

Research Article

**IMPACT OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND LECTURER'S
COMPETENCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY IN MEDICAL
AND PHARMACEUTICAL UNIVERSITIES:
THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SERVICE QUALITY**

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ABSTRACT

Universities in Vietnam have not only faced issues of how to improve the quality of training so that they can provide human resources for the country's socio-economic development but also how to improve competitiveness with universities in the world. On the other hand, the deeper integration into the world economy has demanded human resources with high knowledge and expertise to survive the competitive pressure not only in the country but also from the outside. Therefore, this paper was carried out to open a new research direction to help universities and university administrators achieve their goals, which is to improve the quality of training and prepare high-quality human resources to meet the needs of society. The study was conducted at 15 universities providing pharmaceutical education in Ho Chi Minh City with 550 responses collected, 06 research hypotheses were accepted, and the impact of university governance on student learning was confirmed. The findings confirm the impact of university governance on the training quality of universities. At the same time, it proposes some governance implications to help university administrators improve training quality through increasing school governance, lecturer's competence, and service quality.

Keywords: lecturer's competence; pharmaceutical universities; service quality; university governance

1. Introduction

The quality of training plays an important role in the development of a country (Bunoti, 2011). Abidin (2015) argues that one of the important factors determining national

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competitiveness is the quality of training. With the university-oriented structure gradually shifting to the market-oriented (Tetteh & Ofori, 2010), the quality of training has become a great concern for many sectors of society. Quality in the training field is not only essential but also an important element of excellence in education (Mackenzie, 2007). The fundamental goal of a university to provide the best quality of training should strive to fully understand the needs of its stakeholders.

In general, the research and discovery of factors affecting the quality of training have been carried out worldwide. These studies have identified valuable factors and indicated the level of impact of these factors on the quality of training. Most of the research has been done from the perspectives of the university's management staff and lecturers (Bunoti, 2011; Momunaliev et al., 2020), employers and enterprises (Nwajiuba et al., 2020), and the students (Cavallone et al., 2019). This study applies a more suitable approach. Studies that have examined the relationship between school governance and lecturer competence have a direct impact on training quality and especially consider the mediating role of service quality between university governance and lecturer competence on training quality. Limited studies have been conducted to explore such a relationship between these factors.

2. Literature review

2.1. Agency theory

Reaffirming the role of stakeholder theory, Freeman (1984) suggested that the network of relationships with many groups can influence the decision-making process of managers, based on which, stakeholder theory is interested in these relationships as it affects both the company's processes and performance as well as its stakeholders. Complementing this view, Donaldson and Preston (1995) argue that stakeholder theory focuses on managerial decision-making and that the interests of all stakeholders are intrinsically valid, and equally, no object's interests are assumed to be more important to represent the dominant role.

The last thing to be clear about this theory is the mechanism by which stakeholders influence organizational decisions. Garvare and Johansson (2010) identify that stakeholders are different from other affected or interested audiences in that they have both major points: (1) concern for their needs received from the organization, and (2) the ability to take necessary actions if those needs are not met. Therefore, the owner needs to enact structural mechanisms to help monitor the agent to limit opportunistic behavior and better align the parties' interests (Cruz et al., 2010).

2.2. University governance

University governance also needs to be built by the corporate governance model. Since then, research by Bingab, Forson, Abotsi, and Baah-Ennumh (2018) suggests that university governance has many definitions. Regardless of the traditional method of collective management typical of the education sector and especially for universities in Vietnam. It is very necessary to apply the corporate governance model to university

governance in the context of the education sector necessary to build a university that not only performs well but is also internationally competitive (Zamorski, 2003). This has increased competition from higher education providers (Agyeman et al., 2021). Therefore, higher education governance is not only a core issue but also a topic of great interest to many sectors of society. The concept of university governance also corresponds to corporate governance perspectives.

2.3. Lecturer's competence

Lecturers are experts in the education industry, they master the knowledge and understanding of how to teach and educate and are capable of devoting all their talents and energies to education. Alsina and Mulà (2019) argue that lecturers in universities are responsible for doing research, teaching, self-study and self-improvement, and other activities. Lecturer's competencies include the professional knowledge, teaching methods, and professional ethics of lecturers. "Technical, soft skills" include encouraging a love of learning, listening skills, skills to adapt well to unexpected situations, empathy skills, active interest in students, and critical skills (Attakorn et al., 2014).

2.4. Service quality

In the context of higher education, when the services provided are increasingly diverse for students' learning activities, the assessment of service quality becomes increasingly complex. Service quality in higher education is considered to be the competitive differentiator among higher education institutions in terms of their dominance in creating unique learning experiences (Yeo, 2009). These experiences can be specific activities such as classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, supervision, and administrative or leadership support (Yeo, 2009). With the survey with students, service quality focuses on meeting the needs and desires of students.

2.5. Higher education quality

Markowitsch (2018) argues that higher education quality is an educational environment with high performance and quality services that can be provided to help students achieve their learning goals effectively. Markowitsch (2018) proposes aspects of the conditions required to achieve the goals in the best way. This is a new approach when assessing the quality in general as well as the higher education quality in particular. Ashraf (2020) also believes that higher education quality is an appropriate learning environment built by the teaching staff to create effective learning conditions for students.

2.6. Research Model

2.6.1. The impact of university governance on service quality.

Identified as one of the aspects related to the operation of a university from the view of related objects theory (Certo & Certo, 2012; Drago, 1999), every administrative decision of the university affects the quality of study and student life, directly affecting current students. From the theoretical support and empirical evidence in other research contexts, this study raises

skepticism about the positive impact of school governance on service quality. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is specifically posed as follows:

H1: University governance has a positive impact on service quality.

2.6.2. *The impact of university governance on higher education quality*

Kwek, Lau, and Tan (2010) asserted, that admission criteria for university students as well as the approval of new study programs are determined by the school's governance, and the governance mechanism may change. In a study by Lokuwaduge and Heenetigala (2017) on university governance, university performance conducted in Australian universities also suggested that university performance is not only influenced by factors internal management but also greatly influenced by external factors. So this study proposes another hypothesis as follows:

H2: University governance has a positive impact on higher education quality.

2.6.3. *The impact of lecturer's competence on service quality*

Increasing the capacity and quality of lecturers can increase students' satisfaction and perceived service quality (Del Río-Rama et al., 2021). Separate training quality and service quality can be affected by lecturer competence, Hypothesis H3 is proposed. This hypothesis is proposed to resolve the skepticism about the direct impact of lecturer competence on service quality.

H3: Lecturer's competence has a positive impact on higher education quality.

2.6.4. *The impact of lecturer's competence on higher education quality*

Lecturers also have an advantage in developing training programs, as well as direct policy links to them, compared to individuals and units that are authorized to manage the school (Burke, 2004). Similarly, faculty (the unit in which faculty employ most staff) also has a greater influence on curricula and management science concerns. Compared with Long, Ibrahim, and Kowang (2013), lecturers competence has also been clearly defined. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Lecturer's competence has a positive impact on higher education quality.

2.6.5. *The impact of service quality and higher education quality*

Yeo (2009) also identified service quality in training as the competitive difference between higher education institutions in terms of their dominance in creating unique learning experiences. These experiences can be specific activities such as classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, supervision, and administrative or leadership support. These aspects are separate from the scientific and academic aspects of a university program. As a result, service quality has a significant impact on higher education quality.

H5: Service quality has a positive impact on higher education quality.

2.6.6. Mediation role of service quality

Luo, Xie, and Lian (2019) claim that higher education quality is the only performance indicator of service quality for higher education providers. Higher education quality with higher education institutions (HEIs) is determined by faculty performance, advisory staff performance, learning activities, and library services. Kuanusorn and Puttawong (2015) also demonstrated that service quality affects a company's image. Consequently, Ali et al. found that higher education quality image improved significantly, and that satisfied students perceive the institution's image positively. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is proposed as follows:

H6a: Service quality mediates the relationship between university governance and higher education quality significantly.

H6b: Service quality mediates the relationship between lecturer's competence and higher education quality significantly.

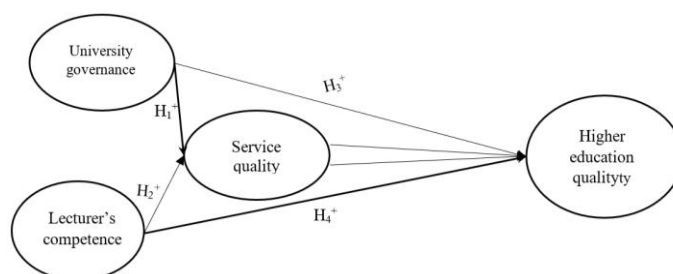


Figure 1. Research model

3. Methodology and results

3.1. Materials and methods

This study applied a mixed-method approach including qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods explain specific cases and problems. This method is suitable for solving the following objectives: identifying the research problem, research gap, and some related objectives. For quantitative ones, its strength lies with generalization through data analysis.

University governance factors were adapted from the research by Januri, Fitriani Saragih, and Sari (2018) conducted in the context of higher education in Jakarta to find the gap between awareness and expectations for educational services based on service quality. The lecturer competence scale was adapted from the study of Bertschy, Künzli, and Lehmann (2013) to evaluate the relationship between student satisfaction and service quality in higher education. The service quality scale used in this study was the one by Ramzi et al. (2022) to confirm the quality of university training through students' perceptions and expectations. The original scale measuring higher education quality was adapted from Del Río-Rama et al. (2021) to measure higher education quality based on student satisfaction conducted at universities in Spain.

The study applied a convenient sampling method. Checking and comparing duplicated or blank errors were conducted, followed by synthesizing the responses, classifying, filtering, and removing the unsatisfactory responses for further statistical analysis purposes. A total of 700 survey questionnaires were distributed and 600 responses were collected. After screening and removing inappropriate answers, 550 are valid responses.

EFA and CFA were conducted (Hair, Black, & Babin, 2010) in this study. The principal axis factoring method was used to extract factors, combined with Promax rotation. The combination of these two methods is effective and suitable for this study as it reflects the very structure of the data (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). SPSS and AMOS software were used to analyze data.

The sample size is at least 4 or 5 times the number of variables. This survey questionnaire has a total of 21 items (observed variables) that require factor analysis, so the minimum number of samples is $21 \times 5 = 105$. The participants in this study are 550, meeting the sample size requirement.

3.2. Results and discussion

Table 1 displays demographic information of the participants in the study.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the survey participants

		n = 550	n	%
Gender	Female		310	56.36
	Male		240	43.64
Academic year	Fresh man		130	23.64
	Sophomore		142	25.82
	Junior		156	28.36
	Senior		122	22.18
Majors	Accreditation		124	22.55
	Drug production and development		136	24.73
	Clinical pharmacy		148	26.91
	Drug Supply Management		142	25.82

3.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results

The EFA results are shown in Table 2. The table shows that the KMO coefficient of 0.966 (in the range of 0.5 to 1.0) and the significance level of the Bartlett test of 0.00, which meets the requirements for statistical analysis and factor analysis is appropriate.

Table 2. EFA results

Pattern Matrix^a				
	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
EQ3	.902			
EQ2	.887			
EQ5	.834			
EQ1	.832			
EQ4	.817			
UG2		.803		
UG5		.785		
UG1		.763		
UG3		.732		
UG6		.683		
UG4		.669		
LC2			.821	
LC5			.802	
LC4			.757	
LC1			.728	
LC3			.648	
SQ2				.796
SQ3				.775
SQ5				.675
SQ1				.654
SQ4				.523

3.2.2. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results

To evaluate the fit of the measurement model with the collected data, the analysis was conducted to determine Chi-square/df, RMSEA, GFI, TLI, and CFI (Table 3):

Table 3. Assess the fit of the measurement model.

	Hair et al. (2010)	AMOS	Evaluation
Chi-square/df	< 3	2.623	Accept
RMSEA	< 0.8	0.042	Accept
GFI,		0.921	Accept
TLI	> 0.9	0.933	Accept
CFI		0.935	Accept

3.2.3. SEM analysis results

The reliability of the estimates of the impact of the factors in the model is detailed in Table 4. Accordingly, all p-values are very small (less than 0.05). In other words, the confidence of the estimates is higher than 95%.

Table 4. The results of testing the study's hypotheses

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
UG	→	SQ	0.513	0.057	8.951	***
LC	→	SQ	0.221	0.044	5.055	***
SQ	→	EQT	0.307	0.070	4.394	***
UG	→	EQT	0.011	0.062	.185	.043
LC	→	EQT	0.058	0.046	1.266	.006

Table 4 shows the standardized estimation coefficient of the influence of the factors, it is possible to assess the importance of the factors to the influence on the quality of training. Of all four factors that have a direct impact on training quality, service quality has the strongest impact on education quality (0.513). The factor with the least impact is corporate governance (0.011). There is also a positive impact on the lecturer's competence (0.058). Thereby, we can see the important role of university governance in this study. Therefore, to improve the quality of training, universities can focus on improving university governance and then improving service quality.

From the estimation results of this study (550) and the population (2,000), it is shown that the estimated coefficients of the relationships in the linear structural model have low error and are not statistically significant. In other words, the level and direction of the impact among the factors are highly stable, supporting the use of test results to conclude the research hypotheses.

With the approach of research, students are customers of universities, and the evaluation of training quality will be through student satisfaction. This view is also consistent with the results of some previous studies (Guilbault, 2018; Hassan & Din, 2019). In the context of a competitive market mechanism and improved autonomy and accountability in the education sector, the upgrading of facilities, the quality of administrative services, libraries, academic advisors, and even assessment is an issue affecting the quality of training of universities. This is consistent with the current university context in Vietnam. The quantitative results of this study confirmed this.

4. Conclusion

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate how university governance impacts the quality of training in Vietnam. Through the review of related previous studies, the study identified the factors affecting the quality of training. The qualitative method identified the concepts and research gaps, thereby helping to identify the hypotheses and propose the theoretical research model for this study. In particular, the university governance both directly and indirectly affects the quality of training through the intermediary of service quality.

The results confirmed that university governance affects training quality. This is not a strong impact compared to two factors: service quality and lecturer competence, but the research results confirmed that university governance has a positive influence on training quality. Therefore, universities can provide appropriate and effective solutions in management to improve its training quality.

❖ **Conflict of Interest:** Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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**TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA QUẢN TRỊ NHÀ TRƯỜNG VÀ NĂNG LỰC GIẢNG VIÊN
ĐẾN CHẤT LƯỢNG GIÁO DỤC ĐẠI HỌC TẠI CÁC TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DƯỢC:
VAI TRÒ TRUNG GIAN CỦA CHẤT LƯỢNG DỊCH VỤ**

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TÓM TẮT

Vấn đề của các trường đại học ở Việt Nam hiện nay không chỉ là nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo nhằm cung cấp nguồn nhân lực cho sự phát triển kinh tế – xã hội của cả khu vực mà còn là vấn đề nâng cao năng lực cạnh tranh với các trường đại học trên thế giới. Mặt khác, việc hội nhập ngày càng sâu rộng vào nền kinh tế thế giới đã đòi hỏi nguồn nhân lực có trình độ, chuyên môn cao để trụ vững trước áp lực cạnh tranh không chỉ trong nước mà còn từ bên ngoài. Vì vậy, bài viết này được thực hiện nhằm mở ra một hướng nghiên cứu mới giúp các trường đại học, nhà quản lý đại học đạt được mục tiêu đề ra, đó là nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo và chuẩn bị nguồn nhân lực chất lượng cao đáp ứng nhu cầu xã hội. Với dữ liệu 550 phản hồi được thu thập tại 15 trường đại học được trên địa bàn Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, kết quả kiểm định 06 giả thuyết nghiên cứu đã chấp nhận, đồng thời khẳng định tác động của công tác quản lý nhà trường đến chất lượng đào tạo. Kết quả nghiên cứu đã bổ sung cơ sở lý luận về tác động của quản lý nhà trường đến chất lượng đào tạo của các trường đại học. Đồng thời, đề xuất các hàm ý quản trị nhằm giúp các nhà quản lý trường đại học nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo thông qua việc tăng cường quản trị trường học, năng lực giảng viên và chất lượng dịch vụ.

Từ khóa: năng lực giảng viên; trường đại học dược; chất lượng dịch vụ; quản trị nhà trường