

**ACADEMICS' INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT
IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AT THREE
TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN
VIETNAM**

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Why academics' inclusion and engagement?

- Newton (2000), Trowler (1998), and Watty (2003): close up studies (explored academics' responses to changes driven by the quality agenda from the management)
- ❖ Bureaucratisation
- ❖ Administrative burden
- ❖ Stifling of creativity
- ❖ A lack of trust

Quality culture

- Harvey and Stensaker (2008) –improvement potential
- Lueger and Vettori (2008): development-oriented and value-based aspects

⇒The approach requires the involvement of all stakeholders both external and internal, especially “front-line” academics and students

Purposes

- Investigate how academics engaged in “perceived” quality assurance activities at three universities in Vietnam
- Investigate the necessity of including and engaging academics in QA

Participants: 36

University A	University B	University C
Academic leaders (4)		
Dean A	Dean B	Head of the Business English division
	Head of the Business English division	
Quality assurance members (9)		
Head of Educational Testing and Quality Control Office	Deputy head of Educational Testing Services	Director of Centre for Education Assessment and Accreditation
3 participants	1 participant	2 participants
Academics of business English programmes (23)		
9 participants	8 participants	6 participants

Findings

- Academics had **little information to share** about the reported QAA activities (self-studies, student surveys, and establishment of QA units) **because of their restricted engagement** in these QA activities.
- The student surveys - **coping strategies**
- These activities - to create **more workload to academics** and seems to go against academic cultures
- The ‘perceived’ QA activities - **in isolation from teaching and learning activities**

Findings (cont'd)

Academics' engagement in mission development

Academics indicated **limited contribution** to the development of missions, which were believed to be developed by **boards of rectors**

Academics' engagement in programme development

- Varied at the three departments, **depending upon leaders' perspectives**
- Limited to **syllabus design**

Discussion

The neglect or/and lack of academics' participation in the process likely indicates **that the standards tend to evaluate quality against the input approach** as analysed by Tran et al. (2011) and Nguyen, Oliver, and Priddy (2009), which is **typical for a centralised management system** ([Raza, 2010](#)) such as Vietnam.

Without academic input

- doubt of feasibility of the universities' missions
- criticised the three BE programmes (differing views about the programmes)
- a lack of commitment to the strategic directions of the institutions and departments
- no sense of ownership of institutional decisions

The need for academics' engagement

- Meyer (2007): academic engagement could prevent the resistant attitude to top-down policy that may jeopardise fundamental motivations of academic work
- Doring (2002): change agents or victims of change

Suggestions

- The future governance of tertiary education at the institutional level requires **a new approach to accommodate academic input** in the decision making processes ([Harloe & Perry, 2004](#))
- **A faculty council** is responsible for making decisions concerning academic issues.

Suggestions (cont'd)

- Shared governance with faculty councils: to eliminate bureaucratic central controls and avoid coping strategies for compliance.
- Power delegation to a faculty council: to promote the grassroots participation
 - the concept of power distance

⇒ **empower the existing scientific committees considering cultural appropriateness**

THANK YOU