The Positive Effects of University Autonomy on e-Learning under the Circumstances of Public Universities in Vietnam

Dinh-Thuy-Huong Nguyen, Ngo-Ho Anh-Khoi, and Thi-Thuy Tran

***Abstract*—For nearly 30 years since the establisment of the two national unviersities, the first steps for autonomy of unviersities, autonomy of university has become a must-be obligation implied by the State, instead of a favorable social trend in Vietnam. Beginning approximately at the same moment, in the global education market, e-learning has been developed as a derivation of distanced learning. This article aims to analyze the advantages of autonomy of university which help to promote this new manner of learning. By the analysis, it could be possible for public universities to decide to participate in to the e-learning market and clarify exactly to whom the program of e-learning will deserve.**

***Index Terms*—Autonomy of university, e-learning, derivation of distanced learning, advantages of autonomy of university, e-learning market, the program of e-learning.**

I. Introduction

"Autonomy of University" has been integrated in academic life approximately for 15 years since 2003 by the promulgation of Decision no 153/2003/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister and has become the more and more important factor that leaded the direction of university management and development in Vietnam. Autonomy of university is not only a challenge but also an opportunity to develop in a competitive educational market nowadays. The universities which function by public budget, will be more dynamic and autonomous when deciding professional issues as well as organization problems, especially financial management. In general, it's believed that e-learning should be an opportunity as well as a challenge for the public university system. Under the circumstances of Vietnamese public universities, the autonomy of university policies could be considered as favorable motivation for the university to decide if they could be able to provide e-learning services, first. Then, after answering the question of organization capacity, it's possible for the university to decide to take part in the e-learning in taking account of the high concurrence of the other universities including public and private system. In final, the question of how to do is raised as one of main problems that could be resolved in our research. The results of the methods above and Discussion will be analyzed by commenting many different case-studies of public universities as there is any official statistic of Government relating to the e-learning organized by public universities in Vietnam.

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II. Methods

A. Organization Capacity of e-Learning

"(…) for producing one hour of distance learning materials and shows that it takes 90-240 hours on average" [1]. And "(...) in 2010, an hour of eLearning costs ~$10,000 to produce" [2]. What about 2019? In 2019, the cost was decreased but it remains always in high amount, according to the Fig. 1-3 below [3]:

LMS installation and setup (IMPLEMENTATION STAGE)

Team member	Involvement length, hours	Hourly rates, $	Overall check, $
Deployment team (DevOps)	50-80	30-60	1500-480+
QA specialist	30-40	20-40	600-1600+

Fig. 1. Implementation stage fees[1].

Online course creation: team's overall involvement timeframes and rates

Team roles	Involvement stages	Time, hrs/1 course video hour	Hourly rate, $	Total check, $
Course owner	All	Individual	Individual	Individual
Subject matter expert (SME)	Design	10-15	Individual	Individual
Project manager	All	40-55	30-70	1200-3850
Instructional designer	Design, Development	50-79	20-80	1000-6320
Marketer	Analysis	30-40	20-90	600-3600
Lecturer	Design, Development	53-84	20-50	1060-4200
Psycholinguist	Design, Development	20-35	20-45	400-1575
Graphic designer	Development	59-86	25-80	1475-6880
Director	Development	3-5	40-110	120-550
Video operator	Development	3-5	20-70	60-350
Video editor	Development	51-110	25-60	1275-6600
Content manager	Implementation	32-43	20-80	640-3440
OVERALL COSTS				7830-37,365

Fig. 2. Online course creation fees[1].

[1] Copyright https://raccoongang.com/

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Online course creation: team involvement estimates

Phase name	Specialists involved	Time, hrs/1 course video hour	Hourly rates, $			Estimated costs, $
			Upwork	Contractors	Experts	
Course upload*	Content Manager	2-3	30-80	20-40	80+	40-240+
QA process**	Content Manager	30-40	30-80	20-40	80+	600-3200+
	Project Manager	30-40	30-70	30-50	70+	900-2800+
	Course Owner	30-40	Individual	Individual	Individual	Individual
Course creation monitoring	Course Owner	2-3 (daily)	Individual	Individual	Individual	Individual
Project management	Project Managerer	2-3 (daily)	30-70	30-50	70+	60-210+(daily)

*uploading the course content to the LMS and combining it into a course
**quality assurance of the ready course, including feedback from the pilot run

Fig. 3. Team involvement fees[1].

B. Strategy Facing to the Crucial Concurrence from e-Learning Market

Liberty is equally in the exchange of cutting the normal amount received by the State. It's possible to affirm that autonomy of university at the beginning of the process was a high requirement from the Government and now the autonomy of university has become an absolute obligation to change from the Government, by observing the legislative process and sustainable executive documents cited-below:

- Decision no 153/2003/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister "Confirmation of the article 10 the autonomous right of universities"
- The Education Code on July 2005.
- Resolution 14/2005/NQ-CP promulgated the 2nd November, 2005 relating to the basic and total reform of university education in Vietnam from 2006 – 2020.
- Joint Circular between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior no 07/2009/TTLT-BGDĐT-BNV on April 2009 guiding the process of autonomy relating the resources human in autonomous university.
- The latest education code in 2019, coming in force the 1st July 2020.

In fact, at the beginning of university autonomy project, under the circumstances of private education, many public universities adopted the solution according to which the university had planned to open the more the less fields of education to attract the more possible number of students. It's very simple to understand this measure. Instead of replacing the State budget, the public universities will seek to be financed from student's fees. And as the university fees couldn't be augmented so high, these universities would expand more the field of education. This measure had been effective in nearly 5-10 years for maximum, at least when the private sector did not exist and the other universities applied the same solution: create more and more many other fields of education different from the strong original point of the university.

The private universities appeared, applying with more modern infrastructure and different working methods to attract students coming to inscription. They identified extremely in an adequate manner the type of students they could attract and the services they can provide best. At the same moment, the public university tried to deal with his all new education units in addition of the previous units. It seemed to be a hard concurrence for public universities when competing not only with private sector but also with other public universities themselves. Year by year the number of students in private universities raised continuously while this number in the public sector has had a slight diminution since 2017, as indicated the graphic below:

175 Giáo dục đại học *University education*

	2010	2014	2015	2016	Sơ bộ *Prel.* 2017
Số trường học (Trường) ***Number of schools (School)***	**188**	**219**	**223**	**235**	**235**
Công lập - *Public*	138	159	163	170	170
Ngoài công lập - *Non-public*	50	60	60	65	65
Số giáo viên (Nghìn người) ***Number of teachers (Thous. pers.)***	**51,0**	**65,7**	**69,6**	**72,8**	**75,0**
Phân theo loại hình - *By type*					
Công lập - *Public*	43,4	52,7	55,4	57,6	59,3
Ngoài công lập - *Non-public*	7,6	13,0	14,2	15,2	15,7
Phân theo giới tính - *By sex*					
Nam - *Male*	27,7	30,0	36,9	37,7	38,4
Nữ - *Female*	23,3	35,7	32,7	35,1	36,6
Số sinh viên (Nghìn người) ***Number of students (Thous. pers.)***	**1435,9**	**1824,3**	**1753,2**	**1767,9**	**1695,9**
Phân theo loại hình - *By type*					
Công lập - *Public*	1246,4	1596,7	1520,8	1523,9	1432,6
Ngoài công lập - *Non-public*	189,5	227,6	232,4	244,0	263,3
Phân theo giới tính - *By sex*					
Nam - *Male*	742,7	974,3	821,1	833,4	791,9
Nữ - *Female*	693,2	850,0	932,1	934,5	904,0
Số sinh viên tốt nghiệp (Nghìn người) ***Number of graduates (Thous. pers.)***	**187,4**	**353,9**	**352,8**	**305,6**	**319,5**
Công lập - *Public*	166,2	302,6	307,8	268,4	282,0
Ngoài công lập - *Non-public*	21,2	51,3	45,0	37,2	37,5

NGTK tóm tắt - 2018 *Statistical summary book* 403

Fig. 4. University education from 2010 to 2017[2].

In this crucial concurrence, in order to exist and furthermore to success, should the public university begin the e-learning project right after confirming about the organization capacity? To be sure about the success of e-learning project, public universities should identify strictly these following questions:

✧ *Who is the learner in e-learning program?*

Certainly, the question raised on the (capacity to maintain) infrastructure of the learner of e-learning is not considered as the main problems. In order to answer directly the question above, it should be concentrated on the particular circumstances of learner. There are many different reasons explaining because of diverse demand of a human being. Nevertheless, it's possible to predict who could come to use e-learning services: persons who don't have enough official working time (estimated from 7:00- 17:00) and maybe the handicapped persons or the persons who don't live in the geographical zone of the university. Timing and physical capacity to pursuing the programs must be key ideas that make strong motivation for learner to choose e-learning program.

✧ *Why do they choose the e-learning program?*

E-learning in Vietnam is at high speed of growth. In a

[2] Copyright of The General Statistic Office of Vietnam, *Statistical summary book 2018*, p.403.

nearest future, this market will not stop growing. That means the more and the more competitive e-learning operators will appear in the market. As analyzed in the last section, the main strong points of public universities are based on their traditional activities: long term forming and the right to form legally university diploma.

Many competitions from public, from private sector in the context of autonomy of university seems to give more difficulties to realize the e-learning programs. Nevertheless, the project of autonomy is considered as an opportunity and a precedent preparation. In the last research relating to autonomy of university, we had mentioned the five points that must be clarified by the autonomy of university [4]. They are these questions concerning:

Who? Evidently, it's about the learner. Nevertheless, the quality of students who could take and who want to take inscription in the e-learning program must be the most important key in order to help the public university to plan in detail the educational programs according to learner capacity.

What? The answer of this question related to the need of the society and enterprise market and what could the university do in their possibility? It's impossible to maintain the traditional method (denying *grossomodo* teacher in center role), maintain a pro-academic knowledge with the small proportion of practicing in the total education program.

For a deep and total change,not only to achieve the e-learning but also for the long term development, the university needs more autonomy from the State who funds directly the university budget. The reason is simply explained that in order to change, the university is the only objet who knows exactly what, where the problems have situated in the university, itself rather than a government unit that has a general administration in upper education like the Ministry of Education and Trainning.

When? Different projects must be planned in short-term, long-term, professional and financial measures.

Where? This is the position in the future of the university in the international ranking and national ranking in five or ten years.

How to do? Due to the autonomy in university management maybe less control means less money? The public university can do whatever they want to fulfill the amount which was ever financed by the State? Doing business in education, educating all trendy domains despite of the original main field of the university via onlie courses? And at the bottom of the demand of autonomy, the most important question was raised that how to innovate, how to be autonomous in considering all the strong points and weak points of the university itself? These questions will be answered in detail in the next section.

Recently, under the enforcement of the new amendment from the upper education law code, there are many discussions relating the non grade of university diploma. According to this new regulation, the ministry of education won't oblige that university diploma ought to be written neither the manner of education (initiative or distance learning) nor the grade of learner during the training duration. This open regulation brought a new equal approach for distance learning, especially e-learning. Then, the opportunity of learner from different method of education will be assured approximately to equality.

Nevertheless, the problems of identification, are raised once more time, the more and more necessary to get success. When you submit your final version, after your paper has been accepted, prepare it in two-column format, including figures and tables.

C. Suggestion of the First Step in Order to Realize the e-Learning Project

After identifying exactly the strong points of education, the potential learner either the actual capacity of the university, it must be the step of action. Should we begin directly the project by establishing a new media center for e-learning? Or should we try some models of organization by referring foreign experiences? Our research doesn't aim to analyze the advantage and disadvantage of the mentioned method above. We suggest another method to achieve e-learning in university education. Under the encouragement of the amendments of the upper education law, coming enforce from 1st July 2019 [5], as it's legal, the university could make different alternative methods or manners of training and forming which depend now on the autonomy of university in considering of all related factors. Starting to organize a new e-learning university diploma takes time and lot of human force, experience and financial capital while the public university almost doesn't have enough experiences in a such modern and flexible method of distance learning. Therefore, taking entries is necessary. According to the article 38 of Upper education law [6], it's legal for public universities to organize the e-learning courses even for the learner of full time university diploma. These kinds of courses, once passed by learner of full time training, correspond to the certificates giving by the center of education. As a university diploma includes a certain number of credits, in the form of different certificates that could be achieved by student, public universities could take an example of e-learning through the process of training, examining for learner to achieve these credits and get the certificates.

III. Results

Corresponding to these methods in-put, there are three results out-put:

A. E-Learning Public Establishments

It is believed that the cost of pursuing a course via e-learning in Vietnam is not as high as the number cited above, according to the research of K. Kapp [1] and C. Alliance [2]. The e-learning cost in Vietnam is divided into different groups by various criteria such as : the organizers (coming from different sectors : academic universities, enterprises, NGOs, foreign investors, special associations and organizations), the objective and duration of e-learning course (for a long-term duration or short-term; especially in case of e-learning, the duration is counted normally per actual operated hours), the motivation of students (in order to get a certificate or a university diploma).

In fact, many public universities in Vietnam have started deeply and strongly the e-learning project. In one side, this

project has been began by the State's order such the cases of Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh Open University [7]. In another side, it's really coming from the actual voluntary and capacity of the university. These universities, effectively have a pioneer place on the educational field in the national ranking such the cases of Foreign Trade University [8], Hanoi University of Science and Technology [9].

B. Co-existence Instead of Concurrence in e-Learning Market

Many public universities had determined strictly and exactly their strong points and decided to take part in this market. In detail, it is believed that union makes strength. Little knowledge of e-learning market, poor and out of date infrastructure, many public limits are considered as the weak points of public system. In order to compete in a such potential market as e-learning, it is better to start with a cooperation. The model win-win has been practiced perfectly in case of Foreign Trade University and Topica group [10]. According to their MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), this public university engages the quality of the whole duration of learning, quality of lecturer and this must be the right of this university to control the whole examining stage. The final result if the e-learners success to pass the exams, will be a Foreign Trade University diploma. These stages will be realised through the technology bases and infrastructures of Topica group.

Because of serving the public interests, the public universities have been put in an invisible boundary of law and regulation. To profit in maximum the strong points of public universities and limit the minimum of weaknesses of these public universities, another model of e-learning has been created: all mentors and teachers coming from public universities would be invited to work for private university in short-term labor contract for certain subjects. At the same time, these private universities will develop their human resources by offering high salaries and others attractive policies. In fact, this model in classical education is popular but in e-learning, it's believed to be the last model until this moment: the project of K&Y High Technology School [11] by Duy-Thong Luong-Nguyen and the professor Quang-Minh Le, the former vice-director of Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City, just appeared in very few month ago. Estimating 100% of their program by e-learning (100% the theory time by e-learning and 100% of the pratice time by recruiter companies and laboratories, as the project claims) [12], following strictly the key relation of social demands: recruiters- school- learner, this alternative training method from K&Y School in a such potential region in the South West of Vietnam like Dong Thap province is waited to bring more positive results in a near future…

C. Positive Results of e-Learning in Public Universities

In Hanoi National University, the pionner of autonomy of university, since 2015, the alternative education in different forms are organized in training soft skills for learner of initiative duration [13]. What the students of this university had not only the knowledge on their mind but also the real certificates of soft skills in their hand, which are considered as a added value during the recruitment. The massive number of learner profiting from e-learning is uncountable. Furthermore, e-learning is really an economical method of training, especially in many super grand cities as Hanoi. The learner besides pursuing the traditional courses, could follow the e-learning courses to achieve the university program as soon as possible. Additionally, if the e-learning becomes such an effective manner in order to focus on learner's interest, the learner from different alternative method and from initial duration will become the most accurate illustration of e-learning. It's considered as another implicit manner of marketing. And the most importance is that this kind of courses organization is legal conforming to the legislation.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

Certainly, there are different methods leading to the success of an e-learning project. However, it is better to remain that the learner will be always the center factor. Especially in e-learning, the learner has many different particular circumtances and for a long-term developement, the survivor public universities must resolve these problems effectively in the respect of their quality standards.

Furthermore, it's impossible to deny the deep impact of the autonomy policy on the society in general. In the part of employment structure, the identification made by the universities will specialize in details employment structures. Employees and employers will have clear choice to pursue. Specialization is a preparation for the next step: professionalization.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Dinh-Thuy-Huong NGUYEN, Ho-Anh-Khoi NGO and Thi-Thuy TRAN conducted the research; Dinh-Thuy-Huong NGUYEN analyzed the data; Dinh-Thuy-Huong NGUYEN wrote the paper; all authors had approved the final version.

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