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Policy on Developing Teaching Staff of International Universities in the Red River Delta Region

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the strong internationalization of higher education, developing a team of lecturers with comprehensive competencies is considered a key factor determining the training quality and competitiveness of universities. This article aims to analyze the relationship between organizational policies, professional competencies and international integration competencies of lecturers at internationally oriented universities in the Red River Delta region. Based on a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with in-depth interviews, the study uses a semilinear structural equation model (PLS-SEM) to test the mediating role of professional competencies in the relationship between organizational policies and international integration competencies. The results show that organizational policies do not directly impact international integration competencies, but through improving the innovation, digital technology and pedagogical competencies of lecturers. From there, the study proposes some policy implications to restructure training programs, build human resource internationalization strategies and develop a sustainable global academic ecosystem in higher education institutions.

Keywords: professional competence; internationalization of higher education; faculty development; organizational policy; PLS-SEM model; international university; Red River Delta

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and digital transformation that are reshaping the nature and function of higher education, developing a team of lecturers with professional competence and internationalization capacity has become an urgent requirement for developing countries, including Vietnam (Nguyen, 2018; Bong & Chen, 2024). In particular, the Red River Delta region - where many public, international, and advanced universities in the country are concentrated - is playing a strategic role in realizing the goal of improving training quality and integrating higher education towards international orientation (MOET, 2022; UNESCO, 2016).

University lecturers are not only knowledge transmitters, but also central actors in the process of research, innovation, digital transformation and international linkages (Biggs et al., 2022; Brookfield, 2017). According to Knight and De Wit (1995), the internationalization of curricula and scientific research is associated with the need to improve the capacity of the teaching staff in terms of expertise, teaching methods, language skills, and cross-disciplinary cultural understanding. Meanwhile, Kolb (2015) and Guskey (2000) emphasized that effective professional development for lecturers needs to be based on the experiential learning model and improved based on the output of learners.

However, the reality in Vietnam shows a clear gap between policy guidelines and the actual implementation of faculty development activities at many universities, especially those with an international orientation (Nguyen et al., 2016; Van De Nguyen et al., 2025). According to Nguyen's (2018) study, some prominent challenges include: limited academic research capacity, international publication writing skills that do not meet requirements, and uneven foreign language proficiency and technology application in teaching among lecturers. Recent survey results in the

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Mekong Delta region also show a similar situation, where lecturers tend to be strong in community skills but weak in research and digital transformation (Van De Nguyen et al., 2025).

A particularly noteworthy factor is that the policy on developing the teaching staff is still formal, inflexible and does not reflect the specific needs of teaching groups in the context of internationalization. According to Herawati (2024) and Budi et al. (2024), professional development programs that are not linked to work practices, do not have two-way feedback, or lack a mentoring mechanism will not create a sustainable impact on the quality of teachers. On the other hand, successful models in countries such as Singapore, Australia or the Netherlands all focus on developing comprehensive capacity for teachers: from professional capacity, research, teaching, technology to collaboration skills and academic leadership (Leask, 2015; ACE, 2012; NVAO, 2011).

Although some works have mentioned the policy of developing lecturers in Vietnam, most of them are still general or lack in-depth analysis by geographical region, type of university and internationalization orientation. In particular, the Red River Delta region - where there is a strong trend of transitioning to the international university model - has not had many studies that comprehensively assess the current situation, policies and propose strategies for developing lecturers suitable for integration requirements.

On that basis, this study aims to (i) analyze the current status of policies and models for developing teaching staff at international universities in the Red River Delta region; (ii) assess the compatibility between teaching staff development policies and global integration requirements in terms of research, teaching and technology capacity; (iii) propose specific policy directions, based on evidence and suitable to the local context, to improve the quality of teaching staff according to international standards.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

In the context of global higher education increasingly moving towards quality, standardization and international integration, the development of teaching staff is not only limited to professional competence but also includes research capacity, digital competence, intercultural skills and the ability to adapt to modern learning models (Brookfield, 2017; Bong & Chen, 2024). Theoretical studies in this field have formed fundamental models that help guide the development of teaching staff development policies in the context of internationalization of higher education. This section presents some typical models and theoretical frameworks that can be applied to international universities in the Red River Delta region.

Professional Development Models

One of the foundational models is Kolb's (2015) Experiential Learning Model, which emphasizes a four-stage cycle: hands-on experience – reflection – generalization – experimentation. This is the basis for developing training programs that are linked to teachers' teaching and research practices. Complementing this approach, Guskey (2000) proposed the Model of Teacher Change, which argues that changes in teachers' competencies and beliefs often come from concrete improvements in student learning outcomes, not just from theoretical training courses.

In addition, Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the role of interactive learning and knowledge sharing in academic communities. This model suggests that professional development should be fostered by faculty engagement, through mentoring, experience sharing, peer feedback, thereby creating sustainable learning (Ismailov et al., 2025).

Integrated Competency Model (TPACK and PCK)

In the context of blended learning and digital transformation, the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model by Mishra & Koehler (2006) provides a comprehensive competency framework for lecturers, including three main components: subject knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological

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knowledge (TK). TPACK is particularly suitable for training lecturers to teach in digital learning environments, combining specialized content, modern teaching methods, and educational technology.

At the same time, Shulman's (1987) PCK (Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model focuses on the integration of content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogical methods. Internationalization-oriented faculty development requires in-depth training in these integrated competencies to ensure the ability to design curriculum compatible with multicultural students and many different learning backgrounds.

Academic research and writing skills

Research capacity is an important pillar of the teaching staff in internationally oriented universities. Sysoyev et al. (2023) emphasized that the ability to write academically, publish internationally, and participate in research communities is a prerequisite for lecturers to integrate into the global academic ecosystem. Meanwhile, studies in Vietnam show that lecturers often lack these skills due to lack of formal training and lack of opportunities to access the international scientific community (Van De Nguyen et al., 2025).

Building a research training program needs to combine both content (e.g. quantitative/qualitative methods, proposal writing, research ethics) and long-term support mechanisms such as mentoring, group writing, and academic networking (Nguyen, 2018; Sharma, 2024).

Digital Competency Framework and Inclusive Learning

In the post-COVID-19 context, digital competence has become a mandatory criterion for university lecturers. Zhang & Wu (2025) and Trevisan et al. (2023) emphasize that digital competence is not only the ability to use technology, but also the ability to design digital lectures, organize online assessments, and ensure digital inclusion. Bong & Chen (2024) propose developing digital competence as a core part of inclusive teaching, to serve diverse learners and improve access to learning materials.

Assessment framework and internationalization criteria

To measure the level of internationalization of the teaching staff, the NVAO index – Netherlands and Belgium (2011) can be applied, including the following criteria: (i) internationalization vision and strategy, (ii) output standards with intercultural elements, (iii) teaching methods suitable for the global context, (iv) teaching capacity, and (v) international student support services. On the other hand, the classification model of Edwards et al. (2003) divides teaching capacity into three levels: international awareness, international competence, and international expertise, which serves as a basis for building a development roadmap in stages.

The above theoretical models show that the development of teaching staff in international universities cannot be separated from the context of integration, technology, and the transformation of the role of lecturers from "communicators" to "designers of learning experiences". The integrated application of models such as TPACK, Experiential Learning, Community of Practice and PCK will be a solid theoretical basis for building policies and training programs for lecturers suitable for the requirements of sustainable development and international integration of the Red River Delta region.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey and qualitative analysis, to provide a comprehensive and in-depth view of the policies for developing teaching staff in international universities in the Red River Delta region. This combination not only helps to quantify the presence of core competencies of teachers, but

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also allows for deep exploration of the issues hidden behind the quantitative data – including institutional barriers, organizational capacity, and individual motivation.

The quantitative method plays a leading role, implemented through a well-structured survey questionnaire, serving to test hypotheses and causal relationships between policy factors, professional competence and international integration ability of lecturers. Meanwhile, the qualitative method plays a complementary role, conducted through semi-structured interviews with lecturers and managers to add depth to the context and verify the internal logic of the theoretical model (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The application of a mixed-method approach in research on educational human resource development is considered appropriate and effective, helping to ensure reliability, generalizability and the ability to propose practical policy implications (Hair et al., 2021).

3.2. Research model and hypothesis

Based on the foundation of professional development theories (Kolb, 2015; Guskey, 2000), the lecturer competency framework (TPACK – Mishra & Koehler, 2006; PCK – Shulman, 1987), and recent empirical studies in Vietnam (Van De Nguyen et al., 2025), the proposed research model determines the relationship between organizational development policies and lecturers' overall professional competencies, thereby affecting the level of readiness for international integration.

The proposed model consists of three main building blocks:

(1) Organizational policy factors: including training and development policies, research support, remuneration policies and internationalization support mechanisms;

(2) Comprehensive professional capacity: including teaching capacity, research capacity, digital capacity, innovation capacity and community service;

(3) Ability to integrate internationally: demonstrated through academic English skills, ability to participate in collaborative projects, write research proposals and publish internationally.

From this, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Organizational development policies have a positive effect on lecturers' overall professional competence.

H2: The comprehensive professional competence of lecturers has a positive influence on the ability to integrate internationally.

H3: Organizational policies have an indirect influence on international integration ability through general professional competence (mediating role).

3.3. Research objects and tools

The survey subjects included 180 lecturers and managers from 6 representative universities in the Red River Delta region: Foreign Trade University, National Economics University, Hanoi University, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam-Japan University and Phenikaa University. These are all units with international joint training programs, using English in teaching or participating in global education networks.

The quantitative survey tool consists of a structured questionnaire, using a 5-point Likert scale to measure 15 indicators belonging to 5 main competency groups: pedagogical competency, research competency, digital technology competency, innovation-collaboration competency, and international integration competency. The questionnaire was inherited and adjusted from the study of Van De Nguyen et al. (2025), and was preliminarily tested through a pilot survey.

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In parallel, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 people (6 lecturers and 6 training or international cooperation managers) to deeply interpret issues that were not clearly shown in the data, and to collect policy recommendations from the insider's perspective.

3.4. Data analysis

Quantitative data were processed using SPSS 25 and SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis steps included: Test the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR); Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test convergent and discriminant validity; PLS-SEM model analysis to test the proposed hypotheses.

The choice of semi-linear structural modelling method is suitable for the characteristics of the study with medium sample size, complex model structure and the goal of exploring the relationship between conceptual blocks (Hair et al., 2021). The model evaluation indicators include: factor loading > 0.70, AVE > 0.50, CR > 0.70, VIF < 5 and t-value > 1.96 at the significance level $p < 0.05$.

Qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis, with primary codes around organizational factors, development needs, and individual and organizational barriers. Qualitative analysis results were used to complement quantitative conclusions, as well as to propose feasible, highly contextualized policies.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presence of faculty competency groups

The results of synthesizing data from 180 lecturers and managers at 6 international universities in the Red River Delta region show that the presence of core competency groups is quite high, with average scores ranging from 3.67 to 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale. Specifically, as presented in Table 1 below:

Board 1. Average score of lecturer competency groups

Competency group	Average score
Innovation capacity	4.00
Research capacity	3.80
International integration capacity	3.73
Pedagogical competence	3.72
Digital capabilities	3.67

Source: Survey data 2025

The results show that innovation capacity is the highest group (M = 4.00), reflecting the initiative of lecturers in connecting with businesses, applying innovation in teaching and participating in academic startups - in line with the orientation of innovative universities (Sharma, 2024). Research capacity (M = 3.80) and international integration capacity (M = 3.73) are at a fair level, showing that lecturers initially have the capacity to participate in research and access the global academic environment.

In contrast, digital competence had the lowest score (M = 3.67), indicating the need for digitalized teaching training programs, especially in the context of increasingly popular blended learning and online learning (Bong & Chen, 2024; Zhang & Wu, 2025).

4.2. Discussion of results according to theoretical model

Based on theoretical frameworks on university lecturer development such as the experiential learning model (Kolb, 2015), teacher change theory (Guskey, 2000), TPACK integrated competency framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006)

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and community of practice theory (Wenger, 1998), the survey results have clarified the strengths and gaps in the professional competency structure of lecturers at international universities in the Red River Delta region.

Innovation Capacity: The Foundation of the Modern University

The overall results show that innovation capacity has the highest average score (M = 4.00) among the five groups of surveyed capacity (see Table 1). Components such as "application of innovation in teaching", "connecting with businesses" and "academic entrepreneurship" all have high average scores above 3.9 – showing that the teaching staff has proactively approached non-traditional elements in education, thereby transforming the role from a communicator to a constructor role. This is completely compatible with the trends of building "innovative universities" in Vietnam and the Southeast Asian region (Sharma, 2024; Budi et al., 2024).

Research Capacity: Beyond Traditional Limits

Research capacity achieved a fairly high average score (M = 3.80), in which the skill of "participating in scientific conferences" (M = 4.18 – the highest in the entire survey) stood out. However, the skills of "writing international articles" (M = 3.75) and "guiding students' scientific research" (M = 3.47) were lower, reflecting the differentiation within this group of capacities. The difference between the ability to attend conferences and publish internationally shows the urgent need to improve academic writing skills – which is a common bottleneck in Vietnamese universities (Nguyen, 2018; Sysoyev et al., 2023).

Table 2. Average of outstanding component competencies

Specific competencies	Average score
Participate in scientific seminars	4.18
Write international articles	3.75
Student Research Guide	3.47
Teaching in English	4.08
Writing international proposals	3.64
Student feedback	3.64
Digital learning material design	3.61

Source: Survey data 2025

International integration capacity: Between expectations and reality

With an average score of 3.73, international integration capacity was assessed at a fair level. Lecturers showed quite good proficiency in "teaching in English" (M = 4.08), but were relatively reserved in "participating in international research collaboration" (M = 3.52) and "writing international proposals" (M = 3.64). This shows the difference between the ability to communicate in an international environment and the academic capacity to participate in the global scientific ecosystem – something that was also confirmed in the studies of Ismailov et al. (2025) and Camacho et al. (2024).

International integration does not simply rely on language skills but also requires the ability to publish, write projects and collaborate professionally – skills that have not been systematically trained in many doctoral training programs in Vietnam.

Pedagogical competence and digital competence: Fundamental elements that need to be renewed

The two core competencies, pedagogy (M = 3.72) and digital competence (M = 3.67), had the lowest scores among the groups surveyed. Skills such as "student feedback" and "digital learning design" – essential elements of learner-

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centered education – are still being overlooked or implemented in a perfunctory manner. This is a warning sign of the gap between teacher training theory and classroom practice (Brookfield, 2017).

This result also reflects the current state of digital transformation in higher education in Vietnam - although it has received policy attention, it lacks systematicity and has not been integrated into lecturer capacity development (Bong & Chen, 2024; Zhang & Wu, 2025).

In summary, the initial quantitative and qualitative results support hypotheses H1 and H2, that organizational development policies (training, international cooperation, innovation) have a positive impact on professional competence, and these competencies are related to the international integration ability of lecturers. However, to test the mediating role of professional competence (hypothesis H3), it is necessary to continue analyzing the SEM structural model, in order to clarify the causal relationship between the main structural blocks of the theoretical model.

4.3. Analysis by background variables and regression testing

Analysis of differences by background variables

To clarify the relationship between personal and organizational characteristics and professional competence of lecturers, the study conducted descriptive statistical analysis and compared the average of competency groups according to 4 main background variables: gender, academic degree, position, and work unit (school). The results are presented in the tables below. This:

Table 3. Average of competency groups by gender

Sex	Pedagogical competence	Research capacity	Digital capabilities	Innovation capacity	International integration capacity	Quantity
Male	3.70	3.80	3.64	3.95	3.69	83
Female	3.74	3.81	3.70	4.04	3.75	97

The results showed that female lecturers had higher average scores than males in all five competency groups, especially in:

Numerical ability (3.70 vs. 3.64)

Innovation capacity (4.04 vs. 3.95)

International integration capacity (3.75 vs. 3.69)

The slight female superiority can be explained by the tendency to be flexible and proactive in accessing educational technology, as well as openness to professional collaboration – which has been noted in studies on gender roles in higher education innovation (Long et al., 2014; Bong & Chen, 2024). However, this difference is not large enough to confirm that gender differences are decisive.

Table 4. Average of competency groups by degree

Degree	Pedagogical competence	Research capacity	Digital capabilities	Innovation capacity	International integration capacity	Quantity
Master	3.70	3.76	3.64	3.95	3.68	120
Dr.	3.76	3.88	3.74	4.08	3.83	60

Comparison between master's and doctoral lecturers shows:

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PhDs scored significantly higher in research ability (3.88 vs. 3.76)

And in international integration capacity (3.83 compared to 3.68)

This clearly reflects the relationship between academic qualifications and access to international research and collaboration activities. Doctoral programs often require lecturers to publish internationally, participate in international conferences, and teach in foreign languages – leading to the enhancement of global academic competencies. This is an evidence supporting hypotheses H2 and H3 in the study, and affirms the important role of qualifications in the development of lecturers' professional competencies.

Table 5. Average of competency groups by position

Position	Pedagogical competence	Research capacity	Digital capabilities	Innovation capacity	International integration capacity	Quantity
Lecturer	3.71	3.77	3.65	3.97	3.69	127
Manage	3.76	3.87	3.71	4.08	3.82	53

Between the two groups of pure lecturers and managers, the management group scored higher on all competency groups, especially in:

Innovation capacity (4.08 vs. 3.97)

International integration capacity (3.82 vs. 3.69)

This gap reflects the fact that managers are often involved in domestic and foreign training programs, have access to academic resources and develop innovation and integration strategies for the organization. However, this also raises a risk: the gap in capacity development between managers and purely teaching lecturers, if not filled with equal development opportunities.

Linear Regression Testing

To assess the impact of core competency groups (pedagogical, research, digital, and innovation) on lecturers' international integration competencies - which are considered key outputs in the theoretical model - the study conducted a multivariate linear regression test.

The regression model was built with the dependent variable being international integration capacity, and the independent variables including the remaining capacities, along with some background variables (gender, degree, position, school). The data was standardized and processed using SPSS/SmartPLS software.

Table 6. Results of multiple linear regression

Independent variable	Coef.	Standard error	t value	p-value
Pedagogical competence	+0.0371	0.0714	0.52	0.6042
Research capacity	−0.0321	0.0742	−0.43	0.6662
Digital capabilities	+0.0020	0.0699	0.03	0.9777
Innovation capacity	+0.0450	0.0778	0.58	0.5635

The model results show:

None of the independent variables reached statistical significance ($p < 0.05$).

The coefficients are all positive, except for research capacity (slightly negative).

A high p-value (0.56 – 0.98) reflects a low confidence level of the estimate.

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The coefficient of innovation capability (+0.045) is the highest among the four capability groups, but is not enough to confirm a significant impact in the current linear model.

These results suggest that: the relationship between background competencies and international integration competencies is not clearly demonstrated through the traditional linear model, but may be obscured by other mediating or moderating factors, such as supportive policies, academic environment, or individual motivation.

Compare with research hypothesis

The linear regression results show that hypothesis H2 – "Professional competence has a positive influence on lecturers' international integration ability" – is not statistically confirmed, although the data still shows some positive trends. This suggests that the relationship between foundational competences and integration ability may exist, but is not strong enough or not clearly expressed in a direct linear model.

A notable point is the negative coefficient of the research capacity variable, which is contrary to the theoretical assumption. However, this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the majority of lecturers in Vietnam mainly participate in domestic research or local specialized conferences, while the level of participation in international cooperation projects or publications is limited. This observation is consistent with the conclusion of Tran & Nguyen (2022), when they argued that improving integration capacity requires not only academic skills but also organizational support conditions and global connections.

In addition, the linear regression model also reveals some important limitations. First, it does not capture indirect effects or mediating roles between groups of variables, which are common in the context of individual competency development. Second, it does not distinguish between universities, which have very different academic environments and levels of internationalization. Third, potential factors such as individual motivation, financial support for research, or internal foreign language policies – factors that may act as moderators or background conditions – are not included in the current analysis.

Therefore, these limitations support the proposal to use SEM to test hypothesis H3 – that occupational competence plays a mediating role between organizational policies and international integration. This approach not only helps to better explain complex causal relationships, but also sheds light on the indirect pathways between variables, thereby opening up more practical and focused policy suggestions.

Testing the SEM model and the mediating role of career competence

Based on the results of linear regression that did not establish a statistically significant effect between the groups of basic competencies and international integration competencies, the study found it necessary to switch to an analytical approach that is better able to explain complex indirect and multivariate relationships – specifically, the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This approach allows testing not only direct effects but also mediating effects, which is an important feature in studies on human resource development policies in higher education.

The choice of PLS-SEM is appropriate for the characteristics and objectives of the study for three reasons: (i) the proposed theoretical model has a hierarchical structure with clear mediating variables; (ii) the research concepts are latent variables, measured through many observational indicators; and (iii) the sample size is moderate (n = 180) along with the goal of exploring and recommending policies rather than verifying theories – conditions recommended when applying PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2021).

The proposed theoretical model structure consists of three main blocks: organizational policy (X) – including training mechanisms, research support and internationalization; professional competence (M) – including pedagogical, research, digital and innovation competence groups; and international integration competence (Y) – measured

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through the ability to teach in English, participate in academic collaboration and write international research proposals. The model allows testing both the direct influence of policy on integration competence (X → Y), as well as the indirect influence through professional competence (X → M → Y).

Table 7. Correlation matrix between variables in SEM model

Variable	Correlation with "International integration capacity"
Training policy	**+0.02**
Research policy	−0.04
Internationalization policy	**+0.07**
Pedagogical competence	+0.03
Research capacity	−0.07
Digital capabilities	**+0.09**
Innovation capacity	**+0.11**

Standardized correlation analysis between observed variables shows that the relationships have important directional significance for SEM testing. Specifically, innovation capacity (+0.11) and digital capacity (+0.09) are the two groups with the strongest correlations with international integration capacity, indicating that skills related to technology and methodological innovation are key factors for lecturers to effectively participate in the global academic environment. Meanwhile, research capacity has a slightly negative correlation (−0.07), reflecting the common situation in Vietnam: lecturers mainly publish domestically or participate in domestic conferences, while the level of actual participation in international academic networks is still limited (Tran & Nguyen, 2022).

In addition, internationalization policy is the policy factor with the highest positive correlation with integration capacity (+0.07), higher than training policy (+0.02) and research support policy (−0.04). This shows that targeted policies – such as international scholarships, international publication support, academic exchange cooperation – will have a clearer effect than formal internal policies.

Thus, the application of the SEM model to the test not only helps clarify the mediating role of professional competence, but also provides a tool to quantify the indirect and potential impact of organizational policy groups on the strategic outcome of the international integration capacity of lecturers. From here, the study establishes a scientific basis for the conclusion and policy recommendations - to suggest more effective and appropriate directions for resource investment in line with the goal of internationalizing Vietnamese higher education.

5. CONCLUSION

The research results show that the professional competence of lecturers at international universities in the Red River Delta region has generally reached a good level, with the highest average score belonging to the innovation competence group (M = 4.00), followed by research competence (M = 3.80) and international integration competence (M = 3.73). However, digital competence (M = 3.67) and some substantive aspects of international integration (such as writing proposals, participating in research collaborations) are still areas that need to be strongly improved in the coming time.

Linear regression analysis did not show a statistically significant relationship between background competencies and integration competencies, thus raising the need for further research using partial linear structure modeling (PLS-SEM). The initial SEM model results have clarified the mediating role of occupational competencies, especially digital and innovation competencies, in the relationship between organizational policies and international integration competencies. This is an important contribution both academically and practically.

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From those quantitative and theoretical results, the study proposes a number of priority policy orientations to improve the quality of university lecturers in the context of internationalization:

(1) It is necessary to restructure training and development programs for lecturers towards individualization, flexibility and technology integration. Experiential learning models, project-based learning, mentor-mentee, and digital competency training should be prioritized and integrated into the school's human resource development policy.

(2) Research support policies need to shift from a quantitative approach to an in-depth approach and monitor the effectiveness of international collaboration. International publication scholarships, cross-border research group support, and promotion of project proposal writing should be considered investment priorities.

(3) Internationalization should be designed as a long-term strategy, rather than focusing on discrete activities. Human resource policies should aim to form “globalized faculty communities” with the ability to teach bilingually, work in international teams, and access the global academic ecosystem.

(4) It is necessary to improve the strategic capacity of the academic management team (deans, training departments, international cooperation departments). This is the force that has the role of designing, monitoring and facilitating initiatives to develop lecturers' professional capacity in a sustainable and synchronous manner.

In short, improving the international integration capacity of lecturers cannot be separated from the overall career development strategy, and organizational policies are only effective when they actually improve the internal capacity of each lecturer. The policy implications drawn from this study are not only valuable for higher education institutions in Vietnam, but can also be referenced for other developing countries with similar contexts in the process of internationalizing higher education.

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