

THE STATUS OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION CAPACITY OF LECTURERS (CASE STUDY AT THE VIETNAM ACADEMY FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES)*

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In recent years, the prestigious university ranking system in the world has not yet named Vietnamese universities and academies. One of the leading reasons is that the publication of research results of lecturers in the prestigious international journal system is still low in quality and modest in quantity. This study was conducted through a survey at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities. The research method combines qualitative and quantitative methods to assess factors according to the SWOT tool, including: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for lecturers for international publication. The results of the study show that lecturers at the Academy lack many skills and approaches that are not suitable for international publications. With the opportunities ahead, however, these skills challenges can be overcome for successful international publication.

Keywords: *International publication; Lecturers; Researcher; Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities.*

1. Introduction

Gerard Piel - who first published Scientific American, once said: "Science will die without publication". International publication (including book articles and inventions, utility solutions...) is making an important contribution to improving the position of countries and universities/research organizations (Bui Minh Duc, Nguyen Thu Ha, Nguyen Dinh Duc, 2019). For education and training institutions, international publication plays a particularly important role. Reputable research results that are known by academic world will benefit the author and the institution. Publication provides an opportunity for each researcher to build his or her own academic network. However, publishing research results in international journals, especially

prestigious journals, is a challenge, requiring a lot of efforts, even for those who have experience in countries with a rich academic background.

In the current context, it is imperative that higher education institutions have international publications to confirm the teaching and research capacity of lecturers. Faced with that fact, the training units in Vietnam all set themselves goals to strive and constantly strive to improve the quality of international publication, step by step participating in this transparent yet challenging playing field.

In Vietnam, international scientific publication data has been used by most universities, research institutes, scientific and educational agencies in evaluating research achievements of scientists and lecturers, and university ranking; is an important

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criterion to confer the title of professor and associate professor. Therefore, the roadmap to develop the capacity to publish research results, including international publications, requires an honest assessment of the status quo, thereby providing recommendations and policy implications to develop the capacity of lecturers to publish research results in Vietnam.

2. Research overview

There are many studies on post-research scientific publication activities in universities around the world. Phillip Altbach (2004) has provided a number of standard features for analyzing the competitive position of universities according to international standards. First of all, the university must be excellent in research, have many high-quality research works, have the ideal facilities for scientific research. The university must have highly qualified lecturers with appropriate salaries and sources of income (My Hanh, 2005).

There are many policies to develop international publication that have been applied by many universities and institutes around the world. Basically, it can be summarized in a number of activities as follows:

1) In terms of organization, training systems: Focusing on research activities such as seminars rather than teaching in lecture halls, students work actively in laboratories, libraries, and self-study rooms rather than studying in the classroom.

2) Evaluation of lecturers: Lecturers are mainly ranked and paid according to their research achievements, in which specifically the quality and quantity of international publications, the number of approved topics and projects at all levels, the impact of those works to society and to academia.

3) Financial support for international publication at research institutes/universities in developed countries such as the US, UK, France, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore... is great to encourage international publication. economics in teachers. Due to a very high degree of autonomy in the collection and expenditure of funds in universities/academies, the top priority is given to high-quality publications with great impact on academia or society.

4) The peer review and accreditation of lecturers at prestigious universities/academies is carried out at least once every 2 years for lecturers and assistant professors, once every 5 years for the title of Professors and Associate Professors (according to standards of scientific publication, awards, number of research works, teaching achievements and academic activities). The review is very harsh, if the lecturers and professors do not meet the

requirements for the quality of scientific research, they may be excluded from the system.

5) Financial autonomy and academic autonomy are common trends of academy/university models.

In the past 7 years, Vietnam has made significant changes in its recognition of the role of international publication for domestic universities/academies. With the efforts of a group of pioneering universities/academies such as Ton Duc Thang University, Duy Tan University, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, National Economics University, Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU), Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Thap University, Phenika University... The quantity and quality of Vietnam's international publications is gradually improving. In Southeast Asia, although Vietnam is only ranked last in terms of published works, compared to about 10 years ago, there have been significant advances. This is considered as the beginning for society to recognize the role and position of international publication in the field of science.

The way that many universities / institutes in Vietnam are doing is to organize a model of the Science and Technology Development Fund. The establishment of the National Foundation for Science and Technology Development is a remarkable milestone in the past 10 years. The Fund has made far-reaching impacts, not just stopping at the results of the total output of research activities. NAFOSTED's organized activities have indeed raised the overall index of research activity, as well as nurtured the research capacity of higher education institutions and research institutions.

In addition to building a forum and improving the overall quality of research, there are also programs organized to promote national research capacity by training researchers with high qualifications, for example Project 322 (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2000), Project 911 (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2010) and most recently Project 89 (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2019). In particular, Project 322 and 911 aim to train more than 20,000 PhDs both domestically and internationally. In addition, the quality of PhD training in Vietnam has improved both in terms of the number of PhD students enrolled, as well as the graduation requirements. For example, the Ministry of Education and Training (2017) has set a new standard for doctoral training in Circular No. 08/2017/TT-BGDĐT with outstandingly rigorous entry requirements. Notably, the total maximum training time has been reduced to 6 years compared to the regulation 8 years ago. In addition, to be eligible to defend the Thesis, the PhD student must

have at least 2 internationally published articles, of which at least 1 article has been published in a scientific journal in the list of ISI/Scopus or 2 articles in peer-reviewed proceedings or journals.

The second activity to improve international publication that universities/academies in the country often apply is to establish a strong research group and create an inter-university international publication network to increase rankings. Bui Minh Duc and colleagues (2019) commented that “Developing research groups in universities can be considered as one of the leading solutions to help create knowledge, increase the quantity and quality of scientific publications and rapid technology transfer”. Bui Minh Duc has made statistics and commented that “In Vietnam today, as well as in the world, two types of research groups are forming: “hard research groups” and “soft research groups”. “The hard research group is formed due to the development intention of the organization, performing specific scientific tasks according to the organizational structure. The group’s obligations and rights as well as the requirements for members are clearly defined. These study groups often have pyramidal structures. At the top is the lead scientist of the research group (usually Professors, Associate Professors), then the lower level is the Doctorates, then the PhD students, graduate students and students. Soft research groups, usually formed when there is a topic, project, or a common passion for expertise, on a voluntary basis of members, regardless of the structure of the organization. A soft research group is formed when members have common interests on a particular scientific issue.

The above observations show that the publication of research results in universities around the world is very diverse, with many contents and rich in genres. “Writing for international publication” is always one of the big tasks of researchers and a mandatory requirement for lecturers. In Vietnam, the international publication is still limited compared to the world and the region. International publication is currently focusing on a number of groups of authors, a number of university training units, but has not yet become a regular activity. Facing the requirements of reality, the Academy for Ethnic Minorities needs to have assessments of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges in the present time in order to be able to step by step promote international publication.

3. Research methods

This study uses the SWOT tool to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities of international publication at an Academy in the North of Vietnam.

Understandably, SWOT is a collection of abbreviations of the first letters of English words: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - is a well-known model in business analysis of enterprises.

SWOT analysis is an important factor to create business strategy of enterprises. Through SWOT analysis, businesses will clearly see their goals as well as factors inside and outside the organization that can positively or negatively affect the goals set by the business. In the process of planning, SWOT analysis plays the role of the most basic and effective tool to help businesses have an overall view, not only of the business itself but also the factors that always affect and decide the success of the business.

To assess the current status of international publication capacity of lecturers and researchers working at the Academy, the research team has applied a number of research methods. Specifically:

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to collect parameters of faculty’s international publishing capacity. The topic uses Anket questionnaire to collect about 35-40 indicators to assess the capabilities, difficulties as well as barriers for lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities to publish internationally. A survey was carried out with all faculty and researchers at this Academy to ensure the integrity of the sample size.

The questionnaire was used for all lecturers and researchers working at the Academy. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 40, sent to individuals by email, and further exchanged by phone due to the complicated situation of the Covid-19 epidemic. The people surveyed include both individuals who have published and have not yet published international publications at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities.

There are 03 in-depth interviews with lecturers and researchers with international publications to discover the factors that make up their success. For the leadership level, there were about 05 in-depth interviews for the Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities, the Director, and the leaders of the departments, faculties and centers of the Academy. A total of 08 in-depth interviews with those who have had international publications and Academy leaders.

Quantitative questionnaires were statistically analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software and analyzed at the level of descriptive statistics. In-depth interviews were recorded and extracted to box the contents which need to be analyzed.

4. Research results

After a period of 1.5 months (from May 1, 2021 to June 15, 2021), the survey results were presented on the SWOT tool as follows:

4.1. Strengths

- Strengths in research methods:

After surveying lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities, the results showed that 95% were proficient in using the methods of synthesis, analysis and comparison; 92% are proficient in using expert methods; 87% are proficient in using qualitative methods (personal interviews, in-depth interviews, community group interviews, structured or semi-structured interviews, tape transcription, Nvivo qualitative software processing (if necessary) and writing qualitative reports...); 35% proficiently use quantitative research methods (designing questionnaires, organizing surveys, collecting data, processing on xcel, SPSS, Epi data software, writing qualitative reports; the rest 24 % know other methods such as using matrix in AI, regression interview, life history research...

- Strengths in collecting and possessing data related to disclosure issues

The fact that the researcher has the skills or ability to collect and possess research data related to the field of work such as ethnic history, ethnic culture, ethnic policy, state management system on Ethnic affairs at home and abroad is an important basis for the implementation of international publications. The scientific data management system of countries around the world is a problem that many lecturers and researchers at the Academy do not know. Many people can access research reports, policy implementation reports from the national, ministry, sectoral, local to district/commune levels, but do not have access to the Mendeley or Zotero data system or simply as on the Google Scholar or Research Gate portals. Currently, more than 02% of lecturers and researchers at the Academy have known about data systems according to international standards and they are those who have published international publications and are on the list of international scientists (with ORCID, Scopus ID, WoS Researcher ID¹..)

- Strengths in establishing the research group:

The degree of connection and interdisciplinary work of lecturers and researchers, the opportunity to approach scientists and form research groups to carry out research work is very large. Most of the lecturers and researchers at the Academy

have participated in research groups to carry out research work in the field of ethnic affairs and ethnography. This is a great advantage of lecturers and researchers here.

- Strengths in the opportunity to implement topics and projects at all levels:

Through the survey, 32% of lecturers and researchers have worked as principal investigator and key members of state-level projects; 88% used to be the principal investigator, key member of ministerial-level projects; 55% used to be the principal investigator, key member of development projects of non-governmental organizations; 46% used to be the principal investigator, key member of provincial-level projects; 35% have been the principal investigator, participated as a key member of the projects of funds such as Nafosted Foundation, Vind Foundation and 12% have participated in international proje

4.2. Weaknesses

There are quite a few weaknesses for lecturers and researchers when starting to conduct research for international publication. These include not being fluent in foreign languages (especially English), not mastering research methods, not knowing the steps for international publication, not having the skills to search for reputable international journals. credit is suitable for the article, no skills to interact with reviewers of prestigious international journals.

- Weaknesses in using foreign languages to read, translate documents, write international publications:

One of the important barriers hindering the international publication of lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities is the limitation in the use of international languages, especially English. Currently, only professors, associate professors, a few doctorates and masters are fluent in one foreign language (English); No one is fluent in 02 foreign languages and 85% of them have not yet used it at the proficiency level of 01 foreign language.

Fluency here means mastering 04 skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), reading and translating documents and using foreign languages in the process of researching and writing international publications.

- Weaknesses in the research method:

For international publication, research method is the top requirement of scientists. The weakness of the lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities is that they do not know how to process the data after the survey, both in qualitative and quantitative methods. Most of

¹. A personal account is granted to subscribe to journals on the ISI/ Scopus system

the lecturers and researchers have participated in surveys to collect research information. They can grasp research issues through collecting secondary information, through meetings, seminars, experience sharing, investigation. But to process the information after collection is quite difficult. Only 35% of lecturers and researchers know how to process quantitative data and process it with software such as Xcel, SPSS, Epi data... Those who know these software often stop at the descriptive level. normally. And the number of people who know to take into account regression, AMOD or SEM is less than 5 people.

In addition, the quality of using qualitative research methods of lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities has not really met the requirements of international publications. Techniques of in-depth interview, group interview, semi-structured interview have not fully exploited information or have problems related to research ethics that have not been properly understood and applied in practice.

- Weaknesses in implementing an international publication:

Currently, the number of lecturers and researchers who have published articles in journals of the ISI/SCOPUS journal indexes reaches 17%. In these indexes, the number of lecturers and researchers who have published articles in journals belonging to the SSCI/SCI index is 5%. The number of people who have never had an article published in the above journal indexes accounts for 83%. This is also the common situation of many universities/academies across the country. However, the current trend of requiring international publication is undeniable. The correct identification of the weaknesses of lecturers and researchers will help the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities to build an appropriate publication model in the coming time.

- Weaknesses in research groups:

One of the weaknesses of lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities is that their skills in working in research groups are not high. Many people when working in groups often have two tendencies: one is too active, to the point of overwhelming the role of others. The second is to rely on the role of the collective without promoting their own creativity and research capacity. These weaknesses have hindered the effectiveness of the research groups. This is an indirect cause that limits the ability to have international publications.

4.3. Opportunities

Although there are many weaknesses in the

scientific publishing capacity of lecturers and researchers, the opportunity to improve the capacity of international publication at the present time at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities is worth grasping and it is necessary to quickly build models to support the development of the quality and quantity of international publications.

- Opportunities in the Academy's international publication support mechanism:

Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities is a newly established unit, the Academy's leadership has recognized the important role of international publication in shaping the position of the Academy in the higher education system in Vietnam. In 2017, the Academy Director established strong research groups in the fields of Ethnic Minority Education, Sociology, Ethnology and Ethnic Minority Policy. The implementation of scientific activities, especially international publications are always supported by the Academy's leadership.

- Opportunities in the mechanism to support international publication of domestic organizations, ministries/sectors, corporations:

Since 2014, the Government has had programs to encourage and create favorable conditions for the development of domestic and international scientific research. The Government encourages universities, academies and research units to publish internationally in order to gain access to science in the world, and at the same time increase university promotion indexes in Vietnam.

- Opportunities in supporting international publication in Vietnam and Southeast Asia of prestigious international journals and publishers:

Currently, many organizations and programs support international publishing, including a number of monographs and works on Southeast Asia, Asia or issues on the East Sea and the Pacific region... The interest of the world's scientists in the past 15 years has gradually shifted to Asia instead of the old continents. Therefore, many scholarship programs, supporting research funding for PhD students, doctorates, and masters in Vietnam and the region have been implemented. This is a great opportunity for young scientists to grasp and improve their international publication capacity.

4.4. Threats

Through a survey at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities with the content of "barriers hindering the international publication of lecturers and researchers", the results show that the biggest barrier is limited research capacity that has not met the requirements of international publication (nearly 70%); the second barrier is "not yet finding

the right research group” (60%); The third barrier is “no incentive and support mechanism at the Academy” (50%).

These challenges show that the international publishing capacity of the Academy’s lecturers and researchers is both due to external factors and internal factors. The lecturers and researchers themselves have not cultivated and accumulated knowledge and skills to improve their own research and international publication capabilities. In addition, the Academy does not have a mechanism for the process of improving the international publication capacity of the group of lecturers and researchers specifically.

5. Discussion

Currently, the biggest obstacle in the international publication of lecturers and researchers of the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities is insufficient foreign language ability, not having access to internationally published products, not having the habit of writing an article. International publication meets the requirements of the journal in the ISI/SCOPUS indexes. In addition, the shy mentality, lack of deep awareness of the meaning of the publication of scientific research products of lecturers and researchers makes the approach to the problem incomplete, furthermore they have not clearly seen the benefits and difficulties of international publication. This needs to be considered due to the support policy, encouragement or mandatory requirements of the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities for the lecturers and researchers. While other higher education institutions are beginning to tighten the requirements of lecturers’ publication and have written incentive policies, the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities has not made this issue a top priority to evaluate lecturers. Therefore, when the needs of the unit were not available, the lecturers themselves did not see the need for international publication, so they did not really care.

The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities shows that at the present time, there are many opportunities for those who wish to access international publication to have can be successful. If in the coming time, the weaknesses in teamwork skills, foreign language skills, searching for documents, how to write published articles are improved... and there is a specific model for developing strong research groups. If the financial statements are appropriate, the quantity and quality of publication will be improved.

6. Conclusion

Scientific articles published in prestigious national and international scientific journals are important results of the research work. It is used to evaluate research topics, as well as evaluate the scientific achievements of researchers and research groups. For a country, scientific publication is considered as one of the measures of scientific and technological development level. Therefore, scientific publications, especially international ones, need more attention and investment.

At the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities, lecturers and researchers have increasingly made important contributions to both quantity and quality of articles published in prestigious international journals such as ISI, SCOPUS, SSCI. They have shown their potential, brought many signals about the force of new lecturers and researchers, playing a decisive role in the quality of education - training and scientific research of the Academy in the future. Recognizing the interaction between the development goals of the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities and the necessity to improve the quality of international publications of lecturers and researchers over the years, improve the training and quality of scientific research, including: creating conditions for participation in scientific activities, opening many training courses to support publication, and guiding international publication activities.

However, besides the achievements, the current status of international publications of lecturers and researchers at the Vietnam Academy for Ethnic Minorities still has limitations: the number of international publications is small, the quality of publication is mainly in Q3, Q4 journals, the number of Q1 and SSCI journals is not much, the technical fields have not been published but mainly in the fields of education, ethnic minority education, educational anthropology... Therefore, in the coming time, the Academy’s leadership needs to quickly build models to promote international publication in such aspects as mechanisms, finance, short- and long-term policies, rewards and as strict requirements for the output of scientific activities at all levels associated with the publication of research results. Thus, the goals of international publication of the unit have developed and are consistent with the general development of the current university training.

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THỰC TRẠNG NĂNG LỰC CÔNG BỐ QUỐC TẾ CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN (NGHIÊN CỨU TRƯỜNG HỢP HỌC VIỆN DÂN TỘC)

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Trong những năm qua, hệ thống xếp hạng đại học danh giá trên thế giới chưa gọi tên các đại học, học viện của Việt Nam. Một trong những nguyên nhân hàng đầu là việc công bố kết quả nghiên cứu của giảng viên trên hệ thống tạp chí quốc tế uy tín còn yếu về chất lượng và khiêm tốn về số lượng. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện thông qua khảo sát tại Học viện Dân tộc. Phương pháp nghiên cứu kết hợp giữa định tính và định lượng nhằm đánh giá các yếu tố theo công cụ SWOT, bao gồm: điểm mạnh, điểm yếu, cơ hội và thách thức cho giảng viên công bố quốc tế. Kết quả của nghiên cứu cho thấy, giảng viên ở Học viện còn thiếu nhiều kỹ năng và cách tiếp cận chưa phù hợp với công bố quốc tế. Tuy nhiên với những cơ hội trước mắt, những thách thức về kỹ năng này có thể khắc phục để công bố quốc tế thành công.

Từ khóa: Công bố quốc tế; Giảng viên; Nghiên cứu viên; Học viện Dân tộc.