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MANAGING INTERNATIONAL FACULTY AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY IN VIETNAM

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Abstract. A quantitative research approach was utilized to comprehend the present state of managing international faculty within public higher education institutions (HEIs) in Vietnam and discern the human resource management model employed by these institutions. The study surveyed 210 participants from 56 public HEIs in Vietnam to explore their perspectives on human resource management practices with international faculty. The findings revealed that public HEIs in Vietnam managed international faculty following characteristics reminiscent of the Michigan human resource management model. Various human resource practices, encompassing Recruitment, Performance evaluation, Compensation and rewards, and Training and development, were adopted to varying degrees across multiple public HEIs in Vietnam. The research results are consistent with the previous study that the Michigan human resource management model has been adjusted and applied in Vietnam and shows a certain suitability of this model to Vietnam's conditions.

Keywords: Foreign lecturer, human resource management model, higher education institutions, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

International faculty holds a significant role in higher education institutions (HEIs), especially in universities actively pursuing internationalization and globalizing education. Research on their roles highlights that international faculty also play distinct roles beyond their general teaching responsibilities akin to local lecturers. These encompass contributing to the university's internationalization efforts, elevating its rankings in global university assessments, fostering advancements in scientific research, sharing knowledge and teaching experiences with local faculty, and serving as cultural ambassadors between nations [1], [2].

In Vietnam, policies aimed at attracting foreign experts, scientists, and lecturers have been consistently articulated in the guiding documents of the Party and State [3], [4], [5], [6]. Aligned with national education policies, considerable efforts have been made to strengthen cooperation and competitiveness with foreign partners by implementing programs to attract international faculty. For instance, the Fulbright Program in Vietnam has facilitated the placement of numerous American lecturers in Vietnamese HEIs like the Vietnam National University - Hanoi, National Economics University, Hue University, Can Tho University, and Hanoi University, among others [7].

Universities worldwide are increasingly challenged with effective manage of their international faculty [8]. The management of these lecturers in HEIs consists of a multifaceted and intricate process, involving diverse responsibilities spanning different levels, disciplines, and departments within these institutions. Researchers globally have investigated this management using varied approaches.

Previous studies highlight that prestigious universities often leverage their reputation to attract international faculty members. However, facilitating this process requires institutions to develop tailored policies and procedures. It is crucial to recognize the impacts of both internal and external factors when formulating policies to attract international faculty [9]. In South Korea, for example, universities are advised to provide support such as housing, language assistance, research funding, or training to aid international faculty in adapting to local culture [10]. Similarly, a study in Portugal by Carvalho et al. (2021) [11] reveals that surveyed universities acknowledge the significance of international faculty in promoting internationalization, yet lack clear strategies or policies for attracting them. In Vietnam, Nguyen TH (2020) [12] suggests several solutions to attract international faculty, including offering workplaces, research facilities, and accommodation, fostering conducive environments for collaboration between foreign and local lecturers, establishing funds to support international faculty, and addressing bureaucratic hurdles in the work permit process.

Some researchers have approached the management of international faculty from a practical standpoint, focusing on recruitment activities, procedures, and training. For instance, Gress and Ilon (2009) [13] emphasize an integrated framework for recruiting international faculty, involving them, local lecturers, administrative staff, and students to enhance productivity and competitiveness for all involved. While in some countries or universities, the procedures for recruiting local and international faculty are similar, in others where the national education system is less developed, distinct procedures govern the recruitment of local and international faculty [14]. Working abroad enriches experience and contributes to overall management capabilities in international human resource management. Universities should engage in activities supporting knowledge transfer from international faculty [15].

Most studies cited originate from developed countries, and consequently, the management models and proposed solutions might not perfectly align with the current conditions of public HEIs in Vietnam. Moreover, research indicates that recruiting and managing local and international faculty follow different procedures in countries with less developed education systems. Therefore, it's clear that public HEIs in Vietnam cannot employ the same management approach used for local lecturers to manage international faculty, necessitating specific solutions for this challenge.

The research is carried out with two main objectives. The first one is to understand the current status of human resource management of international faculty in public HEIs in Vietnam, covering four main practices: (1) Recruitment, (2) Performance evaluation, (3) Compensation and rewards, and (4) Training and development. Secondly, it aims to investigate which human resource management model is currently being utilized by public HEIs in Vietnam for managing international faculty. Accordingly, this study answers two research questions:

(1) What is the current status of managing international faculty in public HEIs in Vietnam?

(2) Which human resource management model(s) are public HEIs in Vietnam using to manage international faculty?

2. Content

2.1. The Concept of International Faculty

Globally, researchers and HEIs have yet to reach a unanimous consensus and precise definition

of international faculty. As elucidated by Altbach and Yudkevich (2017), international faculty are characterized as scholars functioning in countries where they were not born and/or where they did not attain their initial university degree. Typically, these individuals are not nationals of the country where they are employed [16]. The Quacquarelli Symonds World University Ranking defines international faculty staff as foreign nationals physically present at a university to engage in teaching, research, or both, for a minimum duration of three (03) months [17]. In Vietnam, the term "international faculty" lacks a specific delineation. Instead, it broadly encompasses foreign citizens who come to work in Vietnam through diverse arrangements such as labor contracts, educational contracts or agreements, as well as volunteer and expertise agreements [18].

Within the scope of this study, the term "international faculty" pertains to individuals of foreign nationality who have either previously or are currently engaged in teaching, research, or both, at public HEIs in Vietnam.

2.2. Human Resource Management and International Faculty Management

This study uses a human resource management approach to study the management of international faculty at public HEIs in Vietnam. Human Resource Management is generally understood as a system of philosophies and policies on human resources, so there are many different perspectives on human resource management depending on the political regime, cultural life, education level, economic development levels in countries, and the views of researchers. The concept of human resource management is understood as a system of perspectives, policies, and practices used in managing the people of an organization to achieve optimal results for both the organization and its employees.

Human resource management is implemented through various practices, but scholars worldwide have not yet reached a consensus on the number and types of these activities. In addition to the main professional functions of human resource management such as attraction, training - development, and retention, depending on research purposes, cultural characteristics of regions, industries, etc. Human resource management practices can include other components such as teamwork and communication [19], attracting employees to actively participate in activities, and expanding information sharing [20], [21]. Pfeffer (1998) proposed seven human resource management practices: (1) ensuring job stability (employees do not lose their jobs); (2) recruiting new employees; (3) teams are self-managed and decentralized in decision making; (4) relatively high remuneration (bonus) based on results; (5) expand training; (6) reduce the gap in positions, and barriers such as reducing the wage gap; (7) expand the sharing of information and financial results within the organization [22]. Charles J. Fombrun et al. (1984) proposed 4 human resource management practices: (1) Selection, (2) Appraisal, (3) Rewards, (4) Development [23]. According to Tran (2011), human resource management practices are divided into three functional groups: (1) the Attracting human resources group; (2) the Training and development group; and (3) the Human resources maintenance group [24].

In this study, managing international faculty is a system of policies and practical activities used in the management of international faculty at higher education institutions to help higher education institutions achieve their goals and strategies when using international faculty, and at the same time make the international faculty feel satisfied and want to continue to work at HEIs.

2.3. Method

The study employed a quantitative research method through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire comprised 04 groups with 42 items related to 04 aspects of the study to clarify: (1) Recruitment, (2) Performance evaluation, (3) Compensation and rewards, and (4) Training and development regarding international faculty in public HEIs in Vietnam.

The survey targeted Vietnamese lecturers and staff presently employed at public HEIs. A total of 724 individuals were invited to take part in the survey. Ultimately, 233 responses were

received, resulting in a participation rate of 32%. After data cleaning, the total valid responses totaled 210. Among the 56 public HEIs, there are 36 HEIs in the Northern region, 05 HEIs in the Central region, and 15 HEIs in the Southern region. There are 42 HEIs with headquarters in centrally run cities, the remaining are HEIs with headquarters in provincial cities. The training majors of 56 HEIs include Natural Sciences, Life Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Educational Sciences and Teacher Training, Business Management, Languages, Foreign Literature and Culture, Arts, Sports, Medicine, Health, etc.

The study employed a 5-point Likert scale, offering the following response options: 1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neutral, 4) Agree, and 5) Strongly Agree. Correspondingly, the interpretation and range for analysis were defined as follows: 1.00 - 1.80: Strongly Disagree; 1.81 - 2.60: Disagree; 2.61 - 3.40: Neutral; 3.41 - 4.20: Agree; 4.21 - 5.00: Strongly Agree [25].

To utilize the survey results in subsequent evaluations, the study needs to ensure that the scale has sufficient reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the scales. 210 valid survey responses were input into SPSS 20 to conduct descriptive statistics and examine Cronbach's Alpha reliability, the maximum and minimum values, mean values, standard deviations, and so forth. The results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient indicated that all scales have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients higher than 0.7 and itemtotal correlations greater than 0.3, thus demonstrating their reliability.

2.4. Findings and Discussion

2.4.1. Recruitment of International Faculty

Among the 56 public HEIs with respondents participating in the survey, 28 institutions had their own criteria and procedures for recruiting international faculty, unlike those applied to Vietnamese ones. The results indicated that the criterion of teaching experience abroad had the highest mean value (mean = 4.03), whereas that of holding a Ph.D. degree did not achieve consensus among the 210 respondents, with a mean value of 3.29.

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Holding a Ph.D. degree	210	1	5	3.29	1.078
Proficiency in foreign languages (especially English)	210	1	5	3.94	1.045
Research capability and having international publications	210	1	5	3.52	1.045
Teaching experience abroad	210	1	5	4.03	0.835
Intercultural competence	210	1	5	3.94	0.813

Table 1. Survey Results of Criteria for Recruiting International Faculty

Organizations and agencies in Vietnam employ various methods to publish and circulate recruitment information, including advertising through labor service offices, recommendations from organizations and individuals, and others. Utilizing the support of international entities and foreign embassies in Vietnam proves to be an effective approach for spreading recruitment announcements. Additionally, current faculty members at universities or the institutions' international partners are also instrumental in disseminating such information [26].

The survey findings revealed that among the 56 surveyed public HEIs, the favored channels for hiring were (1) recommendations from domestic and international organizational partners; and (2) recommendations from university officials and faculty members. In contrast, other avenues like posting on university websites, utilizing human resource recruitment platforms, employing social media, or advertising in mainstream newspapers were less favored by the respondents.

Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The job announcement for the international faculty of your institution is posted on the institution's website.	210	1	5	2.94	1.174
The job announcement for the international faculty of your institution is posted on some human resource recruitment websites.	210	1	5	2.63	1.051
The job announcement for the international faculty of your institution is posted in mainstream newspapers.	210	1	5	2.59	1.060
The job announcement for the international faculty of your institution is posted on social media platforms.	210	1	5	2.58	1.083
Your institution recruits international faculty via recommendations from domestic and international partners and organizations.	210	1	5	3.96	0.912
Your institution recruits international faculty via recommendations from university officials and faculty members.	210	1	5	3.92	0.906

 Table 2. Survey Results of Hiring Channels Used by Public HEIs in Vietnam to Recruit International Faculty

Comparatively, regulations concerning the announcement of domestic lecturer recruitment in Vietnam stipulate that recruitment announcements must be publicly declared at least once on various mass media platforms such as printed newspapers, electronic media, radio, and television. Simultaneously, these announcements should be posted on electronic information pages or portals and publicly displayed at the recruiting agency's or unit's office [27]. However, the avenues used for disseminating information about recruiting international faculty still lack structure and diversity. This limited reach may hamper the connection between potential international faculty seeking employment and educational institutions, impacting the opportunities for both parties to engage.

2.4.2. Performance Evaluation of International Faculty

 Table 3. Survey Results of Work Performance Evaluation of International Faculty
 in Public HEIs in Vietnam

Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Evaluation and ranking of international faculty at your institution are conducted according to the regulations issued by the institution.	210	1	5	3.08	1.046
Evaluation and ranking of international faculty at your institution are conducted on a case-by-case basis.	210	1	5	3.42	0.962
Evaluating international faculty has assisted your institution in discovering their potential.	210	1	5	3.23	1.005

Evaluating international faculty has assisted your institution in developing better plans for utilizing them.	210	1	5	3.44	1.021
Evaluating international faculty has provided your institution with a basis for determining the level of rewards and benefits for them.	210	1	5	3.28	1.058
Evaluating international faculty has given your institution grounds for making training and development plans for them.	210	1	5	3.16	0.997

To assess international faculty's work results, a system of evaluation criteria and a process for evaluating them are needed. The survey results from 210 faculty members across 56 public HEIs in Vietnam revealed that out of 56 universities, 20 established systems of criteria and procedures for evaluating and ranking international faculty. However, the assessment and ranking of international faculty at these universities, where faculty members participated in the survey, did not follow the regulations issued by the universities and were primarily conducted on a caseby-case basis. According to the statistics in Table 3, the assessment of the work performance of international faculty was still not highly regarded by the public HEIs in Vietnam, and the purpose of evaluating international faculty remained unclear.

The data also indicated that the units directly employing international faculty at these universities frequently supervised and provided support for their work. Simultaneously, there was clear and specific task allocation and timely encouragement.

Vietnamese lecturers and staff - individuals experienced in working with international faculty - expressed satisfaction when working with them. However, they did not highly appreciate the contribution of their foreign colleagues during the collaborative work.

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Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The international faculty you work with possess good teaching skills.	210	1	5	3.89	0.723
The international faculty you work with demonstrate superior research capabilities compared to the Vietnamese colleagues.	210	1	5	3.30	0.922
The international faculty you work with collaborate effectively in fulfilling group tasks.	210	1	5	3.90	0.712
The international faculty you work with integrate well into the team and the working culture at the institution.	210	1	5	3.99	0.722
The international faculty you work with establishes trust and credibility among Vietnamese colleagues.	210	1	5	3.94	0.762
You are satisfied with the international faculty you work with	210	1	5	4.13	0.720

Table 4. Survey Results of Vietnamese Lecturers and Staff's Opinions on the Work of International Faculty in Public HEIs in Vietnam

2.4.3. Compensation and Rewards for International Faculty

The results from 210 Vietnamese faculty members indicated that among 56 public HEIs in Vietnam, 43 had internal regulations regarding the payment of salaries to their foreign colleagues.

However, these institutions lacked guidelines for commendations and recognition for international faculty. As a result, they often failed to promptly reward international faculty upon successful completion of their work, and the departments directly handling them did not actively suggest salary and reward structures for them.

Table 5. Survey Results on Salary Payment and Recognition for International Faculty
in Public HEIs in Vietnam

Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Your institution has internal regulations regarding salary payments for international faculty.	210	1	5	3.50	1.108
Your institution has internal regulations regarding the recognition and honoring of international faculty.	210	1	5	3.07	1.102
Your institution promptly rewards when international faculty perform their job well.	210	1	5	3.30	1.018
The department directly handling international faculty at your institution actively suggests salary and reward structures for them.	210	1	5	3.36	1.026

The results also revealed that the funding for international faculty salaries primarily came from two main sources: (1) the budget of the universities and (2) from international organizations and foreign partners of the universities. The criteria for salary payments to international faculty were based on: (1) their abilities and workload, and (2) their job positions.

 Table 6. Survey Results on Salary Payment Resource and Criteria for International Faculty in Public HEIs in Vietnam

Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The funding for international faculty salaries primarily comes from the budget of the universities.	210	1	5	3.80	0.934
The funding for international faculty salaries primarily comes from international organizations and foreign partners of the universities.	210	1	5	3.45	1.111
Salary payment for international faculty at your institution is based on the job position.		1	5	3.50	1.129
Salary payment for international faculty at your institution is based on competency and workload.	210	1	5	3.62	1.001

The survey showed that the benefits that public HEIs in Vietnam provided to international faculty included healthcare, support for spiritual well-being, living conditions, working conditions, and language and administrative assistance. Several ancillary support activities, such as providing basic Vietnamese language courses, facilitating family members' job searches, and assisting in locating schools for children of international faculty, had yet to be implemented within public HEIs in Vietnam.

According to a study by Nguyen Thi Nhai et al, (2023) [28], nearly 44% of international faculty were employed in Vietnam through dispatch by foreign agencies, organizations, or partner

institutions, thereby often receiving benefits from their originating institutions. Furthermore, the research highlighted that 35% of international faculty were unmarried, and 70% did not reside with family members or relatives during their tenure in Vietnam. Consequently, their need for assistance in securing jobs for family members or finding suitable schools for their children in Vietnam was notably low.

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Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
International faculty at your institution receive healthcare and insurance benefits.	210	1	5	3.50	1.073
International faculty at your institution receive spiritual well-being benefits (e.g., excursions, vacations, leaves).	210	1	5	3.59	1.042
International faculty at your institution receive living condition benefits (e.g., housing support, transportation, lunch).	210	1	5	3.73	0.966
International faculty at your institution receive working condition benefits (e.g., conference participation fees, visa expenses, labor cards).	210	1	5	3.52	0.994
Your institution provides language support and administrative assistance to international faculty.	210	1		4.03	0.904
Your institution provides basic Vietnamese language courses to international faculty.	210	1	5	2.90	1.185
Your institution facilitates international faculty of family members' job searches	210	1	5	2.59	1.078
Your institution assistances in locating schools for children of international faculty	210	1	5	2.68	1.071

 Table 7. Survey Results of Benefits and Support Offered by Public HEIs
 in Vietnam to International Faculty

2.4.4. Training and Development for International Faculty

 Table 8. Survey Results of Training and Development Initiatives for International Faculty

 in Public Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam

Variables	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Your institution conducts integration training programs for international faculty	210	1	5	3.05	1.030
Your institution organizes specialized and professional development sessions tailored for international faculty	210	1	5	2.83	1.024
Your institution formulates programs to facilitate the professional growth of international faculty (e.g., career progression, establishing professional credibility)	210	1	5	2.86	1.021
Your institution encourages international faculty to engage in self-improvement endeavors and augment their professional expertise	210	1	5	3.35	0.997

The survey aimed to evaluate the implementation of four suggested training approaches intended for Vietnamese teaching personnel in 56 public HEIs to assess their execution in the respective institutions. These initiatives encompassed: (1) Conducting integration training programs for international faculty, (2) Organizing specialized and professional development sessions tailored for international faculty, (3) Formulating programs to facilitate the professional growth of international faculty (e.g., career progression, establishing professional credibility), and (4) Encouraging international faculty to engage in self-improvement endeavors and augment their professional expertise. Nevertheless, feedback from Vietnamese staff and faculty members indicated the perceived absence of these recommended training initiatives for international faculty in public HEIs in Vietnam (all mean values <3.41).

The training and development programs designed for international faculty are tailored to meet both the lecturers' specific training requirements and the demands of the departments or units employing them. This approach allows educational institutions to strategize and implement pertinent training modules aligned with these identified needs. However, as per the survey findings, the units directly employing international faculty within the institution did not actively engage in supplementary training activities to augment the lecturers' professional knowledge aligned with their unit's requisites. Moreover, they did not take the initiative to propose organizational courses aimed at equipping lecturers with essential job-related skills. This lack of proactive engagement may account for the absence of specific training initiatives tailored for international faculty at these institutions. Additionally, is there a demand or necessity, from the perspective of international faculty, for training and development initiatives offered by Vietnamese public HEIs? Many of these lecturers from countries with advanced education the "hard" criteria during the recruitment process. have already fulfilled systems

2.4.5. Management Model of International Faculty

Based on the strategies and visions of public educational institutions aimed at attracting and managing foreign lecturer resources, the management of these resources across 56 public HEIs was undertaken through several human resource management practices: (1) Recruitment, (2) Performance evaluation, (3) Compensation and rewards, and (4) Training and development.

Table 9. Characteristics of the Human Resource Management Practices for International
Faculty in Public Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam

Management Practice	Characteristics
Recruitment	 There was limited diversity in channels used to post recruitment information compared to those utilized for hiring Vietnamese lecturers. Academic qualifications did not stand as the primary criterion during the initial
	recruitment phase.
Performance evaluation	- There was an absence of a standardized system for evaluating and classifying international faculty in many public HEIs; evaluations are conducted on a case-by-case basis.
	- Evaluation of the work performance of international faculty was not yet considered a vital aspect by Vietnamese public educational institutions, with the purpose of such evaluations remaining unclear.
Compensation and rewards	- Funding for salaries was derived not only from the institution's budget but also from international organizations and partners.
	- Support activities for international faculty were limited in scope, primarily focusing on language assistance and administrative procedures.
Training and development	- Priority was given to quantity over training and development.

Upon comparison with the Michigan human resource management (HRM) model [23], it became apparent that public HEIs in Vietnam exhibited similarities in managing foreign lecturer resources in line with the characteristics outlined in this model. While the Michigan HRM model delineates four practices - Selection, Appraisal, Rewards, and Development - Vietnamese public HEIs implement similar practices in the management of international faculty: Recruitment, Performance Evaluation, Compensation, and Rewards, and Training and Development. Despite differing terminologies, the fundamental essence of these four practices in both contexts displays general parallels.

Michigan HRM model is known as one of the HRM models developed at the University of Michigan, USA. The Michigan HRM model includes four core practices performed in all organizations, including:

Selection: Includes activities related to the internal movement of employees across positions and the recruitment of people from outside into the organization.

Appraisal: The employee's work results will be recorded and tested during the working process. The performance appraisal process is key to an effective human resources system.

Rewards: When employees do their job well they should be rewarded for it. Work performance will be the basis for determining salary, benefits as well as future development opportunities.

Development: Organize training courses and foster programs to guide appropriate skills for future development needs. Employees currently working in certain positions also need to be developed to increase productivity or prepare for a new position in the future.

The key element of the Michigan HRM model is the mission and goals of the organization. From the mission and goals of the organization, there will be goals of human resource management. From the goals of human resource management, there will be corresponding human resource management activities. This is consistent with the reality at Vietnamese HEIs when HRM for international faculty must be consistent with the HEI's development goals and strategies.

According to the Michigan model, human resource management has a close and synchronous relationship with culture and organizational mechanisms. It is influenced by environmental factors such as the political system, law, level of economic development, socio-economic, technological level, etc. Managing international faculty at public HEIs in Vietnam is conducted in the context of international integration and is influenced by environmental factors outside the universities. The research results are consistent with the study by Tran (2011) which presents that the Michigan human resource management model has been adjusted and applied in Vietnam and shows a certain suitability of this model to Vietnam's conditions [24].

3. Conclusion

The research highlighted the existing scenario regarding the management of international faculty in public HEIs in Vietnam. In recruitment, the channels used to post job openings for international faculty lacked diversity, with academic qualifications not being the primary criterion. Concerning training and development, the emphasis leaned heavily towards increasing the quantity of international faculty, neglecting their professional growth and training. Evaluation of the work performance of international faculty lacked a standardized system, often conducted on a case-by-case basis, with its priority and purpose remaining unclear. In terms of rewards, funding for salaries derived not only from the institution's budget but also from international organizations and partners; however, support activities for international faculty were limited, primarily focusing on language assistance and administrative procedures.

Furthermore, the study unveiled that public HEIs in Vietnam managed foreign lecturer human resources with characteristics akin to the Michigan Human Resource Management model.

Practices encompassing selection, training, development, performance evaluation, and rewards were executed to varying degrees across many public HEIs in Vietnam.

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