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Managing Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities: A Mixed-Methods Case Study Approach

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Abstract

This study explores the management of professional development activities for teacher educators in Vietnam, within the context of ongoing educational reforms. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, the research combines qualitative interviews with 38 participants and surveys from 288 faculty members and administrators. The findings reveal a divergence between the priorities of university administrators and faculty members: while administrators emphasize formal development programs, faculty members prefer informal learning approaches such as self-directed study and collaborative activities. The study also identifies contradictions between professional development management and faculty recruitment, evaluation, and remuneration processes. The research highlights the need for a more systematic, integrated policy approach that aligns recruitment, development, evaluation, and remuneration to enhance faculty motivation and professional growth.

Keywords: professional development activities, teacher educators, faculty motivation, professional growth, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

The future of teacher education is increasingly unpredictable, relying on how educators and trainers enhance their professionalism in response to societal changes (Cochran-Smith, 2000). Professional development is key to improving teacher training quality (European Commission, 2013) and overall education quality (Goodwin, Kosnik, 2013).

Global studies on teacher educator professional development focus on policy and management by teacher training universities. The European Commission (2013) advocates for continuous professional development regulations, emphasizing faculty autonomy (Meeus et al., 2018). However, some studies highlight shortcomings in policies, such as an overemphasis on

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publication achievements and insufficient research funding (Guberman, McDossi, 2019). These studies focus more on policies than on managing teacher educators' professional competencies.

Keophengla's (2020) study is one of the few exploring teacher educators' competencies in Laos, though it lacks a coherent theoretical framework. In Vietnam, limited studies, such as those by Tran-Tu-Hoai (2017) and Pham-Thanh-Vinh (2017), focus on specific policies but lack a strong theoretical basis. No studies have yet examined the actual management of professional development activities for teacher educators in Vietnam.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) issued Circular No. 20/2013, setting guidelines for faculty professional development in Vietnam, aiming to enhance teaching and research capacity. From 2017 to 2021, the Teacher Education Program (ETEP) aimed to improve faculty capacity through professional development activities across the country (ETEP Management Board, 2021).

Based on these reasons, we conducted this research to examine the current state of professional development management in teacher training institutions in Vietnam and propose effective, evidence-based measures to enhance the professional capacity of teacher educators in this national context. This study aims to contribute valuable knowledge to both the theoretical and practical aspects of teacher educator professional development. By examining the management of professional development activities for teacher educators in Vietnam, the research will offer insights into the alignment, or lack thereof, between institutional priorities and the preferences of faculty members. It will shed light on the dynamics of professional development management, particularly how formal and informal approaches to faculty growth coexist and sometimes conflict. Through these contributions, the research will not only enrich academic discourse on teacher educator development but also provide practical insights that can inform policy decisions, administrative strategies, and the professional practices of educator trainers in Vietnam and other countries undergoing similar educational reforms.

2. Conceptual frameworks

2.1. Teacher Educators

Teacher educators are individuals who teach, guide, and support teacher education students, and they make significant contributions to the development of learners into effective teachers (Koster et al., 2005; Lunenberg et al., 2014). In this study, the definition of teacher educators as provided by Koster et al. (2005), Lunenberg et al. (2014), and the European Commission (2013) is adopted. However, the study focuses specifically on teacher educators working at universities that train future teachers, in line with the scope of the paper.

2.2. Professional Competence of Teacher Educators

Professional competence is defined as expertise in information sources, access methods, technologies, services, and management, combined with the ability to critically assess, strategically apply, and use this knowledge to accomplish specific tasks and attain desired results (UNESCO, 2007). Analysis of the core competencies for teacher educators in Europe (European Commission, 2013) reveals that professional competence for teacher educators may include multiple components such as: teaching, research, curriculum development, assessment, engagement with the professional community, and stakeholders; vision; professional development; and other personal competencies. However, these competencies must reflect the professional roles of teacher educators, which include: teacher of teachers, coach (mentor, advisor); curriculum developer; gatekeeper (assessor); and broker (connecting learners with internal and external stakeholders) (Lunenberg et al., 2014). In this study, based on the approach of UNESCO (2007) and the European Commission (2013), the concept of professional competence for teacher educators is framed as the competencies in teaching and scientific research, enabling teacher educators to effectively perform both teaching and research roles.

The teaching competencies of teacher educators can be demonstrated through various factors. To be specific, teachers need to have a comprehensive understanding of subject matter; familiarity with teaching theories for adult learners; the integration of updated teaching content; the development of more effective instructional plans; the use of diverse teaching strategies and methods; the incorporation of information technology in instruction; the enhancement of learners' cognitive abilities; the guidance of learners in engaging in productive professional activities; the monitoring, evaluation, and provision of feedback on learners' practical tasks; and the ability to work effectively with a diverse range of learners.

As for scientific research competence, the research capabilities of teacher educators encompass: the design of robust and scientifically sound research; the creation of tools and implementation of effective data collection methods; data analysis; familiarity with ethical standards; understanding of copyright-related processes; adherence to ethical guidelines in research; presentation of compelling research findings; proper citation of sources in accordance with international standards; and the publication of high-quality scientific articles in academic journals and conferences.

2.3. Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators

Professional development activities for teacher educators include efforts to expand theoretical knowledge in specific subject areas and other aspects, including awareness and behavior, aimed at developing the professional competencies of educators (Smith, 2003). Professional development, or capacity-building activities, are intended to: improve the professional practice and teacher training efforts of teacher educators; sustain interest in the professional field for personal and career development; and advance within the profession (Smith, 2003). In this study, the author adopts Smith's (2003) perspective, where professional development activities are viewed as efforts to improve the professional practice and competencies of teacher educators, as well as to maintain their interest in their professional field to foster personal and career development. This definition includes both formal activities (organized by institutions) and informal activities (self-directed professional development) which aimed at enhancing both the professional competencies and research skills of educators, aligned with their two key responsibilities: teaching and research.

2.4. Management of Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators

Management is viewed as a social process involving the responsibility of planning and regulating the activities of a unit in the pursuit of specific goals (Junega, 2018). In this study, the author adopts a management approach based on the management functions theory, emphasizing the planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring of professional development activities for teacher educators.

Management is a social process involving planning and regulating activities to achieve specific goals (Junega, 2018). This study adopts a management approach based on management functions theory, focusing on planning, organizing, directing, and monitoring professional development activities for teacher educators.

Planning is a key step in managing professional development, ensuring effective implementation (Bubb, Early, 2007). It involves setting goals, identifying activities, and addressing challenges in the development plan. This includes analyzing current activities, surveying faculty needs, setting objectives, determining content and formats, and establishing monitoring and evaluation criteria (Lloyd, Aho, 2020; Liu et al., 2016; Hallinger et al., 2017).

Organization involves allocating resources to achieve objectives (Bateman, Snell, 2013). It includes issuing reward policies, promoting faculty participation in academic communities, providing financial and administrative support, organizing tailored training, and ensuring a fair process for approving research topics (Silova et al., 2010; European Commission, 2013; Liu et al., 2016; Tran-Thi-Hue, 2016; Ping et al., 2018).

Directing aims to motivate and engage faculty to achieve high performance (Bateman, Snell, 2013). This involves fostering idea sharing, gathering feedback, guiding faculty to meet goals, and ensuring conditions for participation in development activities.

Monitoring and evaluation assess the success of professional development activities and make adjustments as needed (Bateman, Snell, 2013). This process includes establishing evaluation criteria, conducting assessments, rewarding high performers, and using results to refine future activities (Hallinger et al., 2017).

3. Research methods

In this study, the author employs a convergent mixed-methods research design (Johnson, Christensen, 2017) within a multiple case study approach, where qualitative research is the primary method for deeply exploring the research issue. This design enables the collection of rich and diverse data by examining multiple cases simultaneously (Johnson, Christensen, 2017). The benefits of this approach include: (1) comparing similarities and differences between cases; (2) testing theories more effectively by observing outcomes across cases; and (3) generalizing findings from multiple cases rather than a single case (Johnson, Christensen, 2017). The mixed-

case study design combines both qualitative and quantitative data, which are analyzed independently before being compared (Creswell, Creswell, 2018).

The study uses purposive sampling to gain insight into the experiences of teacher training universities (Yin, 2018). Due to time and financial constraints, two universities were selected: one from the northern region and the other from the southern region of Vietnam. These universities represent distinct types of teacher training institutions – one a key teacher training university and the other part of a regional university system. The selection criteria follow the homogeneous purposive sampling method (Patton, 2014) and include: (1) both universities offer teacher training across educational levels, from preschool to high school; and (2) both have a long history in teacher education, with one university having over 60–70 years of tradition and the other more than 40–50 years. Detailed information on these universities is provided in the table below.

Table 1. General Information about the two Teacher Training Universities Selected for the Study

Information	University A	University B
Development history	40–50 years	60–70 years
Institution type	Teacher Training University under the Ministry of Education and Training	Teacher Training University under a Regional University
Number of faculty members	400–600	200–300
- With a PhD	150–200	100–150
- With a Master’s Degree	300–350	50–100
- With a Bachelor’s Degree	15–20	0–5

Source: Internal Statistical Data of the Universities – updated December 2021

This table provides detailed information regarding the development history, institutional type, and faculty composition of the two teacher training universities selected for the study, including the number of faculty members with various academic qualifications.

In this study, purposive sampling technique combining with snowball sampling technique which were applied to select participants at two schools - cases that can provide a lot of information for the research problem (Creswell, Clark, 2018). The interview questions aimed to gather information on the following topics: (1) policies related to the enhancement of teaching and scientific research competencies for teacher educators at two universities; (2) an evaluation of the management of professional development activities for teacher educators at two universities and its impacts on the improvement teacher educators’ professional competencies over the past five years; (3) factors influencing the management of these training activities for teacher educators at two universities over the last five years; and (4) measures to enhance the management of these training activities for teacher educators at two universities.

The interviews were conducted by the authors, ranged in duration from 15 to 40 minutes. The specific steps of the interview process were as follows: (1) Contacting the interview subjects in advance to provide information about the research, the interview questions, a consent form for participation, and to schedule the interview; (2) Conducting the interviews (eight interviews were conducted in person at the interviewees’ faculty offices during office hours, three interviews took place via the MS Teams platform, and the remaining 27 interviews were conducted on the Zoom platform), with all interviews being recorded. The process of analyzing interview data follows the steps outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), which include: (1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis; (2) reviewing all data; (3) coding the data; (4) developing descriptions and themes from the data; and (5) presenting the descriptions and themes.

The study interviewed three groups of participants to gather their perspectives: (1) university/school-level administrators, (2) department/faculty-level administrators and academic department heads, (3) teacher educators, and (4) specialized staff responsible for managing professional development activities at the universities. A total of 38 individuals participated in in-depth interviews across the two universities (19 participants from each university).

Regarding the surveys, the study collected feedback from faculty members and administrators at the department and academic unit levels. A total of 119 valid survey responses were collected from University A, and 169 valid responses from University B. The overall total number of valid survey responses from both universities was 288.

4. Results

4.1. Planning Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators at Universities

The data in the [Table 2](#) below show that the majority of responses from faculty members at both universities indicate a high level of agreement with all aspects of planning the management of professional development activities for teacher educators.

Table 2. Survey Data on Planning Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators at Universities

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
P1	Analysis of the current status of professional development activities for teacher educators	3.54	0.94	119	3.91	0.73	169
P2	Regular survey of teacher educators' needs for participating in professional development activities	3.61	1.02	119	3.72	0.85	169
P3	Setting goals for professional development activities for teacher educators	3.76	0.97	119	4.02	0.75	169
P4	Defining the content of professional development activities for teacher educators	3.77	0.99	119	3.93	0.76	169
P5	Identifying the forms of professional development activities for teacher educators	3.79	1.07	119	4.04	0.79	169
P6	Defining the criteria for evaluating professional development activities for teacher educators	3.55	1.10	119	3.85	0.77	169
P7	Providing full information on the strategy for faculty development and the professional	3.80	1.02	119	4.04	0.71	169

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
	development plans for teacher educators						

At both University A and University B, faculty members most strongly agreed with statements about the provision of full information on the university’s faculty development strategy; the identification of professional development forms for teacher educators; the identification of professional development content; and the setting of goals for professional development. In both universities, the least agreement was observed regarding the definition of evaluation criteria for professional development activities and the regular surveys of teacher educators’ needs for participation in such activities.

The interview results from administrators and faculty members at the two universities also suggest that both groups are concerned with the aspect of needs assessment when planning professional development activities. At University A, 10 responses from administrators and faculty, and at University B, 11 responses highlighted this concern. Both universities regularly conducted surveys to assess the development needs of teacher educators. However, one response from each university expressed dissatisfaction with how the results of these surveys were used in the planning process. Specifically, these respondents noted that while the surveys focus on general needs, they sometimes fail to address the actual, specific needs of the faculty members.

The planning process for professional development activities at both universities follows a needs assessment procedure as outlined in the research by Lloyd and Aho (2020). However, some faculty members expressed dissatisfaction with the specificity and effectiveness of the development plans, indicating that some plans were not fully tailored to meet the real needs of the educators.

4.2. Implementing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universitie

Table 3. Survey Data on Implementing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Universities

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
I1	Issuance and dissemination of high-incentive reward policies for faculty publishing internationally	3.70	1.04	119	4.23	0.76	169
I2	Issuance and dissemination of specific regulations for classroom observation and faculty professional activities	3.63	0.98	118	4.03	0.74	169
I3	Issuance and dissemination of specific regulations for participation in professional	3.40	1.01	118	3.72	0.84	169

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
	associations and communities						
I4	Provision of administrative support and funding for faculty to participate in professional development activities	3.67	0.95	119	3.84	0.79	169
I5	Organization of additional training courses aligned with the faculty's teaching and research needs	3.31	0.91	119	3.34	0.76	169
I6	Fair and transparent approval of research project proposals	3.82	1.04	119	3.92	0.85	169

The survey results in the [Table 3](#) indicate that faculty members at both universities generally agreed with most aspects related to the implementation of professional development plans for teacher educators. However, the content “Organization of additional training courses aligned with the faculty’s teaching and research needs” received the lowest ratings. Both University A and University B showed lower satisfaction with this aspect, rating it at an average level.

At University A, faculty rated the most positively in terms of the fair and transparent approval process for research project proposals and the issuance and dissemination of high-incentive reward policies for faculty publishing internationally. At University B, the highest ratings were given to the dissemination of reward policies for international publications and the establishment of specific regulations for classroom observation and professional activities.

Several faculty members at University A noted that the university has not yet issued specific regulations on classroom observation and professional activities, which has resulted in inconsistent implementation across departments. In contrast, five faculty members at University B indicated that the university has clear regulations on these activities, which are well implemented across departments and faculties.

The establishment of specific regulations for faculty participation in professional associations also received a lower rating from faculty at both universities. Besides, a few faculty members at both universities expressed concerns about the decentralized nature of the management of professional development activities, as multiple departments and units are involved in overseeing this process.

Regarding the approval of research projects, some faculty members at University A raised concerns about the timing of the approval process, which is sometimes too delayed relative to the research proposal submission period, potentially affecting the timeliness of research topics. While the survey results on the fairness and transparency of research project approval were generally positive, a few faculty members at University A suggested that more transparency is needed, such as providing explanations when a research proposal is not approved.

Faculty members at both universities appreciated the training courses related to teaching and research needs, such as courses on pedagogical skills, ICT integration in teaching, and workshops on the 2018 General Education Program and STEM education. However, many faculty members expressed the view that the organization of these courses was often driven by top-down

management perspectives, rather than a deep consideration of the actual teaching and research needs of faculty members (12 comments at University A and 16 at University B).

4.3. Leadership in Directing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities

The results presented in the table below show that among the aspects of leadership in directing professional development plans for teacher educators, two items received ratings of agreement or higher from faculty members: (1) “Faculty leaders (department heads, academic unit leaders) regularly monitor and guide faculty to implement professional development activities according to objectives and content from the beginning of the year,” and (2) “University, faculty, and department leaders regularly create opportunities for faculty to exchange feedback with management on the content, format, and timing of professional development activities.” The remaining three items, which relate to organizational culture, academic environment, and the professional climate that encourages faculty participation in professional development, were rated at an average level by both administrators and faculty at the two universities.

Table 4. Survey Data on Leadership in Directing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Universities

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
D1	University, faculty, and department leaders encourage and motivate faculty to share and spread new ideas within the unit	3.26	1.01	119	3.28	0.76	169
D2	University, faculty, and department leaders regularly create opportunities for faculty to exchange feedback with management on the content, format, and timing of professional development activities	3.34	0.88	119	3.37	0.75	169
D3	University, faculty, and department leaders regularly listen to faculty feedback on adjusting professional development policies	3.27	0.91	119	3.33	0.74	169
D4	Faculty leaders (department heads, academic unit leaders) regularly monitor and guide faculty to implement professional development activities according to objectives and content from the beginning of the year	3.67	0.88	119	3.86	0.74	169

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
D5	University leadership directs departments and academic units to cooperate with functional departments to support faculty participation in professional development activities	3.59	0.93	119	3.87	0.73	169

Survey and interview results from administrators and faculty at the two universities show that both institutions have activities in place to encourage and motivate faculty to share new ideas within their academic units at the university, faculty, and department levels. In the process of directing professional development activities, administrators at both universities tend to use coercive power, reward power, and expert power to encourage and motivate faculty to participate in professional development (Lloyd, Aho, 2020). However, the relatively modest evaluations regarding the creation of an academic and professional environment that encourages faculty participation in professional development activities are important data points. These results suggest areas for improvement, particularly in strengthening the institutional culture and environment that supports faculty development.

In summary, the results indicate that both universities demonstrate leadership in motivating faculty to engage in professional development, but there is room for further improvement in fostering a more supportive academic culture. Enhancing the effectiveness of these leadership practices could further encourage faculty participation in professional development activities, as highlighted by faculty feedback from both institutions.

4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities

Table 5. Survey Data on Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Universities

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
E1	Identification of criteria for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of professional development activities for teacher educators	3.55	0.94	119	3.85	0.73	169
E2	Dissemination of the criteria for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of professional development activities for teacher educators	3.45	0.95	119	3.83	0.73	169

Indicator	Content	University A			University B		
		Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Number
E3	Full monitoring and evaluation of faculty participation in professional development activities each year	3.69	0.94	119	3.94	0.72	169
E4	Rewarding individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in professional development activities	3.49	0.95	119	3.77	0.72	169
E5	Using the results of monitoring and evaluation to adjust professional development activities for teacher educators	3.61	0.93	119	3.88	0.78	169

As indicated in the [Table 5](#), faculty members at both universities rated the item “Full monitoring and evaluation of faculty participation in professional development activities each year” the highest (with mean scores of 3.69 for University A and 3.94 for University B). The lowest ratings were given to the item “Rewarding individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in professional development activities” (mean scores of 3.49 for University A and 3.77 for University B).

The interview results also revealed that faculty expressed their views on various aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of professional development activities. These included the identification of criteria for monitoring and evaluation (9 comments from faculty at University A and 2 comments from University B), dissemination of the monitoring and evaluation criteria (2 comments from University A and 5 comments from University B), including professional development results in performance evaluations and KPIs (4 comments from University A and 3 comments from University B), and using the results of evaluations to continuously adjust support for faculty participation in professional development (3 comments from University B).

In practice, both universities conduct regular reviews of professional development activities to assess their alignment with faculty needs and the effectiveness of different development activities. However, some faculty members noted that these reviews were somewhat superficial, primarily recording teaching hours and research activities, while many other professional development activities were not adequately documented. Additionally, at University A, some faculty members pointed out that the use of professional development results to evaluate the quality of training courses seemed to lack emphasis, or if conducted, was often merely procedural. Furthermore, some faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the rewards system for outstanding individual or group achievements in professional development, suggesting that the university should also implement sanctions for those failing to meet required teaching hours or professional development activity participation.

In short, the study on professional development activities for teacher educators at the two universities showed that both institutions have established criteria for monitoring and evaluating faculty participation in these activities. However, these criteria are largely tied to the conversion of professional development into teaching and research hours that faculty engage in during the academic year. The universities also monitor and evaluate faculty participation by requiring faculty to report their teaching hours and research activities annually. Nevertheless, interview results

indicated that this monitoring process is seen as somewhat formal and lacking depth. In other words, both universities lack a more comprehensive, systematic evaluation framework that would fully assess faculty involvement in professional development activities.

4.5. The impact of Managing Professional Development Training Activities on the Professional Competencies of Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities

Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient (r), which quantitatively measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, yields a numerical value ranging from -1.00 to +1.00, with 0 indicating no correlation (Field, 2018). The bivariate correlation analysis also calculated the significance values (p), which assess the statistical significance at a given threshold, such as $p < 0.05$ (Creswell, Guetermann, 2019). Detailed information, including the correlation coefficients and significance values for each dimension of professional competencies and the composite scores of the management of teacher educators’ professional development training activities dimensions, can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of Correlation Analysis between Management Elements of Professional Development Training Activities and Professional Competencies of Teacher Educators at 2 universities

Dimensions	University A						University B					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. TC	-	.59**	.41**	.34**	.38**	.36**	-	.54**	.45**	.46**	.44**	.41**
2. SRC	-	-	.25**	.26**	.22*	.24**	-	-	.51**	.54**	.55**	.50**
3. P	-	-	-	.87**	.74**	.73**	-	-	-	.87**	.77**	.72**
4. I	-	-	-	-	.79**	.80**	-	-	-	-	.79**	.73**
5. L	-	-	-	-	-	.93**	-	-	-	-	-	.90**
6. E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes: ** $p < .05$ (2-tailed); * $p < .01$ (2-tailed); TC: Teaching competencies; SRC: Scientific research competencies; PC: Professional competencies; P: Planning Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators at Universities; I: Implementing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities; L: Leadership in Directing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities; E: Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese University

The Pearson test results for the relationships between independent variables (teaching competencies (TC); scientific research capacity (SRC) and dependent variables (P: Planning Professional Development Activities for Teacher Educators at Universities; I: Implementing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities; L: Leadership in Directing Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities; E: Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Development Activity Plans for Teacher Educators at Vietnamese Universities) – in pairs for each university A and B reveal that the significance value (sig) of the test is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant linear correlation between these pairs of variables in both universities.

To assess the strength or weakness of these correlations, the absolute value of the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) can be considered (Field, 2018). As noted by Field (2018), if the absolute value of r in Pearson analysis is less than 0.1, it indicates a very weak correlation; less than 0.3, a weak correlation; less than 0.5, a moderate correlation; and 0.5 or greater, a very strong correlation. The results presented in Table 6 indicate that, at the university A, management activities of professional development training activities for teacher educators (such as planning, implementing, directing, and evaluating professional development activity plans for teacher educators) exhibit a moderate positive correlation with their teaching competencies ($r < 0.5$) and a weak positive correlation with their scientific research competencies ($r < 0.3$). Similarly, at the university B, these activities also show a moderate positive correlation with teaching capacity ($r < 0.5$), but demonstrate a strong positive correlation with research capacity.

5. Conclusion

It can be observed that while the two universities have developed strategies for advancing research capacities within their faculty, along with specific goals derived from these strategies, certain areas still require further detail and systematization to ensure that faculty members at different stages of their careers have ample opportunities to develop their research capabilities. This aspect, related to the necessity for universities to implement specific policies for faculty at various career stages, has also been addressed in the research of Dengerink et al. (2015), Kelchtermans et al. (2018), Guberman et al. (2020), and Boyd et al. (2021). Faculty members in different career stages require tailored development strategies for both their research and teaching competencies.

The results of this study provide an overview of the current state of professional development management for teacher educators at two exemplary teacher training universities in Vietnam, within the context of educational reforms linked to the implementation of the 2018 General Education Program. The findings indicate that while administrators emphasize formal development forms, faculty members tend to focus more on informal development, such as self-directed learning and collaborative approaches. This preference aligns with the findings of Meeus et al. (2018), who suggest that professional development policies for teacher educators should emphasize faculty autonomy and be based on an understanding of their needs regarding informal learning opportunities. However, in practice, universities often regard professional development as an individual responsibility of faculty members rather than adopting a system-wide policy approach to support faculty career development (Guberman, McDossi, 2019).

Generally, both administrators and faculty agree on the importance of functions such as planning, organizing, supervising, and evaluating professional development activities for teacher educators. However, there are still some limitations in the management of these functions. The study also highlights the existence of contradictions between the management of professional development activities and faculty recruitment, evaluation, and remuneration at the universities. For instance, during recruitment, if faculty members are not selected based on rigorous and appropriate criteria, this can lead to a lack of commitment to remain at the university or to actively engage in professional development activities. Guberman et al. (2020) discuss how improper recruitment criteria may lead to suboptimal hiring outcomes, which can subsequently affect the professional growth of faculty members.

Moreover, the study suggests that when evaluating faculty performance, if the outcomes of faculty efforts are not adequately recognized throughout their careers, this could diminish their motivation to participate in professional development activities. Therefore, it is essential for administrators to consider and implement integrated solutions that align recruitment processes with professional development activities and ensure that performance evaluations and remuneration are consistent with faculty participation in development programs. The coherence and synergy among these processes – recruitment, development, evaluation, and remuneration – are crucial and are integral elements in the human resource management process. The findings of this research, along with the proposed human resource management model, provide both theoretical and practical foundations for administrators at the two universities to consider when developing specific, reasonable, and coherent policies related to recruitment, development, evaluation, and remuneration.

6. Limitations

There are, however, several limitations to this study concerning the sample, scope, and data collection and analysis methods. First, the study was limited to the university level, while the management of professional development activities for teacher educators may involve both university and national levels. To explore the management of professional development activities at the national level, interviews with national-level administrators responsible for professional development would be required. However, the researcher was unable to access these national-level administrators. Second, the study was limited in terms of the number of case studies. Specifically, there are about fourteen teacher training universities in Vietnam, distributed across various regions and typically categorized into three types: (1) key teacher training universities, (2) regional teacher training universities, and (3) faculties of education within multi-disciplinary universities. However, this study only covered two case studies, representing the first two categories, due to limitations in research resources and time constraints.

Since the findings of this study are primarily based on case studies from two universities in Vietnam with a limited dataset, future research could extend to additional teacher training

universities across Vietnam in order to gather a larger and more representative sample of data. Future research could also explore the management of professional development activities for teacher educators at teacher training institutions in Vietnam through additional perspectives that were not addressed in this study, such as: policies related to this management in the context of the 2018 reforms to the Vietnamese general education program; the influence of different leadership styles of managers and leaders at various levels within the universities of teacher education on the professional growth of teacher educators; and the development of professional learning communities for teacher educators in Vietnam.

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