

Exploring the lecturing staff development in the Education Faculty of a Mekong Delta University

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ABSTRACT: *The paper presents the lecturing staff professional development process of the Education Faculty in a multi-disciplinary university the Mekong Delta of Vietnam within the current educational reform context. The paper is based on a qualitative interpretive case study that explored the context of the faculty and the practices of professional development for the teaching staff to address new requirements in higher education. Two data collection methods were used: analysis of policy documents (e.g. national educational policies, Education Law 2018, Higher Education Law 2019, provincial documents, and faculty reports), and informal interviews with four educational managers. The findings provided insights into the faculty context and developmental strategy, and revealed an imbalance in the faculty's lecturing staff development and practical requirements. The paper offers some suggestions for the faculty's developmental strategy and lecturers' professional development, particularly to enhance the qualifications of the teaching staff who are capable of enacting educational reforms successfully in their local contexts.*

KEYWORDS: Educational policies; educational context; lecturing staff development; professional development; Vietnam.

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1. Introduction

Teacher professional development (PD) is learning to obtain or maintain professional credentials such as academic degrees from formal coursework, or to improve teacher professional competences and practices through attending workshops, conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage (Speck & Knipe, 2005). Professional development can have direct and indirect definitions. Direct PD seeks to improve specific learners' academic and wider outcomes. Indirect PD may contribute to improving the development of a school, a faculty, a university or developing teachers and lecturers in other ways. Indirect PD could include leadership development, training in operational or procedural tasks, attending educational conferences to increase awareness of new ideas, and statutory training around particular approaches (UK Department of Education, 2016).

The 11th National Party Congress Resolution (2011-2015) asserted national goals "to basically and comprehensively renew Vietnam's education toward standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration with renewal of the education management mechanism and development of the contingent of educational administrators as the key element", and confirmed

that "Education and training have the missions of raising people's intellectual level, developing human resources and fostering talents, making important contributions to building the country and developing its culture and people" (Vietnam Government, 2012, p. 1). This developmental orientation has created both new opportunities and challenges for pedagogical sector and pedagogical institutions in higher education in Vietnam.

It was documented in the Development of Pedagogy and Pedagogic Institutions Program (DoP&PIP) from 2011 to 2020 that Vietnam had 133 educational institutions providing the training for teachers and educational managers across the country, among which there are 14 pedagogic universities and 39 pedagogic colleges. In the 14 pedagogic universities, there were 4,490 lecturers of different titles and degrees, including Professors and Associate Professors (5.2%), Doctors (13.7%), and Masters (48.7%). The pedagogic colleges have 3,543 lecturers, including Professors and Associate Professors (0.07%), Doctors (0.93%) and Masters (36.89%) (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2011).

However, it is also documented in the above program that the pedagogical institutions had some shortcomings and inappropriateness in strategic development of teaching staff, the mismatch between training contents and the requirements of general education, and limited educational research results. Except for two national

education universities, other colleges and universities of education had a small percentage of lecturers having PhD degrees, and Associate Professor or Professor titles (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2011).

The aim of the DoP&PIP is to make Vietnam's pedagogy become advanced, modern, and capable to meet the needs for developing both the teaching staff and educational management staff for all levels of the educational system in the phase of 2011-2020. The program suggested two main tasks. The first task is to build pedagogic institutions to become creative centers of fundamental and comprehensive innovation of the whole country. The second task is to strengthen the link between pedagogic institutions and faculties with preschool and general school system and all educational management levels to ensure the synchronization in building and implementing the new general education program after 2015 (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2011). To achieve the aim, the program outlined seven projects that need to be implemented:

Project 1: Strengthening the network of pedagogic institutions and their facilities;

Project 2: Developing teaching staff for faculties and universities of education;

Project 3: Innovating the management and operation for pedagogic institutions;

Project 4: Enhancing the role of pedagogic institutions in the teaching staff development for preschool education, general education, and lifelong education;

Project 5: Enhancing pedagogic institutions' role towards training management staff for preschools, schools and lifelong educational centers, and educational managers of offices and departments of education and training;

Project 6: Improving the quality of science and technology activities and international cooperation of pedagogic institutions; and

Project 7: Accredited and control the quality of pedagogic institutions.

In Project 1, some main tasks need to be implemented:

To continue to develop the resources for two key universities of education, i.e. Hanoi University of Education (HNUE) and Ho Chi Minh City University of Education (HCMUE) to become excellent higher education institutions as the core units for research and implementation of major education programs in innovating preschool education system, general education system and pedagogic institutions;

To strongly develop 8 major universities and faculties of education, e.g. Can Tho University, Da Lat University, Quy Nhon University, Da Nang University, Hue University, Vinh University, Thai Nguyen University, and Tay Bac University. The 8 universities and faculties of education and 2 key universities of education will

center on training high-level teachers and fostering lecturers of colleges and universities.

To develop technical education universities and colleges to improve the training quality of vocational teachers;

To enhance the capacities for education universities in foreign languages, physical education, music, arts, special education, lifelong education to train, foster trainers, teachers of these areas in the three regions (the north, the central, and the south);

To strengthen the capacity and modernize three Central Colleges of Education to join with local colleges of education to promote the training and fostering of teachers to have enough qualified teachers for all levels of education until 2020.

Within the above educational context in Vietnam, this case study focused on exploring the reality of the teaching staff development process from 2015 to 2020 of the Education Faculty of a multi-disciplinary university in the Mekong Delta region, on the preparation stage for training future teachers in its local province. This university is particularly not in the list of education university network that the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) provided investment for development. However, it can potentially become an important satellite-institution of education and will continue to have essential roles in training and retraining the teaching staff at all levels for its local and neighboring provinces.

2. Literature review

School systems in the world admit that the teaching quality is the most critical in-school factor impacting student outcomes (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). Today, at a time of rapidly continuing changes, a key condition for achieving a quality teaching process is having a strong and professionally well-trained teaching staff. Teachers are not simply to transfer knowledge. More importantly, they have to support students' learning process, and help students become life-long learners and responsible, capable citizens. Therefore, teacher-trainers also need to improve their expertise to be able to take more complex roles in preparing qualified teachers who can face new challenges and work effectively in a new classroom environment (Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2011).

Teaching quality is believed to mainly depend on the teacher's quality which is basically understood as academic credentials, sometimes with attitudes and personality traits also considered (Bowles, Hattie, Dinham, & Scull, 2014). To gain academic credentials or qualifications, university lecturers in general and pedagogic lecturers in particular, have to be lifelong learners and make efforts in their professional development to contribute to a better education for their local community and country. Education is an ever

growing and ever changing field (Teachers.Org, 2020). Therefore, if teachers do not improve their subject knowledge, new teaching styles and techniques and cannot gain higher qualifications in their teaching jobs, it will be difficult for them to ensure their teaching status and gain respect from learners.

It is acknowledged that teachers are key agents of education reform. Thus, they should be, at any time, ready for changes in their own professional development activities to meet the requirements of national education reform (Bicaj & Treska, 2014). In the Vietnamese educational context, pedagogic lecturers have to train pre-service teachers and foster in-service teachers at lower-level schools to become effective teachers to teach new subjects in the new general education curriculum (NGEC). Besides NGEC program and DoP&PIP (as previously described), Vietnamese pedagogic lecturers are also affected by other important reforms and policies such as the Enhancing Teacher Education Program (ETEP) from 2016 to 2021, the updated National Foreign Language Project (NFLP) 2017-2025, Higher Education Law 2018, and the Amended Education Law 2019.

Within this changing and demanding educational context, Vietnamese higher education institutions, especially those providing teacher education programs and pedagogical institutions, need to enhance the quality of teaching staff and prepare qualified teachers who are able to enact educational reforms in their regions and in Vietnam.

3. Methodology

This research employed a qualitative-interpretive case design. The study is aimed to explore the reality of the teaching staff development of the Education Faculty (hereafter referred to as the Faculty) of a Mekong Delta university in the context that Vietnam will implement the new general education program in the 2020-2021 academic year. The study addressed three research questions:

1. What has the Faculty done for its teaching staff development in recent years?
2. What is the Faculty planning for enacting the Vietnam's new general education curriculum?
3. What is the Faculty's developmental strategy from 2020 to 2025 and its vision until 2030?

3.1. Data collection methods

This study employed two data collection methods: document analysis and informal interviews. For document analysis, key relevant national education policies were collected and analyzed: (i) the Program for Development of Pedagogy and Pedagogic Institutions from 2011 to 2020, (ii) the updated National Foreign Language Project from 2017 to 2025, (iii) Vietnam's New General Education (also named Vietnam's General Education Reform), (iv)

Vietnam's Amended Higher Education Law 2018, and (v) Vietnam's Education Law 2019. In addition, provincial documents and faculty's documents such as faculty reports, training programs, and faculty's developmental strategy were collected and analyzed.

Four academic managers participated in the informal interviews, including three managers from the Faculty of Education (a Vice Dean of the faculty and two Heads of two departments in the Faculty), and one manager from the Personnel Office of the province's Department of Education and Training (DOET). The interviews focused on learning about frequent professional development activities for the teaching staff, and future developmental orientations of the faculty and departments. The interviews also explored participants' views on the new professional standard requirements for pedagogic lecturers in recent years, and the practical needs of the province's DOET for new teachers.

3.2. Data collection process

First, relevant national documents at different levels (national, provincial, and faculty) were collected and reviewed to identify key issues and categories related to the research problem and research questions. After that, the interview questions were designed to further explore the context of the Faculty and its practices of teaching staff development and the participants' perceptions of these issues. Next, potential academic managers were purposefully selected and invited to participate in the interviews. Finally, four informal interviews were conducted with three academic managers at the faculty (a Vice Dean, two heads of two departments) and a manager of the Personnel Office at the DOET.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. The imbalance in the faculty's lecturing staff development from 2015 to 2020

In 2020-2021, the Faculty has ten departments and the total number of 87 lecturers, as described in Table 1. The data indicates that the Faculty's teaching staff development does not meet the requirements of the Program "Development of Pedagogy and Pedagogic Institutions in Vietnam from 2011 to 2020". In this program it is documented that by 2015, 100% of the lecturers from universities of education must have at least MA degrees and 20% of them must have doctoral degrees; by 2020, 45% of the lecturers from universities of education must have doctoral degrees (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2011). However, the percentage of doctoral lecturers from this Faculty in 2020 is 18.39%. This percentage is even under the required percentage of lecturer standards in 2015. For example, two lecturers from the Department of Primary Education are unqualified because they just have BA degrees.

Table 1: The number of lecturers in the Faculty of Education in 2020

The Faculty's Management Board

Faculty assistants

Number of lecturers: 87

Qualifications: 14 PhD degrees, 70 MA degrees (including 12 PhD students), 3 BA degrees

Departments of Disciplines										
Dept.	Math	Phy	Che	Bio	Lit	His	Geo	Edu Psy	Pri Edu	Presch Edu
Female	5	4	3	5	6	2	3	2	7	5
BA	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
MA	8	7	3	6	6	6	6	3	8	5
PhD candidates	4	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	1
PhD	3	1	4		5	0	0	1	0	0
Total	15	9	8	7	11	7	8	6	10	6

Notes: Dept = Department, Math = Mathematics, Phy = Physics, Che = Chemistry, Bio = Biology, Lit = Literature, His = History, Geo = Geography, Edu Psy = Educational Psychology, Pri Edu = Primary Education, Presch Edu = Preschool Education

There was an imbalance in the qualifications of the teaching staff across different departments of the Faculty, and many lecturers did not meet the minimum standards of lecturers' qualifications as required by the government. In fact, no PhD holders and PhD candidates are seen in the Departments of Primary Education and Preschool Education. According to Vietnam's Amended Law of Higher Education 2018, the head of department that manages a university-level training program must hold a PhD degree. As a result, if applying this law, 5 department heads of this Faculty have not met the required standards in terms of credentials.

Main reasons for the shortage of lecturers with Doctoral degrees and the managers' perspectives on this problem were further explored from the interviews. From the interview data, it is found that leaders played an important role in staff development within their departments or faculty. They have to be updated with new policies related to their professional fields so that they can inform, direct, and support the staff's learning, and they can create an effective developmental strategic plan for their faculty and departments. A faculty manager admitted a limitation in leadership experience and understanding about current educational policies. This manager also expressed a concern about the faculty prospect, as follow:

"I have been in charge of managing the faculty for just some years. I know little about new educational policies, but I feel unhappy about the developmental situation of my faculty in the future" (Interviewee 1).

Another issue is that limited English language competence and other personal problems such as family commitments were considered as common barriers

to lecturers' engagement in post-graduate study. For example, one manager explained why many lecturers were not willing to pursuit PhD programs, as follow:

"We encourage all lecturers to study higher, but because their English is not good, they cannot study for doctoral programs. Two or three years ago, many lecturers delayed their study because they said that they had to take care of their family first...And now, the requirement of English competence for PhD candidates in Vietnam is stricter and higher, so this is really harder for them." (Interviewee 1).

Another manager shared similar views: *"I'm old, I cannot study higher, but I always encourage younger colleagues in my department to study higher to improve teaching and research, but until now no one in my department can attend PhD courses because of their English language barrier."* (Interviewee 3).

Financial problem was also perceived as a factor hindering lecturers' motivation and participation in post-graduate programs, as mentioned by Interviewee 2:

"Many lecturers feel disappointed because they do not have classes to teach, and if they study higher, where can they get the money to pay for their PhD study?" (Interviewee 2).

In conclusion, results from document analysis and interviews with the managers showed some challenges and problems the faculty faced. The teaching staff did not meet requirements in terms of professional credentials. Also, there was an imbalance between the number of qualified lecturers among different departments. Key factors affecting the faculty's staff development included the leadership role of the faculty and department managers, the limited English competence of lecturers,

the motivation of the faculty lecturers in professional development, and financial problems.

4.2. Mismatch between the Faculty’s training programs and the society’s practical needs

One of the survival and sustainable development issues of a higher education institution is that its training programs meet the society’s practical needs. However, the current situation of teacher education in this Faculty has revealed some challenges in serving the society demands. Table 2 describes the Faculty’s student number by disciplines. Data from the table shows that the Departments of Biology and Physics cannot open classes for over three years. Legally, when any training programs of an institution cannot open classes in three continuing years, the institution will have to delete those training programs. Thus, the 4-year Physics Education Programs would likely fall into the same situation as the Biology Education major (i.e. no student enrollment in these majors).

Another problem is that the numbers of students of the departments of Primary Education and Preschool Education were much higher than the student numbers of other departments while the numbers of lecturers in the Departments of Primary Education and Preschool Education were smaller (as seen Table 1 above).

The Faculty’s report also showed that the rate of

employed education graduates in 2019 was very low (15.15%). For instance, five in thirty-three (5:33 = 15.15%) of math education teacher Course 16 (graduated in 2019) were employed (three working at secondary schools and two working at upper secondary schools).

According to the recruitment announcement 2019 of this province’s DOET, the province just needed 3 upper-secondary math teachers (See Table 3). Yet, there were 33 math education students graduating from the studied Faculty, regardless the number of math education graduates from other neighboring universities and the number of unemployed math education graduates in previous years, who would apply for jobs in the province. Therefore, there would be a competition for teaching positions and most graduates in this field would likely fail to be recruited by local schools in the province.

This problem, i.e. mismatching between teacher education training and the needs for teachers and teaching positions availability in the province, is relevant to the big picture of teaching employability of the country. According to MOET, there will be more than 40,260 redundant teachers when the new national curriculum for general education is implemented from 2019, and the largest redundancy is predicted to be at the secondary level (See Table 4). Specifically, when the NGEC is implemented during the 2020-2024 period, there will be over 4,000 redundant teachers per year. It is expected to

Table 2: The Faculty’s student number in each discipline

4-Year Pedagogic Disciplines (University)

Year	Math	Physics	Chem	Bio	Lit	His	Geo	Pri.Edu	Pre-Sch Edu	
I	24	0	8	0	15	30*	10	16	70	73
II	17	0	11	0	27	21*	27	24	44	57
III	33	15	24	0	37	–	27	28	49	60 68
IV	29	11	16	0	27	–	12	24	53	49 82 86
Total	103	26	59	0	106	51	76	92	265	426
	1203									

(Notes: University courses Year I means Course 20; Year II means Course 19; Year III means Course 18; and Year IV means Course 17; (*): BA in Vietnamese Language and Literature)

3-Year Pedagogic Disciplines (College)

Year	Primary Edu	Preschool Edu	Physical Edu
I	24	27	10*
II	36	18	0
III	69	76	10
Total	129	121	20
	270		

Notes: - College Courses: Year I means Course 44; Year II means Course 43; and Year III means Course 42. - (*): this number includes five (5) 1st year plus five (5) 2nd year college students of physical education.

Table 3: The local province DOET's upper-secondary teacher recruitment need in 2019-2020

Total	A. Positions in Teaching Disciplines											
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
34	3	3	2	2	2	3	0	2	7	3	4	3

(Notes: A (Math), B (Physics), C (Chemistry), D (Biology), E (Industrial Engineering), F (Literature) G (History), H (Geography), I (English), J (Physical Education), K (Computer), L (National Defense Education))

Total	B. Positions in Educational Officials							
	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii
37	5	5	8	1	2	7	2	7

(Notes: i (Library), ii (Facility official), iii (IT technician), iv (treasurer), v (Achievers), vi (medical staff) ,vii (educational officials), viii (disabled education officials))

Table 4: The summary of the redundancy and shortage of teachers in implementing the new educational curriculum in 2020

Year	Primary level		Secondary level		Upper-secondary level	
	Redundancy	Shortage	Redundancy	Shortage	Redundancy	Shortage
2020-2021	5,000		4,000 - 6,000		2,700	
2021-2022		about 4,000	4,000 - 6,000		2,700	4,508
2022-2023		about 4,000	4,000 - 6,000		2,700	4,387
2023-2024		about 4,000	4,000 - 6,000		2,700	21
Total		over 5,000	21,663		10,800	8, 916
New subjects	In need of recruiting about 2,000 English teachers and 2,000 computer science teachers every year in five years		In need of recruiting about 2,700 music teachers and 2,700 art teachers every year in five years			
Timeline for implementing the new educational curriculum	2020-2021 : Grade 1 2021-2022 : Grade 1, 2 2022-2023 : Grade 1, 2, 3 2023-2024 : Grade 1, 2, 3, 4 2024-2025: Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5		----- 2021-2022: Grade 6 2022-2023: Grade 6, 7 2023-2024: Grade 6, 7, 8 2024-2025: Grade 6, 7, 8, 9		----- 2022-2023: Grade 10 2023-2024: Grade 10, 11 2024-2025: Grade 10, 11, 12	

(Extracted from the MOET's report 2018) (Vietnamnet Brigde, 2018)

have 21,663 redundant secondary school teachers in the school year 2023-2024. MOET has warned localities to review secondary school teachers and consider putting an end to new teacher recruitment (VietnamnetBrigde, 2018). The reason for this redundancy is that at the secondary level, three single subjects of natural sciences (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology) in the old educational curriculum will become one subject – called Natural Sciences in the new educational curriculum, and two other single subjects (History and Geography) will become one social science subject called History and Geography.

As a result, to reduce the unemployment rate of education students graduating in coming years, the Faculty has to collaborate with the local DOETs to learn about their practical needs. It is important for these stakeholders to communicate about such issues as the number of new teachers needed, what subject teachers

will be needed, and when educational employment agencies such as provincial DOETs will need secondary teachers of integrated subjects of natural sciences and social sciences, and what new subjects will be taught at all educational levels in the NGEC 2020.

4.3. Uncertainty about the quality and standards of the Faculty's graduates

The study also found some reasons that caused challenges for the Faculty's graduates to find teaching jobs. These reasons included irrelevant subjects they studied at university, their limited English language competence, and inappropriate student-teacher ratio.

From the interview, the manager from the province's DOET stated that:

“In recent years, as I observe, not many graduates from the local Faculty of Education have been employed because they are not very strong in teaching

methodology and skills, and their limited English language competence in comparison with those from other pedagogic universities. Another thing is that from now on we need more secondary teachers of integrated subjects, and the Faculty cannot provide these teachers.” (Interviewee 4).

From this interviewee’s evaluation, also reflecting an employer’s opinion, graduates from the Faculty would face difficulty in employability at present and in the future. Therefore, it is necessary that the Faculty should revise their programs and update new subjects and skills in each education training program to equip both in-service and pre-service teachers with required competences for teaching the new general education curriculum successfully.

Additionally, it is doubtful about the quality and standards of the faculty’s graduates when considering the student-lecturer ratio in this faculty. Its ratio is much lower than that required by the MOET. For example, it is documented from the Program for ‘Development of Pedagogy and Pedagogic Institutions from 2011 to 2020’ that the number and structure of lecturers at pedagogic institutions must be sufficient and appropriate for dutiful requirements, and the student-lecturer ratio does not exceed 20:1 by the year 2020. On average, the Faculty’s student-lecturer ratio (17.58:1) may be acceptable (Table 6).

However, this is problematic for some particular departments of the Faculty. For example, as seen in Table 7, the student-lecturer ratio of the Primary Education Department (39.4:1) and that of Preschool Education Department (116.6 : 1) were not accepted, compared with the permitted student-lecturer ratio by MOET (20 : 1). Moreover, there were no doctoral lecturers in these two departments and the Primary Education Department had 2 BA lecturers who were legally unqualified to teach university-level classes. Such data raised a big question

and concern about this faculty’s lecturing structure, staff development, the operation of existing training programs, and the quality of education.

4.4. The faculty management board’s pessimistic views about the Faculty’s future

In general, most faculties and institutions of pedagogy have their own visions and developmental plans. For example, as found from their websites, the visions of some key pedagogical institutions were stated as follows:

Institution 1: to strive to be the leading renowned center in educational and research activities in Vietnam and the region, and plays an active facilitator in the country’s modernization and development in the 21st century and beyond (HNEU, 2016).

Institution 2: by 2030 to become a national core teacher training institution, offering training and scientific research meeting the South East Asia quality standards in some key areas, and effective counselling on educational policies (UED-UDN, 2020).

Institution 3: to be a leading center of training, fostering teachers, scientific research and technology transfer of the country, having training programs that meet international standards (School of Natural Sciences Education of Vinh University, 2020).

Institution 4: to become a high-quality center of training, fostering undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and a center for scientific educational research to link with the practicality of learning and teaching at pedagogic institutions and schools (School of Education - Can Tho University, 2020).

Like other pedagogic institutions, this Faculty’s vision is by 2030 to strive to become a high-quality institution for training university and post-graduate teachers and educational managers at different levels, and to become a high-quality research, training and fostering center for

Table 6: The Faculty’s number of students and lecturers

No. of Students		No. of Staff		Student-lecturer Ratio
1477		87		1477 : 84 (17.5 : 1)
College students	Uni students	Lecturers	Support staff	
270	1207	84	3	

Table 7: The number of students and staff in Primary Education and Preschool Education Departments

Primary Education Department				Preschool Education Department			
No. College Students	No. University Students	No. Lecturers	Student-lecturer Ratio	No. College Students	No. University Students	No. Lecturers	Student-lecturer Ratio
129	265	10		121	426	5	
			39.4: 1				116.6: 1

(Notes: the total student number of the two departments does not include 20 college students of Physical Education)

teachers recognized by MOET. Although the Faculty has its clear vision, one faculty leader expressed a pessimistic view on its developmental strategy, as follow:

“At the present, the Faculty has fewer classes for lecturers to teach, and it is becoming harder for us to open new classes. Some lecturers do not have any motivation to study higher while our university now must meet higher standards in terms of lecturers’ qualifications. Therefore, we have greater pressure for development.” (Interviewee 1).

The leadership vision is powerful because the senior managers and leaders believe in the vision and act toward it every day at work. It is not just a statement on a wall or on the website. A powerful vision from the leaders can drive employee performance (Heathfield, 2019). Therefore, it is important that the faculty’s management board should share the vision to lecturers, have optimistic views about the development of the faculty, and motivate lecturers to study and work better for their self-improvement, as well as the development of the organization and society. Heathfield (2019) stated that fundamentals necessary for a vision that excites and motivates people to follow the leader. The vision must (i) clearly set organizational direction and purpose, (ii) inspire loyalty and caring through the involvement of all employees, (iii) display and reflect the unique strengths, culture, values, beliefs, and direction of the organization; (iv) inspire enthusiasm, belief, commitment and excitement in company members, (v) help employees believe that they are part of something bigger than themselves and their daily work; (vi) be regularly communicated and shared, (vii) serve as the reason for why courses of action are chosen, people are hired, markets are selected, and (viii) challenge people to outdo themselves, to stretch and reach.

In summary, the Faculty’s vision, social changes, new policies need to be shared to lecturers and leaders need to hold a positive view about the vision and prospect of the Faculty. Specific tasks for departments and individual lecturers should be clearly directed, and lecturers need to be appropriately motivated to perform their duties effectively, especially to engage in professional development and enhance their expertise and contribute to the development of the faculty.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. For organizational management level

Like many other pedagogic faculties and universities in the whole country, this Faculty of Education is not on the MOET’s list of key pedagogic universities to be invested in the ‘Program for Development of Pedagogy and Pedagogic Universities’. However, this Faculty can continue to become a strong “satellite institution” for training and retraining teachers in all levels of the new

general educational curriculum for the local province, and neighboring provinces in the Mekong Delta region if the University and the Faculty have set a right vision. For instance, the Faculty can collaborate with other strong faculties of sciences and social sciences from other universities, including universities within the network of Vietnam National University – HCM City, to build a strong research and training team in education, science, and share resources from a huge educational market of the southern Vietnam.

To do this, the university needs: (i) to restructure the professional departments suitable with the subject structure of Vietnam’s NGEC such as social science subjects and natural science subjects, (ii) to enhance both the quantity and quality of lecturers who are capable of teaching the new curriculum; (iii) to create favorable conditions for pedagogic lecturers to pursue their higher study and improve their competence, and (iv) to strengthen the bridge with all provincial DOETs in the region and broadly in the country to learn about their practical needs of teachers and PD activities.

At the structural level, the Faculty can consider restructuring using an organizational model that include: (i) Centre for Educational Research, (ii) Department of Innovative Teaching Approach, (iii) Department of Mathematics; (iv) Department of Vietnamese Literature; (v) Department of Natural Sciences, (vi) Department of Social Sciences, (vii) Department of Arts, and (viii) Administrative and Research Support Unit.

5.2. Individual lecturer-level

Facing challenges of social changes and the threshold of educational innovation, lecturers themselves need to proactively innovate and upgrade their knowledge and skills to be qualified and deserved to be the 21st century educators. The 21st century educators should have following traits: student-centered, forward thinking, actively engaged, flipped, relevant, social, lifelong learners, collaborative, adaptive, and advocating for profession (Daugherty, 2015; Cox, 2020). In specific, faculty lecturers need to improve their foreign language competence, especially their English proficiency, IT skills, and other necessary professional skills, which help them develop their research and teaching competence. Moreover, they need to have a good understanding of the policies and reforms in education, as well as the institutional and faculty visions and missions, and work toward them. They also have to study higher to meet the standards for university lecturers of pedagogy, and actively engage in various forms of professional learning activities.

In conclusion, pedagogical institutions play key roles in improving the quality of teacher education, and implementing national educational reforms. This

interpretive case-study research was situated within the context of the implementation of the Vietnamese NGECE by the 2020 - 2021 academic year. The study explored the education faculty's lecturing staff development and its training activities, and analyzed how these issues matched with the national requirements about lecturers' qualifications and the province's practical needs. The research outlined key problems in the faculty's lecturing staff development (e.g. its imbalance in teaching staff development to prepare qualified teachers for enacting the

NGECE, the mismatch between the training programs and the province's practical needs, and barriers to lecturers' engagement in further education). It is suggested that the Faculty's developmental strategy needs to integrate changes at different levels (e.g. structural management and academic programs, faculty development and lecturers' professional development) to better support the achievement of the Faculty's vision and goals as well to enhance the teaching staff's qualifications and professional learning motivation.

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