

School of Education

**Curriculum Planning Management in Higher Education in
Vietnam: The Perspective of Higher Education Institutions**

Do Thi Hoai Thu

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signed: 

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Abstract

One of the greatest challenges of HE reform in Vietnam is improvement in overall quality of HE management, including the management of CP at HEIs. With the aim of fostering HEI capacity to self-manage and contribute to the reform process in CPM, this study was designed to examine the extent to which the views, beliefs and attitudes of Vietnamese educators and administrators in the HE sector are reflected in the practices associated with the current approach to CPM.

With the use of mixed methods for data collection, the study involved three phases, including document review, written questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The document review was used to establish the theoretical background of the study, informing the construction of the questionnaire and the face-to-face, semi-structured interview. Three HEIs participated in the study: one national, one public and one private HEIs. Findings from the study indicate similar issues in CPM faced by the three HEIs: lack of institutional autonomy and capacity for CPM and the limited accountability in CPM of both HEI leaders and their governing body (MOET).

The study calls for the improvement of the current circumstances of CPM and/or the selection of an alternative approach to CPM by reducing the MOET's intervention in the process of CP at HEIs and increasing the accountability of HEIs in CP and CPM. The study also indicates that, while there are many strategies that can be adopted to improve institutional autonomy and accountability for CPM at HEIs, further research on the appropriate balance of these two elements need to be undertaken for the effective management of CP in Vietnam.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BS	Board of Sciences
CP	Curriculum Planning
CPM	Curriculum Planning Management
DAT	Department of Admission and Training
DFA	Department of Finance and Accounting
DHE	Department of Higher Education
DOET	Department of Education and Training
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDETA	General Department for Education Testing and Accreditation
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HERA	Higher Education Reform Agenda
IBS	Institutional Board of Sciences
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment

MST	Ministry of Science and Technology
NBS	National Board of Sciences
NSB	National Sciences Board
R & D	Research and Development
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VIED	Bureau for Vietnam International Education Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Chapter One: Introduction

Rapid globalisation, the development of information and communication technologies and strong demand for knowledge-based economies are all features of life in the twenty-first century. In such a context, it has been argued that the global knowledge economy creates opportunities for people and countries with good education levels (Tilak, 2001) and that societies can become materially wealthy only if they are managed by people with high expertise and knowledge (Simbar, 2008). Therefore, a highly skilled workforce becomes a determining factor in economic advancement (Rena, 2010). Higher education (HE), which plays a major role in the production of highly skilled and knowledgeable people, has been the sector most influenced by these pressures (Marginson & Van der Wende, 2006). In modern economies, it is believed that HE institutions (HEIs) are responsible not only for providing specialised human capital, but also for training and upgrading the existing workforce in order to help a country to cope with the changing global context (Rena, 2010).

The roles and functions of HE in many countries have substantially changed over the past decade. According to Mok (2003), one of the greatest changes in HE as a consequence of globalisation is the shifting governance relationship between government and HEIs. According to Jimenez (2007), HEIs indirectly play three roles in society. First, they contribute to economic growth by supplying qualified graduates for the knowledge-driven economy and by generating and promoting access to and use of knowledge. Second, HEIs have the potential role of increasing access to education and increasing the employability of those people who have the necessary skills and knowledge for the knowledge-driven economy. Third, HEIs play an essential role in supporting basic education (i.e. primary and secondary education) by supplying trained teachers for these sectors.

This changing role of HEIs has also created new demands and challenges for the current HE system and has required the governments of many countries - developing countries in particular - to take into consideration issues of management, accountability and their partnership with HEIs (Simbar, 2008). Working on the basis

that government alone cannot meet the growing demand for education and respond to the expectations of different stakeholders in society, several governments have adopted strategies of 'steering from a distance' by using regulations as a management tool and granting institutions more autonomy in the management of their institutions' operations (Mok, 2003, p. 119). According to Carnoy (2005), in order to do this, the governments in many countries have shifted their role from a 'command and control' model to a more decentralised approach with the aim of promoting greater educational productivity.

This shifting governance role of government in HE management has been achieved through reform of the sector in many countries. Approaches have included a comprehensive review of the HE system and the way it operates (a step which has been undertaken by such countries as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, among others). According to Mok (2003), these reviews of HE cover different aspects of HE provision and management, including the definition of roles, research and management and identification of factors that can affect development. Based on the results from those reviews, Mok (2003) argues that new policies and management models for the sector have been formulated (for example, the construction of an administrative framework for management of HEIs).

Another kind of HE reform has been the privatisation or commercialisation of HE. This has occurred to some extent in many countries, such as China, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines. According to Rena (2010), privatisation is currently the most dominant force among HEIs world-wide. Rena (2010) argues that there are at least three reasons for the privatisation of HE: the first reason is that supply of HE courses does not meet the increasing demand for HE and privatisation in HE, therefore, can contribute to meeting unsatisfied demand, including improving equitable access to education for people from the remote regions of their countries; second, growing community demands for high quality education creates an opportunity for private providers to operate alongside public HEIs, effectively establishing competition between the public and private HEIs in recruiting students - this, it has been argued, can be a driver of improvement in the quality and efficiency in both the public and the private HEIs (Rena, 2010). Third, as Rena emphasises, since private HEIs are

self-financing, government does not have to carry the entire financial burden of an expanding HE system.

A further type of reform has been the adoption of a decentralised approach to educational governance (Mok, 2003). Devolution has been undertaken in such countries as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, where HEIs have autonomy and the authority to determine their activities in accordance with local contexts and the needs of the community. However, greater autonomy for HEIs does not mean that HEIs are completely free from the government's control; rather, it signals merely a reduction in the government's rigid control over institutions, control that is now exercised through the government's executive arm such as a lower level authoritative agency (Mok, 2003; Nguyen, 2010).

Vietnam, like other countries in the South East Asian region, has proactively transformed itself into a market economy, promoting the need for skilled labour to meet the demands of the labour market and the country (Reddy, 2012). Realising that the ability to produce and utilise knowledge is a major factor in a nation's development and that HE plays a key role in producing appropriately skilled people for the country, the Vietnamese Government has set the objectives and functions of HE as follows:

building human resources for our industrialisation and modernisation, training technological and scientific staff with high professional ability, having and applying knowledge in reality, innovation and technology transfer, successfully carrying out our national industrialisation and modernisation process (Pham, 2008, cited in Reddy, 2012, p.4).

In order to meet these objectives, the Government has implemented several reform processes in HE, aimed at creating a HE system that is effectively responsive to new demands and challenges (Nguyen, 2010). Major changes in the HE system include an increased number of HEIs within the system, an increased budget for HE, the elimination of regulations that restricted the private sector's participation in HE, the reorganisation of the bureaucratic structure of the system and the construction of policies and regulations that allow HEIs to levy tuition fees and charges for other education services provided to the public (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen, 2010).

In the process of undertaking reforms in HE, improving the quality of HE has been one of the major goals of the Government. The Government has strongly focused on updating and modernising the planning of curriculum within HEIs, with the intention of promoting innovation in curriculum in order to respond to a HE system that is being transformed from a subsidised and centralised planning model to a market driven model. For instance, ‘advanced syllabuses’ for HEIs, which refer to those which are entirely imported from prestigious HEIs around the world, have been piloted at thirteen HEIs in Vietnam. Overall, the outcomes of the reforms have not matched the rhetoric and students have expressed their disappointment with the reforms during their implementation (Lan Huong, 2008a).

As Lan Huong (2008a) explains, failure in the modernisation of curriculum planning (CP) has resulted from the fact that curricula planned with international (foreign) components were not easily transferred to the Vietnamese HE context. Specifically, according to Lan Huong (2008a), many teaching and learning activities could not be implemented in class since many HEIs were not equipped with computers with internet access as required by these syllabuses. Further, Lan Huong emphasises that, while it was required that these syllabuses needed to be taught in English, many Vietnamese teachers at HEIs were not sufficiently proficient in English to do so and a large number of Vietnamese students had limited language capacity to participate in classes conducted in English. In addition, much of the content and cultural aspects of these syllabuses were not suitably amended to suit the Vietnamese context, reducing the effectiveness of their implementation. HEIs’ lack of preparation for implementing these syllabuses resulted in a situation where ‘foreign curricula were taught in a Vietnamese way’, which means ‘lecturers read the lectures and students write them down’ (Lan Huong, 2008a, p.1). These circumstances go some way towards explaining the failure of HEIs to attract students to study these syllabuses and the consequent lack of implementation of these syllabuses nationwide. Reddy (2012) adds that the lack of qualified lecturers, quality instructional materials and international standards curricula (i.e. curricula planned with foreign components) presented problems for HE in Vietnam, minimising the effectiveness of reforms in HE in general, and CP in particular. Reddy (2012, p.5) comments further that, although the Government has a strong desire to reform HE in accordance with overall reforms in other sectors, ‘there has not been change in the system as per the

demands of international integration, especially, of globalisation' due to problems that remain unresolved in the HE system.

1.1 Vietnamese Higher Education and Its Management Features

Vietnam is similar to China in that it has a diversified education system which is under direct governance and control of the government (Nguyen, 2010). Before the introduction in 1986 of a renovation policy known as *Doi moi*, HE in Vietnam was strongly influenced by the former Soviet Union system, characterised by highly specialised disciplinary HEIs focusing on one particular field of study. During this period of time, according to Dang (2010), most HE curricula and programmes were modelled after those in the former Soviet Union, with teaching activities separated from research.

Since the introduction of *Doi moi*, Vietnam has shifted from a 'bureaucratically centralised planned economy to a multi-sector economy operating under a market mechanism with state management and a socialist orientation' (Nguyen, Nguyen, Le, Boothroyd, & Singer, 2000, p. ix). This does not mean that Vietnamese HE has been completely removed from the Government's control. Rather, *Doi moi* signalled a transition from a subsidised and centralised planning mechanism to a market-oriented one. It also introduced open-door policies which focus on involving different stakeholders from society in the HE reforms, mobilising contributions from communities and responding to social forces demanding the development of the system and diversification of the types of HE available (Nguyen L, 2006). Since the introduction of *Doi moi*, a number of significant changes have taken place in the HE system. According to Pham and Fry (2002, 2004), the national budget for education has increased from 10.8 per cent in 1996 to 17 per cent in 2002 and from 18 per cent in 2005 to 22 per cent in 2010. In addition to the increase in the national education budget in general and infrastructure and salary increases for HE in particular, other changes in the HE system include re-structuring the management of the HE system, eliminating regulations that restrict the private sector from participating in HE, allowing public HEIs to levy tuition fees and charge other services provided to the public within the limits regulated by the Government, increasing the number of student enrolments, updating teaching and learning equipment and increasing the

number of HEIs across the system (Dang QA, 2009; Dang TT, 2012; Nguyen T.H, 2010; World Bank, 2008).

In spite of these changes, Vietnamese HE continues to be managed by a highly centralised administrative organisation: the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (Hayden & Lam, 2007). Although some HEIs in Vietnam are under the management of other line-ministries (i.e. they are concurrently managed by other ministries with regard to financial and human resource issues), the MOET is the highest authoritative agency responsible for determining all HE issues and prescribing the activities of HEIs.

Other than the outcomes obtained from *Doi moi*, under the centralised management mechanism of the MOET, HE in Vietnam is characterised by a number of features. One feature of the system is the limited capacity of HEIs to manage their own affairs. Other than two national HEIs which are self-accrediting institutions operating within a Government charter, all other HEIs must follow the managerial and academic policies issued by the MOET, including curriculum scope, teaching methods, student enrolment procedures and quotas, academic assessment, awarding of degrees, staff appointments, budget determination and the provision of infrastructure (Dang, 2010; Hayden, 2005; Hayden & Lam, 2007; Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a; Ngo, 2006). As a consequence, presidents and vice-presidents of HEIs have limited authority to make decisions about matters affecting their institution and virtually no capacity to direct its development (Dang, 2009; World Bank, 2008).

Another feature of the system is the low rate of access to HE. According to Hayden and Lam (2007), it is estimated that only 10 per cent of people of eligible age participate in HE in Vietnam. Within this number, people in rural and remote areas or with poor backgrounds are less likely to be represented than those from big cities. The reason for this, according to Hayden and Lam (2007), is the lack of available places for students. Annually, the MOET regulates the number of full time students that can be recruited by each HEI; that is, enrolment quotas are applied to all HEIs including public and private institutions. In addition, the MOET also regulates the tuition fees charged by HEIs. As the World Bank (2008) notes, although regulations about enrolment quotas and tuition fees for students may help ensure the quality of

HE (especially for newly established private HEIs, which may not well be prepared with academically qualified staff and teaching and learning conditions) and protect HE equity by limiting the fees charged, these regulations have limited HEIs' expansion.

Educational quality is another issue for the HE system. Although *Doi moi* has been in place for more than 20 years, Vietnamese HE is still struggling with providing the quality of education at its HEIs that attains the standards of other well-known HEIs in the world (Hayden, 2005). Contributing factors have been variously identified as a rigid and onerous curriculum; the use of didactic teaching methods; inadequate infrastructure for teaching and learning; lack of connections between HEIs and industry; and lack of internal and external measures for quality assessment (Dapice, Perkin, Nguyen, Vu, Huynh, Pincus, & Saich, 2008; World Bank, 2008). Other factors identified include the low academic qualifications of staff, the high ratio of students to teachers (30:1) and the heavy teaching loads of teachers (Tran & Swierczek, 2009; Vu, 2009; World Bank, 2008).

Vietnamese HE is also characterised by the separation of research from teaching activities. Influenced by the former Soviet Union model of HE, research has been traditionally undertaken at research institutes, rather than at HEIs. As the World Bank (2008) highlights, a research culture has not developed in HEIs and the physical separation of research and teaching activities has significantly weakened the capacity of HEIs to conduct research. According to Mai (2006), the current funding mechanism, which allocates research funding to research institutes rather than HEIs, is an important factor in discouraging HEIs from undertaking research; coupled with high teaching loads and insufficient support for academic staff to undertake research, the development of a research culture in HEIs has been significantly constrained.

In recognition of these problems, the Government has recently introduced reforms to improve the overall quality of the HE system. One response has been the release of the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) developed by the MOET. However, the progress of reform is still slow partly because, as it is argued, of the slowly changing mindset of people involved in the management of the system, their refusal to embrace new approaches and the ineffective management mechanism of the Government (Hayden, 2005; Lam, 2005; World Bank, 2008).

1.2 Research Problem

Vietnam has been advised by UNESCO that it is unlikely that the country will meet its national educational objectives, which include the improvement of HE quality by 2015 (Luu, 2008). Currently, there are no Vietnamese HEIs represented in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings or the Academic Ranking of World Universities (Vu, 2012, cited in Huong Giang, 2012).

The problems that continue to plague HE in Vietnam include lack of sufficient funding, constraint in regulatory management which limits the autonomy of HEIs, weak legislative provisions for HE, the high ratio of students to teachers, the slow rate of curriculum renewal, and graduates who do not meet the requirements of the labour market and the needs of industry (Hayden and Lam, 2007). The Vietnam Labour Association (2007) claims that only 50 per cent of university graduates are able to obtain jobs which are appropriate to their disciplinary majors. Reddy (2012) posits that the low number of graduates obtaining jobs after graduation relevant to their discipline is that graduates are not considered 'job-ready' and require special training to meet the needs and requirements of industry. Hoang (2008) agrees and comments that Vietnamese students do not have the necessary professional skills in their areas of specialisation to meet the requirements of the labour market.

According to Nguyen (2008), attributes which are highly valued by employers but which are not displayed by many students include independence, the capacity for critical thinking and the ability to work collaboratively in teams. These so-called 'failings' are seen as the result of the ineffective development of educational objectives, continued employment of traditional teaching methods and the continued use of outdated curricula (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Hoang, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; World Bank, 2006).

Banh (2008, cited in Lan Huong, 2008a) emphasises that many HEIs have not identified educational objectives or that these objectives have not been developed in accordance with the needs of industry and/or the context of the institution. As a result, as Thai (2008, also cited in Lan Huong, 2008a) highlights, many instructors fulfil their teaching role within the assigned classes without knowing the educational objectives of their institution. In addition, Nguyen (2010) asserts that current teaching programs are not designed to align with the economic needs of the country,

even though they are more aligned to the country's needs than they were in the state-run universities before the renovation policy was introduced in 1986. Curricula, it has been argued by the Government itself, are academically biased and assessed on outcomes which are not linked with socio-economic development practice and the needs of students (MOET, 2004). It is argued in a recent Government report (MOET, 2009) that HE in Vietnam has inherent weaknesses and limitations and lacks the educational quality to meet and capture the increasing demands for the socio-economic development of the country. In other words, curricula have not been planned in accordance with the needs of Vietnamese society, industry or students.

Discussion about appropriate approaches to improving the quality of HE in general and CP in particular are ongoing. In addition to the arguments about the need for sufficient funding for HE reforms, the re-definition of the roles of the Government and HEIs in academic management and the involvement of different societal stakeholders in CPM have been of greatest concern (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Pham & Fry, 2002). While discussion about the need for further reform in HE often canvasses the views of a range of stakeholders such as students, employers and graduates, the views of HE administrators and educators have not been heard. An exploration of views, beliefs and attitudes of educators and practitioners in HE towards CPM would, therefore, make an important contribution to the reform debate about CP and CPM and may help in the identification of alternative approaches to CPM in HE in Vietnam. The absence of input from these key stakeholders was the impetus for the current study, which explores the views, beliefs and attitudes of Vietnamese educators in the HE sector, and examines how these are reflected in the practices associated with the current Vietnamese approach to centralised CPM.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective for this study is to examine the extent to which the views, beliefs and attitudes of Vietnamese educators in the HE sector are reflected in the practices associated with the current Vietnamese approach to centralised CPM and their significance in identifying ongoing reform in the sector.

To achieve this objective, the study will address the following research questions:

- What are the views, beliefs and attitudes of educators in the Vietnamese HE system with regard to CPM?
- To what extent are the views, beliefs and attitudes of educators in the Vietnamese HE system reflected in the current system of CPM?
- What are the implications of the degree of fit between the views, beliefs and attitudes of educators in the Vietnamese HE system with regard to CPM and the current system?

In order to address these research questions, the study involved three phases: document review, written questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Phase one of the study involved the analysis of documents and materials relating to CPM in HE in Vietnam. These documents included journals, newspaper articles, government policies and regulations, reviews, working papers, published proceedings and reports. Phase two involved the distribution of written questionnaire to HE administrators and professionals of CPM across three HEIs in Vietnam. In Phase three of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key educational administrators and professionals of CP and CPM selected from the target group of questionnaire respondents.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The significance of this study primarily lies in its capacity to inform the current debate about reform in HE in Vietnam. Although several studies have been conducted on educational reform in Vietnam (e.g. Nguyen, 2010; Pham & Sloper, 1995; Pham & Fry, 2002), there has been limited research focussing on the issue of CPM, especially research which explores the views and beliefs of Vietnamese educators and educational administrators on this issue. In addition, recent attempts to make changes in HE have tended to be undertaken as a solution to an immediate problem and are poorly informed by evidence from research. Therefore, this study can provide significant research-based evidence on the beliefs, views and attitudes of HE administrators and potentially contribute to the process of making effective reforms to HE in Vietnam.

In addition, findings from the study can help the MOET and policy makers make decisions about policy and the introduction of appropriate reform measures. Although the essential role of HE administrators and educators in reforming the HE system has been acknowledged by many educational advocates and stakeholders, current practices in CPM that promote changes in HE usually reflect the viewpoints of the Government and fail to take into consideration the views and beliefs of HE stakeholders. There has been little comprehensive profiling of Vietnamese HE administrators' and educators' viewpoints about CPM that can be used by the MOET as evidence-based support for the development of policy or reforms in HE in Vietnam.

Finally, many international organisations (such as The World Bank, the Governments of Belgium and Japan and the European Union) have been recently investing and assisting in reforms to the education system in Vietnam in general and the HE system in particular, with the aim of developing and strengthening the partnership between countries. Findings from this study can be used as a reference source for such organisations looking for feasible opportunities for investment and cooperation or assistance to the HE sector in Vietnam and assist their decision-making. Although it can be argued that Vietnam shares similar socio-cultural and political traditions with its neighbouring countries, such as China and Japan, and that foreign companies and organisations can refer to these countries' successes in education reforms when investing in Vietnam, each country still has its own socio-cultural and educational context which makes it unique.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

While the views, beliefs and attitudes of Vietnamese educators and educational administrators were elicited, the views and beliefs of other stakeholders such as industry, employers and students or graduates were not canvassed in the study. It is possible that these other stakeholder groups would have different ways of viewing CPM in HE and that these differences would lead to divergent conclusions about alternative approaches to CPM in HE in Vietnam. However, the information about HE educators' and administrators' views on CPM gained from this study can be used as an initial source of reference for the understanding of views of other

stakeholders and for the identification of alternative approaches to CPM and the construction of policy reforms in HE in Vietnam.

Another limitation is the extent to which the study's findings can be generalised. Three target HEIs in Vietnam were selected for data collection, in order to obtain data that was rich and detailed. Although the selection of HEIs for the study was based on their common approach to CPM among disciplines in the HE system, each HEI still has its own educational setting for CPM. While it cannot, therefore, be claimed that the findings are generalisable to HE in Vietnam, it is believed that the selection of the three specific institutions provided data that reflects the HE system in Vietnam more broadly.

1.6 Ethical Issues

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University. Ethical guidelines for conducting the study were strictly observed and followed according to the standards identified for research in Australia. Specifically, before each phase of the study was conducted, an Information Sheet, briefly describing the study, was sent to individual participants. All research participants were volunteers and all returned questionnaires were anonymous. For interview participants, informed consent was sought through the use of a signed consent form, in which interviewees were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time. All information obtained from the study has been treated as confidential. All data were stored in a secure electronic file with password access.

1.7 Definition of Terms

In order to provide a specific context for this study's discussion, several terms need to be defined.

- *Higher education institution (HEI)* refers to an educational institution which offers academic degrees beyond high school diploma, including associate degrees (two to three years of study), bachelor degrees (four to six years of study), master's degree (one to two years of study) and doctoral degrees (two

to four years or longer as regulated by the MOET). HEIs include both colleges and universities (Education Law, Government of Vietnam, 2005a).

- *National HEI (university)* refers to a public HEI which is established by the government and operates within charters given to it by the government's cabinet. A national HEI has more autonomy than other HEIs in that they can make decisions about all activities relating to education, research, finance, international cooperation and organisational management. The president of a national HEI's council, director and vice-director of a national HEI are appointed by the Prime Minister of the country.
- *Regional HEI* refers to a public HEI which is established by the government and includes a number of HEI members, serving the particular needs in relation to the socio-economic, cultural and political development of a region.
- *Faculty* refers to a group of departments or divisions within a HEI which is specialised in a particular subject of study (discipline) or a group of subjects of study.
- *Department of Admission and Training* is a functional department organised in a HEI which is mainly responsible for advising the HEI's president or vice-president (of academic affairs) on management policies for CP, providing faculties with guidance in planning curriculum in compliance with the MOET's and institution's regulations and providing services relating to students such as student enrolment and registration, their academic record and graduation.
- *City/provincial Department of Education and Training* refers to a governmental agency which is established by and under the control of the people's committee of a city or a province, with its main functions of giving the city or provincial people's committee advice on high school management. A city/provincial department of education and training is also under a direct management of the MOET in terms of academic management issues.
- *Course of study* and *subject of study* are terms that are used interchangeably. These two terms refer to the study of a particular topic within a wide range of

topics that leads to a qualification from a HEI. Courses of study on offer are usually decided by an individual HEI, based on the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks.

- *Program of study* is defined as an integrated academic plan of courses of study or activities leading to an academic degree.
- *Discipline of study* refers to a systematic and ordered area of study that is taught and researched at an institution (for example, discipline of economics, discipline of finance and banking)
- *Credit transfer in HE* refers to HEIs' recognition of students' prior results for study at a HE level in the same discipline of study or different disciplines of study.

1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters. This first chapter has outlined the broad context, introduced the research objectives and questions and has described the significance and limitations of the research.

Chapter two presents the background context of the research. It describes the HE system in Vietnam, its governance and related characteristics. The chapter also outlines reforms recently undertaken in HE and in CPM in Vietnam.

Chapter three reviews and critiques the literature on CPM in HE in Vietnam. The chapter provides a discussion of relevant perspectives on curriculum, CP, HE management and CPM. The chapter also presents a discussion about issues relating to management in HE, including accountability and institutional autonomy, followed by an analysis of the levels and forms of CPM in HE.

Chapter four describes the research methodology. It provides a rationale for the employment of mixed methods for data collection: documentary review, written-questionnaire and semi-structured interview. It outlines the design of instruments for data collection, the selection of the research sites, the procedures for data collection and the methods for data analysis. Ethical issues have been taken into consideration in the study and are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five presents the findings from each phase of the study. The chapter includes two sections. The first section of the chapter is a report on the findings obtained from phase one (i.e. the desk research), supported by data from phase three (i.e. the semi-structured interview). This section provides findings relating to the current approach to CPM in HE in Vietnam. The second section of the chapter incorporates the findings from phase two (i.e. the written questionnaire) and part of the findings from phase three. This section focuses on describing information such as the demographic profile of the research participants, the participants' satisfaction with and views and beliefs about CPM in general and the current approach to CPM in Vietnam in particular.

The sixth and final chapter presents discussions about the findings and recommendations for consideration. It outlines the study's conclusions and discusses the implications of the study for policy makers and educational administrators. The chapter also provides suggestions for further research in the field of CPM in HE.

Chapter Two: Vietnamese Higher Education Context

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the overall context and circumstances of Vietnamese HE. The chapter is divided into four sections, beginning with an overview of the socio-political context of Vietnam, including significant changes in socio-economic, political and educational policies of the country. It then goes to provide a detailed description of the Vietnamese HE system, which includes the number and types of HEIs, enrolment trends, course structures, funding arrangements and the governance of HE. The third section presents significant reforms in HE system since the country's introduction of the renovation policy. The chapter then ends with a discussion about the significant reforms in CPM.

2.2 Socio-political Context – an Overview

Since 1975, the Communist Party has pursued Vietnam's development as a centrally planned economy, strongly influenced by the Soviet model. The consequence of this strategy is that control and central planning by the State has had a strong impact on all fields of development in Vietnam, including education. The trade embargo imposed on Vietnam by the United States in April 1975, by which 'economic sanctions' and diplomatic relations with Vietnam were severely restricted (Babson, 2002, p.1), made the country's situation worse. Vietnam was confronted with great difficulties and challenges during this time: an economic crisis was accompanied by inflation, pervasive hardship prevailed among the population and confidence was eroded in every aspect of the country's social and political life. In this context, as with other sectors, education in general and HE in particular experienced significant difficulties. The HE system was under the management of line-ministries and, during this time, there was a critical shortage of the funds needed for their regular operation (Dang, 2009; World Bank, 2013a). According to the World Bank (2013a), many HEIs did not have enough funds to maintain their regular activities. Consequently, there was a marked decline in the number of HEIs overall and notable educational disparities in the quantity and quality of HEIs in various regions of the country.

1986 marked a turning point in the country's development when the *Doi moi* (renovation policy) was approved by the Communist Party at its Sixth Congress. *Doi moi* triggered Vietnam's transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy, the objective of which was the establishment of a multi-sector economy operating under market mechanisms, albeit with State management and a socialist orientation (Nguyen TC, Nguyen ML, Le, Boothroyd, & Singer, 2000, p. ix).

According to Nguyen L (2006), *Doi moi* included three major components, the first of which was the development of a multi-sectoral economy. While there were only two economic sectors (the State economic and the cooperative economic sectors) before 1986, under *Doi moi* the number increased to six, now including four new sectors - the private and small business economic sector, the private capitalist economic sector, the State capitalist economic sector and the economic sector with foreign investment. This development of a multi-sectoral economy under *Doi moi* indicates the Government's recognition of the private sector and its encouragement to participate in the development of the country, in an attempt to end Vietnam's isolation from the outside world (Tran & Yoon, 2008).

The second component of *Doi moi* was the establishment of 'comprehensive market elements' to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government's management of the economy (Nguyen L, 2006, p.2). As Nguyen L identifies, these elements encompassed the labour market, the stock market, the real estate market, and the scientific and technological market. The aim was to eliminate price controls, to remove the Government's control over foreign trade and to diversify financial institutions and ownership, with opportunities for foreign investment. Legislation encouraging the development of the private sector was proclaimed with the intention of 'building a legal state of the people, by the people and for the people' (Dang, 2009, p.16).

The third component of *Doi moi* was the Government's determination to achieve the 'development of a healthier society, equality in distribution, creation of a stronger motivation for production development, increase of productivity of social labour, equality of social relationship and encouragement for citizens to become rich' (Nguyen L, 2006, p.2). The aim was to reduce poverty and to improve the overall

quality of life of people, whilst progressively helping the country to re-engage in the international economy (World Bank, 2008). This was done by implementing an 'open-door policy and promoting relations between Vietnam and all other countries in the world community for peace, independence and development' (Nguyen TC et al., 2000, p.ix).

Although *Doi moi* was considered a tool to promote the socio-economic development of Vietnam, the policy did not signal political liberalisation. Rather, it introduced a new market-oriented mechanism for the country's development and opened the door to private industry.

Changes and renovations introduced by *Doi moi* had a strong impact on all aspects of development of the country. Following its introduction, Vietnam made significant progress in its socio-economic development and internal and external relations (Sheridan, 2010), especially when the trade embargo by the United States was lifted in 1994. Since that time, Vietnam has been considered one of the most attractive countries for international investment (Dang, 2009). From the early 1990s to 1998, the country experienced impressive growth in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to an annual average rate of more than seven per cent despite the financial crisis in the Asian region, as well as a reduction in the percentage of Vietnamese people living below the poverty line from 58 per cent (in 1993) to 16 per cent (in 2006) (Waite, 2009). Public sector employment increased from 1.3 per cent in 1995 – 2000 to 9.5 per cent in 2000 – 2005 (Vu & Freire, 2010). The rapid economic growth within the country was accompanied by active integration into the world's economy by being members of, and having bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with, several international trade organisations (Abbott, Bentzen, & Tarp, 2007). Specifically, Vietnam became a member of the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995 and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998; bilateral trade agreements with China were commenced in 2002, with Japan in 2003 and the EU in 2004.

In an attempt to gain membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Vietnam undertook substantial reforms in its trade policies and liberalised itself in many other areas. The public administrative reforms initiated from 2001 to 2010 targeted at the four key areas of institutional management, organisational structure, civil service and

public finance and significant achievements have been made (Painter, 2005). Examples of these are the introduction of a one-door administrative management mechanism (i.e. elimination of unnecessary administrative procedures existing in governmental agencies) and the reduction in the number of governmental units at both central and local levels (Ngo VD, Tran VP, & Vu TB, 2007; Painter, 2005). In addition to its strong commitment to public administrative reform within the country, Vietnam also opened its economy to the world to promote international trade and attract foreign direct investment (FDI) capital. The country's openness to and integration into the international economy was indicated by the implementation of regulations and agreements relating to the WTO's commitment framework, including the 'elimination of trade barriers, trade liberation through tariff reduction, opening domestic market for goods, services and investment, publicity and transparency in policies' (Ngo et al., 2007, p. 13). Vietnam's accession to the WTO and participation in the world's trade system in January 2007 was a significant turning point in the country's development, marking 20 years of transformation from a centrally planned to a market oriented economy.

In line with the overall reform of other sectors and as a response to the rapid socio-economic development of the country, education in Vietnam underwent significant reforms to meet the needs of the country. According to the World Bank (2013a, p.9), the fundamental bases of the reforms in education were 'to change past inappropriate perceptions and solutions, and to forcefully propose and implement new solutions so as to halt the recession, stabilise and strengthen the system, and bring about a situation with the resources needed for continued development'. In order to do this, a number of reforms were introduced across the system. There were three key policies for education renovation (Dang BL, 2003). The first policy transformed educational objectives from those serving the needs of the State owned economic and collective economic sectors to the needs of the market economy. The second policy was directed at the socialisation of education by involving different stakeholders in the development of education, diversifying the types of education and exploring and utilising different resources for educational development. Finally, according to Dang BL (2003), policy aimed to democratise education by the creation of conditions that allowed for people from the community to participate in the management of education.

Although *Doi moi* had a strong impact on education, it did not immediately affect the HE system. This impact on HE was not evident until the Government issued the Decree 90/CP in 1993 affirming the country's commitment to the unification and restructure of the HE system and declaring the right of all people in Vietnam to pursue HE (World Bank, 2008). Since then, HE in Vietnam has experienced progressive change. Specifically, the system was bureaucratically re-structured from three agencies involved in the management of HEIs to one organisation (the Ministry of Education and Training or MOET) which aimed to be more responsive to the new and diverse demands of society (Nguyen, 2010). Five new HEIs were established by merging a number of smaller HEIs, with combined teaching and research functions, a feature which had disappeared in the system before *Doi moi*. Previously HEIs were mono-disciplinary institutions, with limited research capabilities. These new institutions included two national universities (i.e. Hanoi National University and Ho Chi Minh City National University) and three regional universities (i.e. Thai Nguyen, Da Nang and Hue Universities). In addition, private sector involvement in HE (which had been abandoned before the Decree 90 was issued by the Government) was made possible, with the result that the enrolment rate of students into HE increased from two per cent in 1993 to over thirteen per cent in 2005 (Sheridan, 2010). Such changes, however, have not been sufficient for the HE system to keep up with the country's needs, and there have been serious questions raised about educational quality. As Sheridan (2010) argues, the continuance of the Government's pervasively centralised control over HEIs has limited the ability of HE to respond to the rapidly changing demands of a global market due to inflexible management and teaching, outdated curricula, inadequate learning and teaching resources and teachers with limited research capacity.

2.3 Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam

HE in Vietnam has a long tradition, with the first national university, '*Quoc Tu Giam*', established in the eleventh century, directly supervised by the King and located in the country's capital - Hanoi (Nguyen L, 2006). The foundation system of HE remained in place until the mid-nineteenth century, when Indochina was colonised by the French. The University of Indochina was established in the late of 1930s and HE within Vietnam became strongly influenced by the French (French

was the language of instruction at HE level and also the dominant language in society) and was aimed at ‘training people to serve the colonial apparatus’ (World Bank, 2013a, p.2). According to the World Bank (2013a), during the most prosperous times of the French occupation, there were only three HEIs in Indochina and all were located in Hanoi. These institutions included the University of Law, the University of Pharmacy and Medicine and the University of Sciences.

After Vietnam became independent from the French in 1954, the country was divided into two: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam governed by the newly formed government of Ho Chi Minh in the North and the Republic of Vietnam protected by the U.S. military in the South (Dang, 2009). As a result, HE in the North came strongly under the influence of the Soviet model of HE (although the language of instruction was Vietnamese), whereas HE in the South was dominated by French and American education models (the language of instruction was Vietnamese, French and English) (Brooks, 2010; Dang, 2009; Pham & Fry, 2004). When the reunification of the country occurred following the end of the US and Vietnam War in April 1975, HE in Vietnam was amalgamated into one system and developed on a Soviet-based model (Kelly, 2000). After the introduction of the *Doi moi* policy in 1986, the number of HEIs dramatically increased, as did the type (public and non-public) and size of institutions.

Table 2.1 Vietnam Higher Education Institutions 1987-2009

	1987	1997	2009
Public institutions	101	111	295
Private institutions	0	15	81
Total	101	126	376

Source: MOET Annual Report 2009 (MOET, 2009)

Public HEIs are those which are funded and controlled by the Government. In Vietnam, public HEIs play a significant role as the non-public HE sector in Vietnam is quite young and under-developed (Lam QT, 2013).

When *Doi moi* was introduced, three types of non-public institution emerged: semi-public (*ban cong*), people-founded (*dan lap*) and private (*tu thuc*) institutions. Semi-public institutions were those whose initial resources (including infrastructure,

facilities and staff) belonged to the Government, but their regular operational activities were funded by the institutions through the generation of tuition fee income and other educational services (World Bank, 2008). People-founded institutions were owned and managed by a non-government organisation or private association. Operating costs for both semi-public and people-founded institutions were generated from student tuition fees. Private institutions are owned and managed by an individual, a group of individuals or a foreign institution. They operated either as for-profit or not-for-profit institutions.

Both semi-public and people-founded HEIs were combined in 2006 and now operate as either public or private institutions. This means that Vietnam effectively has a two-tier system of HE: public, largely modelled on the former Soviet system, and private HE (Nguyen, 2010).

In addition to the differing financial underpinnings of HEIs, there is also a range of institutional types (MOET, 2010):

- Universities (*Truong dai hoc*): offer undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs, as assigned by the Prime Minister. Vietnamese universities can be categorised into three basic types: specialised, multi-disciplinary and open.
- Colleges (*Truong cao dang*): offer college programs or lower level programs (colleges are established by the MOET or the provincial government and can only award associate degrees).
- Research institutes (*Hoc vien*): offer ‘doctoral programs and in cooperation with a university can offer masters programs, subject to permission from the Prime Minister.

Table 2.2 Types of Universities in Vietnam

Types of university	Specialised universities	Multi-disciplinary universities	Open universities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrowly focused or focused on a single field of education - Academic research capacity <p>(e.g. University of Economics, University of Laws, University of Medicine)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wide range of study areas - Academic research capacity <p>(e.g. Ho Chi Minh City National University, Hue University)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wide range of study areas - More accessible to students <p>(e.g. Ho Chi Minh City Open University)</p>

Source: combined from MOET (2010)

2.3.1 The Student in Vietnamese Higher Education

The past two decades has witnessed a rapid growth in student enrolments in HE. As shown in the Table 2.3, student enrolments have increased 2.4 times in the period 1997-2009 and are nearly 12 times more than they were in 1987 (MOET, 2009). The enrolment of students in the private sector remains small compared with public sector institutions. There were only 218,189 students enrolled in the private HEIs in 2009, including both universities and colleges, representing 12.7 per cent of the total enrolment of students in HE (Dang, 2009). Although the private sector has been given more autonomy in terms of management, institutions received no funding from the Government to support their operations. In addition, with the establishment of the private HE sector still in its early days and the current inconsistent and unspecific system of legislation that potentially compromises the sustainable development of private HE, public institutions are still preferred over non-public ones (Lam QT, 2013). Thus, public HEIs are the key providers, with almost 83 per cent of the total student enrolment in HE in 2009 (MOET, 2009).

In terms of the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER), Vietnam still has a low rate compared with that of other countries such as Australia and Singapore. The GER is defined as the number of students enrolled in the sub-sector or sub-division as a proportion of the relevant age group in the population (students enrolled per 10,000 of the

population) (Sheridan, 2010). According to Sheridan (2010), the GER of Vietnamese HE is variously estimated in the range of 13 per cent - 16 per cent, whereas the participation rate of Australia is 82 per cent - almost six times higher than that of Vietnam. Vietnam has set a GER target of 45 per cent by year 2020 (MOET, 2009). Sheridan (2010) maintains that achieving a participation rate of at least 50 per cent is critical for sustaining a developed economy as well as for supporting solutions for international industry competitiveness, particularly in the wake of globalisation.

In addition to the relatively low GER, the number of HE graduates is still small in comparison with the number of student enrolments (although it has dramatically increased since 1987).

Table 2.3. Student Enrolment and Graduates in Higher Education Institutions in Vietnam 1987-2009

	1987	1997	2009	Growth % 1987-2009
Number of HEIs	101	126	376	372
Number of students	133,136	715,231	1,719,499	1,291
Number of graduates	19,900	73,736	222,665	1,118

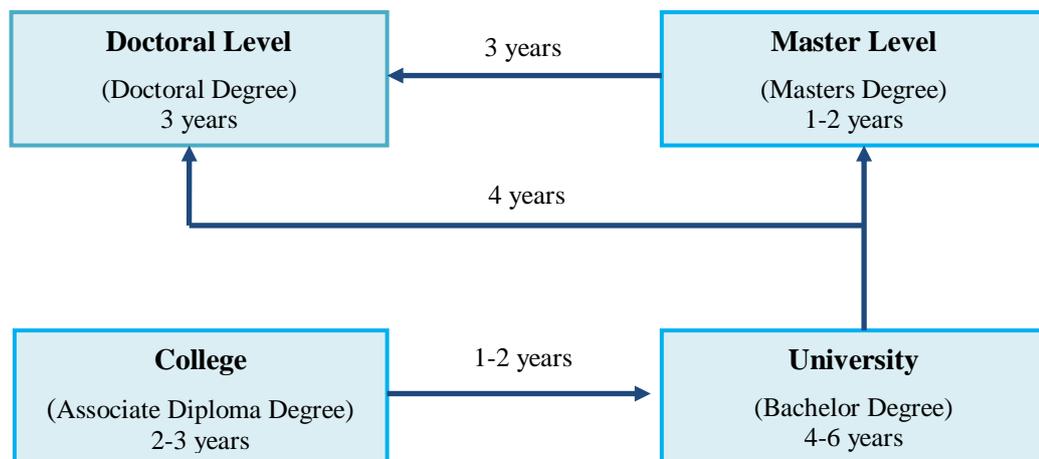
Source: MOET Annual Report 2009 (MOET, 2009)

2.3.2 Course Structure in Vietnamese Higher Education

In Vietnam, there are two types of undergraduate programs: the short cycle and the long-cycle programs of study. The short-cycle programs are offered at community colleges or junior colleges (Kelly, 2000). It usually takes two to three years of study to finish a short-cycle program, the completion of which leads to the award of a HE certificate or a college diploma (associate diploma degree). Long cycle programs are those offered by universities and take from four to six years to finish. Upon completion of the program, students are awarded a university graduate diploma which indicates student's completion of a bachelor degree program. The duration of a bachelor degree program is from four to six years and a master's degree program is from one to two years (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a).

Completion of a degree constitutes successful completion of all courses of study allocated for each term of an academic year or all courses of study allocated for two assigned phases of education. The degree title upon completion of a bachelor program is ‘*cu nhan*’ (bachelor), followed by the name of the specialisation area. However, as noted by Kelly (2000), titles such as ‘doctor’, ‘engineer’ or ‘architect’ are traditionally used by many HEIs across the sector for bachelor degree graduates.

Diagram 2.1 Higher Education Degree Structure



At present, there are two education systems operating concurrently in the HE system in Vietnam: the credit based and the academic year based education systems. Although credit based education was introduced in Vietnam in 2005 with the intention of becoming the universal approach, the system that it replaced, the academic year based education system which is tightly controlled by the MOET through the discipline-based education frameworks, is still in place and the two systems operate in tandem. The aim of further integrating HEIs into the global, competitive HE market and giving students more options demands a more widespread adoption of the flexible system of credit transfer (Nguyen KD, 2005).

The academic year based (or subject based) education system operates on a semester basis. There are a number of courses of study allocated for each semester, some of which are general, others specialised. In the general education phase (also known as the foundation phase), students are required to take courses such as a foreign language, physical education, political education, national defence education and

arts. There are four semesters of study (two academic years) in the general education phase, successful completion of which results in students being awarded a certificate of higher education. Achieving a Certificate of HE makes students eligible for a selection examination for entry to the second phase of study. In the second phase, which is referred to as ‘specialised education’, courses of study are organised based on the list of specialisations regulated by the MOET (IIE, 2004, p.13) and students are required to take courses of study relating to their specialisation or ‘professional subjects’ (Dinh, 2004, p.186). This phase of education also includes work experience or an apprenticeship of about one semester and ends with a comprehensive exam, a thesis or a project, depending on the requirements of the HEI at which the student is studying. According to Kelly (2000), a thesis was formerly an option for outstanding students, but it can now be undertaken by all students.

Credit-based education programs of study are based on the accumulation during an academic year of a number of credits which can only be obtained by successfully completing the work required and achieving the set learning outcomes (European Commission, 2004). Each credit represents one hour of lecture and one hour of preparation per week over a fifteen week semester (IIE, 2004). With a four-year bachelor degree program, students are required to complete a total of 210 credits, 270 credits for a five-year program of study and 320 credits for a six-year program of study (IIE, 2004). The credit system is regulated by the MOET.

Table 2.4 Distribution of Number of Credits for Programs of Study

	Types of institutions	Total number of credits required	Number of credits required for the general education phase	Number of credits required for the specialised education phase
Short-cycle HE (colleges)	Three year institutions	160	90	70
Long cycle HE	Four year institution	210	90	120
	Five year institution	270	90	180
	Six year institution	320	90	230

Source: Nguyen, V.N (2006, p. 52)

There were two purposes for implementing the credit based education system (Kamibeppu, 2010; Kelly, 2000; Nguyen KD, 2005). Firstly, the implication of the credit based arrangements is that CP can be managed in such a way that it promotes recognition of students' prior study results through a transfer of the results of courses of study among disciplines of study and between HEIs. Secondly, students can be given more flexibility and options for their study. As Kamibeppu (2010) explains, in contrast with the academic year based education system in which students are required to follow a list of courses of study which is rigidly controlled by the MOET, the credit based education system gives students more flexibility than the academic year based education system in that they have the opportunity of studying different courses of study at a time, either at the same institution or at another institution. Further, according to Nguyen KD (2005), students are able to determine what courses of study they want to study for each semester, instead of strictly following a list of predetermined courses of study regulated by the MOET.

Thus, the implementation of the credit based education system highlighted a number of differences between the two education systems, including the allocation of time for each course of study, the recognition and transferability of students' prior learning results, the continuous assessment of students and the allocation of elective courses of study (Huynh, 2006; Kamibeppu, 2010; Le DN, 2006; Luu TH, 2006; Nguyen KD, 2005).

Of these, one of the biggest differences between the credit based education system and the academic year based education system is the allocation of time for courses of study (Luu TH, 2006). As the credit based education system places emphasis on students' exploration of knowledge through self-study and application of theory to practice, time allocated for in-class lectures and activities is less than that provided in the academic year based education system to enable students to devote more time to their own study. Further, according to Huynh (2006), another major difference between the two education systems is that students' prior learning results are recognised and may be transferred among HEIs. To facilitate credit transfer, HEIs need to conduct continuous assessment of students, instead of having two major examinations for each semester as in the academic year based education system (Le DN, 2006; Luu T, 2006). Other key distinctions are: students are required to retake a

course of study if they fail it; it is not required to have a thesis or graduation examination once students obtain enough credits required for their graduation (Huynh, 2006); and students have the opportunity of choosing the elective courses during their degree program, which they are not allowed to do in the academic year based education system (Le DN, 2006).

With these major differences between the two education systems and due to the present circumstances of HE in Vietnam, problems emerged when the credit based education system was put into practice, resulting in the slow adoption of this new approach (Huynh, 2006; Kelly, 2000; Luu TH, 2006). Some HEIs have refused to adopt the new education system, while others have gradually replaced the academic year based education with the credit based education system (Huynh, 2006). Preparedness to accept the new arrangements aside, the lack of facilities and of suitably experienced and qualified staff for the implementation of the credit based education system has made for the slow progress of this new education system (Huynh, 2006).

One significant problem hindering its introduction is the regulatory frameworks and guidance provided for the implementation of the credit based education system (Le DN, 2006; Nguyen KD, 2005). As a result, some HEIs have implemented this new education system based on their own interpretations of what is involved (Nguyen KD, 2005). For example, while it is expected that students need to retake a course of study if they fail it, some HEIs allow students to retake the final examination of the course so that they are given the opportunity of passing the course (Huynh, 2006; Luu TH, 2006). An explanation offered by some scholars (Thanh Hung, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2006; Nguyen KD, 2005) is that this has resulted from the MOET's insistence that the discipline-based education frameworks for CP at HEIs continue to be used - frameworks which are constructed primarily for the academic year based education system and have limited application to the credit based system.

In order to improve the current situation, besides support and effort from both the MOET and HEIs, new or amended legislative frameworks, including new curriculum frameworks, need to be constructed (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2006; Thanh Hung, 2010). As Thanh Hung (2010) claims, the current implementation of the credit based education system based on the discipline-based education frameworks and related

regulations inhibits the adoption of the particular characteristics of the credit based system that represent an advance over the former arrangements - notably, the credit transfer system. Further, Nguyen KD (2005) argues that it is important to develop a credit transfer system across the system if HE in Vietnam is to advance and claims that it is currently impossible for students to have their prior learning results transferred among HEIs due to a lack of a viable transfer system among HEIs, limiting credit transfer to within an institution.

2.3.3 Funding Model for Higher Education

HE financing is an issue that inhibits development (Brooks, 2010; Sheridan, 2010; World Bank, 2008), particularly as it relates to the 'budgeting structure' and the 'performance-based funding' mechanism implemented across the system (World Bank, 2008, p.91). According to Sheridan (2010), the current structure of centrally managed funding by the Government restrains HEIs' flexibility in management and teaching. Since direct funding is presently kept at low levels and the Government controls all other forms of income to HEIs, HEIs in Vietnam are not in the financial position to either maintain or enhance the quality of teaching to keep up with emergent trends in teaching and learning. The World Bank (2008) has suggested that the performance-based funding structure determined by the Government, that is the allocation of funding to HEI based on its student enrolment quotas (also regulated by the Government) gives HEIs little or no incentive to increase their income and investment in program quality. As the MOET (2009) has admitted, outdated and irrelevant financial policies have inhibited quality improvement in HEIs, especially by limiting their flexibility to manage the planning of a curriculum that is relevant to the actual needs of the country or local area.

For funding, public HEIs rely on a combination of substantial government funding, tuition fees and charges and other sources (i.e. private income). The Government is the key provider of funds for public HE (Sheridan, 2010), accounting for up to 68 per cent of HEI revenues (World Bank, 2008). Private HEIs do not receive any funding from the Government. They rely heavily on tuition fees and charges which account for up to 90 per cent of their revenues, depending on the type of institution (World Bank, 2008).

Responsibility for implementation of the Government's HE budget is shared between the MOET, other line-ministries and provincial governmental agencies. Budgeting for HEIs in Vietnam is a bottom-up process. In order to be granted government funds, each public HEI is required to submit a detailed education plan and a budget proposal for the following fiscal year to its 'parent ministry' (World Bank, 2008, p.79). Public HEIs under direct control of the MOET send their education plans and budget proposals to the MOET, while some regional HEIs send their plans to the controlling people's committee which financially supervises the institution.

Rather than basing funding requests on the demonstrated needs of the individual HEI, the education plans and budget proposals are normally developed by HEIs based on the economic development plans and budget estimates developed annually by the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and related governmental agencies. The MOET, the MOF and the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) are the three key governmental agencies responsible for collecting education plans and budget proposals from related ministries and people's committees for further review and consolidation. These three agencies make necessary revisions to each HEI's budget proposal to ensure that it conforms to the economic development plans of the Government and collaborate on making a final decision on the budget allocation to each HEI. The revised budget proposals are submitted to the Prime Minister for approval. Once the approval of the Prime Minister is obtained, implementation and management of the budget allocation is carried out by the relevant ministry and/or people's committee.

All HEIs, both public and private, are permitted to charge fees to support their operation. However, fee charging is subject to Government regulation which specifies different levels of fees, categories of students eligible to pay reduced fees or to be exempted from paying tuition fees and details the use of collected fees (IIE, 2004). HEIs are required to compile an annual financial report, which includes the collection and use of fees and charges, for submission to their supervising ministry or people's committee.

According to a report developed by the World Bank (2008), HEIs offering degrees in economics, finance, law or information technology were more successful in

generating income from tuition fees and charges than those specialising in arts and culture. The report reveals that half of the expenditure of these HEIs was recovered by tuition fees and charges. In addition, HEIs which have campuses located in the south east of the country have higher tuition fees and charges than those in the north (in 2004 fees were approximately US\$302 per year - about half of the per-student income (US\$618) in the south - compared to fees in the northern regions of US\$197-282) (World Bank, 2008). However, since the living standards between regions in Vietnam are highly variable (e.g. the living standards in the south east are much higher than those in the north), fees in the south east account for up to 82-85 per cent of per capita income compared with about 70 per cent of per capita income in the north.

Financial assistance from other sources is important to both public and private institutions. As Nguyen (2010) notes, many public HEIs seek funding through cooperation and partnership with international institutions and agencies. Private HEIs, on the other hand, employ a number of strategies to generate income, such as contracting with corporations and companies to conduct customer-based or non-degree education programs. For such programs of study, HEIs do not have to comply with the Government's regulations on fees and charges and can achieve full cost recovery (IIE, 2004).

While HEIs are constrained with respect to cost recovery, it means that funds are mostly used for wages and salaries, not research and development (R&D) (World Bank, 2008). According to the most recently available data (MOET, 2005b), wages and salaries accounted for 38 per cent of public institutions' expenditure and about 42 per cent of expenditure in private institutions. Only two per cent of public institutions' funds were used for R&D, with one per cent used for R&D in the non-public sector. Expenditure for administration and other recurrent costs were high across all institutions (i.e. 31 per cent of expenditure). Noticeably, there were no funds made available for CP or quality improvement in either public or private institutions.

Although Vietnam has put great effort into reforming the HE system, the centrally controlled management of the Government over both academic structure and funding has prevented HEIs from fully realising their managerial capacity (Brooks, 2010;

Dang, 2009; World Bank, 2008; Hayden & Lam, 2007). With a management structure characterised by a high level of centralisation, giving the Government power in determining all matters related to HE - such as curriculum, academic assessment, budget decisions, infrastructure and facility maintenance - HEIs in Vietnam have no capacity to offer programs of study that respond to the increasing demands of the globalised economy or that promote innovative research (Brooks, 2010; Dang, 2009). Nguyen (2010) argues that these outcomes cannot be achieved unless institutions are given greater autonomy in CP and CPM and in financial management. Decentralisation is seen by some scholars as a necessary condition for Vietnamese HEIs to adapt to the international education market in which marketisation and privatisation regulate the competition (Dao & Hayden, 2010; Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen, 2010; Dang, 2009).

2.3.4 Governance of Higher Education

Governance of the HE system in Vietnam is strongly centralised, with the State exercising total authority over all matters (Hayden & Lam, 2007). The management of the system is viewed both vertically and horizontally decentralised which is presented in the following paragraphs.

Before 1990, there were three agencies directly involved in the management of HE: the Ministry of Education, the General Department for Vocational Training and the Ministry for Higher and Secondary Technical Education. These three agencies were merged into a single entity in 1990: the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Besides the MOET, there are another four ministries involved in advising the Government on HE in particular circumstances: the MOF, the MPI, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MST). Based on advice and suggestions from the advisory group of these four ministries, the Government decides on the overall plan for HE growth, such as growth rate and the required levels of integration between the HE sector and other sectors of the economy (Hayden & Lam, 2007, p. 75).

Although the MOET takes a primary role in administering and managing HE, some public universities and colleges are simultaneously run and administered by different ministries and provincial governments (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Mok, 2005; Pham &

Fry, 2004). Of the 376 HEIs in Vietnam, the MOET directly manages the finances of only one-quarter of public institutions, leaving the rest under the control and management of 12 ministries¹ and provincial governments, the power of which is limited to the human resources and financial areas, with the MOET directly managing curricular and academic issues (Hayden & Lam, 2007). For example, the University of Transport is managed by the Ministry of Transport; the University of Police is under control of the Ministry of Defence. These twelve ministries and provincial governments do not participate in the Government's advisory group for HE. The MOET (2009) recognises that coordination among these ministries is limited, resulting in overlapping functional management with the MOET.

Private HEIs, on the other hand, are responsible to the Government through the governing board that has guided their establishment and operation. As prescribed in the Charter for HEIs (MOET, 2003b), governing boards of private institutions work within the Government's regulations and their decisions are not deeply affected by the Government's intervention (Hayden & Lam, 2007). Since these institutions are privately owned, they have more autonomy in financial affairs. However, they are still under the control of the MOET in terms of student enrolment quotas, CP and academic issues (Hayden & Lam, 2007).

As a consequence of these arrangements, Vietnamese HE is both vertically and horizontally decentralised (Nguyen, 2010). According to IIE (2004), vertical decentralisation places HEIs under the control of different levels of government. That is, in terms of budget funding and staff management, some HEIs are under the management of provincial governments (e.g. city or provincial people's committees). For example, An Giang University is currently under the management of An Giang People's Committee and Can Tho University is under the management of Can Tho People's Committee. The management role of these provincial governments is as large as those of the MOET. Horizontal decentralisation places HEIs under the functional management of line-ministries. For example, the University of Banking

¹These ministries included the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Police, the Ministry of Medicine, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Resource and Environment, the Ministry of Information and Media, the Ministry of Legislation and the Ministry of Finance.

and Finance is under the management of the Ministry of Finance, the University of Pharmacy is managed by the Ministry of Health.

In terms of legislative provision, the Education Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a) provides a basis for HE management, although ‘it displays a remarkable tolerance of ambiguity’ and contradiction (Hayden & Lam, 2007, p. 77), an example of which is that, while the State exercises a unified management of the ‘national educational system with regard to the objectives, programs, content and plans of education’, the MOET attempts to ‘implement decentralisation of management to local agencies and enhance the autonomy and accountability of grassroots education establishments’ (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, Article 14). In other words, while the Government retains full control over HE, it appears to be encouraging institutional managerial autonomy.

Coupled with these apparent contradictions is an incomplete set of legal documentary sources (i.e. the Education Law, the HE Law and different decrees, resolutions and decisions issued by the Government and MOET) which is another big challenge for Vietnamese HEIs. The result is that HEIs have total dependency on the MOET for HE management. Yet the MOET, in its Annual Report of 2009 notes that its ‘ability for control and management of HEIs’ operation is very limited’ (MOET, 2009, p. 15). Both these issues have given rise to a serious concern among scholars about HE quality and the MOET’s role in HE management (Duong, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2006; Vallely & Wilkinson, 2008). According to the MOET (2009), the problems relating to the quality of HE in Vietnam have resulted primarily from inadequate legal documentation on quality management coupled with the centralised management mechanism. The incomplete set of legal documentation for HE management and the MOET’s controlling influence through its discipline-based education frameworks have limited the capacity of HEIs for CP and CPM and reduced their academic flexibility in producing programs of study that are relevant to the needs and demands of students and industry (Sheridan, 2010; World Bank, 2008).

2. 4 The Higher Education Reform Agenda

Socio-economic difficulties resulting from a centralised planned economy and the US trade embargo had disadvantaged Vietnam economically relative to its neighbours in the region (Sheridan, 2010). When the *Doi moi* policy was introduced, the strongly centralised and funded HE system found it difficult to adjust to the rapid socio-economic changes and development of a market (Nguyen VN, 2006). The ability to participate effectively in the global economy and the capacity to respond to the high economic growth rate required HE to be revitalised so that young people were well-prepared for jobs in both the financial and industrial sectors. The provision of a qualified workforce was, therefore, an important part of the Vietnamese Government's strategy for HE reform (Dang, 2009).

Another pressure on Vietnamese HE came from cross-border education provision (Dang, 2009). Due to the Government's openness policies, there was an increasing number of students going abroad to study or choosing to enrol in collaborative programs conducted in Vietnam by international institutions - both options which were perceived to deliver better quality HE. Thus, for Vietnamese HE to be more competitive, quality assurance and an expanded range of HE opportunities were two important components of the Government's reform strategies. In recognition that HE plays a significant role in preparing human resources for the country and assists the achievement of economic development goals, the Government implemented several reforms over the two decades from 1990 to 2010.

2.4.1 The Education Strategic Plan for 2001-2010

The Education Strategic Plan for 2001-2010 was developed by the MOET with the aim of diversifying, standardising, modernising and increasing social participation in education, enabling education to actively take part in the implementation of the Socio-economic Development Plan for 2001-2010 (MOET, 2013a). As highlighted by UNESCO, major goals identified for the implementation of the plan were to:

- improve education quality;
- undertake curriculum reform;
- recruit teaching staff to meet the increase in enrolment and for the quality improvement;

- increase effectiveness and the innovation of the teaching – learning method: from teacher centred to learner centred methods;
 - innovate the education management;
 - create the legal basis and bring into play the internal forces for education development.
- (UNESCO, 2013, p.5)

The implementation of the Education Strategic Plan for 2001-2010 was divided into two phases. In Phase 1 (2001-2005), the major focus was ‘to create the basic changes in education quality, to innovate content, methods and curriculum, to build up teaching staff, to innovate education management, to enhance social participation and to create a solid base for achieving strategic goals in the second phase’ of the plan (MOET, 2013a, p.1). In order to do this, many HE reform projects were undertaken, aimed at ‘improving the efficiency and transparency through restructuring the institutions, the administrative organisation, reforming service and public finances’ (Henaff, Lange, & Tran TKT, 2007, p.6). Some of these projects include revision of curricula, content and textbooks, improvements in education management and in the management and training of non-public universities, the establishment of open universities and the transfer of management to institutions. According to Henaff et al. (2007), although changes were made, the success of these projects has not been sufficiently assessed.

In 2005, the Government continued its educational reforms by approving the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) for the period 2006-2010. The SEDP aimed to increase investment in education and ‘to reach the advanced education standards of the region and the world’ (Sheridan, 2010, p. 1). The SEDP’s goals were to be achieved by improving HE quality, including modernising curriculum and teaching methodologies, by revising budget planning and policies, human resourcing and organisational matters and by delivering stronger decentralisation and a clearer delineation of responsibilities and authority (Sheridan, 2010).

Although changes in educational quality have been slow, the MOET claims that the SEDP has made an impact on HE of Vietnam, including improvements to the size and types of HEIs, diversification in the forms of education available and the increased involvement of different stakeholders in HE reforms to meet the demands of socio-economic development of the country (MOET, 2009).

2.4.2 Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006-2020 (HERA)

As an extension of the earlier reforms, and concurrent with Phase 2 of the SEDP, the Government, with the aim of continuing the modernising the HE system by 2020, approved a resolution to adopt ‘substantial and comprehensive renewal of Vietnam’s HE in the 2006-2020 period’, helping it to achieve ‘international standards, highly competitive and appropriate to the socialist-oriented market mechanism’ (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005b). The HE Reform Agenda (HERA) was developed by the MOET to achieve these aims.

HERA presented 32 ‘ambitious and broad’ objectives, covering all aspects of HE; however, it did not specify how these objectives were to be realised over time (World Bank, 2008, p.13). Four key objectives highlighted by Hayden and Lam (2007) are:

- to confer legal autonomy on higher education institutions so that they can be given the right to decide and be responsible for training, research, human resource management and budget planning;
- to eliminate line-ministry control and to develop a mechanism for having State ownership represented within public higher education institutions;
- to develop a system for quality assurance and accreditation for higher education, improve on the legislative and regulatory environment and accelerate the State’s stewardship role in monitoring and inspecting the overall structure and scale of higher education; and
- to develop a Higher Education law.
(Hayden & Lam, 2007, p.9)

Three other objectives identified by the World Bank (2008) that are of significance are:

- full development of a higher education curriculum that supports research and provides students with career options, and that is effectively integrated, fully responsive to quality assurance processes, and delivered by higher education institutions that are properly accredited and that meet international standards;
- the achievement of a marked increase in the number of qualified higher education staff and managers, sufficient to ensure that the HE student-teacher ratio is below 20:1, and that, by 2020, at least 60 per cent of all academic staff have a masters level degree and at least 35 per cent have a doctoral degree; and

- the advancement of scientific and technological research and development activity within key higher education institutions, such that this activity generates at least 15 per cent of the total higher education institution revenue by 2010 and 25 per cent by 2020. (World Bank, 2008, p.13)

In short, through the HERA, the HE system envisaged by 2020 was one of overall quality, effectiveness and efficiency in HEI management and was to be achieved by implementing a number of reform measures to reinforce accountability for their management. The first measure of reform was to provide HEIs with more autonomy so that HEIs could transfer to institutional self-management and be fully responsible for their sustainable development. The second measure of reform was the construction of an effective legislative system for HE management, encompassing a redefinition of the role of the Government in the establishment and monitoring of a quality assurance and accreditation mechanism for the HE system. Further, the improvement of research and development at HEIs and investment in scientific and technological research for commercialisation purposes was promoted under the HERA. All these measures were intended to make the system ‘more aligned with international standards’ in terms of educational quality (World Bank, 2008, p.13).

Although the HERA indicates a strong commitment by the Government to the improvement of the overall management of the HE system, it is argued by many scholars (Hayden & Dao, 2010; Harman & Le, 2010; Smith & Nguyen, 2010) that the objectives set by the HERA were too ambitious. Smith and Nguyen (2010) believe that HERA does not include a clear vision of the future directions of the HE system and there is no particular framework or clarification of the process for HERA’s implementation. Pham (2010) adds that HERA does not specify the necessary resources required for the implementation of the reforms and there has been no Government funding provided for this purpose. In addition, the current circumstances of research and development at HEIs, including minimal funding, limited time allocation and inadequate working conditions for researchers, make it impossible for HEIs to achieve the research targets identified in the HERA. A serious complicating factor is that the HERA indicates that it is likely that HEIs will still be placed under the multi-layered management of the MOET and other related ministries (World Bank, 2008, p.13).

Many writers claim that the HERA's major objectives have ushered in the transformation of a system which has been slow to modernise (Hayden & Lam, 2007; MOET, 2009; Sheridan, 2010). Although the Government, through MOET, has re-confirmed its commitment to the reforms, 'practical strategies and mechanisms' for HERA's implementation have not been initiated, except for a minimal change in the level of State control at those institutions which were selected for pilot implementation of the reforms (Hayden & Lam, 2007). Little has been done to promote broader change. Decentralisation has been proposed as a solution to this inertia (Mason, Arnove, & Sutton, 2001; Yuan, 2001). The argument put forward in support of a decentralised approach is that it promotes institutional and teacher autonomy, enabling universities to develop curriculum that can meet the country's needs by removing political control and allowing for quick response to social change (Zajda, 2004; Yuan, 2001). Decentralisation is, therefore, considered by some commentators as a key component in enhancing the efficiency of CPM, one of the vital factors for HE quality improvement.

2.4.3 Establishment of National Universities

Following the re-structure of HE in 1990, the Government made a second major change to the HE system in 1995 by establishing two national universities - one in the north of the country (Hanoi National University) created by merging four major single-discipline universities and one in the south of the country (Ho Chi Minh City National University), the result of the amalgamation of nine single-discipline universities. The goal for the establishment of these two national universities was the creation of strong and comprehensive multi-disciplinary universities operating at international standards, located in key economic cities and focused on building regional and international recognition (Ngo et al., 2006). These national universities had their own charters, drawn up by the Cabinet; the presidents were directly appointed by the Prime Minister and have ministerial level status. In terms of governance, these national universities have more autonomy and privileges than other HEIs - they can make their own decisions on financial matters and even on educational programs without referring or reporting to any ministry. They do not have to follow the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks and CP, therefore, are not managed in accordance with the MOET's policies, but by the

universities themselves. These institutions provide evidence that decentralisation and institutional autonomy exist in Vietnam and can provide the template for further liberalisation of the HE sector.

2.5 The Reform of Curriculum Planning Management

2.5.1 The General Department for Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA)

In response to the Government's increasing demand for higher quality and in line with the overall reforms in the HE system, the MOET has made significant changes to its CPM approach. First and foremost is the enhanced role of the General Department for Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA) in the development of a complete system of legal frameworks for educational quality assurance and accreditation with a specific focus on CPM. MOET had no direct control over HE quality until the GDETA was established in 2003. Prior to this, HE quality was managed by the HEIs based on outdated government policies, further compromised by inadequate mechanisms for implementation and the lack of complete legislative provisions for implementation. These factors have long been argued as challenges for the sustainable development of Vietnamese HE (Duong, 2010; Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen KD, 2005). Given its dual responsibilities of establishing a complete system of accreditation and quality assurance for HE in Vietnam, the GDETA has worked closely with CP experts and professionals in HEIs to generate ten Quality Standards comprising 53 criteria which are now considered the basis of a provisional regulation for the accreditation of HE programs. These Standards were published in 2004 (Sheridan, 2010), and relate to:

1. mission and objectives of the HEIs (two criteria),
2. organisation and management (five criteria),
3. education programs (five criteria),
4. educational activities (five criteria),
5. managerial staff, lecturers and staff (ten criteria),
6. students (nine criteria),
7. scientific research and technology development (five criteria),
8. international cooperation (three criteria),
9. library, learning equipment and other facilities (seven criteria), and

10. finance and financial management (three criteria).

In annual self reports and internal reviews of CPM and quality assurance submitted to the MOET, HEIs are required to address in detail each of these ten standards, indicating their strengths and weaknesses in implementing the standards and suggesting plans for improvement. The purpose of the reports is ‘to maintain and continuously improve educational quality, account for educational quality to official organisations’, to recognise HEIs which have achieved the expected educational objectives and to assist students and parents to select HEIs suitable for their needs by providing them with basic information about HEIs’ educational quality (Nguyen KD, Oliver, & Priddy, 2009).

However, there are some limitations to the Quality Standards. First, as Duong (2010) has noted, there is no official documentation providing elaboration of each standard except for the criteria, each of which is accompanied by specific examples to help HEIs in developing their self-evaluation reports. Lack of elaboration of each standard has caused confusion in HEI analysis of their institutions’ activities. In addition, as Tran DN., Nguyen TT, & Nguyen TNM (2010, p.136) emphasise, the Quality Standards do not include any requirement for HEIs to identify course specifications, objectives or information about ‘the translation of the mission statement into objectives at the program and course level’. Instead, as Tran et al. (2010) add, eighteen of the standards’ criteria are concerned with HEI review and evaluation of their physical conditions (such as teaching and learning facilities) and human resources. Thus, when the self reports are used as evidence in the MOET’s recognition of HEIs in terms of their achievement of educational objectives, lack of information about educational objectives has made it difficult for the MOET to evaluate HEIs’ fulfilment of this task and limited HEIs’ capacity to evaluate their educational outcomes. Consequently, quality is not adequately and clearly defined by the Quality Standards (Tran et al., 2010), being more concerned with HEIs compliance with the various regulations and legislative requirements of the MOET. For example, regarding quality in institutional management, it is required by criterion 7 in Standard 2 (i.e. organisation and management) that the HEI needs to show ‘evidence of periodically reporting to the governing bodies and the management bodies on its activities’ (Tran et al., 2010, p. 137). These limitations in

the Quality Standards have resulted in HEIs' self review being pre-occupied with quality achievement as the 'provision of institutional input' (Tran et al., 2010, p.138).

Following the construction of the standards, the GDETA submitted to the MOET recommendations for the construction of a legal framework for HE accreditation and quality assurance. Consequently, the MOET issued 'nation-wide temporary regulations on education quality accreditation' in 2004, which were written into the Education Law in 2005 and the Decree number 75/2006/ND-CP in 2006 (Duong, 2010, p.178). The Decree gave HEIs more detailed instructions and regulations on implementing articles of the Education Law, including membership of educational quality accreditation panels, the responsibilities of the MOET in educational quality accreditation, assessment and recognition of programs of study and of HEIs through accreditation results. After three years of piloting the set of standards for educational quality assurance and accreditation, the legal framework relating to educational quality accreditation, which includes ten standards and 61 criteria, was promulgated in 2007 and is applicable to all HEIs.

2.5.2 Introduction of Financial Penalties

From 2009, the MOET required HEIs to publicly announce information relating to their educational quality assurance outcomes (MOET, 2009). The information was to include statements of educational quality commitment and a description of current conditions of educational quality, resources for educational services (i.e. number and experience of staff members, facilities for teaching and learning, CP conditions) and income. The information is publicly disseminated and is easily accessible to the public via an institution's website, news bulletins, notice-boards, etc. Those institutions which fail to announce the information are not allowed by the MOET to recruit students for the following year. According to the MOET (2009), the aim of making this information public is to collect constructive feedback about quality from the public which can indirectly play a role as a secondary supervisor of an institution's implementation of educational quality policies and can help them continuously improve their educational quality in accordance with their enrolment targets.

As a consequence, there has been greater participation from the public, particularly industry, in setting the benchmarks for HE quality (MOET, 2009). Stakeholders' participation in HE quality improvement has resulted in feedback on the management of the HE system, cooperation between firms and companies and HEIs in joint teaching, the offering of internships and jobs to graduates and financial support for teaching and learning activities. According to the MOET (2009), participation from industry in HE improvement is positive, although the changes have been slow. Up to US\$10 million was contributed by different industries in support of the improvement of HE quality across institutions in 2009, mainly used for upgrading teaching and learning facilities.

2.5.3 Introduction of Discipline-based Education Frameworks

A third key change has been the construction and implementation of discipline-based education frameworks. These education frameworks are used by HEIs and are the MOET's official guidelines for CP and CPM, in all HEIs except the two national universities. However, in reality, CP at the two national universities is still compliant with the MOET's education frameworks (Hayden & Lam, 2007). Each discipline of study is issued with an education framework, including standards and requirements to regulate CP of the discipline. According to the MOET (2009), the implementation of discipline-based education frameworks is important in helping it to maintain consistency in CPM across HEIs and ensure that institutions meet the requirements of educational quality assurance in compliance with the Government's educational objectives.

A shortage of academics and experts in CP remains a concern among HEIs (Nguyen KD, Oliver, & Pham XT, 2006). The problem has been partially solved by a sharing of academics and experts between HEIs whereby some HEIs (especially newly established private HEIs) have invited suitably experienced and qualified academic staff from other well-known institutions to participate in the planning of curriculum at their institutions. However, this is possible only in big cities; for regional or newly established institutions, the lack of academics and professionals in CP is a significant constraint.

2.5.4 Introduction of International Higher Education Programs

The Government is strongly encouraging internationalisation and the transition to a global education market. Government policies have focused on expanding international cooperation and links between the MOET and Vietnamese HEIs with prestigious foreign organisations and HEIs. The advanced education programs, for example, were initiated and developed by the Vietnamese and the Government of the United States in 2009. CP for these programs is managed with more freedom and flexibility than local programs, with less interference from the MOET in CPM. According to the MOET (2009), such programs of study can help local HEIs gradually adapt themselves to international academic standards. Insights gained from the implementation of these programs give both the MOET and local HEIs an opportunity to review the strengths and weaknesses of their CPM. In addition, through communication and exchange between local institutions and the awarding counterparts, suggestions for improvement of the CPM of local institutions may be also initiated.

Joint education programs between local institutions and foreign partners have also been developed. These joint education programs are mostly delivered in English with the curricula tailored to the needs of Vietnamese HE. Again, although the planning of curriculum of these programs does not include such compulsory courses of study as political and physical education or the national defence education, the curricula must be approved by the MOET before they are implemented. Among these programs is the MBA program conducted jointly by Curtin University (Australia) and Ho Chi Minh City Economics University, the business administration program conducted by Hanoi Economics University and Troy University (United State of America) and the bachelor program in civil engineering jointly conducted by Ho Chi Minh City University of Transport and Leeds University (United Kingdom). Educational exchange programs - academic staff exchange, study visits and visiting scholar programs - have been enhanced and expanded. Such exchange programs were developed with the funding assistance of both the local HEIs and their foreign partners. In some cases, funding was sought from international organisations and agencies such as UNESCO, World Bank, International Education Institute (IIE, United State of America) and the European Commission.

This overview of the Vietnamese HE system has focussed on describing its centralised structure and governance, highlighting the limitations and constraints on academic and quality management due to the strictly controlled management of HE by the Government. The Government's efforts in renovating the system through its recent reforms in HE and particularly in CPM have also been outlined, providing important background information on the context of the study.

Chapter Three: Review of the Literature

3.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the literature that relates to CPM in HE, with special reference to the Vietnamese context. To fully engage with this literature, it is important to consider related issues: curriculum, CP and HE management.

The chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section discusses definitions of and perspectives on curriculum in HE; the second presents key perspectives on CP which influence the interpretation of CP; the third provides a presentation of conceptualisations and models of HE management; the fourth, fifth and sixth sections present important issues in HE management; and the final section presents perspectives on CPM influencing the interpretation of CPM in Vietnam, followed by a description of the levels and forms of CPM in HE.

3.2 Perspectives on Curriculum

Central to the perspective of curriculum are the key issues of intended learning outcomes, the meaningful engagement of instructors and students in classroom activities, content or subject matter, student experiences, and behavioural objectives (Hicks, 2007; Lunenburg, 2011; Marsh, 2009; Psifidou, 2011). Ornstein and Hunkins (2009, p.11) note, there are variations in the way curriculum is defined, depending on the 'scope and diversity' of the institutional context where the curriculum is implemented.

Within the literature, these different descriptions or definitions of curriculum can be distilled into three key perspectives - the humanistic, the social reconstructionist and the academic subject perspective (Eisner, 2002; Englund, 2000; Isichei, 2007; Mishra, 2000; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009) - each of which is manifested in approaches to curriculum in HE in Vietnam.

Central to the humanistic curriculum is the actual experience of students and their engagement in learning. Curriculum is viewed as a series of pre-planned educational

student activities and experiences (Eisner, 2002). According to McNeil (1990, p.6), the main function of the humanistic curriculum is to provide students with experiences that contribute to their self-development, including their 'personal growth, integrity and autonomy'. Mishra (2000) views its goals as fostering the holistic development of students and helping them become responsible citizens. The teacher plays the role of resource person and facilitator who encourages and promotes student learning, with students considered the centre of all teaching activities. Thus, curriculum planned from a humanistic perspective needs to provide a learning environment that encourages and facilitates the achievement of students, as well as activities that promote creative problem-solving and the active participation of students (Mishra, 2000). These activities include co-operative learning, independent learning, small-group learning and social activities (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

In Vietnam, with the Government's centralised control of CPM in HE, it is expected that students - personally and academically - follow all instructions given by the teacher, who is considered the key authority (Nguyen, 2002) and 'negotiation and collaboration between teacher and students or among students themselves are rarely seen in traditional classrooms' (Pham, 2010 cited in Dang, 2012, p. 6). The students' experiences and their engagement in learning and teaching activities - characteristics of the humanistic perspective of curriculum - are not reflected in the curriculum (Thompson, 2009; Tran, 2012b). Thus, the humanistic perspective currently finds little expression in Vietnamese HE.

When conceptualised as a vehicle for social reconstruction, curriculum is a means for achieving social change and the role of learning institutions in achieving such change is strongly emphasised. Reconstructionists believe that society is constantly changing and that education must prepare students to contribute to economic growth and enhance the labour market and that curriculum needs to be directed towards achieving this goal (Englund, 2000, p.307-308). HEIs, therefore, must operate as 'the agents of change and of social reform' and contribute to the development of students' interest in changing society (Isichei, 2007, p.62). As a consequence, curriculum needs to be transformed to keep up with these social-economic and political changes. According to Isichei (2007), a social reconstructionist curriculum

should be planned based on the image of the ideal society, with clear goals and study programs and provide students with the capacity to deal with problems that humankind faces (McNeil, 1990).

This is achieved by providing students with information about socio-cultural reality, helping them to be well aware of social conflicts and encouraging them to analyse and find solutions to these problems (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Active learning with 'citizen political action' and social reform activities are fundamental (Isichei, 2007, p.62). Reconstructionists believe that universal issues in all disciplines need to be integrated into the curriculum, with a particular emphasis in the social sciences. In a reconstructionist curriculum classroom, the instructors and students are called on to model a new and better society. The teacher, as the resource person and catalyst in class, is responsible for relating global, national and social purposes to student learning; students, on the other hand, propose solutions for the social problems raised in class.

In Vietnamese HE, curriculum is defined by the discipline-based education frameworks issued by the MOET. While political education courses make up 12 per cent of the total number of study hours in a curriculum, Doan (2005) emphasises that it is challenging to implement the objectives of curriculum while, at the same time, keeping up with the fast changes occurring in society. Vallely and Wilkinson (2008, p.2) also add that, with an obligation to implement the national discipline-based education frameworks which are strongly loaded with political and compulsory courses of study, Vietnamese HEIs are 'largely isolated from international currents of knowledge'. Further, it is reported by Vietnamese graduates and employers that HEIs presently focus 'overly on theory', textbooks are 'boring and irrelevant' and the curriculum is 'heavy, outdated and too theory-focused' (Tran, 2012a, p.320). Given these limitations, curriculum in HE in Vietnam, whilst containing elements of this perspective, does not strongly reflect the characteristics of the social reconstructionist perspective of curriculum.

Curriculum as subject matter or content is the final perspective (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 11). Within this perspective, students enrolled in an academic subject curriculum are expected to pursue 'similar learning outcomes', regardless of their 'expectations and graduate professional outcomes' (Richardson, Smith, & Lukaitis,

2012, p.94). As McNeil (1990, p.84) highlights, the purpose of the academic subject curriculum is ‘to develop rational minds, to train students to do research’. According to McNeil (1990), different subjects and disciplines are integrated in an academic subject curriculum and introduced to students in accordance with their individual capacity and interests.

In an academic subject curriculum class, the teacher guides student learning, employing such techniques as exposition and inquiry to help student learning. Students are examined and tested on what they have been taught. According to academic subject curricularists, reading and discussing ‘the great works of philosophy, literature and science’ help stretch and improve students’ (McNeil, 1990, p.84).

In Vietnamese HE, curriculum is viewed as:

...thể hiện mục tiêu giáo dục đại học; quy định chuẩn kiến thức, kỹ năng, phạm vi và cấu trúc nội dung giáo dục đại học, phương pháp và hình thức đào tạo, cách thức đánh giá kết quả đào tạo đối với mỗi môn học, ngành học, trình độ đào tạo của giáo dục đại học...

... showing educational objectives; standardising higher education knowledge and skills; regulating scope and structures of higher education, methods and types of education, methods of assessment for each discipline, course of study and educational levels of higher education ...

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, Article 41, Item 1, researcher translation)

This extract clearly shows that the purposes of HE are to help students ‘master disciplinary knowledge and skills, be able to work independently and creatively and solve problems relating to their educational disciplines’ (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, Article 39, Item 3, researcher translation).

Within this context, curriculum is the product of a ‘formal mechanism through which educational aims are intended to be achieved, and as such, it embraces all the factors that contribute to content, assessment and evaluation, instruction and learning’ (Heywood, 2008, p.10).

HE curriculum in Vietnam incorporates many of the attributes of the academic subject curriculum perspective as it emphasises the transmission and mastery of content or knowledge in a discipline. The difficulty level of disciplinary knowledge

is integrated into the curriculum and introduced to students in accordance with their level and type of education, which is regulated by the Government through the MOET's national discipline-based education frameworks. Further, there is a strong reliance on the use of textbooks which are regulated by the MOET. Sheridan (2010, p.15) comments that instructors are disempowered as leaders of teaching and learning activities in classroom, relying on 'out of date learning resources' for transferring disciplinary knowledge to students and guiding students' learning, while students use note taking and follow the teacher's instruction in class. The Vietnamese HE curriculum is also characterised by the integration into the curriculum of great works of literature and philosophy from Vietnam and across the world.

Review of the curriculum models discussed within the literature point to the fact there is no particular model of curriculum dominant in Vietnam. However, curriculum in HE, which is planned based on the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks, incorporates two typical attributes of the academic subject curriculum: the transmission of the knowledge and content within a discipline of study and the use of textbooks for transferring information to students.

3.3 Perspectives on Curriculum Planning

There are numerous interpretations of curriculum planning (CP) within the literature (Goodlad & Su, 1992; Kelly, 1999; Lincoln, 1992; MacDonald & Purpel, 1988; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Print, 1993). As Posner (1988) emphasises, perspectives on CP dominate curriculum thought and influence the formulation of CP processes.

Some well-known CP theorists such as Kelly (1999), Saylor and Alexander (1974, p.7) view CP as 'the process of creating a curriculum', a process that includes the creation of materials that are considered 'products of CP, but [are] not in themselves curriculum plans'. Placing an emphasis on the construction of educational objectives in CP, Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) view CP as a logical, prescriptive and scientific process. MacDonald and Purpel (1988) and Print (1993, p.57) describe CP as a process whereby curriculum planners 'conceptualise and organise the features of the curriculum they wish to construct'; it is a process that involves a broad investigation of the curriculum content in a specific context, a perspective on a general design of

the curriculum, an organisation of sequential tasks and an arrangement for the implementation and evaluation of the curriculum. On the other hand, emphasising the interaction of curriculum with social, economic and moral forces, Lincoln (1992) contends that there is no single approach to CP and that specifying educational objectives for CP is not necessary. Rather, according to Lincoln (1992), CP is a means or instrument for making changes to or reforming education, as curriculum is the product of CP.

Although perspectives of CP are divergent, they align with views about curriculum which are discussed above and can be divided into two groups: CP as a procedural process or technical production (technique) and CP as an ideological or critical process (conscience). These two groupings have been widely adopted by many curriculum theorists for the interpretation of CP (Apple, 2001; Giroux, 2011; McLaren, 2007; Pinar, 2009; Posner, 1988; Taba, 1962).

CP of HE in Vietnam is not completely based on the technical production or the critical perspective; it reflects many attributes of each of these two perspectives. An outline of the main characteristics of these two perspectives, therefore, is necessary for this study.

The Technical Production Perspective

The technical production perspective has had a strong influence on CP thought (Posner, 1988; Tanner & Tanner, 1980; Tyler, 1949). With this perspective, CP is interpreted as 'a procedure to follow when planning a curriculum' (Posner, 1988, p.78). This approach was originally developed by Tyler (1949), who emphasised that CP is a process in which curriculum planners need to explore four steps: the selection of educational objectives of the institution; the determination of educational experiences needed to achieve these objectives; the organisation of the educational experiences; and the evaluation of the educational objectives achieved. As Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) comment, this four-step procedure is accomplished through the gathering of information from different sources, such as the students and subject matter to be taught, while taking into consideration the particular philosophy of the institution.

Tyler's four fundamental elements for CP are used as a departure point for other theorists who redefine and expand them - for example, Taba (1962) adds three more steps: the diagnosis of needs, the selection of content and the organisation of content.

With the technical production perspective, there is an emphasis on the procedures that facilitate the planning process (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Education is then considered as 'a series of developmental processes which the curriculum should be planned to promote' (Kelly, 1999, p. 15).

The technical production perspective interprets CP as a technical matter through which curriculum planners 'determine the destination before deciding on the route' they want to take (Posner, 1988, p. 80). Comprehensive objectives are formulated as the initial base for the development of other related elements. According to Print (1993), a set of objectives with intended outcomes helps determine the kind of learning activities needed for the curriculum, making the task of CP more logical, systematic and efficient. Therefore, in order to produce the desired learning outcomes, curriculum planners need to objectively and scientifically build comprehensive objectives before other tasks are constructed.

Being viewed as a technical matter, CP needs to be undertaken by technical professionals and experts. The implication here is that, while emphasising educational outcomes, the curriculum planners emphasise the employment of scientific and systematic methods in achieving these outcomes and objectives.

In Vietnam, two features of the technical production perspective are reflected in CP in HE. First, CP is viewed as 'a process' (MOET, 2011a, p.3). The procedural process described in the Decree number 04 /2011/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2011a) issued by the MOET, which regulates the design, selection, evaluation, approval and use of curriculum for HE, includes all essential steps for CP. As identified by Nguyen and Cao (2013), although the names of these steps are modified to fit the socio-cultural and political context of the country, their meanings and purposes are not different from those described by the technical production curricularists. The essential steps for the CP process identified in the HE Law by the Government (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012) include: the formulation of educational objectives; the standardisation of knowledge and skills of students

required for graduation; the determination of content or knowledge to be transferred to students; the organisation or structure of the course components (i.e. the organisation of the educational experiences); and the evaluation of the educational objectives or learning outcomes achieved (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012).

Second, curriculum is planned by HEIs on the basis that educational objectives and expected learning outcomes have been pre-determined and regulated by the MOET through the discipline-based education frameworks (Doan, 2005; Hayden & Lam, 2007; Tran N.D., Nguyen T.T, & Nguyen, MTN, 2010; World Bank, 2008). At present, the setting of educational objectives and requisite knowledge for students is controlled by the MOET to ensure the consistency of education across the HE system (MOET, 2009).

The Critical Perspective

The curriculum planners of the critical perspective view CP as a process through which the linkage between ‘power, knowledge, ideology’ and the educational institution is developed (Giroux, 1981, p. 194). Through the development of this process, the curriculum planners explore such issues as the legitimisation of knowledge transferred to students, the role of the institution in legitimising the transferred knowledge, the participants in the knowledge legitimisation and the evaluation of the transferred knowledge. They highlight the significance of an official curriculum which ‘legitimises’ or ‘de-legitimises’ knowledge, enhances ‘the effects of this process and the manner in which it distributes this knowledge differently’ to different groups of students (Posner, 1988, p.92).

With the critical perspective, the process of knowledge and ideology development is undertaken through a series of steps (Freire, 1970). First, a group of educators generates and develops general themes relevant for the planning of curriculum in a particular place. Second, based on these identified themes, a group of curriculum planners specify or select appropriate themes to be used for the curriculum of the institution/s and then develop related instructional materials which reflect the values and characteristics of the situational context where the materials are to be used.

Although there are elements of procedural process evident in this approach, CP is not viewed as a technical matter but is concerned primarily with political and ideological issues. Critical curricularists believe that reflection upon reality and action is central to CP and reflection which is aimed at liberalising students politically is highly valued (Englund, 2000). They see the main purpose of CP as helping students to become masters of their own thoughts. Englund (2000, p.311) asserts that HEIs need to be responsible for providing students with the ‘critical intellectual abilities needed’ so that they can ‘evaluate and judge different life forms’ which may be different from their own. Therefore, CP needs to ensure that students are assisted to engage in critical discussions aimed at developing their moral awareness and political knowledge.

Further, the critical perspective stresses the democratic relationship between the teacher and students. According to McKenna (2010, p.219), since the major aim of CP based on the critical perspective is to expose ‘the ideologies of educators, students and those embedded in the subject matter’, great emphasis must be placed on ‘determining who is being served by the outcomes selected and [in] whose interests the assessment criteria are designed’. In order to do this, both teacher and students must:

‘...develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.’ (Freire, 1970, p.7).

The underlying implication is that there is a need for a negotiation between the teacher and the students in determining the kind of knowledge that is to be transferred. Aiming at helping students to liberalise their political thinking, curriculum planners argue that both teacher and students need to be co-investigators of their critical reflection (McKenna, 2010).

Although CP of HE in Vietnam appears to be more closely related to the technical production perspective than the critical, it reflects the critical perspective in two important ways. First, the critical perspective is indicated by the Government’s direction to HEIs to develop students’ political ideology and by it determining the kind of knowledge that will form the basis for CP. According to the Education Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, p. 32), the main

objectives of CP in HE in Vietnam are to help students 'to master basic scientific knowledge and disciplinary knowledge; to possess scientific methods for task-organisation and the competence to apply the theory to practice'. It is also expected that curriculum will be planned in such a way as to help students to become independent and critical intellectuals and creative practitioners in their profession (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a). This ideological underpinning of CP has been further affirmed by the Government through its legislative document, the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012).

The second aspect of the critical perspective partly reflected in CP in HE in Vietnam is the use of themes. These themes are identified by the MOET through its discipline-based education frameworks and are later selected or developed by HEIs in their CP. Although CP at the institutional level is mainly concerned with the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks, it is expected by the MOET that these activities will be undertaken within the identified themes to ensure the consistency of CP among HEIs (Nguyen, 2010).

Although the Government's direction to HEIs in developing students' political ideology and determining the kind of knowledge for CP has been documented in legislation such as the Education Law or the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, 2012), many scholars such as Sheridan (2010), Nguyen (2010), Hayden and Lam (2007) and Tran (2012b) argue that the practical circumstances are quite different. Central to their argument is that the current approach to CPM, which is also controlled by the MOET, together with the current situation of HE in Vietnam, has limited the capacity of HEIs to put this Government direction into practice. In addition to financial constraints on the HE system, the 'lack of resources to implement the goals, the centralised governance of the system, the rigid curriculum, teaching staff limitations and the weak linkage between HEIs and industry' are reasons for the inability of HEIs to be proactive in CP (Tran, 2012b, p.9).

3.4 Curriculum Planning in Higher Education in Vietnam

CP in HE in Vietnam is currently based on the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks and related regulations and operates on two levels: the national (ministerial) level and the institutional level.

Drawing on descriptions by Goodlad and Su (1992) and Marsh and Willis (2007) and informed by the views of the technical production and critical theorists, CP will be understood in this study as a process deliberately undertaken by an institution that arranges identified learning opportunities in ways that best meets institutional objectives and goals. This process is undertaken at two levels of planning (i.e. at both the national and the institutional levels) and involves the gathering, sorting, synthesis and selection of relevant information from different sources to be used for the organisation and arrangement of experiences for students (Parkay, Hass, & Anctil, 2010).

At the national or ministerial level, CP is concerned with the construction of discipline-based education frameworks and the approval of textbooks for HEIs (Doan, 2005; Hayden & Lam, 2007; Oliver, 2004; World Bank, 2008). The frameworks are constructed by a committee established by the MOET and which includes academic staff and educators from the MOET and selected HEIs (World Bank, 2008).

Although the discipline-based education frameworks are constructed by a representative committee, it has been argued by many scholars (Doan, 2005; Fielden, 2008; Nguyen, Oliver, & Priddy, 2009; Tran, 2012b) that they are too rigid, too theoretical and lack practical implication. These frameworks provide all details relating to CP at HEIs, including the time allocated for each course of study, the percentage of major courses, compulsory courses and specialised courses for each field of study (Doan, 2005, p.454). The frameworks are organised into two phases of study (World Bank, 2008): the foundation phase of study and the specialised phase of study. Within these two phases of study, the foundation phase is identical for all students despite their different fields of study (Doan, 2005; World Bank, 2008).

As Nguyen, Oliver, and Priddy (2009, p. 128) comment, the discipline-based education frameworks are very theory focused, resulting in 'the absence of liberal or

general education' which is essential for students' personal development. Doan (2005) claims that the MOET's CP has strongly focused on the allocation of compulsory courses of study, such as Marxist-Leninist political sciences, which contribute up to 12 per cent of the total content of a course of study. Explanation for this, according to Doan (2005, p. 457) is that the MOET considers that 'the ideas of inculcating socialist thoughts and socialist principles among students are as important as building intellectual ability'. In addition to the allocation of compulsory courses of study in CP, the current discipline-based education frameworks constructed by the MOET are rigid and outdated and demonstrate a weak link between HEIs and industry in terms of the industry skills and knowledge they contain (Tran, 2012b). Oliver (2004, p.12) also comments that although the MOET's CP places a high emphasis on theory, since market-based principles have become major forces for the country's development, it is necessary to integrate 'practical aspects of education' into curriculum so that students are better prepared to apply their skills and knowledge that industry needs.

Some scholars maintain that the MOET, by retaining centralised control of CP through its determination of which courses can be studied, has overlapped its management function with the CP function of HEIs (Fielden, 2008; Tran TKT, 2013; World Bank, 2008). There is no clear distinction between the responsibilities of the MOET and of HEIs in CP; at present, instead of having overall policies and regulations directing CP at HEIs, the MOET is still directly involved in CP at HEIs (Tran TKT, 2013). Fielden (2008) further maintains that it is better to have CP directed by HEIs, which are in a better position to make decision about courses of study and better able to determine the ways curriculum should be planned in accordance with the needs of the local market and industry and in response to the changes in the country's circumstances.

At the institutional level, CP at HEIs is undertaken through a series of prescribed steps regulated by the MOET through the national discipline-based education frameworks (MOET, 2011a). These steps include developing a broad curriculum plan for each discipline of study; reviewing, amending and approving curriculum plans and developing detailed curriculum; and selecting textbooks and designing instructional materials (MOET, 2011a). The results of the CP process are published

in written documents which specify the educational objectives, the educational content for each phase of study, and the curriculum structure (Nguyen & Cao, 2013; Tran D.N., Nguyen T.T, & Nguyen, M.T.N, 2010).

Since HEIs have to strictly follow the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks and regulations for CP, it has been claimed that the process of CP is too rigid, producing theoretical curriculum focusing on required courses of study which some consider irrelevant and time-consuming (Doan, 2005; Oliver, 2004; World Bank, 2008). For example, as Tran et al. (2010, p.135) identify, although the credit-based education system has been in place in Vietnam for many years, the practice of CP at HEIs fails to take the demands of this system into consideration; curriculum is planned in such a way that 'the same degree program at different institutions follows the same curriculum' and that 'paradoxically it assumes that the end-products of teaching and learning in HEIs are identical regardless of institutional missions and scope'. This is partly the result of the MOET's restrictive regulations for CP which state that any change and amendment relating to the discipline-based education frameworks and approved curriculum, including the introduction of new disciplines of study, must be approved by the MOET and related ministries (World Bank, 2008). This over-regulation has limited HEIs' capacity to plan their curricula to reflect the rapid changes that are taking place in the country and the increasing demands of industry (Sheridan, 2010). As Tran (2012b) states, while the Education Law emphasises that it is the responsibility of HE to produce graduates with the professional skills and knowledge able to satisfy market demand and industry's needs, HEIs are unable to meet this requirement due to the MOET's restrictive discipline-based education frameworks and the related regulations for CP at HEIs. The gap between HEIs and industry indicates 'the stagnation of the HE system compared to the development of the internal economy' and 'the weak linkage between the two' (Tran, 2012b, p.7).

3.5 Management in Higher Education

3.5.1 Overview of Management in Higher Education

Management in HE has been variously described in the literature. Some researchers describe management in HE in terms of its nature (Afolabi, 1998; Blum, 2007; Clegg

& McAuley, 2005; Fowler, 1990; Kekale, 2001; Storey & Sisson, 1993; Taylor & Machado, 2006). For example, while Fowler (1990) refers management in HE as the organisation of work, Storey and Sisson (1993) view management as a set of policies and practices undertaken by the institution. Afolabi (1998) conceptualises it as the identification, organisation, utilisation and coordination of the physical, human, financial and other available resources for the institution's operation. Other scholars (such as Afolabi & Alao, 2013; Bijandi, Hassan, Sulaiman, & Baki, 2012; Burgoyne, Hirsh, & Williams, 2004; David, 1996; Mesaric, Kuzic, & Dovedan, 2011) view management in HE in relation to the roles of the institutional leaders.

Although there are different ways of describing management in HE, its main purposes are to achieve the best performance results and to attain the goals and objectives of the institution (Afolabi, 1998; Fowler, 1990; Kekale, 2001; Storey & Sisson, 1993; Taylor & Machado, 2006). It is believed that the institution's objectives can be achieved through the processes of planning, organising, coordinating, resourcing, staffing, directing, reporting and budgeting undertaken by the institution's leaders (Afolabi & Alao, 2013; Bijandi et al., 2012; Mesaric et al., 2011; Mishra, 2008). For example, Afolabi and Alao (2013, p. 122) suggest that an institution's leader needs to be involved in 'planning, policy making and program designing', steering them towards achieving the institution's goals and effectively and efficiently implementing the institution's development plans and operation policies. Burgoyne et al. (2004, p.13) believe that the function of HE leaders is to 'provide direction and motivate people as well as organise work'. David (1996, p. 4), views management in HE as 'the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross functional decisions that enable an organisation to fulfil its objectives'. This art and science has a strong impact on the institution's failure and success (Shattock, 2010).

Planning in this context is concerned with making decision about what needs to be done to achieve the goals of the institution and the means by which these institutional goals can be achieved. By necessity, this involves the arrangement and structuring of the institution's authority so that the responsibilities and roles of the staff are defined and tasks are identified and accomplished in order to maintain the effective and efficient operation of the institution (Bijandi et al., 2012). Management

therefore involves the development of communication channels within the institution to ensure that people at senior levels of management are well informed about the progress of the implementation of assigned tasks. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) consider that HE management is a decision making role involving overall supervision and examination of different operational areas of the institution to ensure that all necessary resources are provided.

In order to effectively and efficiently manage, it has been argued that an institution's leaders need to meet a number of requirements (Burgoyne et al., 2004; Bush, 2003; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Mishra, 2008; Sharma, 2009). First, they need to have the skills and knowledge which enable them to adapt to and cope with complex management environments (Burgoyne et al., 2004; Bush, 2003; Sharma, 2009). Second, they need to have a long term vision for management in order to direct the institution's development towards the defined mission of the institution while preserving and fostering its values (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). In addition, Taylor and Machado (2006) suggest that this long term vision helps them to view a situation from different perspectives before making decisions. The final requirement is the institutional leaders' capacity to overcome the challenges of management as the circumstances of their institutions change. This is demonstrated by their ability to adapt to various socio-economic, cultural and political changes and to effectively utilise resources available to them for the management of their institution (Clark, 1998; Mishra, 2008; Sporn, 1999; Bok, 2003; Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2011). Bush (2003) argues that HEIs need to be well aware of the factors that have direct or indirect impact on the management of the institution and develop and augment their capacity to respond to them.

3.5.2 Models of Management in Higher Education

As Jamili (2004) notes, the increasing demands of globalisation has presented HE leaders with great challenges and has resulted in changes to the understanding and practices of HE management. There is an increasing interest among HE leaders in exploring the most effective practices in HE management. However, Bush (2003) argues that there is little evidence about which type and form of management practice that is most likely to produce improved outcomes or success. In order to deal with the changes, Jamili (2004) suggests that HE leaders need to be more

flexible and active in transforming their assumptions about HE management and take into consideration alternative management models. To do this effectively, they need to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt to the new management paradigm.

There are numerous models of management in HE that have been described in the literature. These are presented below, some with relevance to the Vietnamese context. Broadly, management models can be divided into two types: classical management models and new management models. Of the first type, there are two main models, described below. With regard to the second type, as Jamili (2004) comments, with the development of technologies and the strong demand for socio-economic, cultural and political change that comes with globalisation, HEIs have realised that the rigid rules and regulations of the classical management model limit their capacity to keep up with these changes or engage with them in such a way that their institutions can prosper. A major assumption of the new management models is that HEIs are operating in a constantly and rapidly changing context and that institutional leaders need to prepare for changes occurring world-wide. Jamili (2004) asserts that HEIs need to adopt radically different approaches to management.

New management models take advantage of the exponential growth in information communication technologies which have the power to help HEIs to cope with the new management environment (Carnall, 2003). Carnall (2003) emphasises that, unlike the classical management system which is founded on stable circumstances and organised as strong hierarchical structures, the new HE management models focus on the development of networks and partnerships, teamwork and broad-based participation. Further, proponents of the new management models believe that innovation is the key element of success and for the creation of competitiveness (Liyanage & Poon, 2002). Advocates of the new management models maintain that its human resources are an important asset in the institution's sustainable development (Jamili, 2004). Staff are encouraged to develop initiatives and generate new ideas; autonomy, creativity and entrepreneurship are strongly nurtured (Boyett & Boyett, 2000; Black & Porter, 2000). Relevant new management models include: the public management, the collegial, the political, the subjective and the cultural models.

Formal or Bureaucratic Model of Management

The formal management model is characterised by its functionally hierarchical management structure (Bush, 2003; Jamili, 2004). Advocates of the formal model view management as occurring in an unchanging environment, developed as a centralised hierarchical system and managed by a controlled process of decision making (Burnes, 2000; Bush, 2003; Jamili, 2004; Kreitner, 2002; Robbins & Coulter, 2003). According to Burnes (2000), formal management theorists hold that institutions have rational purposes and goals which are developed and managed in a formal and structured way. The goals and objectives of the institution are achieved through a chain of commands and orders and focuses on the use of rules and formal control mechanisms to manage task fulfilment (Kreitner, 2002; Robbins & Coulter, 2003).

In formal management models, authority is organised into three levels: the top, middle, and lower levels of management (Mahmood, Basharat, & Bashir, 2012). In this environment, leaders are in charge and fully accountable for their decisions (Black & Porter, 2000). The top level of management is the 'privileged elite class' due to their authority, power attributed to them by virtue of their senior position (Burnes, 2000, cited in Jamili, 2004, p. 106). As Mahmood and his co-authors (2012) identify, the top level of management in a HEI has responsibility for developing the long term strategies for the institution's development. Members of this level of management are the governing or managing board and presidents or vice presidents of a HEI. The middle level includes the heads of a department or faculty, office managers, deputy or assistant directors whose responsibilities are to coordinate all regular activities of the institution and to formulate regulations and plans in compliance with the strategies issued by their superiors. The lowest level of management is referred to as 'supervisory management' as it has responsibility for the implementation of these policies, regulations and plans (Mahmood et al., 2012, p.15). Members of this level management are teachers, group or team leaders and supervisors.

Further, the formal model of management emphasises restricted access to information (Boyett & Boyett, 2000; Turner & Keagan, 1999) and its strong

hierarchical structure limits the institution's engagement in both global and technological developments (Turner & Keagan, 1999).

Scientific Management Model of Management in Higher Education

The major goal of scientific management is efficiency in performance achieved by having a reasonable division of labour and tasks between management and operational staff. This division enables both groups to perform to the best of their ability (Mahmood et al., 2012). This model is characterised by four principles for the efficient and effective performance of the institution (Mahmood et al., 2012):

The first principle is concerned with efficiency in fulfilling the tasks assigned (McNamara, 2011), i.e. staff need to find appropriate ways to fulfil tasks; the second principle is the assignment of tasks to appropriate members of staff who have adequate skills and the knowledge to obtain the expected results; the third principle holds that payment, reward and penalty should be closely linked to staff performance, focusing on innovation and creativity in fulfilling their work (McNamara, 2011); and finally, there should be equal division of tasks and responsibilities among staff, depending on their abilities and qualifications (Mahmood et al., 2012).

The Public Management Model of Higher Education

Both O'Donnell and Alan (1999) and Hood (1991) emphasise that the main focus of the public management model is the introduction of managerial elements from the private sector to the management of public HE. Leaders are encouraged to develop their professional knowledge about the private sector and make use of this knowledge and the freedom they have to improve the institution's performance (Hood, 1991). Thus, the model places importance on the freedom of institutional leaders to improve their performance outcomes, focussing explicitly on the achievement of expected outcomes rather than on the process of achieving them. Competitiveness within the institution, which is considered an important factor in the institution's development, is created by introducing short term employment contracts and privatisation of areas which are not operating effectively, aiming at reducing the operation costs and increasing performance and outcomes.

The Collegial Model of Higher Education Management

In the collegial model, however, decisions and policies are determined by the institution through a discursive process and the power in decision-making is equally shared by those members of the institution who have a common understanding of the institution's aims (Bush, 2007; Cipriano, 2011; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2010). This democratic approach focuses on management by consensus and highly values problem-solving based on agreement and compromise rather than conflict and division. Bush (2003) notes that the collegial model assumes that each institution has a common set of values that is shared by all of its members, values which are the major guide in the development of institutional objectives and in directing the management activities of the institution.

The Political Model of Management in Higher Education

In contrast, the political model holds that an institution's policies and decisions are developed through a bargaining and negotiation process between different groups, which interact with each other to pursue their interests. This model is different from the collegial model in that it emphasises the political context and the power sources which influence the operation of the institution in general and which particularly impact on the formulation of policies and the process of decision making (Bush, 2007). The assumption is that institutions are 'political arenas' which require its members to engage in political activities to pursue their interests (Bush, 2007, p.99). Therefore, management must be political to deal with conflicts between groups (Deal, 2005). In the process of formulating policies or making decisions, conflicts help members to recognise the different interests of other groups and the outcomes of these conflicts are determined by political influences (Morgan, 1997).

Although leaders of the institution have certain authority and influence, they do not possess absolute power over the operation of the institution (Sharma, 2009). Other administrators and staff members, with their expertise and personal skills, may have considerable power over decision-making and these different sources of power help balance the positional authority of the leaders with that of those who have attributed power of allocating resources.

The Subjective Model of Management in Higher Education

Some researchers claim (Bush, 2007; Bush & Coleman, 2000; Sharma, 2009) that HEIs exist to serve the needs of the people within them. Since members of an institution come from different backgrounds and have different values, they have different ways of interpreting a situation or event. The meanings attached to a situation or event depends on the member's beliefs and perceptions; decision-making is based on an individual's views and purposes, denying the institution's goals and group interests (Sharma, 2009).

Further, advocates of the subjective model believe that the organisational structure of an institution reflects the outcomes of the interaction between the institution's members, which are neither stable nor predictable (Sharma, 2009). Organisational charts are impractical in that they cannot predict the behaviour and the beliefs of the institution's members; therefore, having a formal structure for management is meaningless (Bush, 2007). In HE management, leaders need to acknowledge that the 'individual meanings placed on events by members of [the] organisation' will impact on the interpretation of the event and that there are no specific guidelines for managerial actions (Sharma, 2009, p.29).

The Cultural Model of Management in Higher Education

The cultural model of management emphasises the informal aspects of the institution. It assumes that beliefs, values and ideology are important. According to Bush (2007), all people have their own views and beliefs about a situation, which influence and determine their behaviour and the way they view the behaviour of other members of the institution. These views and beliefs about certain situations become behavioural habits that gradually develop into a cultural tradition shared by all members of the institution. Sharma (2009) emphasises that in such circumstances, institutional management must respond to the culture and tradition of the institution.

The cultural model focuses on and values the human aspects of leadership. It emphasises the moral purposes of HE. It is expected that the institution's leaders demonstrate moral behaviour and that the institution is managed in accordance with this moral domain (Bush, 2007). As Sharma (2009) notes, leaders may adopt a moral

approach, focusing on institutional values, so that they can get closer to the institution's cultures, values and beliefs in order to gain support from its members for their management innovations.

3.6 Management in Higher Education in Vietnam

A specific conception of management in HE in Vietnam, especially one from Vietnamese HE researchers, is hard to find. However, the form of management in operation has been identified by some researchers through a description of the roles and responsibilities of the agency or institution.

According to Nguyen (2010), the nature of management in HE in Vietnam can be generally defined through identification of the responsibilities of the MOET, which are to plan and direct the education system. The World Bank (2009) views management in HE as a centralised mechanism of governance whereby all HEIs must 'follow MOET guidelines governing admission, curriculum design, organisation of instruction' and 'rules on budgeting, spending and personnel' organisation (World Bank, 2009, p.48). This view is supported by Le PD (2006) who conceptualises management through the identification of the roles given by the Government to the State agency (*cơ quan quản lý Nhà nước*) and the supervising authorities (*cơ quan chủ quản*).

In addition to the MOET, the supervising authorities include other ministries or city and provincial people's committees assigned by the Government to provide funding and capital investment, to regulate outcome standards, and the number of graduates for the institutions' output through the admission quota system. Tran QT (2005) also defines management by identifying the particular characteristic of the HE system which, in the case of Vietnam, is a strongly centralised bureaucracy in which the division of responsibilities and tasks generates gaps and constrains innovation.

Unlike conceptions of management which emphasise the roles and responsibilities of individual leaders or managers of the institution, management in HE in Vietnam is determined by the State and implemented in a strongly centralised bureaucracy (Tran QT, 2005) and is 'exercised through various ministries' which have 'regulatory responsibilities across the system' (Hayden & Lam, 2007, p.75). The responsibilities

of these ministries and the provincial and city people's committees are to advise the Government on how HE should be adapted to accord with national policies and targets. All the roles and responsibilities of the supervising agencies are officially stipulated by legislative documents issued by the Government and the MOET such as the Education Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a) and the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012).

Management in HE in Vietnam is, therefore, contingent on the responsibilities of the MOET and the limited role of leaders in HEIs. The picture presented indicates clearly that HE management in Vietnam is aligned to the formal model of management in several ways. First, the Government treats HEIs as part of a bureaucratic system which is centrally managed by the MOET and other ministries (Hayden & Lam, 2007; London, 2006; World Bank, 2008; Nguyen, 2010). HE management is divided into three distinct levels which are characterised by a strictly hierarchical structure (Pham, 2006): the top level of management is the MOET which, as identified by Postiglione and Mak (1997, p. 363), is 'responsible for policy making, guidance and supervision in connection with all the education programs and the administration of the HEIs'; the middle level is HEI leaders who have control over people at the institutional management level and are responsible for managing the overall activities of the institution, including, as Tran QT (2005) comments, the division of functions and roles among members; the final level of management lies with department or faculty leaders who are responsible to the institutional leader for all activities within their departments or faculties (Pham, 2005).

A second way in which HE management in Vietnam adheres to the formal model is that both the MOET and HEIs have particular purposes which are represented in the objectives specified by the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, p.2). These broad objectives are present in the vision and objectives of each HEI. The general objectives of the Vietnamese HE which are considered the major functions of HEIs include:

Đào tạo nhân lực, nâng cao dân trí, bồi dưỡng nhân tài; nghiên cứu khoa học, công nghệ tạo ra tri thức, sản phẩm mới, phục vụ yêu cầu phát triển kinh tế - xã hội, bảo đảm quốc phòng, an ninh và hội nhập quốc tế.

Đào tạo người học có phẩm chất chính trị, đạo đức; có kiến thức, kỹ năng thực hành nghề nghiệp, năng lực nghiên cứu và phát triển ứng dụng khoa

học và công nghệ tương xứng với trình độ đào tạo; có sức khỏe; có khả năng sáng tạo và trách nhiệm nghề nghiệp, thích nghi với môi trường làm việc; có ý thức phục vụ nhân dân.

Educating human resource, improving people's intellectual, developing the talented; undertaking scientific and technological research to produce knowledge and new products to meet the needs of socio-economic development, assuring the national defence and security and international integration.

Providing graduates with political and moral virtues; having good knowledge, practical professional skills, capability of doing research and developing scientific and technological applications in accordance with their education level; having good health; having creative capability and high professional responsibility, easily adapting to working environment and having good sense of serving the people.

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, p. 2, researcher translation)

The final attribute of the formal management model reflected in the Vietnamese HE management system is the direct accountability of HEIs for their management actions to higher level management agencies, i.e. the MOET and other governing ministries (Brooks, 2010; Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen, 2010; Sheridan, 2010; World Bank, 2008). As Vallely and Wilkinson (2008) indicate, HEIs in Vietnam are not accountable to outside stakeholders, such as industry and employers; instead, they are directly accountable to their governing bodies, including the MOET and other governing ministries (Hayden & Lam, 2007; World Bank, 2008). HEI management accountability to the MOET is officially stipulated and further reinforced by Government legislation (World Bank, 2008). For example, while the Charter for HEIs specifies that all HEIs' governing councils are also accountable to the Government (i.e. MOET and related ministries) for their decision making and outcomes, it does not indicate whether HEI leaders (i.e. presidents and vice-presidents) are accountable to their governing councils for their management actions (Hayden & Lam, 2007). This implies that leaders of HEIs remain directly accountable to the MOET and other ministries for their management actions (Hayden & Lam, 2007; World Bank, 2008).

HEIs throughout the world are faced with many challenges in institutional management. Some of these challenges include increasing demand from industry for high quality graduates, the massification of HE, reduction in government funding for HE; but perhaps the greatest challenge is the extent of government control over HEI

management (Amaral, Rosa, & Tavares, 2008; Boland, 2007; Saint, 2009; Salmi, 2007). In order to cope with these challenges HEIs need to have flexibility and the capacity to be more responsive to the changing conditions; concurrently, HEIs need to ensure that they meet government requirements in terms of their effective use of allocated funds and resources and demonstrate their ability to provide graduates and educational services which are relevant to the needs of industry and the market (Amaral et al., 2008; Saint, 2009).

As a result, institutional autonomy and accountability in management have become two key themes in the discussion about the ways of achieving effective, efficient and responsive management in HE (Stein, 2001; Varghese, 2012).

3.7. Accountability in Higher Education Management

3.7.1 Overview of Accountability in Higher Education Management

Accountability in HE management has been described in various ways in the literature, yet there is a common element to these conceptualisations: the responsibility of a HEI leader to their governing or supervising body to provide an account of their management actions, performance and educational outcomes (De Wit & Akinyoade, 2008; Dunn, 2003; Kogan, 1986; Leveille, 2006; Shulock & Moore, 2002; World Bank, 2004, 2009). The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (2008, cited in World Bank, 2009, p.5) refers to accountability in HE as the responsibility of the HEI leader to demonstrate that ‘specific and carefully defined outcomes result from HE and that these outcomes are worth what they cost’. According to Leveille (2006, p.37), accountability in management is the interaction between those ‘who are owed an explanation or justification’ for their actions and the others who have ‘a duty to give it’. Those agencies or institutions or individuals to whom an explanation is owed derive enhanced power in relation to those who are accountable to them (De Wit & Akinyoade, 2008). Paul (2002, p.1) views accountability as ‘a process of holding persons or organisations responsible for performance as objectively as possible’. This process of calling to account also emphasises that there must be consequences for inadequate performance. The World Bank (2004, p. 2) expresses the view that accountability in HE management should be viewed as ‘the obligation of power holders to account for or take responsibility

for their actions'. It is a condition in which individual role holders are 'liable to review', where inspection and evaluation of their management actions occurs and where sanctions should be applied if their actions fail to satisfy the conditions and standards defined by those people with whom they have an accountability relationship (Kogan, 1986, p.25). These statements confirm that HEIs are not only responsible for providing information and explanations about their actions and performance outcomes, but that they 'own' the sanctions or penalties that their governing or supervising body applies should it not be satisfied with these actions and outcomes.

Thus, accountability in HE management is, perhaps, best framed in terms of the duties of the HEI leader. Etwell (2009) believes that accountability in HE management results from the institutional leader's obligation to fulfil defined tasks in managing the institution's operation. These specified tasks are defined by their supervising bodies and normally include such criteria as achieving the institution's goals or mission and meeting stated professional standards. There are three additional primary duties identified within the literature: the duty to perform defined actions or tasks (Glenn, 2000; Metz, 2011); the duty to report whether these tasks and actions are achieved (or the progress made towards their achievement) (Metz, 2011; Romzek, 2000; Zumeta, 2000); and the duty to adopt sanctions if the HEI leader fails to fulfil the defined tasks or if his or her achievement does not meet the expected standards (Behn, 2001; Du Toit, 2007; Kogan, 1986; Metz, 2011; Romzek, 2000). Clearly, accountability in HE management demands the clear identification of what a HEI leader must do (Metz, 2011).

It has been argued (De Wit & Akinyoade, 2008; Dunn, 2003; Metz, 2011; Shulock & Moore, 2002) that these duties need to be shared between HEI leaders and other stakeholders - such as government, industry and students - and that collegial responsibility needs to be developed and enhanced by a cooperative relationship and trust between these stakeholders. Within such a system, Jaafar and Anderson (2007) claim that collective responsibility helps to stimulate and enhance an individual's evaluation of the work of others (i.e. one individual can identify whether the others fulfil their responsibilities), reinforcing accountability between management and staff. This means that effective and efficient accountability in HE management

requires multiple dynamic relationships and connections between government, industry, HEIs, students and graduates (Goetz & Jenkins, 2005). In such an accountability arrangement, HEI governing and supervising bodies and relevant stakeholders must be kept informed of what the institutional leader is doing and the extent of progress in achieving agreed goals. Brinkerhoff (2003) emphasises that, in the enforcement of accountability for HE management, monitoring bodies need to be well-informed about HEIs' outputs and activities so that they can make a judgement about their investment in HE. Thus, one of the fundamental accountabilities of the HEI leader is the requirement to report to their supervisors or related stakeholders whether they have done what they are supposed to do (Metz, 2011).

A number of writers contend that sanctions should be applied to HEIs that perform inadequately (Brinkerhoff, 2003; Kogan, 1986; Metz, 2011). Brinkerhoff (2003) emphasises that an important element of defining accountability in HE management is the availability and application of 'punishments' to institutions for their failure to perform defined tasks. Use of sanctions, such as a penalty or 'other forms of coercion' to indicate that a HEI leader has done poorly, strongly reinforces accountability in HE management (Metz, 2011, p.52).

In Vietnam, where the greater majority of HEIs are accountable to the Government (through the MOET, related ministries and other authorised governing and supervising bodies), it is regulated by the government that HEI leaders are responsible for:

...tự đánh giá chất lượng đào tạo và chịu sự kiểm định chất lượng giáo dục;

...huy động, quản lý, sử dụng các nguồn lực; xây dựng và tăng cường cơ sở vật chất, đầu tư trang thiết bị;

...thực hiện chế độ thông tin, báo cáo và chịu sự kiểm tra, thanh tra của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo, các bộ, ngành có liên quan và Ủy ban nhân dân cấp tỉnh nơi cơ sở giáo dục đại học đặt trụ sở hoặc có tổ chức hoạt động đào tạo theo quy định;

...các nhiệm vụ và quyền hạn khác theo quy định của pháp luật.

...conducting self-evaluation of educational quality and under the direct control of the Ministry of Education and Training in educational quality assurance and accreditation;

... mobilising, managing and using resources; developing and expanding facilities and doing investment in equipment;

...conducting information dissemination, report and under the monitoring and examination of the Ministry of Education and Training, related ministries and people's committees of the province where the higher education institution locates or where the educational activities are conducted;

...fulfilling other assigned tasks and have other rights as regulated by law.

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, Article 28, researcher translation)

These statements make it clear that leaders of HEIs are directly responsible for operational activities. Yet, other than the general statements in the HE Law, there is no full regulatory framework describing the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of leaders of HEIs; instead, the HEI leader needs to seek approval from the MOET (or their governing bodies) before making decisions relating to the management of his or her institution (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen, 2010; World Bank, 2008). HEIs are obliged to report annually and through auditing and accreditation about their management activities. This reporting is the main mechanism of accountability.

Within the literature, two main reasons for reinforcing accountability in HE have been identified: the prevention of misuse by a HEI leader of allocated resources and authorised power (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2003; Clark, 2001; Harvey, 1999; Leveille, 2006) and the call for high quality products by external stakeholders in exchange for the investment made in HE (Brinkerhoff, 2003; Goedegebuure et al., 1994; Kitagawa, 2003).

It has been argued by some researchers (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2003; Clark, 2001; Harvey, 1999; Leveille, 2006) that a HEI leader must be accountable for their own actions and performance in exchange for the power and resources they receive from the government for the institution's operation. Having allocated funds and the necessary resources, the government expects that these funds and resources are used effectively, and that the authority given to the HEI leader is fully exercised in achieving the institution's mission and stated goals (Brennan & Shah, 2000). In order to meet these expectations (and also to retain the government as the key sponsor of HEI operations), HEIs need to be able to demonstrate that what they have done is in compliance with the government's requirements and expectations and give explanation for their performance and achieved outcomes (Kitagawa, 2003).

A HEI leader's accountability also places them under pressure by external stakeholders (such as industry, employers, and students) for quality improvement. As Brinkhoff (2003) notes, with the challenge of reduced budgets for HE, there has been competition among HEIs to increase the number of student enrolments in order to generate income for the institution's operation. This competition has become more challenging with the entrance of foreign HEIs, which has resulted from the increased internationalisation in HE in many countries (Kitagawa, 2003). In order to succeed in this competitive environment, a HEI leader must be able to demonstrate that they have a strong commitment to accountability in order to show that the institution's educational outcomes have met the expected quality, 'professional standards and societal values' (Brinkhoff, 2003, p.xii).

Thus, for this study, accountability in HE management in Vietnam is considered to be the responsibility of a HEI leader to justify and account for the management of their institution. It is 'a process that involves the responsibility of ... [an institution] to submit at regular intervals an account of tasks that they have performed to the body or bodies that have authorised or delegated to the ... [institution] the duty to perform those tasks' (Mohandas, Wei, & Keeves, 2012, p.4).

3.7.2 Conditions for Accountability in Higher Education Management

Due to the recent increasing demands for accountability by HE management, HEIs in many countries are now faced with the challenge of developing effective models or selecting appropriate approaches for demonstrating accountability for HE management (Haque, 2000). Many writers (Ahearn, 2000; Kogan, 1986; Wohlstetter, 1991; Yang, Vidovich, & Currie, 2007) are of the view that effective accountability cannot take place unless the following conditions are recognised by HEI leader: the acknowledgement of the influence of politics and power; the monitoring and evaluation role of HEIs in reinforcing accountability; the importance of HEI independence from accountability processes; the development of links and connections between HEIs and societal stakeholders; and the effective development of information channels to governing bodies and the public.

Accountability demands acknowledgement that the power of HEI leader has been devolved to them by their political masters (Kogan, 1986), and that government

expects HEIs to exercise that power within the political constraints set by the government (Wohlstetter, 1991). Wohlstetter emphasises that, when the government empowers HEIs with authority and allocates resources for the institutions' operation, the government demands to be kept informed about the activities that are taking place and expects that institutions will follow legislated standards and regulations. He further adds that the government wants to ensure that the power exercised by a HEI leader is directed towards the achievement of the institution's mission and defined outcomes; in other words, a HEI leader needs to be empowered so that they can perform their designated responsibilities and can direct and guide their subordinates' work in order to comply with government standards and regulations.

Further, some researchers emphasise that there can be no accountability for HE management if the need for the monitoring and evaluation of management has not been recognised by the HEI and is not constantly undertaken by key stakeholders (Ahearn, 2000; Jaafar & Anderson, 2007; Kogan, 1986; Wohlstetter, 1991). It has also been suggested by some researchers (Arnorld, Llewellyn, & Mao, 1998; Scott, 1994; Ahearn, 2000; Jaafar & Anderson, 2007) that the institutional autonomy given to a HEI leader as one of a government's strategies to help HEIs to be more competitive and responsive to change has significant risks: HEIs may by-pass rules and standards in the process of seeking enhanced outcomes or the resources and funds allocated to HEIs may be misused by the HEI leader. In order to avoid such negative consequences, the government would benefit from the conduct of regular inspections and evaluations to ensure that a HEI's activities are undertaken and managed in compliance with its regulations and standards (Ahearn, 2000). Thus, by undertaking regular reviews and evaluation of HEIs' performance and outcomes, the government's overall control over HEIs is likely to be maintained and strengthened (Scott, 1994; Vidovich & Currie, 1998).

At the institutional level, without the monitoring and evaluation of performance, leaders cannot make objective judgements about educational quality or assess the extent of progress of their staff in implementing institutional plans (Wohlstetter, 1991). Jaafar and Anderson (2007) emphasise that regular self-evaluation and review of performance within HEIs is the mechanism by which its accountability

obligations can be met and is the prime means by which HEI leaders are able to improve standards across the institution.

Even if internal monitoring and evaluation of performance is undertaken regularly, accountability in HE management cannot be reliable unless the audit of a HEI's performance and outcomes is independent of the institution (Harvey, 1999; Wohlstetter, 1991). Wohlstetter (1991, p. 44) stresses the need for accountability mechanisms that ensure that a HEI leader is at arm's length from the monitoring and evaluation of his or her own institution's performance to ensure and enhance the 'objectivity', 'neutrality' and 'credibility' of the review results. He claims that judgements about an HEI's performance and outcomes can be valid only when institutional leaders are independent from the evaluation process.

Despite the use of independent assessments, Brinkerhoff (2003, p.5) believes it is 'weak accountability' if there is no connection between HEIs and external stakeholders. Wohlstetter (1991) claims that relationships with and connections between a range of stakeholders, especially government policy makers, help HEI leaders to ensure that information relating to changes in government regulations and standards for HE management is promptly responded to and that strategies relating to HE management are developed to deal with these changes. Nyborg (2005) maintains that, in order to cope with increasing changes in the globalised context of HE, it is critical for HEI leaders to involve different societal stakeholders in their institution's management. Having a close relationship with external stakeholders, including industry and employers who can directly give advice about the institution's planned educational services and outcomes, can help a HEI leader to understand changes in the market and ensure that their institution is managed in response to these changes.

Consequently, there must be effective communication channels developed between HEIs and their governing or supervising bodies and between HEIs and the public for accountability to be effective (Wohlstetter, 1991; World Bank, 2013b). The World Bank emphasises that reporting a HEI's performance and outcomes to their governing or supervising body and disseminating results of the monitoring and evaluation to the public are two important aspects of reinforcing accountability for HE management. Wohlstetter (1991) suggests that information on HEI performance and educational outcomes should be promptly disseminated to the public, including

to students and parents, to maximise the public's interests in HE and, thus, help HEIs to diversify their student population. Vallely and Wilkinson (2008) and Tran et al. (2010) argue, however, that under the MOET's centralised control over HE, HEIs in Vietnam do not have accountability to outside stakeholders for their performance and outcomes other than to the MOET.

3.7.3 Models of Accountability for Higher Education Management

Both government policies (especially those related to HE governance) and the socio-economic and cultural context have an impact on the model of accountability that is adopted in HE management (Kitagawa, 2003). Three models in particular have been identified within the literature: the central control model, the professional model and the partnership model (Ahearn, 2000; Halstead, 1994; King, 2007; Kogan, 1986; Salmi, 2008; Wohlstetter, 1991; Yang, Vidovich, & Currie, 2007).

The central control model of accountability stresses the use of authority assigned to selected governmental representatives (such as governmental agencies and HEI leaders) and a 'managerial hierarchy' mechanism for increasing accountability in HE management (Kogan, 1986, p.33). Accountability is administered through a 'command and control' chain in a hierarchical management system that retains and reinforces the government's influence on HEI management activities (King, 2007, p. 419). Halstead (1994) describes a model in which HEI leaders are accountable to the government or government representatives for their work and actions, while their subordinates (including teachers, department heads and heads of faculties) are accountable to institutional leaders for their performance and outcomes. Wohlstetter (1991) further asserts that the performance of the HEI leader is monitored and evaluated by governments or 'legislative oversight committees' through a process of centrally determined decisions and policies. In this process, HEI leaders and teachers are placed under the obligation of demonstrating to their governing bodies/institutional leader that what they are doing is what they are supposed to do and that these tasks are achieved to comply with regulations and policies defined by the governing bodies (Halstead, 1994).

In the central control model, accountability mechanisms may vary. To reinforce the government's control over HEI activities, accountability is driven by legal

requirements which underscore and enhance the political purposes of government or its authoritative agencies. These legal requirements include mandatory reports, administrative rules, specified operating procedures, and compliance monitoring systems (Ahearn, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2003; Wohlstetter, 1991). To improve financial management, accountability can be directly linked to specific financial requirements such as mandatory financial audits and public financial audit reports (Salmi, 2008; Yang, Vidovich, & Currie, 2007).

By contrast, in the professional accountability model, accountability for HE management is defined, judged and demonstrated by the professionals, educators and academic staff who have the experience and qualifications to do so (Elliott, 1981; Halstead, 1994; Kogan, 1986; Leithwood, 2005; Sockett, 1980). It is argued by Halstead (1994, p.153) that, since professionals and academic staff are responsible for 'educational practice', they have the right to make decisions and judgements about their performance and outcomes and define 'the boundaries of their own accountability'. When accountability is interpreted by professionals and academic staff, it can protect professionals and educators from a situation in which educational outcomes are determined and oriented by external factors and helps to strengthen and enhance academic freedom (Kogan, 1986). In line with this, Elliott (1981) claims that the more autonomous the professionals and educators can be in their own work, the more responsive they are to societal demands. Detractors, however, contend that when educators and professionals of HEIs are given the right to control the evaluation of their own performance, review and evaluation may be distorted or there may be conflicts between the interests of the professional and academic staff and the policies and regulations of the institution (Kogan, 1986). Nonetheless, as Leithwood (2005, p.25) stresses, the professional model of accountability implies that educational leaders and teachers have the opportunity of experiencing 'professional practices' which are appropriate to their institutional context and leaders need to assist staff to construct professional standards and performance outcomes for their work. Institutional leaders need to monitor their staff to understand their progress through self-evaluation and self-reports (Kogan, 1986; Sockett, 1980).

Finally, the partnership model of accountability emphasises that there should be shared decision making within an institution and that participation in the process of decision making can be selective (Halstead, 1994; Kogan, 1986; Salmi, 2008; World Bank, 2004). Kogan (1986) argues that, since decisions relating to a HEI's operational activities have direct or indirect affect on the people working in it, people within the institution should share the responsibility for decision making. Kogan (1986) contends that not all people need to participate in the decision making process or to be consulted on every issue; there can be a selection of participants, perhaps based on their role or experience. The partnership model is reinforced by having strategic plans for achieving mutually agreed or expected outcomes, clearly defined procedures for quality assurance, and periodical reporting systems (Salmi, 2008; World Bank, 2004).

In Vietnam, accountability in HE management is closely aligned with the central control model. One aspect of the central control model reflected in the current mechanism of accountability for HE management is the emphasis on a bureaucratic managerial hierarchy: from the MOET to the Government (minister); from HEIs to the MOET (or related governing or supervising ministries); and from staff in HEIs to the institutional leader (Hayden & Lam, 2010; Pham, 2012; Tran et al., 2010). This centralised control model of accountability aims to retain and increase the Government's influence on the HE sector in general and the operation of HEIs in particular (Henaff et al., 2007; Pham, 2012). Tran et al. (2010) make it clear that, at the national level, the MOET has been legally defined as the national body accountable to the Government for the management of HE. Hayden and Lam (2007) emphasise that authority for HE management is currently assigned to the MOET and related ministries and that these ministries have direct management responsibility to the Government for all activities relating to HE. Nguyen KD, Oliver and Pham XT (2006) add that central control is primarily exercised in the form of the MOET's regulations, rules and requirements for periodical reports which are expected to be strictly observed and complied with by all Vietnamese HEIs. The MOET's obligations include monitoring and assuring the quality of HEIs' educational services and outcomes, and importantly, specifying and constructing the legislative frameworks for institutional management.

Although many reforms in HE have been recently undertaken by the MOET aimed at increasing HEI accountability for HE management, including shifting the Government's centralised control to a Government supervision model (Pham, 2012), Hayden and Lam (2007, p. 78) argue that current practices indicates that 'authority remain[s] in the hands of relevant ministries'. Government still has strong control over HEI activities, with the 'low involvement of external stakeholders' (Pham, 2012; World Bank, 2008). This indicates that the Government remains the principal means by which accountability for HE management is exercised in Vietnam.

3.8 Institutional Autonomy for Higher Education Management

3.8.1 Overview of Institutional Autonomy in Higher Education

Within the literature, the meaning of institutional autonomy has changed over time. Its interpretation depends not only on the historical, political and cultural context of the institution and the country in which HEIs operate, but also on the 'ideological positions' of the scholars who interpret the meaning (De La Rosa, 2007, p.275). Although institutional autonomy is conceptualised in different ways, there are two core elements that are central to the concept: the freedom and independence of HEIs from governing bodies in managing their own affairs and the government's reduced intervention in the management of activities of HEIs (Anderson & Johnson, 1998; Bladh, 2007; Debreczeni, 2002; Fielden, 2008; Nyborg, 2005; Raza, 2009; Schmidt & Langberg, 2007; World Bank, 2013b).

The main argument emerging from the literature on institutional autonomy for HE management is that there can be no institutional autonomy unless HEI leaders are given the freedom and independence to make decisions about their institution's operations. Anderson and Johnson (1998, p. 8) argue that institutional autonomy should be understood as 'the freedom of an institution to run its own affairs without direction or influence from any government level'. Fielden (2008) believes that institutional autonomy is the freedom HEI leaders exercise in making decisions and choices that they deem will result in strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of their institution's operational management. Further, Nyborg (2005) sees institutional autonomy as the right of HEI leaders to make decisions on all issues relating to their institution's operation and development, including its

organisational structure, priorities for development, financial and staff management, and its curriculum and research focus. Along the same line, Askling, Bauer, and Marton (1999, p. 177) consider institutional autonomy in terms of ‘the degree of freedom’ exercised by a HEI leader in steering him/herself; Marton (2000, p. 23) emphasises that any conceptualisation of institutional autonomy should include ‘the conditions where academia determines how its work is carried out’ when deciding the means and instruments for achieving its performance goals or outcomes.

Some researchers (Anderson & Johnson, 1998; Debreczeni, 2002; Schmidt & Langberg, 2007) argue that institutional autonomy also means that there needs to be a reduction in government intervention in HEIs’ management activities. Raza (2009, p.5), for example, posits that institutional autonomy means that governments ‘increasingly exit from the day to day management’ of the HE sector, allowing HEI leaders to determine issues relating to their own development. Debreczeni (2002) maintains that institutional autonomy is a set of conditions which allow HEI leaders to flexibly govern themselves without having any intervention or interruption from external stakeholders, including government. Schmidt and Langberg (2007) agree and assert that institutional autonomy for HE management signifies substantial independence of HEI leaders from their government or other related stakeholders in managing the institution’s activities and the professional and academic freedom of institutional leaders to determine operational issues relating to teaching, research and the curriculum.

Although it is strongly emphasised within the literature that HEI leaders should be free to self-manage and that government should reduce its direct involvement in managing the activities of HEIs, it has been argued by some researchers that there must be an appropriate balance between the freedom given to HEIs and government involvement in HEI operational management (Fielden, 2008; Saint, 2009; Schmidt & Langberg, 2007). For example, while strongly emphasising that institutional autonomy should be understood as the freedom given to HEIs’ leaders so that they can be responsive to the needs of industry and global changes, Fielden (2008) maintains that institutional autonomy does not mean that HEIs are completely free from the control of government. Instead, according to Fielden (2008, p.18), HEIs operate more effectively if ‘they are in control of their destiny’ by having strategies

for their sustainable operation which are approved by government. This position of institutional autonomy within a framework of broader government control is further supported by Schmidt and Langberg (2007, p.89), who assert that government should still play a role as the major ‘driving force for change’ by developing strategies, priorities and expected outcomes for HEIs even when more freedom is given to HEI leaders to allow for the self-management of the institutions’ operations.

3.8.2 Types of Institutional Autonomy

With the growing demand from HEIs for institutional autonomy, governments of many countries have tended to reduce their intervention in HEIs’ managerial activities by shifting from fully centralised control to a government supervised system which has appropriate mechanisms for overseeing HE management (Raza, 2009). Based on the degree of government intervention in the management at HEIs, a government supervised system can manifest itself as delegation from the central government to a lower level of government, delegation to a ‘specialised buffer body’, or direct delegation to HEIs (Fielden, 2008, p. 14).

Central to delegation from the government central control to a lower level of government management is power-sharing between the central government and its lower level agencies or local government bodies. Fielden (2008) notes that, with delegation to lower level agencies, the central government still plays the key role in coordinating the overall management of HE sector, including developing strategic plans, setting priorities for the development of the HE sector and negotiating with related agencies and organisations for the allocation of funds for HEIs. Other responsibilities for managing activities at HEIs are transferred to its lower level agencies or local government bodies (Raza, 2009).

With delegation to specialised buffer bodies, government power and authority over all issues relating to funding and the operation of HEIs are transferred to intermediary bodies which are independent organisations established by law, but which are not part of government (Fielden, 2008). These bodies make all decisions about HE management and are directly accountable to government for their actions and outcomes. Government control over HEIs is limited to broad issues such as the development of national strategies for HE management and other HE policy issues.

It has been suggested in the literature that, since HEI operations are mainly concerned with academic issues such as teaching, learning and research, government is not likely to always be effective at managing issues within HEIs (Boland, 2007). Delegation to specialised intermediary bodies which have suitable expertise in both academic and administrative areas and which apply this expertise independent of government can help HEI leaders to effectively reinforce their institutional autonomy and allow them to manage their operations in compliance with the policy framework set by government (Fielden, 2008; Boland, 2007).

With direct delegation to HEIs, considerable authority is given to HEIs so that the government's management of HEIs becomes more strategic, even though the central government still maintains policy control over HE development (Fielden, 2008). Once given, institutional autonomy can also be classified according to the ways in which a HEI conducts its own affairs. There are three major types of such institutional autonomy identified within the literature: substantive autonomy, procedural autonomy and organic autonomy (Berdahl, 1999; Debreczeni, 2002; Raza, 2009; Varghese, 2012). Substantive autonomy refers to 'the power of the university or college in its corporate form to determine its own goals and programs' (Berdahl, 1999, p.60); and involves the HEI in having authority over matters relating to academic affairs and research, including curriculum design and development, research policy, awarding of degrees, academic staff recruitment and appointment and student admission (Raza, 2009; Varghese, 2012). Procedural autonomy refers to 'the power of the university or college in its corporate forms to determine the means by which its goals and programs' are to be achieved (Berdahl, 1999, p.60). Procedural autonomy gives the HEI freedom to determine the means for achieving non-academic goals and priorities, such as financial and budget management, purchasing and contracting, administrative matters and non-academic staff recruitment and arrangement (Raza, 2009; Varghese, 2012; World Bank, 2013b). Finally, organic autonomy provides HEI leaders the freedom to determine issues relating to the institutional organisation of academic affairs, such as whether the academic structure should be organised on the basis of professional areas or departments and faculties of disciplines of study.

In response to the increasing changes in HE and to help HEIs to actively integrate into the global HE market, the Vietnamese Government has recently undertaken several reforms aimed at conferring increased institutional autonomy on HEIs to allow for their self-management (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a). However, while the Government affirms its strong commitment to institutional autonomy for HEIs' self-management, it has been argued by some researchers that HEI autonomy is not well recognised by the Government and has not been widely implemented. For example, HEIs still remain strictly controlled by the MOET and related ministries and institutional autonomy in any form, especially substantive autonomy, is not in evidence (Hayden & Lam, 2007; World Bank, 2008). According to Hayden and Lam (2007); although HERA and HE law confirm that HEI leaders have autonomy in HE management, this autonomy is illusionary. Pham (2012, p.294) asserts that there is a big gap between the 'formal autonomy and real autonomy of HEIs' in Vietnam; and that the mismatch manifests itself in a situation in which the current centralised regulation of HE management prevails while the government (through the MOET) searches for an effective monitoring framework to help it steer HEI operations from a distance, resulting in all decisions still being made by the MOET, including the setting of enrolment quotas, curriculum planning, control over degree programs of study and HEI expenditure (Pham, 2012, p.294). This lack of institutional autonomy has resulted in weakened HEI capability and contributes to the lack of experience of HEI leaders in self-management (Tran, 2012; World Bank, 2008).

3.9 Balance between Accountability and Institutional Autonomy

Accountability and institutional autonomy are two important factors directly affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of management in HE (Boland, 2007; Salmi, 2007; Zumeta, 2000). Zumeta (2000, p. 64) comments that, in the absence of academic freedom, HEIs cannot 'sustain [the] intellectual diversity and vitality' to respond to the needs of industry. While arguing that HEIs should be given institutional autonomy so that they can be responsive to the needs of industry and deliver educational outcomes commensurate with globalised HE, Salmi (2007, p. 2) emphasises that there must be accountability for management by HEI leaders; and that 'accountability is meaningful only to the extent that tertiary education

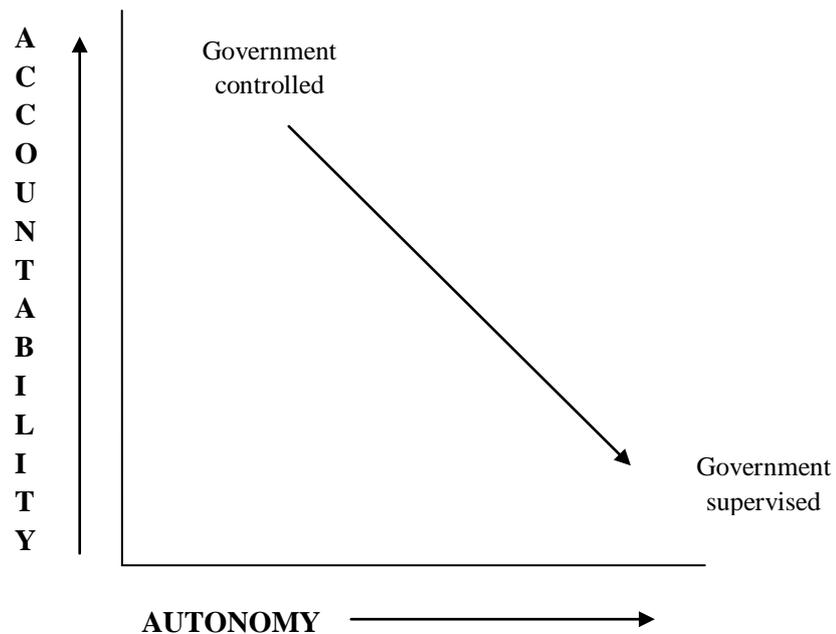
institutions are actually empowered to operate in an autonomous and responsible way’.

Coupled with the increasing call to provide HEI leaders with institutional autonomy (Kitagawa, 2003; Leveille, 2006; World Bank, 2009; Zumeta, 2000), many researchers contend that there must be a balance between institutional autonomy and accountability in HE management and that HEI leaders must be allowed autonomy in the management of their institution while simultaneously being accountable to government and other relevant stakeholders for their performance and outcomes. Saint (2009) suggests that, as HE management becomes more complex and competitive, individual HEIs must be granted more freedom to steer themselves but that the granting of institutional autonomy to HEIs should be accompanied by appropriate mechanisms of accountability to ensure that the increased freedom will not be misused. Salmi (2007) also emphasises that it is unlikely that HEIs can achieve their potential unless a well-functioning mechanism of institutional autonomy is established. Since institutional autonomy does not imply an absence of control from governing bodies, the autonomy given to HEI leaders should be constructed within a balanced framework of accountability for HE management (Debreczni, 2002; Moses, 2007; Schmidt & Langberg, 2007).

In sustaining a balance between institutional autonomy and accountability in HE management, it is argued within the literature that there needs to be recognition of the interaction between these two factors. Raza (2009) believes that increasing institutional autonomy may lead to lower levels of accountability as the HE system changes from a centralised control model to one of government supervised management. As illustrated in diagram 3.1, under the centralised control of the government, accountability is quite ‘universal and rigid’ (Raza, 2009, p.8). However, when the government moves towards a supervised system of management whereby the centralised control is gradually replaced by a more decentralised system (Raza, 2009), new mechanisms of accountability need to be put in place to ensure that the requirements for both institutional autonomy and expected accountability outcomes are met (Huisman & Currie, 2004). There is a need to balance the degree of institutional autonomy with accountability for effective management (World Bank, 2013b). Huisman and Currie (2004) assert that accountability in these circumstances

results not only from the changes in the relationship between the government and HEIs, but also from the requirements for effective and efficient use of resources within the HE system.

Diagram 3.1 Government Controlled and Government Supervised
Accountability and Institutional Autonomy (Raza, 2009, p.7)



There have been calls for introducing incentives to sustain the balance between institutional autonomy and accountability in HE management (Kitagawa, 2003; Nyborg, 2005; Salmi, 2007; Zumeta, 2000). These incentives, as identified in the literature, can apply at two levels: the national level and the institutional level.

At the national level, it has been suggested that there should be promotion by the government of its reduced role in HEI management activities, stimulating HEIs to use their enhanced institutional autonomy for improved self-management (Baschung, Goastellec, & Leresche, 2011; Fielden, 2008; Raza, 2009; Varghese, 2012; Zumeta, 2000). Varghese (2012) argues that the government’s role should be limited to the development of legislative frameworks to help HEIs to perform their functions and to meet the government’s requirements for accountability. Fielden (2008) adds that government’s role needs to be more strategic, directed towards the development of a national strategy for HE which then forms the basis for the development of a strategic plan by each HEI, the purpose of which is to assist it to achieve national

goals. A national HE strategy, as Fielden (2008) emphasises, can be used as a legislative instrument to help the government to measure each institution's progress towards an achievement of defined goals and objectives. As HEIs are given increased autonomy for their management, Nyborg (2005) suggests that the government's legislative framework should not restrain them in their operation; rather, as Nyborg (2005, p.4) asserts, the legislative system needs to be constructed and developed transparently and consistently; it needs to function in such a way that 'it may regulate what is essential to regulate', leaving what considered non-essential to be regulated and managed in other ways.

At the institutional level, there can be no balance between institutional autonomy and accountability in HE management unless HEI leaders have strategies to reinforce accountability for their own actions and performance. Fielden (2008) argues that one of the major concerns of government in conferring institutional autonomy on HEIs is the fear that they cannot perform their role effectively. Thus, HEIs need to be well aware and capable of meeting the accountability demands of government and other relevant societal stakeholders. Leveille (2006) also posits that HEI leaders cannot expect to be given full institutional autonomy immediately; they have to earn it by demonstrating that limited autonomy, once given, can be used effectively. According to Schmidt and Langberg (2007), one of the purposes of giving HEIs autonomy is to help them to meet strategic objectives, to be responsive to the needs of industry and to be more adaptable to the globalised HE context; HEI leaders, therefore, must have a strong commitment to demonstrating their accountability for delivering quality management and educational outcomes.

In the process of calling for institutional leaders' commitment to accountability for HE management in exchange for institutional autonomy, there has been a strong emphasis on the fact that accountability in HE management cannot take place if HEI leaders are not able to demonstrate their capacity for self-management (Fielden, 2008; Kitagawa, 2003; Leveille, 2006; Varghese, 2012). Varghese (2012) suggests that, as governments in many countries reduce the budget for HE, a HEI leader needs to be able to identify and diversify their funding sources to facilitate the institution's development and expansion. Salmi (2007) claims that, in order to cope with challenges in HE management, HEI leaders must be able to demonstrate a strong

capacity to perform new roles and functions, articulate a strong vision for HE management, demonstrate an ability for strategic planning, exercise flexibility in management and balance the tensions between the strong demands of the labour market and the institutions' academic requirements and standards. Kitagawa (2003) asserts that, with increasing demands from industry, the ability for self-management must be demonstrated by HEI leaders, developing and strengthening connections with local communities and industry to help them to address particular skill shortages and provide industry with appropriate human resources.

Bladh (2007) emphasises that privatisation of HE or removing HEIs entirely from government control is not crucial to sustaining the balance between institutional autonomy and accountability in HE management; instead, it is important that the government consider the extent of their intervention in HEI management and the need to focus on developing and implementing an effective national legislative framework that helps HEIs to become more strategic in their approach. HEI leaders, on the other hand, must understand that institutional autonomy not only means greater freedom and flexibility in HE management, it also means greater responsibility and accountability (Nyborg, 2005; Saint, 2009; Salmi, 2007). When asking for institutional autonomy, HEI leaders must be able to provide solid evidence that they can manage their affairs effectively with the power given to them, and that the educational outcomes and objectives achieved comply with the institutions' defined mission and the accountability demands set by the Government (Leveile, 2006).

3.10 Curriculum Planning Management in Higher Education

3.10.1 Perspectives on Curriculum Planning Management

Scott (1985) emphasises that there are several factors involved in academic management, especially the management of CP. These factors may include organisational and technological changes and the social response to curriculum planning management (CPM). It is also necessary to consider the economic, social and political context of the nation where the management is practised (Jacques, 1996). For this study, it is useful to consider two major schools of thought that have had a strong influence on CPM: the empiricists and the essentialists.

The Empiricist Perspective

The empiricist perspective is concerned with what leaders do to manage CP. Central to the empiricist perspective on the management of CP is the 'existence' of management itself (Evers & Lakomski, 2012; Scarbrough, 1998, p.693). Empiricists such as Scarbrough (1998) view CPM primarily as being concerned with the visible behaviours and actions performed by the managers and leaders in different settings, including issuing policies and regulations for CP, the construction of the benchmarks and frameworks guiding the institutions in planning curriculum, the follow-up and assessment of the institution's implementation of these regulations. For empiricists, changes in the management of CP are not problematic. These changes can be predicted by mapping the changing roles and functions and can be resolved by changing the roles and functions of managers and leaders. CPM, therefore, can be understood as the arrangement and organisation of tasks, designated as the roles and functions of the manager or leader, to control and supervise CP to ensure that the process is done in accordance with the intended objectives or interests of the institution.

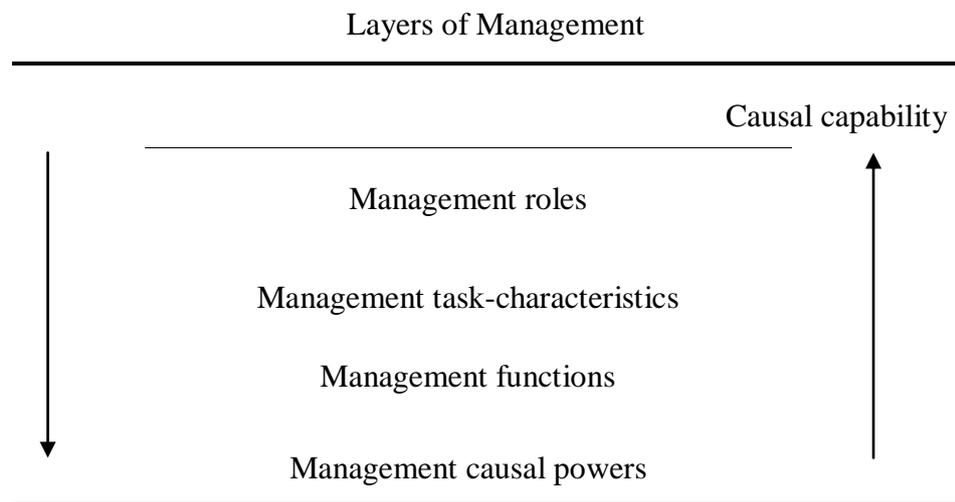
The restrictive assumptions built into the work on CPM based on empiricism is criticised by many scholars such as Hales (1986) and Tsoukas (1994). One criticism is the empiricists' assumption that any change in CPM can be identified by determining the number and the roles of those designated as the managers. As Hales (1986, p.1) notes, such an assumption is 'beset by ambiguity, confusion and, at times, obfuscation'. It merges the meanings of the practice and the roles of management and neglects the deeper functions of management performed within an institution. Since what people expect or require managers to do (functions) is different from what the managers actually achieve in practice (performance), there must be a distinction between performance and expectations in management (Tsoukas, 1994). While actual managerial performance, whether in the form of behaviours, activities or achievement, depends on many factors such as socio-cultural and organisational changes, the expectations or demands are set as a 'framework' for performance within a particular situational setting (Hales, 1986, p.109). Therefore, the empiricists' assumption that management of CP can be adjusted by changing the number of managers or leaders and their roles has

undermined the relationship between performance and the functions of management itself.

The Essentialist Perspective

Essentialists view the management of CP in terms of its ‘essence of management’ (Scarbrough, 1998, p.694; Kezar, 2004). With essentialism, management is considered to be the visible practice of the managers or leaders in relation to the underlying functions carried out by them. According to Tsoukas (1994), management of CP has four layers: roles, task-characteristics, functions and causal powers. These layers can be summarised as follows.

Diagram 3.2 Layers of Management



Source: Tsoukas (1994)

Causal powers lie at the heart of the essentialist model (Scarbrough, 1998). These powers comprise the ability to control the transformation of labour and require active participation and cooperation from subordinates and the passion and motivation of leaders to drive towards higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Depending on particular organisational contexts and circumstances, these powers facilitate and enable the practice of management functions, such as organising and controlling the planning of curriculum. In turn, the degree of organisational flexibility helps to shape management task characteristics. For example, CPM can be interdependent with a higher level management authority or dependent upon it. Management characteristics also help inform the roles of the managers or leaders. The role of the managers, for

instance, can be allocating the budget or developing human resources for the planning of curriculum.

The essentialist perspective places a strong emphasis on the hierarchical relationship between different levels of management within the institution. Actions by one level of management have repercussions for either higher or lower levels of management. The roles and functions of the managers or leaders of the organisation are shaped by the characteristics of the particular organisation, the role of discourse and the impact of subordinate groups within the organisation (Scarborough, 1998; Willmott, 1996). Thus, CPM based on essentialism can be viewed as a structurally determined 'system of actions' carried out by people who are hierarchically empowered to implement these actions in the CP process, with an orientation towards the intended goals and outcomes set by the institution (Yielder & Codling, 2004, p. 319).

Despite their differences, both the empiricists and essentialists place an emphasis on the idea of 'management in itself' when conceptualising the management of CP (Scarborough, 1998, p.696). Both view management as an instrument for controlling contradictions and achieving the expected outcomes (Tomlinson, 1982). This instrument of contradiction control, however, is affected by the surrounding settings such as the givers and receivers of the management (Willmott, 1996). As Scarborough (1998, p.705) explains, the constitution of management is 'the product of particular historical milieu'. Therefore, CPM needs to be interpreted taking into consideration its socio-historical, cultural and political context.

3.10.2 Levels and Forms of Curriculum Planning Management

Although curriculum professionals and teachers are among the key stakeholders involved in CP, CP itself is managed by other individuals and groups and takes place at varying levels of authority and in different forms. There are two visible levels of CPM: the macro level and the micro level of management.

Marsh and Willis (2007) comment that the macro level of CPM is concerned with the production of general policies for CPM by government.

At the macro level, CPM is in the form of 'mandates' and exemplifies 'scientific management' (Carlson, 1988, p.102; Elmore & Sykes, 1992, p.102), in that it is a set

of regulations or rules governing the planning of curriculum at institutions, rules that are intended to produce compliant results (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). These regulations and rules are produced by the government or governmental agencies as written documents, mandating approaches to CP. These mandate documents can either limit the autonomy of the institutions in CPM or specify the means by which they can develop their management of CP in accordance with the approach selected by the government (Maassen & Van Vught, 1994). In Vietnam, these mandates are policies that are produced by the Government. Examples of such mandates are the Government's master plans for specific subjects, the discipline-based education frameworks and general policy documents and regulations about CPM (Arends, 2000). There is no participation from HEIs in preparing and developing these mandates.

When approaches to CPM at the macro-management level are considered, there are two alternative approaches discussed in the literature: 'the state control' and 'the state supervising' approaches (Goedegebuure, Kaiser, Maassen, Meek, Vught, & Weert, 1994; Vught, 1994).

With the state control approach, the purpose is to expand the government's control over the nation's HEIs and to promote the 'standardisation of national degrees' and 'the image of uniformity and common purpose' in education (Carlson, 1988, p.100; Maassen & Van Vught, 1994, p. 41). Therefore, policy statements about CPM at this level are highly prescriptive, usually including such details as 'the range of subjects and electives to be taught', 'the amount of time to be given to each subject', 'the syllabi to be used' and 'the procedures to be followed for monitoring standards' in the institutions as well as the methods of teaching (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p.182).

Carlson (1988, p. 102) comments that, due to the central control of the CP activities at HEIs, CPM can be viewed as a form of accountability reinforced by 'a delineated chain of command and role formalisation' from government which is the top management level. The aims of this 'chain of command and role formalisation' include the standardisation of methods of CP and its evaluation, promotion of the best practice in CP and the implementation of a specific management model which enforces the cooperation of employees. Kogan (1986) suggests that, with this approach, macro level management can also be described as hierarchical

accountability; that is, as people move up to higher levels of management, the more they know about what people at the lower levels are doing and when people move down the hierarchy, the less they know about the activities of those at the higher level of management. Further, hierarchical accountability demands that people involved in macro-level management need to have their exact responsibilities and assigned tasks clearly defined and their work performance in achieving the intended outcomes or meeting the defined requirements assessed. This accountability helps to ensure that the chain of command and role formalisation is consistently transformed into practice across the institution, thus reinforcing the effectiveness and efficiency of CPM (de Boer & File, 2009).

However, Zhang (2013) argues that the Vietnamese Government's control over the management of CP at HEIs, with its overarching authority over all CP activities, does not provide HEIs with the flexibility to respond to changes in the market. Under the pressure of severe budget restrictions, HEIs must be active and successful in increasing student enrolments in order to generate income for their operation; however, as Jaffer, Ng'ambi, and Czerniewicz (2007) comment, Government control does not give HEIs the opportunity to do this, and limits HEIs' capacity to flexibly transform their curricula to meet societal and industry needs due to limited resources for CP. There is also a need for exchange of ideas between HEIs and external stakeholders so that teachers can 'test and revise their theories about teaching and learning, amending their curriculum in response to industry's needs and the contextual changes; again, the Government's control approach limits HEIs' ability to do this (Taylor, 2001, p.2). Consequently, there is a clear need for changes to the macro management of CP - restricting the government's role in CPM and giving HEIs greater operational autonomy in CP (Boer & File, 2009). These changes may be brought about by the adoption of a state supervising approach to CP and CPM.

Unlike the state control approach, the state supervising approach has less influence on HEIs' managerial activities (Maassen & Vught, 1994) providing HEIs with autonomy in CP and other academic affairs. In response, HEIs need to develop the capacity for self-management (Boer & File, 2009; Maassen & Vught, 1994; Taylor, 2001). According to Maassen and Vught (1994, p. 44), with a supervising approach, a government is 'steering from the distance' and using broad legislative frameworks

as the main policy instruments for controlling the quality of CP outcomes of HEIs. Olivier (2001) comments that a government's responsibility for CP should be limited to the construction of overall regulations and policy documents for CP and the control of the quality of CP products. HEIs are responsible for finding their own ways of putting these broad frameworks into practice whilst taking into consideration their institutional context and conditions. In exchange for academic freedom in CP, HEIs are fully accountable not only to the government but also to other societal stakeholders for the quality and effectiveness of their academic actions and outcomes (Larsson, 2006). Olivier (2001) notes that currently HEI accountability is limited, taking the form of periodical reports to government which are reviewed and evaluated only when the system is under serious review.

With the state supervising approach to CPM, HEIs have more flexibility and autonomy in CP compared with the state control approach. However, as Li and Wu (2008) emphasise, it does not mean that the government completely delegates its power and authority to HEIs or that HEIs are free from government control in their academic affairs. Instead, acting as a facilitator and supervisor of CP at the institutional level, the government's role is strengthened and enhanced by its role in developing and issuing overall plans and policies, providing information guidance and conducting evaluation and inspection of CP outcomes (Li & Wu, 2008; Maassen & Vught, 1994; Zhang, 2013).

The micro level of CPM concerns the policies, regulations and plans developed and implemented by individual institutions. Unlike the macro level of management, CPM at the micro level involves significant participation from different stakeholders, including the staff within the institution, industry representatives and other community members. At the micro level, teachers and curriculum professionals are among the groups participating in the construction of policies and plans for CPM (Marsh & Willis, 2007).

CPM at this level aims to ensure that CP is undertaken in compliance with the policies and requirements set by government. The key responsibilities of institutional leaders are strategic planning and developing institution-specific regulations for CP (Da Costa, 2008; Larsson, 2006; Marsh & Willis, 2007). In order to do this, HEI leaders need to identify and develop 'strategic priorities' for CPM and to 'target their

efforts collectively' on these priorities (Larsson, 2006, p.4). Marsh and Willis (2007) further add that strategic plans and regulations for CP at HEIs must be developed in close alignment with the policies and legislative frameworks provided by the government. Depending on how much flexibility the institution is provided, institutional regulations and outlines for CP can be developed with more or less detail and direction. Unlike the management of CP at the macro level, CPM at the micro level is more specific and detailed than the macro-management level (Marsh & Willis, 2007). In general, as identified by Marsh and Willis, documents will specify institutional objectives, steps for realising these objectives, content for CP, methods of teaching or instruction, methods for assessment and timeline for the completion the CP.

CPM at this level is undertaken within a specific and procedural system, aimed at transforming the objectives set by higher level management bodies and the institution itself into the practices of CP (Price & Nelson, 2003). In order to effectively transform the government regulations or requirements into practice, people involved in micro-level management need to perform two tasks. First, as Price and Vallie (2000) note, HEI leaders need to promote harmonious deliberation among those involved in CP activities by helping them understand how CP should be conducted to meet the defined objectives and intended outcomes (i.e. to comply with the regulations or requirements of the higher management level) and the needs of the community, society or industry. This involves the creation of conditions that help their subordinates to successfully carry out their tasks, including both material and psychological support from managers (Price & Vallie, 2000). Second, according to Marsh and Willis (2007), HEI leaders need to exercise the legal authority given to them by government to control the planning of curriculum. This requires managers to give precise directives, to set general guidelines and rules and to make decisions on and find solutions to problematic issues relating to CP (Lambert, 2003). Institutional leaders act as the managers, facilitators and resource providers of CP, accepting broad responsibilities for CP and dealing with the administrative workload needed to achieve the intended outcomes (Murphy & Curtis, 2013).

Although institutional leaders and their subordinates are given substantial flexibility and autonomy in the process of CP, their roles must be subject to appropriate

mechanisms of accountability (Murphy & Curtis, 2013). Currently, these mechanisms are missing. According to Boer and File (2009), this can be rectified by HEIs redefining the ways for informing appropriate stakeholders about their performance. For example, as identified by Boer and File (2009), HEIs can set up effective reporting and information channels for communicating with their governing and supervising agencies about the quality of their outcomes and performance. Further, in order to reinforce HEIs' accountability for CP outcomes, institutional leaders can involve external stakeholder in the process of review and evaluation of the institution's outcomes (Saint, 2009). Huisman and Currie (2004) contend that, with the increasing need to integrate market mechanisms in HE management, HEIs must explore and develop links with external stakeholders, including industry and employers, and involve them in the process of review and evaluation of the institution's outcomes. These connections, as Huisman and Currie (2004) emphasise, can support HEIs by reinforcing the institution's accountability for performance and educational outcomes.

3.11 Chapter Summary

There are various interpretations of curriculum, CP, HE management and CPM. However, perspectives on curriculum, CP, HE management and CPM need to be understood within a particular socio-cultural and political context. In Vietnam, curriculum in HE incorporates many attributes of the academic subject curriculum perspective, whereas CP reflects features of both the critical and the technical production perspectives. Since management of HE in Vietnam occurs within a centrally controlled bureaucracy, it is defined by the State authority, exercised through various ministries and stipulated by Government legislation. As this study explores the attitudes and beliefs about approaches to CPM from the viewpoint of Vietnamese HE administrators and educators, identification of the various perspectives and conceptions on curriculum, CP, HE management and CPM in the context of Vietnam is essential for the interpretation of data collected.

HE management has been described in different ways within the literature, but a basic demand is that HEI leaders must meet a number of requirements to achieve the best performance results and realise the institutions' goals. The model of HE management can differ - it may be formal, scientific, subjective or cultural.

However, under the centralised control mechanism of management exercised over the HE system by the Government, HE management in Vietnam adheres to the formal or bureaucratic model of management which is strongly hierarchical and under which HEI leaders are fully accountable to the MOET and related ministries for their performance and outcomes.

Two important factors affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of HE management are institutional autonomy and accountability. Two elements related to institutional autonomy are the degree of freedom or independence of HEI leaders from their governing bodies in determining issues relating to institutional operation and the extent of the government's intervention in managing activities at HEIs. Thus, institutional autonomy can be identified as substantive, procedural or organic and can operate under delegation from the central government to a lower level of government, through delegation to an intermediary body, or by direct delegation to the HEI.

Autonomy is closely linked to accountability in HE management. The obligation of HEI leaders to account for the successful undertaking of responsibilities and the performance of their duties to their governing or supervising bodies for their actions and performance are fundamental, albeit that this accountability can manifest itself in one (or more) ways: through a central control model, a professional model or a partnership model.

In the HE management in Vietnam, accountability is closely related to the central control model in which a managerial hierarchy from a HEI leader to the MOET (and related ministries) and from departmental and faculty heads and vice-heads to the institutional leader exists, aimed at retaining the Government's influence on the HE sector in general and HEI operational management, in particular.

CP involves two levels of management: the macro level management is general policies governing CP at HE institutions and produced by the government or government agencies; the micro level management is concerned with policies or regulations about CP produced by individual institutions, aimed at having CP conducted in compliance with the requirements set by the government.

In relation to CPM, there are two perspectives that help define the term in the context of HE in Vietnam: the empiricist and the essentialist perspectives. While the empiricist perspective is mainly concerned with what the leaders of the institution do to manage CP, the essentialist perspective emphasises the hierarchical relationships between different levels of management within an institution in order to achieve the intended outcomes in CP. All the theoretical perspectives on CPM and related levels and forms of CPM explored and presented in the chapter are considered the key foundations for the explanation of data collected for the study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Methods

4.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter presents the methodology and methods employed to guide the study. It is divided into six sections. The first section provides an overview of the research methodology and methods selected for the study; the second section describes the data collection methods; the third gives a brief description of the research sites; the fourth reports the processes and procedures for each method of data collection; the fifth presents the approach taken to data analysis; and the chapter then finishes with a discussion about issues relating to ethical considerations in the study.

4.2 Methodology

This study is located within a pragmatist paradigm, which philosophically asserts that there are both singular and multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry (Feilzer, 2010). While integrating a number of perspectives for explaining the issues of truth and reality, pragmatists believe that ‘there is no problem with asserting both that there is a single real world and that all individuals have their own unique interpretations of that world’ to guide their finding of solutions for practical issues (Morgan, 2007, p.72). As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) note, within a pragmatist paradigm, the world is not viewed as an absolute unity, but from multiple perspectives, with multidirectional causes and multiple effects. Feilzer (2010) stresses further that there is a commitment to uncertainty in producing knowledge through research. This commitment to uncertainty implies an acknowledgement that knowledge produced from research is open to shifts and changes due to ‘unpredictable occurrences and events’ (Feilzer, 2010, p.14). In addition, Feilzer maintains that pragmatists hold an ‘anti-representational view of knowledge’ arguing that researchers should not aim to accurately represent reality or provide an accurate account of how things are. Instead, the main goal of researchers is to look for ‘usefulness’ and ‘utility’ (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8). Rescher (1995) comments that the major implication of the utility of a theory is that it can solve a problem, rather than the consideration of whether it is true or false.

The pragmatic approach acknowledges that inquiry is situated and directed and that data collected are for the purpose of the inquiry. There is no need to have any 'presupposition about the nature of the social world' which is not certain and only 'statements' that 'derive from the process of research are warranted' (Scott & Briggs, 2009, p. 229). These statements are developed and varied by standards and norms of the society across time, culture and contextual values. Therefore, the degree of fit between data and theory is 'a social construct' dependent on various social facts (Ziman, 1978 cited in Scott & Briggs, 2009).

Pragmatists do not require 'a particular method or method mix' or 'exclude' others (Feilzer, 2010) as inquiry guides the methodology. Focusing on empirical inquiry, pragmatists do not have to follow a specific method so long as the method used helps answer the research question.

With its distinguished characteristics, including seeking to understand different perspectives within a particular system and examining the implications for practice, pragmatism is well suited for achieving the objectives of this study. Within the pragmatist framework, the position adopted within this study was that 'conclusions are justified and confirmed by an appeal to forward looking and experiential empiricism' (Ruwhiu & Cone, 2010, p. 112). There was a movement back and forth between different techniques and approaches to the knowledge produced from the research in order to assess and explore useful points of connection between these different techniques and approaches through an abductive reasoning process, i.e. a connection logically made between the data collected and the knowledge produced from the study (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2007). The data sets were 'informed', 'complemented' and enhanced by each other, producing a more complete picture of the investigated issues for the research (Feilzer, 2010, p. 9).

Within the pragmatist paradigm, methodological triangulation - the use of multiple methods for strengthening the findings of any one set of data gathered by one method with corroboration through other methods - was employed in this study through the use of several forms of data collection, including document review, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, for confirmation and completeness (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). These different methods of data collection were used with the intention of utilising the strengths of each method and helping

explore the data in depth, thus building interpretations of the findings and enabling a construction of a more complete and comprehensible picture of issues relating to CPM.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

The three data collection methods employed in this study were document review, written questionnaires and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews which are described in detail below.

4.3.1 Document Review

Documentary sources are materials in both printed and visual form, including official documents derived from both public and private sources, letters and autobiographies, mass media outputs and virtual outputs such as Internet sources (Bryman, 2004). As Merriam (1998) comments, all types of documents are necessary to research as they help discover meaning, expand understanding and explore insights that are relevant to the research questions. For this study, documents were a tool for establishing the theoretical background of the research. Since some of the elements under investigation, including earlier reforms in HE and past approaches to CPM, were no longer available for observation, documentary sources played an important role in helping construct a comprehensive picture of both how situations evolved over time and in portraying the current situation. Specifically, they provided an insight into how CP in HE in Vietnam is managed and controlled, as well as how changes in CPM policies have taken place over time. As Bowen (2009, p. 30) suggests, documents are used as ‘a means of tracking change and the development’ of events. Since the legal system for managing HE in Vietnam is constructed incompletely and inconsistently (Hayden & Lam, 2007), changes in policies related to CPM are explored and identified in this study through a comparison of different documents. Second, documentary sources complemented and informed the construction of the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. Questions for the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews were developed based on the findings of the document reviews.

One of the greatest challenges in using document reviews is ‘biased selectivity’ (Yin, 1994, p.80). In order to overcome this potential problem, all available documents were chosen based on their relevance to the topic investigated (i.e. CP and CPM), the research questions and their currency. All documents about CPM analysed derived from the following resources:

- Documents issued by the MOET and publicly available (i.e. online sources)
- Internal documents issued by the MOET but with permission for use from the MOET’s Office (i.e. hard copies)
- Documents issued by the HEIs and publicly available
- Internal documents issued by the HEIs but with permission for use from the institutions
- Documents issued by the Government (i.e. online sources and hard copies obtained from the MOET)

Documents were mainly obtained from the office of the MOET and from the HEIs involved in the study. The main sources were the Education Law of Vietnam (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a), the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012), various Government decrees, decisions and resolutions about CPM, press releases by the MOET and HEIs, newspapers articles, journal articles, meeting minutes and reports about HE development publicised by the MOET, conference proceedings and working papers and periodical reviews. Most of these materials are publicly available, while others were made available subject to permission being obtained from the MOET and the three HEIs involved in the study.

The document review process comprised a primary analysis of materials related to CPM in the Vietnamese HE system. The document review was conducted before phases two and three of the study which were conducted in Vietnam. Based on the research questions, documents were categorised into three groups and were selected based on their content relevance. Information was obtained about:

1. The HE system in Vietnam and its recent reforms: collected from published research, journal and newspaper articles and reviews. These documents included electronic and printed sources.
2. Past and current policies and regulations relating to CPM in HE: mainly obtained from HEIs involved in the study and the office of the MOET. Contact was made with the MOET and permission and assistance in accessing related information was obtained. Some documents were also obtained from online sources.
3. Approaches to CPM in HE in Vietnam: related research, published proceedings, working papers and reports of meetings and conferences. Obtained from published articles, annual reports published by the MOET and national/international reviews of HE in Vietnam.

4.3.2 Written Questionnaire

Questionnaires were used as a tool for data collection in this study for several reasons. First, they are a convenient way of reaching a geographically dispersed sample of the population (Creswell, 2008). Since the research sites were located in two different geographical areas of Vietnam (i.e. two in the south and one in the centre of Vietnam), using questionnaires helped overcome the practical difficulty of gaining access to the sample population. Furthermore, since participants of the study were educators, administrators and professionals working in CP and management, their working schedules involved many meetings and lectures. The use of questionnaires provided research participants with flexibility in completing the questions. They could 'complete a questionnaire when they wanted and at the speed that they wanted to go' (Bryman, 2004, p. 134). Consequently, a high rate of response from participants was anticipated. In addition, as Bryman (2004) suggests, the questionnaire is an effective tool to control such limitations of the research as time and cost constraints. Once the research participants were identified, copies of the questionnaire were sent to individuals. Research participants could also send their response directly back to the researcher as a stamped addressed envelope was enclosed with the questionnaire.

Because responses were anonymous, questionnaires were also used in this study to increase the participants' willingness to disclose potentially sensitive information about CPM at their institutions. Further, as indicated by Kelly, Harper, and Landau (2008), while written questionnaires help to obtain a high rate of response from different research participants, they also help to explore different aspects of an investigated issue. In short, written questionnaires were used in this research due to the anticipated effectiveness of administration, as well as the high quality data that they would provide.

The questionnaire contained three sections. The first section requested demographic information about the research participant such as their gender, qualification(s), position and length of time working in CPM. The second and third sections sought information about participants' attitudes and beliefs towards their institution's practices by seeking input on the approach to CPM implemented at the participant's institution, their attitudes towards these approaches, and those elements of CPM that participants believed are ripe for improvement. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1.

The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of Likert-type questions, multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The use of a mixture of these three types of questions in the questionnaire helped to establish the degree of participants' agreement or disagreement with given statements on a range of issues. First, the Likert-type questions, which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree response options, helped to give the research participants the opportunity of determining the degree of agreement or disagreement to a given statement or option (Barua, 2013). Further, the multiple-choice questions with given statements or options were presented in the initial part of the questionnaire in the belief that, while focusing on eliciting simple information such as demographic details, they would help to increase the participants' motivation to complete the following sections of the questionnaire (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Open-ended questions, on the other hand, gave participants opportunities to express themselves in their own words about the issues of concern. They help to ensure that any issues which had not been identified in the other related questions (i.e. Likert-type and multiple-choice questions) could be raised and addressed to capture the 'richness and depth of

response' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). By using these three types of questions, the questionnaire was arranged so that it progressed from general to specific issues and from simple factual information to more complex issues. By organising the questionnaire this way, the researcher anticipated a high rate of response from participants.

Before the questionnaire was distributed, a trial study was conducted. The trial study involved a sample of staff from a HEI in Ho Chi Minh City. Ten participants, who were working in CPM in HE, were invited to participate in the questionnaire trial. The sample was selected to reflect the likely characteristics of the population for the research study and as such comprised both male and female professionals, staff with a range of qualifications and experience in the area of CPM and included those working in a variety of positions in the area of CPM. Based on feedback collected from the eight individuals who responded to the trial, questions were amended as required - amendments were primarily related to the use of the Vietnamese language, including wording and sentence structure and syntax to make them more concrete, comprehensible and complete.

4.3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

As Boyce and Neale (2006) comment, semi-structured interviews used in triangulated research are useful for providing context to data collected by other methods of data collection. For this study, the semi-structured interviews were used to help to compensate for any limitation that may have occurred with the first two data collection methods and help to develop a complete and comprehensive picture of the incidents, events and activities relating to CPM in HE in Vietnam and participants' views, beliefs and attitudes about them.

Unlike the written questionnaire, which gave little space and opportunity for the participants to discuss issues in their professional area, the semi-structured interview provided them with flexible time and a relaxed atmosphere in which to clarify and expand on all details relating to CPM which may not have been adequately addressed in the questionnaire. In addition, while questions in the written questionnaire were fixed, guided questions in the semi-structured interviews were able to be adapted during the interaction with the researcher, allowing a heightened

focus on the participants' particular interests and providing the opportunity to investigate some topics and issues in more detail. Bak (2011) emphasises that semi-structured interviews can assist in the interpretation of information obtained from the previous research methods of document review and written questionnaire.

The questions for the semi-structured interviews were trialed on three participants selected from the questionnaire trial study group. The interviewees included two institutional leaders (i.e. one president and one vice-president of a HEI) and one departmental leader. After the semi-structured interviews were trialed, the guided questions were amended to make them more comprehensible to participants, including wording changes and modification of the questions, to allow participants to express their views in more detail. Experience from the pilot of the semi-structured interviews was also taken into consideration when conducting the following interview sessions, including preparation of the digital audio recorder device, the location and time for the interview and an approach to making up any initial appointment that was canceled by an interviewee.

4.4 Selected Higher Education Institutions for the Study

Data collection took place at three HEIs in Vietnam selected for their typicality in a number of ways and their uniqueness in others. These three HEIs included one national university, one public university and one private university. These particular institutions were selected not only because the HEIs represented the full range of HE types, but also because they were located across the two main regions of the country, thus representing different economic and cultural characteristics of HEIs in two geographical areas of Vietnam. In addition, they all shared a common approach to CPM for all disciplines. Approval for the data collection had been obtained from leaders of these three universities, as well as from the MOET, before the fieldwork research was carried out.

HEI A

Research site A is a national university located in Ho Chi Minh City, which is the biggest southern metropolitan city in Vietnam and which has the highest standard of living compared with other cities and regions of the country. The university was

founded by the Government Decree 16/CP as the HE hub of the south as a pioneer in education and science and to better serve the needs of community, significantly contributing to the country's economic and scientific development through its research and academic activities. The most unique feature of this university - like its counterpart, the national university in Hanoi - is that it operates under its own charter and, thus, has autonomy in terms of determining its structural organisation and operation (including financial and human resources) and its teaching and learning activities. This situation does not apply to other HEIs in Vietnam (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2001b). CP at the university is 'self-managed' without the necessity of referring to the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks or regulations - the reason for the selection of this university.

Being a multi-discipline HEI, the university consists of six member campuses, one research institute, one faculty and several centres for research and student services. The campus where the study was conducted is located in the centre of the city and is managed by its president and three vice presidents. The total number of students of the campus is about 31,000, enrolled in 28 undergraduate and 33 joint-graduate programs of study. Like other HEIs in Vietnam, the university runs its courses over two main semesters, one commencing in September and the other in February.

HEI B

Research site B is a long-established public university located in central Vietnam, in a well-known historical region of the country with a population of approximately 3.1 million people. Most regions in central Vietnam are economically poorer than the southern regions of the country, with most people earning their living primarily through agriculture.

The university is a multi-disciplinary institution and is a major hub of HE and research for the central region of the country, established under the Decree number 30/CP. At present, the university consists of seven affiliate colleges and two faculties in addition to seven centres for training and research which are under the direct management of one president and three vice presidents. The university has about 40,000 students, enrolled in 90 undergraduate and 83 graduate programs of study.

Currently operated by and under the direct control and management of the MOET, like other public HEIs across the country, the institution has not been supported with any particular policy or regulation from the MOET in terms of management, in spite of the geographical and economic difficulties of the region in which it is located. The HEI is still funded by the MOET, based on the student enrolment quota regulated by the MOET every year. In relation to CP, institution B is centrally managed by the MOET through its discipline-based education frameworks. Its typicality as a public HEI with operational activities centrally managed by the MOET and its uniqueness as a regional university with economic difficulties are reasons for the selection of this university.

HEI C

HEI C is a private university based in the centre of Ho Chi Minh City. At present the university consists of four faculties and offers 27 undergraduate programs of study. Like other private HEIs, institution C is still largely under the control and management of the MOET, with the HEI's governing board responsible to the MOET for the institution's establishment and management. Since it is a privately owned institution, the university has more autonomy in its financial affairs, including facilities maintenance and investment. However, other issues including appointment of academics and the quota for student enrolments are still centrally managed by the MOET.

Although institution C is a privately owned HEI, it still follows the MOET's regulations for CPM. While introducing new initiatives in CP and programs of study to increase the number of student enrolments, the institution must also have its CP conducted in accordance with the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks and related regulations about CPM. Despite such challenging conditions for CP and with the mission of equipping students with practical skills for their profession, institution C is one of the private universities of the country pioneering the development of HEI-industry linkages and introducing new programs of study in response to societal needs. These are the reasons the university was selected as a research site.

4.5 Data Collection: Questionnaires and Interviews

Following the pilot study, phase two and three of the research fieldwork (i.e. the wider distribution of the questionnaires and the conduct of semi-structured interviews) were carried out. Since an academic year for HE in Vietnam starts in September and the first semester of the academic year ends in early January, the fieldwork for the study was timed to start after the end of the first semester to avoid such critical times as student recruitment and examinations.

4.5.1 Distribution of Written Questionnaire

As there is evidence that hard copies are likely to elicit a higher rate of return in Vietnam than an online survey (Lam, 2009), hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the research participants, with a return stamped and addressed envelope. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.7.

The questionnaire was distributed to 161 professionals from the three HEIs. The participants were purposively selected from the lists of professionals working in the area of CP and CPM provided by the three HEIs. The selection of participants was based on their potential to provide rich information for the research (Creswell, 2008), i.e. based on their decision-making positions in CPM, their expertise and experience in CP and/or CPM. The participants included presidents, vice-presidents, heads and vice-heads of different departments and faculties of disciplines and members of CP groups and the CP assessment committees of the HEIs.

At each HEI, one coordinator, who was usually a vice-president or department head for admission and training of the institution, assisted with administering the survey and setting up the semi-structured interviews. The coordinators were mainly responsible for arranging the meetings between the researcher and the research participants, sending the participants the hard copies of the questionnaire and the stamped addressed envelopes, recording participants' questions about the study for the researcher's later contact and response, collecting the completed questionnaires and returning them to the researcher in case the researcher was not at the research site. The coordinators were not involved in explaining any issues relating to the study.

Before the questionnaire was distributed, a meeting with leaders of each HEI was arranged to brief them about the study. There was also a meeting with the target participants held at each institution before the questionnaire was distributed. The meetings were arranged by the coordinators at the HEIs. At the meetings, participants were introduced to the research fieldwork, focussing on the purpose and procedures of data collection. The voluntary nature of participation in the study and the right to withdraw at any time, the maintenance of confidentiality as well as the deadline for returning the completed questionnaires was explained and emphasised so that all participants fully understood the study and could arrange their time to participate in the written questionnaire, if they agreed to do so. It was also emphasised to participants that the questionnaires were to be completed anonymously and that there were two ways for returning the completed questionnaire to the researcher. The participants could either submit the completed questionnaire in an envelope to the researcher while the researcher was at the research site or mail the completed questionnaire to the researcher by using the addressed and stamped envelope provided to the participants at the meetings.

4.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Phase three of the research (i.e. semi-structured interviews) was conducted after the questionnaires were collected and analysed, with the interviews being held over a two-week period.

For this phase, interviewees were selected from the research participant group of phase two. The selection of participants for the interviews from the three HEIs and the MOET was based on their potential for providing rich information and with reference to the various roles they held in the institutions. The participants included institutional leaders, faculty and departmental leaders and professionals working in the area of CPM.

Since the literature varies on the number of informants at which saturation of data is reached, ranging from twelve (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) to thirty and above (Creswell, 1998), invitation to participate in the semi-structured interviews was sent to all prospective participants of the three HEIs. Eighteen participants agreed to participate in the interview.

The participants were contacted and invited to participate in the interviews via email and telephone. Once approval from the participants was gained, schedules for the interviews were arranged. Following advice from Cohen et al. (2007) and Krippendorff (2004), the location for the interview was negotiated with each participant, with the aim of making the location convenient for interviewees. Having the participants choose the setting for the interviews also helped to ensure that the data were obtained from open communication and that the participants would give 'natural responses' during the discussion (Adams & Cox, 2008, p. 23). Confirmation about date, time and place for the interviews was sent to the interviewees for their approval before the interviews were conducted. Most of the interviews took place at the interviewees' offices, except for one which was conducted at the student services office for the interviewee's convenience.

All interviews were carried out as face-to-face discussions which allowed the researcher to address the 'interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional aspects' of the interviews, such as non-verbal cues like facial expression (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 362). Each interview lasted approximately 30-50 minutes. All interviews were conducted in the Vietnamese language and audio-taped with the agreement of the interviewees, and later transcribed into text. All the transcripts of the interviews were then translated into English by the researcher and the accredited translator in Vietnam. Note-taking was also used during the interviews as a backup. The researcher believed that saturation had been reached after interviews had been conducted with 13 participants from the three institutions and the MOET, since there appeared to be no new information or ideas provided by the interviewees from this point onwards.

At the beginning of each interview session, the ethical considerations were again emphasised to the interviewee. All interview sessions were guided by questions from the semi-structured interview guide. Responses from the questionnaire which were considered unclear or needed to be clarified or expanded were noted and raised at the interview to fully explore aspects of the obtained information. New questions initiated from the elaboration of the interviewees' original responses were also raised to follow the interviewee's points of interests and investigate the discussed issues in depth (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2009). During the interview session, the

interviewees were given sufficient time to express their opinions. Although the interviews were undertaken in the Vietnamese language, all interviewees were encouraged to use examples, English phrases or words to express themselves if they wished (Dang, 2012).

After the interviewees were advised of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time, following advice from Bryman (2004), each interview session was then initiated with an elicitation of general information about the interviewee's role in CPM, including the length of time they have worked in the area of CPM, followed by detailed questions exploring issues about CPM. A brief report on the interview, including transcripts of the interviews and notes taken during the interviews, was sent to each interviewee via email for verification, amendment and confirmation before being stored on computer for later analysis. After being verified with the interviewees, the transcripts of the interviews were then translated into English by the researcher and a certified officer of foreign languages translation in Vietnam. Disagreement in translation, which was mainly related to the use of grammar and educational terms, was solved through discussion between the two parties, with consideration of the context where the interview had taken place.

4.6 Data Analysis

For the analysis of data collected from phase one (i.e. document review), a process of theme analysis aiming at identifying, examining and recognising patterns and their frequency of occurrence within the texts from the collected data was employed (Bowen, 2007; Van de Merwe & Wilkinson, 2011). This involved coding, an abductive process of 'segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data' (Creswell, 2008, p. 251). This process was in line with the pragmatic orientation of the research study. Thus, the researcher moved back and forth between induction and deduction in analysing the data (Morgan, 2007). A coding frame or 'a start list of codes', which was created within an identified list of overarching themes, was used to accommodate data that has been accumulated from the analysis of the documentation (Davies, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 58). Based on the established overarching list of themes, instances that fell into each theme were then systematically labeled with identified codes, which were later transferred into specific themes or categories for analysis. Since open coding, which

refers to part of the analysis dealing with categorising and labeling patterns emerged from and indicated by the data collected, was used, the theme list and the coding frame were constantly examined and revised during the analysis. Data analysis for this phase was done manually although it was partially computer-assisted (i.e. Microsoft Office Excel was used to enter, organise and summarise data).

For the analysis of data collected from the written questionnaire (i.e. open-ended question sections) and the semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis using coding techniques was again employed. Excel and NVivo 9.0 were used to assist with the analysis. A list of overarching themes was constructed from the interview transcript content (i.e. key words, sentences, phrases or paragraphs). NVivo 9.0 was employed to assist in the transcribing of the interviews, while NVivo coding was used for searching and identifying the frequency of patterns from the transcripts for the analysis of data. Excel spreadsheets were used for the organisation and summary of numeric data (Ball & Knobloch, 2005).

Transcripts of the interviews were divided into texts or segments and labelled with the identified codes from the coding frame. As Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 61) note, 'some codes do not work or decay', whereas others flourish or too 'many segments get the same code'. Humble (2009, p.38) agrees and emphasises that the development of specific codes within each phase is very much an 'inductive process'. Re-defining and revising the coding frame was extensively undertaken during the analysis of data. Constant comparison, which is very much linked to a pragmatic approach, was used as an indicator guiding the analysis process to ensure the truthfulness, dependability and confirmability of the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Thus, elemental codes in the coding frame were constantly checked, rechecked and grouped into substantive categories and compared during the analysis. Necessary adjustments were made to the coding frame (i.e. deleting or merging codes, creating new codes, moving coded segments from one into another) to help keep track of the interpretation of the data.

Selective coding from the phase two (i.e. open-ended question section in the questionnaire) and phase three (semi-structured interview) were integrated and compared with data collected from phase one (i.e. document review) to form categories or themes and developed into an approach which accounted for the

phenomenon being investigated and helped to present and discuss the research's findings (Darke, Shanks, & Broadbent, 1998).

4.7 Ethical Issues

Before the study was conducted, approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University. Ethical principles for conducting this research were followed, according to the standards identified for research in Australia.

As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 58) state, 'whatever the specific nature of their work, social researchers must take into account the effects of the research on participants and act in such a way to preserve their dignity as human beings'. For this study, ethical issues were carefully considered and followed up during the data collection. Participants were volunteers who were invited to participate in the study through letters of invitation which were sent to the participants after written permission to conduct the study at the research sites was obtained. All the invitation letters were in the Vietnamese language with English translations provided for the Australian ethics committee.

For phase two of the data collection (i.e. written questionnaire), before hard copies of questionnaire were distributed to the participants, as described in section 4.5.2, there was a meeting conducted to brief the participants about all information relating to the purposes and procedure for data collection of the research. In addition to hard copies of the questionnaire, an information sheet was sent to individual participants to help them clearly understand the nature and context of the research and assist them to make an informed decision about their involvement in the research. In the information sheet, research participants were assured that no attempt would be made to identify any individual participant and that participants' responses would be anonymous. In addition, research participants who participated in the questionnaire returned their responses to the researcher in sealed envelopes. All these arrangements were made to guarantee the fullest extent of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. Those who could not attend the meetings were invited via email to participate in the questionnaire, with an information sheet provided as an attachment. Copies of the questionnaire, information sheet and stamped addressed

envelopes were also left at the office of the coordinators for respondents to pick up if they agreed to participate in the questionnaire. The three HEIs were not identified; rather, they were simply referred to as institution A, B or C.

For interview participants, as suggested by Kvale (1996), informed consent, confidentiality and consequences of the interviews were taken into consideration. Before each interview session was conducted, the interviewee was again informed that their participation in the interview was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. The interviewees were also told that the information obtained from the interviews would not be used for any purpose other than the study. There was also an information sheet sent to each interviewee, confirming that no personal information would be made available or revealed in the research or any published material from the study. All interviewees were asked to sign the consent forms before the interviews were conducted. Transcriptions of the interviews were also sent to interviewees to give them an opportunity to verify and confirm their statements before they were analysed. This guaranteed that only the research participants' viewpoints were presented in the research.

Both the written questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were presented in the Vietnamese language to optimise the participants' thorough comprehension of the research. Data collected were treated confidentially and were only accessed by the researcher, the accredited translator and the research supervisors.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the methodology and the research design of methods used for data collection within this study. Within a pragmatist paradigm, three data collection methods - document review, a written questionnaire and semi-structured interviews - were conducted as a sequential process, aimed at obtaining in-depth information about the views, beliefs and attitudes of Vietnamese educators about CPM in HE in Vietnam and presenting a comprehensive picture of participants' ideas about alternative approaches to CPM in HE that could be adopted in Vietnam.

In the discussion about each phase of data collection, the chapter included a brief description of the three HEIs involved in the study and a rationale for the selection of

these institutions as the research sites. Information relating to the process of conducting a trial study before the written questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were undertaken in Vietnam was presented.

The chapter also provided a description of the methods of data analysis employed for each data collection method. Ethical issues and considerations related to the study were described in detail.

Chapter Five: Results

This chapter presents the findings from the three phases of the study which are described in chapter four. The chapter is divided into two parts.

The first part of the chapter presents the results from phase one and part of phase three of the study and is organised into two sections: the first section reports information about CPM in HE in Vietnam, which is primarily obtained from the document review; the second section incorporates the findings from both the desk research and the semi-structured interviews, in which data collected from the semi-structured interviews are used to support and strengthen those obtained from the desk research.

The second part of the chapter reports on the findings from the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews conducted at three HEIs in Vietnam. The chapter is divided into three sections: demographic information, results from closed questions, and the findings from open-ended survey questions and interviews. These are organised by the themes developed during data analysis.

Part One: Current Approach to Curriculum Planning Management

5.1 Curriculum Planning Management in Higher Education in Vietnam

There is little research on the management of CP in higher education in general and particularly on CPM in Vietnam. There are also few legislative documents in Vietnamese higher education offering a clear and precise definition or description of CPM. Those which exist are issued by the Government and the MOET and include:

- Education Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a)
 - HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012)
- These two documents contain the regulations covering education from the elementary to higher education levels.
- Decree number 75/2006/ND-CP issued by the Government (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a), the Circular number 04/2011/TT-

BGDDT (MOET, 2011a) and the Circular number 08/2011/TT-BGDDT (MOET, 2011b) issued by the MOET regulating the introduction of new disciplines of study.

- Decree number 18/2001-ND-CP issued by the Government (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2001a) on the establishment and operation of foreign cultural and educational organisations in Vietnam.
- Circular number 15/2003/TT-BGDDT (MOET, 2003a) and the Decision number 42/2008/QĐ-BGDDT (MOET, 2008) issued by the MOET regulating the CPM at HEIs of international cooperative programs of study.
- Decision number 25/2006/QĐ-BGDDT issued by the MOET (MOET, 2006) regulating the implementation of discipline-based education frameworks in CP at HEIs.
- Decision number 43/2007/QĐ-BGDDT issued by the MOET (MOET, 2007) regulating about the implementation of the credit-transfer education system.
- Circular number 55/2012/TT-BGDDT issued by the MOET (MOET, 2012) regulating the credit transfer system for colleges and universities.

From these documents, it is clear that CPM in HE in Vietnam is defined primarily by the identification of responsibilities and roles assigned to the leaders and administrators of HE agencies and institutions.

In terms of roles and responsibilities in CPM, the Education Law states:

...Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo quy định chương trình khung cho từng ngành đào tạo đối với trình độ cao đẳng, trình độ đại học bao gồm cơ cấu nội dung các môn học, thời gian đào tạo, tỷ lệ phân bổ thời gian đào tạo giữa các môn học, giữa lý thuyết với thực hành và thực tập. Căn cứ vào chương trình khung, trường đại học xác định chương trình giáo dục của trường mình.

...the Minister of Education and Training is responsible for regulating the discipline-based education framework for each discipline of study and for the diploma and bachelor degree programs of study. These discipline-based education frameworks prescribe the structure of discipline knowledge, duration of study, allocation of time and the percentage of time allocated for each course of study and for theory, practice and internship. Based on the

discipline-based education frameworks, higher education institutions are responsible for organising their own curriculum planning.

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, Article 41, Item 1, p. 34, researcher translation)

Recently, the HE Law also affirms that:

...Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo quy định khối lượng kiến thức tối thiểu, ..., quy trình xây dựng, thẩm định và ban hành chương trình đào tạo trình độ cao đẳng, đại học, thạc sĩ, tiến sĩ; quy định các môn học bắt buộc trong chương trình đào tạo đối với các trình độ đào tạo của cơ sở giáo dục đại học có vốn đầu tư nước ngoài; quy định việc biên soạn, lựa chọn, thẩm định, duyệt và sử dụng tài liệu giảng dạy, giáo trình giáo dục đại học.

...the Minister of education and training is responsible for regulating the minimum knowledge requirements, ..., procedures for curriculum planning, review and evaluation and issue of curriculum for diploma, bachelor, masters and doctoral degree level; regulating compulsory courses of study for curriculum at higher education institutions which are operated with foreign investment; regulating the design, selection, review and evaluation, approval and use of instructional materials and textbooks for higher education curriculum.

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, chapter IV, article 36, item 3, p.14, researcher translation)

These statements clearly demonstrate that CP in HE is currently managed by the Government through the documents outlined above that regulate the CP process. In addition, the discipline-based education frameworks are considered by the MOET and HEIs to be an official legal instrument of the Government for managing the planning of curriculum in HE. These documents specifically identify necessary requirements for CP at HEIs, such as compulsory courses of study, foundational courses of study and the allocation of time for each course of study. In other words, CPM in HE in Vietnam is primarily concerned with what the Government (through the MOET) and administrators of HEIs do to manage CP, which is stipulated in legally binding discipline-based education frameworks and related documents.

The researcher maintains that the approach taken by the MOET adheres to the empiricist perspective, with CPM being controlled by the MOET's leaders (at the national, macro level of management) and managed by the presidents and vice-presidents of HEIs (institutional or micro-level management) who are empowered to undertake these different roles by the Government. In so doing, they adopt an

orientation that fulfils the social, political and economic objectives of the Government.

5.2 Levels of Curriculum Planning Management

CP in HEIs in Vietnam is centrally managed by the Government and administered at two levels.

5.2.1 The Macro Level of Curriculum Planning Management in Vietnam

The macro level of management is concerned with the MOET's roles in managing the planning of curriculum at HEIs. At present, MOET is the only Government agency responsible for all issues relating to CPM. The main responsibilities of the MOET in managing CP include developing policy documents and guidelines for the planning of curriculum at HEIs, evaluating and authorising curricula of HEIs and regulating the core textbooks commonly used by HEIs (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012). These responsibilities are officially designated and legalised by the Government (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, 2012).

At the macro level, the objective is to control the planning of curriculum at HEIs by the State (Sheridan, 2010). This centralised mechanism of control is confirmed by the Education Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a) and the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012) which state that the Minister for Education and Training is directly responsible for regulating the discipline-based education frameworks for each discipline of study of the associate and bachelor degree programs of study. The centralised control of CP has recently been reinforced by the Government through legislation regulating the responsibilities of the Minister of Education and Training. It is stated by the HE Law that:

‘Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo tổ chức biên soạn giáo trình sử dụng chung các môn lý luận chính trị, quốc phòng - an ninh để làm tài liệu giảng dạy, học tập trong các cơ sở giáo dục đại học’

‘the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for organising the planning of curriculum for such courses of study as political theory, national defence and security education, commonly used by higher education institutions.’

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, chapter IV, article

36, item 1b, p.14, researcher translation)

and that:

Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo quy định khối lượng kiến thức tối thiểu, ..., quy trình xây dựng, thẩm định và ban hành chương trình đào tạo trình độ cao đẳng, đại học, thạc sĩ, tiến sĩ; quy định các môn học bắt buộc trong chương trình đào tạo đối với các trình độ đào tạo của cơ sở giáo dục đại học có vốn đầu tư nước ngoài; quy định việc biên soạn, lựa chọn, thẩm định, duyệt và sử dụng tài liệu giảng dạy, giáo trình giáo dục đại học.

...the Minister for education and training is responsible for regulating the minimum knowledge requirements, ..., procedures for curriculum planning, review and evaluation and issue of curriculum for diploma, bachelor, masters and doctoral degree level; regulating compulsory courses of study for curriculum at higher education institutions which are operated with foreign investment; regulating the design, selection, review and evaluation, approval and use of instructional materials and textbooks for higher education curriculum.

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, chapter IV, article 36, item 3, p.14; researcher translation)

The MOET's control over CP in HE is primarily exercised in the form of general policies which appear as official documents issued by the MOET and are official directives and guides for CP across the HE sector.

While the MOET maintains its control over CP in HEIs, there are overlaps between its functions of management and of CP. This is demonstrated through the MOET's involvement in 'producing policy documents guiding the design of instructional materials and textbooks' (which is related to CPM) alongside of directly 'deciding what courses of study need to have common textbooks or instructional materials, organising the selection of textbooks and the design of instructional materials for these courses and reviewing and approving the design or selection of these textbooks and materials' (which relate to the process of CP) (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a, p.5).

The MOET's overlapping roles in CP and CPM are further displayed in Circular number 04/2011/TT-BGDĐT (MOET, 2011a). While this policy document specifies requirements for managing the planning of curriculum at HEIs (such as the requirements for the skills and behaviour of students, regulations for ensuring the consistency between the discipline knowledge for students and the intended learning outcomes, requirements for members participating in the selection of textbooks and

the design of instructional materials), it also reaffirms the MOET's involvement in the process of CP which is already indicated in the Decree number 75/2006/ND-CP (such as instruction for CP, procedures for the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks, assessment of instructional materials and selected textbooks, roles and responsibilities of the institution's president in the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks).

As Hayden and Lam (2007) comment, these overlapping functions of the MOET in CPM and CP not only cause ambiguity, but also limit the flexibility and institutional autonomy of HEIs in their CPM and CP, the effect of which is to strengthen the role of the Government in 'determining how the legislation should be interpreted in specific instances' (Hayden & Lam, 2007, p.77).

Assisting the Minister of Education and Training is the Department of HE (DHE) which is established by and operates within the MOET. The DHE is responsible for developing regulations for CP in HE, examining HEI implementation of these regulations, developing the standards of learning outcomes for each program of study (discipline) and constructing the discipline-based education frameworks for HEIs (MOET, 2011a).

In addition to the influence of the DHE, the MOET's control of CP in HE is further reinforced by the National Board of Sciences (NBS) (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a). According to this Decree, the NBS is controlled by the MOET. Members of the NBS, which include educators, curriculum professionals and administrators from the MOET and HEIs from across the country, are selected by the MOET. The main responsibilities of the Board are to help the Minister of Education and Training to review, assess and approve the outlined curriculum, the selection of textbooks and the design of instructional materials of HEIs.

Construction of the Discipline-based Education Frameworks for Curriculum Planning Management

In addition to the regulations and policy documents about CP, data from the study indicate that the discipline-based education frameworks currently form the basis for CPM. Although the DHE is the main agency responsible for constructing the

discipline-based education frameworks, the construction of the education framework involves groups of scholars, including CP professionals, educators and HE administrators, who are selected by the MOET and will have no ongoing involvement once the construction of the education framework finishes. Any changes and updates relating to the discipline-based education frameworks, including the number of credits for the courses of study, the number and name of the compulsory, foundational and discipline-based courses of study and the duration of each course of study, must be approved by the MOET.

Crucially for the context of this study, all the legislation and the education frameworks provide not only general policy statements, but also contain in detail the procedures for CP within HEIs. This is in line with the centralised management of HE of the country (Nguyen, 2010).

MOET's Control of New Disciplines and International Cooperative Programs of Study

If a HEI desires to introduce a new discipline of study which has not been registered with the MOET from the official list of disciplines of study, it is mandatory that HEIs send the MOET a proposal for the introduction of the new discipline of study, including a draft outline of the proposed curriculum (MOET, 2011b). In order to assist the MOET in controlling the introduction of new disciplines of study, the DHE works jointly with the Department of Finance and Accounting (DFA), the General Department for Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA) and other related departments to examine and evaluate all issues relating to the HEI's proposal for introducing new disciplines of study (MOET, 2011b).

In addition to the DHE, the FAD and the GDETA, which operate as key departments in assisting the Minister for Education and Training to control the introduction of new disciplines of study, findings from the desk research indicates that the MOET has also assigned city and provincial Departments of Education and Training (DOETs) the responsibility for examining whether the HEI has met the requisite conditions for the introduction of a new discipline of study. As indicated by the MOET (MOET, 2011b, p.5, researcher translation), DOETs must 'examine and confirm practical conditions relating to full time academic staff, equipment and

library serving for the learning and teaching of the new discipline of study' (*kiểm tra và xác nhận các điều kiện thực tế về đội ngũ giảng viên cơ hữu, trang thiết bị, thư viện phục vụ đào tạo của ngành đăng ký đào tạo*). In order to do this, the city and provincial DOET's director establishes an examination committee which includes one staff from the DOET's board of directors who acts as the committee's head, one staff member from the DOET's personnel office and a professional staff member who acts as the secretary of the committee (MOET, 2011b). The research data confirms that the committee assess the HEI's application by comparing the information provided in the submitted proposal and its current circumstance, by reviewing the payrolls of the institution, academic staff qualifications, the teaching and learning facilities and library of the institution. The DOET's examination results are then sent to the MOET for further review and approval. This process, information about which was obtained from the desk research, is further confirmed by data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. According to two interviewees, due to the lack of experienced CPM staff, the DOETs are mainly concerned with the examination of the physical conditions for CP at the HEI, such as teaching and learning facilities and the number of available teaching staff for the new discipline of study, rather than academic issues relating to CP at HEIs.

The MOET's control of new initiatives is also evident in relation to international cooperative programs. According to the Decree number 18/2001-ND-CP issued by the Government on 4/5/2001 (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2001a) and the Circular number 15/2003/TT-BGDĐT, issued by the MOET on 31/3/2003 (MOET, 2003a), all educational programs of study which are jointly conducted by a HEI and a foreign education partner need to be reviewed and approved by the MOET before these programs are put into practice. Recently, this regulation has been further strengthened by the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012, Article 45, Item 5, researcher translation) which states that 'the Minister for Education and Training is responsible for approving international cooperative programs of study for associate, bachelor, masters and doctorate degrees' (*Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo phê duyệt chương trình liên kết đào tạo với nước ngoài trình độ cao đẳng, đại học, thạc sĩ, tiến sĩ*).

While the primary responsibility for decisions about international programs lies with the Minister for Education and Training, the Minister is assisted in reviewing and approving HEIs' proposals by the DHE, the GDETA and the Bureau for Vietnam International Education Development (VIED). Of these three departments, VIED plays a key role in assisting the MOET to review and approve proposals for introducing an international cooperative program of study. The VIED was established by and operates under the control of the MOET. The main functions of the VIED include 'assisting the Minister for Education and Training in administratively managing all activities relating to international education and carrying out public services in the area of international education' (MOET, 2010a).

There are numerous components in the VIED's review of HEI proposals for introducing an international cooperative program of study which must be provided (such as information about the degree offered, the curriculum for the program of study, the signed agreement between the HEI and its foreign partner) in both English and Vietnamese (MOET, 2013c). Only after the proposals have been reviewed and evaluated by the VIED are they sent to the Office of the Minister for approval (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2001a; MOET, 2003a).

That the MOET controls the introduction of international cooperative programs of study was also reflected in the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. Two interviewees confirmed that the authority of the MOET in this area is indeed followed in practice.

Diagram 5.1 Management of Curriculum Planning at the Macro-level

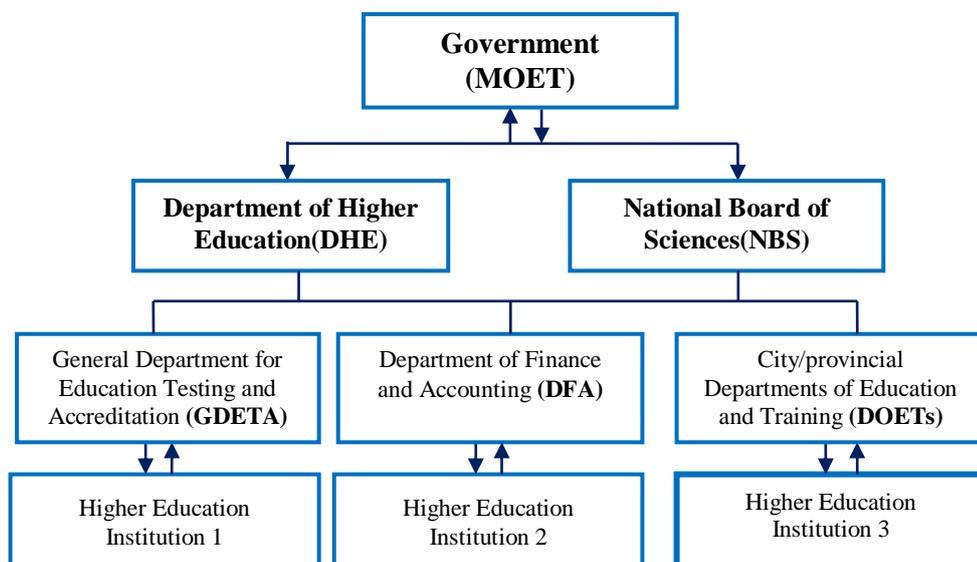


Diagram 5.1 clearly indicates that, in line with the centralised approach to management that prevails in Vietnam, CP in HE is strictly managed at the macro level by the MOET whose controlling role in managing the planning of curriculum leaves little space for HEIs to manage and plan curricula that respond to local and national circumstances (Hayden and Lam, 2007).

5.2.2 The Micro Level of Curriculum Planning Management in Vietnam

At the micro level, CPM is concerned with the roles and responsibilities of leaders of individual HEIs (i.e. presidents and vice-presidents) in planning curriculum in compliance with the intended outcomes, educational objectives and regulations issued by the MOET. These roles and responsibilities are officially designated by the Government and the MOET, with ‘the presidents of HEIs responsible for developing the curricula of programs of study (disciplines) based on the discipline-based education frameworks issued by the MOET’ (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a, p. 5, researcher translation).

In addition, the roles and responsibilities of HEIs in managing the planning of curriculum also include:

Hiệu trưởng trường cao đẳng, trường đại học có trách nhiệm tổ chức biên soạn và duyệt giáo trình các môn học để sử dụng chính thức trong trường trên cơ sở thẩm định của Hội đồng thẩm định giáo trình do hiệu trưởng thành lập; bảo đảm có đủ giáo trình phục vụ giảng dạy, học tập.

Presidents of higher education institutions are responsible for organising activities relating to the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks and approving the designed materials and selected textbooks to be officially used within the institutions, based on the assessment results of the curriculum planning assessment boards established by the presidents of the institutions.

(Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2005a, article 41, item 2, p.34, researcher translation)

These responsibilities are further affirmed in the HE Law (Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012) which states that the management of CP within HEIs is restricted to the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks. This is done by the institution through a committee of instructional materials design and the committee of instructional materials evaluation established by the institution’s president under procedures for the establishment and

requirements for members of the committees regulated by the MOET (MOET, 2011a).

Specifically, it is regulated by the MOET (MOET, 2011a, Article 7, p. 3, researcher translation) that:

Trên cơ sở đề nghị của Khoa, Hiệu trưởng chỉ đạo, tổ chức biên soạn giáo trình để phục vụ giảng dạy, học tập cho các môn học trong chương trình đào tạo của Khoa.

...Hiệu trưởng thành lập Ban biên soạn giáo trình hoặc giao nhiệm vụ trực tiếp cho cá nhân nhà khoa học có trình độ, đúng chuyên môn và kinh nghiệm biên soạn giáo trình.

Based on the faculties' suggestion, the president is responsible for directing and organising the design of instructional materials for courses of study within the degree programs of study.

...the president is responsible for establishing the committee of instructional materials design or assigns the design of instructional materials to suitably experienced and qualified individuals or professionals to do.

It is also regulated that:

Các cơ sở giáo dục đại học không đủ điều kiện tổ chức biên soạn giáo trình thì Hiệu trưởng tổ chức lựa chọn, duyệt giáo trình phù hợp với chương trình đào tạo để làm tài liệu giảng dạy, học tập chính thức.

When the higher education institution does not have enough conditions for organising the design of instructional materials, the institution's president is responsible for organising the selection of instructional materials and approving suitable instructional materials for the programs of study, used as official instructional materials for the teaching and learning activities.

(MOET, 2011a, Article 12, p.5, researcher translation)

At the micro management level, roles and responsibilities of HEIs in CPM are largely exercised in the form of institutional policy documents and regulations, which are constructed to reflect the Government's and the MOET's regulations about CPM. Since many documents from the MOET are not directly disseminated to individual academic staff, the use of institutional documents, therefore, helps curriculum planners and academic staff from different faculties and departments know how to plan the curriculum in order to comply with the regulations of the MOET. These internal documents are in the form of strategic plans and/or institutional rules and regulations for CP which complement the institution's educational objectives.

Assisting the president in producing these policy documents is the institution's Department of Admission and Training (DAT), which operates as an advisory board to the president. In addition to policy development, the DAT is also responsible for following up, evaluating and reporting to the president on the implementation by departments and faculties of the policy documents for CP, cooperating with other faculties and departments to organise the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks and advising the president on the review and evaluation of curricula of disciplines of study.

Data obtained from four interviewees indicated that the DAT is also responsible for developing a list of courses of study, which includes both compulsory and foundational courses. According to these interviewees, this list of courses of study is sent to the relevant departments and faculties of disciplines of study for further CP. As these interviewees explained, the departments and faculties of disciplines of study are responsible for CP of specialised courses of study which are related to their disciplines, while all compulsory and foundational courses of study are developed in accordance with the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks.

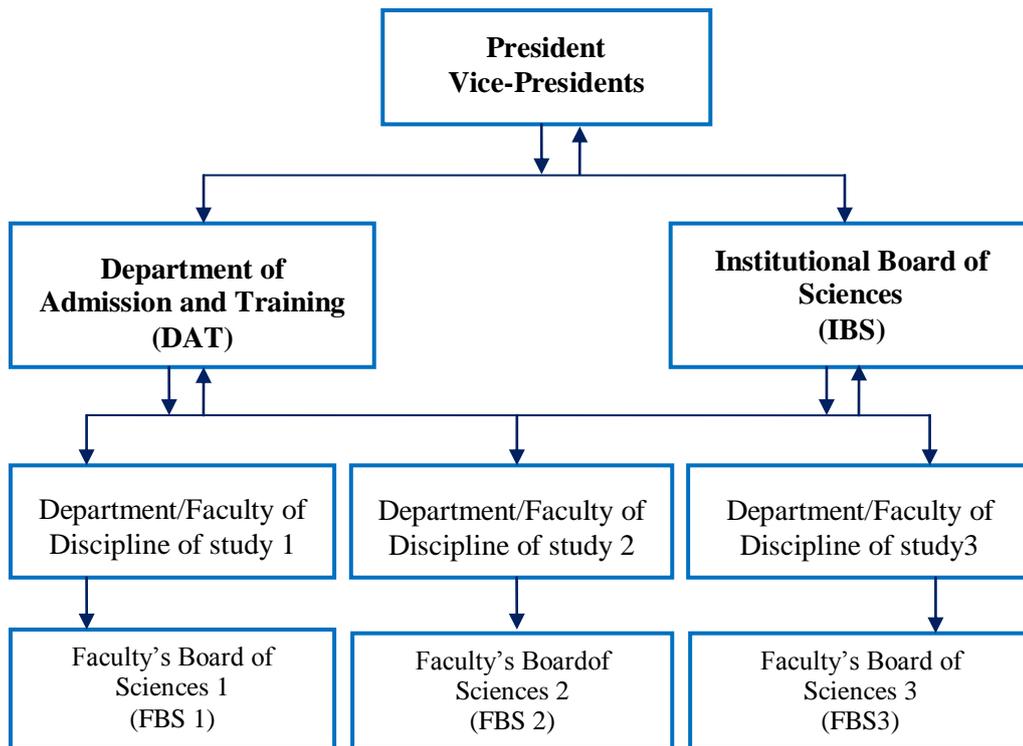
In addition, each institution establishes its own board of sciences (also known as board of sciences and training) for CPM (MOET, 2011 a). The number of board members varies, depending on the size and scope of the institution. Members may include representatives of the DAT, academic staff from different disciplines of study and curriculum professionals from within or beyond the institution. The main functions of the board are to review, evaluate and report to the president (or vice-presidents) on the development of curriculum outlines, the selection of textbooks and the design of instructional materials used within the institution (MOET, 2011 a). After reviewing the curriculum outlines of different disciplines, the board of sciences of the institution sends these curriculum outlines, with their comments, back to the departments or faculties for their further development and amendment. CP managed through the boards of sciences of institutions was commented on by 13 interviewees all of whom reported that all CP activities or products needed to be approved by the board of sciences and training of the institutions before they were sent to the MOET for approval or put into practice.

In order to assist the heads and vice-heads of each faculty in CP, each disciplinary faculty, too, establish a board of sciences which is responsible for organising all activities relating to CP, reviewing and evaluating all curriculum outlines of different disciplines of study submitted by CP groups or teams. These approved outlines of curriculum are submitted to the head or vice-heads of the departments or faculties of disciplines of study for their final review and amendment before they are sent to the board of sciences of the institution. Six interviewees confirmed that members of the faculty's board of sciences include the faculty's leaders, full time teaching staff and visiting lecturers. According to these interviewees, lecturers of other HEIs may have been invited to participate if the faculty's academic staff were not available for CP of a particular discipline of study.

These complex arrangements for CPM at HEIs are, according to three interviewees, further complicated by the involvement of other departments from within the institution, including the department of international cooperation and the department of student services which assist in investigating the needs of the industry related to CP by developing links with industry, collecting feedback from the industry and employers on graduates, and organising internships for students.

In summary, the management of CP at the micro level is mainly aimed at the translation of the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks and related regulations about CP into practice, the design of instructional materials and the selection of textbooks for the disciplines. As Hayden and Lam (2007) comment, one of the outcomes of the centralisation of CPM in Vietnamese HE is that departmental and faculty plans and outlines of CP are not implemented until they have been approved by the leaders of the institution and the DAT. Similarly, activities relating to CP, including the selection of textbooks and the design of instructional materials, are not put into practice until they are approved by the MOET.

Diagram 5.2 Management of Curriculum Planning at the Micro Level



Part two: Approaches to Curriculum Planning Management: Views and Beliefs

5.3 Demographic Information

With 161 questionnaires distributed, 142 responses were collected (88 per cent). Two responses were discarded since only demographic information was provided. The remaining 140 responses represent a response rate of 87 per cent of the total number of questionnaires distributed.

Data collected from the questionnaire showed that information about respondents' gender was simply demographic information, and that it did not play a role in the interpretation of the study's findings.

It was showed by collected data from the questionnaire that more male respondents (55 per cent) participated in the questionnaire than females (45 per cent); and that there were more respondents from institution C than from A and B. Table 5.1 presents the number of respondents from each HEI and the respondents' gender in detail.

Table 5.1 Number of Respondents and Gender by Institution.

Institution	Male	Female	Total
A	32	18	50 (36%)
B	17	18	35 (25%)
C	28	27	55 (39%)
Total	77 (55%)	63 (45%)	140 (100%)

Examination of the respondents' work positions and their gender showed that more respondents at a higher level of management (i.e. institution and faculty leaders) participated in the research (69 per cent) than those at a lower level of management (i.e. CP academics- 31 per cent). Within the number of respondents at a higher level of management, male respondents outnumbered female respondents, comprising 58 per cent of the total. Table 5.2 presents the two variables of respondents' work position and gender across the three HEIs.

Table 5.2 Distribution of Respondents' Position and Gender

Institution	Institution leaders		Faculty leaders		CP members	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
A	1	2	26	8	5	8
B	2	0	12	15	2	4
C	3	1	12	15	13	11
Sub-total	6 (4 %)	3 (2 %)	50 (36%)	38 (27%)	20 (14%)	23 (16%)
Total	9 (6%)		88 (63%)		43 (31%)	

With regard to respondents' academic qualifications and their CP and CPM experience, results showed that there were more respondents with a doctoral degree (nearly 68 per cent) than respondents with a masters degree (32 per cent) as their highest level qualification. However, the data also showed that the number of respondents with more than ten years of experience in the field of CP and CPM (24 per cent) was fewer than those with less than ten years of experience in the field (76 per cent). Table 5.3 presents the distribution of respondents' academic qualifications and their CP and CPM experience across the three HEIs.

Table 5.3 Distribution of Respondents' Academic Qualifications and Curriculum Planning Experience

Institution	More than 10 years work experience		Less than 10 years work experience	
	PhD	MA	PhD	MA
A	5	1	33	11
B	11	2	11	11
C	11	3	24	17
Sub-total	27 (19%)	6 (4%)	68 (49%)	39 (28%)
Total	33 (24%)		107 (76%)	

5.4 Questionnaire: Results of Closed-questions

5.4.1 *Current Approaches to Curriculum Planning Management, Satisfaction Levels and Preferred Approaches to Curriculum Planning Management*

Closed-questions in the questionnaire, which included items 1 and 3 of section 2 and item 1 of section 3 (see appendix 1), collected information about the participants' perspectives on the current approach to CPM at their institution, their satisfaction levels with this approach and preferred approach to CPM.

All 140 questionnaire participants reported that CPM at their institutions was completely controlled by the Government through the national discipline-based education frameworks.

In response to the question about participants' satisfaction levels with the current approach to CPM, a small number of respondents (1 per cent) reported that they were highly satisfied with the current approach; however, this level of satisfaction was not uniform across the three institutions. Nineteen respondents from institutions A and C (14 per cent) identified that they were quite satisfied with the current approach to CPM at their HEIs. Among this group of respondents, respondents from institution A were more satisfied with the current approach than those from institution C.

On the other hand, 91 respondents (65 per cent) expressed a very high level of dissatisfaction with the current approach to CPM at their institution. Among this group of respondents, institution C had the highest number of respondents with a high level of dissatisfaction, followed by those from institution B and A respectively. These data showed that expressed levels of dissatisfaction varied widely across institutions.

However, comparing the number of respondents who were highly dissatisfied with the current approach to CPM, respondents from institution B were more dissatisfied with the current approach than those from institutions C and A. Specifically, 31 out of 35 respondents (nearly 89 per cent) at institution B were very dissatisfied with the current approach to CPM. At institution C, 41 out of 55 respondents (75 per cent) were dissatisfied with the current approach to CPM. Only 19 respondents from institution A (38 per cent) identified that they were highly dissatisfied with the current approach to CPM at their HEI. However, the overall dissatisfaction levels (i.e. the combined number of slightly and very dissatisfied respondents) at institutions A, B and C approached 70 per cent, 94 per cent and 85 per cent respectively. Table 5.4 presents the distribution of respondents' satisfaction levels across the three HEIs.

Table 5.4 Levels of Respondents' Satisfaction with
the Current Approach to Curriculum Planning Management

Levels of satisfaction	Number of respondents	%	Number of respondent distributed for each institution		
			Institution A	Institution B	Institution C
Highly satisfied	2	1	1	1	0
Quite satisfied	19	14	14	0	5
Slightly dissatisfied	24	17	16	2	6
Very dissatisfied	91	65	19	31	41
No opinion	4	3	0	1	3
Total	140	100	50	35	55

Asked to identify their preferred approach to CPM, two main options emerged. 72 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that HEIs should be completely responsible for CPM at their institutions (Approach 1) i.e. that institutional autonomy in CPM should be the norm.

Another preferred approach to CPM (Approach 2) was that the Government should set the expected outcomes for education, but the institutions should determine the means by which these outcomes would be realised. This second approach was supported by 39 survey participants or 28 per cent of the total number of respondents. Table 5.5 presents the distribution of respondents for each preferred approach to CPM across the three HEIs.

Table 5.5 Distribution of Respondents for the Preferred Approaches to Curriculum Planning Management

Institution	Approach 1	%	Approach 2	%	Total
A	38	27	12	9	50
B	20	14	15	11	35
C	43	31	12	9	55
Total	101	72	39	28	140

Approach 1: full institutional autonomy conferred on HEIs for CPM.

Approach 2: CP managed by HEIs with institutional responsibility to meet the Government's defined outcomes

5.4.2 Current Approaches to Curriculum Planning Management and the Curriculum

To gather further information on the survey participants' views about the current approaches to CPM implemented at their HEI, question item 2 of section 2 in the questionnaire focused on exploring how the curriculum was planned by the institution, based on its CPM approach. This item was designed on a Likert-type scale, with the choice of answers including 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' and 'neither agree nor disagree'. The item included nine statements describing different aspects of curriculum for the survey participants' selection.

Analysis of data collected for this item showed that respondents believe that the current curriculum of the three HEIs was planned with clear statements of intended learning outcomes (100 per cent). The items which investigated the involvement of stakeholders (i.e. representatives from the industry and different societal organisations) in the planning of curriculum showed that respondents believe that curriculum is designed with little involvement of different stakeholders and 110 respondents (over 78 per cent) reported that curriculum at their institution is

designed without any involvement from stakeholders. Of the 22 per cent who indicated that there was some involvement by stakeholders in curriculum design, institution C demonstrated the greatest degree of involvement (13 per cent).

Just over half of all respondents (52 per cent) were of the view that curriculum design in their institution is not an ongoing process (writing, implementing and assessing) and 71 per cent believed that the curriculum of their institution did not include adequate guidelines for teaching and learning. There were marked institutional differences in relation to both these items, with respondents from institution C having the strongest views on these two matters.

If the intent of the curriculum is to impart the skills and knowledge that society needs, 109 respondents (or 78 per cent) were of the view that the curriculum does not meet this goal, with all 140 respondents (100 per cent) reporting that the curriculum does not help develop students intellectually. One hundred and thirty eight respondents (98 per cent) held the view that the curriculum does not help to develop students as individuals in society.

A number of items explored information about the instructors' flexibility in teaching and opportunity for professional development when the planned curriculum was put into practice. In relation to the item about instructors' flexibility in teaching, more than 87 per cent of respondents reported that instructors in their institution had no flexibility to make changes to the current curriculum according to need, with a much smaller number (11 per cent) indicating that instructors in their institution were able to make changes to the curriculum. Concerning the opportunity for instructors' professional development, among 140 respondents, 28 respondents did not identify whether their institution provided instructors with opportunities for professional development, while sixty four respondents (46 per cent) reported that they did not have opportunities for professional development; the remaining 36 respondents (26 per cent) indicated that they were provided with opportunities for professional development.

Table 5.6 Distribution of Respondents' Views and Beliefs towards the Current Approach to Curriculum Planning Management across Three Higher Education Institutions

	SA	A	D	SD	NA ND
The current approach to CPM ensures that...					
a. the curriculum includes clear learning outcomes for each discipline.		140 (100%)			
b. the curriculum is designed with the involvement of various stakeholders.		30 (22%)	110 (78%)		
c. curriculum design is an on-going process of writing, implementing and assessing.		67 (48%)	73 (52%)		
d. the curriculum comprises necessary guidelines for teaching and learning.		41 (29%)	99 (71%)		
e. the curriculum includes knowledge and skills that the society currently needs.		31 (22%)	109 (78%)		
f. the curriculum helps develop students intellectually.			108 (77%)	32 (23%)	
g. the curriculum helps develop students as individuals in society.			114 (81%)	24 (17%)	2 (1%)
h. instructors have opportunities to make changes to the curriculum according to need.		16 (11%)	122 (87%)		2 (1%)
i. instructors have opportunities for professional development.	4 (3%)	32 (23%)	64 (46%)		40 (28%)

SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree, SD:

Strongly Disagree, NAND: Neither Agree Nor Disagree

5.5 Results of Open Questions and Interviews

This section presents findings incorporated from the open-ended questions in the written survey (i.e. question items 4, 5 of section 2 and items 2, 3, 4 of section 3 in the questionnaire) and data collected from the semi-structured interviews with

thirteen practitioners of CPM from the MOET and the three HEIs involved in the research.

Three overarching themes were developed during the analysis of the combined data: academic factors, resource factors and managerial factors. Each theme included several sub-themes, which were developed and categorised using in-vivo codes. Each of the major themes is described in more detail below, together with its sub-themes. The first theme of ‘academic factors’ includes: addressing students’ and society’s needs in CP; addressing political ideals in CP; flexibility in CP and teaching; and the evaluation, review and update of curriculum. The theme of ‘resource factors’ presents issues relating to resources for CP and CPM such as teaching and learning facilities, budget provision for CP and CPM, staff training and staff development. The theme of ‘managerial factors’ includes information relating to roles of the MOET and the HEIs in CP and CPM and issues concerned with consistency of approach, confusion and change in implementing the MOET’s regulations and policy documents for CP and CPM.

5.5.1 Academic Issues

5.5.1.1 Addressing Student and Society Needs in Curriculum Planning

Data collected from the written survey and semi-structured interviews demonstrated a belief on the part of respondents that HEIs need to manage their CP in accordance with the needs of society and, in particular, the needs of their students and that the Government needs to support and assist HEIs in analysing societal needs so that an effective approach to CPM can be developed.

In order to do this, some survey respondents and interviewees believed that there are several tasks for the Government to undertake, including:

- developing plans for the management of CP of HEIs
- updating information about industry’s employment needs
- developing procedures for CP
- constructing and updating management policies for CP in HEIs
- considering students’ need for academic transfer between HEIs in constructing management policies for CP

Fifty eight survey respondents expressed the view that the Government needs to have specific long and short term plans for the management of CP in HEIs. A smaller number - 28 respondents - believed that the Government has a responsibility to update information about the employment needs of industry and guide HEIs to undertake CP in accordance with those needs. The third task advocated by five respondents was that the Government has a role in identifying and developing procedures for CP in HEIs to ensure that the planning outcomes meet the needs of industry. Some survey respondents and interviewees maintain that the Government needs to focus on constructing and constantly updating management policies for CP in HEIs to ensure that students are provided with the knowledge and skills that society and industry demand. Concerning the issue of construction and update of the management policies for CP of HEIs, some interviewees added that the Government needs to cooperate with different stakeholders to develop appropriate policies for CPM in HEIs.

Finally, students' needs in relation to academic transfer between HEIs in Vietnam was raised as an important issue. Some interviewees claimed that although the credit transfer system had been in place in Vietnam for several years, it was impossible for students to transfer their academic results from one institution to another. Two interviewees reported that students can have their study results transferred from one discipline of study to another within an institution. According to these interviewees, this situation is the result of the lack of legislation by the Government to make explicit for the credit transfer education system. One of these interviewees (Interviewee 11) commented that it was a credit transfer education system in name only, as it does not allow students to transfer their academic results from one HEI to another and that students' needs for recognition of prior results were not taken into consideration by HEIs. This interviewee claimed that:

Thật sự là sinh viên không có tự do nào. Nói tín chỉ, nhưng thật sự là ta sắp sinh viên vô những chỗ ta muốn, cái kiểu như thế. Cho nên, em thấy mô hình gọi là tín chỉ hiện nay...uhm không thật sự là tín chỉ, sinh viên không có lựa chọn nào mà theo sự sắp xếp của nhà trường.

Students really don't have any flexibility. The credit transfer system is implemented in such a way that students are placed in the positions that we want to, just like that. So, I think what we call credit transfer education system,...uhm, it's not really a credit transfer system when students do not have any options, but just follow the institutions' arrangement.

It was suggested by these interviewees that the Government needs to consider students' needs for credit transfer when constructing policies for the management of CP.

At the institutional level, a large number of survey respondents and interviewees believed that HEIs need to be more active in promoting CP in accordance with society and student needs. Specifically, 48 survey respondents identified that each HEI should be called onto develop strategic plans for managing the planning of curriculum to meet the needs of industry and to respond to the changes in the globalised context of HE in Vietnam. Thirty respondents suggested that HEIs should regularly examine the CP of disciplines to ensure that this task is done in accordance with the Government's regulations and that industry's needs are taken into account.

Several interviewees offered the view that curriculum planners need to take into consideration students' and industry's feedback. This feedback, it was argued, should be regularly obtained from industry and employers who employ graduates from HEIs, as well as from graduates of the institutions who have gained employment after graduation. Amendment of curriculum based on such feedback can help HEIs to ensure that the curriculum is planned in accordance with the needs of industry and with a view to enhancing the employment prospects of students.

Interviewee 2 commented that:

...đặc biệt, anh thấy không biết có đúng không chứ cái cần phải hỏi, người cần hỏi là người đã ra trường, họ đã đi làm việc. Chính đối tượng đó...vì họ đã ra trường, thì họ sẽ biết là ở trường đại học họ đã được học cái gì và đã khi ra trường, họ đã đi làm, thì họ biết cái nào là cái cần thiết cho họ...họ biết...ah, đáng lẽ ra trong trường tôi được học cái này thì hay hơn. Thì theo anh nghĩ, cái thông tin đó cũng nên survey đối với đối tượng là các nhà doanh nghiệp nè, những nơi sử dụng người lao động, và thứ hai là những người đã ra trường, họ cần hỏi những alumni.

...especially, I don't know if it is correct or not, but we need to ask..., we need to ask people who are graduates, who have already got jobs. It is these people....because they have already graduated, they will know what they have learned from their university and when they graduate, they go to work, they know what is necessary for them...they know...ah it would be better if I have been taught this or that. I think, we should also survey those people from industry who directly use the labour and, secondly, those people who have graduated, we need to collect feedback from alumni.

Furthermore, one senior leader of a HEI expressed the view that HEI leaders need to develop links with external stakeholders, including industry and employers, to get advice on the educational outcomes of the institution and that they should be actively involved in the planning, reviewing and updating of curriculum to ensure that CP is done in accordance with the real needs of industry.

In addition to feedback sources, some interviewees also suggested that HEIs need to consider feedback from the instructors who are directly involved in the implementation of the curriculum. Being directly involved in the implementation of the curriculum, instructors have a better understanding of student needs; they know how curriculum could be changed to respond to these needs and the demands emanating from the development of information and communication technologies.

At present, according to an interviewee from the MOET, although it is required by the MOET that HEIs collect feedback from students, industry and employers for the purposes of reviewing and amending CP and curriculum, there is no audit by the MOET to determine if HEIs adhere to this regulation. In addition, according to one interviewee, when students realise that their feedback is not taken into consideration in review of the curriculum, feedback was meaningless and not taken seriously.

Interviewee 7 explained that:

Có rất nhiều yêu cầu là các trường phải lấy ý kiến sinh viên, phải lấy ý kiến của nhà tuyển dụng để phục vụ cho việc đánh giá và sửa đổi chương trình. Nhưng cái việc giám sát xem các trường có thực hiện hay không thì rõ ràng mình đang bỏ ngỏ. Sinh viên khi mà được hỏi ý kiến để anh góp ý thì anh thấy là ý kiến của tôi sau đó chẳng được thay đổi gì hết, thì cái việc đó nó trở thành vô nghĩa và học cũng không mong muốn là góp ý sao cho nó thực chất.

There have been many regulations that feedback from students and employers need to be collected for the review and amendment of curriculum planning and curriculum. However, we still lack activities relating to the examination and audit of whether these regulations are implemented. When students realise that their feedback on curriculum has not been used or do not result in any change in curriculum, they do not seriously send their feedback on curriculum to institutional leaders; collecting feedback becomes meaningless.

As a result, another interviewee claimed that CP in HEIs was presently based on the MOET's regulations for CP (through the discipline-based education frameworks and related regulations for CP at HEIs) and, to a lesser extent, on what the instructors

thought was necessary ‘without referring to the students’ opinions about what they wanted to study’ (Interviewee 2). Interviewee 2 claimed that:

Chứ nào giờ mình toàn thấy thiết kế chương trình là do từ giảng viên mang tính áp đặt...chứ thật ra học viên họ cũng cần cái đó. Cứ nghĩ là họ cần chứ không có sự tham khảo ý kiến của học viên...Thế thì cái dân chủ trong thiết kế chương trình là quan trọng. Cần phải tìm hiểu, lấy ý kiến, phải lắng nghe họ để xem nguyện vọng của họ thế nào chứ, đúng không? Chứ nào giờ mình làm mà mình nghĩ là họ thích, họ cần; điều này mang tính áp đặt.

I have only seen that curriculum is planned with ideas imposed by instructors...actually students also need that (contributing their opinions into curriculum planning). Curriculum is planned based on what they think is necessary without collecting feedback from students...So, autonomy in curriculum planning is important. We need to study, collect feedback, listen to students to understand what they want, don't we? We have been planning curriculum based on what we think students like and need; this is a strict imposition.

5.5.1.2 Addressing Political Ideals in Curriculum Planning

According to one interviewee, the current configuration of some discipline-based courses of study is not reasonable. Students need to wait until the third or the fourth year of study to be introduced to their major (specialised) discipline(s) of study, as the early phases of their program was filled with compulsory and foundational courses of study unrelated to their discipline. This interviewee (Interviewee 7) claimed that:

...nhưng mà sinh viên của mình thì hay than phiền là những năm đầu tiên của các em, theo các em...chưa đụng gì tới cái chuyên ngành của các em cả, điều này làm cho các em mất đi sự say mê học tập, mãi đến năm thứ 4 hoặc thứ 5 hoặc cuối năm thứ ba gì đó thì các em mới bắt đầu tiếp xúc với chuyên ngành, thì như vậy các em chưa định hướng việc học được, phải đợi mãi đến năm thứ tư hoặc thứ năm của chương trình học.

... students often complain that, in the first years of their program of study, as they emphasise...they have not had any chance to study with their specialised (major) disciplines of study, which make them lose their interests and motivation in study; they don't begin to study with their specialised disciplines of study until the fourth or the fifth or by the end of the third year of their program of study; so, they can't have direction for their study until the fourth or the fifth year of their program of study.

One senior leader suggested that the percentage of the compulsory or foundational courses of study in the curriculum should be reduced. This interviewee added that

the discipline-based courses of study varied, depending in which major discipline of study the student was enrolled. This interviewee (Interviewee 8) commented that:

...có thể chấp nhận các môn này trong chương trình khung, nhưng tỷ lệ phải giảm đi nữa. Hiện tại những môn gọi là đại cương đó nó chiếm khoảng 40 credits, tức chiếm khoảng 30% thì vẫn còn cao; nó bó chân bó tay cái phần sau.

...these courses are acceptable, but there should be a reduction of percentage of these courses in curriculum. At present, these courses of study which are known as foundational courses count about 40 credits or about 30 per cent. This percentage is still too much, limiting curriculum planners to have adequate planning for the other parts of the program.

The issue of course configuration in curriculum was raised by several other interviewees. According to one interviewee, although compulsory and foundational courses count for a high percentage of the program, it is necessary to have these components in the curriculum to reinforce students' political ideals. This view was supported by another interviewee who added that, although some foundational courses of study are not really helpful to students (i.e. not related to students' major disciplines of study), it is important to have the compulsory courses of study in the curriculum to ensure that students understand the country's political system and governance. This interviewee commented that:

Ở một góc độ của chính phủ, ở góc độ của Bộ Giáo dục thì người ta có cái lý do của người ta khi người ta đưa cái tư tưởng Hồ Chí Minh hoặc là lịch sử Đảng vào chương trình. Mình lý giải theo cái cách của Bộ Giáo dục, thì việc đó nó hợp lý. Hợp lý là tại sao? Hợp lý ở chỗ rằng là cái xứ sở của mình mà mình không biết về lịch sử thì không ok. Mà chính phủ này, đất nước này là có Đảng Cộng sản cầm quyền, đúng không ạ? Thì hiểu biết về cái chính đảng của cái quốc gia này cũng là điều hợp lý.

From the Government's viewpoint, the Ministry of Education and Training's viewpoint, it is reasonable for them to configure such courses of study as Ho Chi Minh ideals or history of the communist party into curriculum. I think it is reasonable to do so, if we understand this issue from the Ministry of Education and Training's viewpoint. Why is it reasonable? It is reasonable because it is not ok if we live in a country but we don't understand about the history of the country. The Government of this country, this country is governed by the Communist Party, isn't it? So, it is reasonable that we need to understand about the governance of the country and its governing party.

5.5.1.3 Flexibility in Curriculum Planning

Although the national education frameworks were seen as a key mechanism for managing the planning of curriculum of HEIs, some interviewees believe that they had some flexibility in implementing the education frameworks. According to these interviewees, the discretion of institutions manifests itself in a number of ways, including the opportunity for HEIs to allocate the elective courses of study to the credit transfer education system. As some interviewees explained, CP for the academic year education system did not allow HEIs to add courses of study to the curriculum that are not regulated by the education frameworks. With the credit transfer education system, HEIs could select some courses of study from the regulated list of elective courses of study issued by the MOET for students' option.

The second form of flexibility in using the education frameworks, as identified by interviewee 12, is related to the amendment of curriculum when using the education frameworks. According to this interviewee, since the discipline-based education frameworks regulate discipline knowledge and the time allocation for courses of study, HEIs are not permitted to make changes unless the MOET's approval is obtained. In addition, as this interviewee added, teachers are not permitted to make amendment to the approved curriculum if there is no permission from the institution itself. As a consequence of these time-consuming and complex approval processes, teachers simply follow the education frameworks for their CP and keep using the approved curriculum for years, despite the fact that the education frameworks and curriculum are out-dated. Teachers choose not to spend time amending the approved curriculum. Ironically, as this interviewee commented, the frameworks provide some benefit to both teachers and HEIs, as the reduced time teachers spend on CP has saved institutions considerable expense. This interviewee commented that:

Riêng về thuận lợi đối với chương trình khung thì có lẽ là...em đỡ mất thời gian, đúng không chị? Đỡ mất thời gian, đỡ tốn kém của trường. Tại vì mỗi lần thay đổi chương trình thì phải pay chứ, pay cho cái công người ta làm, pay cho giáo trình, chị phải mua giáo trình, rất là nhiều thứ, rồi học sinh nhiều khi...chị dạy một quyển sách đâu bao giờ chị dạy hết trong một học kỳ đâu, thế thì nếu mà chị đổi sách đột ngột quá học sinh lại phải mua giáo trình mới thì nó complain nữa. Cho nên, học sinh cũng lợi chứ, rồi trường cũng lợi, khỏi phải tốn nhiều tiền, công sức của giáo viên nữa. Em nghĩ nó chỉ được cái lợi ở chỗ đó đó chị.

For the advantages of using the discipline-based education frameworks, it may be [pause]...they save my time, don't they? It helps to save time and expenses of the institution. It is because we have to pay for every time we make change to curriculum, we need to pay for staff who are involved in the amendment of curriculum, pay for new instructional materials and textbook, so many things,...and students sometimes....when you use a textbook, you hardly finish teaching with the textbook within one semester. So, when you change the textbook, students have to buy new textbooks, they will definitely complain about this. So, using the discipline-based education frameworks is beneficial to students and institution as well; it saves money and efforts of instructors. I think, it is the only advantage of using the frameworks.

However, most interviewees from HEIs claimed that using the education frameworks results in lack of flexibility in managing the planning of curriculum. The first type of restriction identified by two interviewees was the strict implementation of the education frameworks by staff from the MOET. According to these interviewees, the MOET staff responsible for managing the planning of curriculum of HEIs did not fully understand the discipline-based education frameworks and the purposes of the Government in using the education frameworks for managing CP in HEIs. As a result, as these interviewees explained, these MOET staff managed CP by mechanistically observing all details in the education frameworks and examining the planning of curriculum by reference to these details, regardless of whether these details were included in the institutions' curriculum or not. As indicated by these interviewees, the MOET's staff are pre-occupied with details such as the names of the courses of study (without considering the knowledge and skills allocated for the courses), the number of credits and time allocated for the courses (without considering the characteristics of the courses and the disciplines of study) (Interviewees 3 and 4). One of these interviewees (Interviewee 3) claimed that:

Cái khó hiện nay ở đây chính là sự cứng nhắc trong việc thực hiện chương trình khung...từ cái môn học....các vị vận hành hiện nay cứ hiểu theo nghĩa là môn học, không có cái môn học đó thì chết tôi rồi, cứ...tin học đại cương. Cái thời này tin học đại cương nó có thể biến thể thành tin học văn phòng, nó có thể là một thứ tin học cộng đồng hay là cái gì đó...huh. Đó là cái điểm mà tôi thấy người đang vận hành chương trình khung chưa hiểu rõ, mà tôi thấy còn cứng nhắc.

At present, the difficulty is the mechanistic implementation of the discipline-based education frameworks...only based on the names of the courses of study...people who are involved in the management of curriculum planning at higher education institutions simply understand that

curriculum planning must be done based on the names of the courses of study which are regulated in the discipline-based education frameworks; and that curriculum planning has not been done in compliance with the discipline-based education frameworks unless the names of the courses which are regulated in the frameworks appear in curriculum, just... 'foundation for computer sciences'. We live in the age that the course of foundation for computer sciences can be changed to computer for office or computer for community services or something else...huh. I think this point has not been well understood by those people who are responsible for managing curriculum planning at higher education institutions.

Some interviewees also claimed that the inflexible implementation of the education frameworks limits the responsibility of HEIs in their CPM and delayed the development of CP of institutions.

The second restriction identified by some interviewees was the time constraints in delivering the discipline-based courses of study. One interviewee claimed that some well-known HEIs found that the current allocation of time for courses of study was not problematic in their CP. However, as this interviewee further added, for less powerful or well-known HEIs, the current allocation of time was too tight for the institutions to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills in their discipline of study. Interviewee 11 commented that:

Thành ra đôi khi nó cũng hơi bị động. Ví dụ như mình muốn học kỳ một học sinh nó phải học bao nhiêu môn đây nè. Nhưng mà vì môn chung và môn bắt buộc nó chiếm nhiều đây thời gian rồi. Mình muốn đưa môn mình vô đây thì nó đung. Nhiều khi nó bị nhiều cái bắt cập như thế, nhưng mà mình cũng đành chịu vì môn chung nhà trường đã làm và sắp sẵn vô hết rồi.

Sometimes, we are passive in our curriculum planning. For example, we want our students to study these courses of study in semester 1. However, we are stuck in allocating time for these courses because foundational and compulsory courses of study planned and allocated in the curriculum by the institutions count a considerable amount of time of the curriculum. We can't put our desired courses of study in the curriculum. Sometimes, (although) we find such difficulties in using the education frameworks, we have to accept it.

This position was viewed differently by Interviewee 2, who noted that the time constraints should be considered with reference to the specific context and conditions of teaching and learning of the particular HEI. He explained that:

Còn tùy trường mà nó được bao nhiêu...thì theo anh nghĩ, 30-40% đối với những trường mạnh thì đó là ít; Nhưng đối với những trường mới thành lập hoặc có số lượng cán bộ giảng viên của họ yếu, thì họ cũng trong chờ vào

các qui định của Bộ là chính; chứ họ không tự vẽ ra được cái...cái đó...chương trình của riêng họ.

It depends...for strong higher education institutions, 30-40 per cent of the total amount of time of the curriculum allocated for discipline-based courses of study may be not enough; but for newly established institutions or those which don't have enough academic staff for teaching, they still rely on the Ministry of Education and Training's regulations; they can't create a new curriculum for their own institutions.

This interviewee further suggested that the Government needs to undertake research on the allocation of time for courses of study in the education frameworks before making a decision on this issue. According to him,

...cũng tùy vào nghiên cứu về thời gian cho mỗi môn học mà mình đưa ra. Thứ nhất, là cần xem các nghiên cứu về chương trình của các trường đại học trên thế giới, cái phần đó là bao nhiêu. Dĩ nhiên mình cũng phải học hỏi của họ thôi, đúng không? Cái thứ hai là cần tham khảo ý kiến các nhà chuyên môn cũng như ngay cả sinh viên và đặc biệt anh thấy không biết có đúng không chứ người cần hỏi là người ra đã ra trường, họ đã đi làm.

...it depends on the results of research how much time is needed for each course of study so that we can make final decision. Firstly, we need to study research in curriculum of higher education institutions in the world to see how much time is needed for this course of study, for example. Certainly, we still need to study their experience, don't we? Secondly, we need to collect opinions of curriculum experts and professionals and even students, and especially, I am not sure if I am right, but I think we need to investigate collecting feedback from graduates who have already got jobs.

The third restriction identified by some interviewees was control over the HEIs' allocation of elective courses of study. According to these interviewees, although it was regulated that students were allowed to study some elective courses during their program of study, these courses were chosen by HEIs from the list of electives which is issued by the MOET. As they stated, the HEIs' selection of elective courses of study is strictly controlled by the MOET, including the names and the number of the courses of study, and HEIs are not permitted to add in or omit any courses of study from the regulated list. These interviewees believed that HEIs choose courses of study based on the availability and qualifications of their institutions' teaching staff rather than on the needs and interests of their students. Interviewees of this group claimed that such control of the elective courses of study by the MOET limited HEIs' capacity to respond to the needs of students. Interviewee 11 commented that:

Đúng nghĩa môn tự chọn thì nếu như trường nào có đầy đủ lực lượng giảng viên thì sinh viên được quyền tự chọn trong tất cả những môn học mà Bộ đã đưa ra. Nhưng mà vì chúng tôi đâu có đủ người để làm việc đó, cho nên nói là tự chọn nhưng mà thật ra là gần như mình phải chọn cho sinh viên. Mình chỉ chọn một số môn như thế này thì sinh viên nó sẽ chọn trong những môn mình đã chọn. Chứ không thể thả cho nó chọn hết trong một danh sách dài nhiều đây rồi rồi nó chọn cái môn nào đó mà mình không có người dạy thì không biết làm sao nữa.

If teaching staff are available for all courses of study, the real meaning of elective courses is that students are allowed to select any elective courses listed in the list of elective courses issued by the Ministry of Education and Training. However, since our institution's teaching staff for all courses of study are not available, although they are so-called elective courses of study, the truth is that we almost choose the elective courses of study for our students. We choose some courses of study and students choose their elective courses of study based on the number of courses chosen by us. We cannot let students freely choose elective courses of study from the long list of elective courses to avoid the case that students choose any course of study which we don't have teaching staff for this course; in this case, we really don't know what to do.

Consequently, in relation to the use of the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks for CP in HEIs, two distinct views emerged from the data. The first view, captured in the comments of Interviewees 9, was that 'it is unreasonable to use one common education framework for all disciplines of study as each discipline of study, each HEI has its own characteristics for CP' (*một cái khung chung mà dùng cho tất cả các ngành khác nhau thì đúng là không hợp lý; Mỗi một ngành, một trường nó có đặc trưng riêng*).

Second, it is the belief of some interviewees that it is still useful to have the education frameworks because they limit the discretion of HEIs. As some interviewees explained, HEIs which lack suitably experienced and qualified staff for CP and CPM, such as newly established private institutions, usually invite lecturers from other HEIs to participate in CP at their institution. As a result, curriculum could, without the education frameworks, be planned using the approaches of the institutions from which these lecturers come or planned based on their personal viewpoints, ignoring the characteristics of the host institution or the needs of students. Another problem identified by these interviewees is the possibility that the curriculum of a HEI may be planned based on the HEI's intention of making a profit, with less attention paid to academic issues. Therefore, these interviewees believed

that it is still important to have the education frameworks for CP. As interviewee 2 explained:

Hiện giờ mình có một số các trường gọi là đại học vùng như đại học quốc gia hay là đại học mà nó có một bề dày lâu rồi thì người ta có thể tự thiết kế lại hoặc là bổ sung thêm hoặc là người ta thấy cái khung đó quá gò bó. Nhưng mà đối với những trường tư, anh nghĩ, cái đó (chương trình khung) là cái người ta theo được, là cái họ mong đợi.

At present, some so-called regional higher education institutions (such as national higher education institutions which have strong establishment history, can manage their curriculum planning or make amendment to curriculum or they may find that the education frameworks are too strict to them in curriculum planning management. However, for new higher education institutions such as private ones, I think, they can follow the education frameworks. These are what they expect.

However, in order to create flexibility for HEIs in their management of CP, many survey respondents and interviewees believed that the education frameworks would be enhanced by the inclusion of outcome standards and if their use were to be conceived as a general guide for HEIs in their CPM, rather than being the prescriptive documents that they are at present.

5.5.1.4 Evaluation, Review and Update of Curriculum

Data obtained from the semi-structured interviews illustrate a major concern with the lack of evaluation, review and updating of both the out-dated education frameworks and of local curriculum, a situation attributed to pressure from the credit transfer education system.

According to one interviewee, although the education frameworks are out-dated, the MOET has failed to undertake an evaluation and update of the frameworks and lacks a policy framework to direct its work in this area. In his view, due to the lack of CP and CPM staff, the MOET has not only failed to issue education frameworks for all disciplines of study, but has also failed to conduct regular evaluation and update of the frameworks which have been issued for some disciplines of study. Interviewee 3 commented that:

Hiện nay Bộ quản lý chủ quan. Bộ không có tài thánh nào để kiểm tra được hết tất cả các trường có theo được cái khung của Bộ không. Tại sao ta cứ...? Nhưng ông nào vô tình mà Bộ phát hiện ra thì chết...thật ra Bộ có

kiểm soát được đâu, làm sao mà Bộ có thể kiểm soát được? Tôi nói một trường của tôi, kiểm soát là đội ngũ gồm 4 người, chỉ có một trường của tôi thôi, còn chịu không nổi, thế thì Bộ kiểm soát thế nào? Bộ chỉ là hô hào các trường theo chương trình khung, phải làm thế này, phải thế kia. Bộ chỉ đưa ra chương trình khung chứ chưa có chính sách nào để giám sát được việc thực hiện của các trường.

At present, the Ministry of Education and Training management of curriculum planning at higher education institutions is very subjective, the Ministry of Education and Training cannot conduct examination and evaluation whether higher education institutions have managed their curriculum planning based on the discipline-based education frameworks. Why should we..? but it is unlucky for any institution which is discovered by the Ministry of Education and Training that curriculum planning at the institution has not been done in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Training's education frameworks....actually, the Ministry of Education and Training cannot examine... how can the Ministry of Education and Training can conduct an examination and evaluation of higher education institutions' curriculum planning? Say, only at my institution, there are 4 staff members responsible for all activities relating to review and evaluation of curriculum planning at the institution; we find it hard to fulfil the task. So, how can the Ministry of Education and Training do it? The Ministry of Education and Training only encourages higher education institutions to manage their curriculum planning in compliance with the discipline-based education frameworks; we need to do this or to do that. The Ministry of Education and Training only issues the frameworks, but they have not had any policy for inspecting and evaluating higher education institutions' implementation of the discipline-based education frameworks.

This interviewee also reported that HEIs have been using the out-dated discipline-based education frameworks for their CP for years. One interviewee (Interviewee 8) stated that even when evaluation, review and update of curriculum was undertaken, it was not done because the institution was active in CPM; rather, it was because the institution was pressured to do so by the recent changes from the academic year education system to a credit transfer system.

Some interviewees reported that the review and update of curriculum in their HEIs were done at the end of each academic year or at the end of each intake period. This often resulted in small changes to the curriculum, although it was rarely done in a formal way. Interviewee 2 identified that:

...Khoa họp lại để đánh giá các môn học trong năm nay như thế nào thì anh thấy ít có xảy ra điều đó. Có thể vài ba năm người ta mới đánh giá một lần hoặc...người ta không phải đánh giá một cách chính thức đâu. Không có formal...mà người ta có thể họp lại và hỏi thăm thế thôi. Chứ ví dụ như để tổ chức một cuộc đánh giá đảng hoàng thì không thể làm được.

...on an annual basis, faculties (of disciplines of study) rarely meet for the evaluation of curriculum of the courses of study. Maybe it is done once every two or three years...but it is not done formally. People can meet and ask if there is any change in curriculum (wanted), that's it. It's impossible to organise a formal meeting for evaluation of the curriculum.

However, the frequency of evaluation and updating of curriculum was observed differently by some other interviewees. One interviewee identified that he had not seen any change in curriculum at his institution, so he could not imagine how this task was done (Interviewee 11).

Về thời gian đánh giá và cập nhật lại đề cương chi tiết thì thật sự tôi không rõ lắm, tại vì tôi thấy ở khoa chúng tôi thì sau khi đã được bàn bạc thống nhất với nhau rồi thì anh em cứ thế mà anh em thực hiện, chứ chưa thấy cái tiền lệ thay đổi, nên không hình dung là nó như thế nào.

Concerning time for evaluation and update of the curriculum plan, to tell the truth, I am not really clear about this issue, because I know that, at my faculty, after having agreement on the curriculum, we just put it into practice; I have not seen any routine of making change to the curriculum; I can't imagine how such thing is done.

Several interviewees reported that, as academics, they are not permitted to be involved in the review and update of curriculum since all arrangements and organisation of the courses of study was done for each semester by the DAT which arranges and organises the courses of study based on the MOET's education frameworks and regulations. However, these interviewees claimed that the majority of staff of the DAT are not academic staff who are directly involved in teaching or implementing the approved curriculum (i.e. most of them are general staff dealing with administrative work); they did not know how important it is to have the curriculum reviewed and updated regularly. Consequently, instructors are obliged to continue teaching with the approved curriculum for years despite the fact that the curriculum is outdated. Interviewee 12, one of the interviewees of this group, claimed that:

Không làm được chị ạ; đó là cái thực tế và lý do tại sao chất lượng không có. Tại vì...những người làm công tác ở Phòng Quản lý Đào tạo trường em không có chuyên môn. Ít nhất anh phải hiểu đặc thù từng môn, anh cứ nhìn chung thôi; anh không hiểu được đặc thù từng môn, cho nên mình nói cũng khó lắm. Mình nói không được. Họ nói tại sao những môn khác được mà môn cô không được, cô cứ khó khăn

We can't do anything; it's a reason why higher education quality is low. It's because...people of the Department of Admission and Training of my

institution are not academically qualified. As a minimum, they should understand the particular characteristics of each course of study. At present, they just view the issue generally; they don't understand the particular characteristics of each course of study; it's really difficult for us. We can't explain to them. They just ask us why they can do this or that for other courses of study [keeping teaching without reviewing, evaluating and amending curriculum], but I can't do such thing for my course and blame that I am trying to cause them difficulty.

Several interviewees argued that curriculum revision was done differently (or not at all) by different HEIs. As they explained, some HEIs try to have the curriculum updated at the end of a semester or a school year; others still rely on or wait for the MOET's permission and direction to do so. It is believed that many HEIs do not take this issue seriously. One interviewee is of the view that the lack of CP professionals and staff for managing CP in HEIs is one limit on the MOET's review and updating of curriculum. To overcome this, this interviewee proposes that the MOET should permit HEIs to be responsible for planning the foundational and discipline-based courses of study so that the update of curriculum can be done more regularly, in accordance with the needs of students and industry. Interviewee 7 commented that:

Hiện giờ, quản lý con người bên mảng thiết kế chương trình đó...rõ ràng là nó vẫn đang có rất nhiều bất cập. Nếu đứng ở góc độ giảng viên thì mình cũng không thể nào đổ tội cho học được bởi vì khi mà tiền công như thế thì không đủ để giảng viên theo đuổi nghề và họ phải kiếm sống bên ngoài ...cho nên, tôi nghĩ nếu như mà có thể thì các môn cơ sở ngành và chuyên ngành nên để về phía cho các trường thực hiện. Nếu mà mình làm như thế thì sẽ giúp cho các trường họ...họ hoàn toàn chủ động hơn trong chương trình của mình mà vừa sáng tạo hơn trong việc thiết kế chương trình đáp ứng được với các nhu cầu của xã hội.

At present, we have many difficulties in managing staff for curriculum planning. If we consider the issue from the viewpoint of curriculum planning staff, we can't blame them since the current payment for curriculum planning staff is not enough for them to live with their job, and thus they have to earn living outside...

...so, I think if possible, foundational and discipline-based courses of study should be planned by higher education institutions. If we can do so, we can help higher education institutions.....to be fully active in planning their curriculum and creative in curriculum planning in accordance with society's needs.

As this interviewee explained, HEIs are better able to regularly update the curriculum because they are more in touch with industry and student needs; thus,

they are in a better position to review and update the curriculum to reflect these changing needs.

Another interviewee suggested that the MOET should invite independent accreditation organisations to jointly review and accredit programs of study of HEIs to ensure the quality of their programs of study.

5.5.2 Resource Issues

5.5.2.1 Staff Training and Development

Respondents and interviewees indicated that HEIs do not provide people with sufficient opportunities for their professional development in CP. This was also identified by some interviewees who claimed that CPM staff lacked adequate knowledge and skills for their work. Some interviewees argued that CP in HE is currently managed by many people who are not academically qualified and do not have the experience to work in this field. Consequently, as identified by one interviewee, CP of HEIs is based on the interpretation and understanding of the education frameworks by the MOET's staff (Interviewee 3). This interviewee claimed:

Theo nghĩa chương trình khung nghĩa là mình đảm bảo cái khối lượng kiến thức cốt lõi yêu cầu phải có của một ngành ..., để đảm bảo sinh viên ra trường ít nhất...khối lượng kiến thức ít nhất phải có; còn mỗi trường có sự phát triển của riêng mình. Nhưng mà các vị vận hành hiện nay theo nghĩa là môn học, không có cái môn học đó thì chết tôi rồi.

The meaning of the discipline-based education frameworks is that we must ensure the core knowledge required for a discipline of study in our curriculum planning..., to ensure that graduates master the required knowledge; and each higher education institution has its own direction for development. However, the planning of curriculum is currently managed by the Ministry of Education and Training staff in such a way that curriculum is planned based on the names of the regulated courses of study, and that it's wrong if there is no such courses of study with the name regulated.

In addition, as indicated by interviewee 9, when the academic year education system was changed into the credit transfer system, people who were responsible for CPM in HE did not have the experience to implement this new system. This interviewee commented that:

cái hệ thống tín chỉ, tôi nói thật là, trường nào là ngọn cờ đầu tôi không biết, chứ trường tôi tôi không dám làm ngọn cờ đầu đâu. Khi làm tín chỉ, phải nói là chúng tôi vượt khó. Vượt khó vì chúng tôi muốn học kinh nghiệm từ người khác mà đâu có ai có kinh nghiệm đâu mà học.

the credit transfer education system, to tell the truth, I don't know which university is the pioneer in the implementation of this education system, but I dare not to say my university is the pioneer. When the credit transfer education system was put into practice, we had a real time of overcoming difficulties. We are still trying to overcome difficulties because we want to gain experience in implementing this system from other people, but there is no one who has experience in this system who we can learn from.

According to some interviewees, the training of academic staff in CP is a difficult issue for HEIs. It was reported by several interviewees that the greatest difficulty in CPM of HEIs was human resource management; HEIs still found it difficult to provide training for academic staff of CPM with most interviewees commenting that the MOET needs to provide more training in CP and CPM. Two interviewees reported that although many training courses in CP and CPM have been conducted for academic staff, the outcomes were not positive. As they explained, a large number of CP and CPM staff retain their old habits and way of thinking about CP, refusing to embrace the new approaches advocated in training courses. Additionally, according to these interviewees, poor conditions for conducting training - such as inadequate facilities and minimal budget allocation - limit HEIs' capacity to provide training for their staff. As a result, not many changes in CP and CPM are made. These interviewees are of the view that the refusal of staff to embrace new approaches and lack of training in CP have delayed the development of CP in HEIs. Interviewee 2 explained that:

Để mà train cho họ có được không? Để mà tập huấn cho họ có được không? Khó lắm! làm thế nào tập huấn tràn lan được khi mà họ vẫn giữ thói quen. ..thói quen giảng dạy, cách nghĩ của họ, cái cách triết lý giáo dục của họ; triết lý của họ là...học thuộc lòng là sẽ tốt. Họ nghĩ như vậy, họ suppose như vậy, nhưng mà thực tế không phải vậy.

Hiện giờ, Sài gòn thì được, Huế và Đà Nẵng thì được...các thành phố lớn thì ok, nhưng mà ở thôn quê thì khó. Khó thực hiện được tại vì giảng viên không có, điều kiện training không có.

Can we train them [academic staff for curriculum planning]? can we provide them with training in curriculum planning and curriculum planning management? It's really difficult! How can we train them when they keep their old habits...habits of thinking, teaching and their old thought about

philosophy for education; their philosophy is... is learning by heart is good for teaching and learning. They think so, they suppose so, but it is not true.

At present, Saigon is ok, Hue and Danang... big cities is ok, but it's difficult to do in countryside areas. It is difficult to provide academic staff for curriculum planning with training because we lack academic staff and conditions for conducting training.

In order to perform the CP successfully, in addition to staff training, many survey respondents and interviewees believed that HEIs need to have staff with high academic qualifications and a sound knowledge of CP and CPM. As one of the interviewees of this group indicated,

Do đó, về mặt quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo, trước hết phải đảm bảo tuyển giảng viên cho nó đáng mặt giảng viên. Em tuyển giảng viên có trình độ, có tri thức. Còn một yếu tố mà người ta cũng ít quan tâm, nhưng tôi nghĩ cái này không chỉ xảy ra ở Việt Nam mà ở nhiều nước trên thế giới... đó là những người quản trị đại học cũng cần phải được đào tạo chuyên nghiệp. Họ có thể được đào tạo từ kinh nghiệm, nhưng mà kinh nghiệm đó phải được nâng lên và hệ thống hóa lại... nói chung là trong nhà trường thì giảng viên quan trọng, sinh viên quan trọng nhưng mà người quản lý cũng là quan trọng nữa.

So, for curriculum planning management, firstly, we must make sure that academic staff for curriculum planning are highly qualified. You need to recruit academic staff with high qualification, with good knowledge. There is one element which is not really taken into consideration by people, but I think this happens not only in Vietnam, but also in many countries in the world... It is higher education managers that need to be well educated and professionally trained. These people may be trained from their own experience, but such experience must be advanced and systemised... in general, lecturers are important, students are important, but managers are important, too.

One interviewee commented that CP and CPM staff should be released from administrative work so that they can fully concentrate on their planning work.

5.5.2.2 Other Resource Issues

Resources issues identified by respondents include teaching and learning facilities and budget for effective management of CP. Interviewee 7 reported that most teaching and learning facilities in HEIs are old and out-dated, a view supported by many other interviewees. Many interviewees stressed the importance of having contemporary teaching and learning facilities. As some interviewees stated, in order to manage CP in compliance with the MOET's regulations, HEIs must be well

equipped with contemporary teaching and learning facilities; yet such facilities are not available in many HEIs. Interviewee 7 explained that:

Nếu như để có thể thực hiện việc thiết kế chương trình theo yêu cầu của Bộ thì phải có những cơ sở vật chất đi kèm chẳng hạn như phòng lab, rồi máy tính, v.v. rất là nhiều trang thiết bị chức năng để sử dụng. Chưa kể là có những môn học mà nó đòi hỏi những trang thiết bị như máy móc, dụng cụ riêng...thì hiện giờ việc trang bị những máy móc này hơi bị khó đối với các trường. Ngay cả những tài liệu giảng dạy, tài liệu học tập, rồi thư viện...vẫn là vấn đề nhiều trường đang than phiền không thực hiện được.

In order to plan curriculum in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Training's regulations, it requires higher education institutions to be well equipped with necessary facilities for teaching and learning such as laboratory, computers and so on and other functional equipment; not mention that many courses of study require to have particular machines and tools...this equipment...at present... higher education institutions find it difficult to be equipped with. Even many higher education institutions' leaders complain that they don't have enough instructional materials, learning materials and a library for their teaching and learning activities.

The second issue is the inadequate budget for CP and CPM. According to one interviewee, the salary currently paid to CP and CPM staff is low and not sufficiently high to attract suitably qualified and experienced staff. Some interviewees also added that their institutions do not have a budget for activities relating to CP and CPM. Therefore, according to some interviewees, besides the updating of teaching and learning facilities, a pressing need is for the MOET to develop policies that govern salary and benefits for academic staff and for those responsible for CP if the quality and effectiveness of CPM in HEIs is to be improved. It was suggested by Interviewee 13 that:

Bộ cũng cần ủng hộ các trường trong công tác phát triển đội ngũ giảng viên, đặc biệt là đội ngũ giảng viên tham gia thiết kế chương trình đào tạo đại học. Bộ cần phải có chính sách bồi dưỡng và khuyến khích phát triển đội ngũ này.

Cũng cần phải có chế độ lương bổng phù hợp cho đội ngũ quản lý công tác này để người ta đầu tư trọn vẹn vào công tác, tránh trường hợp giảng viên chạy số để kiếm đồng lương thay vì tập trung vào công việc chính của họ.

The Ministry of Education and Training should support higher education institutions to develop academic staff, especially academic staff for curriculum planning. The Ministry of Education and Training should develop policies for the development of academic staff for curriculum planning at higher education institutions. There should be policies governing salaries for people who are involved in the management of curriculum planning at higher education institutions so that they can fully

concentrate on their work, avoiding a circumstance that academic staff earn their living by having other part-time jobs, instead of concentrating on their main job.

5.5.3 Management Issues

5.5.3.1 The Roles of the MOET

Data obtained from both the survey and semi-structured interviews indicates that there is a belief that the MOET should play the role of a leader and supervisor in examining whether HEIs have fulfilled their commitments regarding the institutions' CPM.

In order to achieve this, according to three interviewees, the MOET must have a long term vision for CPM in HEIs. One interviewee of this group (Interviewee 2) was of the view that the MOET's roles as a leader and a supervisor of CPM of HEIs should be limited to the administrative management of CPM, leaving academic issues for HEIs to handle. This interviewee stated that:

Bộ chỉ nên quản lý hành chính thôi; chứ không thể quản lý chuyên môn được...chuyện này chỉ có các chuyên viên, chuyên gia của trường đại học họ mới làm được...chuyên viên ở Bộ thì không thể bao quát hết tất cả các ngành nghề đâu, nên họ không thể làm được chuyện đó. Họ chỉ quản lý theo kiểu là hồ sơ giấy tờ và biết là chương trình hiện giờ là bao nhiêu, người ta qui định cái đầu vào thế nào, đầu ra thế nào thôi, chứ không...họ không làm việc của các trường đại học được.

The Ministry of Education and Training's role should be limited within administrative management only; They should not involve in managing academic activities at higher education institutions...which can only be done by curriculum professionals and academic staff of higher education institutions...people at the Ministry of Education and Training cannot manage all disciplines of study, so they should not be involved in managing academic tasks of higher education institutions. People of the Ministry of Education and Training should be responsible for managing issues relating to paperwork, managing regulations for curriculum planning at higher education institutions, regulations for the inputs and outputs of higher education...they should not...they cannot do the higher education institutions' tasks.

Second, 14 survey respondents are of the view that the MOET should help HEIs improve their understanding of international trends in CP so that an effective approach to CP can be identified and developed by HEIs.

Third, the majority of survey respondents and interviewees believed that the MOET should focus on developing legislation regulating the management of CP by HEIs and the evaluation of HEIs' implementation of regulations about CPM. Two interviewees explained that these governing regulations would give HEIs direction in their CPM.

Fourth, according to 63 survey respondents (45 per cent) and seven interviewees, as part of its leadership role the MOET should be responsible for constructing the learning outcome standards and/or performance indicators and managing the HEIs' implementation of these standards in their CP. Four interviewees from this group added that these standards and indicators should reflect the core knowledge and the skills for a discipline of study as well as the outcome standards for the discipline. The interviewees offered the view that the learning outcome standards and performance indicators issued by the MOET should be used by HEIs as guidelines for their CPM only, not as official regulations or compulsory education frameworks. One of these interviewees explained that:

...tốt nhất là Bộ cho cái chuẩn kiến thức đầu ra cho các trường. Còn cái khung hiện nay thì cần phải xem lại....Bộ nên đưa ra chuẩn kiến thức để quản lý; cũng có thể là khung, nhưng không phải là khung chương trình...công tác thiết kế chương trình nên đưa lại cho các trường thực hiện.

...the best way is that the Ministry of Education and Training should issue outcome standards for curriculum planning at higher education institutions. The current discipline-based education frameworks need to be reviewed. The Ministry of Education and Training should manage curriculum planning at higher education institutions through the outcome standards only; there may be frameworks for curriculum planning, but it should be frameworks, not curriculum frameworks. curriculum planning should be done by higher education institutions.

5.5.3.2 The Roles of Higher Education Institutions

Some interviewees reported that HEIs presently do not have autonomy in their CPM. They stated that the planning of curriculum of their institutions has to be undertaken in accordance with the MOET's education frameworks, including the opening of new disciplines of study. The majority of survey respondents and interviewees suggested that HEIs need to be given full autonomy so that they can act as determiners of their CPM. One interviewee explained that if HEIs can determine

their CP, they can find their own ways for improving the quality of CP, recognising the specific conditions of teaching and learning of their institutions.

Along these lines, four interviewees added that only when HEIs are given full autonomy in determining all details of knowledge and time allocation for courses of study, will they be more responsible for the quality of CP of their institutions. One of these interviewees emphasised that:

Nếu chúng ta muốn đại học phát triển thì chúng ta nên nghĩ đến việc làm sao cho các trường đại học có được sự tự chủ trong việc xây dựng chương trình, đánh giá chương trình cũng như là...tức là làm sao cho nhà trường hiểu là cái chất lượng là cái trách nhiệm của họ và cái việc anh xây dựng chương trình của anh thế nào để đáp ứng được cái mục tiêu anh đề ra là trách nhiệm của anh đối với Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo, đối với xã hội, đối với sinh viên và đối với công chúng, những người hưởng lợi từ giáo dục. Nếu mà mình giao cái đó hoàn toàn cho trường đại học, tôi nghĩ trường hoàn toàn có thể thực hiện được.

If we want higher education to develop, we should think how to give higher education institutions autonomy in curriculum planning and evaluation of curriculum as well as ...I mean how to make higher education institutions' leaders to understand that they must be responsible for the quality of their educational outcomes and accountable to the Ministry of Education and Training, society, students, the public and those who benefit from higher education for how curriculum should be planned in compliance with the defined objectives. If we assign this task to higher education institutions, I think, higher education institutions can completely do it.

However, the role of HEIs was viewed differently by one interviewee, who believed that HEIs should not rely on the MOET to develop new policies for their CPM; rather, they need to be more pro-active in the planning of curriculum. According to this interviewee, if HEIs take the initiative in CPM they can make changes which will later impact on the Government's policies, and that such changes in CPM policies could help HEIs fulfil their role as a determiners of CP.

5.5.3.3 Inconsistency and Changes in Curriculum Planning

Data obtained from both the survey and the semi-structured interviews indicated that the MOET's management of HEIs' CP through the education frameworks has resulted in inconsistency and confusion in the implementation process.

First, the confusion has resulted from the inconsistency in approaches to constructing the education frameworks. Four interviewees reported that although it is regulated that CP at HEIs needs to be done in accordance with the MOET's education frameworks, some disciplines of study have not been issued with the education frameworks. In addition, as these interviewees added, when the academic year education system was changed into the credit transfer education system, there was no education framework issued for CP of the disciplines of study under this new system. Interviewee 3 commented that:

...chương trình khung nó lồi thối và Bộ không thể cập nhật nhanh được... có chương trình thì không có chương trình khung, có chương trình lại có. Chương trình khung kiểu gì mà có tới 120 tín chỉ. Cái chỗ nào cho nhà trường thiết kế chương trình? Khung la cái lồi, khoảng 40 phần trăm thôi, còn lại thì để cho cơ sở chủ động 60 phần trăm. Còn ở đây, họ chiếm 80 phần trăm, còn 20 phần trăm cho các trường, rất là khó.

...the discipline-based education frameworks are messy and are not promptly updated by the Ministry of Education and Training...some disciplines of study are not issued with the discipline-based education frameworks and some do have; but how can they are called discipline-based education frameworks when the regulated courses of study count 120 credits? There is no room for higher education institutions to plan curriculum. I think, the frameworks should include only core information and so the regulated courses should count about 40 per cent of curriculum only so that higher education institutions have about 60 per cent of curriculum for their own planning; but here, regulated courses of study in the discipline-based education frameworks count 80 per cent of curriculum, higher education institutions have only about 20 per cent for curriculum planning. It's very difficult for higher education institutions in curriculum planning.

According to these interviewees, for those disciplines of study which have not been issued with the disciplined-based education frameworks, the planning of curriculum of these disciplines is done in compliance with the issued education frameworks for other disciplines of study. As one interviewee argued, lack of consistency in the provision and application of education frameworks has caused HEIs confusion in the CP process, especially as the credit transfer education system and the academic year education one are two completely different systems which cannot be combined in CP. Furthermore, this interviewee added that each discipline of study had its own characteristics for CP which cannot use one common framework for CP of all disciplines of study.

Second, some interviewees reported that the MOET's regulations about CP are not sufficiently consistent and transparent, causing confusion. As they explained, although all initiatives which are not regulated in the education frameworks must be approved by the MOET before they can be put into practice, it took the HEIs considerable time to get approval from the MOET. The responses from the MOET sometimes made it unclear as to whether HEIs were permitted to introduce the initiatives or not. Interviewee 3 claimed that:

Quy định là không được làm trái với qui chế, phải xin ý kiến. Nhưng khi mình xin ý kiến một cách công khai thì Bộ không dám trả lời. Cuối cùng là chúng tôi phải hỏi đi, hỏi lại thì ông nói 'được', nhưng câu trả lời này....vẫn không rõ ràng, gây khó cho chúng tôi làm.

It is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Training that we are not allowed to do anything differently from the regulations (education frameworks) and that we need to ask the Ministry of Education and Training for permission before we can do so. However, when we officially ask the Ministry of Education and Training for their opinion about what we are going to do, the Ministry of Education and Training does not give us the answers. Finally, we have to keep asking them many times, and then they say 'yes', but, this answer seems...still unclear, causing difficulty for us to do.

According to this interviewee, HEIs carefully study all related regulations about CP and interpret these policies from the MOET in different ways. Paradoxically, the MOET understands that what the HEIs are doing in CP is actually allowed by the regulations. Some survey respondents suggested that it would be useful for the MOET to construct a new set of policies for effectively managing the planning of curriculum of HEIs, given there are inconsistencies in the current documents.

With regard to changes in CPM, the study revealed that there were three distinct views:

- supporting changes to CPM in HEIs
- considering necessary conditions for changes to CPM in HEIs
- refusing changes to CPM of HEIs

Concerning the first view, Interviewee 4 argued that:

Chúng ta đổi soành soạch, mình đổi liên tục mà mình đổi không có vô chuyện căn cơ phải đổi. Thành ra nó tạo một cảm giác rối mắt cho người ta và người ta không tin nữa. Tại vì người ta thấy đổi hoài mà người ta không thấy sự cải thiện, người ta không có tin.

We have made so many changes, changing all the time, changing without reason. So, all create people with a feeling of distraction. People can't believe in such changes. Changes have been made, but people can't find any improvement. So, people don't trust it anymore.

Furthermore, two interviewees were of the view that changes to CPM of HEIs will not be effective since problems in CPM stem from inadequacies in the lower level of education (i.e. secondary education level), which has a strong impact on CP at the higher education level. Therefore, they suggested that it is important to make changes to CPM at the secondary education level first to help create a consistent system of changes in CPM from the lower to the HE levels. Interviewee 5 stated that:

...tại vì mình thấy vấn đề cốt lõi nó không nằm ở cấp đại học. Cấp đại học đi qua các cấp khác như cấp một, cấp hai, cấp ba...nếu mình chỉ thay đổi cái phần ngọn thôi thì nó chỉ được một phần nào đó, chứ không hẳn thay đổi toàn bộ hệ thống. Phần dưới nó không có để nuôi cái phần trên. Vấn đề là mình cần nghĩ xem làm sao để xây dựng cái nền từ bên dưới, nó cập nhật từ bên dưới. Dĩ nhiên nó cũng cần thời gian vì thay đổi hết lớp này thì nó mới qua lớp khác.

...I think the core issue is not at the higher education level. Before reaching the higher education level, you must study through other educational levels such as elementary, lower secondary and then upper secondary...if we just make change to the top part, changes can be made in some parts, but there is no complete change for the whole system. There is no strong background for the development of the higher level. So, the issue is that we should think how to build a strong background, updating from the background, the lower level first. Certainly, it takes time since changes need to be made through different levels.

The second group of participants generally supported changes to CPM of HEIs and a small number of interviewees believed that positive changes to CPM can be made if effort is put into the reforms or if all projects relating to CPM are run well.

Interviewee 7 commented that:

Những dự án cải cách giáo dục đại học, nếu chúng ta thực hiện tốt thì nó thật sự mang lại những tác động tích cực đối với các trường. Vừa rồi có rất nhiều trường đại học tham gia dự án giáo dục đại học II, tập trung vào việc đào tạo và nghiên cứu của giảng viên. Theo đánh giá của tôi với tư cách là chuyên gia tham gia vào việc đánh giá thực hiện dự án của các trường thì mình thấy nó cũng có một số chuyển biến nhất định trong việc là nhiều trường có thêm nguồn lực để gửi giảng viên ra nước ngoài học tập hoặc để làm quen với xu hướng xây dựng chương trình hoặc là có cơ sở vật chất để phục vụ cho việc giảng dạy và học tập.

If projects for higher education reforms are implemented successfully, they definitely have positive effects on higher education institutions. There have

been many higher education institutions which have participated in the higher education project II, focusing on training and research of academic staff. As an official expert participating in the review and evaluation of higher education institutions' implementation of the project, I can say that there have been many changes to be made such as higher education institutions have opportunities of sending their academic staff overseas to study or to learn more about new trends in curriculum planning or they have the opportunities of developing their institutions' facilities for teaching and learning.

Two interviewees are of the view that changes to CPM of HEIs are necessary for HE and that the Government needs to evaluate the current approach to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Interviewee 13 suggested that:

...trước khi đưa ra một mô hình nào về quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo, thì tôi nghĩ đầu tiên là Bộ cần xem xét, đánh giá lại việc thực hiện mô hình hiện tại như thế nào...dựa trên kết quả đánh giá có được, Bộ mới điều nghiên xem điểm mạnh, điểm yếu của mô hình hiện tại để đề xuất ra một mô hình mới; vì chưa chắc đổi mới là hay, và mô hình mới đã tốt hơn mô hình quản lý hiện tại.

...before choosing any alternative approach to curriculum planning management, I think, firstly, the Ministry of Education and Training should take into consideration of having a review and evaluation of the current approach to curriculum planning management...based on the review's and evaluation's results, the Ministry of Education and Training should study the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and then choose an appropriate alternative approach to curriculum planning management; because we are not sure that reforms are good and that the new approach is better than the current one to curriculum planning management.

Moreover, two other interviewees suggested that when changes to CPM in HEIs are made, it is essential that the Government gives HEIs a transitional period for implementation. As they explained, it is impossible for HEIs to implement effectively any change to CP and CPM when they are not well-prepared and lack the necessary conditions to support such changes, especially having sufficient academic staff and professionals for CP. It was indicated by Interviewee 9 that:

Nghiêm túc thì thật ra phải có một khoảng thời gian chuyển đổi. Thời gian đó để các trường chuẩn bị. Trong thời gian chuyển mình thì hiệu quả đạt được nó không tốt. Tôi nói thật, nếu mình muốn làm ào ào để đạt chỉ tiêu cũng được...cũng gọi là chương trình tín chỉ...nhưng vấn đề chất lượng ở đâu? Đó là vấn đề. Vấn đề này thuộc cấp lãnh đạo trả lời. Theo tôi nghĩ, vội vàng thì không nên, muốn vội vàng thì phải có chiến lược logic, khoa học và cần nghiên cứu tài liệu về tín chỉ ở nước ngoài...nghiên cứu xong thì Việt Nam hóa nó.

Seriously, there is a need to have a transitional period. This transitional period is for higher education institutions' preparation for the implementation of the credit transfer education system. During the transitional period the outcomes of the implementation of this education system may not be good. Frankly speaking, if we just want to implement this system to reach the quantity target, we still can do it...it's still the so-called credit transfer education system...but what about the quality? It's the problem. This question is for higher education institution leaders. I think, we should not be too hurried. If you want to hurry, you need to have scientific and logical strategies to do it; and we need to study research in credit transfer education system in other countries. Then we should consider the context of Vietnam when putting this system into practice.

Finally, the third group of participants included those who were against reforms in CPM. Two interviewees believed that it may be possible for changes in CPM to be made in such big cities as Ho Chi Minh, Da Nang or Hue, but it would be difficult to do so in remote areas which lack the necessary conditions for CPM change, including adequate teaching and learning facilities and qualified academic staff. They added that it is still difficult for both the Government and HEIs to promote reforms in CPM, even when all the necessary physical conditions for CPM are met (i.e. teaching and learning facilities and academic staff availability), because key academic staff are those from the 'old generation' who refuse to make changes or create initiatives in CPM. As these interviewees explained, these key academic staff maintain their traditional philosophy of education that teaching and learning are effective only when the teacher-centred approach is used. As a result, as interviewees of this group opined, curriculum is planned based on the personal viewpoints of these academic staff without taking into consideration the needs and interests of students and industry or recent trends in CPM. One interviewee believed that the most important thing that the MOET can do to improve the quality of CPM is to imitate and develop the credit transfer education system in Vietnam as successfully as has been done in other countries. This interviewee commented that:

Cho nên em thấy mô hình nghe nói bây giờ là tín chỉ, nhưng thật sự nó không phải là tín chỉ...Thế cho nên, em nghĩ mình đâu cần thay đổi hay cải cách gì, chỉ cần mình bắt chước triệt để những gì nước khác làm về mô hình tín chỉ thì tốt rồi.

So, I think the current so-called credit transfer education system is not really a credit transfer...So, I don't think we need to make any change or reform in HE; it's good enough if we can just imitate what people in other countries do for the credit transfer education system.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented data collected from the three phases of the study. The first part of the chapter was the presentation of results from the desk research, supported by data from the semi-structured interviews.

The second section described CPM in HEIs at the macro and the micro-management levels. The macro management level is concerned with the roles and responsibilities of the MOET in centrally controlling the planning of curriculum of HEIs, reinforced by the Government through legislation and exercised in the form of the national discipline-based education frameworks and related general policies for CP. Assisting the MOET in fulfilling these roles and responsibilities are the DHE, the NBS, the DFA, the GDETA and other city/provincial DOETs.

The micro management level is concerned with the roles and responsibilities of the leaders of individual HEIs in managing CP at their institutions in accordance with the MOET's legislative documents about CP and CPM. In order to perform these roles and responsibilities, HEIs establish their own IBS which works cooperatively with other departments, faculties of discipline of study and the DAT to manage CP in compliance with the MOET's and the institutions' regulations about CP.

In the second part of the chapter, findings from the closed-questions in the written questionnaire show that the participants' views about and their satisfaction levels with the current approach to CPM varied considerably. The data illustrates that CP in HE in Vietnam is currently controlled by the MOET through the discipline-based education frameworks, which regulates details for CP in HEIs. Respondents to the questionnaire generally show high levels of dissatisfaction with the current approach to CPM at their institutions.

Two desired approaches to CPM were identified by the survey respondents. The first is that the MOET should confer institutional autonomy on HEIs in CPM. The second approach is that the MOET should set the expected outcomes for education and the institutions determine the means by which these outcomes will be realised.

To improve the quality of CP at HEIs, most respondents and interviewees believed that the MOET should undertake a leadership role, with HEIs acting as determiners

of CP in their institutions. They are also of the view that CP of HEIs needs to be managed in accordance with the needs of students and society/industry and that the Government needs to support and assist HEIs in analysing these needs so that HEIs can develop an effective approach to CPM.

There is a belief among interviewees that the MOET's management of CP in HEIs through the education frameworks has resulted in inconsistency and confusion in their implementation. However, many interviewees are of the view that it is still necessary to have the education frameworks for the management of CP at HEIs, which should be conceived as a general guidance for HEIs' CP, instead of the regulatory mechanism they are at present.

The lack of evaluation, review and update of the education frameworks and curriculum by both the MOET and HEIs was seen as a consequence of the lack of CP and CPM staff for directing and examining the process. The interviewees suggested that HEIs should be given full autonomy so that they can be fully responsible for their CP.

Some interviewees claimed that staff training in CP and CPM is not effective due to the fact that many CP and CPM staff refuse to embrace new approaches and that poor conditions for conducting training limits the capacity of HEIs to provide regular training for their staff. The interviewees suggested that the MOET should provide academic staff with more training in CP and CPM.

Outdated teaching and learning facilities and inadequate budgets for CP and CPM staff are major concerns. The interviewees suggested that the MOET needs to develop legislation to govern salary and benefits for academic staff and those responsible for CP to improve the quality of CP in HE.

Finally, concerning possible changes in CPM, three distinct views emerged from the data. Some interviewees hold the view that changes in CPM will be good for HEIs if reforms in CPM are effectively run. The second view is that, although changes in CPM are necessary to HEIs, the MOET needs to take into account the evaluation of the current approach to CPM and the related conditions for CP before proceeding with any changes. In addition, the interviewees maintain that problems relating to CPM stem from poor practice in the secondary education level and the MOET

should make changes at the secondary education level first before making changes in HE.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations

6.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter discusses the implications of the study's findings. The discussion centres on two overarching themes: accountability and institutional autonomy, particularly as they impact on CP and CPM in Vietnam.

The first section of the chapter raises issues relating to accountability, including the legal framework for CPM, the impact of the curriculum frameworks, the development and strengthening of linkages with external stakeholders, and the monitoring and reporting of educational outcomes as instruments of quality assurance in CPM. Analysis of differences between the prevailing circumstances and the views and beliefs of respondents has led to the identification of disparities which signal the need for ongoing action in the reform of CP and CPM.

The second section examines the issue of institutional autonomy for HEIs in CPM, including their legislative authority, the importance of authoritative management, the quality of leadership and decision-making and institutional capacity to cope with autonomy. As with accountability, analysis of the differences between the prevailing circumstances and the views and beliefs of respondents leads to the identification of disparities which underscore potential reforms in CP and CPM.

The discussion then considers possible actions to emerge from the disparities between present and desired circumstances and their alignment with the HE reforms in Vietnam that have been articulated since 2006. The significance of HERA as the vehicle for reform in CP and CPM in Vietnam is highlighted. The chapter then ends with an overview of issues that warrant future research in the field of CPM in Vietnamese HE. Discussion throughout the chapter specifically focuses on the three research questions:

1. What are the views, beliefs and attitudes of educators in the Vietnamese HE system to the management of CP?

2. To what extent are the views, beliefs and attitudes of educators in the Vietnamese HE reflected in the current system of CPM?
3. What are the implications of the degree of fit between the views of educators in the Vietnamese HE system towards CPM and the current system?

Diagram 6.1 Outcomes of the Study's Findings



6.2 Accountability

Data collected from the study indicate that leaders of HEIs in Vietnam are accountable to the government (through the MOET and other governing ministries) for the management of their institutions in general and for CPM in particular. This accountability is orchestrated via a bureaucratic and hierarchical structure - from the MOET to HEIs and, within each HEI, from the institutional leader to subordinate departments and faculties of disciplines of study. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies (Hayden & Lam, 2009; World Bank, 2008). Factors that govern the current accountability of HEIs for CPM are specific legal frameworks, the curriculum frameworks, mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of CP at HEIs (quality assurance strategies) and the linkages with societal stakeholders and the external community.

6.2.1 A Legal Framework for Curriculum Planning Management

Analysis of the study's findings indicates that legal requirements are of prime importance in reinforcing accountability for HEI management of CP. Legal obligations are specified in such documents as the regulations and policies constructed and issued by the Government and MOET, including the Education Law, HE Law, national HE development plans and guidelines, resolutions and decrees regulating CP at HEIs, the Charter for HEIs and related legislative documents regulating roles, responsibilities and functions of HEI leaders in managing HE in general and CP in particular.

With the centralised control currently exercised across the HE system by the MOET, the findings indicate that these legal requirements are problematic. Respondents consider them to be poorly constructed, under-developed and out-of-date; they believed that these features result in inconsistency and inflexibility in CPM. The state and array of legal documentation causes confusion to HEIs in their implementation, as HEI leaders are confronted with a complex and numerous set of laws and regulations, many of which are open to misinterpretation and which often fail to provide HEI leaders with flexibility in making decisions relating to the management of CP at their institution.

Despite the obvious drawbacks of the current legal frameworks, findings from the study echo those of Hayden and Lam (2007), who claim that the destabilising situation created by the legislative inconsistencies is indicative of the Government's strong desire to retain centralised control over the HE sector to ensure the maintenance of the country's socialist orientation and the operation of HEIs within a management framework of national economic development. The centralised control model operating in relation to the decision-making and policy development in CPM demands continuing government influence on HEI management activities, which is a position also supported by King (2003).

Findings from the study identify a strong call for the construction of a complete, consistent and transparent set of legal documents to guide CPM at HEIs. The findings suggest that any new legal frameworks must include a clear re-definition of the roles, responsibilities and functions of the governing bodies (i.e. the MOET,

related ministries and local government agencies) and of HEI leaders in the management of CP; that provision for the constant updating of the frameworks in response to changing contexts is essential; and that there must be a pathway for CPM under the credit transfer education system – i.e. legislative documents regulating recognition of student prior learning and credit transfer across the HE system.

The mismatch between the current legislation for CPM and the imperatives identified by respondents highlights the Government's slow progress in constructing a complete legislative system for HE management and reinforces the view that the Government's desire to have ongoing influence on HEIs' management of activities relating to CP underscores its reluctance to address the flawed legislative frameworks for HE. In addition, the identified inadequacies of the current legal frameworks reflects respondents' views that HEI leaders have a responsibility to be proactive in their management of CP in order to respond to changing educational imperatives and to integrate their institution into the global education market. To achieve these outcomes, respondents believed that a transparent and consistent set of legal frameworks for CPM and CP to guide and direct HEI leaders' management of CP is urgently required.

Coupled with this, it is necessary that the Government (through the MOET) should reduce its intervention in CP and CPM within HEIs. Findings from the study indicate that the frameworks for CPM need to provide HEI leaders with the freedom to determine how academic affairs, and CP issues in particular, are decided and provide them with the right to choose whatever means and instruments are needed to achieve the institutions' goals. These views reflect those of Marton (1999) who advocates strongly for HEI leaders' freedom in institutional management. New legal frameworks must be constructed in such a way that, while HEIs remain accountable to the Government for CPM, they have flexibility in managing CP in accordance with institutional and regional conditions and the needs of relevant stakeholders.

6.2.2 Curriculum Frameworks for Curriculum Planning Management

In addition to new legal frameworks for CP and CPM at HEIs, analysis of the study's findings also indicates that the curriculum frameworks for CP at HEIs are another important instrument that helps to reinforce HEI accountability for CPM.

According to respondents, the curriculum frameworks are prescriptions for CP at HEIs. They act as a set of ‘guidelines’ and include a qualifications framework, performance indicators and learning outcome standards issued by the MOET to guide and direct CPM at HEIs.

Respondents are clear in their belief that, at present, the curriculum frameworks are inadequate and unable to fully and effectively direct CP at HEIs. The findings indicate that the current discipline-based education frameworks, which are constructed and issued by the MOET and are the only official curriculum frameworks for CP at HEIs, are poorly constructed, incomplete, outdated and inflexible. While lack of review and update of the discipline-based education frameworks presents HEI leaders with challenges in managing CP at their institutions, the study has found that the incomplete nature of the frameworks and the lack of relevant guidelines and policy documents for CP make it extremely difficult for HEI leaders to manage CP and comply with the MOET’s regulations.

Apart from the challenges and confusion these factors cause, the findings indicate that the current discipline-based education frameworks also limit HEIs’ capacity for innovation in CP. For example, as reported by respondents, all changes or amendments to the frameworks must be approved by the MOET. This centralised control of CP through the use of the discipline-based education frameworks means that HEI leaders rely entirely on the MOET for all decision-making relating to CP at their institution, thus limiting their ability to demonstrate their own capabilities in this area and creating a situation in which HEIs have low levels of accountability for CPM. This finding is similar to that found by Tran et al. (2010). In addition, the findings suggest that the lack of preparedness for change on the part of some HEI leaders has compounded a difficult situation. The findings also confirm the view that it is the Government’s aim (through the MOET) to retain power over CPM in HEIs, a finding that echoes that of Halstead (1994) who claims that while the MOET retains power, HEI leaders are placed in the situation of demonstrating to the MOET that what they are doing in relation to CP activities is what they are supposed to do and that these tasks comply with the regulations and the discipline-based education frameworks. There is little or no scope in such circumstances for institutional innovation in curriculum.

Analysis of findings about the curriculum frameworks for CP supports the view that there are perceived inadequacies in the current discipline-based education frameworks for CP and a number of imperatives for CPM have been identified by respondents. The interpretation of respondents of the current circumstances and their views about what needs to change to improve CP suggests that there is an urgent need to review the current discipline-based education frameworks and construct improved curriculum frameworks for CP at HEIs. The revised frameworks would need to enhance HEIs' effectiveness in managing CP, while taking account of the MOET's regulations for CP and the increasing needs of industry. They need to be structured in such a way as to clarify and augment HEI leaders' accountability for CPM. The findings suggest that, if the revised curriculum frameworks are to be conceived as general guidelines for HEIs in CPM, they must be transparent and include only information which is essential to CP within HEIs. Non-essential information such as that relating to institutions' operational activities and academic affairs should be entirely the responsibility of individual HEIs. Respondents believed that the essential information the frameworks must contain is expected learning outcomes or standards and performance indicators that help to guide and direct HEI leaders in managing CP at their institutions. These findings accords with the views of Nyborg (2005).

In summary, findings from the study suggest that the MOET must reduce its intervention in the management of HEIs' academic activities in general and involvement in the process of CP in particular. In order to achieve this, it is essential to construct new and/or revised curriculum frameworks for CP at HEIs. While the revised curriculum frameworks may still place HEIs under the supervision of the MOET, they must allow HEIs to be fully responsible for their actions relating to the determination of issues relating to CP, giving them the flexibility to plan curriculum in accordance with changing societal contexts and stakeholder needs.

6.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of Curriculum Planning

The importance of maintaining and enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of CP at HEIs is also highlighted by the study's findings. HEI leaders in Vietnam are presently accountable to the MOET for the monitoring and evaluation of curriculum and for CP at their institution. The expectation is that HEIs will conduct regular

reviews and update the curriculum at the institutional level and supplement these activities by the collection of feedback from stakeholders about the current adequacy of the curriculum and the ways in which it can be amended to meet their needs.

In line with other studies about monitoring and evaluation in HE management (Ahearn, 2010; Jaafar & Anderson, 2007; Kogan, 1986), findings from this study suggest that this monitoring and evaluation are crucial elements in reinforcing HEIs' accountability in CP and CPM. Yet findings about the current approach to CPM indicate that the importance and value of these activities have not been fully recognised in Vietnam, with low levels of monitoring and insufficient inspection and evaluation of curriculum and CP by both the MOET and HEIs.

At the Government level, despite the fact that the MOET strives to maintain its centralised control of CPM at HEIs, there is currently no effective audit provisions to monitor and evaluate whether the curriculum frameworks and regulations for CP have been implemented by HEIs in line with Government expectations; nor is there any other effective mechanism for quality assurance undertaken by the MOET to evaluate the progress and quality of CP at HEIs. Apart from the low level of monitoring of CP at HEIs, respondents strongly emphasised that, while the legislative documents, curriculum frameworks for CP and standards for quality assurance are both inadequate and incomplete, these documents have been rarely reviewed and updated by the MOET to help HEIs to manage CP, indicating a low level of accountability on the part of the MOET to the HE sector overall.

At the institutional level, the study's findings indicate that there are poor accountability arrangements for HEIs in managing CP, a situation that has resulted in marked differences in the evaluation of curriculum across institutions and which is, perhaps, indicative of a lack of recognition by some HEI leaders of the importance of monitoring and evaluation of CP processes. It seems that the lack of an appropriate and effective accountability mechanism for monitoring and evaluating CP at HEIs is a major reason for the inaction of HEIs. Respondents reported that, since all activities relating to CP must be done in compliance with the MOET's regulations and frameworks for CP, the evaluation and amendment of curriculum at the institutional level has had a low priority, as all changes must be reviewed and approved by the MOET. This approval process appears to act as a disincentive to

institutional initiative. Findings from the study are similar to those observed in Wohlstetter (1991) who notes that, while there has been a strong call for a new approach to CP audit, this approach would involve formalised, regular monitoring, inspection and evaluation of CP by both the MOET and HEI leaders to reinforce accountability in CPM.

There appears to be little appetite for a reinvigorated approach to accountability. The study's findings indicate that there are discrepancies between respondents' views and beliefs about the current provisions for monitoring and evaluation of CP at HEIs and the imperatives for new approaches to CP audit. While the inadequacies indicate a low level of accountability in CPM by the MOET, the findings indicate that this is replicated at the HEIs, where there is no culture of accountability for CP evident. Mechanistic implementation of the frameworks and regulations without any responsibility being assumed for innovation in CP and for the review and evaluation of CP at the institutional level indicates that HEI leaders have not yet fully accepted the need for self-management and leadership in CP.

If the findings from this study are illustrative of the wider situation in Vietnam, any improvement in CPM would require a comprehensive review of the current standards for quality assurance, including re-assessing the means of monitoring and evaluating CP by the MOET and HEIs, with view to devising and implementing a more effective mechanism for the evaluation of CP and CPM, via regular audits and reporting by HEIs across the HE sector. Simultaneously, HEI leaders would need to be held fully accountable for their actions and performance in CPM. At the institutional level, developing a culture of accountability for actions and outcomes relating to CP and CPM would be a major responsibility of the leadership of the institution. It would be essential that HEI leaders conduct more regular reviews and evaluation of CP so that curriculum can be updated and the needs of relevant stakeholders incorporated in the curriculum. To achieve this, HEI leaders need to assume a leading role in curriculum design and innovation.

6.2.4 Linkages with External Stakeholders and the Community

Similar to the results of other studies (Nyborg, 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2003), links with external stakeholders and the wider community in support of CPM - that is,

relationships developed by HEI leaders and academic staff who are responsible for CP with employers, industry representatives and community interest groups - was identified by respondents as an important factor for the effective management of CP and an essential means of both reinforcing accountability in CPM and establishing new directions in curriculum.

Findings about the current approach to CPM at HEIs indicate that partnerships with industry and the wider community have either not been initiated or have been poorly developed and enhanced by HEIs. The significance of developing and enhancing these linkages has not been widely recognised by HEI leaders, indicated by the fact that, while it is required by the MOET that collection of feedback from students, industry and employers is a component of the review, evaluation and amendment of CP, this aspect has not been undertaken by many HEIs. Although reasons for this failure to develop partnerships with external stakeholders for CPM purposes has been explained differently by respondents (such as lack of policy documents allowing for the development of partnerships, the absence of a partnership 'culture' in HEIs, and HEI leaders' limited capacity to establish partnerships with external stakeholders), findings from the study indicate that respondents mainly see it as a consequence of the MOET's centralised management which contains CP within strict discipline-based education frameworks and regulations for CP, limiting HEIs' ability to manage CP in accordance with industry and employer needs.

Findings from the study indicate strong views about the development of partnerships and involvement of external stakeholders in CP and CPM. Respondents believed that HEI leaders need to actively develop partnerships with external stakeholders and the wider community to improve the quality of CP and CPM and that HEIs should actively explore the opportunity of involving different societal stakeholders, including students, employers and industry, in the process of CP to identify skill shortages and to ensure that CP has been undertaken with consideration of these stakeholders' needs taken into account. Kitagawa (2003) has made similar suggestions for the advancement of CP.

Findings from the study also suggest that a new mechanism for CPM which paves a way for HEIs to develop, strengthen and enhance relationships and connections with external stakeholders is needed, coupled with HEI leaders having the freedom and

flexibility in CPM to determine the most effective pathway for delivering CP which reflects their institutional context and stakeholder needs.

In summary, it is argued by respondents that in order to improve the overall quality of CPM at HEIs, besides improved accountability to the MOET for CP outcomes, it is essential for HEI leaders to develop a culture of accountability for their actions and performance relating to CP and CPM. In line with other studies about accountability in HE management (Brinkerhoff, 2003; Nyborg, 2006; Kitagawa, 2003), this study has found that the development of a culture of accountability for CP and CPM cannot be achieved unless close relationships between HEIs and external stakeholders are established and strengthened. This will, in turn, help HEI leaders and academic staff responsible for CP understand changes occurring in the labour market. The MOET's evaluation of CPM is a key factor in the reinforcement of HEI accountability in CPM and this, too, must be substantially improved.

6.3 Institutional Autonomy

Institutional autonomy, as identified by respondents in this study, relates to a HEI's authority over matters relating to academic affairs, teaching and research - such as CP, research policies and research priorities, awarding of degrees, academic staff recruitment and appointment, student enrolment and graduation. Raza (2009) and Varghese (2012) describe this as substantive autonomy. Analysis of the study's findings suggests a number of factors impacting negatively on the institutional autonomy of HEIs in Vietnam: their lack of legislative authority, under-developed leadership, failure to exercise of authoritative decision-making and limited institutional capacity for CPM.

6.3.1 Legislative Authority

The findings about institutional autonomy in CP and CPM indicate that HEIs do not have autonomy in the management of CP and that the Government (through the MOET) has yet to devolve power to them so that they can manage CP in the most effective and efficient way. Findings from the study indicate that the legislative authority to manage CP is an imperative, as well as a means of defining HEI leaders' accountability for the management of CP at their institution. This finding echoes

those of Kogan (1986) and Wohlstetter (1991), who found that legislative authority is a critical factor in establishing HEI autonomy and ensuring appropriate accountability in HE management.

Currently, HEI leaders have limited legislative authority for CPM, with an obligation to implement the MOET's regulations, discipline-based education frameworks and related policy documents for CP without the right to adapt them in any way. Findings from the study indicate a disconnect between the provisions of the Government's legislation relating to the authority of HEI leaders in HE management in general, and in CPM in particular, and its practice. While it is regulated by the Government (through HE Law and the Charter of HEIs) that HEI leaders have full autonomy for managing academic issues, including CP, respondents reported that, in their experience, such autonomy has not been fully bestowed or operationalised. According to respondents, most decisions related to CP must be approved by the MOET. The study indicates that this centralised control provides HEIs with no authority in CPM and has made it difficult for them to manage CP in ways that benefit the community and other stakeholders. For example, respondents reported that some of the MOET's regulations and discipline-based education frameworks are outdated and not suitable for CP at HEIs; however, changes and innovation relating to CP cannot be effectively undertaken since it takes considerable time to have approval from the MOET for the changes. The centralised command and order chain of management operating in relation to CP makes it clear that HEI leaders do not have substantial legislative authority for CPM and that institutional autonomy is illusory. This perspective is supported by Hayden and Lam (2007) and Tran et al. (2010).

This situation demands change. Respondents strongly emphasised that, for an effective alternative approach to CPM, HEI leaders need full legislative authority so that they can effectively lead their colleagues in the planning of curriculum, albeit that it may be that planning processes must comply with the Government's regulations and policies for CP. An effective alternative approach is an imperative - a new mechanism for CPM at HEIs which gives HEI leaders complete legislative authority over CPM. Concurrent with this, it is suggested that the MOET should alter

its central controlling role to a more supervising and monitoring one, thus giving HEI leaders flexibility and freedom in CPM whilst holding them more accountable.

Since institutional autonomy does not mean that HEIs are completely independent from the MOET (Fielden, 2008), a balance between the autonomy given to HEIs and their accountability for CPM must be established by strengthening the legislative system for CP and developing national HE strategies which hold HEI leaders accountable for their management performance and outcomes. Concurrent with this, it is suggested that the MOET alter its central controlling role to a more supervisory and monitoring one, thus giving HEI leaders the flexibility and freedom in CPM whilst ensuring that relevant and appropriate accountability measures are in place. This steering and supervising approach to the MOET's management of CP at HEIs is much more strategic and gives HEIs the scope to enhance their management effectiveness.

6.3.2 Leadership and Authoritative Decision-making

Authentic legislative authority would enable HEIs to foster curriculum innovation, to incorporate curriculum changes based on identified trends and needs and to recruit and appoint academic staff for CP and CPM in order to enhance the quality of the curriculum.

Previous research highlights that autonomy is evident only when HEI leaders are fully authorised to make decisions and determine management issues which they believe will enable them to achieve the best performance results (Fielden, 2008; Marton, 1999). The study's findings indicate that HEI leaders do not have overarching responsibility for CPM, nor have they been active in seeking such responsibility. HEI leaders indicate that they depend on the MOET for all decisions relating to CPM, including the introduction of new disciplines of study or the adoption of international collaborative programs of study with foreign partners, and that they do not have the freedom to determine issues relating to curriculum innovation. Respondents supported the view that HEI leaders appear to have a limited capacity for decision-making in relation to the curriculum and that there is a disjunction between the autonomy given to HEI leaders in theory (i.e. legislation)

and that which is evident in current practice, a feature that has also been observed by Hayden and Lam (2007) and the World Bank (2008).

Respondents hold a strong belief that HEIs are in a better position than the MOET to make decisions about how CP should be undertaken to meet the increasingly changing needs of stakeholders and what should be included in the curriculum to comply with the MOET's regulations for CP. However, this study found that if HEI leaders are to run CP without interference from the MOET, they must be willing to accept a greater level of responsibility for change management in their institution. Leaders need to enhance their own capabilities and reinforce their accountability for CPM at the institutional level. These findings have also been observed by Anderson and Anderson (1998). The lack of momentum for change in HEIs has itself been a major contributor to the lack of progress towards self-management. Leadership development is therefore fundamental.

6.3.3 Institutional Capacity for Curriculum Planning and Curriculum Planning Management

Throughout the study, the need for improved capacity at institutions to plan and manage the curriculum has been highlighted. Respondents considered this a primary condition for the MOET's conferral to HEIs of institutional autonomy in CPM. Since the Government is the key financial sponsor of HEI operations, demonstrating capacity for self-management of the institution's operations is an important pre-condition for institutional autonomy. Analysis of the study's findings indicates two important elements affecting institutional capacity at the moment: limited staff management and development capabilities and inadequate financial management capacity.

The recruitment and appointment of staff experienced in the areas of CP and CPM underpins the ability of HEIs to self-manage in these areas. Yet, the study suggests that respondents believed that both MOET leaders and HEI leaders have poorly-developed skills in staff management, resulting in the appointment of staff responsible for monitoring and managing CP who either do not have the most suitable experience or the appropriate academic qualifications to perform these tasks effectively. As a result, CP has been, in the main, poorly managed due to the

mechanistic interpretation of the discipline-based education frameworks and related regulations for CP, with decisions on matters relating to CP driven by the limited experience of unqualified staff. This finding has been also identified by Tran et al. (2010) as problematic, commenting that decision-making in HE management matters is driven by the people who are working in the MOET - many of whom have limited experience and qualification in CP or management.

Coupled with this limitation, HEI leaders' have not amply demonstrated an aptitude or willingness to conduct staff training and provide staff with opportunities for their professional development in CP, still relying entirely on the MOET for professional training for academic staff. Reasons for this vary across institutions, but respondents suggested that key factors are the limited resources available to support regular training, such as lack of professionally qualified staff and inadequate funds, together with a lack of willingness or refusal by staff to embrace the new approaches to CP advocated in training courses. HEI leaders' capacity to manage staff and embark on staff capacity building needs to be upgraded significantly. The professional development of leaders needs to be supported by policies requiring academic staff to participate in CP and CPM and a commitment by the MOET to support and assist HEIs in staff development and staff training in CP and CPM.

These findings identify a two-fold effect of the MOET's centralised control over HE management - an over-reliance by HEI leaders on the MOET for all decision-making in the operational management of their institution and a culture of passivity at the institutional level which has resulted in a low level of skill on the part of leaders in managing staff and building their capacity for CP and CPM.

In order to make HEIs more responsive to the competitive global education market, the MOET has undertaken several HE reforms over the past decade. One such reform aimed at conferring greater institutional autonomy on HEIs. Although the achievement of this goal is still debated by many scholars (Hayden & Lam, 2007; Nguyen, 2010; Pham, 2012), autonomy requires that HEIs are able to demonstrate to the MOET that they are capable of managing the institution successfully and effectively. To do this, it is important that the building of institutional capacity is a prime focus for HEI leaders. Findings from the study suggest that the current staffing circumstances of many HEIs must be changed in order to improve the quality of

CPM. HEIs must explore the opportunities for developing and strengthening the leadership, capability and capacity of staff in CP and CPM.

As with staffing and capacity building for CP and CPM, findings from the study indicate that financial management is a fundamental issue directly affecting the effectiveness of CPM at HEIs as it directly impacts on the allocation of funds and the infrastructure for CP.

Previous research (Salmi, 2007; Varghese, 2012) highlights that the rate of change in HE and global competition in the HE market means that HEI leaders need to demonstrate their ability to identify and diversify the financial resources available to facilitate and strengthen their institution's development and expansion. Analysis of the study's findings indicates that HEI leaders currently have poor financial management skills which often results in poor use of the available funding. For example, respondents reported that HEIs do not have a separate budget for activities relating to CP and CPM and that facilities for conducting staff training are limited. They expressed the view that, in order to have curriculum planned in compliance with the MOET's discipline-based education frameworks, HEIs need to have well-equipped teaching and learning facilities. However, respondents reported that these are currently in poor condition in most HEIs, limiting their capacity to manage CP and effectively implement the curriculum. Respondents expressed the view that the MOET must support HEIs financially to upgrade their facilities for teaching and learning in order to enhance their teaching effectiveness. Findings also suggest that, while the current infrastructure planning for CPM is not adequate to promote innovation in CP, respondents believed that the current allocations of funds for HEI operations are not sufficient to support change in CP and CPM. Respondents also asserted that the MOET must develop adequate policies governing salary and benefits for academic staff responsible for CP and CPM in order to attract experienced and qualified staff who have the capacity to take CP to a new, improved level.

To achieve these goals, a revision of the current mechanism of funding allocation for CP is warranted alongside an effective mechanism to hold HEI leaders accountable to the MOET for the use of the resources and funds allocated. As observed by Varghese (2012), HEI leaders need to understand that they must be able to

demonstrate their ability to utilise available financial resources for CP and CPM and balance competing demands within the institution to facilitate its development and expansion.

6.4 The ESP (2001-2010) and the HERA (2006-2020)

The views and beliefs of Vietnamese educators and administrators towards CPM indicate inadequacies in the current approach to, and provisions for, CP and CPM. They strongly expressed the view that institutional autonomy must be conferred on HEI leaders in relation to CPM and that there is a need for a more effective mechanism for holding HEI leaders accountable to the MOET and other stakeholders for their CP performance and outcomes. What is remarkable, however, is that these very same reforms have been identified in the ESP (2001-2010) and the HERA (2006-2020). Throughout the study, there was little or no acknowledgement by respondents of the goals of these two important HE reforms, both of which addressed these key issues. This would suggest that legislation and government directives are insufficient in themselves to elicit change.

According to the MOET (2013), the ESP (2001-2010) in its first phase aimed (amongst other things):

- to build up projects on changing education managerial mechanism; especially, to correct the management at macro and micro levels, the managerial mechanism of public and non-public higher education institutions;
- to develop the accreditation system at all levels of education;
- to carry out strong innovations of the higher education curricula in the direction of diversification, standardisation, modernisation; to create conditions for quick, selective adaptation of curricula of developed countries in the field of science, technology;
- to promulgate the curriculum frameworks for undergraduate level in school year 2001-2002 and for the master degree level in school year 2002-2003;
- to modernise teaching and learning equipment, laboratories and practical base;
- to build up and carry out projects on innovation of educational management, projects on higher education innovations, teaching training innovation; and
- to realise the transmission of management to institutions.

(MOET, 2013, p.1)

The second phase of the plan focused on developing a master plan for HEI development, helping the HE system to keep pace with developed countries in the region. These targets make it clear that the inadequacies and weaknesses in the management of HE and in CPM had been recognised and identified by the MOET as early as 2001 and suggest that the MOET is committed to the reform of management of the HE system.

While the achievement of the ESP objectives has not been sufficiently assessed and still remain unclear (Henaff et al., 2007), it was superseded by the HERA (2006-2020) which not only aims to confer institutional autonomy on HEIs allowing for the total management of internal operations but also heralded the development of an effective legislative system (including improving the overall legislative and regulatory environment, developing an effective mechanism for quality assurance and accreditation of HEIs) to reinforce the accountability of HEI leaders for management of their institution. Many objectives in the ESP have been re-stated in the HERA, including renovation of HE curriculum and standardisation of HE staffing.

Both the ESP and the HERA imply a commitment from the MOET to renovating and improving the overall quality of HE management, yet there is no specific plan outlining how these tasks and objectives will be achieved (Pham, 2012; Smith & Nguyen, 2010). There is no effective vehicle for implementing HERA and no funding or related resources dedicated to its implementation. While the HERA establishes broad objectives for HE reform, it seems that there has been no consideration given to the current teaching and learning conditions at HEIs, presenting HEIs with difficulties in implementation and challenges in achieving these objectives. Although the HERA has been in place for over six years, it has been argued by many respondents and researchers that institutional autonomy has still not been effectively conferred on HEIs (Hayden & Lam, 2007; World Bank, 2008) and the current legislation for HE management is still problematic. Lack of specific strategies and resources for the reforms and inadequate preparation by both the MOET and HEIs for their implementation may account for the ineffective implementation of both the ESP and the HERA.

Table 6.1 Comparison between HERA’s Objectives and the Recommendations of the Current Study

HERA Objectives	Suggestions from the study’s findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘to confer legal autonomy on higher education institutions so that they can be given the right ‘to decide and be responsible for training, research, human resource management and budget planning ▪ to eliminate line-ministry control and to develop a mechanism for having State ownership represented within public higher education institutions’ (Hayden & Lam, 2007, p.79) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To improve institutional autonomy for HEIs’ self management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘to develop a system for quality assurance and accreditation for higher education, improve on the legislative and regulatory environment and accelerate the State’s stewardship role in monitoring and inspecting the overall structure and scale of higher education ▪ to develop a Higher Education law’ (Hayden & Lam, 2007, p.79) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop a mechanism for quality assurance and audits to improve HEI quality assurance in CP ▪ To construct complete legislative frameworks for CPM at HEIs which provides HEI leaders with legislative authority for CPM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘full development of a higher education curriculum that supports research and provides students with career options, and that is effectively integrated, fully responsive to quality assurance processes, and delivered by higher education institutions that are properly accredited and that meet international standards’ (World Bank, 2008, p. 13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To construct complete curriculum frameworks for CP at HEIs

HERA' Objectives	Suggestions from the study's findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'the achievement of a marked increase in the number of qualified higher education staff and managers, sufficient to ensure that the HE student-teacher ratio is below 20:1, and that, by 2020, at least 60 per cent of all academic staff have a masters level degree and at least 35 per cent have a doctoral degree' (World Bank, 2008, p. 13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing budgets for employment of suitable experienced and qualified academic staff and capacity building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'the development of an advanced research and development culture, with research and development activities to account for 25 per cent of the higher education system's revenue by 2020' (Pham, 2012, p.3) ▪ 'the renewal, restructuring and internationalisation of the higher education curriculum ▪ the development of a more internationally integrated higher education system, involving more international commitments and agreements, improvements in the teaching and learning of foreign languages (especially English), and the development of conditions favourable to increased foreign investment in the higher education system' (Pham, 2012, p.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To review the current allocation of funding to HEIs ▪ To upgrade current infrastructure for teaching, learning and research of HEIs

In summary, institutional autonomy and accountability have been identified in this study as the two crucial issues underpinning quality in HE management and both require the identification of specific actions and/or strategies for improvement. The suggestions made in this study can, hopefully, be used by the MOET and other stakeholders as a reference in determining an alternative approach to CPM and in developing strategies for the effective implementation of the HERA.

6.5 Recommendations and Directions for Further Research

Examination of the views, beliefs and attitudes of Vietnamese educators and administrators towards CPM indicates inadequacies in the current approach and the need for an alternative approach to CP and CPM. The inadequacies point to low quality practice in CPM across the institutions examined. These institutions have not responded substantially to changing educational contexts and the needs of industry. Institutional autonomy was identified as the key strategy for improving the quality of CPM. If it is indeed the case that the MOET's and HEIs' capacity for CPM is limited, then this capacity must be improved at both the MOET and HEIs. In support of this, a culture of accountability for CP and CPM must be developed and maintained by HEIs, with a balance between the institutional autonomy given to HEI leaders for CPM and accountability for their performance and outcomes.

Overarching strategies recommended for the improvement of the current circumstances of CPM and/or the selection of an alternative approach to CPM include:

At the governmental level, it is essential that the MOET needs to reduce its intervention in the processes of CP at HEIs. This can be done by:

- developing and implementing a consistent, transparent and complete legislative framework, which clearly defines the roles of the MOET and HEIs in CP and CPM and which holds HEIs accountable to the MOET and stakeholders for their performance and outcomes in CP. While regulating the roles and responsibilities of HEIs for CPM, the new legislative framework should give HEIs the freedom to determine issues relating to academic matters, including CP and CPM, and provide for the operation of HEIs to be monitored and supervised by the MOET. Through the new legislative framework, HEIs will have greater legislative authority to make decisions on CPM and the MOET will move from the centralised control of CPM to a more strategic supervisory role;
- constructing a new curriculum framework which provides HEIs with information and guidelines which enable HEI leaders to direct CP effectively

and to encourage innovation in CP, whilst taking into account both the MOET's regulations and institutional needs;

- adopting an adequate mechanism to improve the quality assurance in and accreditation of CP at HEIs and to reinforce HEI leaders' accountability for quality learning outcomes;
- developing adequate policies for the allocation of funding to HEIs, with a view to increasing budgets to enable the employment of suitably experienced and qualified academic staff and for staff capacity building;
- upgrading infrastructure for teaching and learning of HEIs; and
- encouraging and supporting HEIs to conduct professional training in CP and CPM for academic staff and providing HEI leaders with more opportunities for professional development.

At the institutional level, HEIs must demonstrate that they are accountable for their actions and performance relating to CP and CPM. In particular there needs to be:

- a culture of accountability developed in which HEI leaders and their subordinates assume responsibility for improvements in CP and CPM;
- accountability for performance in CP not only to the MOET but to other stakeholders who directly or indirectly benefit from the institutions' educational outcomes. Partnership with stakeholders need to be developed and enhanced to help HEI leaders understand changing needs and to provide the opportunity to respond to them in CP processes;
- an improvement in the institutional capacity for self-management of CP through HEI leaders developing the skills to effectively undertake CPM, to utilise available financial resources for CP and CPM, to balance institutional tensions and share this responsibility with their subordinates. This can be achieved by developing and strengthening the capability of staff in CP and CPM, encouraging them to explore opportunities for professional development that consider new approaches to CP and CPM.

Although institutional autonomy and accountability for HE management have been identified in the HERA, these issues are broadly conceived, not focusing on any particular area such as CPM. Analysis of the HERA's objectives make it clear that the MOET acknowledges in HERA that a centralised control mechanism in the HE system is no longer the best approach to HE development and does not ensure that HEIs are responsive to changing educational contexts and the global education market. This study shows that objectives for HE improvement identified in the HERA have been developed and imposed on HEIs without consideration of the impact of institutional conditions, such as the standard of infrastructure for teaching and learning. This has resulted in little progress towards achievement of its objectives. To enable HERA to achieve its goals, the MOET would benefit from undertaking a comprehensive review of its objectives and re-evaluate implementation approaches, with a view to developing specific strategies or a strategic plan for the ongoing implementation of HERA.

As suggested by findings from this study, identification of institutional weaknesses and clarification of the roles of the MOET and HEIs in HE management are significant. Although institutional autonomy for HE management has been identified, a clear path for achieving this objective must be established. The ways in which the MOET plans to reduce its intervention in HEI operations must be clearly identified, as must how proposed changes will be funded. As suggested in the previous research (Brennan & Shah, 2000), the MOET must clarify the allocation of funding to HEIs for CP and for upgrading infrastructure for teaching, learning and research. Its sponsorship of a complete review of the legislative system directing HEI management would be well received. Finally, there can be no renovation or reform unless HEIs and the MOET have the capacity to engage in it. It is essential that both the MOET and HEIs develop their capacity for HE leadership and management, including curriculum, human resource and financial management, and for involving relevant stakeholders and the community in the reform effort.

Recommendations for Further Research

While findings from this study call for improved institutional autonomy and accountability for CPM, it is essential that there should be further research on the appropriate balance between these two elements in the effective management of

Vietnamese HE. Further, since recommendations relating to the institutional autonomy and accountability identified in this study are mainly concerned with substantive autonomy, additional research with a focus on other types of institutional autonomy such as procedural or organic autonomy is warranted and may be helpful in the development of strategies for the implementation of the HERA (Berdahl, 1999; Debreczeni, 2002; Raza, 2009; Varghese, 2012). Lastly, research on the views and beliefs of other stakeholders such as students, parents, graduates, industry representatives or employers would be useful in guiding further reform efforts. Understanding different views and beliefs about CPM can help educational stakeholders and the MOET in selecting optimal approach to CPM.

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Appendices

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
English Version

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QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire seeks your views on the practice of curriculum planning management at your institution. It consists of three sections, with 13 questions in total. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Please read the instructions carefully before answering each question.

I. General Information

Please place a cross in the most appropriate box below

1. Gender: a. Male b. Female

2. Highest academic/professional qualification
 - a. Bachelor's degree
 - b. Master's degree
 - c. Doctorate
 - d. Other, please specify:.....

3. Your current position:
 - a. Institution leader:
 - b. Department leader:
 - c. Member of curriculum planning assessment unit:
(or curriculum planning and management group)
 - d. Other, please specify
.....

4. Your age group:
 - a. 30 and below
 - b. From 31 to 39
 - c. 40 and over

5. You have been working in the field of curriculum planning or curriculum planning management for...
 - a. up to two years
 - b. from two to five years
 - c. from six to ten years
 - d. more than ten years

II. Current approaches to curriculum planning management.

1. Which of the following approaches to curriculum planning management is currently taken at your institution? Please place a cross in the most appropriate box listed below.

In my institution, curriculum planning...

- a. is completely managed by the government through the national education framework.
- b. is managed by the government, but can be modified by my institution according to need
- c. is managed by my own institution.
- d. is managed by an independent agency.
- e. Other, please specify:

.....

2. Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements about current approaches to curriculum planning management in your institution by placing a cross in the appropriate box below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
The current approach to curriculum planning management ensures that...					
a. the curriculum includes clear learning outcomes for each discipline.					
b. the curriculum is designed with the involvement of various stakeholders.					
c. curriculum design is an on-going process of writing, implementing and assessing.					
d. the curriculum comprises necessary guidelines for teaching and learning.					
e. the curriculum includes knowledge					

and skills that the society currently needs.					
f. the curriculum helps develop students intellectually.					
g. the curriculum helps develop students as individuals in society.					
h. instructors have opportunities to make changes to the curriculum according to need.					
i. instructors have opportunities for professional development.					

3. How satisfied are you with the current approach to curriculum planning management at your institution? Please place a cross in the appropriate box below.

- a. Highly satisfied
- b. Quite satisfied
- c. Slightly dissatisfied
- d. Very dissatisfied
- e. No opinion

4. In your opinion, is there any way in which curriculum planning management could be improved at your institution?

- a. Yes Please go to question 5.
- b. No Please go to Section III.

5. How do you think that curriculum planning management can be improved? Please write your description in the space below.

.....

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.....

III. Approaches to curriculum planning management.

1. Which of the following approaches to curriculum planning management for higher education do you think most closely reflects your opinion about the most suitable approach for Vietnam? Please place a cross in ONE appropriate box below.

In my opinion, the most suitable approach to curriculum planning management for higher education in Vietnam should be:

- a. the government centrally controls curriculum planning management.
- b. an educational agency which is subject to control by the government is responsible for curriculum planning management for higher education.
- c. an educational agency which is not under control by the government is responsible for curriculum planning management for higher education
- d. the government sets the expected outcomes for education, and higher education institutions are responsible for their curriculum planning management.
- e. higher education institutions have complete responsibility for curriculum planning management.
- f. Other:
Please provide further details in the space below.

.....

2. In your opinion, what should be the main role of the government in curriculum planning management in higher education in Vietnam? Please write your description in the space below.

.....

3. In your opinion, what should be the main role of higher education institutions in curriculum planning management in higher education in Vietnam? Please write your description in the space below.

.....

4. In your opinion, what are the factors that contribute to effective and successful curriculum planning management in higher education in Vietnam? Please write your description in the space below.

.....

Thank you for your cooperation in completing the questionnaire! Please return this questionnaire to:

*Ms. Thu Do
 35 Le Thanh Ton Street, District 1,
 Ho Chi Minh City*

h. hơn 10 năm

V. Mô hình quản lý hiện tại đối với công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo.

6. Mô hình quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo nào sau đây hiện đang được áp dụng tại trường của quý vị. Vui lòng đánh dấu chéo vào ô thích hợp bên dưới. Tại trường của tôi, việc thiết kế chương trình đào tạo...

f. hoàn toàn do Nhà nước quản lý thông qua chương trình khung quốc gia

g. do Nhà nước quản lý, nhưng trường có thể điều chỉnh theo nhu cầu thực tế

h. do trường quản lý

i. do một tổ chức độc lập với Nhà nước quản lý

j. hình thức quản lý khác (vui lòng ghi rõ):

.....

7. Vui lòng xác nhận xem liệu quý vị có đồng ý với những vấn đề sau về mô hình quản lý hiện tại ở trường của quý vị đối với công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bằng cách đánh dấu chéo vào ô thích hợp bên dưới.

	Hoàn toàn đồng ý	Đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	Không có ý kiến
Mô hình quản lý hiện tại đối với công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo tại trường của tôi đã đảm bảo được rằng ...					
j. Chương trình đào tạo có mục tiêu rõ ràng cho kết quả học tập đầu ra của từng môn học.					
k. Chương trình đào tạo được thiết kế với sự tham gia của nhiều đối tác khác nhau.					
l. Việc thiết kế chương trình đào tạo là một quá trình liên tục bao gồm thiết kế chương trình, thực hiện chương trình và đánh giá chương trình.					
m. Chương trình đào tạo bao gồm những hướng dẫn cần thiết cho công tác giảng dạy và học tập.					

n.	Chương trình đào tạo bao gồm những kiến thức và kỹ năng mà xã hội hiện đang cần.					
o.	Chương trình đào tạo giúp sinh viên phát triển tri thức một cách toàn diện.					
p.	Chương trình đào tạo giúp sinh viên phát triển thành những cá thể độc lập trong xã hội.					
q.	Chương trình đào tạo tạo cơ hội cho giảng viên thay đổi chương trình cho phù hợp với nhu cầu thực tế.					
r.	Chương trình đào tạo tạo cơ hội cho giảng viên phát triển chuyên môn của mình.					

8. Mức độ hài lòng của quý vị đối với mô hình quản lý hiện tại cho công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo tại trường của quý vị. Vui lòng đánh dấu chéo vào ô thích hợp bên dưới.

- a. Hoàn toàn hài lòng
- b. Khá hài lòng
- c. Mức độ không hài lòng không đáng kể
- d. Hoàn toàn không hài lòng
- e. Không có ý kiến

9. Theo quý vị, có cách nào để cải thiện công tác quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo tại trường của quý vị? vui lòng đánh dấu chéo vào ô thích hợp bên dưới.

- a. Có Vui lòng đọc tiếp câu số 5.
- b. Không Vui lòng chuyển sang phần III.

10. Theo quý vị, làm thế nào để cải thiện công tác quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo? vui lòng ghi rõ chi tiết vào chỗ trống bên dưới đây.

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VI. Mô hình quản lý cho công tác thiết kế chương trình.

1. Theo quan điểm của quý vị, trong số những mô hình quản lý cho công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học, mô hình quản lý nào phù hợp nhất cho Việt Nam? Vui lòng đánh dấu chéo vào CHỈ MỘT ô phù hợp bên dưới.
Theo quan điểm của tôi, mô hình quản lý phù hợp nhất cho công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học của Việt nam nên là:

- g. Nhà nước quản lý tập trung công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo.
- h. Một cơ quan giáo dục trực thuộc sự quản lý của Nhà nước chịu trách nhiệm quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học.
- i. Một cơ quan giáo dục không thuộc sự quản lý của Nhà nước chịu trách nhiệm quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học
- j. Nhà nước đưa ra kết quả đầu ra mong muốn cho giáo dục, trong khi các trường đại học chịu trách nhiệm về việc quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo.
- k. Các trường đại học hoàn toàn chịu trách nhiệm về việc quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo.
- l. Mô hình khác:
Vui lòng ghi rõ chi tiết vào chỗ trống dưới đây.

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2. Theo quý vị, vai trò chính của Nhà nước trong việc quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học ở Việt Nam nên là gì? Vui lòng ghi rõ chi tiết vào chỗ trống dưới đây.

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3. Theo quý vị, vai trò chính của các trường đại học trong việc quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học ở Việt Nam nên là gì? Vui lòng ghi rõ chi tiết vào chỗ trống dưới đây

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.....
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4. Theo quý vị, những nhân tố nào góp phần vào thành công và hiệu quả cho việc quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo bậc đại học ở Việt Nam? Vui lòng ghi rõ chi tiết vào chỗ trống dưới đây.

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*Cảm ơn sự hợp tác của quý vị trong việc hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi thăm dò.
Vui lòng gửi bảng câu hỏi đã được điền đầy đủ thông tin về địa chỉ dưới đây.*

*Cô Đỗ Thị Hoài Thu
35 Lê Thánh Tôn, Quận 1
Tp. Hồ Chí Minh*

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS
English Version

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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS

I. General Information about the interviewee/institution

1. How long have you been working in the field of CP/CPM?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your specific job?

II. Information about educators' attitudes and beliefs towards the current approach to curriculum planning management (CPM)

1. What is the process of implementing the current approach to CPM at the institution?
2. Are you satisfied with the current process of CP at your institution?
3. Do you have to follow any regulations or framework for CP? (if yes, can you tell me more about these regulations/frameworks?)
4. What are the advantages and/or constraints in implementing the current approach to CPM at your institution?
5. What strategies do you have to deal with these constraints or disadvantages?
6. Do you have any strategies for involving external stakeholders such as industry or employers in the process of CP or CPM?

III. Information about educators' views and beliefs about alternative approaches to CPM in Vietnam

1. What should be done to improve the current circumstance of or the overall quality of CPM in Vietnam? and why?
2. What is the most appropriate approach to CPM in Vietnam? (what is the role of the MOET and HEIs in managing CP in this alternative approach?)
3. What make you think that this alternative approach to CPM is appropriate to the Vietnamese HE context?

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS
Vietnamese Version

CÂU HỎI PHỎNG VẤN

I. Thông tin tổng quát về trường/người được phỏng vấn

1. Xin anh/chị cho biết anh/chị đã công tác trong ngành quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo/thiết kế chương trình đào tạo được bao lâu rồi?
2. Anh/chị có thể cho biết vài thông tin về công việc mình đang làm?

II. Quan điểm của nhà quản lý giáo dục về phương pháp quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo hiện tại:

- 1 Xin anh/chị cho biết về chu trình quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo tại trường của mình?
- 2 Anh/chị có hài long về chu trình hiện tại này không?
- 3 Trường chúng ta có phải thực hiện những qui định hay khung luật lệ gì trong công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo không? Nếu có, anh/chị có thể mô tả về những qui định này không?
- 4 Anh/chị có những thuận lợi hay khó khăn gì trong việc thực hiện phương pháp quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo hiện tại ở trường mình không? Anh/chị có thể nói rõ về những thuận lợi hoặc khó khăn này không?
- 5 Anh/chị có chiến lược nào để khắc phục những khó khăn/bất cập này?
- 6 Trường mình có chiến lược nào để mời những đối tượng bên ngoài chẳng hạn như nhà tuyển dụng, hay các công ty kinh doanh tham gia vào việc thiết kế chương trình hoặc quản lý công tác này không?

III. Quan điểm của nhà quản lý giáo dục về phương pháp phù hợp cho việc quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo ở Việt Nam

1. Theo anh/chị thì chúng ta cần làm gì để cải thiện chất lượng chung của công tác quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo ở Việt Nam? Tại sao?
2. Phương pháp phù hợp nhất cho việc quản lý thiết kế chương trình đào tạo ở Việt Nam theo anh/chị là gì?
3. Tại sao?

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
English Version**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research title: Curriculum Planning Management in Higher Education in Vietnam: The Perspective of Higher Education Institutions

My name is Thu Thi Hoai Do, and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at Curtin University. My study aims to explore attitudes towards the current approach to curriculum planning management in higher education and identification of the benefits and disadvantages of alternative approaches of curriculum planning management.

If you choose to participate, please complete the questionnaire that is attached. It will take you approximately 30 minutes.

Your name and any details that would identify you personally will NOT be recorded on the questionnaire and all questionnaires will be kept in a secure and private place for the duration of the research. All information obtained from the questionnaire will be collated and presented in an aggregate form only.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. There are no disadvantages, penalties or adverse consequences for not participating. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

If you want more information, you can contact me on 848-38245618 or by email on thuseameo@yahoo.com, or my supervisor, Dr. Katie Dunworth, on 9266 4227 or by email on k.dunworth@curtin.edu.au

Note: This project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number 10/063). If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845 or by contacting Sarah French by email on S.French@curtin.edu.au

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
Vietnamese Version**

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**PHIẾU THÔNG TIN
(DÀNH CHO BẢNG KHẢO SÁT THÔNG TIN)**

Đề tài nghiên cứu: Quản lý Công tác Thiết kế Chương trình Đào tạo Đại học Việt Nam: Quan điểm từ các Trường Đại học

Tôi là Đỗ Thị Hoài Thu, nghiên cứu sinh chương trình đào tạo Tiến sĩ thuộc Khoa Giáo dục, trường Đại học Curtin, Úc. Đề tài nghiên cứu của tôi nhằm mục tiêu tìm hiểu về quan điểm của các nhà giáo dục Việt Nam đối với mô hình quản lý công tác thiết kế chương trình đào tạo đại học hiện nay và nhận định về những tiện ích cũng như bất cập trong việc thực hiện những mô hình quản lý mới.

Nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia vào cuộc khảo sát, vui lòng điền thông tin vào bảng khảo sát đính kèm. Bảng khảo sát mất khoảng 30 phút để hoàn thành.

Tên và thông tin cá nhân của quý vị sẽ KHÔNG được lưu lại trên bảng khảo sát. Các bảng khảo sát sẽ được lưu giữ tại nơi an toàn trong suốt thời gian nghiên cứu. Thông tin thu được từ cuộc khảo sát sẽ chỉ được trình bày dưới hình thức tổng hợp.

Sự tham gia của quý vị hoàn toàn mang tính chất tự nguyện. Quý vị sẽ không gặp bất kỳ khó khăn hay bất lợi nào nếu không tham gia vào cuộc khảo sát. Quý vị cũng có thể từ chối tham gia ở bất kỳ thời điểm nào của cuộc khảo sát.

Để biết thêm chi tiết, quý vị có thể liên lạc trực tiếp với tôi theo số điện thoại: 848-38245618 hay email: thuseameo@yahoo.com hoặc giáo sư hướng dẫn đề tài của tôi là TS.Katie Dunworth theo số điện thoại 9266 4227 hoặc email: k.dunworth@curtin.edu.au

Lưu ý: Đề tài nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng Đạo đức trong Nghiên cứu Nhân văn của trường Đại học Curtin chấp thuận (theo quyết định số 10/063). Vui lòng liên hệ với Hội đồng trên của trường nếu cần xác minh về quyết định chấp thuận này theo địa chỉ: Phòng Nghiên cứu và Phát triển, trường Đại học Curtin, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845 hoặc liên lạc trực tiếp với Sarah French theo địa chỉ email: s.french@curtin.edu.au

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
English Version**

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Research title: Curriculum Planning Management in Higher Education in Vietnam: The Perspective of Higher Education Institutions

My name is Thu Thi Hoai Do, and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at Curtin University. My study aims to explore attitudes towards the current approach to curriculum planning management in higher education and identification of the benefits and disadvantages of alternative approaches of curriculum planning management.

If you choose to participate, you will participate in an interview which will last 30-40 minutes.

Please note that for data analysis purposes your interview will be tape-recorded.

Your name and any details that would identify you personally will NOT be recorded in the interview and all the tapes of the interviews and their transcripts will be kept in a secure and private place for the duration of the research. All information obtained from the interview will be collated and presented in an aggregate form only.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There are no disadvantages, penalties or adverse consequences for not participating. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

If you want more information, you can contact me on 848-38245618, or my supervisor, Dr. Katie Dunworth, on 9266 4227 or by email on k.dunworth@curtin.edu.au

Note: This project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number 10/063). If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845 or by contacting Sarah French by email on S.French@curtin.edu.au

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
Vietnamese Version**

THÔNG TIN VỀ PHÒNG VẤN KHẢO SÁT

Đề tài nghiên cứu: Quản lý Công tác Thiết kế Chương trình Đào tạo Đại học Việt Nam: Quan điểm từ các Trường Đại học

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Nếu quý vị đồng ý tham gia vào cuộc khảo sát, quý vị sẽ được phỏng vấn trong vòng 30-40 phút.

Xin lưu ý là cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được thu âm lại nhằm phục vụ cho mục tiêu phân tích dữ liệu về sau.

Tên và thông tin cá nhân của quý vị sẽ **KHÔNG ĐƯỢC** ghi âm lại trong cuộc phỏng vấn. Các băng thu âm cũng như tài liệu đánh máy ghi lại các cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được lưu giữ tại nơi an toàn trong suốt thời gian nghiên cứu. Thông tin từ các cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ chỉ được trình bày dưới hình thức tổng hợp.

Sự tham gia của quý vị hoàn toàn mang tính chất tự nguyện. Quý vị sẽ không gặp bất kỳ khó khăn hay bất lợi nào nếu không tham gia vào cuộc khảo sát. Quý vị cũng có thể từ chối tham gia ở bất kỳ thời điểm nào của cuộc khảo sát.

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
English Version



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research title: Curriculum Planning Management in Higher Education in Vietnam:
The Perspective of Higher Education Institutions

Researcher's name: Thu Thi Hoai Do

I confirm that I have been informed about this project and understand what my participation involves. I understand that I can withdraw at any time, and that no information which could identify me will be used in published material.

I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview, which will take 30-40 minutes.

I agree to participate in the study as described to me in the information sheet.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Vietnamese Version

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PHIẾU ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA

Đề tài nghiên cứu: Quản lý Công tác Thiết kế Chương trình Đào tạo Đại học tại Việt Nam: Góc nhìn từ Các Trường Đại học

Tên Nghiên cứu sinh: Đỗ Thị Hoài Thu

Tôi xác nhận đã được cung cấp đầy đủ thông tin có liên quan đến đề tài nghiên cứu này và đã hiểu rõ về việc tham gia của mình vào cuộc khảo sát. Tôi cũng hiểu rõ mình có thể từ chối tham gia vào bất kỳ thời điểm nào của cuộc khảo sát, và không có bất kỳ thông tin cá nhân nào của tôi được phép sử dụng trên các ấn bản

Tôi hiểu rõ mình sẽ được thu âm trong suốt thời gian được phỏng vấn, khoảng 30-40 phút.

Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào cuộc nghiên cứu như thông tin đã cung cấp trong Phiếu Thông tin.

Tên:

Chữ ký:

Ngày: