

## RESEARCH ON AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Thi Ngoc<sup>1\*</sup>, Nguyen Thanh Binh<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** Currently, the education and training in Vietnam sector has had specific policies and actions in which to attach importance to the renewal of the management mechanism for university in the direction that universities are more and more autonomous in their mission implementation, improve the quality of education. International experience shows that one of the solutions to improve the quality of public universities is to gradually increase autonomy for universities in the following areas: autonomy in program and education plan; autonomy in using finance and facilities; autonomy in recruitment, human resource management; autonomy in educational goals and quality.

**Keywords:** *Autonomous university, high quality university.*

### 1. Introduction

Autonomous university are the product of the educational management model in the form of decentralization for university. This model requires the decentralization, the participation of the majority in the decision-making process. This is a flexible management model based on the relationship between supply and demand in education. The World Bank's studies on more than 20 countries around the world in different continents in 2007 identified five levels of autonomous university performance. According to another SABER case study (Systems Approach for Better Education Results - World Bank) on the model of autonomous university, a university is autonomous when it comes to decision and accountability in 5 aspects: (i) autonomy in planning and managing university budget, (ii) autonomy in human resource management, (iii) the role of university board in university governance (participation), (iv) evaluation of university and students, (v) university responsibility

The content of autonomy in planning and management of the university budget includes the legal authority given to managing operating budgets, managing non-teaching staff salaries, managing teacher salaries, additional fundraising, planning and budgeting. The content of autonomy in personnel includes: autonomy in the appointment of teachers and the decision to assign tasks to teachers, autonomy in appointing and assigning tasks to employees, autonomy in appointing and assigning tasks to the Principal of the university.

The role of the University Council includes the following contents: participation of the university board in budget estimation, participation in financial supervision, participation in human resource management, participation in university activities, participation in the enrollment process and assessment of student input, ensuring transparency in the participation of the community. The content of autonomy in university and student assessment includes: using the Ministry of Education's criteria to evaluate according to regulations, using the assessment results to adjust the university's educational activities, publicizing student assessment

---

Received February 6, 2022. Accepted March 25, 2022.

<sup>1,2</sup>University of Finance - Business Administration

\*e-mail: [nguyenngoct89@gmail.com](mailto:nguyenngoct89@gmail.com)

results. In the SABER set of criteria, there are also criteria that emphasize the social responsibility of the university, including: the responsibility to guide the use of students' assessment results, analysis of learning and student performance, and performance financial obligations at the central, local and grassroots levels (universities) and responsibilities in university operations and the level of university performance obligations.

Studies in Vietnam show the need to dig deeper into solutions to building an autonomous-oriented public university model in order to enforce the legal regulations on giving autonomy to universities. , enhance the implementation guidance for university leaders in the organization of the university apparatus and operation. Inheriting international experiences, it is necessary to propose an autonomous university model with different levels, corresponding to the ability to ensure the quality of the university and suitable to the political - social - economic context of Vietnam.

## 2. International experience

SABER SAA proposed 5 policy solutions: (1) increase autonomy in budget estimation and management of the university, (2) increase autonomy in human resource management, (3) enhance the role of the university board in regulating university activities, (4) strengthen university assessment and teacher evaluation, and (5) strengthen the stakeholder's accountability. The model of university-based governance is a proposal based on the argument that instead of the long-term impact of government policy, there is a need for a more immediate, decentralized and educational institutions to make decisions more quickly and promptly respond to the demands of social contexts. The reason for these major power-shifting solutions is that the university, as a provider, will be directly influenced by its customers - including students, student parents and social community (client), who enjoy educational products from the university. Universities need more decision-making power to tailor activities to the needs of learners, parents and social communities [8]. However, SABER said that only increasing autonomy is not enough, it is necessary to strengthen university assessment, teacher assessment and increase accountability of the university. Accordingly, the criteria framework for assessing the autonomy of universities according to the AAA model of university-based management (SABER SAA) has proposed the content of autonomy under the model of Autonomy, Assessment, and Accountability (AAA). This model is illustrated in Figure 1.

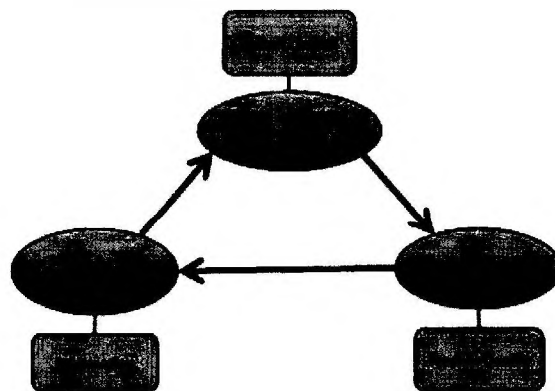


Figure 1. Closed Circle Autonomy, Assessment, and Accountability (Source: SABER World Bank)

However, there are a few issues that need to be raised with the SABER SAA model: over-emphasis on student performance assessments can increase the pressure and burden of responsibility for teacher. In addition, the university will focus more on solutions to increase students' scores (internal short-term efficiency) rather than long-term quality (external long-term effectiveness). Thus, comparing the legal framework of autonomous universities in Vietnam and some international models, it can be seen that the autonomy framework of Vietnamese universities has begun to approach those recommended in the world,

emphasizing on the contents: autonomy in financial management, autonomy in personnel management, the role of the university board and autonomy in organizing educational activities (models in the world emphasize specially on the student assessment process). The university autonomy model is also always associated with accountability. However, the connotation of each autonomous field of international models emphasizes a number of key areas, ensuring the synchronous efficiency of university governance activities in the direction of autonomy. Research results from international models will be important recommendations in building Vietnam’s autonomous university model to meet requirements as close to international standards and in accordance with the domestic socio-political context.

### 3. Proposing a model of an autonomous public university

The model of an autonomous public university is a theoretical educational model, described by a number of key factors such as: the decentralized relationship in university management (including relationship between state management agencies with the universities, between the subjects participating in the management of the universities), the roles and functions of each subject, the elemental framework of autonomy of the public universities (autonomy - responsibility - quality assurance).

From the research results and international experience, it is possible to propose a model of an autonomous public university with structured elements as follows:

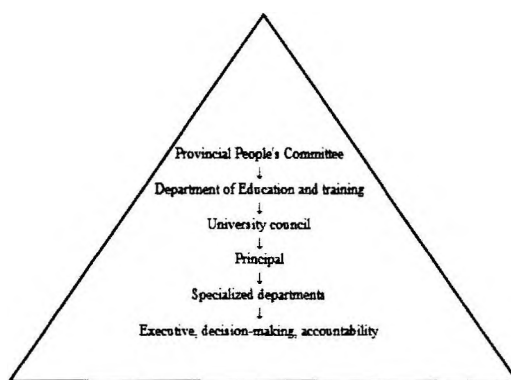


Figure 2. The model of an autonomous public university

To operate the model of an autonomous public university, it is necessary to clearly define the role of state management for educational institutions and clearly define the functions and tasks of the subjects participating in the university leadership and management, at the same time clearly define the autonomy of teachers and learners as personal autonomy - closely related to the autonomy of the organization. The role of state management and the role of the subjects in the university is proposed as follows basing on the research and collection of current legal regulations and some adjustment recommendations on the basis of theoretical and practical research on university management:

#### The role of entities participating in university leadership and management

In order to operate the model of autonomous university, it is necessary to clearly define the roles of subjects participating in university leadership and management. These roles are associated with the implementation of each area of autonomy to avoid overlapping in the direction and administration of the university’s activities. The Party is represented by the head of the Party organization in a public university (the university’s Party Committee secretary) that leads the university within the framework of the Constitution and the law. Principal is the person responsible for the management and administration of university activities. Principals are competent to build and organize the university’s apparatus through proposing plans to arrange and consolidate the university’s organizational structure and submit it to

competent authorities for decision. Principals may decide to establish, reorganize, or dissolve units that are not part of the organizational structure of constituent units under the decision of the authority. In a role relationship with the university Council, the principal implements the resolutions of the university Council, builds the university development plan, university year plan and tasks and direct to implement plan, reports and evaluates the performance results to the university council and competent authorities, implements policies for teachers and students, implements democratic regulations, mobilizes and coordinates social resources to improve the quality of education of the university, to meet the needs of the people. The University Council headed by the Chairman of University Council decides on the university's mid-term and annual development goals, strategies and plans, adopts regulations on the organization and operation of the university to submit to authorities for approval, decides on the policy of building organizational apparatus, recruiting, training and retraining civil servants, public employees and employees, finance, assets, investment in the construction of facilities, procurement of equipment, and mobilization of necessary resources for the development of the university's operations, decides on the professional, professional operation orientation and science and technology development orientation of the university, supervises the implementation of the University Council's resolutions, the implementation of the democratic regulations in the university activities. In addition, the university council has the authority to propose the Provincial People's Committee to appoint, dismiss, reward, discipline and provide policies for principals and vice principals; periodically or irregularly report to superior management agencies on university activities; periodically or unexpectedly request the head of the public university to report on the university's activities; approve the establishment, reorganization and dissolution of the university's constituent units; approve the scheme to determine the employment position of the university before submitting it to the competent authority for appraisal; approve the financial plan, the fees of professional activities, basic criteria in professional activities, operations and annual financial settlement reports of public non-business units.

#### 4. Conclusions

The study has proposed the model of an autonomous public university and the operating mechanism of the model on the basis of analyzing domestic and international contexts, generalizing theoretical current models and systematizing legal documents. To implement the model in practice, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- For the Ministry of Education and Training: soon issue a circular guiding the implementation of autonomy and accountability of public university on the basis of unified legal documents in which specifies the authority of state management agencies in the implementation of autonomy of university, determines the domains of autonomy and assigned levels of autonomy corresponding to the ability to ensure the quality of education of the university, specifies the authority of subjects participating in university management and administration. In particular, the regulation on the degree of autonomy of university should have a close correlation with the ability to ensure the quality of education of the university. The autonomy may be given to establishments that have met the quality standard by degrees. After the process of empowering autonomy, it is necessary to have a strict monitoring mechanism with legal tools to ensure effective implementation of autonomy.
- The education sector should have training courses to improve autonomy capacity for university with the contents of: legal basis, organizational strategies, human resource management, financial management, management of professional activities aimed at exercising autonomy to the extent that it allows.
- The local state management agencies in education need to have development strategies, projects ... in order to create favorable conditions for universities to develop their capacity and be proactive in educational activities.
- It is necessary to soon establish a professional association for teachers to enhance the ability to exchange, learn and support each other, create a learning community that regularly develops professional

expertise for teachers, contributing to practice effective autonomy. The issues posed for the following studies: need to clarify more clearly the fields and degree of autonomy of public universities. The degree of autonomy will correspond to the level of quality assurance of the university's education. The autonomous contents will focus on key areas of the university as recommended by international organizations and in accordance with current legal regulations.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Alan J. Daly, Tina Trujillo. (2013) The reincarnation of the effective schools research: rethinking the literature on district effectiveness. *Journal of Educational Administration* 51:4, pages 426-452. Crossref.
- [2] Dorothy Shipps, Monica White. (2009) A New Politics of the Principalsip? Accountability-Driven Change in New York City. *Peabody Journal of Education* 84:3, pages 350-373.
- [3] Honig, Meredith I. (2009). "External" Organizations and the Politics of Urban Educational Leadership: The Case of New Small Autonomous Schools Initiatives. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 84(3), 394–413. Crossref.
- [4] Janelle Scott, Catherine DiMartino. (2009) Public Education Under New Management: A Typology of Educational Privatization Applied to New York City's Restructuring. *Peabody Journal of Education* 84:3, pages 432-452.
- [5] Jennifer Lin Russell, Karen Knutson, Kevin Crowley. (2013) Informal learning organizations as part of an educational ecology: Lessons from collaboration across the formal-informal divide. *Journal of Educational Change* 14:3, pages 259-281. Crossref .
- [6] Nina Kolleck, Miri Yemini. (2019) Understanding third sector participation in public schooling through partnerships, collaborations, alliances and entrepreneurialism. *Journal of Educational Administration* 57:4, pages 318-321. Crossref .
- [7] Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), World Bank Group, 2015. What Matters Most for School Autonomy and Accountability: A Framework Paper.
- [8] The World Bank, 2007. What Do We Know About School - Based Management? Human Development Network, Washington, DC.