In Solbrekke and Karseth (2006)'s study, for example, as the aim of the research was to shed light on some aspects of professional responsibility, the researchers employed qualitative interviews to collect data concerning students' visions of future work and notions of professional responsibility. In another study, entitled *Teachers' Beliefs and Intentions Concerning Teaching in Higher Education*, carried out by Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead and Mayes (2005), a questionnaire was distributed to teachers at four institutions in the United Kingdom as the quantitative data collected would measure different aspects of teachers' beliefs and intentions concerning teaching in higher education.

In other words, the choice of methodology depends on the researchers' philosophical position and their fundamental assumptions concerning the social reality – or ontological assumptions, the nature of knowledge – or epistemological assumptions, and human nature and agency – or assumptions about the interaction between human

beings and their environment (Sikes, 2005). Methodology, as illustrated by Sarantakos (2005), is a strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted. Specifically, a realist or objectivist ontology and empiricist epistemology adopted by most positivists will guide them in their choice of a quantitative methodology, which leads to fixed designs and quantitative methods. On the other hand, a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, adopted by those advocating the symbolic interactionism, phenomenology or ethnomethodology paradigm, will guide them towards a strategy of qualitative methodology with more flexible designs and qualitative methods (Sarantakos, 2005).

In this research I take an ontological position of constructivism which believes that 'social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there', which are independent of people (Bryman, 2004: 266). Generally, constructivism, as defined by Bryman (2004: 17), is 'an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors'. In constructivism, knowledge is viewed as indeterminate, multiple and constructed. Such a social constructivist view would guide me in the way the data are collected for the research, as well as the type of data collected and the sample chosen for the survey and interviews.

It should be noted that theory is the outcome of this research. Instead of starting with a theory as in positivism, I will generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning. In other words, theory will not precede research but follow it and will be grounded on the data generated by the research act, as stated by Glaser and Strauss

(1967). The attempt to generate grounded theory has confirmed a commitment to a qualitative paradigm which leads to the constructivist ontological position of the research. Grounded theory would be obtained through the analysis of qualitative data collected that describe the perspectives of the people being studied on the issue of staff development in universities in Vietnam. The data collected would also reflect the differences in academic development policies in the two typical types of management in universities in Vietnam: public and private. These differences might be observed by outsiders; however, they would also need to be explained by the people involved in the situation. It is necessary to collect subjective accounts and perceptions that explain how the world is experienced and constructed by the people who live in it. As a result of this, the questions for the study were framed in an open-ended way so that participants can express their views. The study, therefore, is of a descriptive and explanatory nature, aiming at collecting deep rather than broad information.

Concerning the nature of knowledge, the assumption is that knowledge is experiential, personal and subjective. With an interpretivist epistemology, the stress of the research is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants. Therefore, considerable emphasis is placed on the accounts given by informants, through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and documentary analysis. These were also the methods employed in similar studies carried out by Dearn, Fraser and Ryan (2002), Smith (2005), Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006), and McTavish (2006). Specifically, in his study on *Departmental Leadership and Management in Chartered and Statutory Universities*, with an aim to examine perceptions of the relative importance of research and teaching among academic staff, Smith (2005) carried out comparative

case studies, using semi-structured interviews as the only method to collect qualitative data that provided a broad picture of educational leadership and management in two different university departments. Dearn et al. (2002), however, used both survey and semi-structured interview techniques to gather quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to capture the informants' opinions and teaching development opportunities, as well as the richness and diversity of their beliefs and perceptions on the provision of professional development for university teaching in Australia. Similarly, McTavish (2006) employed a combination of methods for data collection in his study on *Further Education Management Strategy and Policy* carried out at five Scottish colleges. The research data were collected from in-depth interviews, questionnaires, documentary and other sources, seeking information on management processes within the participants' scope of responsibility, their perceptions and personal views of wider development in sector strategy and policy.

In the final study, a group of American experts, through the auspices of the Vietnam Education Foundation (Director et al., 2006), carried out a multiple case study, qualitative research project on *undergraduate education* of four selected Vietnamese universities, with an aim to assess the current conditions of teaching and learning in three targeted disciplines, and to identify opportunities for improvement and model for change for these institutions, in particular, and higher education institutions in Vietnam in general. In the research, the data were collected through online (web sites of the four universities) and other archival documents (from the Ministry of Education and Training and the four participating universities), interviews (with administrators, academic staff and students of the four universities), observations, and follow-up correspondence. The researchers of these studies believed that on the basis of the

qualitative data collected, they could make an interpretation of what was found from the eyes of others in order to build a picture of what they perceived the world to be.

With such a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, I adopted qualitative methodology as a guide for the research project. The next section presents issues concerning the use of qualitative research as a paradigm.

### **Qualitative Research as a Paradigm**

As argued by Judith Bell (1993: 6), each of the educational research approaches ‘has its strengths and weaknesses and each is particularly suitable for a particular context’. Thus, in order to select an approach as the most appropriate methodology for the research, it is of great importance to understand the advantages and disadvantages of that approach. With qualitative research selected as a research paradigm for the study, this section covers major characteristics of qualitative research as well as its limitations. Qualitative researchers, as seen by Hammersley (1992), share a number of preferences such as a preference for qualitative and naturally occurring data, a preference for meanings rather than behaviour, for inductive hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis testing and a rejection of natural science as a model. These are also viewed by Bryman (2004) as the main preoccupations of qualitative researchers.

### ***Major Characteristics of Qualitative Research***

Qualitative research is concerned with the collection and analysis of data that are not in the form of numbers. Unlike quantitative research which is viewed as objective and focuses on the collection of facts, qualitative research is more subjective and focuses on exploring smaller numbers of instances or examples which are considered as being

interesting and illuminating. In other words, it aims to achieve ‘depth’ rather than ‘breadth’ (Punch, 2005).

A review of the literature on qualitative research methodology suggests a number of distinguished characteristics which emerged from the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research model. First of all, qualitative research takes place in the ‘natural setting’ (Cresswell, 2003: 181; Sarantakos, 2005: 45), through which descriptions and accounts of the processes of social interaction are provided. This characteristic was related to another characteristic described by Bryman (2004: 279) as ‘seeing through the eyes of the research’s participants’. The key subject matter of the social sciences, according to Bryman (2004), is the people because it is reasoned that people as subjects of social sciences, rather than other objects of the natural sciences, can attribute meanings to events and their environment.

The second feature of qualitative research, as defined by Silverman (2001: 8), is that it aims at collecting ‘naturally occurring data’ through observation rather than experiment, or unstructured rather than structured interviews. In other words, the methods of data collection used by qualitative researchers are interactive and humanistic, involving the active participation of the participants in the data collection. Traditional methods of data collection include open-ended observations, interviews and documents. With such methods, the data collected are often in the form of texts (or words) and images (or pictures) rather than numbers (Cresswell, 2003). In the study carried out by Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006), for example, for the purpose of triangulation, various data collection techniques (reviewing documents, interviewing, and observing) were used, in an awareness that

the weaknesses of one data collection technique were counterbalanced by the strengths of the others. It is common belief that 'a deeper understanding of social phenomena' would be obtained from these qualitative methods than from quantitative methods adopted by positivists in quantitative research (Silverman, 2001: 8). However, there is often a mix of the two, as can be found in the studies of Dearn, Fraser and Ryan (2002) and McTavish (2006), since it is believed that the combination of methods would provide the data required to produce a complete piece of research. This explains my preference for employing semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and documents as methods of data collection for the research. The discussion on the usage of those methods will be presented in a later part of this chapter.

Another distinguished characteristic of qualitative research is that it is an inductive, hypothesis-generating research rather than a deductive, hypothesis testing one (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This hypothesis-generating characteristic of qualitative research is reflected in the studies carried out by Dearn, Fraser and Ryan (2002), Smith (2005), Solbrekke and Karseth (2006), McTavish (2006), and Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006). Specifically, Solbrekke and Karseth (2006: 96) employed qualitative interviews and institutional documents to collect data to 'bring to the fore some aspects of professional responsibility' and some 'perspectives on how societal changes influence the normative role of university in educating professionals'. Similarly, the qualitative study carried out by Smith (2005: 463) raised some questions with regards to the findings of other researchers and writers, concerning the notions that 'heads of department are overloaded with work, large departments are difficult to manage and collegiality is the 'preferred' model of

decision making'. In the study of Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006), tentative hypotheses emerged through the constant comparative method used to analyse the data. It was believed that by starting with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document, the research could compare it with another incident in the same or another set of data and through the comparative method of data analysis, the data gradually evolved into a core of emerging theory (Director et al., 2006). It is for this characteristic of hypothesis generating that I employed qualitative research as a paradigm for the study, because the aim of the study is not to prove or test any hypothesis but to collect open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data.

It should also be noted that, in relation to this feature of hypothesis generating, qualitative research is often less structured than other kinds of social research. An advantage of this unstructured nature of qualitative research, Bryman (2004: 283) argued, is that it 'offers the prospect of flexibility'. In other words, as stated by Sarantakos (2005: 45), qualitative research is flexible because 'the design, methods and processes are open to change' and it is also open because 'there is neither strict design nor hypotheses and limits in its focus or operation'.

The above mentioned characteristics of qualitative research, however, give rise to criticisms of this naturalistic and interpretive approach. Criticism or limitations of qualitative research are presented in the next section.

### *Limitations of Qualitative Research*

As mentioned above, the qualitative methodology adopted for the research enables the researcher to develop an understanding of the values, beliefs and behaviour in the context in which the research is conducted. However, qualitative methodology has been criticised for the way in which it perceives reality, people and research; the methods it uses; the politics it supports; and the relationship it establishes with the researched.

First of all, qualitative research is often criticised for being ‘too subjective’ (Bryman, 2004: 284). For this research, the consumers may question that the qualitative findings rely much on the researcher’s views about what is significant and important and why one area of attention was chosen rather than another. The close personal relationships between the researcher and the people studied may have an effect on the researched’s responses and research findings. I had a background of teaching experience for more than ten years at *Ho Chi Minh City Nong Lam University* (formally named the University of Agriculture and Forestry in *Ho Chi Minh City*), a Vietnamese public university based in *Ho Chi Minh City*. In addition, I also worked for the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, Regional Training Centre (SEAMEO RETRAC<sup>25</sup>) as head of the Educational Management Department between 2003 and 2006. The core mission of SEAMEO RETRAC is to assist SEAMEO member countries to identify and address issues of educational management by providing such services as research, training, consultancy, information dissemination, community service, networking and partnership. As head of the Educational Management Department of SEAMEO RETRAC, I had opportunities to meet and discuss with

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<sup>25</sup> SEAMEO RETRAC, one of the fifteen centres of SEAMEO, is based in *Ho Chi Minh City*, Vietnam. The centre’s core mission is to assist SEAMEO member countries to identify and tackle problems of management in education at all levels. More information can be retrieved at <http://www.vnseameo.org>

educational leaders and administrators of universities, both public and private, in Vietnam and in many other countries in the region, the issues and concerns relating to educational management. Personal experiences accumulated while working as a permanent academic staff in a Vietnamese higher education institution and in the field of educational management have enabled me to go into the depth and details of the issues under investigation. Having acquired a solid understanding about the organisational structure of the Vietnamese higher education system, as well as the critical issues of higher education reforms, I did not have to rely on the accounts of the others in the study for the issues under investigation. However, these experiences might also bring some biases to the research. These biases, as described by Sadler (2002: 125), can be related to the researcher's 'background knowledge, prior experience, emotional makeup, or world view'.

The second limitation of qualitative research is that there are problems of generalisation (Bryman, 2004). The findings may not be generalised to a target population of which the sample is representative. In the research, however, there would be a detailed description of the research context, the methods and procedures of data collections, and the knowledge base for data analysis. All of these provided the readers with sufficient information to make judgments of the possibility of transferability of the findings to other contexts.

Beside the issue of generalisability, the research also faced the problem of reliability. It is extremely difficult to conduct a true replication of the research as what the researcher of this study think to be meaningful and interesting might not be viewed the same by other researchers. Even though replication might be carried out, it is also

difficult to produce identical findings since there will be effects of the researcher's characteristics on the participants' responses in the interviews, and the interpretation of the research findings will also rely on the researcher's ingenuity. Interpretation, according to Bryman (1992), is also a problem facing qualitative research. Many questioned the ability of investigators to see through the eyes of other people and to interpret events from their point of view.

Another criticism that is often made of qualitative research is the lack of transparency. Qualitative research is sometimes criticised for not clearly stating how the participants were selected, how the analysis of data was conducted or what the researchers actually did and how the researchers arrived at the conclusions.

In short, an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research is very important to the researcher. Such an understanding will guide the researcher in the planning and designing of the research project so that the strengths of the research strategy will be exploited to its most and the weaknesses reduced in order to obtain the goals and objectives of the study. The next section will describe the design of the research in relation to this qualitative research paradigm.

### **The Research Design**

Research design is defined as the one that provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data, and the choice of the kind of research design is always guided by the research questions (Bryman, 2004). As this research aims to investigate the crucial issues facing staffing and academic staff development in private universities in Vietnam, a comparative design in the form of multiple-case study has been adopted in

relation to a qualitative research strategy. Different types of case studies are used for different research purposes, as distinguished by Yin (2009: 6-7), including *the explanatory or causal* case studies, *exploratory* case studies and *descriptive* case studies. However, according to Bryman (2004), there is another type of case study, called *exemplifying*, which is often chosen because it will provide a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered. With regards to designs of case studies, there are two main types: single-case and multiple-case designs (Yin, 2009: 46). Each design has its own rationale, for example while single-case studies might represent a critical test of existing theory, a rare or unique event, or serve a revelatory purpose, the multiple-case studies might follow a replication, not sampling logic. A number of writers have argued in favour for the use of multiple case studies, stating that it improves theory building and thus the researcher will be in a better position to establish the circumstances in which a theory will or will not hold (Bryman, 2004). This research, therefore, adopted the multiple-case study design based on the ground of *exemplification*.

The research examined four universities in the two major geographical concentration of higher education in Vietnam: *Ha Noi* (in the north) and *Ho Chi Minh City* (in the south). These cases were selected on the basis of their representation of public and private higher education institutions. Specifically, in each of these two metropolitan cities of the country, one public and one private university were selected on the basis of approximately the same size in terms of academic staff and student numbers, fields of study, and length of time in operation. In order to preserve the identity of the research participants and respect their openness and honesty, the names of the institutions participating in this thesis were kept in confidence.

By strategically choosing universities in this way, I can compare the policies of human resource development adopted in both types of institutions as well as their distinguished characteristics. The chief strength of the comparative design is that we can understand social phenomenon better when they are compared in two or more meaningful contrasting situations. According to Bryman (2004), this comparative design allows the distinguished characteristics of some cases (which are public universities in this study) to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections about contrasting findings and may suggest concepts that are relevant to an emerging theory. In addition, comparing two or more cases can also help researchers to establish the circumstances in which a theory will or will not hold (Yin, 2009).

It should also be noted that the design of this study follows what Sarantakos (2005: 113) defined as a flexible qualitative design. This kind of research design includes six major steps and is constructed before the research commences. In the first step, the *research topic and methodology* are selected, which will be used as the basis for the second step, namely the *methodological construction of the topic*. Specifically, as the topic of the research was *Academic Staff Recruitment and Development in Private Universities in Vietnam: In Comparison with Public Universities*, a qualitative methodology was chosen, primarily because the purpose of the study was to explore the topic in general terms and to facilitate descriptions rather than quantitative data.

The second step involves the framing of research questions, the review of related literature and conceptualisation, and the forming of the research strategy and rationale. In this step, the focus of the study shifted to a more specific definition of the research, which is related to the issues of staffing and academic staff development in

one sector of higher education, the private one. The interest is placed on the policies of academic staff development implemented in those private universities and to what extent these policies are efficient in helping these institutions improve their academic staff's capacity in teaching, learning and doing research.

The third step, called the *sampling procedures*, includes the choice of setting, choice of key informants and choice of study groups and events. It was decided that the research would be conducted in four universities selected from the two different sectors in the higher educational system. The rectors, vice-rectors and some of the teaching staff of these four institutions would be the subject of the study. Similar sampling procedures had been carried out in the studies of Smith (2005), Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006), McTavish (2006), and Bennich-Björkman (2007). All of these were comparative studies on higher education institutions, employing case studies as the research design for the qualitative research. A range of criteria was used in the selection of colleges as case studies for the research carried out by McTavish (2006), as well as in the studies of Smith (2005), Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006), and Bennich-Björkman (2007). This was done to ensure that the cases selected represented the higher education sectors, which might include universities that varied in size and locations as in McTavish's study, both medieval and new universities as in Bennich-Björkman's, or chartered and statutory universities as in Smith's studies. In Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera's project, the universities were chosen from two large cities in Vietnam based on the following characteristics: their exemplary undergraduate programmes in the three targeted disciplines (computer science, electrical engineering and physics) and the high number of Vietnam Education

Foundation (VEF) Fellows from these universities' programmes. However, the methods employed for the data collection varied accordingly in each of the research projects. These methods will be mentioned in the next section.

This leads to the fourth step of *data collection* in which the researcher needs to choose the methods, enter the setting and conduct research, record and organise data. Semi-structured interviews would be requested with representatives of the universities including rectors, vice-rectors, and heads of the administration departments of the four institutions selected. Questionnaires would be sent to a sample of the teaching staff in these four institutions. This sample includes both full-time and part-time teachers coming from a wide variety of disciplines and different levels of experience in teaching. In addition, documentary analysis would be employed as a research instrument for data collection. All of these methods were also employed in the studies of McTavish, Smith, Bennich-Björkman, and Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera as mentioned in the previous paragraph. As all of these studies were qualitative, having the intention to be explorative, not to test or develop theories, in-depth interviews were conducted in all of them. However, apart from this method, in McTavish's research, there was a combination of other research methods including questionnaires, documentary and other sources; or in Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera's research project, the data were also collected from other methods such as documentary and observations.

The fifth step concerns the *data analysis and interpretation*, with the data collected being analysed, meanings assigned, and hypothesis formulated. Qualitative analysis, which is mainly descriptive, was employed when analysing the data. In the final step

of *reporting*, a report would be prepared for discussion and publication. In the report, qualitative model would be employed. The next section considers the comparative nature of the research.

### **The Comparative Nature of the Research**

Comparative research in education, as asserted in a classic book, *Comparative Method in Education*, by Bereday (1964: 7), is a field of study that ‘was inaugurated by the first scientifically comparative educator, Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris in 1817’. Although rooted in the nineteenth century, comparative education is still relatively new to academe and yet has attracted a significant number of educational policy makers, administrators of international and domestic programmes, officials of international agencies, academicians and students, mostly at the graduate level (Kelly, Altbach & Arnove, 1982). In a recently established book entitled *Comparative Education Research: Approaches and Methods*, edited by Bray, Adamson and Mason (2007), new insights within the longstanding traditions of comparative education research were introduced, with a focus on the different units of analysis. Intra-national as well as cross-national comparisons were presented and analysed, and the value of approaching themes from different angles was also highlighted in the book (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007). According to Bray (2007), different actors undertake comparative studies of education for different purposes. For example, practitioners like school principals and teachers make comparisons in order ‘to improve the operation of their institutions’, while international agencies carry out comparative study ‘to improve the advice given to national governments and others’, and policy makers might examine education systems of other countries in order ‘to identify ways to achieve social, political and other objectives in their own settings’ (Bray, 2007: 15-

16). However, as argued by Kelly et al. (1982: 508), serving a variety of clientele from educational planners to policy makers and others, comparative education is considered as ‘a means to provide information on policy options in planning educational reform and a benchmark to compare the effectiveness of educational practice.’

Comparative research projects in education can be carried out internationally, or at the macro level, between educational organisations in different countries all over the world, and intranationally, or at the micro level, between schools within countries. In the *Comparative Education Review*, Altbach and Kelly (1986: 1) observed that since 1977 the field of comparative study had broadened and scholars had begun to address intranational as well as transnational comparisons. Bray, Adamson and Mason (2007), in their introduction of the book *Comparative Education Research: Approaches and Methods*, also asserted that the field of comparative education research has moved to embrace much more intranational work, which was a feature of the 1990s and after. Comparisons can be made across a variety of units such as places, systems, cultures, values, educational achievements, policies, curricular, educational organisations, ways of learning and pedagogical innovations (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007). This research does not aim at comparing the differences and similarities of the educational organisations between countries at the macro levels. This is, however, a more narrowly conceived research at the micro-level, aiming at comparing the leadership styles and policies in academic staff development in two different sectors of higher education in the national educational system of Vietnam. The research is carried out in four higher education institutions, which include two public and two private universities.

The purpose of comparing educational organisations, as presented by Dimmock (2007), might be instrumental, trying to understand and account for performance in different settings. There is a desire to know what makes educational organisations relatively successful, whether the key characteristics of their success can be identified and compared to organisational performance elsewhere, and whether these characteristics learned from these successful organisations can be transferable. Comparing organisations might also be done on the basis of pure intrinsic interest, with an academic pursuit of developing theory (Dimmock, 2007). In addition, the major reason for comparing systems of education, according to Bray and Kai (2007: 128), was to avoid the notion of ‘one country, one system’. This goal, as argued by Bray and Kai, can be achieved when comparing technical-vocational schools with academic-grammar schools, Catholic with Protestant schools, or private with public schools. These are the main reasons for me to employ the comparative design for the research, with an aim to explore whether higher education institutions in the two sectors are facing similar issues in staffing and academic staff development, what the current staff development policies are currently employed in the two different sectors of higher education, and to which extent these policies prove to be effective.

Undertaking intra-national comparisons, I may enjoy the practical benefits, such as I can conduct all the work in a single language and in an easy and cheap way, as found by Raffe Brannen, Croxford, and Martin (1999) in their comparative study of the educational systems in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

(the research) is facilitated by a common language, cultural affinities, a common administrative environment and geographical proximity. Costs of travel and communication are lower. Collaboration among UK universities or research institutes, where research is organised and funded along similar lines, is likely to be easier than among institutions in different nation state where these things are organised differently. (p.7)

The flexible model of qualitative research design and the comparative nature of the research give rise to the implementation of research methods for data collection, which will be described in detail in the next two sections: overview of research methods and methods of data collection.

### **The Research Methods**

A research method, as defined by Bryman (2004) is simply a technique for collecting data and it can be associated with different kinds of research design. A research method can involve a specific instrument for collecting data, such as ‘a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, or participant observation’ (Bryman, 2004: 27).

In general, the methods employed by qualitative researchers are similar to those employed by quantitative researchers, but adjusted to meet their methodological standards. The most common feature of qualitative research is that it is subjective and problematic. Qualitative researchers are set close to reality and thus they study reality from the inside, using naturalistic methods to capture the world in action. Qualitative researchers employ open methods of data collection and produce useful qualitative data. These methods aim to express language, and collect thick descriptions, therefore they often present data in the form of words and pictures (Sarantakos, 2005).

The methods associated with qualitative research differ from each other considerably. One of the best-known methods of data collection employed in qualitative research is participant observation, which is favoured by anthropologists (Bryman, 1992; Sarantakos, 2005). Unstructured interviews are also favoured by many qualitative

researchers. In this method, the researchers provide minimal guidance and allow considerable latitudes for interviewees. In addition to these two methods, the other methods associated with qualitative research include focus groups, language-based approaches such as discourse and conversation analysis, and the collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents.

In this thesis, I tried to obtain, to some extent, credibility, or internal validity through the implementation of triangulation of data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and documentary analysis. Triangulation helped produce a greater confidence in the research findings, and thus also ensured the validity of the research instrument. The reasons for selecting these methods of data collection as well as their strengths and limitations will be presented in the next section.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

As mentioned above, in this research, triangulation was employed with the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection including interviews, documentary sources and questionnaires. The reason for me to use multiple sources of data and triangulate the data collected is that they help make the findings or conclusion more convincing and accurate. Multiple sources of evidence collected through the implementation of these research methods essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon. Using multiple sources of evidence and triangulating the data would ensure construct validity and reliability of the case study (Yin, 2009). In this section, each of the methods will be described in terms of its appropriateness to the conduction of the research, the types of documentary sources to

be used, the way the sample for interviews and questionnaires to be selected and the procedures of data collection conducted.

### ***Interviews***

Interviews may be used in both quantitative and qualitative research. According to (Kvale, 1996), there are different types of interviews, depending on the purposes of the interviews, the degree of the interview structure, the nature of the research, whether it is exploratory or hypothesis testing and what exactly the researchers would like to find out. In general, qualitative researchers make use of unstructured or semi-structured interviews, which may also be referred to as in-depth or qualitative interviews, because the best way to find information out about people is to ask them (Yates, 2004). Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 354) stated that one tends to 'veer towards qualitative, open-ended, unstructured interviews' when one 'wishes to acquire unique, non-standardised, personalised information about how individuals view the world'. In unstructured or semi-structured interviews, the researchers provide minimal guidance and allow considerable latitudes for interviewees. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are used when the researchers are interested in the interviewees' point of view and the emphasis is put on the generality in the formulation of initial research ideas and on the interviewees' own perspectives (Bryman, 2004). These two type of interviews have greater flexibility and freedom than other types of interviews, because the content, sequence and wording of the questions being asked in the interviews, according to Cohen, et al., (2000: 273), are 'entirely in the hands of the interviewer'.

In this research, semi-structured interviews were used because, as mentioned earlier, the information needs of the research are for depth rather than breadth. As the semi-structured interviews give insight into what the interviewee views as relevant and important, the researcher, as an interviewer, needs to follow up interesting points raised by the interviewee, making prompts or probing whenever necessary. For this reason, interviews were audio-recorded, with the permission of the interviewees, so that the interviewer would not lose concentration whilst taking notes on what was said. Being recorded, interviews could be easily transcribed for data analysis. Transcriptions were then sent to all interviewees for correction and clarification. Note taking, however, was used to record the information when respondents did not agree for their interviews to be recorded.

The interview questions investigated the missions and functions of the institution (compared to others' in the country and region) as well as the strategic plan of the institution for the next ten years concerning academic staff development. The emphasis of the interviews, however, was placed on the current policies regarding the academic staff recruitment and development. The questions for interviews therefore investigated the interviewees' perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of recruiting academic staff and the constraints facing their institution (as a public or private institution) on academic staff development. The information gathered also covered teaching development support that the institution provided their academic staff, as well as the extent and kinds of support provided to academic staff to conduct research at the institution. The interviews also gave a chance to explore the interviewees' aspirations for the future of the institution and their expectations from the government or Ministry of Education and Training in order to support their

institution in the development of its academic staff (See [Appendix D](#) for the interview questions).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with rectors of the four universities selected as case studies for the research. In addition, lower levels of management in the four institutions, such as vice-rectors or heads of the administration departments, were also requested for the interviews. Contacts with interviewees had been made before fieldwork was conducted, so that I could explain purposes of the study and the plans for data collection. In addition, these contacts enabled me to make interview arrangements with them personally and at the same time gain their approval and assistance to conduct the questionnaire with academic staff under their respective authority. These contacts were facilitated by introduction and recommendation letters ([See Appendix A](#)) from my supervisor at work, who is Director of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Training Centre (SEAMEO RETRAC), an organisation belonging to the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam.

All of the interviews were carried out in the form of face-to-face conversations. As a form of communication, the interviews allowed the researcher to clarify questions by prompting and probing the respondents' answers. This helped provide the researcher with information that a written response would conceal. In addition, it allowed the researcher to pick up non-verbal cues such as facial and bodily expressions, which were addressed as the '*interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional* aspects of the interview' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007: 362).

The locations of the interviews were negotiated by the researcher and the respondents. Most of them were conducted in the respondents' offices or at a place that the respondents feel comfortable and secure to talk freely (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The language used in all interviews was Vietnamese, and the transcriptions, after being verified with interviewees, were translated into English by the researcher. Each of the interviews lasted approximately from one to two hours. Ethical dimension of interviews was also borne in mind when conducting interviews with respondents. Ethical aspects of interviewing, such as informed consent and guarantees of confidentiality, are fully discussed later in this chapter.

It can be said that semi-structured, or in-depth, interviews have become a popular method of data collection in qualitative research. Whether to use in-depth interviews or other methods of data collection (or a combination of interviews and other methods) depends to a large extent on the relative suitability of the research questions being addressed. Since semi-structured interview was selected as an instrument for data collection for the research, the researcher must bear in mind the strengths of the technique as well as its shortcomings in order to be able to make the most of this technique in the search for data for the research. The next section will be a presentation of another qualitative method of data collection, documentary sources.

### ***Documentary Sources***

Documentary sources used in qualitative research may refer to materials that are in both the written and visual forms and can be used for research as they are found (Bryman, 2004; Cortazzi, 2002). Documentary sources include personal documents such as diaries, letters, and autobiographies; official documents derived from both the

State and private sources; mass media outputs; and virtual outputs such as internet sources (Bryman, 2004). As defined by Wellington (2003), whilst observations, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and so on are categorised as *primary sources* of data, documents act as *secondary sources*. These secondary sources might include both documents which are initiated or elicited by the researchers (such as diaries and logs) and pre-existing documents (such as government reports, census data, school/college reports and prospectuses). Documentary sources can be used as the major method or they can be used as a subsidiary form of research, for example to provide triangulation within a case study (Cortazzi, 2002).

Documentary sources used in this research were mainly obtained from ministerial offices, the MOET Publishing House, the Library of General Sciences in Ho Chi Minh City, and from the institutions involving in the research. These documentary sources provided information concerning policies and issues of human resource development. The documents also acted as an excellent source of additional data, especially when they were used in connection with other methods of data collection such as interviews and questionnaires. As most of the documents were publicly accessible, the use of documentary sources formed an excellent means of triangulation, increasing the trustworthiness of research. Specifically, the documentary sources included:

- Legislative laws and governmental decrees such as the *Law on State Officials and Civil Servants (Phap lenh can bo cong chuc)* which was released in February 1998; the *Decree of Recruitment and Management of Civil Servants (Nghì dinh ve tuyen dung, su dung va quan ly cong chuc)* released in November 1998; the *Law of Education (Luat Giao duc)* passed by the

Vietnamese National Assembly in November 1998, and the *Amended Education Law* adopted by the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Eleventh Legislature, Seventh Session, on 14 June 2005, in which rights and functions of higher education staff are defined;

- Decisions of the Government concerning national education in general and higher education in particular, including *Decision 93/CP* relating to the reconstruction of the Vietnamese system of national education, which was put in operation since 1993; *Decision 122/2006/QĐ-TTg* on transferring *people founded* higher education institutions into the *private* sector, which was signed on 29 May 2006; and the *Decision 146/2006/QĐ-TTg* on transferring *semi-public* universities into *private* ones, signed on 22 June 2006;
- Decrees produced by the MOET, including *Decree 647/GDDT* on 14 February 1997 and *Decree 2138/GDDT* on 28 June 1997, regarding regulations and principles of postgraduate education in Vietnam; and *Guide on Strategic Development of Vietnamese Higher Education by the year 2020* in September 1998;
- Official announcements and statistical information relating to higher education and administrative matters retrieved from the official website of the MOET <http://moet.gov.vn>, or the Vietnamese educational network website <http://www.edu.net.vn>;
- Printed materials from institutions involving in the research relating to administrative matters and personnel management;
- Conference proceedings and reports on Vietnamese higher education comprising the *World Conference on Higher Education* organised by UNESCO in 1998, the proceedings of *Regional Seminar on Higher Education*

*in Southeast Asian Countries: A Current Update*, held by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED) in 2005.

Almost all of these pre-existing documents can be unobtrusively obtained at low cost, easily stored and readily re-analysed. However, there are also disadvantages in using documentary sources as a method of data collection. As documents were used as data for the research, I was aware that the research purpose may be different from the purposes behind the original document (Cortazzi, 2002). In addition, the relation of the document to its social context must be considered, as documents do not simply arise without a context and clearly reflect the reality of that context.

There is also a matter of the selection of documents. According to Duffy (1993), because of constraints of time, there needs to be a balance in the selection of documents. As it is impossible for the researcher to analyse everything, it was important that the researcher had to decide what to select, so that what was fundamental and significant to the project was not left out. However, in order to avoid bias, documents were not selected on the basis of merely supporting the researcher's own views or hypotheses. Selecting and analysing documents is not less time-consuming than collecting primary data. In addition, researchers also need to have considerable interpretative skills to ascertain the meaning of the materials selected for the research (Bryman, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, in addition to these two qualitative methods of data collection, questionnaires were also employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the

research. The description of how this method was used could be found in the next section.

### *Questionnaires*

The questionnaire is also a popular method of data collection in social research. According to Anderson (1998), with a well-constructed questionnaire, researchers can gather reliable and reasonably valid quantitative and qualitative data in a simple, cost efficient and timely manner. As respondents of the questionnaire must read and answer the questions themselves, this type of research instrument was designed in a way that is especially easy for respondents to follow, and the questions have to be especially easy to answer so that not a single question will be omitted (Bryman, 2004).

The questionnaire in this research aimed at understanding the perspectives, attitudes and experiences of school leaders, administrators, department heads, and lecturers on issues relating to the academic staff development in Vietnamese universities. A numerical description of the research issues would be gathered by the questionnaire. The questionnaire, therefore, consisted of questions grouped in six parts (See [Appendix E](#)). The first part (part A) covered the demographic background of participants. This part asked participants about their gender, age and academic title, qualifications obtained, their length of employment, and their status of employment such as part-time or full-time. Part B explored the information on participants' current teaching situation, concerning the number of teaching subjects and the number of teaching hours for a course in an academic year, as well as the average class size in one of their teaching subjects. This part also asked participants if the institution

provided them with any support for their teaching responsibilities, and apart from teaching, what other duties they have at the institution.

The next three parts consist of questions concerning participants' knowledge of and reflections on the policies of human resource management and development in their own institution. These questions focused on the current forms of preparing staff for their teaching role as well as the forms of continuing teacher education; teaching supports for academic staff provided by the university, and the way in which effective teaching can be recognised. Specifically, part C was concerned with the personal and professional development of academic staff, part D required information on resources for professional development and part E dealt with conducting research at the institution.

The last part covers questions inquiring participants' views and suggestions on the current human resource management policies so that high quality of teaching in their institutions could be maintained and improved.

The questionnaires included a mixture of Likert-type questions and open-ended questions. The Likert-type questions provided participants options for their degree of agreement and importance. However, most of the questions are open-ended, giving the participants opportunities to contribute their opinions and perceptions where applicable by expressing themselves in their own words. The language used in the questionnaire was Vietnamese, which was later translated into English by the researcher.

The questionnaires were distributed to sixty academic staff at a private university in *Ho Chi Minh* City during the pilot study. The teachers were randomly chosen from the list of 115 fulltime and part-time teachers (provided by the rector of the university) who were teaching at that university at the time of the pilot study. The questions in the questionnaire were later revised before the questionnaires were administered to 185 academic staff at the four selected institutions in *Ha Noi* and *Ho Chi Minh* City. The sample population should ensure an equal number of male and female, and from different levels of administration. The questionnaires were delivered to respondents in consultation with the heads of their departments. A letter of transmittal (See [Appendix A](#)), written and sealed by the Director of SEAMEO RETRAC where I worked as a staff member, together with a returning stamped and addressed envelope, was also enclosed in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was anonymous as the respondents' names were not identified.

The questionnaire offered considerable advantages in administration. Firstly, it enjoyed cost advantages, especially when it was administered to a geographically widely dispersed population. Wilson (1998) argued that the chief advantage of questionnaires over interview-led methods is that it is cheaper and also quicker to administer. Secondly, as the questionnaire was self-completed by respondents, the answers of the respondents would not be affected by the characteristics of the researchers, or interviewers as in the interviewing technique. In addition, the questionnaire was convenient for respondents since they could complete it at any speed and at any time that was most convenient for them (Bryman, 2004).

Another advantage of the questionnaire, as stated by Wellington (2003), is that as the questionnaire is often associated with the collection of quantitative data, the analysis of such data is straightforward and it can be greatly enhanced by the use of a computer package such as SPSS. Even when qualitative data are collected by a postal questionnaire, they may also be richer and more truthful than data collected in a face-to-face interview (Wellington, 2003).

The questionnaire, however, suffers a number of disadvantages. One of the disadvantages of the questionnaire is that it cannot be prompted or probed. As there will be no researchers or interviewers there for respondents to ask if they find the questions difficult to understand and to answer, the questions asked must be clear, unambiguous and easy to answer (Bryman, 2004). Another disadvantage of the questionnaire, according to Bryman (2004), is that questions that are not salient to respondents cannot be asked. This is to avoid the risk that the respondents will feel bored with it and consign it to the waste paper bin. As mentioned above, in order to reduce respondent fatigue, the questionnaire should not be too long, thus it is difficult to ask many questions.

In addition, with postal questionnaires, one can never know for sure whether the required respondent actually completed the questionnaire (Wilson, 1998). There will also be a great risk of missing data since respondents may skip questions that appear to be irrelevant or boring to them. The response rates of the questionnaire are usually low and this is also viewed as a particularly important problem in questionnaire investigations, according to Wilson (1998). Low response rates in the questionnaire

can lead to the risk of bias, as it is argued that those who do not return the questionnaire may have different responses from those who do (Bryman, 2004).

In brief, every data collection instrument has its own strengths and weaknesses. One cannot say that this instrument of data collection is superior to another or vice versa. Depending on the nature and context of the research as well as the research questions raised, the researcher decided the type of data that need to be collected. Based on this, a decision on the data collection procedures and instruments that are most appropriate for the unit being studied was made. While the interviews helped the researcher to collect qualitative data relating to perspectives of educational leaders on crucial issues of staffing and academic staff development facing their institutions, the documents provided the researcher valuable information on the academic staff development policies implemented at these public and private universities. Questionnaires were used to collect information from the perspectives of academic staff on the staffing issues and policies implemented at their own institution. The information gathered from questionnaires also sought the respondents' evaluation of and suggestion for the human resource development activities at their institution under present circumstances. The information from questionnaires, in triangulation with the interview data and documents, gave a deeper understanding and description of the current staffing situation at these institutions. The procedures of data collection will be presented in the next section.

### **Procedures of Data Collection**

As the case studies for the research include Vietnamese universities, field research was conducted in Vietnam during the period from November 2007 to February 2008.

This period of time for fieldwork was carefully considered to avoid the period of student recruitment and examinations at most of Vietnamese higher education institutions during which academic staff and educational leaders have to concentrate on the administration and grading of entrance or end-of-course examinations (an academic year normally starts in September and the first semester of the academic year normally ends by January). The first few weeks of November 2007 were the preparation period for the research fieldwork and documentation collection. Before conducting interviews with leaders of institutions and delivering questionnaires to their academic staff, a pilot study was carried out at a private university in *Ho Chi Minh* City, south of Vietnam. The next section gives a brief description of the procedure of how and when the pilot study was conducted.

### ***Conducting the Pilot Study***

The pilot study was conducted in a private university in *Ho Chi Minh* City from 27 November to 4 December 2007. There were several reasons for this institution to be chosen for the pilot study. First of all, as the institution was located in *Ho Chi Minh* City where I live and work, it was economically beneficial as it saved me from spending time and traveling costs to the site to carry out the pilot study. Secondly, while working as head of the Educational Management Department of SEAMEO RETRAC, I developed strong working relationship with the institutional leaders and colleagues at the institution, which would warrant productive co-operation from them.

Interviews were conducted with the rector and vice-rector of the university. A sample of respondents was also selected for the questionnaire. This sample comprised of sixty academic staff who were selected from the list of 115 academic staff provided by the

institution. These included an equal number of male and female lecturers who came from different departments, having different titles, qualifications and different levels of experience in teaching. These variables would help me gain a variety of information about the respondents' perceptions on human resource management policies of the institution. Fifty questionnaires were returned from this group.

Based on the feedback of the interviews and the questionnaires returned from this group, the wording and sentence structure of the questions in the interviews and questionnaires were modified. The questions for interviews, for example, were shortened and sharpened with a focus on perspectives of interviewees on their academic staff development policies, as well as their strategic plan for the next ten years concerning academic staff development. Information relating to missions or functions of the institution and procedures of academic staff recruitment and development could be found from documents provided later by the interviewees or from the institution's website. The modification of wording and sentence structure in the questionnaire made it more comprehensible to local respondents so that they could express their views accurately on the issues investigated.

The pilot study was followed by the interviews and a questionnaire survey at the four selected universities in *Ho Chi Minh City* and *Ha Noi* from December 2007 to January 2008. It is worth mentioning that while conducting fieldwork in Vietnam, I had an opportunity to work with one more university, located in a province which is 202 kilometres southwest of *Ho Chi Minh City*. This university was recently upgraded from a community college to a university status in June 2006. The university operates under the governmental management of the People's Committee of this province, not

directly under the Ministry of Education and Training like the other four universities previously chosen as case studies for the research. Data collected from interviews with its leaders and questionnaires delivered to its staff helped me to explore the issues under investigation with deeper understanding and from more objective perspectives. The data collection at these five institutions began with interviews with leaders of the institutions (who are rectors and vice-rectors of the institutions). The time schedule for interviews was illustrated in Table 4.1. In all cases, I was allowed to tape-record the conversations. Some arrangements for interviews with rectors of some institutions had to be canceled at last minutes since the interviewees had urgent activities to deal with and could not manage to meet with the interviewer as previously planned.

**Table 4.1: Time Schedule for Interviews with Leaders of Institutions**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Pilot University</b>	27/11/2007	Rector
	04/12/2007	Vice-rector
<b>1<sup>st</sup> University</b>	14/12/2007	Rector Head of the Administration Department Deputy Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Development
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> University</b>	17/12/2007	Head of the Department of Politics, Administration, and Student Affairs
<b>3rd University</b>	19/12/2007	Rector
		Head of the Administration Department
<b>4<sup>th</sup> University</b>	20/12/2007	Head of the Institution
<b>5<sup>th</sup> University</b>	04/01/2008	Vice-rector
		Head of the Administration Department

Questionnaires were distributed to academic staff of each institution on the same day or the day after the interviews with its leaders. The schedule of distributing and returning of questionnaires was illustrated in Table 4.2. Out of totally 295 questionnaires distributed (including the questionnaires distributed to academic staff at the pilot institution), 214 returned resulting a response rate of 72.5%. Each questionnaire was accompanied by an introductory letter, briefly describing the purpose of the research and confidentiality issues, thanking the respondents and signed by the researcher. My email address was included in the letter so that respondents could contact me for further information about the research. A self-

addressed stamped envelope was also enclosed in each questionnaire for respondents to return the completed questionnaire. Most of the questionnaires were returned to the researcher in stamped envelopes provided. However, in some institutions, the questionnaires were returned to an office administrator of the institution (in sealed envelopes), who later sent them all to the researcher.

**Table 4.2: Time Schedule for Questionnaire Delivery and Rates of Response**

Institutions	Distributed		Returned		Response rates
	Date	Number	Date	Number	
<b>Pilot University</b>	28/11/2007	60	10/12/2007	50	83%
<b>1<sup>st</sup> University</b>	14/12/2007	50	31/12/2007	39	78%
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> University</b>	18/12/2007	50	03/01/2008	32	64%
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> University</b>	19/12/2007	50	03/01/2008	35	70%
<b>4<sup>th</sup> University</b>	20/12/2007	35	03/01/2008	27	77%
<b>5<sup>th</sup> University</b>	05/01/2008	50	21/01/2008	31	62%
<b>Total</b>		295		214	72.5%

Documents were gathered in forms of hard copies before, during and after meeting with leaders of these institutions. Some documents were also retrieved from the websites of institutions. In the next section, there will be a description of the methods of data analysis.

## **Methods of Data Analysis**

The study implemented a triangulation of methods of data collection, resulting in the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. However, qualitative methods were chosen as the dominant of the study. As a result of this choice, qualitative methods would be considered as the glue that cements the interpretation of multi-method results (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data analysis started from the beginning of data collection, as suggested by qualitative researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on the perspectives of qualitative ‘grounded theory’ approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), eventual theory would be grounded from the data which were systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. Data collection and analysis, in this grounded theory, proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other. An important step in analysing data is to have the interview tapes transcribed. After that, transcriptions were sent to interviewees by fax or via email for clarification and correction should there be any incorrect or irrelevant information. As soon as I received feedback from interviewees on the transcriptions of the interviews, the analysis process began.

Coding, which was considered one of the most central processes in grounded theory, was employed in the process of analysing qualitative data for the research. Open coding, defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as ‘the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data’, was used to categorise qualitative data gathered from interviews, questionnaires and documents. Qualitative data gathered from interviews and documentary sources were later triangulated with categories and patterns from the questionnaires. In addition, quantitative data

collected from questionnaires were used for illustration and clarification of qualitative findings as well as for validation of qualitative analysis.

Following the qualitative data coding step, I delineated units of general meanings which were relevant to the research questions, as suggested by Hycner (1999). These units of relevant meaning were later grouped into themes or clusters which proved to be very useful for me in the presentation and discussion of the research findings.

### **Ethical Issues and Considerations**

The term '*ethics*', as defined by Wellington (2003: 54), refers to the 'moral principles, guiding conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession'. Ethics of social research refers to respect for human dignity. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 56) stated, 'whatever the specific nature of their work, social researchers must take into account the effects of the research on participants and act in such a way to preserve their dignity as human beings.' Specifically, ethical issues in educational research concern the insurance of anonymity of the respondents and the confidentiality of their responses (Fogelman, 2002).

Wellington (2003) implied that an educational research project could be unethical in different areas, from the design or planning of the research, the methods employed for data collection, the data analysis, to the presentation or the reporting, and the findings, or conclusions and recommendations of the research. For this reason, Wellington (2003) suggested that every researcher should place ethics foremost in the planning, conduct and presentation of his/her research. Thus ethical principles should give guidance to the researchers in what they ought to and ought not to do in their research.

Maintaining ethical standards is an obligation required in the research of students and professionals alike. A first principle of research ethics, as argued by Sapsford and Abbott (1998), is that the subjects (or the respondents) of the research should be protected from harm. Thus, researchers generally promise respondents anonymity and confidentiality in their interviewing projects. Anonymity and confidentiality are defined by Sapsford and Abbott:

As we are using the term, confidentiality is a promise that you will not be identified or presented in identifiable form, while anonymity is a promise that even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondent. (1998: 319)

Anonymity, as suggested by Keats (2000), should be offered and maintained as it will free the interviewee from voicing opinions and give more reliable and valid information than if the respondent's identity is revealed. However, what is important is whatever is promised by the researchers does actually happen. Keats (2000) also suggested that these ethical standards should be maintained, but they should not be promised if they cannot be carried out, as the respondents may have a sense of being tricked or betrayed if they found out after being interviewed that the promise has not been kept and their identity has been revealed.

As interviewing is used as a means of data collection for the research, the three areas of ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration are informed consent, confidentiality and the consequences of the interviews (Kvale, 1996: 111-120). Therefore, before carrying out the interviewing with representatives of the institutions selected for the study, ethical approval had been obtained and informed consent had been approved from participants of the research ([See Appendix C](#)). The interviewees were later given opportunities to verify their statements when the research was in

draft form. Finally, the interviewees also received a copy of a final report of the research. In addition, in the presentation of the research findings, participants' anonymity and confidentiality had been ensured since only participants' viewpoints were presented in the discourse analysis. All of these had been done as they are considered the conditions and guarantees of ethics proffered for a school based research project (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

In addition, as questionnaires were also distributed to the teaching staff of the institutions, the respondents were assured in the covering letter ([See Appendix B](#)) that no attempt would be made to identify any individual respondent, and their responses to the questionnaire were anonymous. As clearly described in the procedure of the survey, the respondents' completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher in sealed envelopes. Finally, in its presentation, not any names of the participants nor those of their institutions were mentioned and the participants' identities were ensured non-traceable. In addition, no information relating to the nature or history of the institutions was provided in the published results and the institutions were simply referred to as Institutions A-D, which assured that the respondents' departments, faculties, and institutions would not be identified. This was done to guarantee to the most extent the anonymity and confidentiality of participants taking part in the studies and the ethics of the research is highly assured. However, the researcher is aware that it is difficult to make an institution completely unidentifiable because with specific data information concerning the number of students and teachers, as well as specialised characteristics of each institutions, as described and analysed in the chapters of data analysis and discussion, one might be able to chase the names of these institutions by comparing with information posted on their own web sites.

## **Conclusions**

The chapter has presented the methodology and methods of the research. Starting with a presentation of the epistemology and ontology of the research, the chapter gave a rationale for conducting the research in the qualitative paradigm. A description of the multiple case study adopted as the research design was included. The comparative nature of the research has been discussed, with its strengths and benefits analysed. This explained why comparative nature has been employed as a research design for this thesis. The chapter has also discussed in detail the methods of data collection for the study, addressing the strengths and weaknesses of each of the techniques. The triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative data would enable the researcher to crosscheck data obtained from various sources, to increase validity, to discover different dimensions of phenomena, and to better understand the context of study. The chapter has presented how the pilot study was conducted, together with the procedures of conducting the interviews and survey for the research. Finally, methods of analysis, ethical issues and considerations in the research have been discussed. The next chapter presents the data collected through the combination of the three methods of data collection employed in this research.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Introduction

In this chapter I present the data collected from six universities in Vietnam, three of which are private (including the private institution where the pilot study was conducted). The chapter is concerned primarily with describing issues of academic staff development and the policies implemented in Vietnamese universities. The data, collected during fieldwork in Vietnam between November 2007 and February 2008, are used as the main source of information. Apart from the data gathered from four main case studies, the data collected from the pilot study and from the additional provincial University (as presented on [page 150](#)) are also included in the data analysis. The data are presented as a combination of interviews, questionnaires and documentation, focused on the three research questions:

1. What are the crucial issues of staffing and academic staff development facing public and private universities in Vietnam?
2. What academic staff development policies have private universities implemented?
3. To what extent have these policies proved to be effective, as perceived by the leaders of private universities and their academic staff?

In order to address these questions, the chapter compares the public and private sectors, using standards of academic staff development in the public sector as the benchmark<sup>26</sup>. There are difficulties with the comparison, however, as public education

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<sup>26</sup> The reason for using standards of staff development in the public sector as the benchmark for the comparison was illustrated in Chapter One, [page 28](#).

has been long established whilst the private sector is relatively new<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless the comparison does at least provide an aspirational target for the private universities. For reasons of confidentiality the three private institutions participating in the research will be referred to as Institution NA, NB, NC and the three public institutions as Institution PD, PE and PF.

### **What are the Crucial Issues of Staffing and Academic Staff Development Facing Public and Private Universities in Vietnam?**

This section presents the current teaching situation, academic staff recruitment and development in universities across both sectors.

#### ***The Current Teaching Situation***

In each of the institutions involved in the research, the academic staff were perceived as the most important force, ‘a driving force for the institutions to reach the global standards on education and training’, as stated in the website of public institution PE. However, in the current teaching situation in each of the institutions, there were certainly outstanding issues which concerned the teaching staff. These ranged from the number of academic staff, the qualifications they held, the ratio of academic staff to students, and the total number of teaching hours that any single lecturer had to carry out in an academic year. Each of the issues mentioned may, to some extent, affect the quality of teaching and learning at a specific institution. In this section, these issues will be presented. The data used were derived from the websites of the institutions participating, from questionnaires delivered to academic staff and through interviews with key informant leaders of the institutions.

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<sup>27</sup> The oldest university participating in the research was established in 1956, whilst in the private sector, the oldest was established in 1988. Among the six institutions, there are two universities (one from each sector) upgraded from colleges in 2006.

### *The Number of Academic Staff in Each Institution*

Forty five new higher education (HE) institutions were established or upgraded from junior colleges in Vietnam between 2005 and 2007. However, the number of university lecturers has not been increased correlatively to meet the need of teaching at HE institutions. (To teach at junior colleges, academic staff need only a bachelor's degree, which will not be of appropriate quality when their institutions are upgraded to universities, as university lecturers must have at least a master's degree.) The result is a shortage of qualified academic staff in many HE institutions. As regulated by the MOET, in order for a HE institution to be established, there must be at least 30% full-time academic staff<sup>28</sup> (or *Giang vien Co huu*), which is hard to achieve for many institutions. Therefore, in many HE institutions, especially those recently established, the list of full-time academic staff often includes names of lecturers who are 'borrowed' from other institutions (Phuc An, 2008). For instance, Prof *Thai Ba Can*, Rector of the University of Technology in Ho Chi Minh City, said: "if the MOET has time to investigate, they can find out that on many occasions, one lecturer may be working *full-time* at two or even three different universities at the same time" (Phuc An, 2008).

As a result of the lack of appropriate preparation for the academic staff for HE, in many recently established provincial private universities, the academic staff included those who were also teaching currently in the public sector. The severe shortage of

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<sup>28</sup> For recognition as a full-time academic staff member, candidates must meet the general requirements in accordance with Education Law (as defined in Article 61 and 63), MOET regulations and university statutes. Specifically, university lecturers must perform such tasks as (1) performing teaching duties and educational tasks at tertiary level (junior-college, undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate); (2) doing research; (3) involving in administrative and management activities at the tertiary institution; (4) constantly studying and engaging in on-going professional development; (5) participating in social activities and being exemplary in fulfilling the citizen's duties (The National Assembly, 27 June 2005).

highly qualified teaching staff in newly-established universities and colleges was the most pressing problem in improving the quality of education, admitted Banh Tien Long, Deputy Minister of Education (VNS, 2008a).

In each of the institutions involved in the research, the number of academic staff ranged from 170 to more than 1000 (See Table 5.1), depending on the current total number of students registered in each institution and the load of teaching that the institution had to carry out.

**Table 5.1: Number of Academic Staff in Public and Private Universities According to Full-Time and Part-Time Status (2007-2008)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Total number of staff</b>	<b>Full-time staff</b>	<b>Part-time<sup>29</sup> staff</b>
<b>NA</b>	170	68 (40%)	102 (60%)
<b>NB</b>	347	111 (32%)	236 (68%)
<b>NC</b>	205	105 (51.2%)	100 (48.8%)
<b>PD</b>	491	191 (38.9%)	300 (61.1%)
<b>PE</b>	1167	697 (59.7%)	470 (40.2%)
<b>PF</b>	502	275 (54.8%)	227 (45.2%)

*Source:* Interview data and websites of institutions taking part in the research.

In the public sector, all institutions had the number of full-time academics that met the requirement of the MOET (30%, minimum). Institution PE had the highest percentage of full-time academic staff (59.7%). In institution PD, the number of full-time

<sup>29</sup> The number of part-time academic staff presented here is for the academic year 2007-2008 only. The number may change depending on the actual requirement of the teaching load for each academic year in each institution.

academic staff occupied only 38.9% of all academic staff. As confirmed by the head of the administration department of this institution:

*“The rest of the academic staff (61.1% of the total academic staff) in our institution includes academics with post-graduate qualifications, who are invited to come to teach at the institution on a part-time basis.”*

However, the vice-rector of this institution said they would try to have between 50% and 60% full-time academic staff over the next few years. In institution PF, in the plan for human resource development of the institution for the next five years, the priority was given to the development of full-time academic staff, both in quality (referring to the quality of teaching and qualification) and quantity, so that they could undertake approximately 60% of the teaching hours of the whole institution.

In the private sector, of all the three private universities, institution NC had the highest number of full-time academics, occupying 51.2% of the total number of academic staff (See Table 5.1). As stated by the rector of this institution:

*“We now have 105 full-time academics who have so far covered 60% of the total load of teaching. However, as required by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), full-time academics of a HE institution should be able to cover 70% of the teaching load, we plan to increase the number of full-time academics in the next five years so that they can undertake 70% of the total load of teaching as required.”*

Beside illustrating the concern about the number of full-time academic staff, this statement also tells us something about the priority of ‘teaching’ in HE institutions in Vietnam. Full-time academic staff must spend the majority of their time on teaching (at their own institution or at many other institutions) rather than on research or other academic activities. This issue will be referred to later in the section on academic staff development.

In institution NA, there were 68 full-time academics out of 170 (40% of the total academics), undertaking nearly 40% of the total load of teaching. This institution planned that, by 2010, the number of full-time academic staff would increase 44% more so that it would be able to cover 70% of the total load of teaching at the institution. Similarly, in institution NB, the head of the department of politics, administration, and student affairs confirmed:

*“In the next five to ten years, the institution plans to increase the number of full-time teaching staff so that they can undertake 60% to 65% of the total teaching hours.”*

Another issue was the number of full-time academic staff with post-graduate degrees. It should be noticed that there are not many lecturers with doctoral degrees anywhere in the country, and the number of doctoral degree holders has decreased as many of them have retired or are about to retire. In a survey conducted at thirty five HE institutions in the country in 1991, Pham and Sloper (1995) found that all professors and 96.69 % of associate professors were over fifty one years old, and that 70.42% of doctorate holders and 41.04% of candidate of science degree holders were older than fifty one years old. These people would have approached the age of retirement by 2000. According to the *Labour Law* in Vietnam, women should retire at the age of fifty five, five years earlier than men. It was also found that there was a rapid decline in the number of Vietnamese academics going abroad to socialist countries for postgraduate degrees in the 1980s (T.N. Pham & Sloper, 1995).

In a more recent study on *Foreign-trained Academics and the Development of Vietnamese Higher Education since Doi moi*, Doan (2000) indicated that a large proportion of academic staff were trained in the former Soviet Union and other socialist Eastern European countries from 1960s to 1980s. However, by the end of

1980s, the number of scholarships from socialist countries was cut down to five per cent of the annual intake of previous years (Doan, 2000: 138). With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Vietnam suffered a massive reduction of foreign aid from socialist countries; specifically, 50% of overseas study scholarships were cut in 1990 and more than 90% in 1991 (p.151). These figures helped to explain the gap in the age profile of academic staff holding postgraduate degrees in HE institutions in Vietnam. Recently, in order to tackle the severe shortage of highly-educated teaching staff, the MOET proposed a strategy to send 10% of academic staff overseas to attain doctoral degrees and 15% for master degrees, according to Banh Tien Long, Deputy Minister of Education (VNS, 2008a). As confirmed by Banh Tien Long, the number of academic staff seeking doctoral degrees overseas has been increasing steadily: 1,352 in 2005, 1,249 in 2006, and up to 1,402 in 2007 (Vietnamnet Bridge, 2008).

In the academic year 2006-2007, there were 12.4% doctoral degree holders<sup>30</sup> (6,037 doctoral degree holders out of 48,579 university lecturers) while the number fell to 10.9% (5,882/53,518) in 2007-2008, as shown in the website of MOET (Vietnam Edu.net<sup>31</sup>, 2008). The number of academic staff with doctoral degrees in most of the institutions involved in the research (except institution PF), as shown in Table 5.2, was higher than the average number of doctoral degree holders for the whole country. However, these ratios of academic staff with doctoral degrees were still low if compared to the targeted level for 2010 at 25%, as proposed in the plan to prepare 20,000 lecturers with doctoral degrees by 2020 by the MOET.

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<sup>30</sup> The number of lecturers with doctoral degree holders includes those with candidate degrees (*Pho Tien Sy*), who have been officially recognised as full doctorate holders by the Decree 1013/CP-KG signed on 20 September 1999 by the Prime Minister.

<sup>31</sup> Available at <http://edu.net.vn/thongke/dhcd.htm#gv> retrieved on 25 June 2008

**Table 5.2: Number of Full-Time Academic Staff in Public and Private Universities According to Qualifications<sup>32</sup> (2007-2008)**

Institution	Number of academics	Academics with only BA, BSc degrees		Academics with post-graduate degrees			
				M. Phil or Master degrees		Doctoral degrees	
NA	170 (total)	17	(10%)	102	(60%)	51	(30%)
	68 (full-time)	1	(1.5%)	47	(69.1%)	20	(29.4 %)
NB	111 (full-time)	48	(43.2%)	48	(43.2%)	15	(13.5%)
NC	105 (full-time)	38	(36.2%)	49	(46.7%)	18	(17.1%)
PD	191 (full-time)	40	(20.9%)	115	(60.2%)	36	(18.8%)
PE	697 (full-time)	192	(27.5%)	398	(57.1%)	107	(15.3%)
PF	275 (full-time)	224	(81.5%)	49	(17.8%)	2	(0.7%)

*Source:* Interview data and websites of institutions taking part in the research.

Table 5.2 showed that in the public sector, institution PF had the lowest number of full-time academics with qualifications higher than university bachelor degrees: only 51 out of 275 academics had post-graduate degrees, occupying a percentage of 18.5 out of the total. Among these 51 academics with post-graduate degrees, there were only two doctoral degree holders. Institution PE had a higher percentage (72.4%) of full-time academics with post-graduate degrees. Doctoral degree holders in institution PE represented 15.3%. Of the three public institutions, PD had the highest percentage of full-time academics with post-graduate degrees (79%), of which 60.2% academics had master's degrees and 18.8% had doctoral degrees (See Table 5.2).

<sup>32</sup> The qualification levels expressed in Table 5.2 are not mutually exclusive, e.g. those with a doctoral degree shown in the last column also have a BA/BSc degree or/and post-graduate degrees, which refer to M.Phil or master's degrees.

In the private sector, institution NA reported a very high number of academics with post-graduate degrees. As confirmed by the vice-rector of the institution, “there are about 90% (153 academics, See Table 5.2 above) of all the academics teaching at undergraduate level have master’s and doctoral degrees, the rest (10% of full time academics) only have diplomas or university bachelor’s degrees or are studying for a post-graduate degree.” This figure included both full-time and part-time academic staff of this institution. Taking into account the number of full-time academic staff only, there were 20 doctoral degree holders and 47 out of 68 full-time academics had master’s degrees. These two figures altogether occupied 98.5% of the total full-time academic staff having post-graduate degrees. In the other two private institutions, NB and NC, the percentage of academics with master’s and doctoral degrees varied from 56.7% to 63.8%. The number of doctoral degree holders in each of these two institutions was lower than 20%.

### *The Ratio of Academic Staff to Students*

The quota of students enrolling in each HE institution every year is basically stipulated by the MOET. The calculation for the quota is based on the number of full-time and part-time academic staff each institution has. This quota has been put under control to ensure that institutions will not enrol too many students, and the academic staff will not be overloaded with the teaching at the institution. Concerning the ratio of university lecturers to students, Professor *Pham Phu* (Phuc An, 2008) said that with 53,000 lecturers and 1.5 million students all over the country, the average ratio was 1:28, rather high compared to the standard ratio at 1:20 as set by the MOET. The current ratio (1:28) was higher than that of other nations in the region, such as 1:23 in

Singapore (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2007) or 1:21 in the Philippines (Ministry of Education Philippines, 2008).

Table 5.3 showed the ratio of academic staff to students (in undergraduate classes) in the six institutions participating in the research, with the lowest at 1:15 at the private institution NA and the highest at 1:27 at the public institution PE.

**Table 5.3: The Ratio of Academic Staff to Students (2007-2008)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Total number of academic staff<sup>33</sup></b>	<b>Total number of students<sup>34</sup></b>	<b>Academic staff and students ratio<sup>35</sup></b>
<b>NA</b>	170	2595	1:15
<b>NB</b>	347	6038	1:17
<b>NC</b>	205	5,000	1:24
<b>PD</b>	491	12,700	1:26
<b>PE</b>	1117	30,000	1:27
<b>PF</b>	502	8340	1:17

*Source:* Interview data and websites of institutions taking part in the research.

These data were retrieved from the websites and through interviews with leaders of institutions, and the average ratio presented (which is at 1:20.8) seemed to be moderate for HE institutions in Vietnam. However, it should be noticed that the average ratio of teachers to students might be different from the actual class size. The results obtained from the questionnaire delivered to academic staff in those institutions showed that there were big class sizes in some institutions. On average,

<sup>33</sup> Part-time academic staff are included in the figure above on a pro-rata basis i.e. they are counted in the same way as full time staff.

<sup>34</sup> These numbers include only undergraduate students undertaking formal education at the institutions. They do not include students of junior-college, post-graduate and distant education programmes.

<sup>35</sup> The student ratio is rounded to its nearest whole number.

there were about thirty to forty students in a class, as reported by 48% of the respondents. Only 10% of the academics said that they had fewer than twenty students in one of their classes. In some classes, the number of students might be from 100 to 150. Classes with more than forty students were considered to be ‘crowded’, according to the questionnaire respondents, due to the lack of academic staff, especially in emerging academic areas such as business studies or computer sciences.

Additionally, on average, each academic staff member had 560 teaching hours per academic year, as regulated by the MOET, according to the head of the administration department of institution NA. This number of teaching hours included time for teaching, doing research and supervising students. Commenting on the total teaching hours of lecturers, the head of the administration department of institution NA said:

*“The number of teaching hours is flexible and can be deducted if academic staff are involved in other academic activities such as doing research projects, writing teaching materials, preparing for a new teaching subject, or taking part in other administration duties.”*

In another private institution, the standard teaching hours of an academic staff was regulated at only 280 per three semesters per year. In cases where any one academic staff member taught more than the regulated hours, s/he would get higher payment for the extra hours of teaching, said the head of administration department of this institution. Similarly, in institution NB, as stated by the head of the administration department, a university lecturer at a private institution had to cover about 900 hours per academic year, of which 600 hours were reserved for research and other academic activities<sup>36</sup>. As the regulations on teaching hours for academic staff in private

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<sup>36</sup> As told by this head of administration department of institution NB, this information is retrieved from the *Draft of Working Regulations for Lecturers in Private Universities*, sent by the MOET to private HE institutions for suggestion and contribution.

universities were still being drafted and there was not yet an official regulation promulgated by the MOET, the total number of teaching hours for academic staff in each institution might vary, depending on the actual needs of the institution and on the regulations stipulated by the rector of that institution.

However, the actual teaching hours that university lecturers had to carry out were in reality much higher than those regulated formally. Only 53.7% respondents reported teaching fewer than 300 hours per year. The rest, 46.2%, were teaching more than 300 hours per year; lecturers of some disciplines such as English language or computer science reported to teach approximately 600 hours per academic year. This showed that in order for academics to carry out the teaching hours as temporarily regulated by the MOET, these institutions needed more academic staff than the current number. It should be noted here that the main income of most of the academic staff came from teaching rather than from other activities such as doing research, supervising students or carrying out other administrative responsibilities. That is to say, the more teaching hours they undertook, the more money they would get. Therefore in order to earn more income, many lecturers would like to, or had to, take as many teaching hours as they could cover. This was not likely to encourage research among academic staff, let alone their teaching quality, in HE institutions.

Concerning the current teaching situation, when asked if the institution provided the teaching staff with any support for their teaching responsibilities, the majority of the questionnaire respondents answered that they received little support (e.g. teaching

assistant<sup>37</sup>, professional development or training courses) from their institutions. Only two of them said that they “sometimes had teaching assistants from the institution”, but “that was not adequate and most of the teaching assistance was for crowded classes only”. (As mentioned above on [page 169](#), crowded classes were those classes with more than forty students per class.) Only one institution provided staff with training courses with specialists, who could share their experience and professional knowledge with the teaching staff at the institution. As suggested by one respondent, the institution should provide the teaching staff with some professional training courses such as tourism or hotel management, and field trips to hotels and business companies so that they could develop their practical knowledge in their own field of teaching and studying. This indicated that there was a real demand for on-the-job training, one kind of investment in human capital, among academic staff. The theory of investment in human capital advocates on-the-job training and considers it as important as other investment in schooling, information and health. According to the human capital theory, on-the-job training helps increase the future productivity of the workers as they can learn new skills and perfect old ones. In other words, on-the-job training ‘illustrates the effect of human capital on earnings, employment, and other economic variables’ (Becker, 1993: 30).

Apart from teaching, nearly all of the respondents said that other duties included supervising students on research projects (for graduation; for distance education programmes; and, in some institutions, for MBA programmes, which were provided by doctoral degree holders only). The students they supervised included both students

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<sup>37</sup> Teaching assistants do not officially give lectures, but only help lecturers prepare documents for the lecture. Teaching assistants are excellent students who are recruited after graduation to work as teaching staff at universities. After the probationary period, they will be officially considered as a lecturer if passing the requirements of the institutions.

currently studying at the institution and foreign students (from America, Australia, France, or from Asian countries such as India, Singapore, and Japan) coming to Vietnam to do fieldwork or under exchange programmes<sup>38</sup>. Beside supervision, most teaching staff were involved in administrative or management tasks. They worked either as chairs of departments, heads of subjects, heads of programmes, or head-teachers of classes. Some staff managed students' affairs, youth union, or student alumni. Others compiled course books, teaching materials, or were in charge of the institutional scientific newsletter, and edited the website of the institution.

This section has identified some of the major issues facing universities in the current teaching situation. The next section looks further at academic staff recruitment at these institutions.

### **Issues of Academic Staff Recruitment**

Based on the current teaching situation in public and private universities as presented above, it is clear that these institutions needed to develop their academic staff both in quantity (total number of staff, especially full-time staff) and quality (including qualifications and quality of teaching). Institutions in both sectors were facing the same major issue in academic staff recruitment, which was the lack of high-qualified academic staff all over the country. As said by the rector of the public institution NA:

*“We are in very fierce competition in recruiting academic staff, especially those with titles such as Professor, Associate Professor, or Doctor.”*

Depending on the characteristics of each institution, there were different policies implemented in recruiting academic staff for their institutions. Each institution in

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<sup>38</sup> As stated by a respondent, these international students coming to Vietnam to study such programmes as Business Administration, or Information Technology, not Vietnamese.

both sectors also had its own advantages and disadvantages in recruiting. The following two sub-sections look into the issues facing institutions of each sector in recruiting academic staff for their institutions.

### ***Public Universities***

Public universities in Vietnam are governmental institutions established by the MOET. Almost all of the public universities in Vietnam have long been established and built up their own prestige in teaching and studying, which makes it an advantage for public universities in recruiting staff for their institutions. As confirmed by the Rector of institution PE, “thanks to the prestige of the university in teaching and studying, the institution has no difficulties in recruiting staff.”

It is clear that public universities had no difficulties in recruiting full-time staff. However, it might be a little more difficult in recruiting part-time or inviting scholars/lecturers from other institutions nationally and internationally. The rector of institution PD confirmed that “it is also difficult to recruit or attract people, especially those graduated from universities overseas to work for a public institution.” The reason for this difficulty was, the rector said:

*“Apart from competition with other HE institutions in recruiting academic staff for the institution, there is a growing competition with companies in recruiting personnel as companies are able to pay higher salaries, which can attract talented and well educated people to work for them rather than become a teaching staff at a public university.”*

Being financially restricted by the government, public universities could not offer a high salary for lecturers. As the article ‘*Where to find lecturers with doctoral*

*degrees?* published on *VietNamNet Bridge*<sup>39</sup> stated, a doctoral degree holder in the information technology sector, for example, could earn more than 10 million Vietnam *dong* (VND) (=USD625 or GBP291)<sup>40</sup> a month; however, if he worked for a university he could earn only ‘*several*’ million *dong*. The average monthly salary for doctoral graduates on probation at a university was around VND1.2 million (=USD75)<sup>41</sup>. In some public universities, lecturers with doctoral degrees might receive between VND1.5 million (=USD93.75) and VND2 million (=USD125), which was similar to the salary that a factory worker received (See [Table 5.4](#), [Figure 5.1](#)). A professor with forty six years experience earned VND5 million (=USD312.5) only. Obviously, this current payment mechanism did not value intellect and could hardly attract professionally qualified people (including academics and scientists) to the educational sector.

**Table 5.4: Comparison of Average Salaries**<sup>42</sup>

	Salary per month in VND	Salary per month in USD
<b>Lecturers with doctoral degrees (on probation)</b>	1.2 million to 2 million	75 to 125
<b>Experienced lecturers with doctoral degrees</b>	5 million	312
<b>IT technicians with doctoral degrees</b>	10 million	625
<b>Factory workers (with high school certificates)</b>	2 million	125

*Source:* retrieved from the website of *VietNamNet Bridge* on 26 June, 2008  
<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/education>

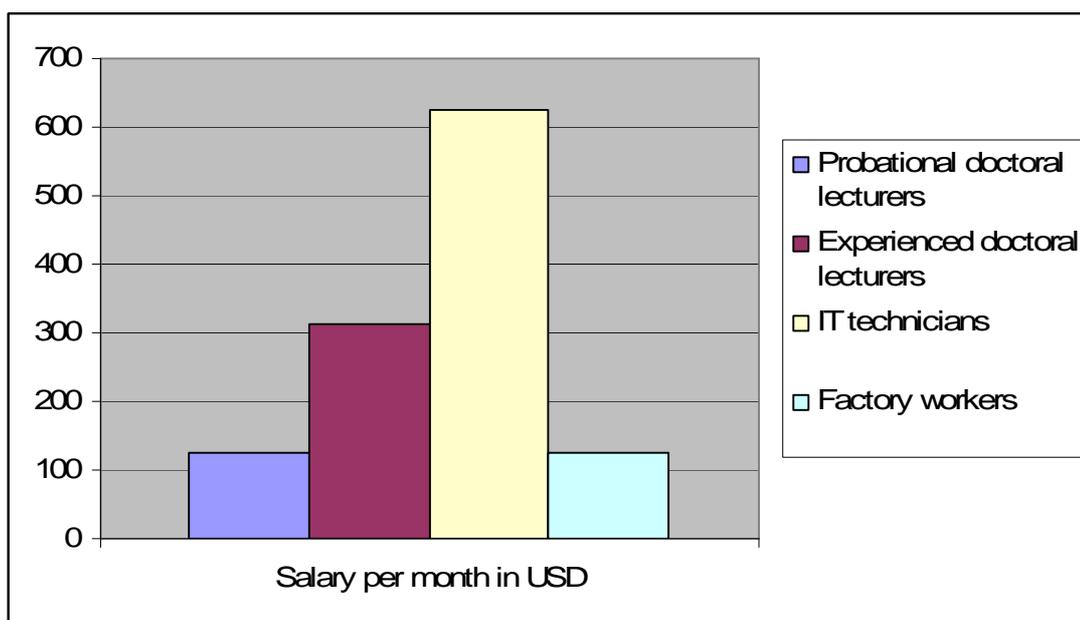
<sup>39</sup> Available at <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/education/2007/11/753162> retrieved on 25 June 2008

<sup>40</sup> 1 US Dollar = 16,000 Vietnam *Dong* (VND); 1 British Pound = 34,334 VND, June 2008

<sup>41</sup> Available at <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/education/2007/11/753096> retrieved on 25 June 2008

<sup>42</sup> These are examples of average salaries of lecturers working in HE institutions of the public sector only.

**Figure 5.1: Comparison of Average Salaries**



Source: VietnamNet Bridge, 26 June, 2008

Beside low payment, the high requirements for recruitment made it difficult for public universities to recruit academic staff, as disclosed by the rector of institution PE:

*“Candidates must have a master’s or post-graduate certificate, preferably from HE institutions overseas; they must also be deeply devoted to a teaching career, and must act as role models for students such as having the ethical standards<sup>43</sup> of a university lecturer.”*

These requirements will be further discussed in the section on policies on academic staff recruitment and development.

In addition to these common difficulties facing public universities, the geographical differences made it harder for universities in less developed areas to attract academic

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<sup>43</sup>As regulated in Article 75 of the Education Law, university lecturers are prohibited from having the following behaviours: (1) disrespect the honour, dignity of learners, hurt or abuse them physically; (2) fraudulent in admission, examinations, intentionally mis-evaluating learners’ study and training results; (3) distort educational content; (4) force learners to take extra classes for money. (The National Assembly, 27 June 2005)

staff to work at their institution due to low payment, or not being able to provide staff with welfare benefits such as accommodation. In this context, the rector of a public institution in a less developed area offered a view:

*“It is hard to attract candidates with HE degrees to come to work at our institution as our province is poor and cannot provide accommodation to academics from other provinces or cities nearby. Doctoral degree holders who come to work at the province, for example, will not get as high salary as they will certainly receive in more developed towns or cities.”*

As found on the website of a university in a more economically developed province nearby, in order to attract academics with doctoral degrees to their institution, there were special policies concerning the provision of accommodation (twenty million Vietnam *dong* per person = USD 1,250) and one-off financial support for life settlement (thirty million Vietnam *dong* [= USD 1,875] per person for doctoral degree holders, associate professors, or professors, and fifteen million Vietnam *dong* [=USD937] per person for master degree holders)<sup>44</sup>. As the average basic salary for a doctoral degree holder was 1.2 million Vietnam *dong* (=USD 75) per month (see Table 5.4 above), these policies to attract lecturers to this university were very encouraging since new-coming lecturers could get a one-off support for accommodation and life settlement with a total sum of money equivalent to 2.3 years' salary (for master's degree holders) or 3.3 years' salary (for doctoral degree holders).

### ***Private Universities***

As perceived by the rector of institution NA, there was a serious imbalance between the human resource demand and supply in the educational section in Vietnam, especially in the HE sector. Therefore, private universities were also facing the same

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<sup>44</sup> Information was retrieved from the website of An Giang University at <http://www.agu.edu.vn/general/index.php?mid=6&pg=policy>

difficulties as public institutions in recruiting academic staff with titles such as Professor, Associate Professor, and Doctor due to limited numbers of doctoral lecturers all over the country. Besides, private universities also had to compete with companies in recruiting talented and qualified personnel as companies had the potential to pay higher. As confirmed by the rector of institution NC:

*“In the market economy nowadays, in some of the professional areas such as computer science, high qualified labours often get very high salary, and HE institutions cannot compete with companies by paying higher to attract them to work for their institutions.” (See Table 5.4 above)*

Another disadvantage of private universities in recruiting academic staff was the discrimination between public and private institutions. The rector of private institution NA made a point that “it is supposed to be more prestigious to teach in a public university.” The rector of institution NC also shared the view:

*“As a general social perception, lecturers often feel that teaching for a private university will not be as prestigious and honourable as teaching for a public university.”*

This discrimination made it more difficult for private institutions to recruit academic staff. The rector of institution NC said that private universities had to face more difficulties than public ones in recruiting staff because academic staff in private institutions were not as fairly treated as those working for public institutions (in obtaining governmental scholarships for further study, for example). The head of the department of politics, administration, and student affairs in institution NB also admitted:

*“Public institutions often have the quota from the MOET concerning further studies for academic staff while our institution does not receive any from the MOET. In addition, there are not yet any official and specific regulations concerning the accessing and granting titles for*

*professorship<sup>45</sup> for academic staff in private universities. Thus academic staff in private institutions might feel that they suffer a loss of privileges when teaching for a private institution. All of these contribute to the difficulties in recruiting academic staff in private universities.”*

However, as perceived by all leaders of the private universities, in spite of such disadvantages in recruitment, there were few difficulties in recruiting academic staff for their institutions since they were independent from and not strictly bound by government policies. The autonomy of a private institution brought them more flexibility in recruiting talented staff as well as dismissing those who did not work in accordance with the culture of the institutions, as confirmed by the head of the administration department of institution NC.

Being financially independent, private universities could pay higher salaries than public universities. In institution NA, the basis monthly salary that a lecturer at level one in the salary scale<sup>46</sup> got was VND6 million, approximately three times higher than the salary that a lecturer at the same level got in a public institution (see Table 5.4). According to the rector of the private institution NC, the basic salary paid for academic staff at his institution was 30% higher than that in a public university. Higher payment (compared to that in institutions in the public sector) made it an advantage for private universities to attract academic staff to their institutions. However, payment for lecturers was still very low in comparison with payment for

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<sup>45</sup> There are different grades in the titles granted for academic staff, such as assistant lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and professor.

<sup>46</sup> There are different levels in the salary scale, which is calculated by multiplying the basic payment to the ratio for that level, e.g. the ratio for lecturers at level one is 2.34; level two is 2.67, level three is 3.00; thus the salary for lecturers at level one at a public institution will be VND450,000x2.34 = VND1,053,000. This salary does not include allowances and payment that lecturers get for each teaching hour.

people with the same educational degrees working in industrial or commercial sectors (See the comparison of salaries for lecturers and IT technicians in Table 5.4).

In addition to high payment, the rector of institution NC said that the institution could also provide academic staff with better conditions and good working environment for professional development. This rector added:

*“Apart from ensuring that the salary which the academic staff receive from the institution must be able to secure their own life, the institution also provides the opportunities for promotion and healthy working environment. These have been done to attract qualified academic staff to work for our institution and to keep them with us for longer.”*

It is clear that institutions of both sectors were facing the same challenges in academic staff recruitment, which was the shortage of academics with HE qualifications, particularly doctoral degree holders, all over the country. As a result institutions of both sectors had to compete, not only with each other but also with companies, in recruiting qualified staff with post-graduate qualifications for their institutions. It is obvious that lecturers' salaries were not competitive with those of other occupations. Low payment was considered a barrier that made it hard for public universities to recruit academic staff. However, the prestige of the institution and the teaching position at a public university were viewed as the advantages of public HE institutions in recruiting staff for their institutions. On the contrary, not having as much prestige as public universities was one of the disadvantages of private institutions. Another disadvantage, as agreed by all rectors of the three private universities, was that academic staff in these institutions do not get equal treatment from the MOET, which hindered many academic staff in applying for a teaching position with them. The only way for these private universities to cope with problems in recruitment was through high payment, due to their autonomy in finance. In addition to high payment, all

rectors of these private universities confirmed that, thanks to personal connections with lecturers whom they have been working with before, they could recruit academic staff for their institutions. In addition, everybody was treated equally when being accessed for the teaching positions in these private institutions, and there was not any favour for any *special* connections (e.g. from the authority or Communist Party affiliation), as declared by the rector of institution NA.

### **Issues of Academic Staff Development**

Institutions from both sectors were looking forward to having academic staff with high capacity that met the national and international standards so that they were able to teach not only national but also international programmes. The director of an institute of business administration in a public university shared the view that “our institute aimed at having academic staff that were capable of teaching at international institutions with standards similar to those of American institutions.” According to this director, the institution planned to reach this target by 2015. In order to have a high quality academic staff, institutions of both sectors had to deal with a variety of issues in academic staff development, from teaching development, teaching assessment, to doing research and resources supplement. These issues are presented and discussed below.

### ***Teaching Development***

In general, in both sectors, academic staff were required to have their own plans for professional development. In the public institution PD, for example, full-time academic staff, especially young and novice lecturers, must build up their own study plans for professional development. The institution provided academic staff with

study programmes for master's degrees or doctoral degrees carried out at the institution. Academic staff could also be given opportunities to attend training courses to foster their professional ability<sup>47</sup> at other institutions. In most institutions, academic staff were financially supported to carry out their further studies.

However, due to financial restrictions, academic staff could hardly get any help with their responsibilities. Not many staff had teaching assistants, nor research assistants, except for those teaching overcrowded classes<sup>48</sup>. Incentives for academic staff to be involved in development programmes were time-release, and in some schools, financial reward. Academic staff in some institutions were provided with materials or other resources needed for their teaching upon required. Private institutions, however, were facing more difficulties than public institutions in approaching resources for teacher development (e.g. higher education for its teaching staff). The following subsections look into issues concerning research output of academic staff, their further study for higher education such as master's or doctoral degrees, or attending seminars and conferences for personal and professional development.

### ***Doing Research***

The lack of opportunity for doing research was perceived as a weakness of universities in Vietnam in general. Doing research was encouraged in both public and private universities since it was officially a requirement for all academic staff in a university. However, 'it is not very fruitful and is formally done for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the government', the rector of institution PD admitted. In

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<sup>47</sup> Academic staff in HE institutions are required by the MOET to attend training courses for professional development annually or periodically. These courses are pedagogy, teaching methodology, logical reasoning and educational psychology at the university level.

<sup>48</sup> See the section of current teaching situation above concerning 'overcrowded classes' on [page 169](#).

addition, this rector said that some academic staff considered doing research only as a duty because, with regards to economy, it did not stimulate them to carry out research activities at all.

Private universities did not get funding for research from the government. The research funding came mainly from their own budget or private funding. Like other public HE institutions, many private universities encouraged academic staff to conduct research by giving some financial support, recognition and promotion. In general, doing research was still a weakness of private universities due to several reasons: (1) not many research topics were funded, (2) income from research was lower than from teaching, (3) research was not considered a priority in the university policy/administration. Moreover, most of the academic staff were part-time and on a rolling six months/yearly contract; the university, therefore, just encouraged academic staff to do research voluntarily, and 'this is not very fruitful', as the head of the administration department of institution NB admitted.

In public universities, doing research was both encouraged and compulsory. On one hand, academic staff were encouraged to do research by having time release, financial support and recognition for their research results. On the other hand, "academic staff were required to carry out research as it was considered one of the criteria for assessment for commendations and rewards by the end of the academic year", as the head of the administration department of institution PF confirmed.

The budget for doing research in public universities came from different sources: governmental budget, which was very limited; self-created by the institution; and

orders placed by organisations. In the institution PE, the director of the Institute of Business Administration said that the funding for doing research that the institute received from the government occupied 50% of the total budget for research. The rest of the budget came from private companies.

On answering the question of how the institution encouraged its staff members to conduct research, participants from the private institutions reported that their institutions gave some financial support and time release. Some got support from their institution in reporting and publicising the results of their research. Similarly, in a public institution, staff who did research would have their teaching hours reduced by 40% and be provided with financial support.

In both public and private institutions, doing research was considered to be 'for the professional benefits of lecturers and students'. It was also a criterion for professorship ranking (Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor) or for commendations and rewards. There was, however, no visible or practical orientation for staff. "They just called for staff to do research, '*by word of mouth*' and gave a little bit financial support or rewards", said one staff member in a private institution. However, these rewards, according to some staff, were not worthy.

The benefits that academic staff obtained from doing research were not highly perceived. In other words, it could be said that the link between research and teaching was not seen a positive thing by many academic staff. Only some academic staff admitted that they applied the results obtained from research into their lectures. Some also said that they learned new technology and new ways of doing research which was

very helpful for them for further research in the near future. The topic for research, as some academic staff recommended, should be related to the reality of teaching. In addition, some academic staff suggested that the research should be applied rather than theoretical or fundamental. Research funding might be the cause of this preference. As stated by Dang, Nghiem and Sloper (1995), money for research flowed towards and from applied activities which were linked to scientific technological or methodological problems; fundamental research in areas such as health, agriculture, marine science, and other social fields received limited funds since they might not show an immediate return.

### *Academic Publication*

Academic publication or having articles published in a prestigious international academic journal was one of the requirements for lecturers at universities, in both public and private sectors, as regulated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)<sup>49</sup>. Especially, those who wanted to continue their further study needed to have at least one article published in acknowledged international professional journals in order to be admitted to a doctoral programme. Unfortunately, the questionnaire results showed that not many staff had publications. Only a few participants admitted that they did have articles and scientific reports published in the internal journal of the institution they were currently working for and in other local professional journals. Others co-published teaching materials for the subject that they were teaching, such as English course books for advanced levels for grades eight to twelve. One academic staff who held a doctorate degree said he had been involved in the editing and

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<sup>49</sup> Postgraduates of the following four subjects: arts, security, national defence and political science will not be subject to the requirement of having articles published in international journals, but must have articles published in domestic journals. Retrieved from <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/education/2008/01/765799> on 25 June 2008

publishing of five English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English dictionaries and already had twenty four books published. However, the majority of the respondents said they did not have any publications yet. Some academic staff intended to do so in a very near future as they were drafting teaching materials for the teaching subject assigned or compiling materials for use at the institution only. Many of them admitted that they did not plan for it yet.

The low commitment to publication of academics was completely understandable. Considering the excessive regulated teaching time that most university lecturers carried out, as indicated in the section above, academic staff certainly had no time reserved for doing research and writing academic papers. Another reason was that academics did not receive whole-hearted support and encouragement from the institution for publication. In addition, publication did not result in a high income, which many lecturers could get from having more teaching hours.

### ***Further Study for Master's or Doctoral Degrees***

As illustrated above in the section on the current teaching situation, a high percentage of academics in many HE institutions of both sectors did not have doctoral degrees. This was a common matter of concern of every institution. Since institutions could not recruit as many staff with doctoral degrees as they needed due to limited number of doctoral holders all over the country, one way to tackle this problem was to encourage academic staff to carry out further study for a post-graduate degree. However, many rectors admitted that their institutions faced a lot of difficulties in sending academic staff to further education programmes. The rector of the private institution NC stated *“it costs us a huge sum of money while our budget for further study for academic staff*

*is very limited.*” Furthermore, the institution could not send many staff to further study at the same time since it would cause a lack of teaching staff, thus the rest of the academics had to suffer an overload of teaching hours left by those being sent over for further study. Similarly, the rector of institution NA said:

*“The institution can only reserve a very limited amount of budget for further study for academic staff because this budget comes from the total budget of the institution which, at the present time, has to be reserved for investment in developing fundamental facilities for the institution.”*

For this reason, this institution had to apply its own policy on recruitment which requires candidates to have a post-graduate qualification (at least a master’s degree) as one of the top priorities in its criteria for application. This also explained the very high percentage (90%) of academic staff with post-graduate qualifications in this institution, as presented in the section on the current teaching situation, [Table 5.2, page 166](#).

In all three private HE institutions, the concern is the relatively low number of academic staff with doctoral degrees. As admitted by the rector of institution NC:

*“...with 70% to 80% academics already having master’s degrees, the institution is not really worried about the number of academics with master’s degrees. The worries lie in the number of academics with doctoral degrees in order to meet the requirement of the teaching at the institution and of the MOET.”*

The head of the department of politics, administration, and student affairs in institution NB also said:

*“The institution plans in the next five to ten years to have a huge development in the full-time teaching staff, with the quantity ensuring to cover 50% to 60% the total teaching hours, and there must be more than 60% academic staff obtaining up-to-standard qualifications (master’s or doctoral degrees). From now to the year 2020, there must be from 20 to 30 doctorate holders. That is to say, the institution has*

*to send from two to three staff to further study for doctoral degrees each year.”*

Institutions in the public sector might face fewer difficulties concerning the budget for further study for their academic staff since the budget came from the government and from other sources. The rector of a public HE institution in a big city said that the budget for academic staff development for the institution came from two sources: the government (for master's and doctorate studies) and other sources such as scholarships from international organizations, projects or self-support. The rector of another public institution which was under the jurisdiction of a province, however, stated that the budget they had for academic staff development came mainly from the province and was very limited since the province was too poor to provide a generous budget. Moreover, as a provincial institution, they could not access the budget allocated from the MOET for HE institutions and thus had to face difficulties in academic staff development for their institution.

In reality, all of the rectors showed their awareness in the effects of education on the productivity of their academic staff. In order to solve the problem of the shortage of university lecturers with doctoral degrees, the MOET has recently built up a programme aiming at having 20,000 doctorate holders by 2020, targeting college and university lecturers<sup>50</sup>. Thus, in HE institutions all over the country, academic staff were encouraged to be involved in this programme. Specifically, in the academic year 2007-2008, 1,500 candidates would be selected for doctoral studies, 500 of whom would be sent overseas and the rest would pursue their doctoral studies at HE institutions in Vietnam. This programme provided more opportunities for academic

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<sup>50</sup> As quoted from the 'Current Priorities of Vietnam's Higher Education', presented in the Vietnam-New Zealand Education Forum on 4 December 2007 in Hanoi by Prof. Dr. Banh Tien Long, Standing Vice Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam.

staff in both public and private HE institutions to obtain a doctoral degree to meet the requirements of the MOET for lecturers at HE institutions.

### *Attending Seminars and Conferences*

Attending seminars and conferences was also one of the activities of academic staff development in HE institutions. When asked if academic staff attended seminars and conferences, about one fourth of the respondents (26.3%) answered that they did not attend any seminars or conferences at all. The reasons for not attending seminars or conferences, according to some academic staff, were that they were too busy with the administration tasks and did not get support to attend conferences. Some blamed the institution for not providing opportunities for staff to attend. Some did not attend any conferences during the last academic year due to personal reasons such as taking maternity leave.

However, 73.6% of participants confirmed that they attended seminars and conferences during the last academic year. The majority of these participants (71%) attended two or three seminars and conferences per year. The highest number of conferences they attended was four and the lowest was one. Most of these participants (77%) attended seminars as attendees and only 19% attended as presenters. Among these academics, only two attended both as presenters and attendees. All of them, however, admitted that they neither were forced to attend seminars and conferences nor received any promotions or rewards for these attendances from their institutions. Most of the seminars and conferences that these academic staff attended were organised at other national HE institutions (50.9%) and at their own institutions (37.7%). Only 11.3% participants went overseas for international conferences. The

financial support that academic staff received to attend these conferences came mainly from their own institution (52.8%), and from themselves (39.6%). A small number got financial support from conference organisers or from other sources.

The benefits that staff got from attending seminars and conferences were referred to as 'having updated information on the specialised area or field of study.' Many said that attending conferences helped them improve their teaching methods. Another benefit of attending conferences and seminars, as admitted by some staff, was that they developed personally as they began to think more critically and feel more confident. By attending conferences, staff could also build up new relationships with colleagues and through this channel they could share their knowledge and experience as well as compare teaching situations between their school and others.

### ***Teaching Assessment and Staff Evaluation***

In both sectors, academic staff were evaluated annually, through many channels: peer reviews (observation and evaluation), self assessment, student assessment (end of course), and teaching portfolio. The purpose of assessment was for further development of academic staff. According to the head of the administration department of institution PD, the main purpose of teaching assessment was for lecturers to know their strengths and weaknesses in teaching, which would be used later on for professional development, upgrading their teaching standard and teaching quality at the institution. In addition, teaching assessment also aimed at salary and allowance adjustments. For instance, academic staff who were recognised as meeting the standard after the assessment might be considered for a transfer to a higher level of salary ranks before the due time, or for promotion to a higher position. The results

of assessment might also be used for ending the contract if a lecturer did not meet the requirement.

Because teaching assessment was compulsory and was a governmental regulation for academic staff in all public HE institutions, academic staff in public universities did not oppose teaching assessment and were cooperative with the institution in doing this, said the head of the administration department of institution PD. However, according to the head of the department of politics, administration, and student affairs of private institution NB:

*“It is hard to efficiently carry out teaching assessment in many educational institutions in Vietnam due to the traditional Oriental conception that students should highly respect their teachers, and thus are not supposed to evaluate their teachers”.*

Some academic staff disagreed with the teaching assessment activity and were opposed to it. The criteria for assessment might vary in each institution. For example, in a public university, the main criteria included: 1) the application of modern teaching methods (e.g. the usage of case study, group discussion, internet and power-point in teaching instead of the traditional method of lecturing and note taking); 2) professional knowledge; 3) personal point of view and attitude towards governmental policies; 4) accomplishment of standard teaching hours assigned. In another public university, beside the similar criteria mentioned above, there were other criteria such as doing research, self studying for further professional development and assessment of students. In addition, the methods of collecting information for teaching assessment might also vary. While self assessment of lecturers was considered important in the private university NA, it was viewed as inappropriate in the private institution NB. Student evaluation and peer review were the two major methods implemented for

evaluating lecturers in institutions NB and NC. The head of the department of administration of institution NC emphasized the effectiveness of the information collected through the students' channel. He said:

*“Students can have easy access to the rector of the institution [the rector reserves two hours per week to meet with students at his office], which facilitates the institution in collecting prompt information and enables its leaders to make timely decisions whenever there are any problems concerning teaching and learning at the institution.”*

The difference of criteria as well as process of teaching evaluation will be presented in further detail in the next section.

### ***Resources Supplement***

The support that teachers thought institutions should provide them with included not only assistance to their teaching but other fundamental facilities such as an office to meet students out of teaching hours, modern equipment that could be used for teaching (overhead projectors, loudspeakers, microphones, computers, laptops and TV sets), new and updated teaching materials, a well-equipped laboratory for doing research and an account to access scientific data sources.

The resources that academics thought institutions should provide them with, in order to improve their teaching effectiveness, varied according to the subjects they were teaching. Most of them referred to the need to have updated materials and professional journals and references. This implicated that institutions should invest more in the library. They should have a standard e-resource centre and e-library. Besides, there should be more computers and the internet service links should be upgraded with broad band width and at a higher speed so that it worked more efficiently. Similarly, all universities needed more well-equipped laboratories as well

as modern language labs. There was a requirement for upgrading classrooms (supplied with air-conditioners and appropriate chairs for group activities), and supporting equipments (overhead projectors, laptops, good-quality cassette recorders, wireless microphones for teachers and students, and TV sets). Finally, academic staff should have their own working spaces at the institution. The result from the questionnaire showed that most academic staff did not have their own offices but had to share with many others in the same room supplied with facilities such as computers, internet access, and printers, to name a few. It was not very helpful in their tutorial role as they did not have privacy and the capability to access these facilities was also limited since there were more staff than the facilities supplied.

It is, of course, impossible to deal with all of the issues mentioned above at the same time. However, each of the institutions had its own policies in the effort to solve the problems of human resource facing their institution. The next section looks into the policies on academic staff development that private universities implemented, in comparison with the policies of the institutions in the public sector.

### **What Academic Staff Development Policies Have Private Universities Implemented?**

In order to address the issues in academic staff recruitment and development mentioned above, universities implemented various policies concerning human resource development in their institutions. The following sections refer to the current policies on academic staff recruitment and development implemented in private universities, in comparison with those in public institutions.

### *Policies on Academic Staff Recruitment*

In the public sector, policies to attract and maintain academic staff at most institutions included the tenure-track<sup>51</sup>, which secured a lifelong position as well as other privileges at the institution for academic staff. Academic staff in these public institutions might also have more opportunities for further study and promotion than those in private institutions. In some public institutions, economic policies were applied, such as high payment and allowances apart from the main salary, to call for attraction and to keep staff staying with the institution. In addition to these economic policies, in institution PD, there were some other special policies dealing with experienced lecturers, overseas trained lecturers and lecturers with foreign language competences. Besides, many public institutions also built up good and personal relationships with academics to call for and invite them to teach at their institution. In this context, the vice-rector of the public HE institution PD shared the view:

*“Thanks to the personal relationships built up with many academics, the institution has no difficulties in looking for academics to teach at the institution. This is also considered one of the advantages and strengths of the institution in the recruitment of academic staff in the competing labour market.”*

Economic policies and maintaining good relationships with other HE institutions and with academic staff were considered the most important policies in recruiting and keeping academic staff with the institution, as admitted by the vice-rector of institution PD. According to this vice-rector, good treatment to academic staff with high levels of education would attract and maintain staff to stay with the institution.

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<sup>51</sup> Tenure-track or permanent lecturers are government-employed and eligible for health insurance and social welfare. Being a tenure-track or permanent staff, lecturers remain in their positions until they reach retirement age, regardless of their performance. This is viewed by Doan (2000) as one of the weakness in personnel management in public HE institutions.

A provincial public HE institution also applied economic policies to attract academic staff from other provinces and cities. According to the head of the administration department of this institution, master's degree holders would receive a one-off support of VND 15 million (= USD 937.5) when coming to teach at the institution, and doctorate holders would get from VND 20 to 25 million (= from USD 1,250 to USD 1,562.5). Besides, all academic staff in this institution, no matter whether they were in the tenure-track or not, would be wholeheartedly supported for further study for professional development. As the basic salary was fixed and could not be raised, the institution was flexible by supporting academic staff with allowances for materials, per diem and travelling allowances, during their study time. Young and promising academic staff might also be considered for promotion to leading positions, such as head of the subject or head of the department, without strict restriction on seniority or teaching experience.

The criteria for recruitment in public universities were similar to one another. However, the ranking of these criteria might vary in each institution. In institution PD, the most important criterion in the recruitment policy was quality, which was presented through the qualifications that candidates obtained as well as the institution from which the qualifications were granted. The second most important criterion was the teaching capability of the lecturer, which should meet the requirement of the teaching profession at a HE institution. In addition, there were some other criteria such as incentives to staying with the teaching career and portfolio. The top priority in the selection of academic staff was candidates with certificates of honour. According to the vice-rector of institution PD:

*“...high level education degree holders, such as master's or doctoral degree holders, may not always be good lecturers. Of course, the*

*higher degree, the better. However, graduates of honour from universities are more welcome and will certainly be provided with opportunities for professional development once recruited. This is our policy on recruitment.”*

Talking about basic criteria for academic staff recruitment, the head of the administration department of institution PF also shared the same view:

*“When recruiting academic staff for our institution, the focus is on those with qualifications obtained from formal education; these qualifications should be ranked as good and excellent or honoured. In addition, candidates should also have high levels of competence in Computer Science and English.”*

In another public HE institution, the most important criterion in recruitment, however, included professional ethics as well as the love and devotion to the teaching career. The director of the Institute of Business Administration of this university claimed that this criterion would reflect the success of the academic staff in the long run. The other criteria which were also of great importance included professional qualifications, performance capability (which was expressed as certificates and the ability to perform specific skills), and English, to name a few. According to this director, a lecturer working for the business administration department, for example, must acquire a good knowledge of English language as well as business management.

In the private sector, the head of the department of politics, administration, and student affairs in institution NB said that the institution had its own policies on human resource recruitment and development in order to call for academics to come to their institution. Specifically, he said:

*“In our institution, the teaching staff are considered the most important source, the top priority of interest, and are always well cared for. All of the staff are well and fairly treated. However, as the institution cannot pay very high for their teaching hours, academic staff are ensured that they are allocated an adequate amount of*

*teaching hours so that their income is high enough to cover their living expenditure.”*

In institution NA, there were special policies on recruitment. The rector of this institution said:

*“For the time being, the human resources capable of working as administrators, lecturers and staff for a “real” [high standard] HE institution are very limited in Vietnam. Therefore, it will be extremely difficult to look for this source of human resource in the national labour market [...]. With this point of view, our institution has been looking forward to recruiting human resource from the global labour market for the past few years.”*

Thus, the academic staff whom this institution looked for came from overseas. They recruited both foreign and Vietnamese academics from overseas. It was much more difficult than recruiting from the national labour market. However, as the rector of this institution claimed:

*“We know that it is extremely difficult to recruit academic staff from overseas, but we really need academic staff with high levels of education and wide knowledge. As there is a shortage of these academic staff in the national labour market, we have no other choice rather than recruiting from overseas. This is the only way that helps us get out of this problem.”*

In order to be able to do this, the institution built up its own policy in foreign affairs, which was considered the most important in helping the institution to recruit academic staff from international HE institutions. “Not only talking about it [foreign affairs], we took action by going out of the country to look for qualified academic staff, and to set up relationship with other HE institutions”, said the rector of institution NA. This rector also expressed their attitude toward this, “We should not passively wait for opportunities to come, as many other HE institutions do, but have to actively look for and grasp at the chance whenever we have it.” This at least in part explained the high number of academic staff with postgraduate degrees teaching at this institution.

Private universities did not only have to cope with difficulties in recruiting but also in keeping staff after recruitment. Dealing with this problem, the head of the department of politics, administration and student affairs in institution NB said that for the current academic year, they were also aiming at applying similar human resource policies implemented in public institutions so that academic staff were more committed and stayed with the institution. These policies included payment for summer term when teachers did not have to take any teaching hours, end-of-year bonuses (the so-called 'thirteenth month payment' as a bonus for lecturers to celebrate the traditional Vietnamese New Year '*Tet*'), and regulations concerning the teaching hours for the teaching staff as currently implemented in public universities (900 teaching hours per year, 600 of which were reserved for carrying out research and other activities, as regulated by the MOET).

Similarly, in institution NC, high payment was considered one of the effective policies in attracting and maintaining academic staff. Lecturers working for the institution received a salary which was 30% higher than that of a lecturer working for a public institution. Specifically, if a monthly salary that a lecturer of a public institution received was VND 450,000 (= USD 28.1) multiplied by a teaching ratio of 2.34<sup>52</sup>, a monthly salary of a lecturer of institution NC would be VND 600,000 (=USD 37.5) multiplied by 2.34. In addition to this basic salary, a lecturer at institution NC also received VND 25,000 (= USD 1.56) for each of the teaching hours within the regulated 280 teaching hours per year whereas a lecturer at a public institution only received VND8,500 (= USD 0.53) for one teaching hour. If lecturers

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<sup>52</sup> There are various levels of teaching ratio regulated by the government, e.g. the teaching ratio for lecturers at level one is 2.34; level two is 2.67. Depending on the experience in teaching, lecturers will be put in an appropriate level and accessed for an upgrade of their teaching ratio level every three years.

taught more than the regulated teaching hours, they would receive higher payment for each exceeding teaching hour (e.g. VND 40,000, or USD 2.5, per exceeding teaching hour). This high payment scheme surely attracted academic staff to the institution as it assured that academic staff got high incomes, let alone other allowances they got for academic activities such as allowances for working as heads of subjects, heads of departments, or for supervising students in doing graduation dissertations.

Criteria for recruitment in private universities were similar to those in many institutions in the public sector. The most important criterion in recruitment, according to the head of the administration department of institution NC, focused on “talented persons who are actually devoted to the teaching profession”. The rector of institution NA also admitted that the most important criterion was not the “certificate” but the “real qualification” that candidates had. The rector confirmed: “Other institutions recruit staff with doctoral degrees under no conditions, but we do differently.” According to the rector, an academic staff with a doctoral degree might not teach as well as an academic staff with only a master’s degree. Therefore, in order to be confirmed in their post, candidates must go through a probationary period to show that the “certificate” they held reflected the “real qualification”. In other words, candidates should prove that there was no gap between the level of their knowledge and the certificate that they had, due to the fact that many people in Vietnam nowadays might obtain post-graduate certificates from minor (not prestigious) universities, or local universities, which were not trustworthy in producing post-graduate degrees of high quality. In addition, the rector of institution NA emphasised that there should not only be one criterion (which was certificate, as applied in many

other HE institutions, this rector said). In order to recruit good academic staff for the institution, there must be a combination of many other criteria.

### ***Policies on Academic Staff Development***

The results of the interviews with leaders of the six institutions across both sectors showed that there were similar things in the policies on academic staff development implemented in their institutions. First of all, all institutions claimed that they supported their academic staff to carry out further study for professional development (either by going back to school to obtain post-graduate degrees or by attending seminars and conferences only); the level of support, however, might be different in each institution. As research was not a strong activity in many institutions, there were plans to encourage and require academic staff to do research at all institutions. Secondly, teaching assessment and staff evaluation was considered one of the important criteria in helping academic staff improve their teaching quality. Thirdly, resources supplement provided for academic staff development was still a matter of concern as all institutions claimed that they had limited budget. The following subsections look into these policies in detail.

### ***Teaching Development***

In institution NC, in order to obtain the human resource development plan that in the next ten years the number of doctorate holders must reach a ratio of 50%, a policy has been proposed that the institution would end the teaching contract with academic staff reaching the age of thirty five but having not obtained doctoral degrees yet. This policy, thus, forced its academic staff, especially the young ones, to build up a personal professional development plan if they wanted to maintain their teaching

position at the institution. In the private institution NA, academic staff were encouraged to carry out further study. The rector of this institution said:

*“In order to solve the problems of human resource, the institution recruited academic staff from overseas. This brought us instant but short-term effects. In order to have a long-term effect, we could not only depend on this source of human resource (from overseas) but have to recruit from the national human resources. Therefore, the institution often signs contracts with academic staff for at least three years. We really look forward to welcoming back academic staff who are studying overseas for their post-graduate degrees.”*

In this institution, it was therefore a compulsory to study for a master’s degree if academic staff only held a bachelor’s degree. Those who already had a master’s degree were encouraged to study for a doctoral degree or do research.

The findings from the questionnaire showed that the common support that almost all respondents received from their institutions for their post-graduate studies was time release. All institutions supported their staff to carry out post-graduate study by reducing their required teaching hours (40% out of the total, as in a private university), assisting staff in accessing to scholarships and in doing paper work for the application process.

Financial support for further studies varied among institutions. As found in the questionnaire survey, in private institutions, respondents reported that they had to be financially self-supporting for studying for master’s or doctoral degrees. However, as one staff in a private institution admitted, she received a bonus from the university as a reward after completing her post-graduate study. Another staff got a loan without interest from her institution for her study and would have to pay back to the institution over five to ten years. In other private universities, as reported by many academic

staff, there was not yet a clear policy in supporting tuition fee for their academic staff for further studies.

However, the results from the interviews with leaders of these private institutions showed that they did reserve some budget for academic staff development. Specifically, in institution NC, academic staff would receive VND 4 million (= USD 250) per year for pursuing a master degree programme, in addition to the reduction of the standard teaching hours (280 per academic year). Academic staff studying for a doctoral programme were able to borrow VND 50 million (= USD 3,125) without interest from the institution. In the private institution NA, staff could get financial support for their post-graduate studies. However, the budget for academic staff to pursue their further studies was very limited as it derived mainly from the general budget of the institution, which had to be invested in the development of the institutional infrastructure for the time being. Therefore, those who would like to pursue their post-graduate studies must be able to pay at least one third of the tuition fee; they could borrow one third from the institution without paying interest, the rest of the tuition fee (one third) would be paid by the institution as a kind of support and investment in academic staff development.

In public universities, however, academic staff were better supported financially. As reported by a respondent, the university paid the whole tuition fee for his PhD programme<sup>53</sup>. In the public institution PD, academic staff would be supported 60% of the total tuition fee for a master's degree programme. Some staff might also look for opportunities to carry out their post-graduate studies overseas with the total

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<sup>53</sup> It should be noted that this respondent completed his PhD study at the institution he was working for, thus the tuition fee for his PhD programme in a national HE institution was not as high as that in international HE institutions in the country and overseas.

expenditure paid by the institution, regional authority or by the government. Academic staff in the public institution PF received support for the whole tuition fee for their further study. As regulated by the MOET, when attending a training course which was longer than six months, academic staff received only 65% of the basic salary. However, academic staff at this institution received not only the whole salary, but allowances for accommodation, living expenditures and materials as well. In case academic staff were admitted to post-graduate programmes, they would receive a temporary support of VND 7,500,000 (= USD 468.75) at the beginning and a similar sum of money upon completing the programme. However, there would be bonds in returning for these financial supports: academic staff had to sign a contract to come back and work for the institution for at least five years after graduation (as regulated by the Government<sup>54</sup>, academic staff completing their further studies were required to work for their institution a period of time which was three times more than the time they spent on their studies. In case any academic staff decided to leave the institution after completing his/her study programme, s/he had to compensate the institution for the total expenditure on his/her studies, regardless whether the scholarships came from the government, their institutions, or from other international organisations.)

Opportunities for further study would be provided to all academic staff, including young and newly recruited lecturers, only if they could prove that they were devoted to the teaching career and would stay with the institution for long. It was regulated in the institution PF policy that all lecturers had to be able to use a foreign language<sup>55</sup> proficiently. The institution laid down as the policy for professional development as follows: lecturers with a bachelor's degree had to obtain a master's degree in five

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<sup>54</sup> Decree 54/2005/ND-CP signed by the Vietnamese Prime Minister *Phan Van Khai* on 19 April 2005.

<sup>55</sup> A language lecturer must be able to use a second foreign language proficiently.

years, and similarly, those who already had a master's degree had to obtain a doctoral degree in five years.

Beside investing in their academic staff for their further studies, institutions also had a budget reserved for doing research. In public institutions PD and PF, doing research was considered the most important criterion in assessing for commendations and rewards by the end of each academic year, therefore academics staff were both encouraged and required to carry out research. In institution PF, for example, academic staff had to reserve their time in research. In addition, all lecturers had to build up electronic curriculum, post them online and inform their students the websites so that students could access and contact their lecturers. In their professional development policy, this institution built up plans to send lecturers to fieldwork for practical experience. A combination of theory and the real life experience obtained would help teacher improve their teaching quality, thus meet the demands of providing students with knowledge and skills necessary for them to work after graduation.

According to the head of the department of politics, administration, and student affairs of institution NB, the institution encouraged their academic staff to carry out research by reducing their standard teaching hours. In institution NA, in addition to the short-term investment in doing research, which brought about instant results for the institution and its academic staff, the institution was also willing to support academic staff in carrying out long-term projects (by giving support in the publication and distribution of the research output). The institution also set up links with companies

through which academic staff had more opportunities to develop their professional experience.

### *Teaching Assessment and Staff Evaluation*

In all institutions, lecturers were assessed annually based on information collected through different channels: students, lecturers themselves and their colleagues. In institution PE, academic staff were officially evaluated twice a year, normally at the end of each semester<sup>56</sup>. There were three main criteria for teaching assessment: (1) teaching methods, which would consider whether the lecturer adopted new methods in teaching, such as case study, group discussion, internet and power-point; (2) professional knowledge, which would be graded using the Likert-type scale from 1 to 6; (3) at the end of the semester, the assessment would include some additional criteria as personal point of view and attitude towards governmental policies, and accomplishment of standard teaching hours. The process of annual evaluation started with students' evaluation at the end of each course. Evaluation forms were sent to students from the department of administration. At the subject level, lecturers had to carry out self-evaluation which was later assessed at the departmental level. The result of evaluation from departmental level would then be sent to the leader of the institution.

The same procedure was also applied in the public institutions PD and PF, as the rectors and heads of the administration departments of these two institutions confirmed in the interviews. According to the head of the administration department of institution PD, apart from students' evaluation at the end of the course, lecturers

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<sup>56</sup> There are two semesters in an academic year; each lasts for approximately five months. The first semester normally starts in early September.

carried out self-evaluation based on their own responsibilities as a lecturer, a senior lecturer, an associate professor or a professor. There were eight criteria for self-evaluation, which included political attitude and ideology, professional knowledge, research activities, self-studying for further development (e.g. studying for a foreign language or for professional development), students' evaluation and working attitude. The evaluation from colleagues towards each of the lecturers was also considered in the process of teaching assessment and staff evaluation. Evaluation from colleagues was done through peer reviews, teaching observations and open discussions at departmental meetings. Finally, in addition to these evaluations, heads of departments also had to give direct comments and evaluation to each of the lecturers in their department, without being affected by the collective evaluation towards individuals, which had been done at the previous stage. The results of the assessment finally were sent to the institution. A combination of information collected through these channels was very helpful to institutions in the activity of teaching assessment and academic staff evaluation.

Similarly, in the private institution NA, teaching assessment was applied for both full-time and part-time lecturers. There were two different processes of student evaluation. One was conducted during the course (applied for newly recruited full-time and part-time lecturers, and full-time lecturers assigned a new teaching programme) aiming at ensuring the teaching quality of the subject study through class observation, students' evaluation, class meeting, email and information obtained from the department of academic affairs and from the departmental secretary. Based on the response from students and self assessment of lecturers, lecturers themselves would have to make appropriate adjustment or, when necessary, require supports from the head of the

subject in order to obtain a high quality of teaching. The other evaluation from students was conducted at the end of the course, focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of the subject study, through such criteria as structure and appropriateness of the lecture, teaching methods, teaching attitude and general evaluation regarding the organisation and management of the class activities and effectiveness of the lecture. The evaluation form was delivered to each student registered for the course and the results were transferred to heads of the programme, heads of the subject study, heads of the department, leaders of the institution and the concerned lecturers for the purpose of improving the professional knowledge of the lecturers.

Beside students' evaluation of the course, in institution NA, there were several different types of evaluation, such as self-evaluation from lecturers, peer reviews from colleagues and head of the department, and evaluation from the leader of the institution. As shown in the evaluation forms of this institution, the three general criteria for these evaluations included teaching, professional development and research activities. In addition, lecturers had to provide further statistical information for the evaluation, such as the number of international projects involved; the number of students supervised for PhD programmes, research activities and supervision for graduation dissertations; the number of publications, edited books/magazines; participation in the counselling committee or organisation of national and international conferences.

The main purpose of the teaching assessment and evaluation was for lecturers to know their strengths and weaknesses in teaching so that they could make

improvement for a better professional development as well as a higher teaching quality. In addition, the results of the assessment and evaluation were also used for economic purposes, such as raising salary and allowances, or for commendations and rewards. As stated by rectors of all institutions, there had not been any cases that led to the termination of the contract as a result of the teaching assessment and staff evaluation.

Only heads of departments were able to access and deal with information relating to teaching assessment and evaluation. For example, based on the percentage of evaluation made by students at the end of the course, heads of departments had to make decisions on how to deal with lecturers who had problems. These heads had to work with lecturers on an individual basis, by talking to each lecturer about his/her problem(s), discussing and coming up with solutions for the problems. The final results of teaching assessment and staff evaluation of each lecturer could only be viewed by the leader of the institution, heads of departments and the concerned lecturers.

According to the head of the administration department of the public institution PD, the matter of concern was the criteria for assessment and evaluation. Because some of the criteria could not be evaluated quantitatively, this made it hard for the assessment and evaluation to obtain fairness. Thus, the institution needed to be very careful to bring about the exactness and equity of assessment and evaluation when dealing with qualitative criteria. The teaching assessment and staff evaluation, therefore, should be carried out through a long period of time and from different channels in order to obtain the effectiveness. The rector and heads of departments could give direct

assessment and evaluation, but this should be done without being affected by the collective evaluation, as the vice-rector of public institution PD shared his thoughts.

### **To What Extent have these Policies Proved to be Effective, as Perceived by the Leaders of Private Universities and their Academic Staff?**

This section explores different perspectives of academic staff and leaders of institutions on the effectiveness of academic staff development policies implemented at their own institutions.

#### *Perspectives of Leaders of Universities on their Academic Staff Development Policies*

As mentioned above, most public universities in Vietnam have been long established whilst private institutions are relatively new (see time-line for establishment of these institutions on [page 160](#)). Thus, many public institutions possessed more specific and relatively effective policies on academic staff development. However, among the six institutions of both sectors involving in the research, some has just recently been transferred from a college to a university status, therefore in some institutions, there was not even a clearly written policy concerning academic staff development. When asked to provide a copy of their policy on academic staff development, many heads of administration departments of these institutions confessed that they did not have a written document yet, or that they were just in the stage of drafting such policies and there was not yet an updated official written policy.

This partly explained for the vague knowledge of some respondents concerning the policies for further studies for academic staff in their institution, or the financial

support academics might get from institution for doing research. For example, for the question of whether the institution reserved any budget for referential materials and books for teaching and research, only academics involving in administrative positions (e.g. heads of the subjects/ heads of the departments) answered 'Yes' and were able to give the average budget that academics could get annually. The rest of the respondents in the same institution said they did not know if there was any budget reserved for books and materials. In another question concerning doing research, 50% of respondents (half of them were full-time academics) in institution NA said that doing research was not a compulsory activity at the institution, whereas the rest of the respondents (80% of them were full-time) acknowledge that it was a required activity. However, it was interesting to find that not many academics from the latter group carried on research even though they knew that doing research was compulsory for academic staff. The same findings were found with respondents in other institutions concerning these issues. This, to some extent, showed that the existing policies at some institutions were neither widely spread to their academic staff nor strictly carried out as they should be.

Policies on human resource development at some institutions were regularly updated for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching at the institution, according to many rectors and heads of administration departments of the six institutions. It was reflected through the comments of the vice-rector of institution NA:

*“Concerning the academic staff evaluation, in the past, heads of the subject studies or heads of the programmes used to meet all students once or twice a semester, listened to their opinions and then exchanged their reflections to the concerned lecturers. This kind of collective meeting did not show to be effective as each student could not state his/her own opinions and evaluation on the effectiveness of teaching of each lecturer for an individual subject/course. Since 2005-*

*2006 the institution changed the policy on evaluation, constructing a new system of collecting students' opinions through students' evaluation form, which is delivered to all students at the end of each course..."*

By applying a new system of academic staff evaluation, according to this vice-rector, the institution showed their willingness to improve the quality of teaching and studying at their institution. As mentioned above, teaching evaluation was a sensitive activity due to the Oriental tradition in Vietnam that students should highly respect their teachers (see [page 190](#)). Therefore, in order to make both students and academic staff feel more comfortable with the academic staff evaluation activity at the institution, the term 'evaluating the course of study' was used instead of 'evaluating the teaching/lecturers'. After two years applying this new system of evaluation, the institution could see its effectiveness as both students and lecturers were familiar with it and wholeheartedly supported it. Commenting on this evaluation system, the vice-rector of institution NA said:

*"Lecturers are more cooperative as they can see that the evaluation activity helps them improve their teaching methods, make appropriate changes when necessary in order to ensure a high quality of teaching, as well as to obtain personal development."*

However, this vice-rector also admitted that there were still limitations on the evaluation of academic staff since data entry and analysis were currently carried out manually, thus taking feedback from students could not be done for all courses at the institution. In general, as the rector of this institution confirmed, there were many changes made in their human resource policy to attract and keep high-quality academic staff with their institution: (1) the average salary was increased in comparison with that of the previous academic years, (2) the working policy was

updated, providing academics with more economic benefits, (3) performance review of academic staff was changed for better efficiency, and (4) the institution provided a healthy working environment in which academic staff felt highly respected, fairly treated and were able to comfortably contribute to the development of the institution. The rector of institution NA believed that, with its unique characteristics of a private university, these changes brought about a more efficient and workable policy on academic staff recruitment and development.

These were also the common features that could be found in the policy on academic staff recruitment and development of the other two private institutions. The rector of institution NC confirmed that the sole concern of the institution was to develop the academic staff. The weakness of private institutions, as viewed by rectors and heads of administration departments of the three private institutions, lay in the low number of academic staff with doctoral degrees, as well as the academic staff's ability to carry out research.

The common disadvantage of these private institutions, comparing with those in the public sector, was the financial shortage, which hindered them in supporting their staff for further studies for a higher educational degree or for doing research. It is obvious that it took time for these private institutions to build up for their own institution the academic staff that could ensure high teaching quality to meet the requirement of their institution, as well as of the MOET and society as a whole. However, depending on their acknowledged strengths (location of the institution, popular fields of studies, prestige for high quality of teaching and length of time in

operation, or strong diplomatic relationship with other international HE institutions, to name a few), each of the institutions built up their own human resource policy which they believed could help them solve the challenges in the competition for high quality academic staff. For example, according to the head of administration department of institution NB, as the major fields of studies at the institution (e.g. foreign languages and computer sciences) were also popular at many other institutions in the city, and the institution was located in one of the big cities of the country, they did not have difficulties in looking for lecturers as there were always a great number of academics who were willing to take part-time teaching positions at institutions other than their official ones. In the case of another private institution, although their major field of study was also computer sciences, their target personnel were overseas Vietnamese and international academics with HE qualifications. The rector of this institution used a metaphor to describe the situation and their points of view on academic staff recruitment and development:

*“The pond [the national labour market] is small and there are not many fish [lecturers] in it while there are too many fishers [competing HE institutions and companies] and our bait [salary or working conditions] is not very attractive. Therefore, our strategy on human resource is to recruit academic staff and administrative personnel from the global market....”*

In order to recruit from the global market, the rector said, they had to start with international relations. Recognising the importance of co-operative relations, the institution took advantage of every opportunity to develop it. “We do not keep sitting in our institution and wait for opportunities to come, but go overseas to look for cooperation with international institutions”, the rector added. Thanks to such co-operation, as presented on the welcoming letter on their institutional website, the

institution 'has improved curricula, teaching methods, and management in order to keep up with international academic standards.'

However, this rector also admitted that recruitment of lecturers from overseas was only the short-term solution for the problems of human resource at the institution. Overseas lecturers brought about the prompt effects to the shortage of lecturers at the institution. However, the institution could not only rely on this short-term human resource as overseas lecturers would not stay for long with the institution. Thus, the institution had to look for lecturers from the domestic labour sources and used overseas lecturers as the nucleus to develop a strong academic staff in teaching and doing research.

Institutions in the public sector, on the contrary, seemed to worry less about recruiting academic staff for their institutions although low salary, together with strict management disciplines from the government, was viewed as the disadvantage that hindered these institutions from recruiting staff. Policies on academic staff recruitment in public institutions did not take economic benefits (e.g. high salary, allowances) as their core to attract lecturers because their payment schemes had to strictly follow the governmental regulations. However, special characteristics of public institutions (such as prestige of the institution, opportunities for professional development and promotion, or life-long positions ensured for academic staff working for a public institution) helped them overcome the difficulties in recruiting academic staff for their institutions. The head of administration department of the public institution PD said with confidence that the institution had no difficulties in recruiting

full-time academic staff because, in spite of a public institution, the university could preserve its own autonomy in finance from the government and thus could pay higher than some other institutions in the city. In the academic year 2007-2008, there were more than 200 candidates with master's degrees applying for teaching positions at the institution, this head disclosed. The vice-rector of this institution also added that:

*“In the last academic year, the institution was able to recruit ten lecturers with doctoral degrees granted from overseas universities. This shows that the institution has obtained a good reputation that can attract academics with high qualifications.”*

There were some changes in the policy of recruitment, said the vice-rector of this institution. Previously, graduates from their own institution were recruited as academic staff and provided with opportunities for further studies for professional development. These young and newly-graduated academic staff lacked a wide knowledge and experience in teaching at the university level. In the next few years, the institution would look for academics who already had postgraduate degrees and were working for other institutions. The vice-rector believed that this new policy on recruitment would help them reduce the budget reserved for young academics for professional development, as well as shorten the time for raising academic staff's teaching quality and qualifications. However, it was recognised that “there is a lot of competition with other institutions and organisations in the recruitment of part-time academic staff as the number of academics with higher education qualifications in the city is limited,” this vice-rector added.

In addition, opportunities for professional development and promotion to a higher position were viewed as important in the policies on academic staff recruitment and development. With the financial support from the MOET for professional

development for academic staff, leaders of public institutions did not worry about upgrading the degrees of their academic staff as they could send staff for further studies for HE degrees annually. Research activities were viewed as weakness of universities, in both public and private sectors, although every institution stated in their policies that academic staff had to carry on research as part of their duties, apart from teaching.

### ***Perspectives of the Academic Staff on the Staff Development Policies***

Academic staff's perspectives on the institution's academic staff development policies were presented into the following three categories: personal development, doing research, and resources.

#### ***Personal Development***

For personal development, many respondents suggested that institutions should have appropriate treatment policy to encourage staff to study for higher education. Specifically, financial and time support should be given to staff for further study (or post-graduate study) abroad or, at least, academic staff should be sent to professional courses. Concerning time support, some academics also added that there should be fewer meetings so that academic staff could have more time and focus more on their tasks of teaching and doing research.

In addition to opportunities for further studies for post-graduate degrees, many respondents said that there should be more professional training courses and field trips for staff to obtain more practical experiences. More workshops should be organised so that staff could learn from each other. Knowledge exchange should also be

encouraged through such activities as inviting scholars from universities overseas to come to teach at the institution, or encouraging staff and providing opportunities for staff to attend international workshops and conferences.

These suggestions, on the one hand, reflected the real demands from academic staff in both public and private universities on opportunities for education and training for personal and professional development, the two main forms of human resource investment as mentioned in the theory of Human Capital. On the other hand, it also showed that universities did not have yet human resource policies that were really effective in developing their academic teaching staff and in improving their teaching quality.

### ***Doing Research***

According to many respondents, there should be financial support given to ‘quality’ research. The research committee should study the needs of society and suggest or call upon staff to carry out research with financial support. As stated by a respondent, “general appeal will not count as almost all of the staff have been teaching at many institutions to ensure income for their own life”. Apart from money, time was also a matter of concern when a respondent said, “teaching hours should be reduced so that academic staff have more time for research”. In addition, one respondent stated:

*“Research topics should be suggested<sup>57</sup> by the research committee or given to staff so that the result of the research study can meet the needs of the society as well as of the development of the institution.”*

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<sup>57</sup> This shows a lack of confidence and self-study experience in research among academic staff, and this also reflects the culture of study in Vietnam since the learners are often guided on what to do and learn.

Finally, the results of research projects should be accessed and disseminated to all staff. This could be seen as a reward to the time, money, and effort that academic staff invested in their research project. All of these suggestions showed that the majority of academic staff were really interested in doing research, but the current policies implemented in universities across both sectors did not actually encourage academic staff to carry on research within their institutions, or in cooperation with academic staff in other HE institutions.

### ***Resources***

Many academic staff suggested that institutions should buy more course books and professional materials for reference. In the questionnaire, many academic staff showed the ambiguity concerning the budget the institutions reserved for academic staff to spend on books and referential materials. Thus, it should be clearly stated in the policy and publicised to all staff so that they could have a chance to use it when there was a need. Besides, many respondents suggested that institutions should provide good environment for the teaching and learning purposes by upgrading the school fundamental resources. These resources could be referred to as laboratories for language study, photocopier machines, overhead projectors and screens for classrooms, to name a few. In addition, institutions should also provide academic staff with offices so that they could have a private place to work while at the institutions and supervise students apart from their teaching hours. This requirement, however, was hard to be done because almost all of the institutions, especially private institutions, had a very small campus. Thus, there was not enough space for classrooms, let alone private offices for their academic staff.

In general, there should be stricter policies on staff development relating to doing research and studying for further education. The teaching staff should be assigned tasks suitable to their professional capacity. Each of the academic teaching staff should be assisted with appropriate orientation for personal development. Human resource development policies applied at the institution should be publicised and all staff should be treated equally for their professional development. Staff should be given maximum financial support possible and their life should be settled. For example, the institution should provide them with accommodation, medical care, canteen, and spaces for break-time. Universities should ensure stable income for the teaching staff by raising payment per teaching hours. Academic staff, especially the inexperienced ones, should be supported both financially and '*spiritually*' in the work through mentors or advisers. There should be an assistant dealing with office work at each subject to save teachers from spending time on this load of work.

### **Conclusions**

This chapter presented the issues of staffing and academic staff development facing universities of both sectors. The analysis indicated that advantages and disadvantages in academic staff development in the private institutions were similar to those in the public sector. Institutions of both sectors had to deal with similar problems in relation to the number of academic staff (especially full-time academic staff), the low number of staff with post-graduate qualifications, as well as the ratio of academic staff to students. As there was not a balance between the number of academics and students registered at the institutions, academic staff in each of the institutions have to spend most of their time on teaching rather than on research, other academic activities or professional development.

In order to deal with these issues in human resource management, universities implemented different policies in recruiting qualified academic staff and in developing their current academic staff. Whilst public universities considered their prestige as a governmental institution an advantage in attracting academic staff to their institutions, private universities saw high payment as a reward for those working at their institutions.

As education was the key to human resource development, institutions of both sectors encouraged their academic staff to carry out their further studies for post-graduate degrees by providing financial and time support, although at various levels, depending on the capacity of each institution. It would certainly take a long time before institutions had strong human resources with highly qualified academic staff. However, action must be taken immediately to ensure that the current academic staff in universities were developed to their best in order to be able to provide quality teaching to their students. Moreover, this should also be done to attract academics to the teaching career, rather than working for organisations apart from the educational sector.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

The theory of human resource development in educational institutions, together with an analysis of the current situation of higher education in Vietnam as presented in Chapter Two, points to the need for universities to have practical and applicable policies on academic staff development to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and doing research in their institutions. In the previous chapter, the findings of the research were presented with a focus on the academic staff development issues facing both public and private universities in Vietnam, the current academic staff development policies implemented in these institutions, as well as the perspectives of educational leaders and lecturers towards their academic staff development policies. These findings formed the basis for the discussion in this chapter, as they had implications for the way universities in Vietnam should construct and implement academic staff development policies in their institutions. In the chapter, I address the major findings of the research, consider some implications and make some suggestions as to how such policies may be enhanced.

First, I would like to discuss the realities of academic staff development in Vietnamese universities. The current teaching situation in institutions in both the public and private sectors revealed important issues facing the management of academic staff development in these institutions. Despite all the efforts to attract academic staff with higher education qualifications, such as higher salaries, increasing allowances, providing opportunities for professional development for young

academics or giving special welfare treatment and promotion, many institutions still failed to recruit and retain qualified academic staff. Most of the six institutions investigated had a lack of suitable candidates (qualified candidates with post-graduate qualifications) for the teaching positions at their institutions. In the institutions involved in the research, the average number of full-time academic staff represented approximately 50% of the total number of academics. Institutions in the private sector seemed to have a lower percentage of full-time academic staff than institutions in the public sector, thus private institutions had to rely more on part-time staff to carry the teaching load at their institutions. The reliance on part-time academics had both positive and adverse effects. The positive effect was that private institutions only needed to recruit the number of academics required (most come from public institutions), depending on the needs of the institution for each academic year. It was also more flexible for private institutions to recruit only appropriate and qualified academic staff and to dismiss unsuitable ones. However, it was not stable to rely so heavily on part-time academics, as it was very competitive to recruit staff from this source. Moreover, part-time academic staff were not completely committed to the institution and might easily leave at the end of the contract. Another adverse effect was that part-time academic staff were not usually engaged in research due to their very heavy teaching commitments (from both their main and subordinate institutions).

There were several reasons that accounted for either the high or the low percentage of full-time academics with post-graduate qualifications in each institution. These included the prestige of the institution, its public or private status, salary, and academic staff development policies implemented by each institution, including the chances for promotion that each institution offered its academic staff. However, the

location of the institutions should also be taken into account. Whether it was located in a large and well-developed city or in a remote and less-developed area was important, because this would affect its ability to attract and recruit full-time academic staff with post-graduate qualifications and even good students<sup>58</sup>. In addition, some of the institutions investigated have been upgraded recently from college to university status and this also explained the relatively low number of post-graduate qualification holders in some institutions. As mentioned in Chapter Five, [page 161](#), academic staff at a college needed only a bachelor's degree as a basic qualification requirement, thus when colleges were upgraded to universities, it would take time for their academic staff to obtain a postgraduate degree, which was a basic requirement for academic staff at universities.

The shortage of highly qualified academic staff brought with it many consequences. First, in many universities, there was always a high ratio of students to academic staff. Based on the statistical numbers of academic staff and students, the average ratio of academic staff to students of the six institutions investigated was 1:20.8. Again, while the lowest academic staff and student ratio was 1:15 at a private institution and the highest was 1:27 at a public institution (see [Table 5.3](#) in [Chapter Five](#)), there were still large class sizes in many institutions. The questionnaire results showed that many lecturers had approximately thirty to forty students in their classes and in some emerging subject areas (at the undergraduate level) such as business administration or information technology, there might be more than 100 students in a class. The high

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<sup>58</sup> The quality of students enrolling in public and private universities had been mentioned in Chapter Three, [page 99](#). Students of the private institutions were considered as of lower quality since these private institutions could only recruit those who failed the entrance examination to public institutions.

ratio of students to academic staff certainly affected the quality of teaching and learning at these institutions.

The teacher shortage also led to an overload of teaching in most of the institutions. Academics in both sectors had a large number of teaching hours, apart from other administrative duties. The interview analysis revealed that in many institutions, the total teaching hours that each academic staff member undertook were regulated at about 300 hours per academic year. In reality, many taught nearly twice that number. The questionnaire results showed that 46.2% of lecturers from the six institutions were teaching more than 300 hours per year; a small number of lecturers in this group, especially in the English language or computer science disciplines reported to teach approximately 600 hours per academic year. The literature suggested that academic staff in a higher education institution should carry the responsibilities of both teaching and research in order to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. However, it could be said that teaching was the priority or the main responsibility of academic staff in these institutions and not many had time reserved for research or other academic activities. Apart from the lack of academic staff, another reason explaining the large number of teaching hours was the extra income they would get for such a load. In addition, as the Vietnamese university system originated from the Soviet model that separated teaching from research, it could be understood that academic staff in these institutions were more oriented to teaching than to research and innovation.

As a result of the shortage of qualified lecturers, in many institutions throughout the country there was a large number of academic staff with only bachelor's degrees teaching undergraduate programmes. The fact that there was a very low percentage of

doctoral degree holders of all full-time academic staff (the highest was 29.4% in a private institution and the lowest was 0.7% in a public one, see Table 5.2 in Chapter Five) in all of the institutions surveyed indicated that institutions of both sectors should invest more in human capital. This could be done through providing continuing professional development, on-the-job training, and other knowledge and skills appropriate to needs, so that institutions could get the most from their current academic staff. According to the theory of human capital, the most important investment was education and training as such investments improved skills, knowledge, or health and, as a result, would increase incomes and staff morale.

Another issue relating to the staffing in higher education was the age profile of academic staff. The data analysis in Chapter Five (page 164) showed that the age of academics holding doctoral degrees in higher education (HE) institutions in Vietnam was skewed. The majority of professors and associate professors were reaching the age of retirement while the rest were young academic staff, usually recruited as fresh graduates from HE institutions. In terms of qualification and working experience, these young academics had not been well prepared to take over senior positions. It was regulated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) that in order to be appointed to the position of Chair of a department, candidates must have at least a master's degree.

All these issues described an overall picture of the current academic staff development situation in universities in Vietnam. Derived from these very central important issues, institutions of both sectors were facing several challenges in recruiting new staff and improving their current academic staff in order to meet the

needs of their institutions. The following sections explore further these issues of academic staff recruitment and development in such institutions.

### **Issues of Academic Staff Recruitment**

The competition for qualified academic staff became fiercer as a result of many new universities being founded within the last two years (forty five new HE institutions were established between 2005 and 2007<sup>59</sup>). This is not to mention the existing private and public universities which developed new programmes which required more teaching staff. As they were financially restricted by the government, public institutions could not offer a high salary for lecturers and this made it hard for them to persuade qualified staff to come to their institutions.

It is even more difficult to persuade Vietnamese overseas academics to work for Vietnamese universities, as their salaries abroad were in tens of thousands of US dollars a year. For this reason, many universities found it hard to attract and retain qualified lecturers, both from within the country and overseas (including expatriate Vietnamese and foreign lecturers). This is part of the so-called 'brain drain' which human resource policy makers need to take into consideration when trying to attract highly qualified Vietnamese to work for Vietnamese higher education (HE) institutions. The 'brain drain' reflects the flow of people leaving Vietnam or Vietnamese agencies and universities for different reasons. Although precise statistics were not available, there were flows of academics migrating to Western countries for political reasons after 1975 when the country was reunited. The migrating academics were joined later by significant numbers of students who did not want to come back

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<sup>59</sup> The information is retrieved from the website of the Ministry of Education and Training <http://edu.net.vn/thongke/dhcd.htm> on 14 November 2008.

to Vietnam after finishing their studying abroad either for economic reasons, or for gaining working experience in their field of study. In addition, some of the academics chose to reside permanently in a developed country for personal reasons such as family re-union or for their professional development. Finally, within the country, there were a number of academics and researchers leaving state agencies and universities to work for locally-based foreign owned companies. The issue of 'brain drain' remained a big problem for a developing country like Vietnam and it urged educational policy makers to amend their academic staff recruitment and development policies to recruit and retain professionals for their institution's development.

It is clear that the HE institutions of both sectors were facing the same challenges in academic staff recruitment, which was the shortage of academics with HE qualifications, particularly doctoral degree holders. As a result, institutions of both sectors had to compete, not only with each other but also with companies, in recruiting qualified staff with post-graduate qualifications for their institutions. It is obvious that lecturers' salaries were not competitive with those of other occupations. Low payment was considered a barrier that made it hard for public universities to recruit academic staff. However, the prestige of the institution and the teaching position at a public university were viewed as the advantages of public HE institutions in recruiting staff for their institutions. On the contrary, not having as much prestige as public universities was one of the disadvantages of private universities. Another disadvantage, as agreed by the rectors of the three private institutions, was that academic staff in these institutions did not get equal treatment from the MOET, which hindered many academic staff in applying for a teaching position with them. The only way for these private institutions to cope with problems in recruitment was through

high payment, due to their autonomy in finance. The interview analysis in Chapter Five revealed that academics in private universities received a basic salary which was 30% higher than the salary paid for academics of the same rank working for public institutions. Nevertheless, their high payment was still very low compared to the payment offered by commercial and industrial sectors, which lured a lot of qualified academics to leave the educational sector, especially when there was a growing demand for high qualified human resources due to rapid economic growth after Vietnam joined the World Trade Organisation in January 2007.

Apart from high payment, academics of private universities were provided with a better working environment and opportunities for professional development. Additionally, the rectors of the private institutions confirmed that, thanks to personal connections with lecturers with whom they had been working before, they could recruit academic staff for their institutions. Moreover, the recruitment was fair and democratic, with academic staff recruited on the basics of qualified qualifications and capabilities, as confirmed by the rector of institution NA.

The staffing issues in general, and issues relating to academic staff recruitment in particular, remained the pressing problems in institutions of both sectors. These problems became more crucial in newly-established universities. The boom of universities in recent years, the imbalance between the rapid growing number of enrolled students and the slow increasing number of academic staff with higher education qualifications, the competition for human resources within HE institutions and between HE institutions with companies, all together contributed to the issues of

academic staff facing HE institutions in Vietnam, forcing these institutions to find ways to attract, recruit and retain qualified academic staff.

### **Issues of Academic Staff Development**

It is obvious that HE institutions across both sectors were faced with many crucial challenges in academic staff development. It is not a surprise to find that research was not commonly carried out in many institutions, as HE institutions in Vietnam tended to focus more on teaching rather than on research. The problem has become worse in private institutions since these institutions were short of both finance and, consequently, human resources in carrying out research. In a paper prepared for the research study on *Higher Education in South-east Asia* organised by UNESCO and SEAMEO RIHED, Dr Ngo Doan Dai (2006) indicated that what hindered private institutions to carry out scientific research was that their full-time staff were young and inexperienced (most of them were recruited after graduating from higher education institutions), and

Where there are professors, they are usually retired ones who are no longer interested in doing research, and guest professors from public universities who just come to teach, but not to contribute to research.  
(Ngo, 2006: 224)

As a result of not doing research, few staff had academic publication or articles published in prestigious international journals. The low commitment to publication of academics was completely understandable. Considering the excessive regulated teaching time that most university lecturers carried out, academic staff had no time for doing research and writing academic papers. Another reason was that academics did not receive whole-hearted support and encouragement from the institution for publication. In addition, academic staff had no motivation for doing research as

publication did not result in a higher income, which many lecturers could more easily get from having more teaching hours; and research outputs were not appropriately evaluated and rewarded both spiritually and financially. To solve the problems concerning doing research, it is recommended that the standard teaching hours should be reduced so that academic staff have more time for conducting research. More funds should be reserved for the development of modern laboratory facilities, access to scholarly resources on the web for lecturers and graduate students to carry out research successfully, and publication of research outputs. In addition, institutions need to offer support for their academic staff to attend international conferences. Concerning the capacity of academic staff to carry out research, institutions need to make the most of academic staff who studied abroad and returned to Vietnam. They should be engaged in providing guidance for the improvement of teaching and learning as well as doing research for younger and inexperienced academic staff by disseminating their knowledge in the discipline, up-to-dated teaching methods and more importantly, their research skills obtained from international higher education institutions. In addition, universities should provide professional development programmes in pedagogy and research skills for their academic staff to upgrade their teaching skills and research ability.

The failure to attend seminars and conferences was also a matter of concern. Nearly one quarter of academic staff had never attended any seminars or conferences. Financial shortage, again, was blamed as one of the reasons for academic staff for not attending seminars and conferences. Thus institutions should reserve more budget in supporting academic staff to participate in national and international seminars and conferences. The activity of teaching assessment and staff evaluation, although

carried out in most institutions, did not prove to be very effective in improving the quality of teaching, since it was done very formally and its results did not affect or really encourage staff in their professional development. Academic staff would not be motivated to improve their teaching quality or doing research if what they have done would not be appropriately evaluated. Thus institutions need to build up an effective evaluation and assessment system that highly value the contribution and attainment of their academics. Rewards and promotion should be based on merit, performance and conducting research, which would be precisely evaluated and accessed annually. Criteria for evaluation and assessment should be made clear and publicised to all academic staff; and the evaluation process should be carried out publicly and fairly, and on the basis of improving the quality of teaching, learning and doing research at the institutions so that academic staff, and even students, would cooperate with institutions in the evaluation process.

Concerning the fundamental resources for professional development for academic staff, the questionnaire results showed that most academics did not have their own offices, and the learning resources in most institutions were poor and inadequate. In order for academic staff to fully develop their teaching capacity, institutions need to supply them with fundamental resources, such as private offices, learning resources (libraries and laboratories) with more updated reference materials, as well as computers with high-speed internet access. As Nguyen, Pham and Sloper (1995: 196) stated in *Physical Facilities and Learning Resources*:

Only when such basic matters concerning physical facilities and learning resources<sup>60</sup> are rectified can the professional work of

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<sup>60</sup> These physical facilities and learning resources refer to technical facilities and equipment for lectures, laboratories, faculty offices, provision of textbooks and library materials to name a few.

academic staff be expected to improve so that they raise the quality of higher education.

The upgrading of staff qualifications was another issue of academic staff development in all six institutions. The fact that many academic staff in each of the institutions investigated did not have the qualifications required to teach at an HE institution showed that these institutions needed to develop and implement feasible plans for professional development for their academic staff (see Table 5.2 in Chapter Five). Each of the rectors showed awareness of the effects of education on the productivity of academic staff. The interview analysis and the questionnaire results showed that in each institution, academic staff were provided with encouragement and financial support for their further study. This investment in human capital was carried out not only to meet the requirement of the MOET that HE institutions must have a certain percentage (25%) of academic staff with doctoral degrees, but with a desire to improve the quality of the work force. However, a greater proportion of the budget need to be reserved for investment in human capital.

The issue of upgrading lecturers' qualifications should not only be the concern of each individual institution but also of the governmental educational leaders. Recently, in response to this problem of the shortage of university lecturers with doctoral degrees, the MOET has built up a programme aiming at having 20,000 doctorate holders by 2020, targeting college and university lecturers<sup>61</sup>. Thus, in HE institutions all over the country, academic staff are encouraged to be involved in this programme. Specifically, in the academic year 2007-2008, 1,500 candidates would be selected for doctoral studies, of which 500 would be given the opportunity to study overseas and

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<sup>61</sup> As quoted from the 'Current Priorities of Vietnam's Higher Education', presented in the Vietnam-New Zealand Education Forum on 4 December 2007 in Hanoi by Prof. Dr. Banh Tien Long, Standing Vice Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam.

the rest would pursue their doctoral studies domestically. This programme provided more opportunities for academic staff in both public and private HE institutions to obtain a doctoral degree to meet the requirements of the MOET for lecturers at HE institutions.

In general, institutions of both sectors were facing the same difficulties concerning the budget for developing their academic staff, and in increasing the number of academics with doctoral degrees. In fact, institutions of both sectors had a limited budget for staff development. Universities in the public sectors were better off than private institutions as the former could get funding for staff development from the state. Private institutions might have more difficulties than public institutions in finding resources for academic staff development, and, as a result, such institutions had to cover training costs for their academic staff from their own budget, which was often limited as it came mainly from tuition fees. Due to this limited budget in private institutions, academic staff in these institutions had fewer opportunities for further education than those in the public sector.

Another factor affecting the study for further education of academic staff in private institutions was that the majority of staff were part-time. Institutions normally tended to invest more in their full-time staff to ensure a high rate of return from this source of staff. These private institutions, however, could overcome the constraint of limited budget for academic staff development by taking advantage of such programme of producing 20,000 doctorate holders by the MOET as mentioned above. As this programme is open to all academic staff of both the public and the private sector, academic staff of private institutions should be encouraged to take part in this

programme. In addition, private institutions could also look for support from NGOs and international HE institutions in providing their academic staff with more opportunities for further education.

As a central concern of all universities, the staffing issues mentioned above forced university administrators and policy makers to make adjustment in their staffing policies and practices. The policies implemented and the changes made were different, depending on the particular context of each institution. The following section discusses the implications for policies on human resource management and development in private universities in Vietnam.

### **Implications for the Academic Staff Recruitment and Development Policies in Private Universities in Vietnam**

The solution for staffing issues in higher education in Vietnam requires effort not only from each of the institutions, but also from the government. It requires time and an appropriate strategy in solving the problem of human resources. In dealing with the shortage of academic staff, institutions may look for promising academics from overseas institutions, as in the case of private institution NA. This institution built up a strong relationship with other international institutions in Europe and Asia over the last ten years. The international co-operation and staff exchange not only helped them get out of the shortage of human resources, but also strengthened the teaching programmes offered. Institutions may also call for academics from outside employment settings. This measure of employing lecturers on temporary, part-time and *ad hoc* positions enables institutions to overcome the difficulties in academic staff recruitment and to meet the need for particular forms of expertise.

As discussed above, it might not be stable and reliable to depend too much on part-time academic staff, thus universities need to build up their own full-time academic staff that are committed to teaching and research and to the development of their institutions. Universities, therefore, may recruit graduates from their own and other institutions for full-time teaching positions. This measure might bring with it the problem of not meeting the qualifications standard required for academic staff at HE institutions and force HE institutions to invest in the further professional development of such staff. In the long run, however, such academics may become the core human resources engaged in the development of the institution. Another way of dealing with the shortage of lecturers was through recruiting potential academic staff who came back to Vietnam upon finishing their post-graduate studies abroad. Another source of academic staff that universities may look for comes from overseas Vietnamese scientists and academics, who might be willing to come back to Vietnam periodically, for example three or six months a year, or permanently once they are retired.

In order to attract and retain full-time academic staff, institutions need to change their motivation and reward system. From the interview and document analysis, it can be seen that, in all six institutions, economic policies were applied in attracting and retaining qualified academic staff. These included offering high salaries, increasing allowances, or providing one-off support on accommodation. This was done to assure an income high enough for academic staff to cover their personal living costs, so that they could concentrate on their academic duties. Apart from economic policies, institutions also implemented different policies which were most suitable to their current requirement and capability, for example providing welfare treatment, health

insurance, financial support and opportunities for professional development and promotion for young and novice lecturers.

It is hard to recruit staff, but it is harder to retain them. Mr Nguyen Quoc Hop (VNS, 2008b), head of the training office at *Van Hien* University admitted that there was a growing number of lecturers changing jobs after just a short period of time working as lecturers. Leaders of all six universities involved in the research also agreed with this. Therefore, apart from the policies on recruitment, such institutions also need to find ways to retain their qualified lecturers. The paying system, for example, should be changed so that lecturers' income would not depend on the number of courses taught, thus they do not need to have additional jobs and can concentrate more on the teaching, learning and doing research at the institution. Based on this paying system, full-time academics, therefore, should be recruited with a commitment of working forty hours a week at their home institution with a balance of teaching, doing research and other services. Promotions and financial rewards should not only be based on experience and qualifications obtained, as they used to be, but also on merit, performance, quality of teaching, conducting research and other service activities offered such as supervising students, instructional development, and institutional governance.

As discussed in the previous section, income of human resources working in the educational sector was much lower than other occupations, if not the lowest. Therefore, for those who have been, or have chosen to be, working in the educational sector, high income is not their professional target. Instead, most of them joined the teaching career for other reasons. These include the learning environment and the

opportunities for professional development that HE institutions can offer, especially for young and newly graduated candidates who lack both experience and wide knowledge in their specialised fields of studies. Recognising this, in the policies on academic staff development of all institutions, much attention has been paid to support academic staff develop professionally. In all the institutions investigated, academics have been given opportunities to attend domestic and foreign professional training courses, seminars and conferences. All have plans to upgrade their academic staff's qualifications using the state and institutional budget. Many have cooperated with international institutions in organising seminar and conferences for their staff. In spite of these efforts, these institutions do not seem to meet the demands of their staff. The questionnaire results showed that academic staff in these institutions still required and expected much more support on professional development from their institutions.

In order to deal with issues concerning academic staff recruitment and and to provide more support on professional development, institutional policies on academic staff development should be reviewed with regards to recruitment, promotion and tenure award criteria, and the linkage between these criteria and the achievement of staff development targets. The importance of academic staff development should be emphasised and given proper consideration in the institutional policies. Specifically, academic staff development should be made a mandatory requirement before promotions are made. In addition, institutions should provide firm backing and support to academic staff development and should consider it as an institutional priority. Academic staff development plans should be made as part of the institutional human resource strategy and institutions should ensure that adequate funding be provided for academic staff development plans to be carried out. What is more

important is that academic staff of universities should be aware of such plans and of the need for continuing development for their own benefits. There should be appropriate rewards as well as punishments for those who obtain or fail to obtain the academic staff development targets set for each individual.

The above recommendations are for institutions to respond to challenges on academic staff recruitment and development. With regards to responsibilities of the governmental educational agency, specifically the MOET, it is suggested that top-universities should be given responsibilities to produce qualified academic staff for other universities in Vietnam. In addition, the government should review the current human resource policies to call for overseas Vietnamese academics to come back to contribute to the national higher education system. Specifically, multi- and long-term visas might be issued for Vietnamese diasporas who come back to teach at Vietnamese HE institutions. They should also be supported with accommodation, when required, and be given the best working conditions possible so that they know they are wholeheartedly welcomed and their contribution is significantly recognised.

Academic staff working for both public and private universities should be given equal treatment so that academic staff in private institutions will not feel discriminated and have more incentives in working for a private institution. In addition, university leaders of both sectors should be granted more autonomy in making tenure decisions and promotion to the ranks of associate or full professor for their academic staff.

In dealing with the issues of conducting research at universities, more research-oriented universities should be established; cooperation among major research

universities be encouraged and facilitated; and more fundings be reserved for fundamental and basic research in institutions so that a new generation of scientists be prepared. Research fundings should also be made competitive so that only the best qualified and productive universities and/or research institutes can get funding. Because only through research can new knowledge be created and shared with students, and education can become relevant to current needs, the MOET should stress the importance of academic staff conducting research and require HE institutions to make it clear in their reviews of institutional strategic planning and of evaluating academic staff performance annually. Research outputs of an HE institution should also be considered an important criteria in accrediting. The MOET should help academic staff in HE institutions to improve their professional competence by funding academic staff to attend international conferences and sabbaticals or calling for support from international organisations to conduct international conferences in Vietnam so that more Vietnamese academic staff can take part in.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the issues investigated in the research questions. Institutions of both sectors of the Vietnamese higher education system are now facing similar issues in recruiting and developing academic staff for their institutions. In the current Vietnamese higher education situation in which the demand is much higher than the supply, many new higher education institutions have recently been established to meet the needs of the fast growing number of university students, resulting in the severe shortage and a very young age profile of university lecturers. As a result, the competition for qualified lecturers, especially lecturers with post-graduate degrees,

becomes fiercer, which forces institutions to find ways to tackle the problem. Due to the length of operation and financial support from government, public universities are more advantageous than private ones in recruiting and retaining academic staff, thus whilst private institutions implemented economic treatment as their core policies, public institutions attracted and retained academic staff by providing them opportunities for professional development.

It is worth noting that the current policies on academic staff recruitment in private universities (recruiting part-time academics from overseas and other local public institutions) proved to be effective in helping them tackle the crucial issue of academic staff shortage. However, these are just short-term solutions for the problem. In order for private universities to have a qualified academic staff, they need to regard long-term investments in their current academic staff, such as providing more opportunities for professional development or encouraging academic staff to do research, as their counterparts in the public sector have been doing. However, in order for private universities to obtain this, there need to be not only efforts from these private institutions, but also support from the government, specifically the Ministry of Education and Training.

The research shows that there are still many decisions to be made in the establishment of an effective policy on academic staff development to overcome challenges facing institutions of both the public and the private HE sector. It does not mean that private universities should rigidly take policies implemented by public institutions as models. Depending on their own needs and special characteristics of the institution, each private institution may develop an appropriate policy on academic staff development

so that they will soon have their own highly qualified academic staff. Without a strong highly qualified academic staff, HE institutions in general, or private universities in particular, cannot accomplish their missions of education and training in providing highly qualified manpower for the cause of industrialisation, modernisation and sustainable development of the country.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter Five a detailed analysis of the data collected has been presented focussing on the staffing issues facing Vietnamese universities, as well as the current academic staff development policies implemented in these institutions. Chapter Six offered implications not only to private universities but also to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), for the way private universities in Vietnam should construct and implement academic staff development policies in their institutions so that they can function more effectively. This final chapter provides a short conclusion, followed by bibliography and appendices. The chapter summarises the findings of the thesis, identifies any limitations and offers suggestions for further research. The chapter also makes claims for the thesis as a PhD, concerning its originality, contribution to knowledge, substance based on the research, and publishable standard.

#### **Summary of the Thesis**

The literature review on higher education in developing countries showed that higher education (HE) plays a crucial role in their economic growth and social development from both human capital and social capital aspects. HE systems in many countries, however, faced similar issues concerning the lack of academic staff, the quality of teaching, learning and doing research, financial constraints, and governance of HE institutions. Vietnam is not an exception in entering the era of globalisation, industrialisation and modernisation. Like many other developing countries, Vietnam also carried out HE reforms, resulting in the expansion and differentiation of the HE

system, the changes in its functions, the diversification of financial resources, and the reorganisation of HE institutional structures and systems. Private HE institutions were established as a result of these reforms in HE in Vietnam. However, together with the establishment of private HE institutions, there come into being several issues and challenges concerning the quality of education, including the students' inputs and outputs, the outdated curricula, the lack of linkage between university training objectives and social needs, and the need of highly qualified academic staff.

Quality of education could be seen as one of the most crucial and greatest challenges that private HE institutions are facing; academic and administrative staff need to make great efforts to address the charge of low quality teaching. As teaching staff is one of the various elements that strongly influence the quality of education, this study aims to explore existing issues of staffing and academic staff development in private universities in Vietnam, the policies implemented by private universities in order to promote academic staff development, and the extent of effectiveness in implementing these policies in Vietnamese private universities.

A comparative and qualitative method with multiple case studies was employed to answer the following main research questions:

1. What are the crucial issues of staffing and academic staff development facing public and private universities in Vietnam?
2. What academic staff development policies have private universities implemented?
3. To what extent have these policies proved to be effective, as perceived by the leaders of private universities and their academic staff?

Four universities in Vietnam, two public and two private, were initially chosen as case studies for this research. However, during fieldwork which took place in Vietnam between November 2007 and February 2008, I had a chance to work with another provincial public university. The data obtained from this provincial HE institution showed to be very informative and valuable in helping me to explore the issues under investigation with deeper understanding and from more objective perspectives. Therefore, data collected from this additional case study, together with data from the pilot study, were also included in the data analysis.

Standards of staffing in public institutions were used as the benchmark for the comparative study, as public higher education institutions in Vietnam have a longer history of establishment and operation, which have helped them build up cadres of highly qualified and experienced teaching staff. Data on higher education policies and issues relating to academic staff development and the quality of education in these institutions were gathered using a mixed methods approach. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of the universities involved; questionnaires were distributed to selected academic staff of these institutions; and documentary sources from the MOET and from these institutions were collected in forms of hard copies and from their own institutional websites.

The results of the study showed that institutions of both sectors were facing similar issues in recruiting and developing their academic staff. With financial support from government, public universities were in a more advantageous position than private ones in recruiting and retaining academic staff, by providing academic staff opportunities for professional development. However, as private universities enjoyed

more autonomy in financial management, they implemented economic measures as their core policies in calling for academic staff. The research showed that there were still many decisions to be made in the establishment of an effective policy on academic staff development to overcome challenges facing institutions of both the public and the private HE sector.

The first and foremost area where actions need to be taken was the increase of the number of full-time academic staff in private universities. Chapter Five showed that private universities depended largely on part-time academic staff who came mainly from public institutions. The full-time academics in these private institutions were few and inadequately qualified. Their salary was low in comparison to the heavy load of work they had to carry out. It is suggested that private universities should emphasise in their strategic planning the development of their full-time academic staff so that they could reduce the dependence on the teaching staff from the public sector. That is to say, they should recruit more academic staff on the basis of a full-time contract which requires lecturers to make a commitment to a combination of such responsibilities as teaching, doing research, supervising students and other services. In order to obtain this, their salary should not be based on the total hours/courses taught, but on merit, performance and doing research.

In addition, promotion and salary increase should be based on achievement of academic staff development targets set for each individual. Criteria for promotion and appointment should be publicised to all academic staff and through open and formal selection procedures. The current process of academic staff evaluation and assessment should be revised, with a stress on the exactness, fairness and democracy. Information

for evaluation should be gathered from different channels such as student/teacher evaluation, peer review, and personal portfolio. Private universities also need to provide academic staff with financial support in participating in international conferences, carrying out researches or sabbaticals, and studying for further qualifications required.

The above suggestions certainly require private universities to reserve a considerable sum of money from their limited budget which comes mainly from tuition fees. Thus, private universities should explore every source of funding in carrying out their human resource development planning. They should, for example, take advantage of the governmental budget for developing academic staff in HE institutions through the plan by the MOET of preparing 20,000 PhDs by 2020. Private universities should also encourage their academic staff to compete for other scholarships provided by international organisations such as the Fulbright, Ausaid, Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF), UNESCO, the World Bank and other Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to name a few.

The following sections present the limitations of this research and recommendations for further research.

### **What are the Limitations of the Research?**

Inevitably, there are limitations to the research. First, as institutions of approximately the same sizes, in terms of academic staff and student numbers, fields of study and length of time in operation, of both sectors were chosen as case studies for this qualitative research, they do not represent the whole higher education system. One

needs, therefore, to be cautious in applying the findings generally. However, it is argued that the findings of the research are illuminating and of value. Secondly, in terms of data collection, as Vietnam is a bureaucratic state-plan country; there is a restriction in accessing official documents to those who are not line members. The information or data base is not often updated and publicly displayed or indeed available. Some information is available on websites; however, its validity and reliability should be questioned. For example, in order to deal with the requirement of the MOET on numbers of academic staff, several universities officially reported a higher number of staff than they had in reality (VNS, 2008a).

In some cases, it was hard to arrange for an appointment for interviews with the top leaders of the institutions without special or personal relationships with them. Although most interviewees were very helpful and co-operative, some remained reluctant to provide information relating to their staffing situation and policies on academic staff development at their institutions. As this is qualitative research, and data were obtained through interviews, documents and questionnaires, the main limitation is in the verification of the data. In spite of these limitations, however, I have tried my best to go as deeply as possible into the issues investigated and to consider them from a critical and practical point of view.

### **What Further Research Needs to be Done?**

The research has gathered evidence about the policies on academic staff development in universities in Vietnam. This is one of the first studies focusing on such policies in higher education in Vietnam. What remains to be researched? A number of matters worthy of further investigation have been implied and identified. These are:

- The effectiveness of policies on academic staff development on improving the quality of teaching and learning in HE institutions in Vietnam, especially in the private sector.
- The impact of lecturers' qualifications on the quality of teaching.
- The effective use of brain and labour from lecturers with post-graduate degrees: teaching and/or doing research.
- The possible use of diasporas - the Vietnamese exiles or overseas communities.

### **Reflections on the Research**

This qualitative research was designed to help gain a deep understanding of the issues confronting Vietnamese private universities concerning their academic staff development. The interest in academic staff development in universities derived from my own experience as a lecturer at a public HE institution where I had been working for more than ten years. This interest has been developed since I moved to work for the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Training Centre (SEAMEO RETRAC), an educational organisation which dealt with issues of educational management in HE institutions in Vietnam and the regional countries.

Although the research focused on academic staff development in the private sector, with the suggestions of my two supervisors, a comparative multiple-case study was employed as a research design, with standards of staffing in public institutions used as the bench mark for the comparative study due to its longer history of establishment, operation, and experience in building up cadres of highly qualified and experienced teaching staff. The major difficulty I encountered during the process of carrying out

the research was approaching the leaders of the four institutions chosen as case studies of the research. With support from the Director of SEAMEO RETRAC, however, I finally was able to arrange meetings with leaders of the pilot institution and the four institutions (and even of one additional provincial public university) for interviews and obtain their approval for conducting a questionnaire survey with selected academic staff of their institutions.

Although it was hard to approach these leaders at the beginning, I received wholehearted support from these educational leaders during and after the interviews. As some of the rectors told me at the beginning of their interviews, they agreed to talk with me in spite of their tight working schedule as they always approved and encouraged academic staff to carry out research and considered research as one of the main duties of academic staff at HE institutions. Most of the interviewees responded to my transcripts sent to them after the interviews to confirm or make some minor corrections to the information provided during the interviews. Thus, to me their supporting behaviour and attitude proved more than any words in encouraging and supporting their academic staff to carrying out research and studying for further education for professional development. The feedback I received from academic staff was also very encouraging. Many of them emailed me after the survey, sharing their experience and interest in my topic and asking for my approval to use my questionnaire and the participation information sheet (See [Appendix B](#)) as the model examples for students of their research methodology courses. The positive responses from both the leaders and academic staff of the institutions involved in the research were quite an exciting experience while conducting this research.

Carrying out this research project has enabled me to understand the major issues facing private universities, the policies on academic staff development in these institutions as well as the effectiveness of these policies under the perspectives of their leaders and academics. The process of carrying out this qualitative comparative multiple-case study research also helped me to learn to design, conduct, gather and analyse data, and present it to a publishable standard. This will certainly contribute to my professional development as a future educational manager and as a researcher.

### **Contribution of the Study**

Recognising that private universities in Vietnam are continuously contributing to the development of HE system of the whole country while they suffer unequal treatment (from both the public and the government) and a lack of appropriate guidelines in operation from the government, the research was designed and carried out with the hope that its results will be beneficial to not only private universities participating in the research, but also other private HE institutions in exploring ways to improve themselves so that they will meet the needs of the society. The implications of the research may be used to develop favourable working conditions that could attract potential academics who received postgraduate degrees from international HE institutions to come back to Vietnam to teach and do research in private HE institutions in particular, and other HE institutions in general. In addition, the research may provide implications for policy makers (the MOET) in consolidating its support to the private sector so that it may effectively develop on a par with the public sector. The results of the study might also provide a full picture of private HE in Vietnam for international and local organisations looking for future cooperation and assistance with Vietnamese private HE institutions.

As mentioned in the literature review, few research articles on private higher education in Vietnam could be found in any international and national professional journals, and there were only a few unpublished postgraduate theses available on higher education in Vietnam, such as those carried out by Pham (1997) on *Policies on Privatisation in Vietnamese HE*, Doan (2000) on *Foreign-trained Academics and the Development of Vietnamese HE*, and Pham (2006) on *Roles of Private Universities as Non-profit Organisations in Vietnam*. This research is, therefore, one of the first and few research projects done on policies on academic staff development in private universities in Vietnam, investigating an issue of current and major concern for the development of the private HE sector. The research findings might serve as a point of reference for educators, researchers, and policy-makers in the future. It is also hoped that the methods and methodology used in this comparative multiple-case study qualitative research may be applicable to other future research projects on HE in Vietnam in general and on private HE in particular.

Considering the contribution to knowledge presented above, I believe that the research met the criteria for a PhD thesis, since it proved to be a work of substance investigating a crucial issue in HE in Vietnam on which no previous research has been carried out. In addition, the thesis proved to be an original investigation since the data used for analysis and discussion were collected from primary sources using scientific and strictly controlled methods of data collection. The research was also carefully designed, conducted, and presented with due care and consideration to a publishable standard.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**RECOMMENDATION LETTER**  
**(Vietnamese and English)**



BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO  
TRUNG TÂM ĐÀO TẠO KHU VỰC SEAMEO  
TẠI VIỆT NAM

CỘNG HOÀ XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM  
Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

Số: 226...../SEA-VP  
V/v giới thiệu thực hiện đề tài NC tốt nghiệp

*Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, ngày 26 tháng 11 năm 2007*

Kính gửi:

Trung tâm Đào tạo Khu vực của SEAMEO tại Việt Nam gửi đến quý Trường lời chào trân trọng.

Cô Lâm Diễm Châu, Trưởng Ban Nghiên cứu Khoa học, hiện là nghiên cứu sinh tiến sĩ chuyên ngành giáo dục học tại Đại học Nottingham, Anh Quốc. Từ tháng 11/2007 đến tháng 2/2008, cô Châu dự định thực hiện đề tài nghiên cứu tốt nghiệp trong lĩnh vực xây dựng và phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên tại một số đại học ở Việt Nam. Trong số các đại học này, cô Châu rất mong muốn được làm việc với quý Trường, cụ thể là được trao đổi với Ban Giám hiệu và Trường phòng Tổ chức Hành chính.

Ngoài ra, để thực hiện đề tài, còn một bảng hỏi gửi đến 50 giảng viên của trường. Trung tâm mong nhận được sự giúp đỡ của quý Trường để đề tài thực hiện tốt đẹp. Đây cũng là các số liệu chi phục vụ cho nghiên cứu và sẽ gửi lại quý Trường xem và góp ý trước khi sử dụng.

Trung tâm trân trọng giới thiệu cô Lâm Diễm Châu và chân thành cảm ơn quý Trường về sự giúp đỡ quý báu này. Rất mong nhận được phúc đáp thuận lợi và tên người liên hệ để tiện việc liên lạc.

GIÁM ĐỐC



Nơi nhận:  
- Như trên  
- Lưu: VT

**Đỗ Huy Thịnh**

TỔ CHỨC BỘ TRƯỞNG GIÁO DỤC CÁC NƯỚC ĐÔNG NAM Á (SEAMEO)  
**TRUNG TÂM ĐÀO TẠO KHU VỰC CỦA SEAMEO TẠI VIỆT NAM**

35 Lê Thánh Tôn, Quận 1, TP. Hồ Chí Minh, Việt Nam - Điện thoại: (84-8) 8 245 618 / 8 232 174 - Fax: (84-8) 8 232 175

Ministry of Education and Training  
SEAMEO Regional Training Centre  
In Vietnam

No: 226/SEA-VP

Re: Recommendation for fieldwork for PhD research project

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam  
Independence-Freedom-Happiness

Ho Chi Minh City, 26 November 2007

Dear

Warmest Greetings from SEAMEO Regional Training Centre (SEAMEO RETRAC) in Vietnam!

Mrs Lam Diem Chau, Head of the Science Research Department of the Centre, is currently a PhD student at the School of Education, the University of Nottingham. Between November 2007 and February 2008, Mrs Chau is going to carry out fieldwork for her PhD research project on *Academic Staff Recruitment and Development in Private Universities in Vietnam: In Comparison with Public Universities* at some selected universities in Vietnam. Mrs Chau is interested in your institution and would like to carry out some interviews with leaders of your institutions, specifically Rector, Vice Rector and Head of the Administration Department.

In addition, there will be a questionnaire which would be sent to approximately fifty academic staff currently teaching at your institution. The Centre would appreciate your support so that the research will be done successfully. The information collected will only be used for the research purposes and will be sent to you for your verification and contribution before being used for the research.

SEAMEO RETRAC highly recommends Mrs Chau and would like to thank you for your cooperation and support. The Centre looks forward to receiving your feedback concerning the name of the person in charge for further communication.

Director

(Signed)

Do Huy Thinh

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Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation  
Regional Training Centre in Vietnam  
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**APPENDIX B**  
**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**  
**(Vietnamese and English)**

## ***Thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu***

Đề tài nghiên cứu: *Xây dựng và phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên tại các trường đại học tư thục tại Việt Nam: So sánh với các trường đại học công*

Kính gửi

Tôi tên Lâm Diễm Châu, hiện đang là nghiên cứu sinh tiến sĩ chuyên ngành giáo dục học tại trường Đại học Nottingham, Anh Quốc. Tôi đang thực hiện đề tài nghiên cứu tốt nghiệp trong lĩnh vực xây dựng và phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên tại các trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Mục tiêu nghiên cứu của đề tài nhằm tìm hiểu quan điểm, thái độ và kinh nghiệm của lãnh đạo các trường đại học và giảng viên đang giảng dạy tại trường về những vấn đề liên quan đến việc phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên và chất lượng giảng dạy tại các trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Thông tin cho đề tài sẽ được thu thập thông qua các hình thức: phỏng vấn với lãnh đạo của trường, bảng câu hỏi dành cho giảng viên đang giảng dạy tại trường và các tài liệu liên quan đến chính sách tuyển dụng và phát triển giáo viên tại trường. Tôi đã xin phép và được Ban Giám Hiệu trường chấp thuận cho tôi tiến hành thu thập thông tin qua bản câu hỏi sẽ được gửi đến đội ngũ giảng viên tại trường.

Bảng câu hỏi dành cho giảng viên cần khoảng nửa giờ đồng hồ để hoàn tất. Thầy/Cô không bị bắt buộc phải điền vào bảng câu hỏi nếu không đồng ý. Tuy nhiên, tôi rất mong nhận được sự cộng tác của Thầy/Cô thông qua việc trả lời tất cả mọi câu hỏi trong bảng câu hỏi. Không có câu trả lời nào là đúng hay sai cả. Tất cả mọi câu hỏi đều đã được cân nhắc kỹ và có tầm quan trọng như nhau cho đề tài nghiên cứu. Các câu trả lời sẽ giúp cung cấp những quan điểm có giá trị về những vấn đề hiện tại liên quan đến việc phát triển nguồn nhân lực tại các trường đại học tại Việt Nam.

Kết quả của đề tài nghiên cứu sẽ có thể được in ấn và phát hành. Thầy/Cô có thể tìm hiểu những thông tin này bằng cách liên lạc trực tiếp với người thực hiện đề tài hoặc các giáo sư hướng dẫn. Tuy nhiên những thông tin mà Thầy/Cô cung cấp cũng như thông tin cá nhân của Thầy/Cô sẽ được giữ bí mật tuyệt đối. Nếu Thầy/Cô đồng ý tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu này, xin vui lòng gửi lại bảng câu hỏi trong phong thư đã được dán tem dính kèm **trước ngày 06 tháng 1 năm 2008**. Cảm ơn sự cộng tác của Thầy/Cô. Để biết thêm thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu, vui lòng liên hệ người nghiên cứu tại địa chỉ:

Cô Lâm Diễm Châu  
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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Topic: *Academic staff Recruitment and Development in Private Universities in Vietnam: In Comparison with Public Universities*

This study aims to explore your perspectives, attitudes and experiences on issues relating to the academic staff recruitment and development in higher education institutions in Vietnam. Data will be collected through interviews and questionnaires conducted to selected leaders and academic staff at the institution.

The interview will last no more than one hour. The questionnaire will take approximately half an hour to complete. You do not have to fill in this questionnaire if you do not want to do so. However, I would be very grateful if you would answer all the questions in the questionnaire. There are no wrong answers to these questions. All answers are valuable. Your answers to the questions will provide this study with your valuable perspectives on the current issues concerning human resource development in Vietnamese higher education.

The results of the study might be published and you might have access to these findings by directly contacting the researcher and/or her supervisors. However, your identity and information **will be treated in strict confidence**. If you agree to participate in the research, please return the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed before January 6, 2008. Thank you for your cooperation.

For further information about the study, please contact the researcher on the address below

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**APPENDIX C**  
**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**  
**(Vietnamese and English)**

## BẢN ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA VÀO ĐỀ TÀI NGHIÊN CỨU

**Tên đề tài:** *Xây dựng và phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên tại các trường đại học tư thực tại Việt Nam: So sánh với các trường đại học công*

**Tên nghiên cứu sinh:** **Lâm Diễm Châu**

**Tên người hướng dẫn:** **Giáo sư John Morgan và Tiến Sĩ Chris Atkin**

- Tôi đã đọc thông tin dành cho người tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu và nắm được tính chất và mục đích của dự án này. Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào đề tài nghiên cứu.
- Tôi hiểu mục đích của dự án và vai trò của mình khi tham gia vào đó.
- Tôi biết mình có thể rút lui khỏi dự án ở bất cứ giai đoạn nào của dự án và điều đó sẽ không ảnh hưởng gì đến tôi trong hiện tại cũng như tương lai.
- Tôi hiểu rằng thông tin thu thập được sẽ có thể được phát hành, tuy nhiên các thông tin cá nhân của tôi sẽ được giữ bí mật tuyệt đối. (Nếu có bất cứ thoả thuận nào liên quan đến việc tiết lộ thông tin cá nhân của người tham gia vào dự án nghiên cứu, điểm này phải được chỉnh sửa lại theo đúng tinh thần của sự thoả thuận giữa hai bên).
- Tôi biết rằng cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được ghi âm lại.
- Tôi biết rằng các thông tin sẽ được lưu trữ dưới dạng văn bản hoặc dữ liệu trên máy tính, máy ghi âm; và chỉ có người nghiên cứu và các giáo sư hướng dẫn mới có quyền xem và sử dụng chúng. Các thông tin này sẽ chỉ được sử dụng cho mục đích nghiên cứu và sẽ không được tiết lộ cho bất cứ ai khác.
- Tôi biết rằng tôi có thể liên lạc với nghiên cứu sinh và các giáo sư hướng dẫn nếu tôi muốn biết thêm thông tin về đề tài nghiên cứu. Nếu tôi có bất cứ phản nản gì về việc tham gia của mình vào dự án nghiên cứu này, tôi cũng có thể liên lạc với Điều phối viên chịu trách nhiệm về mảng Đạo đức Nghiên cứu của Khoa Giáo dục, trường Đại học Nottingham:

Dr Andrew Hobson, Phó Giáo sư

Email: [andrew.hobson@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.hobson@nottingham.ac.uk)

Ký tên .....(người tham gia vào dự án)

Tên họ đầy đủ ..... Ngày .....

Thông tin liên lạc

Cô Lâm Diễm Châu

Trưởng Ban Nghiên cứu Khoa học,

SEAMEO RETRAC 35 Lê Thánh Tôn Quận 1, Tp HCM

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## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Project title:** *Academic staff Recruitment and Development in Private Universities in Vietnam: In Comparison with Public Universities*

**Researcher's name:** Chau Diem Lam

**Supervisor's name:** Professor William John Morgan and Dr Chris Atkin

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential. *{If other arrangements have been agreed in relation to identification of research participants this point will require amendment to accurately reflect those arrangements }*
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.
- I understand that data *will be stored in forms of hard and electronic copies of transcripts, and audiotape; only the researcher and her examiners have access to it; and the data will only be used for the purposes of the research and not shown to anyone else inappropriately.*
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed ..... (research participant)

Print name ..... Date .....

### Contact details

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Research Ethics Coordinator: Dr Andrew Hobson

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**APPENDIX D**  
**QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS**  
**(Vietnamese and English)**

## Câu hỏi phỏng vấn

### Thông tin chung về trường

1. Sứ mệnh của trường là gì?
2. Trường có chức năng gì đặc biệt không (so với những trường khác trong nước hoặc trong khu vực)?
3. Kế hoạch chiến lược của trường liên quan đến việc phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên trong 10 năm tới là gì?

### A. Chính sách tuyển dụng

1. Nhà trường có gặp phải những cạnh tranh gì trong việc tuyển dụng giảng viên?
2. Là một trường công lập, thế mạnh/yếu của trường trong việc tuyển dụng giảng viên là gì?
3. Tiêu chí quan trọng nhất trong chính sách tuyển dụng giảng viên của trường là gì?
4. Nhà trường có chính sách gì để thu hút và duy trì đội ngũ giảng viên giỏi và có kinh nghiệm. (Trả lương cao, biên chế, đề bạt thăng tiến, hỗ trợ cho việc học và nghiên cứu sau đại học để lấy bằng thạc sĩ, tiến sĩ)

### B. Chính sách phát triển

- Chính sách phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên của trường hướng đến những mục đích nào?
- Là một trường công lập, trường phải đương đầu với những trở ngại/ khó khăn gì trong việc phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên của trường?
- Nhà trường tiếp cận những nguồn kinh phí để phát triển đội ngũ giáo viên bằng cách nào?

### B1. Đánh giá giảng viên

1. Giảng viên có được đánh giá định kỳ hằng năm không?  
Nếu có, ai tiến hành việc đánh giá? (GV tự đánh giá, sinh viên, đồng nghiệp, hay người giám sát ở cấp cao hơn) việc đánh giá được tiến hành thường xuyên như thế nào?
  - Tiến trình đánh giá được thực hiện như thế nào?
  - Các tiêu chí được sử dụng trong việc đánh giá là gì? (Đánh giá chéo, dự giờ, nghiên cứu, hướng dẫn sinh viên làm đề tài?)
2. Mục đích của việc đánh giá giảng viên là gì? (làm cơ sở cho việc đề bạt thăng tiến, xét tuyển vào biên chế, tăng lương, hay cho nghỉ việc?) Kết quả đánh giá có được sử dụng để phát triển hoặc cải tiến công tác giảng dạy không? Nếu có thì nó được sử dụng như thế nào?
3. Nhà trường có cho sinh viên đánh giá từng giảng viên đứng lớp của họ sau mỗi khóa học không? Nếu có, ai đảm nhiệm công việc này? Khi nào? Có bắt buộc không? Ai được

quyền xem các kết quả đánh giá? Mối liên hệ giữa các đánh giá của sinh viên đối với giảng viên giảng dạy và các cải tiến trong công tác giảng dạy?

4. Cần phải làm gì trong công tác đánh giá giảng viên để phát triển/ cải tiến hơn nữa hiệu quả giảng dạy của giảng viên?

## **B2. Công tác phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên**

1. Nhà trường hỗ trợ cho giảng viên như thế nào cho việc phát triển và nâng cao công tác giảng dạy? Những người không có bằng cấp chuyên môn nhưng không ngừng tham gia vào việc giảng dạy, như nhân viên thư viện, kỹ thuật viên công nghệ thông tin, hoặc cố vấn học tập cho sinh viên có được hỗ trợ gì từ phía nhà trường?
  - *Những hình thức hỗ trợ? (tổ chức những lớp học nâng cao có cấp phát chứng chỉ, chuyên đề, hội thảo, những chương trình tập huấn, danh hiệu cho giáo viên dạy giỏi, giải thưởng dành cho việc phát triển công tác giảng dạy đại học)*
  - *Nhà trường có tạo động cơ khuyến khích giảng viên tham gia vào các chương trình này không? Nếu có, các động cơ này là gì? (khuyến khích về tài chính, hỗ trợ về thời gian, các công nhận khác)*
2. Nhà trường có cung cấp cho đội ngũ giảng viên những dụng cụ học tập, tài liệu, sách giáo khoa, máy tính, mạng internet, tài liệu tham khảo hay báo và tạp chí chuyên ngành không?
3. Giảng viên có tiếp cận được những tạp chí chuyên ngành mới nhất không? (qua internet, đặt mua dài hạn ở thư viện, mượn từ các thư viện khác trong và ngoài nước)
4. Giảng viên có được hỗ trợ gì cho nhiệm vụ giảng dạy của mình không? (họ có trợ giảng, phụ tá nghiên cứu?)

## **B3. Nghiên cứu khoa học**

1. Trường có hỗ trợ hoặc khuyến khích đội ngũ giảng viên tiến hành nghiên cứu khoa học không? Nếu có, cụ thể là gì? Hình thức khuyến khích như thế nào? Tỷ lệ % trung bình giảng viên tham gia vào công tác nghiên cứu là bao nhiêu?
2. Kinh phí dành cho nghiên cứu lấy từ nguồn nào: Trường, chính phủ, hoặc cá nhân giảng viên? Tỷ lệ % trung bình của các nguồn này như thế nào?
3. Giảng viên có được khuyến khích cộng tác với các giảng viên khác hoặc với sinh viên để tiến hành nghiên cứu không? Việc này được tiến hành như thế nào?
4. Các công trình nghiên cứu cung cấp tư liệu/ thông tin cho việc giảng dạy ở mức độ nào?

## **C. Nguyện vọng và dự tính của trường trong tương lai**

1. Tầm nhìn của nhà trường trong tương lai, liên quan đến việc phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên, là gì?
2. Nhà trường mong đợi gì từ chính phủ/ Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo để hỗ trợ nhà trường trong việc phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên?

## Questions for interviews

### General information about the university

1. What are the missions of the university?
2. Does the university have any special functions (compared to others in the country/region?)
3. What is the strategic plan of the university for the next ten years concerning academic staff development?

### A. Recruitment Policy

1. Does the university have any competitors in recruiting academic staff?
2. As a public/non-public university, what do you consider as the advantages/disadvantages in recruiting academic staff for your institution?
3. What do you consider as the most important criteria in the university's academic staff recruitment policy?
4. What is the university policy to attract and maintain experienced and talented academic staff? High salary, tenure tract, promotion, support for further study for credit, e.g. Masters, PhD?

### B. Development Policy

What are the purposes of the academic staff development policy of your institution?

What are the constraints of your university as a public/non-public one on staff development?

How does the university gain access to resources/funding for staff development?

### B1. Teaching Evaluation

1. In your university, are your teaching staff evaluated annually?  
If yes, who does the evaluation? (self, students, peers, supervisors?) and how often?
  - what is the process of evaluation?
  - What is the criteria used for the evaluation? (peer review, observation, research, supervision for student's dissertation)
2. What is the purpose of evaluation? (as a reward for promotion, tenure, increased salary or termination?) Are the assessment results used for further development/improvement of academic staff teaching? If yes, how?
3. Does the institution conduct student evaluations of individual university teachers? If yes, who administers the system? When? Is it compulsory? Who gets access to the results? What links are made between student evaluations of individual teachers and the improvement of teaching practice?
4. What should be done in order to further develop/improve academic teaching effectiveness?

## **B2. Teaching Development**

1. How does the university provide teaching development support for academic teaching staff? and non-academic staff who are increasingly involved in teaching- library staff, learning skills advisors, IT staff?
  - What form does it take? (graduate certificates, seminar/workshop, mentoring programmes, teaching excellence awards, university teaching development grants)
  - Are there any incentives for staff to do such programmes? If so, what are the incentives? (financial reward, time release, recognition?)
2. Does the institution provide academic staff with educational aids, materials, textbooks and resources such as computers, internet access, reference materials, journals?
3. How do academic staff access the latest professional journals? (internet, library subscription, interlibrary loan?)
4. Do academic staff get any help with their responsibilities (do they have teaching assistants, research assistants?)

## **B3. Research**

1. Does the institution provide any support or encouragement to academic staff members to conduct research? If so, how? What percentage of staff conduct research?
2. Where does the research funding come from: University, government, or private? Percentage of each of the resources?
3. Is joint research with other academic staff and/or students encouraged? How?
4. To what extent does the research inform teaching?

## **C. Aspirations and expectations**

1. What are the aspirations of the university for the future?
2. What are your expectations from the government/MOET in order to support your university in the development of its academic staff?

**APPENDIX E**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**(Vietnamese and English)**



## B. Tình trạng giảng dạy hiện thời

1. Anh/chị được phân công giảng dạy bao nhiêu môn khác nhau trong niên học này?  
1                       2                       3                       4                       5
2. Anh/chị giảng dạy trung bình bao nhiêu giờ cho một môn trong một niên học?  
.....
3. Trung bình có khoảng bao nhiêu sinh viên trong một lớp của anh/chị?  
.....
4. Nhà trường có cung cấp cho các anh/chị những hỗ trợ gì cho công tác giảng dạy không? (ví dụ như trợ lý giảng dạy hoặc trợ lý nghiên cứu)  
Nếu có, cụ thể là gì?.....  
.....  
Nếu không, anh/chị cần nhà trường cung cấp những hỗ trợ gì cho công tác giảng dạy tại trường?.....  
.....
5. Ngoài công tác giảng dạy, anh/chị có đảm nhận thêm những nhiệm vụ gì tại trường (ví dụ như các công tác quản lý, hoặc hướng dẫn sinh viên làm đề tài).....  
.....

## C. Việc phát triển chuyên môn

1. Anh/chị đã có những công trình xuất bản nào gần đây?
  - a. Nếu có, những công trình đó là gì? (ví dụ như bài báo, kỷ yếu hội thảo, tài liệu đã được xuất bản trên một tạp chí chuyên môn của trường, ngành, quốc tế, hoặc sách).....  
.....
  - b. Nếu không, anh/chị có dự định viết bài để cho ra ấn bản không?  
.....  
.....
2. Anh/chị được nhà trường hỗ trợ như thế nào đối với việc học sau đại học (Nghiên cứu sinh, Thạc sĩ, hoặc Tiến sĩ)?  
.....  
.....
3. Anh/chị có tham dự những hội thảo, hội nghị chuyên ngành để phát triển chuyên môn?
  - a. Có                                            Nếu có, tiếp tục với câu hỏi **từ 4 đến 11**
  - b. Không                                            Nếu không, vui lòng nêu lý do của việc không tham dự và chuyển tiếp sang các câu ở **phần D**  
.....  
.....
4. Anh/chị tham dự hội thảo, hội nghị với tư cách là
  - a. Người tham dự
  - b. Người trình bày
5. Trong niên học vừa qua, anh/chị đã tham dự được bao nhiêu hội thảo, hội nghị?  
.....
6. Anh/chị có bị bắt buộc phải tham dự những hội thảo, hội nghị này không?
  - a. Có
  - b. Không
7. Anh/chị có nhận được sự tương thưởng hay đề bạt thăng tiến nào cho việc tham dự các hội thảo, hội nghị này không?
  - a. Có
  - b. Không

8. Những hội thảo, hội nghị này được tổ chức
- a. ngay tại trường của các anh/chị đang công tác
  - b. bởi một trường khác trong nước
  - c. mang tính chất quốc tế, ở một nước khác
9. Anh/chị nhận được sự hỗ trợ về mặt tài chính để tham dự các hội thảo, hội nghị này từ
- a. bản thân
  - b. trường các anh/chị đang công tác chính
  - c. nhà tổ chức hội nghị, hội thảo
  - d. những nơi khác (ghi cụ thể) .....
10. Việc tham dự các hội nghị, hội thảo giúp anh/chị cải tiến chất lượng giảng dạy của mình như thế nào?
- a. Rất nhiều  b. Khá nhiều  c. Rất ít  d. Không được gì cả
11. Anh/chị đã có những cải tiến gì sau khi tham dự những hội thảo, hội nghị này?
- .....
- .....

#### **D. Cơ sở vật chất**

1. Thư viện trường cung cấp cho giảng viên và sinh viên những công cụ, tài liệu, sách giáo khoa hoặc nguồn cơ sở vật chất hỗ trợ học tập đến mức nào (ví dụ như tài liệu tham khảo, tạp chí, hay kết nối mạng internet)

- a. Rất đa dạng và phong phú
- b. Trên mức trung bình
- c. Dưới mức trung bình
- d. Nghèo nàn, chẳng có gì cả

2. Anh/chị có một bản sao các giáo trình giảng dạy riêng cho mình không?

- a. Có  b. Không

Các sinh viên có được bản sao các giáo trình học tập riêng cho mình không?

- a. Có  b. Không

Nếu không, sinh viên có được phép sao chép các giáo trình học tập không?

- a. Có  b. Không

Sinh viên có thể mượn giáo trình học tập ở thư viện trường không?

- a. Có  b. Không

3. Anh/chị tiếp cận những tạp chí chuyên ngành bằng cách nào?

- a. Qua mạng internet
- b. Đăng ký dài hạn ở thư viện
- c. Mượn từ các thư viện liên trường
- d. Từ các nguồn khác (vui lòng ghi rõ) .....

4. Anh/chị có phòng làm việc riêng tại trường không?

a. Nếu có, phòng có được trang bị máy vi tính có nối mạng không?

- Có  Không

b. Nếu không, tại trường/khoa có trang bị máy vi tính để giảng viên sử dụng?

- Có  Không

5. Trường có phòng thí nghiệm (hoặc phòng nghe nhìn) để giảng viên và sinh viên có thể sử dụng? Có  Không

6. Phòng thí nghiệm (hoặc phòng nghe nhìn) có được trang bị đầy đủ không?

Có  Không

7. Mức độ anh/chị sử dụng các phòng này trong giảng dạy như thế nào?

a. Rất thường xuyên

b. thỉnh thoảng

c. Rất ít khi sử dụng

d. Không bao giờ sử dụng

8. Trường có ngân sách dành riêng cho giảng viên mua sách, tài liệu phục vụ cho công tác giảng dạy và nghiên cứu?

Có  Nếu có, ngân sách trung bình cho mỗi niên học là bao nhiêu?.....

Không

9. Theo anh/chị, nhà trường cần cung cấp thêm những nguồn cơ sở vật chất nào để giúp anh/chị nâng cao hiệu quả giảng dạy?

.....

#### **E. Nghiên cứu khoa học**

1. Việc tiến hành nghiên cứu có là yêu cầu bắt buộc ở trường các anh/chị không?

Có  Không

2. Trường khuyến khích đội ngũ giảng viên tiến hành nghiên cứu như thế nào?

.....

3. Nguồn tài trợ cho các công trình nghiên cứu là từ

a. Nhà trường  b. Nhà nước

c. Các công ty  d. Cá nhân

4. Anh/chị hiện có đang tiến hành công trình nghiên cứu nào không?

Có  Không

5. Lý do tiến hành nghiên cứu của anh/chị

a. để phát triển chuyên môn cho cá nhân

b. để thăng tiến

c. để đáp ứng yêu cầu của nhà trường

d. để tăng thu nhập

e. lý do khác (vui lòng ghi rõ).....

6. Anh/chị thích tiến hành nghiên cứu

a. một mình

b. cộng tác với người khác

7. Nhà trường có khuyến khích anh/chị cộng tác với các đồng nghiệp (trong trường hoặc với các trường khác) để tiến hành nghiên cứu?

Có  Không

Nếu có, hình thức khuyến khích là gì?

.....

**F. Quan điểm của anh/chị về các chính sách phát triển nguồn nhân lực của nhà trường**

1. Anh/chị có hài lòng về các chính sách phát triển nguồn nhân lực đang được áp dụng tại trường:

- a. Rất nhiều
- b. Khá nhiều
- c. Rất ít
- d. Không chút nào cả

2. Theo anh/chị, trường nên làm gì để hỗ trợ giảng viên phát triển chuyên môn hơn nữa nhằm nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy?

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**CẢM ƠN SỰ CỘNG TÁC CỦA ANH/CHỊ!**

Mọi thắc mắc liên quan đến đề tài nghiên cứu,

vui lòng liên hệ Cô Lâm Diễm Châu

Điện thoại số: 0949 698 450 hoặc email: [txcdl@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:txcdl@nottingham.ac.uk)



- c. Doctorate      In: (subject) .....
- From: (institution) .....
- Date awarded: .....

**B. Your current teaching situation**

1. How many different courses are you assigned to teach per academic year?
- 1               2               3               4               5
2. How many hours do you teach for a course per year?
- .....
3. Approximately, how many students are there in one of your classes?.....
4. Does this institution provide you with any support for your teaching responsibilities? (teaching assistants, research assistants)
- If yes, what are they?
- .....
- If no, what support do you think the institution should provide you with?
- .....
- Apart from teaching, what other duties do you have at the institution? (i.e., supervise students....)
- .....

**C. Your personal and professional development**

1. Have you had any recent publications?
- a. If yes, What are they? (i.e. articles/materials published on a refereed professional journal, or books?).....
- b. If no, do you intend to write paper for publications?.....
2. How do you get support for further study (for Master's or Doctorate degree?) from your institution?
- .....
3. Have you attended any seminars or conferences for your professional development?
- A. If yes, continue with questions 4 to 11
- B. If no, What are the reasons for not attending seminars or conferences?
- .....

Then please move to questions in part D

4. Did you attend as  
 a. an *attendee*                       b. a *presenter*
5. How many did you attend last year?  
 .....
6. Is it compulsory to attend?  
 Yes                       No
7. Can you get any promotion/reward from attending?  
 Yes                       No
8. Are these seminars/conferences organised  
 a. Within your own institution?   
 b. By another institution, within the country?   
 c. Internationally, in another country?
9. Where did you get fund from to attend these seminars/conferences?  
 a. Self-funding   
 b. Your institution   
 c. Seminar organiser(s)   
 d. Others (please specify).....  
 .....
10. How does attending seminars or conferences help improve your teaching quality?  
 a. Very much       b. Quite a lot       c. Very little       d. Not at all
11. What improvement have you got after attending seminars or conferences?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**D. Resources**

1. How does the school library provide teaching staff and students with educational aids, materials, textbooks and resources (such as reference materials, journals or internet access)?  
 a. A very rich variety of resources   
 b. Higher than average   
 c. Lower than average   
 d. Not at all
2. Do you have your own copies of textbooks?                      Yes       No   
 Do your students have their own copies as well?                      Yes       No   
 If not, can students make copies of the textbooks                      Yes       No   
 or can students borrow textbooks from the library?                      Yes       No

3. How do you access the latest professional journals?
  - a. Through internet
  - b. By library subscription
  - c. By interlibrary loan
  - d. Others (please specify).....
4. Do you have your own working spaces?
 

Yes  No

  - a. If yes, is it furnished with a computer with internet access?
 

Yes  No
  - b. If no, are there any computers available for teaching staff to use?
 

Yes  No
5. Is there a laboratory (or a language lab) available for staff and students?
 

Yes  No
6. Is the laboratory (or the language lab) well equipped?
 

Yes  No
7. How often do you use them in your teaching?
 

a. Regularly  b. Sometimes  c. Rarely  d. Never
8. Is there a budget reserved for academic staff for buying books, materials, etc. for their teaching and research?
 

Yes  No  How much is there per academic year?.....
9. What other resources do you think the institution should provide you with in order to improve your teaching effectiveness?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**E. Research**

1. Is conducting research compulsory at your institution?
 

Yes  No
2. How does the institution encourage its staff members to conduct research?
 

.....  
 .....  
 .....
3. Where does the research funding come from?
 

a. Institution  b. Government   
 c. Business Companies  c. Private
4. Are you involved in any research now?
 

Yes  No

5. Why do you conduct the research?

- a. For personal development
- b. For promotion
- c. To meet the requirement of the institution
- d. To increase income
- e. Others (please specify).....

6. How do you prefer to conduct research?

- individually  cooperatively

7. Does the institution encourage you to cooperate with other staff in your institution or with staff in other institutions in conducting research?

- Yes  No

If Yes, How?

.....  
.....  
.....

**F. Your own perspectives on the school human resource policies**

1. Are you satisfied with the human resource development policies currently implemented at your institution?

- a. Completely
- b. Fairly
- c. A little bit
- d. Not at all

2. In your opinion, what should the institution do in order to further develop the teaching quality? (Or to support its academic staff with their professional development?)

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

**If you have any questions, please contact Mrs Lam Diem Chau  
on her cell phone: 0772 234 2225 or by email: ttxcdl@nottingham.ac.uk**