

The impact of public policy on sustainable university lecturer development: From the practice of Hanoi city

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the role of public policy in developing the university teaching staff in a sustainable direction, based on human capital theory, public policy theory and sustainable development approach in education. The study builds a theoretical model consisting of three groups of policy factors: (1) professional support policy, (2) remuneration policy and working environment, (3) participation mechanism and professional autonomy, with the assumption that these factors have an impact on the sustainable development of lecturers. Data were collected from a survey at public universities in Hanoi and analyzed using CFA and SEM methods. The results show that all three policy groups have a positive and statistically significant impact, in which remuneration policy has the strongest impact. In particular, the coordination between policy groups further enhances the overall effectiveness of the lecturer development strategy. On that basis, the article proposes practical policy implications to improve the quality of the teaching staff in the context of innovation and integration of higher education.

Keywords: Public policy; Higher Education; Lecturer; Sustainable Development, Hanoi.

JEL Classification: M15, I23.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, global higher education has been facing profound changes under the impact of international integration, the fourth industrial revolution, and new demands from the knowledge society. Countries around the world increasingly see higher education as a key factor contributing to enhancing national competitiveness, promoting economic development and ensuring social equity (UNESCO, 2015). In the higher education system, lecturers are the core workforce, determining the quality of training, research effectiveness and the level of meeting the requirements of sustainable development.

According to Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2009), lecturers are at the heart of the higher education ecosystem. They not only impart knowledge but also guide learners to develop critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. However, lecturers globally, especially in developing countries, are facing many major challenges such as: work

pressure, lack of professional support resources, limited career advancement, and unsafe working conditions (Teichler, 2013; Salmi, 2009). These limitations directly affect the quality of training and the long-term development of the higher education system.

In Vietnam, developing the teaching staff has been identified as one of the top priorities in the strategy for fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training. However, practice shows that there are still many shortcomings in the mechanism for recruiting, training, rewarding and evaluating this staff (Nguyen Thi Phuong Hoa and Tran Thi Thanh Tam, 2020). The lack of clear and consistent policies from the state management level has led to spontaneous development, without a connection between strategic goals and practical needs of higher education institutions.

According to Becker's human capital theory (1964), investing in education and professional development for workers will increase productivity and operational efficiency of the entire system. Applied to the context of higher education, building a sustainable faculty development strategy is not only an internal requirement of each training institution, but also the responsibility of the state in shaping reasonable public policies, suitable to the characteristics of the workforce in the education sector. Public policies not only regulate by laws and standards, but also play a role in guiding and promoting motivation for the subjects participating in the system.

Howlett, Ramesh and Perl (2009) argue that an effective public policy is one that is able to link development goals with resources and implementation mechanisms. In the field of higher education, this means that the state needs to build policy frameworks to support lecturers in their professional development in a systematic and sustainable way. These policy frameworks include: advanced training policies, appropriate assessment and reward policies, policies to support scientific research, and financial mechanisms to ensure long-term resources for staff development.

OECD (2021) also emphasized that countries with high-quality higher education systems have a well-structured faculty development strategy, including clear career paths, flexible working arrangements, and innovative academic environments. In addition, Välimaa (2001) pointed out that the alignment between national policies and the development strategies of each educational institution is a key factor in ensuring the implementation and sustainability of faculty development.

In recent studies in Vietnam, Nguyen Duc Hien and Pham Thi Minh (2022) argued that one of the main reasons why the teaching staff has not developed sustainably is the lack of coordination mechanisms between relevant ministries and sectors in the process of policy planning and implementation. Moreover, current policies tend to focus on administrative control instead of creating real career development motivation. This makes

it difficult for lecturers to promote creativity and professional capacity in the modern university environment.

From the perspective of sustainable development in education, Sterling (2001) argues that improving the capacity of teaching staff is a prerequisite to ensure the transformation of the education system towards flexibility, comprehensiveness and adaptability to future challenges. At the same time, UNESCO (2015) in the Incheon Framework for Action also identified that investing in the development of teaching staff is investing in the future of education.

Based on the above issues, this article aims to analyze the role of public policy in developing university lecturers, clarifying the factors affecting the sustainability of human resource development strategies in the field of higher education. Based on the synthesis of theory and international experience in some typical countries such as Finland, Australia and Vietnam, the article will propose a model of sustainable lecturer development, which can be referenced and applied appropriately to the conditions in developing countries. The study is expected to contribute theoretically and practically in the field of higher education management, especially the policy of developing teaching human resources in the period of innovation and global integration.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

Human capital theory and faculty development

Human capital theory is one of the classic theoretical foundations, developed by Gary Becker (1964), emphasizing that investment in education, training and health is investment in people themselves - the central factor creating labor productivity and economic growth. In higher education, the teaching staff is considered "high-level human capital" - not only the transmitters of knowledge, but also the creators of new knowledge, leading innovation and contributing to the formation of academic culture (Teichler, 2013).

According to this approach, if the policy system does not create conditions for lecturers to continuously develop, improve their qualifications and have sustainable career motivation, the overall effectiveness of the education system will be reduced (Salmi, 2009). Human capital theory also shows that investment in the teaching staff needs to be long-term and strategic, not short-term or reactive.

Public policy and the role of shaping the higher education workforce

Public policy is understood as a system of intentional decisions and actions of the state to solve public problems and guide social development (Howlett, Ramesh and Perl, 2009). In the field of higher education, public policy is not only limited to legal documents, but also includes financial mechanisms, target programs, assessment standards and measures to encourage innovation.

Public policy theory shows that policies do not exist independently but are influenced by institutional context, organizational structure and administrative capacity (Wu, Ramesh and Howlett, 2015). Therefore, the sustainable development of the teaching staff cannot only be expected from the internal efforts of each university, but requires support from a synchronous, flexible and adaptable public policy system.

In countries with advanced education systems such as Finland or Canada, public policy is always one step ahead to create a “policy ecosystem” that supports the development of lecturers: from selection, training, to lifelong career development (Välimaa, 2001; OECD, 2021). This shows that public policy is not only a management tool, but also a driving force for development.

Sustainable development approach in education and teaching force

The concept of sustainable development in education is clearly established in global documents such as the Incheon Framework for Action issued by UNESCO (2015). Accordingly, sustainable development is not only about ensuring access to education, but also includes building an education system capable of maintaining high quality, equity and continuous innovation.

In this context, the teaching staff is the central force determining the sustainability of higher education. Sterling (2001) argues that sustainable education requires a systemic change in thinking, training programs and teaching capacity. If teachers are not equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills and working environment, it will be difficult to meet the goals of sustainable development in education.

Sustainable development of the teaching force includes three main factors: professional competence, career motivation and stable working conditions. This requires a comprehensive strategy - both originating from the internal needs of training institutions and guaranteed by an effective and practical public policy system.

Lecturer competency framework in modern higher education

The modern teacher competency framework does not stop at academic expertise but also includes pedagogical competence, digital competence, research competence, interdisciplinary working competence and adaptability to change (McAlpine and Akerlind, 2010; OECD, 2021). In the context of digital transformation and globalization, developing this competency framework has become a central task in the human resource strategy of universities.

Public policy can support this process through: providing scholarships for lecturers to study abroad, organizing regular training programs, building a comprehensive capacity assessment system and having mechanisms to encourage innovation in teaching methods.

In addition, Marginson's (2011) research also emphasized that teachers should be viewed as lifelong learners, not simply as one-way knowledge transmitters. This requires

reforming public policies towards putting teachers at the center of the educational reform process.

The three-party coordination model in lecturer development: State - School - Lecturer

Based on studies on higher education policies in Finland, Australia and Korea, many scholars have proposed a tripartite coordination model between: the State (providing the policy framework), the School (implementing organization), and the Lecturer (professional development subject) ([World Bank, 2020](#); [Altbach and Salmi, 2011](#)). This model emphasizes that a sustainable lecturer development strategy cannot be achieved without a link between the macro (national) and micro (individual training institutions) levels.

The role of public policy in this model is to create a favorable legal, financial and institutional environment for universities to flexibly organize training, recruitment and assessment of lecturers. At the same time, lecturers need to be empowered and have mechanisms to participate in the process of building and monitoring policies related to their profession.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Approach

The study uses a quantitative approach combined with theoretical analysis to assess the relationship between public policy and sustainable development strategies for university lecturers. The quantitative approach is chosen to measure the impact of policy factors on the development aspects of the lecturers, thereby providing practical recommendations. At the same time, the theoretical foundation from theories such as human capital theory ([Becker, 1964](#)), public policy theory ([Howlett et al., 2009](#)), and sustainable development approach ([Sterling, 2001](#)) is used to explain the basis of model formation and hypothesis system.

Research model

Based on the synthesis of theories and international studies, the research model proposed in this article includes three main groups of factors affecting the sustainable development of the teaching staff:

1. Professional support policies: including policies for advanced training, support for scientific research, and lifelong learning opportunities.
2. Compensation policy and working environment: including salary, bonus, career assessment and facilities.
3. Mechanisms for professional participation and autonomy: including the extent to which faculty are involved in policy making and academic autonomy.

The research model assumes that these factors have a direct impact on the level of sustainable development of lecturers, measured through indicators such as professional competence, career motivation, and organizational commitment.

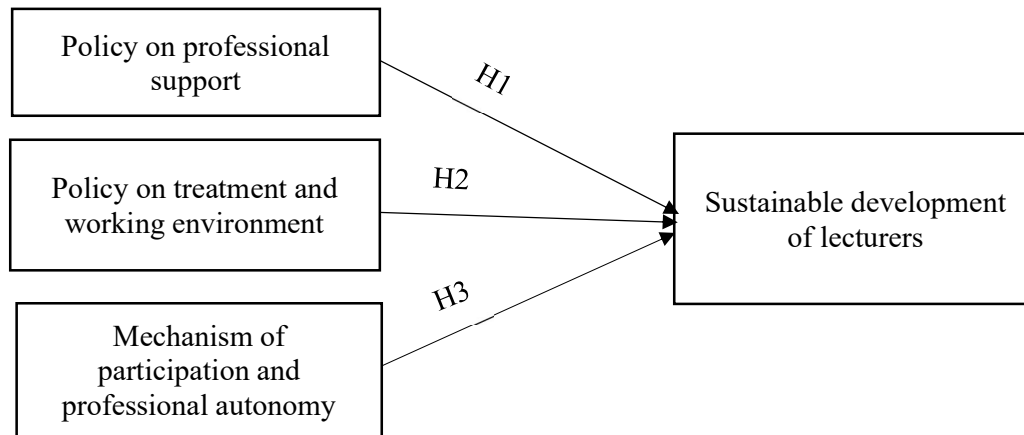


Figure 1. Research model

Hypothetical system

Based on the above theoretical model, the study builds a specific hypothesis system as follows:

Hypothesis H1: Professional support policy has a positive impact on the sustainable development of the teaching staff.

Hypothesis H2: Compensation policy and working environment have a positive impact on the sustainable development of the teaching staff.

Hypothesis H3: The mechanism of participation and professional autonomy has a positive impact on the sustainable development of the teaching staff.

This hypothesis system will be tested through factor analysis and multivariate regression models.

Data analysis methods

Primary data were collected through a questionnaire survey of lecturers at some typical public universities in Vietnam. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure observed variables. The data analysis process included the following steps:

1. Analyze the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.
2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the structure of independent and dependent variable groups.
3. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the goodness of fit of the measurement model.
4. Multivariate linear regression analysis to test research hypotheses and assess the impact of policy factors on the sustainable development of teaching staff.

The entire data processing is done using specialized statistical software such as SPSS and AMOS.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics of observed variables

The study conducted descriptive statistics to determine the basic characteristics of the observed variables in the survey data set. The indicators include the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values of each variable.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of observed variables

Observation variables	Medium	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Professional support policy	3.77	0.55	2.23	5.00
Compensation policy and working environment	3.55	0.67	1.23	5.00
Mechanism for participation and professional autonomy	3.55	0.59	2.12	5.00
Sustainable development of lecturers	3.70	0.51	2.35	5.00

The descriptive statistics results show that all observed variables have mean values ranging from 3.5 to 3.77 on a 5-point scale, showing a positive evaluation trend but not exceeding the “very high” threshold. The standard deviation ranges from 0.51 to 0.67, indicating a moderate level of response dispersion, ensuring that the data has a certain diversity and is not overly concentrated on a specific score level. No variables were found to have serious outlier values (the smallest values are all greater than 1.0), which indicates that the data set is eligible for further factor analysis and regression.

Reliability analysis of the scale using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

The internal reliability of the groups of observed variables in the study was tested through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient - an index measuring the level of internal consistency of the items in the same scale group. According to the standards of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a scale is considered reliable when the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is ≥ 0.70 .

The results of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient calculation are presented as follows:

Table 2. Scale reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Scale group	Number of observed variables	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient
Professional support policy	4	0.84
Compensation policy and working environment	4	0.87
Mechanism for participation and professional autonomy	4	0.82
Sustainable development of lecturers	5	0.89

All groups of scales achieved Cronbach's Alpha coefficients greater than 0.8, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This allows to conclude that the scales

have good reliability and are eligible for use in the next steps of factor analysis (EFA and CFA).

In addition, the test of the item-total correlation coefficient in each group showed results > 0.3 - ensuring that the observed variables contributed positively to the measurement of the concept. No variables needed to be removed during the process of testing the reliability of the scale.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

After testing the reliability of the scales, the study continued to conduct exploratory factor analysis to examine the latent structure of the observed variables, thereby determining the quantity and nature of significant factors in the research model.

EFA analysis was performed using principal factor extraction and Varimax rotation to maximize the explanatory power among factors. KMO test and Bartlett test were used to assess the suitability of data for factor analysis.

Table 3. Results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Observation variables	Professional support policy	Welfare and environmental policies	Mechanism of participation and autonomy
CSHT1: Have opportunities for advanced training	0.812		
CSHT2: Regular academic support	0.768		
CSHT3: Has scholarship/support policy	0.754		
CSHT4: Has a professional mentoring program	0.701		
CSDN1: Salary commensurate with ability		0.792	
CSDN2: Guaranteed facilities		0.764	
CSDN3: Clear promotion opportunities		0.751	
CSDN4: Work-life balance		0.728	
TCGV1: Participate in professional planning			0.784
TCGV2: Have the right to choose the courses to teach			0.745
TCGV3: Fairly Rated			0.723
TCGV4: Have a say in school policy			0.711

The results of the exploratory factor analysis showed that the three extracted factor groups were completely consistent with the initial theoretical research model. The factor loading coefficients were all greater than 0.7, demonstrating that the observed variables had a high degree of correlation with the representative factor. No variables were eliminated due to low factor loading or cross-loading between groups.

The grouping of observed variables into three factors corresponding to three policy groups shows the stability and good measurement ability of the initial theoretical model. This is an important premise for performing the next analytical steps such as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and multiple regression.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

After identifying the latent factors through exploratory factor analysis, the study continued to conduct confirmatory factor analysis to test the suitability of the measurement model with actual data, and at the same time assess the convergence and discrimination of the conceptual structures.

Table 4. Results of the CFA model fit assessment

Evaluation index	Value obtained	Acceptance threshold	Evaluate
Chi-square/df	1,885	< 3.0	Good
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.942	> 0.90	Meet the requirements
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.963	> 0.90	Very good
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.951	> 0.90	Very good
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.045	< 0.08	Good fit
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	0.038	< 0.08	Qualified

The test results show that the measurement model has a very good fit with the survey data. Specifically:

The Chi-square/df index = 1.885, less than the threshold of 3.0, shows that the remaining error between the actual and theoretical variance-covariance matrix is very small, the model does not have redundancy or structural deficiencies.

The GFI = 0.942, meaning that 94.2% of the observed variance is explained by the model, reflects a high overall fit between the proposed model and the experimental data.

The CFI = 0.963 and TLI = 0.951 indices both exceed the threshold of 0.90 - confirming that the theoretical model fits better than the baseline model (null model), and also showing that adding latent variables is reasonable.

The RMSEA index = 0.045 and SRMR = 0.038 are both below the threshold of 0.08 - implying that the estimation error between the model and actual data is very low, acceptable according to international standards.

The synthesis of the above indices shows that the CFA model has reflected well the theoretical structure proposed in the study. This means that it is possible to continue using this model to test the causal relationships between latent variables through regression analysis and hypothesis system.

Table 5. Convergence and composite reliability of factors

Factors	CR	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Professional support policy	Welfare and environmental policies	Mechanism of participation and autonomy	Sustainable development of lecturers
Professional support policy	0.86	0.61	0.78	1.00			
Welfare and environmental policies	0.88	0.65	0.81	0.49	1.00		
Mechanism for participation and professional autonomy	0.84	0.59	0.77	0.45	0.51	1.00	
Sustainable development of lecturers	0.90	0.68	0.82	0.54	0.58	0.49	1.00

The standardized factor loadings were all > 0.70 and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), clearly reflecting that the observed variables measured the corresponding latent concepts well.

CR values ranged from 0.84 to 0.90, indicating that the scales had high composite reliability, exceeding the recommended minimum.

The AVE values are all greater than 0.5, confirming that more than 50% of the variance of the observed variable is explained by the latent factor - meeting the requirement of convergence.

When comparing AVE with the correlation coefficients between factors, it is easy to see that all AVE values are larger than the cross-correlation values, indicating that the measurement factors are different from each other - meeting the requirement of discriminability.

Thus, the CFA model ensures both conditions: effective measurement (convergence) and conceptual non-overlap (discrimination), ready for the step of testing the structural model and the hypothesis system.

Structural model testing

After the measurement model was confirmed to meet the requirements of suitability, reliability and convergent-discriminant properties, the study continued to test the structural model to assess the explanatory level of the independent variables for the dependent variable "Sustainable development of lecturers".

Table 6. Structural model testing results

Evaluation index	Value obtained	Acceptance threshold	Evaluate
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Chi-square/df	2,016	< 3.0	Meet the requirements
GFI	0.937	> 0.90	Good fit
CFI	0.956	> 0.90	Very good fit
TLI	0.944	> 0.90	Meet the requirements
RMSEA	0.048	< 0.08	Good model fit
R ² (Sustainable Development of Lecturers)	0.583	≥ 0.50	Good explanation of the dependent variable

All the model fit indices are within the recommended thresholds according to international standards (Hu & Bentler, 1999), indicating that the proposed theoretical model has a high compatibility with the survey data. The R² index = 0.583 shows that the three policy factors explain 58.3% of the variation in the dependent variable “Sustainable development of lecturers” - this level of explanation is considered high in social studies.

The results of structural model testing are the basis for further evaluation of each causal relationship between the factors in the model, through testing the proposed hypothesis system. This content will be presented in detail in the next section.

Testing the hypothesis system

Based on the theoretical model, the study proposed four main hypotheses to test the relationships between public policies and the level of sustainable development of the teaching staff. The hypotheses were tested through standardized regression coefficients, t-values and statistical significance levels p-values. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 7. Results of testing research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Audit relationship	Beta coefficient	t value	Sig. (p-value)	Conclude
H1	Professional support policy → Sustainable development of teaching staff	0.312	4,782	0.000	Support the hypothesis
H2	Compensation policy and working environment → Sustainable development of teaching staff	0.391	5,906	0.000	Support the hypothesis
H3	Mechanism for participation and professional autonomy → Sustainable development of teaching staff	0.274	3,994	0.000	Support the hypothesis
H4	Interaction between three policy groups → Overall effectiveness of sustainable development of lecturers	0.205	3,128	0.002	Support the hypothesis

Hypothesis H1: *Professional support policy has a positive impact on the sustainable development of the teaching staff.*

The results of the regression analysis show that the Beta coefficient = 0.312, t value = 4.782 and p < 0.001. This confirms that the hypothesis H1 is supported. Thus, policies on training to improve qualifications, support scientific research and promote lifelong

learning have had a positive and significant impact on improving the capacity, career motivation and long-term commitment of lecturers. The results are consistent with the studies of Altbach & Salmi (2011) and OECD (2021), affirming the core role of professional support in university human resource strategy .

Hypothesis H2: *Compensation policy and working environment have a positive impact on the sustainable development of the teaching staff.*

Hypothesis H2 was also strongly confirmed with the highest Beta coefficient in the model (0.391), t value = 5.906 and $p < 0.001$. The results show that reasonable salary, fair reward system, favorable working conditions and promotion opportunities play an important role in maintaining the career motivation and loyalty of lecturers. This is consistent with Herzberg's motivation theory, as well as empirical evidence in developed higher education countries such as Finland and Canada (Välilä, 2001; World Bank, 2020).

Hypothesis H3: *The mechanism of participation and professional autonomy has a positive impact on the sustainable development of the teaching staff.*

Beta coefficient = 0.274, t value = 3.994 and $p < 0.001$ demonstrate that hypothesis H3 is supported. This result reflects that when lecturers have a voice in academic activities and organizational governance - including choosing teaching content, contributing to school policies, and being evaluated fairly - they will tend to be more proactive in academics, and more committed to the organization. This is an indispensable factor in the modern human resource development model, strongly mentioned in the recommendation of UNESCO (2015) and the study of Marginson (2011).

Hypothesis H4: *The coordination among the three policy groups increases the overall effectiveness of the teaching staff development strategy.*

Hypothesis H4 was also supported with Beta coefficient = 0.205, t value = 3.128 and $p = 0.002$. The results show that when the three groups of policies are implemented synchronously, with mutual support interactions - instead of individually and separately - the impact on sustainable development of lecturers is significantly improved. This is evidence that integrated management thinking and comprehensive strategy are necessary to solve the problem of human resources in higher education in the context of innovation and global integration.

5. CONCLUSION

The study focused on analyzing the role of public policy in the strategy for sustainable development of teaching staff in higher education, through a theoretical model consisting of three groups of factors: professional support policy, remuneration policy and working environment, and participation mechanism - professional autonomy. Based on quantitative survey and model testing using modern analytical tools (CFA,

SEM), the research hypotheses were confirmed, demonstrating the consistency between the underlying theory and practical data.

The results showed that: All three policy groups have positive and statistically significant effects on the sustainable development of lecturers, in which remuneration policies and working environment have the strongest effects ; The synchronous coordination between policy groups (hypothesis H4) contributes to improving overall efficiency, affirming the systematic and integrated nature in the management of teaching human resources ; The model's level of explanation for the dependent variable is high ($R^2 = 58.3\%$), showing that the model has practical value in policy making.

Thus, sustainable development of the teaching staff cannot rely on individual efforts, but requires a comprehensive strategy, with a harmonious connection between the state's macro policies and the internal management activities of higher education institutions.

From the research results, some policy implications can be proposed as follows:

Firstly, it is necessary to develop and implement systematic and long-term professional support policies, including: postgraduate training scholarships, research funding, digital capacity development and lifelong learning promotion. These policies should not be seasonal, but must be integrated into the human resource development strategy of each educational institution.

Second, it is necessary to improve the remuneration and working conditions for lecturers in a competitive, transparent and performance-based manner. There should be a clear career assessment mechanism, a productivity-based income regime and increased investment in facilities and digital technology for teaching and research.

Third, it is necessary to promote faculty participation and autonomy in academic and institutional governance matters. This includes the right to propose training programs, participate in academic councils, and policy feedback mechanisms from faculty to the leadership.

Fourth, public policies need to be designed in an integrated, synchronous and flexible manner between the three groups of policies. Separating or implementing individual policies will not create strategic changes. The Ministry of Education and Training, together with relevant ministries and sectors, needs to coordinate to build a comprehensive policy framework on developing the teaching staff, linked to innovation in higher education and international integration.

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