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**An Evaluation of the Quality Management System of Transnational  
Undergraduate Programmes in a Vietnamese University**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
**Doctor of Philosophy in Education**  
at  
**The University of Waikato**  
by  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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## Abstract

As one of few studies about transnational education in Vietnam, this study is an evaluation carried out to provide an in-depth look into the quality management mechanisms applied to transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs) of a Vietnamese university (University A). The primary purpose of this evaluation is to hear the voices of undergraduate students, who have directly experienced, or are directly experiencing, the transnational education service provided by a particular university. The study aimed to answer an overarching question: *What factors impact stakeholders' evaluations of the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university?*

The conceptual framework comprises three key research elements. These are the research context including educational, administrative and cultural context, research theorising including transnational education, quality management and evaluation, and research methodology including the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model and evaluation methods. The aspects explored in each element of the framework play important roles in investigating the quality management system of TNUPs. These elements are interrelated because they all work towards the common goal of the research that is answering the overarching question. The study adopted the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) evaluation model of Stufflebeam (2004) as the evaluation methodology. The CIPP model was used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of TNUPs, figure out the important features of quality TNUPs in stakeholders' viewpoints, and encourage the understanding and interrelation among stakeholders. Based on the CIPP model, the methodology consists of four foci that are context, input, process, and product evaluations. The data was collected via two sources: interviews with participants including students, students' parents, alumni, administrators, and quality assurance officers of University A, and analysis of documents relating to TNUP quality management in Vietnam. The data was analysed by applying both

inductive and deductive analysis approaches. Deductive analysis used the CIPP model as a guide for coding data, and inductive analysis allowed me as the researcher to employ open coding, which is not dependent of the preliminary categories based on the CIPP model. The integration of these analytical approaches provided me with information to build a framework for the research findings, helping me to answer the research questions effectively. The research findings relate to the criteria for TNUP self-evaluation as introduced by the Vietnam National University (VNU) in its instruction on checking and assessing quality of transnational programmes in the VNU, and follow through planning, application, and final judgement processes. The findings propose that the TNUPs of University A have positive features that should be maintained, such as enrolment requirements, output standards, the recruitment process, the enrolment process, and the support of administrators to students. However, these TNUPs have issues that need to be improved. These issues include teaching and learning resources, programme length and contents, assessment and feedback systems, the work of teaching and administrative staff, and tuition fees. The findings also suggest that the quality management mechanism of University A and Vietnamese cultural values affect stakeholders' viewpoints about TNUPs. Based on the findings, my research recommends a model of quality management for TNUPs with the hope that it could better serve the demands of TNUP stakeholders.

The study is helpful as an external evaluation process involving University A stakeholders to review its quality management mechanism of TNUPs. The study's findings support University A to identify necessary changes to redevelop its quality management model appropriately. The research findings provide constructive research information for other universities in Vietnam that also offer TNUPs. Other institutions can learn from University A's experience in administrative and academic aspects. Such valuable information can also contribute to the development of transnational education in Vietnam generally.

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AQIP	Academic Quality Improvement Programme
AUN-QA	ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance
CIPP	Context-Input-Process-Product
CQAT	Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
DUP	Domestic undergraduate programme
GATS	General Agreement on Trades and Services
GDETA	General Department of Education for Testing and Accreditation
GE	General English
GOV	Government of Vietnam
GSO	General Statistics Office
HCMA	Ho Chi Minh Academy
HEI	Higher education institution
HERA	Higher Education Reform Agenda
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
MOE	Ministry of Education (China)
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam)
MR	Management Review
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PG	Post graduate
QA	Quality assurance
QAC	Hong Kong Quality Assurance Council
QFD	Quality Function Deployment
QIP	Quality Improvement Programme
QMD	Quality Management Department
QMM	Quality management model
RAE	Research Assessment Exercises
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SERVPERF	Service Performance Based Model
SERVQUAL	Service Quality Model

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
TESOL	Teaching English for speakers of other languages
TLQPR	Teaching and Learning Quality Review
TNE	Transnational education
TNHE	Transnational higher education
TNUP	Transnational undergraduate programme
TQC	Total Quality Control
TQM	Total Quality Management
TQS	Total Quality Service
UCG	University Grants Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
VIED	Vietnam International Education Department
VN-NARIC	Vietnam National Academic Recognition Information Centre
VNU	Vietnam National University, Hanoi
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the study: *An Evaluation of the Quality Management System of Transnational Undergraduate Programmes in a Vietnamese University*. In the *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005), transnational education, also named cross-border education by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was introduced as a consequence of globalisation. There are many ways to conceptualise globalisation, but it can be simply understood as a process of minimising barriers and encouraging people's contacts with others all over the world (Scholte, 2008). Globalisation has created transnational interrelations between countries, ranging from economic, political, cultural, and social to academic aspects (Campbell, 1994; Petrella, 1996; Scholte, 2008). In regard to academic interrelations, the trading of educational programmes between developed countries, as sellers, and developing ones, as buyers, encourages the expansion of transnational education (Altbach, 2015b; Moutsios, 2009). In return, the delivery of educational programmes leads to the movement of capital from developing to developed countries, and this contributes to a globalisation process. Since the 1900s, as the global market has witnessed the commercialisation of higher education (Altbach, 2015a), the role of transnational higher education (TNHE) has become more and more crucial and taken for granted, especially in Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, and Vietnam (Huang, 2007).

The proliferation of transnational education involves three issues: regulation, quality assurance, and recognition (Vlăsceanu, 1999). Regulation consists of legal, cultural or intellectual processes resulting from the cooperation of higher education institutions (HEIs). Quality assurance means guaranteeing quality including the collaborative programmes and

degrees. Recognition is the acknowledgement of degrees awarded by partner HEIs. Of the three issues, quality assurance has received much consideration (Vlăsceanu, 1999). The more universities take part in transnational education, the more suitable quality assurance mechanisms are needed to ensure the quality of educational programmes offered (Coleman, 2003; Dos Santos, 2002; Smith, 2010). In higher education, quality assurance contributes to quality management, and, to some extent, the two terms share the same meaning (Vlăsceanu & Grunberg, 2007). As TNHE in Asia is becoming more visible, Asian countries are not only importing foreign educational programmes, they are also educational exporters (Chiang, 2012; Mok, 2012).

Being a country in South East Asia that is influenced by the intense stream of TNHE expansion in the region since the early 2000s, Vietnam has witnessed an increasing number of transnational programmes in higher education. In 2020, Vietnam had 192,000 students studying abroad, 21,000 foreign students studying in Vietnam, and 400 TNHE programmes operated in Vietnam (Manh & Giang, 2020). Accordingly, by carrying out evaluation research, this study explored how a university in Vietnam managed the quality of its transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs). The research evaluated the TNUP quality management mechanism as reflected through the voices of TNUP stakeholders in relation to the educational services they received at the Vietnamese university.

In this introductory chapter, I discuss my background and position as the researcher within the study to clarify my choice of the research context, the university, and its transnational programmes. The objectives of my research focus on the importance of managing the quality of TNUPs via two channels, namely, understanding stakeholders' expectations about TNUPs, and adjusting recent TNUP quality management mechanisms to meet stakeholders' expectations. The rationale section, which is based on my work as an administrator of TNUPs, provides my reasons for carrying out the research. The chapter

concludes with details of the overall structure of the thesis and the main content of each chapter.

### **1.1. My Background and Position as a Researcher within the Study**

In regard to my academic background, I chose a transnational graduate programme to study for my master's degree. It was a programme of an Australian university delivered in Vietnam. The programme required me to study full-time and to pay a tuition fee that was three times higher than the tuition fee of domestic graduate programmes. Many people asked me why I chose this option—given there was an easier and 'cheaper' choice. I told them that I really hoped a transnational programme could bring me not only knowledge, but also a new way to view life and an entrance into the international academic world. I was not disappointed, and I must say that the transnational master's degree was the driving force for me to undertake my PhD degree in New Zealand.

As mentioned in the introduction, apart from quality assurance and regulation, recognition is a tough issue of transnational education (Vlăsceanu, 1999). In Vietnam, it is required that transnational degrees are recognised by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), and on the website of the MOET, there are instructions on how to process the degree recognition application (VN-NARIC, 2019). My transnational master's degree was regulated under the same circumstances. The programme I chose required me to have 6.5 IELTS and study two stages: a post graduate (PG) programme and a master's programme. The PG programme was designed by the Vietnamese university, and the master's programme could only be started after completing the PG programme. The MOET required every document relating to my study including the PG transcript to process the degree recognition. The master's programme transcript was not a problem, but it took the university about three weeks to get the PG transcript as there had not been such requirements before. The recognition of my master's degree went well, but many of my friends had difficulties with the

MOET because they did not either have the required IELTS certificate or submit a full PG transcript. Such examples show that degree recognition, especially the MOET's requirements about documents for degree recognition, is still an issue of concern for transnational programme students in Vietnam.

In regard to my career background, I completed my bachelor's degree in 2006 and thereafter started my job as an administrator of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university. My work involved consulting with students about TNUPs, assisting students in applying for, enrolling in, studying in, and graduating from TNUPs, and being the communication link between my university and its partner universities. Generally, my work was to ensure that TNUPs were running smoothly and students were satisfied with the services provided. During my 10-year career as a TNUP administrator, I enjoyed opportunities to work with and help many student cohorts, and to witness them entering and graduating from TNUPs. I have seen TNUP students gaining employment in national and international companies, and their knowledge is valued by employers and professionals. There were also TNUP students who have achieved little success with their degrees such as being unemployed, under-employed or working in jobs unrelated to their central area of interest because their qualifications from TNUPs are not recognised by the MOET. Although transnational education models have multiplied in many universities in Vietnam with an increasing number of recruits, students are still concerned about whether their degrees are recognised by the MOET and valued by the labour market. This affects the recruitment of TNUPs as well as the reputation of such programmes.

When I started this study, many of my Vietnamese friends wondered why I had chosen to focus on quality management—a context which is considered sensitive and difficult to carry out especially in Vietnamese educational institutions where cultural customs often restrict students from discussing issues that relate to their teachers or educational providers. My colleagues told me that although there might be a lot of interesting things to find out

about the quality management of an institution, it was too risky for the institution to let me explore such information. The reason for this is that publicising internal information might bring the institution more harm than benefits. As a result, I considered the data collection phase of the study might be difficult. Their advice made me anxious. However, after careful consideration, I finally decided to continue what I had started.

I decided to choose the university where I was working to carry out evaluation research into TNUP quality management because I thought my understanding about the university would assist me a great deal when undertaking this study. My career background also affected my choice of stance within this research. As such, I could be viewed as an insider especially when I shared the same identity, language, and experiences as the participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Also, having knowledge of an insider in this situation was advantageous because I had understanding of the research context and participants (Kanuha, 2000). On the other hand, if the participants, especially the students, knew that I was a TNUP administrator and had connections with the University staff, they might hesitate to provide me with information about University A. Such a disadvantage results from the cultural values of Vietnamese people, particularly in relation to avoiding disagreement, especially disagreement with people in authority at school or in the family (V. T. Le, 2016; H. T. Nguyen, 2021; M. D. Nguyen, 1985). These cultural values were evident when issues relating to the University were mentioned to participants. I realised that if I chose to act an insider, the quality of the information I received from the participants might be affected. In order to get access to accurate and objective information, I decided to position myself as an outsider in this evaluation research. As emphasised by Asselin (2003), being an outsider helps researchers maintain unbiased views as if they know nothing about the studied subjects (as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Therefore, although my past career shaped my purpose of

doing the research, I decided to be an outsider to keep my viewpoints objective during the process of my study.

## **1.2. The Focus of the Study**

### **1.2.1. Statement of the Problem**

Since 2006, when Vietnam officially became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), it has become vital for the country to adjust its policies to enhance international economic integration. One of the most important adjustments focused on reforming education, and introducing transnational education was a new target. The importance of organising transnational programmes was emphasised in a period called *Đổi Mới* (Resolution). This period saw the development of significant policies by the Vietnamese government for the fundamental and comprehensive reform of Vietnamese higher education from 2006 to 2020 (GOV, 2005). The ‘Resolution’ provided for increasing autonomy of institutions and universities, especially in collaboration with international establishments in order to encourage overseas investment in education. Similarly, Vietnamese students were encouraged to adapt to the global educational landscape. Hence, choosing to study in transnational programmes became a new trend all over the country. This also resulted in an increase in transnational programmes in Vietnamese universities. In 1998, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)’s (Australia) proposal to build the first international university in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, was approved by the Vietnamese government. As a result, a campus of RMIT University (Australia) was founded in 2000 and officially opened in 2001. This triggered the introduction of several international universities in Vietnam as well as joint ventures between Vietnam and overseas partners including the United States, Germany, France and Belgium (Fry, 2009). In 2017, Vietnamese higher education institutions co-ordinated with more than 200 higher education institutions from 30 countries and territories (VIED-MOET, 2017).

The number of students studying in transnational programmes has been increasing, and so has the number of transnational programmes – from 200 in 2017 to 400 programmes in 2020, but the quality of such programmes is still questioned by the public and even by the MOET. In 2020, the MOET had to disestablish 200 transnational programmes that were claimed to be of low quality (Manh & Giang, 2020). It is reported that transnational programmes are developed to serve the demands of people who desire to have international bachelor's, master's or PhD degrees, but the quality of such programmes is not sufficiently monitored (Hien & Giang, 2016). Before 2012, thousands of people did not have their transnational degrees recognised by the MOET, and the reasons were attributed to the fact that the Vietnamese government did not have regulations or quality accreditation systems in place for transnational education (Hien & Giang, 2016). Accordingly, having proper quality management mechanisms for transnational programmes became essential for educational institutions. This issue motivated me to carry out the evaluation of the quality management system of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university.

### **1.2.2. Guiding Research Questions**

In order to carry out the research, I posed the research question: *What factors impact stakeholders' evaluations of the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university?* The overarching question is answered by information gathered from the answers of six subsidiary questions:

1. What does University A offer students and parents when choosing TNUPs?
2. How do students and parents evaluate the design and delivery of TNUPs at University A?
3. What is the nature of students' experiences when studying in the TNUPs of University A?
4. To what extent do the vested interests of administrators and quality assurance officers impact on the quality management of TNUPs at University A?

5. What do students consider to be benefits gained after studying in the TNUPs of University A?

6. What kinds of issues do students and parents experience when studying in the TNUPs, and how does University A respond to these?

The subsidiary questions aimed to explore the information about the context of University A when offering TNUPs and related to academic staff, teaching and learning resources, and the designs and delivery of TNUPs. Moreover, students' experiences and their views of problematic issues when studying in TNUPs were looked into. The work of TNUP administrators and quality assurance officers was examined to identify vested interest in managing the quality of TNUPs. Finally, the benefits that students can gain after studying in TNUPs were investigated.

### **1.2.3. Objectives of the Study**

I decided to carry out the research based on two main objectives. The first objective was to investigate the quality management system of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university. This involved accessing detailed information about this system such as what kinds of activities were carried out to manage the quality of TNUPs, who was involved in these activities, and clarifying how effective these activities were. The second objective was to investigate the perspectives of selected stakeholders, especially students of TNUPs, towards the quality of TNUPs.

These objectives originated from my understanding about the meaning of quality management within education. The importance of quality management was first mentioned in the quality management theory of William Edwards Deming in the 1940s. Deming's theory about quality management started in industry and did not focus on how to control the quality of a product or service, but how to meet the expectations of customers. The theory was successfully applied in the manufacturing of Japan in the 1950s, and since then it has been

recognised and developed in many other countries for the purpose of ensuring that manufactured products can satisfy consumers (Sallis, 2002). Deming's idea became the theoretical framework of total quality management (TQM). Deming's TQM assisted the Japanese industry to thrive after Second World War, and TQM has been applied all over the world since the 1980s (Sallis, 2002).

The contribution of quality management theory and TQM to education is as important as it is to industry, and has been discussed by advocates over years. Hill and Taylor (1991) assert that TQM has been used as a tool to measure and maintain the continuous improvement of higher education institutions for decades. Tribus (1992) discusses the different application of quality management terms in industry and academia and how quality management can help improve the quality of education. Most recently, Mukhopadhyay (2020) states that TQM "creates a culture of management" (p. 58) and provides tools to manage quality in education. It is obvious that quality management plays an important part in education, and having a good quality management mechanism is meaningful to an educational institution.

### **1.3. Rationale for the Study**

In Vietnam, transnational programmes are being delivered in different languages, such as English, French, Russian or Chinese. Nevertheless, now that English has become an international language in many fields, such as science, academia, and business, there is intense attraction to higher education institutions which can provide high-quality programmes in English (Altbach, 2004). English is considered to be the lingua franca in cross-border education. There are more and more domestic institutions in many nations introducing transnational programmes in which English is used as the language of instruction (Wilkins & Urbanovič, 2014). Accordingly, this research was based on information collected from transnational programmes delivered in English organised by a university in Hanoi, Vietnam

(hereafter referred to as “University A” or “the University”), which is a member of the Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

There are a number of reasons why I chose this university. Firstly, there were few studies about TNUPs in Vietnam; therefore, little was known about the quality mechanisms applying to these TNUPs. Secondly, the University is one of the first institutions in Vietnam to offer TNUPs, and it has a lot of experience in different aspects of TNUPs. Hence, the data collected from the University is valuable as the University has a longer history of organising and managing TNUPs than other institutions.

The major aim of this evaluation was to hear the voices of students who had directly experienced, or who were directly experiencing, the service. Student voice is not merely what we get from students’ speaking but also reflects their way of thinking, their relationships, and their experiences of what is happening at schools or universities (Cook-Sather, 2006; Orner, 1992). The experiences of undergraduate students were the focus of this study because undergraduate students spend a long time studying, and they are less able to support their study in terms of tuition fees and living expenses. Undergraduate students are often unaware of what their future careers might be compared to postgraduate students, and their knowledge and future career tend to depend on what they are taught at the university. Parents of undergraduate students normally take an active interest in their children’s study, or in other words, the voices of parents are often reflected through the voices of undergraduate students. Accordingly, the domain of students in this research was inclusive of students’ parents. Although students and parents are just two of many stakeholders, and their perceptions may not affect the whole system, it is through them that other stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, officers, or decision makers, can evaluate the efficacy of the system. With this study, I aimed to bring a comprehensive view of TNUPs through selected stakeholders’ attitudes. I aimed for my research to explore information about administrative and academic

activities of TNUPs at University A that directly or indirectly affected student life. I also aimed for my research to be helpful to the MOET and other universities in Vietnam, in terms of insights into TNUPs, and learning from University A's experience. Finally, I aimed for higher education institutions in the world to know about TNUPs in Vietnam, to see how Vietnam has caught up with transnational education trends since the 2000s. As a result, more overseas institutions may consider cooperating with Vietnamese institutions, and as such, the social and economic development of Vietnam might be promoted.

#### **1.4. Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis comprises seven chapters. The sections below describe the content of each chapter.

Chapter One introduces my study. In this chapter, readers are provided with information about my academic and professional background that motivated me to design and undertake this research. The thriving nature of transnational education in Vietnam, and the insufficiency of the current quality management mechanisms are described as the research problem. To have appropriate quality management mechanisms for transnational education, the quality of the current mechanisms needs to be investigated. Hence, the research questions were posed to explore the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university through the attitudes of selected stakeholders towards these programmes.

Chapter Two informs readers about the context of Vietnam in terms of historical, educational and cultural aspects in order to consider their impacts on the development of transnational education. The history of Vietnam marked by wars and political changes has shaped educational changes. Five important education reforms are detailed in the chapter to examine how the education system has been modified from 179 BC to 1990 onwards. I also discuss that despite experiencing five education reforms and integrating with international education, Vietnamese education maintains its cultural values. These include respect for

teachers and morality, and a fondness for learning. After discussing the historical context of Vietnamese education, I focus on contemporary challenges for higher education in Vietnam. Vietnamese educational policies are then reviewed to clarify their impacts on the education system generally and transnational education in Vietnam particularly. The chapter concludes with an overview of University A and its mechanisms of managing and evaluating transnational undergraduate programmes.

In Chapter Three, I review literature relating to my research context, in particular, three main issues: transnational education, quality management in education, and evaluation. As transnational education is considered the beginning point for me to undertake this research, the context of its introduction worldwide, its scope and forms, and its development in Vietnam are firstly discussed. Quality management in education, considered as the basis for this study, is then reviewed through the definitions of quality, the movement of quality assurance from industry to education, and the roles of quality in education. Quality management models, which are popularly applied in education, are considered. Quality management models in East Asian higher education including China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and in Vietnamese higher education including University A, are then discussed to provide readers with a bigger picture and a particular picture of quality management models in this study. This research mainly focuses on evaluating TNUPs' quality through student voice. Accordingly, the concept and meaning of student voice is presented. Evaluation-as the framework of this study-is the next issue to be reviewed. Needs assessment is discussed to identify needs explored in this study. The relationship between educational programme development and evaluation is emphasised to highlight the importance of evaluation of a complete educational programme. Finally, I review popular educational evaluation models, and discuss the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) evaluation model which guides this study.

Chapter Four reviews the evaluation methodology of the research that consists of eight stages. Firstly, the purposes of the evaluation are revisited. Based on the evaluation purposes, the overarching question and the sub-questions guiding the research are recalled. The adoption of the CIPP model of Stufflebeam is then described to explain why it is suitable to answer the research questions. The Chapter continues with detailing my process of choosing research participants, and my data collection methods including individual interviews and documents analysis. Then, I recount the ethical principles when designing and undertaking the research, and explain my research stance as an outsider. Finally, I discuss my methods of data analysis that applied both inductive and deductive analysis approaches.

Chapter Five presents the outcomes and findings of the research which the data analysis revealed. The findings are presented following the set of criteria for evaluation of transnational undergraduate programmes as introduced by the Vietnam National University, Hanoi (see Appendix G, p. 276). The themes and sub-themes discussed in the chapter examine the findings relating to stakeholders' responses when evaluating the quality of administrative and academic activities of TNUPs at University A.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the Chapter Five findings that are relevant to the purposes of this evaluation. I suggest that stakeholders' viewpoints are affected not only by the quality management model of University A but also by Vietnamese cultural factors. The chapter presents the findings as implicit in the stakeholders' viewpoints, and at the same time, I discuss the impacts of Vietnamese cultural values in relation to their opinion. The application of the CIPP model in this study, and the quality of the data collected are then evaluated. Finally, the chapter considers the mechanisms and efficacy of the quality management models applied to TNUPs by the Vietnamese government and by University A.

Chapter Seven presents my thoughts after carrying out the research. I address the answers to my research questions as drawn out from the research findings. I then present the

significance of the study in relation to the quality management of TNUPs at University A in particular and in Vietnamese higher education in general. An adjusted quality management model for TNUPs of University A is proposed. Finally, the chapter presents some limitations of the study.

As previously introduced, my decision to design and implement this research originated from my background of being a Vietnamese person, studying in a transnational programme in Vietnam, and administering transnational programmes in a Vietnamese university. Therefore, the Vietnamese context and culture play a very important role in my study. The historical aspects of Vietnamese education as well as the cultural values of Vietnamese people are then reviewed to help readers understand their influences on the development of transnational education in Vietnam.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Development of Transnational Education in Vietnam, the Vietnamese University, and Its Transnational Undergraduate Programmes**

It is important for the readers of this thesis to understand the context of transnational undergraduate programmes in Vietnam in which the research participants live, study, and have relationships with stakeholders. Key aspects of the history of Vietnamese education (from 179 BC to 1990 onwards) are reviewed through important education reforms that created the basis for the introduction of transnational education in Vietnam. Dominated by Chinese imperialism for about 10 centuries, Vietnamese educational and cultural values are strongly affected by Confucianism. Accordingly, the chapter discusses how Confucian ideology has been adopted and adapted in Vietnamese culture and education. The section about Vietnamese higher education follows description of the general education system and focuses on some noticeable factors of the system, such as tuition fees, curriculum, and academic staffing. Quality management, as applied to the higher education sector of Vietnam, is also detailed. Educational policies in relation to Vietnamese higher education are explored to explain their influences on the development of transnational higher education programmes. University A is the main context of this study; therefore, its background and connection with transnational undergraduate programmes is a central focus of the chapter. Finally, a summary is provided to segue into the next chapter that investigates the literature and theoretical perspectives related to the study.

#### **2.1. A Brief History of Vietnamese Education Through Important Education Reforms (From 179 BC to 1990 Onwards)**

Vietnam is a country in the South East Asia region that has experienced a long history of retaining its independence from many feudal and colonial forces. Foreign impacts from China (179 BC–1427), France (1884–1945), and America (1954–1975) resulted in changes of

Vietnamese society and education systems which are discussed in this section. I detail the prominent features of Vietnamese educational history (from 179 BC to 1990 and onwards) through five education reforms. From 179 BC to 1975, three education reforms influenced changes in the languages of instruction, elimination of illiteracy, adjustments to the education system and acceleration of the cooperation with overseas education. After 1975, two education reforms were carried out including uniting the country's education system and changing financial planning for education, and developing the education system, especially higher education, to meet increasing knowledge demands.

### **2.1.1. The First Reform: Changing the Languages of Instruction (179 BC–1945)**

From 179 BC to AD 938, Vietnam experienced nearly 1,000 years of Chinese imperialism, which has been claimed to have left permanent effects on its culture and education system (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). The most salient feature about the influences of Chinese culture is the impact of Confucian ideology on Vietnamese life and education (London, 2011). Two cultural features of Vietnam, assumed to be influenced by Confucianism, that are maintained today are an emphasis on morality and a respect for intellectuals in education (T. N. Nguyen, 2019). Furthermore, as language is considered a pivotal factor within the impacts of colonialism, Chinese characters were used in all written documents (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). In fact, during Chinese imperialism, Vietnamese people had a spoken but not written language. Knowledge was taught and acquired through written documents in Chinese, and as a result, the impacts of Chinese culture became stronger.

After Vietnam gained its independence from Chinese rule in AD 938, the country experienced about 900 years of self-reliance and was ruled by feudal dynasties, which included the “Lý (1010–1225), Trần (1225–1400), Lê (1428–1788), Mạc (1527–92), and Nguyễn (1802–1945)” (London, 2011, p. 6). These dynasties ruled whilst at the same time

successfully fighting against Chinese invasions. From the 11th to the 18th centuries, the feudal education system of Vietnam still strictly followed Confucianism. Chinese continued to be the official language used in schools and feudal courts with a Vietnamese style of Chinese characters (*chữ Nôm*) being created in the 13th century (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). During the feudal period (1010–1945), Vietnamese students—always boys and men—came to schools to be educated by Confucian scholars or teachers in order to pass the national exams and become feudal mandarins (London, 2011; H. L. Nguyen, 2015).

In 1858, the French army invaded Vietnam, and from 1886–1945, the whole country was ruled through French colonialism. In 1879, the Vietnamese feudal education system was eliminated by an education system adapted from the French education system. A 10-year school system was applied with three stages including primary school (three years), secondary school (three years), and high school (four years). Schools used a French curriculum, and students were taught in French (MOET, 2019). In 1919, the national language system (*chữ quốc ngữ*) (known as the Vietnamese language today) was introduced. This totally replaced the use of Chinese characters in written documents and created a remarkable change in the education system by encouraging the development of Vietnamese language (both lexicology and phonology) and widening the resources of written documents in Vietnamese (London, 2011; T. M. T. Nguyen, 2015; L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). Vietnamese became the main language at schools, and learners were encouraged to study and explore natural sciences and technologies as well as learn knowledge from other countries in the world (MOET, 2019).

### **2.1.2. The Second Reform: Eliminating Illiteracy (1945–1954)**

French colonialism brought comprehensive reform to Vietnamese education by not only replacing the Confucian system but also generating a new generation of intellectuals educated by the Vietnamese feudal education system. This was influenced by Western culture and provided a quality labour force for Vietnam (Tung, 2017). Vietnamese education under

French colonialism witnessed two different realities: the very high rate of illiteracy of mostly workers and farmers and the increasing movements of intellectuals to study overseas to explore new ways of liberating the country.

Because of the limitations of schooling in colonial Vietnam, it was common for people, especially peasants, workers, and their children, to be uneducated and unable to read or write (London, 2011). Before 1945, 90% of Vietnam's population were illiterate (Ho Chi Minh National Academy (HCMA, 2009)). This was a serious problem because, without the ability to read and write, these people easily became slaves to the colonial government, and the country's fight for independence from French colonialism became more difficult (HCMA, 2009). Meanwhile, an increasing number of intellectuals from lower-middle-class families went overseas (Japan, France, and China) to study and to seek ideas to liberate their country (London, 2011). These intellectuals became the leaders of revolutions against French colonialism. There were many revolutions against French colonialism, and the last one to occur was the August 1945 Revolution led by Ho Chi Minh and the Indochina Communist Party (which was later called the Vietnamese Communist party) which succeeded in liberating the country.

After the August 1945 Revolution, French colonialism officially ended in Vietnam, and the new government of the State of Vietnam Democratic Republic founded its Ministry of National Education (MOET, 2019). The first educational target of the new government was the elimination of illiteracy. A department responsible for eliminating illiteracy was immediately established. After one year, in 1946, 15,000 classes were open; 95,000 teachers were trained; and 2.5 million people were literate (HCMA, 2009). In 1950, the State of Vietnam Democratic Republic government decided to conduct education reforms. The purpose of these was to adapt the French education system and to build a Vietnamese education system which suited the country (MOET, 2019). Over four years of reform (1950–

1954), the 10-year school system was replaced by a nine-year school system including primary school (three years), secondary school (three years) and high school (three years). A new curriculum designed by the Ministry of National Education replaced the French curriculum and was applied in all schools, colleges, and universities (MOET, 2019).

### **2.1.3. The Third Reform: Adjusting the Education System of the North of Vietnam and Accelerating the Cooperation with Overseas Education (1954–1975)**

From 1946–1954, the independence of Vietnam was threatened when the French army, supported by the American army, returned to Sai Gon, in Vietnam in an attempt to colonise the Indochina region including Vietnam. In 1954, all sides met in Geneva, Switzerland and signed the Geneva Treaty which divided Vietnam into two parts called the North and the South. The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was in charge of the North, and there was another government in the South called the Republic of Vietnam that was supported by the American government. In most regions of the South, Vietnamese people fought for the reunion of the whole country.

The Ministry of National Education was renamed the Ministry of Education, and it was in charge of the education system for the whole country. Although the government in the South tried to apply a school system over 12 years, divided into three levels (primary, secondary and high school) with a school curriculum borrowed from America, most of the country basically followed the policies of the Ministry of Education (MOET, 2019). Many students from the South were sent to the North to study. The North of Vietnam maintained a nine-year school system, as before, until 1956 when an education reform was introduced. According to this reform, the nine-year school system was replaced by a 10-year school system consisting of three levels (primary (four years)—one more year than the previous system—secondary (three years) and high school (three years)) (MOET, 2019). The curriculum implemented in schools, colleges, and universities of the North was adapted from

the curricula of the Soviet Union. Illiteracy was totally erased in the North due to the government's successful implementation of the previous education reforms, and many new professional schools, colleges, and universities were founded (HCMA, 2009).

The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam also sent thousands of young people overseas, mainly to socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Poland, to study to become the new high quality human resources of the country (MOET, 2019). With this policy, Vietnam strengthened collaboration with other socialist countries and encouraged Vietnamese young people to study in international education institutions. If the movements of intellectuals to foreign countries between 1945 and 1954 were mainly for liberating the country, the movements of young people in this period were for widening knowledge and contributing to national development.

#### **2.1.4. The Fourth Reform: Uniting the Country's Education System and Changing Financial Plans for Education (1976–1990)**

Vietnam declared the reunion of the whole country in April 1976 after the Americans withdrew from the South, and national general elections took place. The country was then named The Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Whilst the country was united, because of the remnants of the old government in the South, the school systems of the North and the South still differed (a 12-year system in the South and a 10-year system in the North) until 1981 (MOET, 2019). In 1981, educational reform was carried out. The Ministry of Education officially combined the two school systems of the North and the South and introduced a 12-year school system with one curriculum applied to the whole country (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). The 12-year school system was adapted from the model of the school system in the South, but the curriculum was the same as the curriculum in the North. Although this education reform was meaningful to the country's education system uniting the school systems of the two parts, it still had limitations when the curriculum was claimed to be too

much for students to study in 12 years. The heavy load of knowledge became a barrier for students' creativity in learning as well as teachers' innovations in teaching (MOET, 2019).

Before 1989, education in Vietnam was publicly funded and free. Since 1989, the Vietnamese government made a very important policy in education, Decision 44-HĐBT on 24th April, 1989 about collecting part of schooling tuition fees, which stated that students coming to school must pay tuition fees. This policy also allowed private educational institutions to be founded with the resulting diversification of education in Vietnam (the Government of Vietnam (GOV, 1989)).

In 1990, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was founded merging the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Vocational Training. Since this merger, the MOET has administered the whole national education system from preschool to university and postgraduate education (MOET, 2019). All educational activities, such as the establishment of educational institutions, quality assurance, degree conferment, and international integration, are under the administration of the MOET and the prime minister (GOV, 1990).

#### **2.1.5. The Fifth Reform: Developing the Education System, Especially Higher Education, to Meet Increasing Knowledge Demands (from 1990 onwards)**

In 1986, the Vietnamese government issued a noticeable socio-economic policy called *Đổi Mới* (Resolution) which focused on building a market economy for Vietnam, helping Vietnam to develop the socialist republic order, and strengthen international relationships with foreign countries (Nam Tien Tran, 2015). The *Đổi Mới* period resulted in expansion of the education sector by setting up an educational system which would meet the requirements of the country's development (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). As emphasised by MOET (2019), the education system from 1990 onwards focused on improving intellectual standards, training human resources, and fostering talents for the national development and international

integration. In 2000, in order to help Vietnamese education keep up with developed countries' education, the Vietnamese government issued Decree 40/2000/NQ-QH10 to reform the school curriculum as well as to change textbooks (GOV, 2000b). According to the Decree, the school system and the scale of education needed to develop rapidly in order to meet the increasing learning needs and to improve the professional qualifications and skills for Vietnamese people; social justice needed to be applied in education, especially for ethnic minorities, rural workers, policy beneficiaries, and people in difficult circumstances; and gender equality was sought (GOV, 2000b). The quality of education and training has improved to meet the requirements of human resources for socio-economic development, construction, and national defence. The technical infrastructure of the education and training systems has been further increased and gradually modernised (MOET, 2019).

In 2005, the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) was introduced to extend the influence of market mechanisms on Vietnamese higher education as well as to carry out a wide range of reforms in higher education (Harman, Hayden, & Pham, 2010; Hayden & Lam, 2010). One of the targets of Vietnamese higher education stated by HERA included “a more internationally integrated higher education system, involving more international commitments and agreements, improvements in the teaching and learning of foreign languages (especially English), and the development of conditions favourable to increased foreign investment in the higher education system” (Harman et al., 2010, p. 3). With such purposes, HERA has opened the door for international institutions to invest in Vietnamese higher education, and for Vietnam to cooperate with overseas countries in terms of higher education. This is the basis for transnational higher education in Vietnam.

It is evident that with the five education reforms, the education system has been through many changes. According to Kim (2003), the reasons for education reforms may not really originate from what the learners think is best for them, but to adapt to the political and

social changes of the country. For example, the invasion of French in 1858 created changes to the political situation of Vietnam and replaced the feudal education system by a system adopted from France. Thanks to that, the old ways of learning by heart Confucius analects and using Chinese at schools were replaced by encouraging students to approach more international knowledge and using Vietnamese as the official language of instruction. The unification of the North and the South led to the unification of the school system and the curriculum (MOET, 2019). The *Đổi Mới* and the introduction of HERA has led to the expansion of education types as well as attracting more foreign development in higher education creating the basis for transnational higher education (Harman et al., 2010; L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). The changes in the Vietnamese education system, the government's efforts in internationalising higher education are important strategies to encourage public, private, and foreign investment in higher education (Welch, 2010).

Although there have been many adjustments made to the Vietnamese education system due to the changes in the political situation, there are other educational features that have hardly changed because they are aligned with the cultural values of the Vietnamese people. These cultural and educational features, signifying the influences of Confucianism on Vietnamese culture, are still maintained in contemporary Vietnamese education and will be discussed in the section below.

## **2.2. Vietnamese Cultural Values and Significant Cultural Features of Vietnamese Education**

### **2.2.1. Vietnamese Cultural Values**

Vietnamese cultural values originate from the religious beliefs of the Vietnamese people. According to M. D. Nguyen (1985), there are six religions which strongly affect Vietnamese people's spiritual life: Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Animism. In recent studies, Vietnamese cultural values are believed to be affected by three religions which are Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism (Lan, 2016; Van,

2020; Vuong et al., 2018). Among these religions, Confucianism has the strongest influence and has become the code of virtues and manners as well as the basis of social order in Vietnamese life (M. D. Nguyen, 1985; Thu, Thi, Thuy, & Huy, 2021; Vuong et al., 2018). Confucian ideology originated from China and has impacted Vietnam since the colonisation by the Chinese feudalism. Confucian ideology has been the leading philosophy in Vietnam for over 1,000 years (939–1945) and has had many positive influences on Vietnamese people's lives. This is especially the case for education whereby the philosophy has encouraged people's fondness for learning and provided the link between theory and practice. However, because of its imposed nature, Confucian education philosophy is also considered to extinguish people's independence and critical thinking (H. L. Nguyen, 2015).

Being derived from the influence of religious beliefs in general and Confucianism in particular, the following values are identified as the most popular cultural values of Vietnam: respecting the power of kinship, having a passive attitude towards life, having self-control, attempting to accept denial and avoidance, and believing in fatalism (M. D. Nguyen, 1985). These cultural values are popular because they can be seen in the everyday life of Vietnamese people. The power of kinship is highly respected because, for Vietnamese people, family is the most important thing, and family members are the most important people. Whenever there are difficulties in life, they always choose to come to family members and seek their advice first. Similarly, family relationships are always the top priority when they need to consider any issues. Avoiding showing direct disagreement and trying to satisfy other people by accepting their ideas are vivid examples of Vietnamese people's having self-control and having a passive attitude to life. Apart from that, although living in a country which has experienced wars with much loss and pain, Vietnamese people always maintain positive thoughts and hope for the best. Attempting to accept denial and avoidance and believing in fatalism is another way of describing Vietnamese people's optimism. Using a different way of

naming, other researchers introduce five cultural values of Vietnam which are being collectivistic, being passive and having self-control, being harmonious, being flexible, and being sociable (V. T. Le, 2016; Ninh, 2022; Vu, 2020). As explained by V. T. Le (2016) and Ninh (2022), being collectivistic is represented by Vietnamese people's respect for the power of the group, uniting, helping each other and showing gratitude. Being passive and having self-control is illustrated by their preference for stability and patience. Being harmonious, flexible, and sociable is being optimistic, adaptable, and maintaining good relationships with other people. Although the names of the values introduced by two authors are not the same, it can be seen that the characteristics described by them have common points. For example, being collectivistic means respecting the idea of the group and uniting for common purposes, and respecting the power of kinship means respecting and following the decision of the family—a group of people with biological relationship. In their study about Vietnamese culture, Chung and Bemak (1998) also state that Vietnamese people have a collective nature which means an individual in Vietnamese society is greatly influenced by the power of their family. Being harmonious and sociable share the same characteristics with attempting to accept denial and avoidance. The Vietnamese cultural value system is a combination of the traditional values mentioned by M. D. Nguyen (1985) and the updated and recent values mentioned by V. T. Le (2016), Ninh (2022), and (Vu, 2020).

### **2.2.2. Significant Features of Vietnamese Education**

As discussed in the previous section, Vietnam was under the rule of Chinese imperialism for more than 1,000 years, and Confucianism deeply influenced Vietnamese culture and education. Influences of Confucianism on Vietnamese education can be seen in two noticeable features: the respect for teachers and morality and the fondness for learning. These features are discussed in the sections below.

### ***2.2.2.1. The Respect for Teachers and Morality***

According to Confucius, teaching is a highly valued career, and teachers must always be respected by their students and the society (T. N. Nguyen, 2019; L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004; T. D. Truong, Hallinger, & Sanga, 2017). Respecting teachers and respecting morality/knowledge (*tôn sư trọng đạo*)—is one of Confucius’s most important theories of learning and is considered the highest of obligations students must follow during their study life. Furthermore, it is unacceptable to make people, especially teachers, lose face in front of other people (T. D. Truong et al., 2017). The respect for teachers is usually understood whereby students accept the knowledge taught by their teachers without hesitation and never make their teachers confused or embarrassed by questioning and challenging their knowledge—although they are encouraged to do so theoretically. Hence, it is rather common that when a teacher poses a question, a few or none of the students dare to speak their mind and just answer what they think their teacher and friends feel acceptable (H. L. Nguyen, 2015).

In Confucianism, teaching morality is the first and foremost target of education (Vo, 2020). According to Confucius, Five Eternal Virtues (*ren* (kindness), *yi* (fairness), *li* (good manners), *zhi* (intelligence), and *xin* (allegiance)) were the codes of ethics of a good society (T. Liu & Stening, 2016; Vo, 2020). In Confucius’ opinion, if a man showed that he was kind, respectful, reasonable, judicious and always kept his promises, he was an ideal man (T. Nguyen, 2019). In Vietnam, the respect for morality means following the Five Eternal Virtues as well as showing regard for people of higher hierarchy and worshipping ancestors (H. L. Nguyen, 2015; M. D. Nguyen, 1985). Furthermore, *yang-based* (the priority is given to men) is one of the most important cultural features of Confucianism (N. T. Nguyen, 2016). As a result, under more than 10 centuries of feudalism, Vietnamese education concentrated on teaching morality and obligations and aimed to train boys or men to take exams and become

gentlemen working for the feudal governments as only men had the right to go to school (London, 2011). Also, respecting teachers and morality reflects the effect of Vietnamese students' harmonious and sociable nature by trying to avoid disagreement with their teachers. Apart from respecting knowledge and morality, as a teacher, Confucius always encouraged people to be keen on learning, and intellectuals were highly appreciated in Confucianism (T. N. Nguyen, 2019; Vo, 2020). The fondness for learning, as a Vietnamese educational feature, is discussed in the next section.

#### ***2.2.2.2. The Fondness for Learning***

In Vietnamese culture, the respect for teachers is allied with the fondness for learning (T. N. Nguyen, 2019; L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). Under Vietnamese feudalism, the fondness for learning meant students learning by heart all the knowledge in Chinese books, taking exams to become mandarins, and serving in royal courts (H. L. Nguyen, 2015). The examination system of Confucianism is considered snobbish because it mainly focused on people who can reach the highest positions in exams, but it is also believed to encourage students' commitment to study (L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004). Today, in Vietnam, the fondness for learning is still very important because learning is considered the only way to complete self-transformation (T. N. Nguyen, 2019). The higher the level a person studies, the more chances they have to explore their ability, to get a better job with a higher salary, and to build more social relationships (Ho, 2021; Tong, 2020).

My discussion about two educational features shows that the influence of Confucianism on Vietnamese education is really strong. However, Confucianism was not only adopted but also adapted to suit the Vietnamese context, and so are the features of respect for teachers and morality, and the fondness for learning (Vo, 2020). As reviewed in the previous sections, from 1900, the country's political system has gone through different stages; many policies on education that have been promulgated and carried out have gradually

blurred the impact of Confucian philosophy on education. Today, Vietnamese students are open to study at several different sources and are encouraged to criticise and reason on issues rather than just listen and accept the information provided by their teachers (Q. T. Nguyen & Tran, 2020; T. C. Nguyen, 2021). The purposes of being educated are still mainly based on morality and knowledge, but working as an officer in state-owned organisations is not as sought after as before. People can choose any jobs that are aligned with their ability so long as the jobs are legal and not against morality rules (H. Nguyen, 2022; H. L. Nguyen, 2015). The fondness for learning in Vietnam means students can study as much as they are able to, not only from books but also from real life, and try to apply their knowledge to practical circumstances (H. Nguyen, 2022; H. L. Nguyen, 2015; C. H. Truong, 2022). Apart from that, the family is considered the most essential unit in a Vietnamese society and the power of kinship must be respected, so Vietnamese students are usually under the strong influence of parents and family. Accordingly, Vietnamese students' learning is adapted to the duty of satisfying parents, and students tend to be passive in identifying their interest of study and follow what has been chosen for them by their parents (Hieu, 2018; Ninh, 2022; Vu, 2020). There is even competition among parents for famous schools and universities in which they believe their children will have more chance of getting good jobs and asserting their potential in the society (Quynh, 2011). As summarised by H. L. Nguyen (2015), although having both positive and negative effects, the ideology of Confucius is still latent in the way Vietnamese people educate and train their next generations, but it has been modified to adapt to the present circumstances of the country.

## **2.3. The Vietnamese Higher Education System**

### **2.3.1. The General System**

In 1986, the education systems of the North and the South of Vietnam were unified by one government and came under the control of the Vietnamese government and the

Vietnamese Communist Party. Education, including higher education, was more overtly politicised. Annually, the government set quota for higher education based on the needs of national industries, and a national budget was distributed to higher education institutions accordingly. Students did not have to think about applying for jobs after graduation because their jobs were also decided by the government. Graduates would work for companies or offices under the assignment of the government.

This situation was maintained until the 1990s when there was an introduction of a new type of higher education called “university” and the issuance of the Vietnamese Higher Education Law in 1992 (then revised in 2018), which provided a foundation for shaping the higher education system in Vietnam. In 2018, according to the revision of the Higher Education Law issued by the Vietnamese government, a university degree takes around three and a half or four years to complete (GOV, 2018). In terms of a model, there are two types of universities: Vietnamese universities (including public/state-owned universities and non-public/private universities) and universities with foreign investment (completely or partly funded by foreign investment) (GOV, 2012a). Apart from higher education institutions called universities, there is also a type called national/regional university which is the unification of different universities and parts thereof of the whole university adhering to the credit training system. National/regional universities issue their own regulations following the Vietnamese government’s policies, and their member universities carry out administrative and academic activities under their own regulations (GOV, 2012a).

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is directly in charge of managing the Vietnamese higher education system, and apart from multi-disciplinary universities, all degrees and certificates issued by the other models of Vietnamese public universities are signed and sealed by the MOET. Before 2015, in order to be admitted to study in an undergraduate programme, a student needed to pass the high school graduation exam first and

then pass the university entrance exam set by the MOET. The university entrance exam used to be called *kì thi ba chung* in which all universities held the exam on the same day, used the same exam questions and the same marking scheme approved by the MOET. Since 2015, the MOET has eliminated both the high school graduation exam and the university entrance exam; now, students have to take only one exam called the high school national examination (*kì thi tốt nghiệp trung học phổ thông quốc gia*). Eligible high school graduates use the results to apply to be considered for an undergraduate programme.

It would be a great omission if the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) is not mentioned when portraying the higher education system of Vietnam. As discussed previously, HERA was introduced in 2005 and was expected to create comprehensive changes in the higher education system of Vietnam, especially by extending the impact of market mechanisms on the higher education system. After 1975, Vietnam became a socialist republic under the government of the Vietnamese Communist Party. This reality was assumed to make Vietnam follow the same way as China with the dominance of the “socialist-oriented market mechanism” prevailing (Harman et al., 2010, p. 5). However, although it was considered in conflict with the “principles of Marxism-Leninism”, HERA was still introduced and accepted in Vietnam (Harman et al., 2010, p. 5). The effect of HERA on Vietnamese higher education is also applied to transnational higher education development. HERA transformed the transnational higher education (TNHE) system of Vietnam from a state-controlled approach to a free-market approach (as in Japan and Taiwan) (Huang, 2007). Previously, educational policies of Vietnam were promulgated mostly due to changes in the socio-political circumstances of the country. With the introduction of HERA, the collaboration between Vietnam and foreign countries in terms of higher education is encouraged, so customers’ demands for international education are now considered when the government decides any policies on higher education (Harman et al., 2010).

### **2.3.2. Tuition Fees, Curricula, and Academic Staff**

When considering educational programmes, apart from students' interest in professional fields, tuition fees are important issues for students and their families to decide which programmes would suit them best. Between programmes having the same majors, people tend to choose those that are aligned with their financial situations. Further, programme curricula that determine required papers are necessary for students to make plans for their study. Also, staff, especially academic staff, are crucial parts of educational institutions because their performance can directly affect students' experiences in educational programmes and students' study results. Therefore, the following sections offer a review of tuition fees, curricula, and the academic staff of higher education in Vietnam.

#### ***2.3.2.1. Changes in Tuition Fees of Higher Education according to the Government's Policies***

Before 1986, the Vietnamese government supported students enrolled in undergraduate programmes by not requiring them to pay tuition fees. Since 1986, higher education institutions have collected tuition fees. The government assisted students by paying part of the tuition fees for learners (from 50% to 70% of the regulated tuition fees), and the balance was calculated by each higher education institution, but it must be approved by the government (GOV, 2015). As stated by GOV (2021), the Vietnamese government, represented by the MOET, controls the ceiling of tuition fees of all levels in the education system including higher education. Higher education institutions that self-control their frequent expenses can decide their tuition fees, but the tuition fees cannot exceed twice the tuition fee ceiling of each higher education sector (GOV, 2021). Higher education institutions that meet the MOET or overseas accreditation/audit requirements can decide their tuition fees, but have to clarify their tuition fees with the MOET (GOV, 2021). Accordingly, higher education institutions have the right to use the fees they collect, but they must report their financial plans to the MOET and the government. A further important point about this tuition

fee system is that all students coming to university are supposed to pay the required tuition fees no matter where they come from. However, the government may grant fees exemptions, student loans, or scholarships for students of special circumstances to study in public sectors (GOV, 2021; Hayden & Lam, 2010; Kristy, 2000). For example, students who study to be teachers, students whose parents contributed in the Vietnamese wars for independence, or students whose parents are serving in national military forces do not have to pay tuition fees. Students who study traditional arts or study to work in dangerous fields only pay 30% of tuition fees (GOV, 2021).

### ***2.3.2.2. Differences between the Curricula of Domestic and Transnational Higher Education Programmes***

The curricula of domestic training programmes in higher education institutions are officially controlled and approved by the MOET. The curriculum frameworks of most undergraduate programmes consist of two components: general knowledge and professional knowledge (MOET, 2015a). The MOET also regulates compulsory papers, standard contact hours, programme structures, and other requirements relating to programme operation (MOET, 2015a). In order to have a higher education system which is up-to-date, advanced but still communist and patriotic, the MOET requires students to study foundation papers such as Marxist-Leninist studies or Ho Chi Minh's thoughts which involve four component papers and take up a significant amount of time in the total length of the curriculum (St George, 2011; L. T. Tran & Marginson, 2018). The curricula of transnational programmes, in contrast, are decided on by agreement between the Vietnamese higher education institutions and their partners (GOV, 2012b).

### ***2.3.2.3. Conflicts between Quantity and Qualifications of Academic Staff in Vietnamese Higher Education***

In terms of quantity, the number of higher education staff in Vietnamese higher education has increased since *Đổi Mới* (Resolution) in 1986. Between 1986 and 2006, the

number of public-sector universities increased by 2.7 times. The number of students increased by 23 times, but the number of lecturers only increased by 4.4 times, which suggests that the increase in the number of lecturers did not keep up with the demand created by the large increase in the number of students. According to V. P. Nguyen and Nguyen (2018), in the 30-plus years since 1986, the number of lecturers who have bachelor's degrees has increased rapidly; the number of lecturers who have master's degrees has increased slowly, but the number of lecturers who have PhD degrees has remained static. In 2015, lecturers with PhD degrees in Vietnam only numbered 12.06% of the total number of university lecturers, which indicates that the average qualification of university lecturers is not high (V. P. Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018). Hayden and Lam (2010) claim that the academic staff do not have enough motivation to improve their professional qualifications because of low salaries, limited teaching materials, insubstantial facilities, and the heavy teaching workload of undergraduate programmes placed on them.

#### **2.4. Educational Policies and their Effects on Transnational Education in Vietnam**

The general context of the Vietnamese education system, and transnational education in particular, has had a great impact on the introduction of transnational higher education in Vietnam. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the development of education in general and higher education in particular, has always been attached to the process of globalisation and internationalisation. Globalisation can be understood as the integration of all fields such as economic, political, cultural, social, and academic. Internationalisation mainly deals with the policies and programmes that are used to deal with globalisation by universities and governments (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). Internationalisation has resulted in “sending students to study abroad, setting up a branch campus overseas, or engaging in some type of inter-institutional partnership” (Altbach et al., 2009, p. iv). According to Altbach et al. (2009), under the effect of internationalisation, many countries quickly immerse themselves in the

flow, whilst many others consider it as “an assault on national culture and autonomy” (Altbach et al., 2009, p. iv). However, even when the trend to internationalisation is so strong and attracts a lot of followers, there may be still those who find it difficult to integrate. The following paragraphs take a closer look into the situation in Vietnam to explore how the country’s education has changed due to this universal trend.

As discussed in the previous sections, Vietnamese education has been understood as the education of Vietnam since 1976 after the Vietnamese Communist Party had united the North and the South of Vietnam as one country named the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (or Vietnam in short). Although the whole country had gained its independence, the development of the North and the South of Vietnam still differed. Whilst the North suffered from severe consequences post-war, such as a backward economy, and a poor and illiterate population, the South still had remnants of the old government. These included the existence of individual and small business; hence, the political target was completing the unification of the country, overcoming the consequences of war, and recovering the socio-economic development in both the North and the South. From 1979 to 1989, the development of education was in parallel with the economic development of Vietnam. Since 1990 the Vietnamese economy has witnessed great progress, and education also followed with a range of strategic policies. In Article 36 of *The Constitution of Vietnam in 1992*, the primary objectives of Vietnamese education stated the following:

The government shall develop a balanced system of education; eradicate illiteracy and develop forms of public, private schools and other forms of education.

The government prioritises investment in education and encourages other sources of investment.

Public organizations, social organizations, economic organizations, families and schools shall have the responsibility to educate the youth, teens and children.

(Extracted from *The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1992*) (GOV, 1992, pp. 7-8)

Generally, the educational objectives in Article 36 (1992) involved keeping a balanced educational system all over the country, eradicating illiteracy, and taking care of the young generation. Also, developing other forms of education apart from public education and enhancing and encouraging sources of investment in education are important targets of Vietnamese education, as mentioned in Article 36 (1992). If public education were the only form of Vietnamese education previously, the appearance of non-public educational institutions after Article 36 (1992) indicates a profound change in the education system. Further, when other sources of investment are encouraged to invest in Vietnamese education, it helps Vietnam open the door to the rest of the world and set the basis for cross-border education later.

Most recently, in Article 61 of *The Constitution of Vietnam in 2013* (revised from *The Constitution of Vietnam in 1992*), apart from objectives about the general development of Vietnamese education, Article 61 (2013) continued to encourage the expansion of transnational education in Vietnam when it emphasised the following:

The government prioritises investment and attracts other sources of investment for education; cares for preschool education; ensures that primary education is compulsory. The government does not collect tuition fees; steps up the universalisation of secondary education; develops higher education and vocational education; implements scholarship policies and reasonable tuition fees. (Extracted from *The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 2013* (GOV, 2013, p. 13))

Obviously, Article 61 (2013) restated the target of Vietnamese education that was mentioned in Article 36 (1992), which is encouraging and attracting other investment sources apart from the government.

Over time, the policies on education have changed, but it can be seen very clearly that Vietnamese education is always under the control of the Vietnamese government. Therefore, the purpose of education usually includes both general and political agendas. However, there are more and more positive and specific things to be done to the Vietnamese education

system. For example, secondary education is now universal, and the government has given priority to investment in education as well as the development of different forms of education apart from public and private schools.

Apart from the geo-political aspect of being in the Asia-Pacific region, Vietnam definitely shares some cultural features with other regional countries, especially China. Among those features, Confucianism is the ideology that has permeated throughout Vietnamese culture and has greatly influenced social, political, and educational aspects of the country (Doan, 2005; Marginson, 2011; Welch, 2010). According to Marginson (2011), the education in Vietnam, as well as in many Asia-Pacific countries, follows the Confucian model, which consists of four elements:

(1) strong nation-state shaping of structures, funding, and priorities; (2) a tendency to universal tertiary participation, partly financed by growing levels of household funding of tuition, sustained by a private duty, grounded in Confucian values, to invest in education; (3) 'one chance' national examinations that mediate social competition and university hierarchy and focus family commitments to education; (4) accelerated public investment in research and 'world-class' universities. (p. 587)

Of the four elements, the second and the third ones are strongly incorporated by the Vietnamese education system because studying at higher education institutions and providing good higher education institutions are considered very important by the Vietnamese people (Marginson, 2011). The second element leads to the fact that studying for a university degree has become popular, and more and more parents are encouraging their children and trying to save money to pay for the provision of higher education for them (London, 2011; T. L. Tran et al., 2016). As a result, the education in Vietnam has become a private good instead of a public good, as it was before (T. L. Tran et al., 2016), as the tuition fee system, which was first introduced in 1993, has been applied with a view to reduce dependence on state subsidies.

Especially since the Vietnamese Communist Party initiated the *Đổi Mới* period, a comprehensive reform program that encompassed the economy and many other aspects of social life, such as administration, politics, culture, and education, there have been many changes that have taken place in the education system. In higher education, in 2005, 3% of students enrolled in post-graduate courses. In 2017, 74% of high school graduates wanted to continue their study at universities, while only 68% wanted to do so in 2016 (Linh, 2017). Accordingly, it is reasonable to say that “higher education in Vietnam is overwhelmingly focused on the educational needs of undergraduate students” (Hayden & Lam, 2010, p. 24). As for the transnational undergraduate programmes, *The 07/2017/TT-BGDĐT Circular about regulations on transnational undergraduate programmes in Vietnam* states that transnational undergraduate programmes aim to meet the training needs of the society and mobilise the potential of tertiary education institutions and other resources to train human resources serving the socio-economic development demands of localities and regions (MOET, 2017b). In exchange, transnational undergraduate programmes help increase investment in education from households, open chances for students to gain university degrees, and enhance the cooperation in both education and economics between Vietnam and other foreign countries.

The most typical change is the HERA, which offers Vietnamese universities more autonomy and encourages internationalisation by providing opportunities for overseas universities to open campuses in Vietnam. This is a big step for the Vietnamese government to call for foreign investment in education (Dai, 2006 as cited in Fry, 2009). In 1998, RMIT University’s (Australia) proposal to build the first international university in Vietnam was approved by the Vietnamese government. As a result, a campus of RMIT University was founded in Vietnam in 2000 and officially opened in 2001. This triggered the introduction of several international universities in Vietnam as well as joint ventures between Vietnam and

overseas partners like the United States, Germany, France, Belgium (Fry, 2009). These relationships are proof of the development of transnational higher education in Vietnam.

In 2020, Vietnam had two national universities: Vietnam National University, Hanoi and Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, which were created by merging several universities together. Vietnam also had five regional universities representing the four biggest regions of the country, which are Thai Nguyen University (of the Northern Midlands and Mountains), Da Nang University (of the South Central), Hue University and Vinh University (both of the North Central), and Can Tho University (of the South West). According to the statistics of the MOET listed in V. Le (2017), in the academic year 2016–2017, Vietnam had 235 universities and academies (among which 170 were state-owned, 60 were non-state or private, and five have 100% foreign capital) and 1,767,879 students (out of more than 95.5 million Vietnamese people). In 2020, the country had more than 400 transnational programmes (both undergraduate and postgraduate) that were licensed to operate by the government. Similarly, statistics show that Vietnamese higher education institutions coordinate with more than 200 higher education institutions from across 30 countries and territories (Vietnam International Education Department – the Ministry of Education (VIED-MOET, 2017)). This reflects the rapid development of Vietnamese higher education in general and of transnational education in particular.

The Vietnamese Law of Higher Education states that higher educations should help create knowledge and new products and serve the requirements of socio-economic development (GOV, 2012a). Nevertheless, according to Fry (2009), the increasing social demand for higher education, which has given it a greater status, has led to a large number of unemployed graduates. As generated by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam (GSO), there were 1,083,400 unemployed graduates in the first quarter of 2020, but in the third quarter of 2021, the number of unemployed graduates was 1,714,800 people (GSO, 2022, p. 5).

Provided the purposes of transnational programmes in Vietnam are to provide knowledge and create job opportunities for Vietnamese students, the increasing number of unemployed graduates illustrates the negative side. As such, although the Vietnamese government's priority has been given to higher education and transnational higher education, and the development is rather quick, the government should consider if Vietnamese higher education is providing what the market really needs.

## **2.5. University A and its Transnational Undergraduate Programmes**

### **2.5.1. The General Context**

As previously reviewed, the term “Vietnamese education” has been officially used since 1976 when the whole country was united under the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party. From 1976, the education system has changed several times through different periods with its purposes adapted to the social and political development of the country. The very first targets were to eliminate people's illiteracy and to keep up with the pace of development of other nations in the world (GOV, 1966), the main aims of education set out hereafter demonstrated a significant improvement of the system. These improvements related to carrying out greater social inclusion in education, clarifying education types forms to manage (GOV, 1992) and developing the existing system, and encouraging investment sources for education (GOV, 2013). Those changes happened because, from 1976 onwards, the development of education paralleled the economic development of Vietnam. By 1990 the Vietnamese economy had witnessed great progress including the development of more strategic education policies, especially policies relating to international integration in education (GSO, 2002). The national socio-economic context is the foundation for the expansion of transnational education in Vietnam.

### **2.5.2. University A and its Transnational Undergraduate Programmes**

Having been founded in 2002, University A is an affiliated school of Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU) that offers transnational undergraduate programmes. It has cooperated with partners from Malaysia, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, and China to organise, recruit, and run TNUPs. The TNHE trend in Vietnam has strengthened since the 2000s, and University A can be considered as one of the pioneers. The first full-time TNUP using English language was with a Malaysian partner. This programme started recruiting in 2004 and had 47 recruits in 2005. Since then, this number of recruits increased with 67 recruits in 2006, 193 recruits in 2007, 100 recruits in 2008, and 200 recruits in 2009 (adapted from *Statistics on the Number of Students of TNUPs in English*. VNU-IS Source. Copyright 2017 by VNU-IS.) At first, the university programme lasts for four years. In the first three years, students follow the academic syllabus of the partner university. In the fourth year, apart from continuing with the Malaysian university, students can choose to continue and finish with the academic syllabuses of either a British or Australian partner and be awarded two bachelor's degrees—one from the Malaysian university and the other from either the British or the Australian partner. Hence, students have chances to gain their bachelor's degrees from two of those three universities. However, from 2010, as the university's collaboration with the British and Australian partners stopped, University A decided not to continue offering these options and has only maintained the collaboration with the Malaysian partner. The TNUP with the Malaysian partner is a full-time franchised programme where students can choose to transfer abroad after two or three years studying in University A and continue their last years in one of the universities in the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, Malaysia, or Australia. In 2010, University A started to recruit students for another full-time TNUP with an American partner and was quite successful with 250 recruits (VNU-IS, 2010c). For both TNUPs, University A

is required to provide lecture halls with enough seats and equipment to assist learning and teaching activities. There are two semesters in an academic year. The partner universities are responsible for sending the curriculum, the papers to be offered, and the learning materials to University A within six weeks of the commencement of each semester. Every paper must be taught by a lecturer who has a master's or a PhD degree. University A is responsible for appointing lecturers and sending their curriculum vitae to its partners to be approved at least one month before a semester starts. Assessment including assignments and exams are taken at University A, scripts are marked by Vietnamese lecturers then sent to the partner universities to be moderated. The partner universities send the final results of all papers to University A to release to students within 20 working days upon receipt of all the scripts (adapted from *Standard operating procedures for franchise programmes* (VNU-IS, 2010b). Up to 2018, the two programmes were still the main full-time TNUPs in English that University A offered and are the focus of this research.

At University A, the Department of Academic and Student Affairs, established in 2003, has been in charge of all the academic and scientific research activities. The administrators in this department deal with issues of TNUPs involving students' attendance, exam schedules, exam misconduct, appeal for the reconsideration of exam results, or any other issues about the programmes. These administrators work directly with students, parents, and administrators of partner universities. In terms of teaching activities, there are three divisions—one in charge of English language teaching, one in charge of social, humanistic, and economic subjects, and one in charge of natural science and technologies. The lecturers of the English Division are mostly full-time teachers at the University, whereas more than half of the lecturers in the other two divisions are freelancers from other universities or organisations (VNU-IS, 2010c). According to *The University's Report on its TNUPs to VNU in 2010*, in the TNUP with the American partner, the ratio of fulltime teachers/freelancers was

10/18, and in the TNUP with the Malaysian partner, the ratio was 11/18 (VNU-IS, 2010c).

Almost all teaching staff have master's or doctoral degrees in English language teaching, economics, mathematics, finance, taxation, accounting or auditing. The teaching staff come from reputable universities in Vietnam, such as Vietnam National University, Foreign Trade University, Vietnam University of Commerce, or the Academy of Finance.

## 2.6. Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed five important reforms in Vietnamese education that aligned with the history of the country (179 BC to 1990 and beyond). The development of the Vietnamese education system has been adapted to the country's process of being colonised, claiming independence, recovering after wars, and encouraging economic development. Having been ruled by Chinese imperialism for over 1,000 years, Vietnamese culture is strongly affected by Confucianism, which results in noticeable features of education such as the fondness for learning and the respect for teachers and morality. These features, though originating from Chinese culture, have been adapted to the culture and the social circumstance of Vietnam.

Although having been set up in the educational system before 1975, the higher education of Vietnam has only thrived since mid-1975 after the North and the South of Vietnam were united. Also, the Vietnamese government carried out *Đổi Mới* (Resolution) period and introduced the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) to encourage the development of higher education. *Đổi Mới* contributed to the appearance of new higher education, especially in the non-public sector. The policies in HERA have encouraged international investment in the higher education of Vietnam. With the prominent development of higher education, quality assurance activities in higher education have also been given a lot of attention, and they are directly managed by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training.

Under the management of the Vietnamese government, many educational policies have been issued to help Vietnamese higher education keep up with the force of internationalisation in education. As a result, transnational education has been developed in Vietnam and entailed the changes of many aspects in the higher education systems especially the commercialisation of higher education. Being the focus of my study, University A's general context and its transnational undergraduate programmes were reviewed in the last section of the chapter. With such background information, I aim to provide the readers with an overview of the Vietnamese education in which the TNUPs studied in this research are carried out. The history and development of transnational education worldwide and the literature relating to quality management and evaluation, which is important to my research, is reviewed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Development of Transnational Education as a Globalisation Trend, Quality Management, and Evaluation**

In Chapter Two, the readers were informed about Vietnamese educational reforms through periods of its history. These reforms that resulted from political changes affected the development of Vietnamese education generally and transnational education in Vietnam particularly. This chapter presents an overview of the literature and theoretical perspectives of the study in relation to transnational education and quality management in education. The chapter starts with a discussion of globalisation and internationalisation to consider their impacts on transnational education. As transnational education is the focus of my study, how this term is conceptualised and classified is then presented. The history and development of quality and quality management systems, and their application in education especially transnational education are then considered. The concept of student voice—a practical instrument to understand activities of higher education institutions—is discussed. The concepts and scope of needs assessment is then considered to present the needs that this study aimed to explore. Based on these needs, the close relationship between needs assessment and this evaluation research is described. Popular educational evaluation models are subsequently reviewed to clarify reasons for my choice of adopting the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) evaluation model to carry out this study. Finally, the CIPP evaluation model is described with an explanation of its components and how they are adopted in the research.

#### **3.1. Globalisation in Education**

In recent years, the term “globalisation” has appeared with a very high frequency in the mass media as well as in everyday conversations. According to Ette (2016), globalisation is a process that has stretched through centuries starting from the European colonial expansion in the middle of the 15th century. In contrast, O'Rourke and Williamson (2002, p.

47) believe that globalisation is not an old phenomenon “beginning in the early 19th century” (p. 47). Lemert (2016) agrees with Ette (2016) that globalisation relates to the European widening of territory. They both agree that substantial global changes, which resulted in the impacts of globalisation, began in the 1900s. Although the debates continue, it is quite obvious that globalisation has become a matter of discussion because of its effects worldwide.

Given its impacts on the world, it is worth considering what globalisation is and how important it has become. Some scholars refer to globalisation as the worldwide development of economic processes or free markets, although its forms and processes are varied and hard to define (Bishop, Reinke, & Adams, 2011; Foskett & Maringe, 2012; Petrella, 1996). Other scholars see globalisation as a bigger picture that covers a wide range of fields and has multi-dimensional impacts (Campbell, 1994; Petrella, 1996). In their viewpoints, globalisation is considered the link that enhances interdependence and integration among nations based on economic, political, cultural, social, and academic connections. It means globalisation not only involves the trade of material things, such as goods or products, but also the exchange of immaterial things, such as social conventions, cultural values, political covenants, and educational programmes.

Researchers also use the term “internationalisation” which shares similar characteristics to globalisation. More specifically, Petrella (1996) states that internationalisation involves the trading between countries of “raw materials, semi-finished and finished products, services, money, ideas and people” (p. 63). As such, internationalisation is characterised by import/export activities and population movement (Petrella, 1996, p. 63). It can be seen from the discussion about globalisation and internationalisation that the world has been experiencing more and more exchanges of intangible items in addition to produced goods.

Of the intangible items to be traded, knowledge is a special one. Altbach and Knight (2007) note that “global capital has, for the first time, heavily invested in knowledge industries worldwide, including higher education and advanced training” (p. 290). Sharing the same viewpoint, Bloom (2004) suggests that although starting its influences on economic processes, globalisation has gradually focused on the importance of knowledge, and accordingly, the focus of the world economy has turned from industry to knowledge, putting education in a leading position. This redirection may originate from the fact that knowledge is the root of human development, the basis of all manufacturing processes, and full access to knowledge and high skill competencies are asserted to be essential requirements for people to succeed in society (Ashton & Green, 1996; Campbell, 1994).

The role of knowledge is embedded deeply in every socio-economic activity; hence, the need for economic globalisation is followed by the demand for education, especially tertiary education whose role, as argued by the World Bank, “is more influential than ever” (as cited in Peters & Besley, 2006, p. 24). Hence, the trading of knowledge becomes more and more popular, which is illustrated by the movement of students or educational programmes between countries. It is highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which states that “by pursuing high level studies in countries other than their own, students may expand their knowledge of other cultures and languages, and better equip themselves in an increasingly globalised labour market” (OECD, 2016, p. 168). According to the OECD, “the number of students enrolled in a country of which they are not citizens increased by 50% (from 3 to 4.5 million) between 2005 and 2012” (OECD, 2016, p. 168).

While the impacts of globalisation and internationalisation trends are becoming visible all over the world, in Vietnam, the government has many policies to encourage the country to develop and keep up with global integration in political systems, economic systems, and

education systems (V. T. Pham, 2019). To globalise the education system, Vietnam is adjusting the curriculum of higher education, by combining theory and practice, renovating the administration system by encouraging self-governing institutions, and focusing on education outcomes, which meet the demands of the labour market (V. T. Pham, 2019). The most important policy demonstrating the Vietnamese government’s attempts to integrate with the world’s education systems is the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA), which encourages foreign investment in Vietnamese higher education (GOV, 2005). Table 1 shows the goals set by the Vietnamese government in internationalising higher education.

**Table 1**

*Higher Education International Goals Set by the Vietnamese Government in 2013*

Types of Internationalisation	2014–15	2016–20
Mobility of students and faculty	3000 university lecturers to study abroad at master’s and doctoral level	7000 university lecturers to study abroad at master’s and doctoral level
	Receive about 300 international students and 300 international lecturers and researchers annually	Receive about 500 international students and 400 international lecturers and researchers annually
	Students in the 3 excellent universities able to continue study or work in the region/world.	Students in the 5 excellent universities able to continue study or work in the region/world
Internationalisation at institutional level	About 50 programs accredited by international accreditation agencies	About 150 programs accredited by international accreditation agencies
Internationalisation at national level	At least 3 “excellent universities” established	Increase number of “excellent universities” to 5 institutions

*Note.* Adapted from “Vietnamese government policies and practices in internationalisation of higher education” (p. 26) by Hoang, L., Tran, T. L., Pham, H. H., 2018, *Internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education* (pp. 19-42). Copyright 2018 by Springer.

As illustrated in Table 1, there are three types of internationalisation in higher education emphasised by the Vietnamese government. These are student and faculty mobility, internationalisation at an institutional level, and internationalisation at a national level (Hoang, Tran, & Pham, 2018). Apart from opening new high-quality institutions or raising the quality of institutions to keep up with international standards, the noticeable targets are sending lecturers overseas to study higher degrees, receiving international students to study in

Vietnam, and equipping Vietnamese students to meet the demand of the international labour market. These goals not only reflect the government's expectation of internationalising higher education but also indicate that Vietnam does not lie outside the global trends of trading knowledge. Statistics illustrate the thriving expansion of globalisation in education. The basis for the introduction of transnational education is discussed in the next section.

### **3.2. Transnational Education**

#### **3.2.1. The Concept and Scope of Transnational Education**

As discussed previously, the increasing demand for knowledge exchanges encourages the movement of students or educational programmes between countries and results in the globalisation of education. In order to widen their knowledge, students can either choose (1) to study in overseas countries or (2) to enrol in international programmes offered in their home countries. With regard to the first choice, students of developing countries usually choose to study in developed countries. The rapid growth of developing countries makes it difficult for their higher education systems to accommodate student volumes. This is because these countries face financial constraints. This problem can be solved by transnational education being offered by developed countries (Alam, Alam, Chowdhury, & Steiner, 2013). Statistics show that “within the OECD area, EU countries host the largest proportion (35%) of international students (who left their country of origin for the purpose of study)”, and other developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Germany, Canada, Japan, and Russia also host a large number of international students (OECD, 2016, p. 168). Similarly, the second choice of students involves studying international programmes in their home countries and leads to the fact that there are more and more developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia exporting education to developing ones to broaden their economic and cultural impact on developing countries (Altbach, 2015b; Huang, 2007; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006; Moutsios,

2009). These choices contribute to a new purpose of the “education market” in which “education systems must produce human resources destined to upgrade developing economies and to ensure the growth of the advanced economies” (Moutsios, 2009, p. 475).

These choices are also the reasons for the introduction of a new term: “transnational education”. “Transnational education” (TNE) is sometimes used interchangeably by different names. TNE is called “off-shore” education by McBurnie and Ziguras (2006) because of its “efficiently allocating educational resources across borders” (p. 1). TNE is also named “cross-border” education by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (OECD, 2005). According to UNESCO, “cross-border (higher) education includes (higher) education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-border (higher) education may include (higher) education by public/private and not-for-profit/for-profit providers” (OECD, 2005, p. 7). TNE is supposed to cover the tendency for countries to encourage the movement and exchange of teaching-learning processes and academic programmes (Dos Santos, 2002; Huang, 2007; Knight, 2002; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006; Naidoo, 2009). This means TNE, as an example of globalisation in education, represents the exchange of knowledge between countries based on participants’ needs. In TNE, developed countries play the role of the sellers (providers) and developing countries are the buyers (beneficiaries). The delivery of educational programmes, real or virtual, all leads to the movement of capital from developing countries to developed ones, and this contributes to the globalisation process.

The General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) divides education markets into five sectors, which are preschool and primary, secondary, vocational and higher, adult, and other education (Moutsios, 2009). Within these sectors, the GATS emphasises that the role of higher education is much more

important than the others (Moutsios, 2009). Since the 1990s, higher education has been driven by commercial aspirations, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, instead of being a public good as it was before, higher education has become a private good that requires customers to pay if they want to use it (Altbach, 2015b; Huang, 2007). As the global market witnesses the commercialisation of higher education (Altbach, 2015a), transnational higher education (TNHE) has become more crucial, larger, and taken for granted in many countries (Huang, 2007; Levatino, 2017; Naidoo, 2009). Many regions are affected by TNHE trends. Asia is considered the most salient and dynamic region that has both domestic students going overseas and foreign students arriving to study in transnational programmes (Huang, 2007; Knight, 2007; Mok, 2012). Since the 1990s, under the driving force of economic globalisation, advanced information technology, and market-oriented mechanisms, Asian countries have taken part in the transnational education process with different approaches which suit their national contexts (Chiang, 2012; Huang, 2007; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001). These approaches are discussed in the next section.

### **3.2.2. Forms of Transnational Education**

In terms of models of educational services, the GATS posits that there are four main modes of TNE: (1) cross-border supplies/delivery (e.g., distance education); (2) consumption abroad (e.g., movement of students to study overseas); (3) commercial presence (e.g., overseas campuses); and (4) presence of natural persons/the movement of natural persons (e.g., movement of people to deliver the service) (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001; Sidhu, 2007). As can be seen from the examples of these modes, each mode deals with a perspective of TNE. Of the four modes, transnational higher education service is claimed to follow mode (2), which means students travelling to foreign countries to study (Sidhu, 2007). However, as explored by Knight (2015a), even when students are continuing to move to other countries for their studies, this cannot satisfy the demands for higher education in developing countries and

leads to the growth of new types of educational providers, new forms of delivery, and new models of collaboration that can offer students training programmes in their home countries.

On the basis of the diversity of institutional arrangements, Dos Santos (2000, April 3) introduces six forms of TNE that are franchising, branch campus, programme articulation, international institution, offshore institution, and other arrangements. The criteria for categorisation mainly depend on where the educational provider/institution wants their programmes to be delivered. For example, an institution based in a host country but having its organisation and programme contents designed by a foreign country is called an off-shore institution (Dos Santos, 2000, April 3).

Having different categorisation standards, Hussain (2007) divides TNE into 10 forms following three main frameworks: delivery mechanism-based frameworks (including forms such as franchising, programme articulation, branch campus, off-shore institution, corporate university, international institution, distance learning and virtual university), institutional arrangement-based frameworks, and qualification-based frameworks. Hussain (2007) argues that TNE can be classified due to how it is delivered, where it is based, or how the qualifications are awarded.

Although their way of categorising are not the same, the forms of TNE introduced by Hussain (2007) are not much different from the ones introduced by Dos Santos (2000, April 3), and they have the same names and features such as franchising, programme articulation, branch campus, international institution, and off-shore institution. Other forms named by Hussain (2007), such as corporate university, distance learning, or virtual universities, are put in other arrangements by Dos Santos (2000, April 3).

Based on the mode of provision, Knight (2016) divides TNE into two categories: collaborative (which means “foreign higher education institutions (HEIs) have a local partner or a counterpart with whom they are cooperating in terms of the delivery of the academic

program”) and independent (which means “from the host country perspective, that no local HEI or provider is normally involved in the design or delivery of the academic programs”) (p. 38). TNE activity can be divided into eight types depending on how TNE is provided. These are twinning programmes, joint/double/multiple degree programmes, co-founder/co-developed institutions, locally supported distance programmes, international branch campuses, franchise universities, distance education providers, and foreign private institutions (Knight, 2016). Some of these types have the same names as the types introduced by the two previous authors such as franchise programme and branch campus.

In her research about the development of transnational education in the Vietnamese market, N. Nguyen (2018) summarises that there are six types of TNE which are franchising, twinning, branch campus, double/joint degree, virtual/distance, and corporate programmes. The categorisation of these types is based on the responsibilities of the overseas university and the host university when these programmes are delivered. It means that the type of TNE is decided depending on which side is responsible for academic issues, administrative issues, degree conferring issues, or different phases of the whole transnational programme (N. Nguyen, 2018).

My attention is on how a franchise programme is defined because the two transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs) in this study are both franchise programmes. According to Dos Santos (2000, April 3) and Hussain (2007), a franchise programme is a programme delivered in a country with the approval of another country. More specifically, Knight (2016) clarifies the responsibilities of each side in such a collaboration. Following the classification of Knight (2016), franchise programmes belong to the collaborative category in which the foreign provider provides academic programmes, and the host institution is in charge of the campus, administration, and student support. The host institution is not involved much in the franchise programme curriculum, assessment and

quality assurance (N. Nguyen, 2018). In the case of University A, the two franchise programmes are delivered by the Malaysian and American partners. They have features of franchise programmes mentioned by Knight (2016) and N. Nguyen (2018) such as the partner universities provide curriculums and decide assessment methods, and University A is responsible for campus, administration and student support. The only different feature is that University A is involved deeply in assuring the quality of these programmes, and the partner universities carry out an audit every five years (VNU-IS, 2010a). In other words, the quality of these programmes mainly depends on how University A manages them in Vietnam.

According to Naidoo (2009), these various modalities of transnational education are actually some of the terms currently used to illustrate the complex range of activity of mode (3) – commercial presence suggested by the GATS, in which educational providers tend to have campuses overseas offering the transnational programmes they provide. In South East Asia, this model, together with the related movement of natural persons (the movement of people to deliver educational services (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001)), is the main kind of transnational education provided (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006). With regard to the Asian context, where TNE is developed actively, Huang (2007) divides TNE into three forms of delivery: Import-Oriented types (mostly adopts educational programmes from Western countries), Import-Export types (follows educational programmes from Australia/the United Kingdom, the United States and exports educational programmes to other Asian countries), and Transitional types (mainly imports educational programmes but have tried to export educational services). Sharing the same idea with Huang (2007) about the development of TNE in Asia, Mok (2012) states that the TNE trends have been more and more observable in Asia, but students mobility has changed. Students from developing countries (“periphery”) mostly came to developed countries (“core”) to study in the past, whereas now emerging countries (“semi-periphery”) are becoming new destinations (Mok, 2012, p. 226). Following

this change of student mobility, Asian countries are not only importing foreign educational programmes but also becoming educational exporters (Chiang, 2012; Mok, 2012). Many countries in the Asian region such as Singapore, Malaysia, China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar are exporting their programmes, and at the same time, are host countries to import and deliver transnational programmes for national and regional students (P.-Y. Chen, 2015).

### **3.2.3. The Development of Transnational Higher Education in the Vietnamese Context**

As discussed in the previous chapter, Vietnam is a country that has suffered from a history of wars, and the education system of Vietnam has been changed several times under the management of different government types such as feudal, colonial, and socialist republic. The educational policies were mainly based on the socio-economic changes of the country, and for a very long time, the target of Vietnamese education was recovering from the ruins of wars and building a united educational system throughout the country.

In 2005, a remarkable change took place when the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) was introduced. HERA targeted to renovate the higher education system of Vietnam from 2006 to 2020 in terms of the following things: higher education (HE) networks, curriculum, staffing, science and technology activities, budget allocation, administration, and international integration (GOV, 2005). Although HERA focused on developing all seven components of the Vietnamese HE system, international integration seems to have been given the most attention.

HERA has encouraged the cooperation of Vietnamese HE with overseas countries by allowing international institutions to invest in Vietnamese HE and Vietnamese HE institutions to recruit foreign students and lecturers/specialists. HERA has also supported foreign institutions to have their branch campuses in Vietnam and Vietnamese students to study transnational programmes in Vietnam, instead of going overseas. In academic terms, by

attracting foreign investment in Vietnamese HE, HERA has created chances for Vietnamese students and lecturers to learn from international HE. In regard to student mobility, allowing Vietnamese HE to import foreign educational programmes and Vietnamese HE programmes to be exported, HERA has proved that Vietnam has been trying to be an educational importer as well as an educational exporter. This is a new trend of Asian TNE transnational higher education (Chiang, 2012; Mok, 2012). In economic terms, by encouraging the foundation of more foreign branch campuses in Vietnam and encouraging Vietnamese students to study in international programmes without leaving their home countries, the Vietnamese government can reduce both brain and currency drain. It can be said that HERA has created the basis for transnational education in Vietnam and extended the impact of market mechanisms on the HE system of Vietnam. HERA has also led to a new stage in Vietnamese education where policies of the government on education especially transnational education are not openly political but aim to meet the increasing demands of the customers for international higher education.

Before HERA, Vietnam was considered to have a weak modern HE system and mainly imported educational programmes from Western countries. This was likely to lead to disadvantages such as minimising students' mobility or losing national identity (Chiang, 2012; Huang, 2007). This assumption resulted from the fact that Vietnam had a very long time experiencing wars and colonialism, and its education system went through several reforms accordingly (as discussed in Chapter Two), which have not been good for building a strong higher education system. Further, importing educational programmes from Western countries involves importing their culture. Therefore, studying foreign programmes and being influenced by foreign culture might affect Vietnamese students' national identity. However, as discussed above, HERA may be considered as a solution to these problems because with

HERA, Vietnam expects to have a stronger HE system that can allow its educational programmes to go across the border and make it a new destination for international students.

After HERA, the Vietnamese government also had other decrees to promote the development of transnational higher education (TNHE) in Vietnam. *Decree 06/2000/NĐ-CP on foreign investment and cooperation in health care, education and training, and scientific research* was issued in 2000. This decree allowed HE institutions with 100% foreign investment to be established in Vietnam and provided instructions for Vietnamese institutions that wanted to offer transnational programmes (GOV, 2000a). In 2001, *Decree 18/2001/NĐ-CP on establishment and operation of foreign educational and cultural institutions in Vietnam* was issued. The decree also focused on providing instructions for foreign educational and cultural institutions that wanted to have branch campuses in Vietnam (GOV, 2001). In 2012, *Decree 73/2012/NĐ-CP on foreign investment and cooperation in education* (normally called Decree 73) was issued. Decree 73 covered all the issues relating to Vietnamese institutions collaborating in education with overseas partners, such as forms and scope of collaboration, assessment, degrees/certificates, staff, facilities, programme content, recruitment, and enrolment. Decree 73 also provided the instructions of application, the regulations of operation, and the responsibilities of all sides in educational collaboration (GOV, 2012b). It can be said that Decree 73 signalled the effort of the Vietnamese government in developing transnational education with more supportive and specific policies. In the latest version of *Vietnamese Education Law* issued in 2019, it is stated that the Vietnamese government strongly encourages the collaboration of national institutions and foreign institutions to deliver educational programmes in Vietnam as long as they follow Vietnamese laws and cultural values. Also, the Minister of the MOET is in charge of signing agreements with overseas partners on degree recognition and issuing instructions about degree recognition procedures for Vietnamese higher education institutions (GOV, 2019).

With the assistance of the government through policies, TNHE in Vietnam has prospered. Table 2, adapted from the statistics of Manh and Giang (2020) shows some positive statistics of TNHE activities in Vietnam up to 2020.

**Table 2**

*Statistics of Transnational Higher Education Activities in Vietnam up to 2020*

Activity	Number	Note
Vietnamese students studying abroad	192,000	About 50,000 students in the United States and North America; 40,000 in EU
Foreign students studying in Vietnam	21,000	The number of foreign students coming to Vietnam to study has risen 10% every year in the past 5 years
HE institutions having foreign investment	5	
TNHE programmes	400	Vietnamese HE has collaboration with more than 30 countries all over the world

*Note.* Adapted from Bảo đảm chất lượng các chương trình liên kết đào tạo quốc tế [Assuring quality of transnational programmes]. Nhân dân điện tử. <https://nhandan.com.vn/du-hoc/bao-dam-chat-luong-cac-chuong-trinh-lien-ket-dao-tao-quoc-te-611375/>. Copyright 2020 by Nhân Dân Điện Tử.

It can be seen in Table 2 that Vietnam has accomplished the target of being both an importer and an exporter of educational programmes, as stated in HERA. There are a large number of foreign students coming to study in Vietnam as well as Vietnamese students studying abroad. Furthermore, TNHE had developed with 400 transnational programmes all over the country by 2020, compared with only 200 transnational programmes in 2017 (VIED-MOET, 2017).

If TNHE in the world generally, and in Vietnam in particular, is thriving with the rapid increases in the number of transnational programmes, the quality of transnational programmes should also be a matter of concern. According to Knight (2016), although influenced by the overseas HEIs in terms of course design or curriculum, the quality assurance activities applied to each model of TNHE vary depending on the context of the local HEIs. As such, even with the same transnational programme from the same foreign provider, different local HEIs may have different ways to organise transnational programmes

and to carry out quality assurance activities. The following section considers the quality and activities to assure and manage quality in transnational education.

### **3.3. Quality in Transnational Higher Education**

#### **3.3.1. Quality in Higher Education**

Quality is a concept that has divergent meanings and these have received much interest since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The term “quality” became popular in the 1940s in manufacturing industries with competition between the manufacturing systems of the United States and Japan to bring customers fine products with low costs (Miller, Duesing, Lowery, & Sumner, 2018). The definitions of quality vary. Seymour (1992) approaches quality by concentrating on two factors that illuminate the meaning of the quality and have a two-way impact on each other. These are *motivation* that includes cost management, accountability, the need for survival, and the provision of best service and *means* that is how to carry out these tasks. Liston (1999) defines quality as “a body of knowledge about products, services, and customer and client satisfaction” (p.11). Liston (1999) emphasises that the key points of quality are identifying and meeting the needs of clients, improving the staff capabilities, and developing processes such as customer service, product research and development, and staff development to serve these purposes. The approaches of Liston and Seymour use different words, but they share the same sentiment of looking carefully into what produces the quality care and how to make products that meet market demands and meet customers’ needs. Patton (2002) calls quality the slogan or the primary marketing topic of our era. In the online *Analytic Quality Glossary*, Harvey (2004) defines quality as “the embodiment of the essential nature of a person, collective, object, action, process or organisation”. Although there are several approaches to conceptualise quality, it is still difficult to have a clear definition of it because quality is a “relative concept” and “used in various contexts” (Elassy, 2015, p. 254).

Quality as a concept in this research emphasises the role of knowledge. In the knowledge economy, higher education is assumed to play a vital role (Peters & Besley, 2006). As a result, the importance of quality in higher education and what it involves should be a matter of concern. Ruben (1995) defines higher education as a “service industry” that involves “generating, integrating, and communicating knowledge for a variety of audiences—academic, professional, student, and public” (p.3). Another definition of higher education introduced by Turner (2012) characterises higher education as the main activity that a university carries out. This definition puts higher education in a context of a university and requires exploration of what a university is. Turner (2012) assumes that “university” is a broad concept that includes many institutions that are not of the same type. In relation to this section, I will use the term “higher education institutions” (HEI) instead of universities when discussing their quality-related activities. Vlăsceanu and Grunberg (2007) claim that an HEI is “an educational body which carries out higher education activities based on legally approved study programmes” (p. 52) and highlight that a higher education organisation should have its own accreditation processes as well as an external evaluation procedures that identify with its values and the demands of its stakeholders. Vlăsceanu and Grunberg (2007) state that apart from academic activities, HEIs can also carry out activities for the purpose of doing business, for example, designing and organising educational programmes that follow the needs or the orders of customers. Sharing the same viewpoint, Turner (2012) explains that, originally, higher education institutions were created for the purpose of teaching and research. However, gradually, the link between higher education institutions and the labour market has strengthened because higher education institutions aim to create and provide people with more and more professional subjects that allow them to work in different fields after studying. Turner (2012) identifies three main functions of a higher education institution. These are “to be the critic of the society (provide a necessary stimulus for reform and

advancement), to be a source of practical knowledge, and to provide a qualified workforce to staff the machinery of society” (p. 26). These functions assert that higher education institutions are for people not only to learn knowledge but also to equip themselves for their different roles in the society. Previously scholars of higher education institutions were the only people to judge their quality, but today “whether a university is seen to be doing a good job or not will depend on what one thinks the job of a university is in the first place” (Turner, 2012, p. 25).

In Vietnam, a country where Confucianism has very strong impacts on every matter of life especially education, studying is the most recognised way to improve oneself and make oneself complete (T. N. Nguyen & Tran, 2019). In 1070, the first higher education institution of Vietnam called the Temple of Literature (Văn Miếu) was built as a place to worship Confucius and to educate court officials. For nearly 10 centuries, from the 10th to the 20th century, the examination system of Vietnamese higher education followed Confucianism and helped create many famous Vietnamese scholars (Welch, 2010). However, according to T. N. Nguyen and Tran (2019), gender discrimination is a big issue in Confucianism when only men have the privilege to be educated and to take doctoral exams.

Although Confucianism is still influential in Vietnamese society, the role and purpose of Vietnamese higher education is more aligned with modern life. As stated in the Higher Education Law issued in 2012, the main purposes of Vietnamese higher education is to create a human resource for the country by educating people, to contribute to the country’s socio-economic development by doing scientific research and creating new products, and to contribute to the country’s international integration (GOV, 2012a, p. 2). Apart from academic activities, international integration is also considered a main activity of Vietnamese higher education. This explains why transnational higher education in Vietnam has been given much attention by the government and has developed intensively in the past five years.

Quality in higher education (HE), as a multidimensional concept, has been extensively researched since the 1980s (Cheng, 2016). The most important criterion to evaluate quality in higher education is the extent to which it fits the purposes of HE (Cheng, 2016; Turner, 2012). When discussing quality in HE, Ruben (1995) indicates that there are three dimensions of quality. These are academic quality (instruction, research; service/outreach); administrative quality (processes, systems, procedures, information, flows); and relationship quality (relations with our publics/consumers and one another, interpersonal sensitivity and skill, cooperation and collaboration, service orientation) (p. 8). Of the three dimensions suggested by Ruben (1995), apart from academic and administrative quality generally called “management quality” that any higher education institution has, the relationships between staff of these areas, and between the activities of the institution and its customers, which he called “relationship quality”, are also important (p.7). Accordingly, Ruben (1995) believes that in the higher education context, quality should include six core values. These are service orientation involved satisfying customers, leadership involved having a good leader, information involved being a good system for acquiring, analysing and using information, collaboration involved maintaining good interactions inside the system and with other organisations, communication involved providing effective communication for students, staff and the public, and continuous improvement involved achieving quality requiring the commitment and on-going effort of everyone in the system. Generally, Ruben (1995) suggests that bringing quality to customers in higher education is not a simple activity but requires complex attempts involving the participation of all people in the system.

With regard to the participation of people in HE quality, Quinn, Lemay, Larsen, and Johnson (2009) identify that understanding the voices of HE customers is very important in improving HE quality. Also, Quinn et al. (2009) identify nine common customers of HE: students, parents, research sponsors, state and federal governments, society, future employers

of students, disciplinary academic communities, accreditation body, and staff/faculty members (p. 141). Focusing on the importance of stakeholders' participation and their relationship in HE quality, Cheng (2016) suggests that achieving quality in HE is a process aligned with the success and needs "of three key stakeholders in HE: students, universities and academics" (p. 9). More specifically, quality in HE should involve motivating students to develop their potential and encouraging faculty members to fulfil their professional responsibilities (Cheng, 2016). Although their recognition of HE stakeholders is different, it can be seen that Quinn et al. (2009) and Cheng (2016) share the same idea about the importance of stakeholders' voices and their participation in developing quality HE. Similarly, understanding how stakeholders perceive quality in HE is important. When discussing quality in HE, Elassy (2015) highlights the perception of two groups of stakeholders: academics and students. Elassy (2015) assumes that academics may perceive quality as things beneficial to students, and students may perceive quality through teaching, learning and teacher's performance. As such, academics tend to focus on quality assurance in teaching and assessing their students, and students tend to focus on quality improvement in the educational services they receive (Elassy, 2015). For HE institutions, students' feedback should not be considered as the standards for ranking academic and other educational activities but as the reference for improving quality (Harvey, 2022).

### **3.3.2. Quality in Transnational Higher Education**

The issues relating to quality in TNHE have been discussed continually by many researchers. Because of the explosion of transnational higher education that has led to the appearance of new higher education providers, it is acknowledged that there are tensions between the traditional roles of HEIs and their commercial activities. It is also acknowledged that their academic standards are gradually being compromised as financial gain activities become more important (Altbach, 2015a; Coleman, 2003; Smith, 2010). These tensions

originate from the conflicts between the original purpose of HEIs in relation to having scholars teaching academic knowledge (Turner, 2012) and the fact that customers of HEIs (students, student family and the public) are willing to invest more in education (i.e., pay more money) to get access to the expected programmes or degrees introduced by TNHE.

Increasingly, there are more countries importing overseas training programmes to bring high-quality educational experiences to students and meet the needs of students for international degrees (McBurnie, 2008). This requires local HEIs to collaborate with overseas HEIs to provide customers with what they demand. Apart from collaboration, according to Altbach (2015a), local HEIs are now affected by commercial pressure which means they have to compete with foreign educational providers. Overseas providers often focus on sectors that sound attractive to students and bring them more profit such as business, information technologies or management studies. However, local HEIs are expected to give more attention to sectors important to national development such as basic science sectors which overseas providers normally neglect, and students are less interested in. Therefore, in this situation, local HEIs are required to be more active as both competitors and co-operators.

It is also suggested by Vlăsceanu (1999) that the acceleration of transnational education leads to three tough issues: regulation involved legal, ethnic or rhetorical things resulting from the cooperation of HEI, quality assurance involved assuring quality including the collaborative programmes and degrees, and recognition involved the recognition of degrees awarded by partner HEIs. In terms of regulations, there are statutes that reflect the policies and practices used to measure the TNHE activities and these are aligned with international organisation guidelines such as the UNESCO or the OECD guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education, or at a national scale such as the establishment of codes of conduct or codes of practice in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Knight, 2007; Smith, 2010; Stella, 2006; Van Damme, 2001). In terms of recognition, the

need for the transparency of certification and recognition of institutions and their programmes is considered to be important if they are to maximise the effectiveness of training programmes, credits, or qualifications achieved in different countries (Dos Santos, 2002; Knight, 2007; Smith, 2010; Van Damme, 2001). In terms of quality assurance, it is agreed by scholars that the more universities involve in peripheral educational<sup>1</sup> activities which means not only developed countries but also emerging countries are destinations for students from developing countries to come to study (Mok, 2012)), the more they need suitable quality assurance mechanisms (Coleman, 2003; Dos Santos, 2002; Smith, 2010).

As suggested by the report in the *Borderless Education* project of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, a quality framework should deal with many issues and cover all aspects affecting the quality of transnational higher educational programmes with regard to quality assurance (CVCP, 2000, as cited in Dos Santos, 2002). Woodhouse (1999) states that “quality assurance refers to the policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced” (p. 30). Coates (2005) claims that in higher education, quality assurance is considered very important because it provides students with valid information about the quality of the courses on offer, delivers information to educational institutions about the quality of their courses and makes it visible, and gives governments information so they can adjust their policies about education.

Quality assurance can involve one, some, or all of the following approaches to quality. These are audit, assessment, accreditation, and quality improvement (Woodhouse, 1999). Audit is an examination to see if an organisation’s structure and actions suit its goals (Woodhouse, 2003). Assessment is the evaluation of the outputs of a HEI, and it may result in grading the HEI according to scales that are either “numerical (e.g., 1 to 4), literal (e.g., A to

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<sup>1</sup> In peripheral educational activities, developed countries are core countries, emerging countries are semi-periphery countries, and developing countries are periphery countries (Mok, 2012)

F) or descriptive (e.g., excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory)” (Woodhouse, 1999, p. 32). Accreditation is the process enacted by a state or non-state body to decide whether an educational programme meets certain standards (Liston, 1999; Vlăsceanu & Grunberg, 2007). In TNHE, quality assurance involves the same approaches but requires the engagement of students and staff from all participating institutions in all processes and procedures (Williams, 2018). Hence, it looks like assuring quality of TNHE is more complicated and more difficult than assuring quality of domestic programmes which mainly requires the actions of local HEIs (Shams, 2017). It is also assumed that although these approaches can provide HEIs with information about their weaknesses and strengths that may be helpful in improving their quality, they seem to focus on the current situation and aim to sustain the quality of HEIs (Elassy, 2015). Further, the real purpose of the quality movement is to serve what stakeholders want, not only to comprehend the present situation (Liston, 1999). Hence, it is necessary to have model(s) to help reduce the weaknesses and enhance the strengths diagnosed by quality assurance approaches, and it is one of the reasons for the introduction of quality management (Elassy, 2015; Shams, 2017). If quality assurance mainly deals with measuring and controlling the educational system, it is quality management that deals with quality improvement activities (Liston, 1999). In TNHE, transnational programmes are delivered based on the partnership of local and foreign HEIs, and managing quality of TNHE involves considering the voices of different stakeholders such as students, employees, partners and suppliers, external agencies, value co-creation, and the society that are called partnership dimensions (Shams, 2017). However, according to P.-Y. Chen (2014), managing quality of TNHE also deals with the divergence in living environments, teaching facilities, cultural values, and languages between the home country and the host country. Therefore, managing quality of HE especially TNHE requires the understanding of HEIs as well as the relationships between HEIs and agencies affecting HEIs’ quality.

In the next section, the importance of quality management in education, especially higher education, will be discussed.

### **3.4. Quality Management in the Higher Education Environment**

#### **3.4.1. The Quality Movement: from Industry to Education**

The importance of quality management was acknowledged over 100 years ago, starting with the idea of craftsmen making their products to meet customer's needs and enhancing their economic efficiency (Fisher & Nair, 2009; Sallis, 2002; Weckenmann, Akkasoglu, & Werner, 2015). Gradually, the original idea was developed in modern industry and became the paradigm of quality management (Weckenmann et al., 2015). Quality management involves activities used to manage quality improvement (Liston, 1999). Quality management theory was started in industry by Edwards Deming in the 1940s and did not focus on how to control the quality but how to meet the expectations of customers. The quality management approach introduced by Deming was successfully applied in Japan in the 1950s, and since then, it has been recognised and developed worldwide (Sallis, 2002).

Walter Shewhart, Joseph Juran, Philip Crosby, Armand Feigenbaum, Kaoru Ishikawa, Genichi Taguchi, Edward Deming and some other scholars are important people who established the quality movement and framed the original ideas of quality management (Alauddin & Yamada, 2019; Mukhopadhyay, 2020). Around 20 years ago, quality management was divided into four development stages: quality inspection, quality control, quality assurance, and total quality management (Alauddin & Yamada, 2019; Bounds, 1994; Dale, Bamford, & van der Wiele, 2016; Seymour, 1992). Each quality stage was built upon the previous one, and if the first three stages focused on the internal processes of the organisation, the fourth one concentrated on the customers' needs (Kaye & Anderson, 1999).

In the 1980s, Edward Deming introduced 14 key principles of management for business and organisations to follow if they want to improve the effectiveness of their

production (Deming, 1982). In the 1990s, many principles or models were introduced following the key theme of strategic quality management such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Total Quality Control (TQC), and Quality Improvement Programme (QIP) (Liston, 1999; Sallis, 2002; Seymour, 1992). However, it seems that strategic quality management could not meet the demands of the business environment today (Kaye & Anderson, 1999); and as a result, the fifth stage was recognised as where organisations create their own mechanisms for continuous improvement (internally) and competitive continuous improvement (externally). A plan for continuous improvement is necessary for an organisation to be flexible, responsive, and adaptable (Dale et al., 2016; Kaye & Anderson, 1999).

Although the quality movement originally appeared in industry, it has reached and become mainstream in education because quality involves satisfying customers' needs, and education is a system that strongly concentrates on human needs (Mukhopadhyay, 2020; Sallis, 2002). According to the definition of quality education on the website of UNESCO, quality in education involves the appropriateness of three elements: policies; resources including materials and facilities, and stakeholders including teaching staff (UNESCO, 2019). However, the teaching staff is one of many other stakeholders of education, such as students, parents, research sponsors, state and federal governments, society, future employers of students, disciplinary academic communities, accreditation bodies, and staff/faculty members (Quinn et al., 2009, p. 141). Therefore, it may be insufficient if the other stakeholders are not mentioned in the definition.

In connection with the roles of stakeholders in quality education, Leisyte and Westerheijden (2014) assume that, although there are many stakeholders in education, students have a very important role as they are involved in evaluating educational courses, quality assurance, and the quality management of education. Having the same viewpoint,

Cheng (2016) argues that teaching staff can motivate and encourage students to develop themselves, but students' satisfaction should be considered as a tool of measurement for quality education. With regard to quality assurance in education, Liston (1999) suggests that assuring quality is not enough when students and teachers' needs vary, and academic methodologies are improving. An educational institution has teachers with differing teaching methodologies to apply in their classes. Similarly, every student of the institution is a unique individual, and how they acquire knowledge through their teachers' teaching methodologies is not the same. Therefore, it will be difficult for the institution to use a fixed set of standards to control and assure quality of their programmes. Provided that quality assurance involves approaches such as accreditation, assessment, or auditing, which require tight standards, it will become more difficult to maintain quality in education.

Accordingly, it is necessary to have a flexible system that deals with both maintaining and developing quality for each educational institution, and quality management that can meet that requirement. In the higher education sector, Vlăsceanu and Grunberg (2007) emphasise that quality assurance contributes to quality management and to some extent, the two terms share the same meaning. Further, quality management in higher education means not only maintaining, observing, and consulting but also creating motivation for stakeholders to improve their engagement with education (Cheng, 2016). However, whilst several studies have been conducted around the importance of quality assurance and accreditation in transnational higher education (TNHE) (Banner, 2016; Bordogna, 2020; Coleman, 2003; Dos Santos, 2002; Hajek, 2011, April 29; Knight, 2007; Martin, 2007; Smith, 2010; Stella & Bhushan, 2011; L. T. Tran & Marginson, 2018; Van Damme, 2001; Williams, 2018), the activities implemented to enhance the quality of TNHE seem to be less well discussed. One of the reasons for this might be that those activities vary according to different educational environments and depend on particular contexts. As a result, quality management models

should be able to be adjusted based on the divergence of educational characteristics in different countries, especially when the tension between standardisation and diversity of provision becomes real.

In the Vietnamese context, internationalisation trends in education have enhanced the need for the reformation of the HE system and for the appearance of new forms of educational programmes, especially undergraduate programmes, to meet the increasing demands of customers (T. N. Nguyen & Tran, 2019). As reviewed in the previous section, starting from the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) in 2005, the Vietnamese government has issued other policies to encourage the internationalisation of higher education, especially the development of TNHE. Such development of the HE systems requires a corresponding modification of the quality assurance (QA) systems because the old systems are out-dated (Do, 2019).

Do (2019) has reviewed the QA system of Vietnamese HE as including three main instruments: accreditation, ranking, and stratification. The models of these instruments were originally imported from overseas such as the American accreditation models and the Western ranking and stratification models, but they are all modified and localised to adapt to the reality of the institutions and requirements of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (Do, 2019). Although borrowing the accreditation procedures of America with steps: registration, self-evaluation, site visit, feedback on external review results and decision granting, the accreditation model of Vietnam differs. American accreditation activities are for continuous improvement purposes. They are voluntary and carried out by non-profit and non-governmental units. However, Vietnamese accreditation activities are governmental compliance-based, obligatory, and dependent of the MOET in terms of standards, criteria and procedures. External reviewers of American accreditation system are units in the same profession, but external reviewers of Vietnamese accreditation system are units authorised by

the MOET. Similarly, ranking and stratification systems are borrowed from Western education and were originally two different systems. Ranking consists of techniques to judge the performance of educational institutions, and stratification involves tools to describe, compare and categorise educational institutions. In Vietnamese higher education, they are combined, in which HEIs are ranked after being categorised followed the MOET's indicators (Do, 2019). The MOET's imposition can be seen very clearly in every activity of the accreditation system of Vietnam. This imposition is assumed to be the result of Confucianism's influences in Vietnamese HE that have very close relations with cultural power and normality (London, 2011 as cited in T. N. Nguyen, 2019). According to Confucius, people having higher social and political positions must be respected, and the codes of ethics called Five Eternal Virtues must be followed to maintain a good society (T. Liu & Stening, 2016; Vo, 2020). Therefore, the MOET, considered as the Vietnamese government's right arm in education, has its power and rules respected and followed by all educational units of lower political hierarchy. Due to the features of the QA system, quality improvement activities and quality management mechanisms in Vietnamese HE are varied according to the needs of each HE institution whilst still following the general policies required by the MOET.

### **3.4.2. Some Popular Quality Management Models in Education**

There are several models of quality management in education that were created to serve the flexibility of various educational contexts. The following section reviews several quality management models: the Total Quality Management Model, the Total Quality Service Model, the Quality Function Deployment Model, the ISO 9000 Model, and the Academic Quality Improvement Programme Model. These models combine the satisfaction of customers' needs with system improvement.

### ***3.4.2.1. The Total Quality Management Model (TQM)***

The quality movement, introduced and developed by famous names, such as Deming, Juran, Feigenbaum and Crosby, consists of four main eras: quality inspection, quality control, quality assurance, and total quality management (TQM) (Alauddin & Yamada, 2019). TQM is defined as both a philosophy and a methodology that helps organisations create and maintain the quality of their products in order to satisfy the needs of their consumers (Hill & Taylor, 1991; Lakhe & Mohanty, 1994; Liston, 1999; Yusof & Aspinwall, 2000). Further, TQM encourages not only the development of the whole organisation but also the engagement of every person in the continuous improvement of the organisation (Alauddin & Yamada, 2019; Sallis, 2002). According to Mukhopadhyay (2020), total quality (TQ) involves customers' satisfaction with all characteristics of the product, and management (M) means the mechanisms to maintain and develop quality. In his book named "Total Quality Management in Education", Sallis (2002) summarises that TQM can represent many other labels such as "total quality control, total quality service, continuous improvement, strategic quality management, systematic improvement, quality first, quality initiatives, service quality" (p. 24). In other words, TQM can be anything that belongs to quality enhancement and continuous improvement of an organisation to satisfy its customers (Mukhopadhyay, 2020; Nasim, Sikander, & Tian, 2020).

TQM was first applied in industry but was gradually used in other sectors including education (Mukhopadhyay, 2020; Nasim et al., 2020; Sallis, 2002). The application of TQM in education, especially higher education, is due to the impacts of globalisation that results from the competitiveness of higher education institutions (Asif, Searcy, Zutshi, & Fisscher, 2013 as cited in Nasim et al., 2020). It is stated that in education, TQM can provide tools to manage quality but requires the cooperation of all people in an institution, especially staff,

because it involves continual changes that staff may feel uncomfortable dealing with (Mukhopadhyay, 2020; Sallis, 2002).

#### **3.4.2.2. *The Total Quality Service Model (TQS)***

TQS appeared as a model that reflected the customers' perception of service quality (G. S. Sureshchandar, Chandrasekharan Rajendran, & R. N. Anantharaman, 2001a). TQS is defined as "a true commitment to operationalising the concept of customer focus, establishing service performance standards, measuring performance against benchmarks, recognising and rewarding exemplary behaviour, and maintaining enthusiasm for the customer at all times" (Stamatis, 1995, p. xi). TQS is described as an approach that involves TQM in service organisations and results in a framework of practices aimed at bringing good value to customers and success for organisations via service (Liston, 1999; Sureshchandar et al., 2001a; G. S. Sureshchandar, C. Rajendran, & R. N. Anantharaman, 2001b).

Stamatis (1995, p. xii) proposes five steps that an organisation can apply to provide quality service. These are commitment, delegation, customer information, internal assessment, and action. These steps suggest a procedure of implementing quality service for an organisation. Firstly, the organisation promises customers the development of their product quality. Then to carry out the promise, the organisation establishes a mechanism that includes having people in charge of managing others, gathering customers' information and marketing products to customers, evaluating the effectiveness of the mechanism, and making appropriate adjustments to products if needed.

TQS has been applied not only in industry but also in education, especially higher education, because "higher education institutions are increasingly recognised to be a part of the service industry" (Galeeva, 2016 as cited in Latif, Latif, Farooq Sahibzada, & Ullah, 2019). Westcombe-Down (2009) asserts that all the staff of an educational institution are responsible for the quality service of the institution. In order to carry out TQS, an educational

institution needs a strategic quality plan consisting of activities, such as “establishing quality goals” and “developing the products and processes required to achieve these goals” (Westcombe-Down, 2009, p. 10).

#### ***3.4.2.3. The Quality Function Deployment Model (QFD)***

Sharing the same purpose with TQS to some extent, QFD was introduced as a graphical representation of TQM (Quinn et al., 2009) and a tool to transcribe and integrate customers’ expectations of products and services. It established the relationship between the what (the customers’ requirements) and the how (the mechanisms to satisfy them) (Chan & Wu, 2002; Madu, 2019; Quinn et al., 2009; Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes, 2004). Generally, when introduced in manufacturing, the purpose of QFD is to incorporate the quality of products with customers’ needs (Madu, 2019). QFD is also called Voice of the Consumer or Voice of the Customer (Madu, 2019; Sahney et al., 2004). The three important aspects of QFD are the following: (1) the cross-functional team charged with implementing it, (2) the process itself, and (3) the graphical display that guides the process (Pitman, Motwani, Kumar, & Cheng, 1995). QFD is widely used in industry in Japan and America; furthermore, it is also used by researchers as a very effective technique to evaluate and maintain administrative quality in a higher education environment (Hwarng & Teo, 2001; Mazur, 1996; Sahney et al., 2004). Additionally, QFD is often used with instructional or administrative activities of higher education organisations (Quinn et al., 2009).

#### ***3.4.2.4. The ISO 9000 Model***

ISO 9000 is a series of standards that were first published in 1987 by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and revised in 1994–5 (Liston, 1999; Yahya & Goh, 2001). Since then, the framework has been adapted widely in many countries in the world. “ISO provides a set of standards for process quality improvements that includes 20 elements, including attention to customer requirements, continuous improvement, adherence to

applicable regulatory requirements, and management leadership (www. iso.org)” (Quinn et al., 2009, p. 143). These ISO 9000 series of quality assurance standards comprises ISO 9000, ISO 9001, ISO 9002, ISO 9003, and ISO 9004 (ISO, 1994, as cited in Yahya & Goh, 2001). One of the very significant characteristics of ISO 9000 is that it can assure the quality of products or services are the same regardless of their origins (Thonhauser & Passmore, 2006).

As ISO 9000 was originally created for use in industry, its application in educational contexts requires modification (Karapetrovic et al., 1998 as cited in Quinn et al., 2009). Even though it is claimed that education institutions are not under the same demand of being certified like manufacturers and that the certification of ISO may not be meaningful to customers of education like customers of industry (Quinn et al., 2009), ISO 9000 is still widely applied in higher education (Liston, 1999; Shutler & Crawford, 1998; Van den Berghe, 1997). With principles and clauses concentrating on “system conformity, continuous improvement and customer satisfaction” and encouraging the development of “programme quality and institutional system performance” in higher education, the popular application of ISO 9000 series in higher education is appropriate (Yeung, 2018, pp. 1596, 1597).

#### ***3.4.2.5. The Academic Quality Improvement Programme (AQIP) Model***

The AQIP Model is an advanced form of accreditation that is created “to infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities in order to assure and advance the quality of higher education” (Handbook of Accreditation, 2003, as cited in Quinn et al., 2009, p. 144). This model is considered to be a very effective way to help universities analyse their training systems, understand the community’s needs, and reaffirm their accreditation by quality improvement activities (Dew, 2007; Quinn et al., 2009; Yarmohammadian, Mozaffary, & Esfahani, 2011). In order to be helpful in educational contexts, the AQIP Model requires modification using the following

steps: helping students learn, accomplishing other distinctive objectives, understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs, valuing people, leading and communicating, supporting institutional operations, measuring effectiveness, planning continuous improvement, and building collaborative relationships (Quinn et al., 2009, p. 144). These steps can be grouped as three stages (input, process and output) of the AQIP model. At the input stage, an education institution should understand its students' and other stakeholders' needs to identify what it should do to meet the needs of stakeholders. The process stage requires the institution to maintain communication and build relationships with stakeholders, value the feedback of stakeholders, and measure the effectiveness of its academic and administrative activities to assure the quality of education. At the output stage, the institution needs to have plans about further targets to improve the quality of its programmes, and about how to complete these targets. These stages cover the assessment of all activities of an education institution, such as its inside operation, its stakeholders' wishes, its mutual relationships, and its sustained development. Therefore, it is reasonable for AQIP to be considered an applicable model for all higher education institutions because it can recognise stakeholders' needs, manage and develop academic and administrative quality at the same time (Yarmohammadian et al., 2011).

### **3.4.3. Quality Management Models in Selected East Asian Higher Education**

The quality management models reviewed in the following sections provide an overview of quality management in East Asian higher education, of which Vietnamese higher education is a part.

#### ***3.4.3.1. Quality Management in Chinese Higher Education***

The quality assurance system of Chinese higher education, focuses on improvement and accountability, and comprises of two mechanisms: external (or national) and internal (Li, 2010; S. Liu, 2016). The external schemes are carried out by the governments – the central

and local governments, the third-party evaluation agencies – independent evaluation organisations, and the market – educational companies and research institutes (S. Liu, 2016, p. 70). In the external schemes, the governments set up plans to assess the quality of higher educational institutions (HEIs). The governments can delegate their governmental agencies or independent evaluation organisations such as educational companies or institutes to carry out the assessment process. However, most of the evaluation activities are covered by governmental agencies, and there are hardly any non-governmental organisations working in these schemes (Li, 2004 as cited in S. Liu, 2016). The internal schemes involve each HEI setting up their own quality assurance office in charge of internal quality assurance activities. In the internal schemes, educational institutions have to set up their teaching evaluation centres to manage their quality assurance mechanisms. Institutions also have teaching supervision groups to follow and improve teaching activities. Peer observations of teachers and student feedback collection are also important quality assurance activities in the internal schemes. The most noticeable feature of the Chinese quality assurance system is that although there are external and internal schemes to assure quality of higher education, these schemes are still positioned in the shadow of the Chinese government. All the reports relating to the quality of higher education institutions in China must be censored by the Chinese government before being published in order to avoid any misguided information (S. Liu, 2016).

In order to enhance the quality of higher education, in 2010, the Chinese government set up a compulsory evaluation procedure involving the following five steps: issuing standards and guidelines and setting up an evaluation panel, providing an institutional self-report, the evaluation panel conducting on-site visits, the evaluation panel reporting to institutions and the ministry, and institutions writing self-improvement reports and carrying out self-improvement activities (Li, 2010, p. 68). Although the evaluation mechanisms look comprehensive, the obvious influence of the Chinese government still exists when the

evaluation panel is nominated and supervised by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Further, the government funding allocation for HEIs is dependent on evaluation results (Li, 2010).

In 2014, to assure higher education quality in the development of Chinese higher education, the National Evaluation Centre—a department that belongs to the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE)—published a system of higher education assessment that included five types of evaluation: self-evaluation, institution-based evaluation, programme-based accreditation and evaluation, global-peer-review-based evaluation, and accreditation, and developing the National Database of HEIs (Li, 2014 as cited in Shi, 2015). With self-evaluation, HEIs can develop their own quality assurance and enhancement system. Institutional-based evaluation focuses on assessing and auditing the teaching quality of HEIs. Programme-based accreditation and evaluation involves carrying assessing and auditing the teaching quality at a programme level. Similarly, global-peer-review-based evaluation and accreditation is for high quality universities to be assessed and accredited by foreign observers. Finally, the National Database of HEIs is built up by gathering and managing data relating to teaching activities (Li, 2014 as cited in Shi, 2015, p. 22).

The five evaluations in the system are hierarchically arranged, starting from HEIs themselves through to the international peer review. The evaluation system is required and observed by the MOE, and its results are reported to the MOE or more specifically the Chinese government. This situation is understandable when most of the funds for Chinese HEIs are from the government (Hongjie & Jacob, 2016). However, the government's control over HEIs often creates concerns about the actual effectiveness of these mechanisms (M. Shah & T. N. Q. Do, 2017).

#### ***3.4.3.2. Quality Management in Hong Kong's Higher Education***

Although part of China, Hong Kong has its own quality management system applied to higher education, and it was the first and leading region among East Asian societies to

apply quality measures to control the higher education sector (Jung & Postiglione, 2015; Mok, 2000). The quality assurance system of Hong Kong universities is managed by the University Grants Committee (UGC) and consists of three agencies—the Research Assessment Exercises (RAE), the Teaching and Learning Quality Review (TLQPR), and the Management Review (MR) (Jung & Postiglione, 2015; Mok & Chan, 2016). The Research Assessment Exercises controls governmental budgets for research by measuring academic staff's research performance involved national and international publications of higher education institutions (HEIs). Depending on the results of the Research Assessment Exercises, the Hong Kong government decides the fund allocations for HEIs. The Teaching and Learning Quality Review is in charge of reviewing the teaching and learning activities carried out by HEIs following the indicators set up by the University Grants Committee. The teaching and learning activities include curriculum design, pedagogical design, implementation quality, outcome assessment, and resource provision (Mok & Chan, 2016; Mok & Lee, 2000). The Management Review assists HEIs in their self-improvement by reviewing the management systems of HEIs through their management of academic and research activities, estate, finance, achievements, student services, human resource, and information technology (Jung & Postiglione, 2015).

To strengthen the continuous improvement of the quality of HEIs, the Hong Kong government has an audit process to assess “how well students achieve...intended learning outcomes defined by each institution and its programs” (M. Shah & Q. T. N. Do, 2017, p. 72). The audit process involves an HEI having nine months preparation before a panel nominated by the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Council (QAC) has an on-site visit. The panel has meetings and interviews with groups of stakeholders of the HEI who are normally the core administrative staff, and checks the materials relating to course assessment methods and

student course grades provided by the HEI. The Quality Assurance Council then issues an audit report and allows the HEI 22 months to carry out follow-up activities (Sun, 2017).

The interesting feature about higher education in Hong Kong is the impact of cultural features on the quality management system, which results from the fact that Hong Kong's culture is a mixture of Chinese and other cultures (Sun, 2017). The impact is represented by the involvement of senior staff in the quality assurance process, which means only seniors can be involved and have the power to make evaluative and conclusive statements about quality. The impact is also illustrated by the relationship between people's participation in internal quality assurance activities of an HEI and their hierarchical positions in the HEI, which means people having higher positions must be more involved than people with lower positions (Sun, 2017).

#### ***3.4.3.3. Quality Management in South Korean Higher Education***

The South Korean higher education has rapidly developed in the 60 years since Korea became independent from Japan in 1945 (Shin, 2012). It is also identified that South Korean higher education is under the influence of Western higher education (e.g., the higher education system is a combination of German and American styles), Confucian traditions (e.g., the exam-based filtering system and the strong desire of parents for their children to be educated), and high demands for being admitted to reputable HEIs (Shin, 2012, 2015). These influences contribute to making the South Korean higher education system one of the fastest growing systems in the world. This rapid development requires a corresponding quality assurance system.

According to Ko (2017), the South Korean government's role in controlling the development of HEIs and setting enrolment quota for every HEI is very strong. South Korean higher education pays attention to quality assurance activities through: (1) for improvement: making judgments on current or past performance against the criteria provided by external

authorities and (2) for accountability: aiming at promoting institutional performance” (Kis, 2005 as cited in Ko, 2017, p. 115). To enhance the quality of higher education, the South Korean government has carried out three policies. These are maintaining a quality framework that involves an accreditation system, having a budget allocation system that depends on the performance of HEIs, and putting more funds into research activities (Shin, 2012). The accreditation procedure carried out by the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI) involves four steps: KUAI’s presentation at the HEI, the HEI’s submission of an application to be accredited, KUAI’ offsite documentary review, and the HEI’s payment of relevant fees (Ko, 2017, p. 114). This accreditation system of South Korean higher education is quite similar to the evaluation system of Chinese higher education. In South Korea, government funding allocation for HEIs depends on accreditation results (Ko, 2017), and evaluation results are the basis for government funding allocation for HEIs in China (Li, 2010).

This review shows that the quality management models of higher education in the selected East Asian countries may vary due to different cultural and economic contexts, but they share the same key processes such as internal evaluation that is self-evaluation of institutions, external evaluation that is evaluation of governmental offices or external agencies, and follow-up activities for quality improvement after evaluation. These processes can also be found in the accreditation system of Vietnamese higher education, which involves self-study, external evaluation, report of evaluation results, and recognition (MOET, 2017a). However, those models tend to neglect the quality management activities in the transnational higher education sector that are considered in this study.

More specifically, the focus of this study is on the franchise model of transnational higher education in a Vietnamese university (University A). Franchise in education is defined as a transnational education model in which the franchiser education provider in country A grants an institution in the host country B the right to deliver its programme in country B or

other countries, and the qualifications are awarded by the franchiser education provider in country A (Dos Santos, 2002; Knight, 2006; Naidoo, 2009). In relation to Vietnam, when choosing this model, students of University A who study in an international programme spend the whole course resident in Vietnam. In this model, the partner universities follow Vietnamese policies and regulations about transnational education including quality assurance activities (Knight, 2015b). Accordingly, the university in Vietnam is mainly in charge of quality management activities. As such, University A is not only the link between students and the overseas universities in terms of academic activities, but how University A carries out its quality management activities affects students significantly.

#### **3.4.4. Quality Management in Vietnamese Higher Education**

In Vietnam, the needs for building a quality control system for education, especially higher education, have been discussed by scholars and educationists since 2000. This indicates the importance of quality assurance, the “immaterial infrastructure” for quality of Vietnamese higher education (Westerheijden, Cremonini, & van Empel, 2010, p. 196). According to K. D. Nguyen, Oliver, and Priddy (2009), in Vietnamese education, quality in teaching and learning is understood to be achieved when the outcomes of a programme meet the purposes set out from the beginning and meet the demands of all stakeholders, especially the demands of teachers and future employers of students. In terms of programme content, Vietnamese students may consider that university programmes are often not attuned to the labour market needs. However, when universities changed their curriculum frameworks to be vocationally oriented, the lack of “liberal or general education” is a result (K. D. Nguyen et al., 2009, p. 128). In 2001, controlling quality and building an accreditation system for higher education became a strategic plan of Vietnam (Westerheijden et al., 2010).

Before 2003, the MOET established criteria for universities to evaluate their activities, but many universities claimed that they were invalid and unreliable because they were

“temporary” and “only based on quantitative measures”. So they decided to have their own criteria (K. D. Nguyen et al., 2009, p. 126). Furthermore, criteria and procedures for carrying out quality assurance and accreditation in higher education institutions introduced by the MOET were only applied to public higher education institutions, not non-public ones (Hayden & Lam, 2010).

In 2003, the MOET established its General Department of Education for Testing and Accreditation (GDETA), which was responsible for the accreditation of higher education and organising university entrance examinations. However, after being assigned more tasks, such as taking care of the examinations of the whole education system with limited number of staff, GDETA was overloaded and its activities became ineffective (Westerheijden et al., 2010).

In 2004, the MOET started to apply another set of temporary quality standards and institutional accreditation processes based on self-evaluation of universities. This model was adapted from the American accreditation model that included self-study, peer review, and external evaluation. External evaluation was not really aligned with the Vietnamese cultural feature of avoiding opposition (M. D. Nguyen, 1985), but self-study and peer review appeared to be more adaptable; although, they still faced the Vietnamese cultural barriers of saving face, underhand secret keeping or authority, hierarchy, and social relationships values (K. D. Nguyen et al., 2009, p. 128). Later in 2004, GDETA established relationships with accreditation experts from developed countries such as the United States and the Netherlands. Based on these relationships, the MOET implemented some accreditation pilot projects in Vietnamese universities, aiming to find out the most suitable accreditation procedure for Vietnamese higher education. These accreditation pilot projects included the World Bank’s First Higher Education Project (2004–2006) that focused on upgrading university infrastructure, the Dutch government’s project that focused on programme quality (2005–

2007), and the Eight Audits that focused on revising protocols and procedures of the previous projects (spring 2007) (Westerheijden et al., 2010). As a result, in 2017, the Vietnamese government officially established the official procedure for accreditation of higher education institutions. This is conducted every 5 years and includes 4 steps: self-study, external evaluation, appraisal of evaluation results, and recognition (MOET, 2017a, p. 11). The purpose of this procedure is to assure the quality of higher education institutions in terms of development strategies, organisation, and operation (MOET, 2017a).

Although it is claimed that external-evaluation is not so relevant within the social and cultural context of Vietnam, and the strong intervention of the MOET provides challenges for Vietnamese higher education institutions to carry out quality assurance (K. D. Nguyen et al., 2009), using this procedure, the MOET still regulates external-evaluation as one of the important steps for higher education institutions to be accredited. This regulation aims to continually improve the quality of higher education institutions and make their quality and operational effectiveness clear for all stakeholders (MOET, 2017a). This procedure is useful in helping to improve the reliability of accreditation when the quality of higher education institutions is evaluated not only by themselves but also by outsiders. Encouraging higher education institutions to be judged by other institutions is also demonstrated the attempt of the MOET to overcome cultural barriers, such as avoiding confrontation, especially with people of higher positions, or respecting harmony, to assure good quality programmes for Vietnamese learners (H. L. Nguyen, 2015; M. D. Nguyen, 1985).

#### **3.4.5. Quality Management Mechanism of University A**

In the Decree issued on 26 September 2012, the Vietnamese government clarified conditions about facilities, curricula, teachers, students, degrees, and certificates in relation to the collaboration with overseas partners in the educational sector. With regard to quality management, the Vietnamese government set permanent regulations about the accreditation of

training programmes, which clearly stated that, during the operation of training courses, education establishments that conduct transnational education and foreign-invested education establishments in Vietnam have to adhere to the following steps:

Take responsibility for the quality of educational activities, periodically carry out self-evaluation, quality assurance and quality improvement activities according to Vietnamese or foreign standards;  
Periodically register for quality accreditation according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training or the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs. (GOV, 2012b, p. 3)

The regulations pointed out two aspects of transnational education quality management that education institutions must carry out. These are internal activities involved self-evaluation, quality assurance, and quality improvement, and external activities involved external quality accreditation. The external accreditation is carried out by the MOET, but the internal activities must be carried out by the education institutions themselves with their own mechanisms.

As a national university—a high-quality centre for training and multi-disciplinary scientific research—the Vietnam National University (VNU) must have its quality management system strictly follow these government regulations (GOV, 2012b, p. 3). Thus, one of its missions is to build a quality assurance system that serves these demands. In 1995, the VNU founded the Centre for Quality Assurance of Training and Educational Development Research (which was renamed VNU Institute for Education Quality Assurance in 2017) to deal with every issue relating to quality assurance, quality assessment, accreditation, and quality improvement at the VNU. In accordance with the Government's decree, in 2013, the VNU had a regulatory policy about the quality assessment system, which stressed that all universities and affiliated schools in the VNU should follow an evaluation procedure every five years. The procedure consists of three steps. Step one – self-evaluation is carried out by the university or affiliated school itself. Step two – external evaluation is carried out by VNU in connection with other international quality assurance agencies. Step three – final decision is

decided by the VNU or other international quality assurance agencies (VNU, 2013). The outcome of the procedure is the recognition of whether a university, an affiliated school, or a training program has met the quality standards of the MOET or international quality assurance agencies. With universities, affiliated schools, or training programs that have not yet met the required quality standards in their first evaluation, the VNU will support and facilitate them so that they are able to apply for a re-evaluation in one year after the first evaluation (VNU, 2013).

Apart from the general regulations of quality assurance procedures, the VNU also has separate guidance about the self-evaluation of its transnational programmes. The VNU provides guidance about the self-evaluation of TNUPs and an example of the TNUP self-evaluation report (VNU, 2012). In this guidance, the VNU lists 15 criteria, also called standards that are used to evaluate the quality of a transnational programme. These criteria cover all facets of TNUP programmes that students will experience if they want to study in TNUPs (details can be found in Appendix G (p. 276)). Information about each criterion is required to be provided in detail with statistics where applicable. Institutions of the VNU that offer TNUPs carry out this self-evaluation annually and submit reports to the VNU. Based on institutions' reports, the VNU decides the effectiveness of their quality management systems and has further requirements if needed.

In response to this policy of the VNU, all of its universities and affiliated schools have developed mechanisms to take care of quality assurance. Annually, every VNU university or affiliated school that offers transnational programmes must submit a report describing how they have carried out the standards in detail. The VNU bases the decision to evaluate the efficacy of the transnational programmes on those reports. Apart from this report, the VNU does not intervene in the audit of transnational programmes. Transnational programmes of

each university or affiliated school of the VNU are audited by their partner universities, and the VNU is only informed the final result of their audit (VNU, 2012).

In 2015, University A officially founded its Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing, which has a very important role in managing and maintaining the quality of the whole university. The centre has two main duties as specified in the relevant policy:

Dealing with all institutional and external issues relating to quality assurance (setting quality assurance plans for the university; carrying out quality assurance activities; consulting the Board of Rectors about quality assurance; participating in national and international quality assurance activities);

Dealing with all issues relating to testing (setting criteria for the testing and assessment; gathering and making banks of exam questions; consulting the Board of Rectors about testing and assessment; keeping confidentiality of database relating to quality assurance and testing).

(Adapted from *The University's Decision of Founding the Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing in 2015* (VNU-IS, 2015a))

Similarly, the university has to send a self-evaluation report about its transnational undergraduate programmes to the VNU annually to inform the VNU about how its TNUPs are running. In one of the reports cited for this thesis, of the 15 self-evaluation criteria listed by the VNU, six standards did not appear in the report. These are the implementation process of the programme, the teaching and learning activities, the university staff and staff development, learning consultation and support, teaching and learning quality assurance, feedback of stakeholders, and satisfaction of stakeholders' support (adapted from the University's report on its TNUPs to the VNU in 2010 (VNU-IS, 2010c)). Surprisingly, these criteria appeared in other documents which may or may not have been reported to the VNU. The implementation process of the programme, teaching and learning quality assurance, and learning consultation and support were found in the programmes' handbook submitted with the report. Feedback from stakeholders has been collected by the Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing since 2016 but was only reported to the University's Rector, not the VNU. Employers' feedback on the quality of graduates has also been collected by the Centre of

Quality Assurance and Testing since 2016 and reported to the VNU, but only feedback of employers of local/domestic programmes' graduates was collected. The difference in time between the report written in 2010 and the instructions of the VNU introduced in 2012 might be a reason for the absence of some information in the University's report. But the feedback of TNUP stakeholders, though required, was not reported to the VNU. There was no information about the feedback of employers of TNUP alumni. As explained by a quality assurance officer from University A, the information about employers of TNUP alumni was limited, and it was difficult for the University to collect their feedback. Therefore, the VNU accepted and was satisfied with the information they received. The report together with other documents above provided sufficient information to understand the self-evaluation process of University A and to further discuss the quality management mechanisms of TNUPs in later chapters.

### **3.5. Student Voice**

Listening to stakeholders' voices has important meaning for improving the quality of higher education (Cheng, 2016; Quinn et al., 2009). Among the voices of many stakeholders of higher education, student voice is a term often discussed by educational advocates, and in this section, its connections to this study's focus of student voice and the quality management system of a Vietnamese university will be considered. According to Orner (1992), student voice can be conceptualised as a paradigm of educational research, but the content that students talk about and their reasons for doing so "vary along with the social, political, economic and cultural commitments of an array of research and teaching agendas" (p. 76). More specifically, Cook-Sather (2006) asserts that the real meaning of student voice relates to the values underlying the term because it "asks us to connect the sound of students speaking not only with those students experiencing meaningful, acknowledged presence, but also with their having the power to influence analyses of, decisions about, and practices in schools" (p.

363). It can be inferred from Orner and Cook-Sather's quotations that student voice is not merely what we get from students speaking but also reflects their way of thinking, their relationships, and their experience of what is happening at schools or universities. Or, in other words, it "signals the presence, involvement and commitment" (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 365). Sharing the same view with Cook-Sather, Toshalis and Nakkula (2012) emphasise that "at its core, student voice is the antithesis of depersonalised, standardised, and homogenised educational experiences because it begins and ends with the thoughts, feelings, visions, and actions of the students themselves" (p. 33).

A student is central to every educational activity; therefore, student voice should play a very important role in education. Toshalis and Nakkula (2012) assume that if students are aware that their voices may help their educational institutions understand what they think and need, and may result in changes which are possibly better for them, they may become well-motivated and more engaged in activities. Young and Jerome (2020) note that, although it is quite common when HEIs collect students' feedback to listen to student voice and consider dealing with feedback to help satisfy students, there are still other ways to understand student voice, such as through student-staff relationships or student actions.

To explore how student voice is conceptualised in the Vietnamese context, I will return to focus on Vietnamese culture. Under the very intensive influences of Confucianism, education in Vietnam is considered very important because a person can be considered complete and achieve high positions within society after having attained an education (T. N. Nguyen, 2019). As a result, teachers are always respected, and students are expected to completely follow their teachers' words without questioning (T. N. Nguyen, 2019; L. H. Pham & Fry, 2004; T. D. Truong et al., 2017). With such traditions, the gap between students and teachers is rather big, and student voice may not be given enough attention in Vietnamese education. More recently, in November 2020, the MOET and the Vietnamese Youth Union

have signed a memorandum about organising periodical forums between HEIs and their students. With the purpose of assuring quality for HEIs, these forums create chances for students to raise their voices and HEIs to understand their learners so that they can improve their management systems and meet their learners' needs (Phan, 2020).

With regard to quality assurance in educational activities, to identify how important student voice is, what role students are playing should be explored first. According to Sahney et al. (2004), in activities carried out by universities, there are not only students who have a stake in the quality of education but also staff, faculty, organisations, parents and society. However, Sahney et al. (2004, p. 146) classify students and parents in turn as “primary” and “secondary external customers” and assume that the purpose of service quality in higher education is to find out their requirements so as to design appropriate facilities for the educational institutions. Apart from agreeing with the view that students are the main stakeholders in higher education, Mukhopadhyay (2005) also highlights that with an educational institution, students, especially graduates, are the ambassadors who build up, contribute to, and represent its quality reputation. In carrying out this study, I tend to agree with the viewpoint of Mukhopadhyay (2005) and consider student voice as the fundamental unit of analysis, and student services, like admission, tuition fees, participation, examination, assessment, co-scholastics and co-curricular activities, as the keys to higher education quality management. Furthermore, as discussed previously, the realm of student voice in this study comprises the voices of parents, graduates, administrators, and quality assurance officers due to their importance in contributing to the quality of transnational undergraduate programmes.

### **3.6. Evaluation Research**

#### **3.6.1. Needs Assessment**

Before looking at the theories about evaluation research, it is essential to identify what a need is. Although the concept of needs may vary according to different settings (Scriven &

Roth, 1990; Watkins & Kavale, 2014), a need could be generally defined as anything significantly beneficial for a mode of existence, and without which, that mode of existence will be in an unsatisfactory condition (Scriven & Roth, 1990). More particularly, it is stated that a need is a gap between the present condition – what currently is and the desired condition – what should be (Altschuld & Watkins, 2014; Kavita, Sleezer, & Russ-Eft, 1999). The focus of the gap is also used to classify needs into four types: a strategic need concentrating on the long-term organisational purposes, an operational or tactical need focusing on the short-term to gain tactical/operational purposes, an individual performance need relating to an individual achievements, behaviours, or possibility of performance, and a learning need focusing on the gaps between knowledge and skills (Kavita et al., 1999). In educational contexts, Stufflebeam, McCormick, Brinkerhoff, and Nelson (2012) propose four types of needs. Firstly, discrepancy that considers a need as a gap between perception of desired and actual execution. Secondly, democratic that identifies a need as an instruction believed by a majority of people. Thirdly, analytic that defines a need as the guidance in which development may occur, provided the present situation continues. Finally, diagnostic that locates a need as something that can bring harm if absent and benefit if present. Within the scope of my evaluation study focusing on stakeholders' viewpoints about quality management mechanism of TNUPs, the needs in educational contexts suggested by Stufflebeam et al. (2012) are applicable. Following Stufflebeam's system, this study involves exploring four types of needs within the context of TNUPs at University A. Discrepancy is the gap between stakeholder's perception of quality TNUPs and the actual quality they are provided. Democratic is the expectation about quality of TNUPs mentioned by most of the stakeholders. Analytic is the adjustments to improve TNUP quality management system suggested by stakeholders. Diagnostic is the specific changes that should be made to TNUPs' problematic issues.

Modern needs assessments have been conducted since the 1950s and continued to be studied and contributed to by scholars through the decades (Altschuld & Watkins, 2014). Needs assessment is defined as the determination of needs that aims at discovering the gap between the real products and the desired products (Kaufman & English, 1979; Royse, Tindall, Badger, & Webster, 2009; Scriven & Roth, 1990). Apart from figuring out the gap, more importantly, needs assessment will lead to possible solutions and guidance on how to fill in the gap (Altschuld & Watkins, 2014; Kavita et al., 1999; Watkins & Kavale, 2014). Needs assessment and evaluation share many similar characteristics and techniques, but their focuses are different because needs assessment mainly addresses questions of perspective, and evaluation deals more with recent outcomes (Altschuld & Watkins, 2014; Stufflebeam et al., 2012). Otherwise, to some extent, needs assessment is considered as a type of evaluation, and the key to having a successful assessment is identifying what is going to be assessed (Kavita et al., 1999; Watkins & Kavale, 2014).

Accordingly, in the context of this study, what stakeholders think are necessary or unnecessary in contributing to the quality of TNUPs should be identified and compared with the existing components of the quality management system in University A to decide on the efficacy of the mechanism. As mentioned above, not only undergraduate students but also their parents and other stakeholders will determine things related to their choice of study such as tuition fees or the outcomes they may gain after studying in the programme.

### **3.6.2. The Relationship between Educational Programme Development and Evaluation**

As stated previously, this research aims to look more deeply into the quality of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university. Information studied about the current situation can also serve the purpose of developing these programmes to meet stakeholders' needs. Regarding programme development, Caffarella (2002) states that educational programmes should be designed to help learners improve their language and skills

as well as provide qualified employees for the labour market. To serve these targets, programme development models have been developed to interlink essential components required for successful outputs (Caffarella, 2002).

In 1978, Boshier introduced a programme development model in which he divided the process into three big steps: programme planning, management of instruction, and programme evaluation (cited in Benseman, Findsen, & Scott, 1996, p. 266). Following on from this, other different models were introduced. Sork (2000) proposed seven basic elements of programme development. These are analysing the context and learner community, justifying the focus of planning, clarifying intentions, preparing an instructional plan, preparing an administrative plan, and developing a summative evaluation plan. All of these are surrounded by a formative evaluation that “informs program managers about ways to improve program quality or the delivery of programme services” (Secolsky & Denison, 2012, pp. 457-458). In other words, formative evaluation is at the centre of the development process and is evident throughout all of the other elements.

The interactive model of programme development developed by Caffarella (2002) has 12 components, and each of these involved many tasks and decision points. The special feature of this model was its flexibility. There was no fixed order for those components to be considered, and programme planners could work with many components at the same time and use the model in a variety of ways (Caffarella, 2002). More recently, Caffarella and Daffron (2013) have presented a modified model with only 11 components. These are context, needs assessment, goal and objectives, support, budgets, scheduling, marketing, details, instruction, learning transfer, and evaluation. Although there are several models for programme development and the required components of each model are not the same, an evaluation is always an indispensable component in these models. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) explain that if a programme development process is to serve learners’ needs, it is necessary to have an

evaluation to triangulate if the programme planned has fulfilled this task (summative purpose) and provided information for programme improvement (formative purpose). Therefore, if programme development is the beginning, evaluation is vital for a complete educational programme. With such importance, the concepts and classification of evaluation and evaluation research are reviewed in the following section.

### **3.6.3. An Overview of Evaluation Research**

Evaluation research or evaluation is a process that aims at providing recognition for all aspects of a programme and giving confirmation and a basis for decisions about the programme's value (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Sharing the same viewpoint with Stufflebeam and Coryn, other scholars believe that an evaluation has two functions: examination involved discovering the current situation of a programme and development involved bringing about planned changes (H.-T. Chen, 1996; Cronbach et al., 1981; Patton, 2002; Scriven, 1996; Wholey, 1996). More specifically, evaluation is conceptualised as a way to look into and assess an activity in order to provide information for further actions about the activities or related activities (Dahler-Larsen, 2011).

In relation to the context of this study, some reviews that align with programme evaluation should be considered, as together with quality assurance, they contribute to a full programme information system (Patton, 2002). A programme is defined as “a set of resources and activities directed toward one or more common goals, typically under the direction of a single manager or management team” (Wholey et al., 2010, p. 5 as cited in Secolsky & Denison, 2012, p. 456). Programme evaluation is claimed by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) to be the comprehensive appraisal of any collaborated activities aimed at attaining goals. Patton (2002) suggests that programme evaluation starts from evaluating the quality of the programme and ends with enhancing its quality. To some extent, quality management and programme evaluation share the same targets when both of them focus on how to make the

quality of a programme better. Similarly, Benson et al., (2001) state that all evaluation aims to identify, understand, and transmit the quality of a programme (as cited in Patton, 2002).

In terms of classification, Secolsky and Denison (2012) summarise three categories of programme evaluations: formative programme evaluation, summative programme evaluation, and developmental programme evaluation (p. 457). Formative programme evaluation “informs program managers about ways to improve program quality or the delivery of programme services” (Secolsky & Denison, 2012, pp. 457-458). Or in short, the purpose of formative evaluation is to improve the quality of a programme (Scriven, 1996). Summative programme evaluation aims to measure and determine the effectiveness of a programme (Scriven, 1996), or “to inform decision-makers who are administrators and funders about whether the programme was successful” (Secolsky & Denison, 2012, p. 457). When comparing formative and summative programme evaluation, Scriven (1996) assumes they are equal in value, but summative programme evaluation can serve the practical role and cover the meaning of evaluation whereas formative may not. Wholey (1996) claims a different viewpoint when saying that formative programme evaluation outweighs summative in terms of governmental purposes such as policy improvement or budget decision-making. The third category, developmental programme evaluation involves the constant collection of information relating to programme development to investigate and assess the development process and to furnish knowledge about the programme as well (Secolsky & Denison, 2012).

The purposes of three categories of programme evaluation can be outlined as follows: formative evaluation provides information to improve a programme; summative evaluation collects information to assess the effectiveness of a programme; and developmental evaluation continually gathers information helpful for making adjustments during the development of a programme (Secolsky & Denison, 2012). With regard to evaluating an existing programme, programme evaluation can firstly serve the aim of judging the

effectiveness of a programme, but in the end, the judgement should lead to the programme's quality improvement. In other words, summative and formative evaluation should be collaborative in programme evaluation (Patton, 2002; Scriven, 1996).

To get programme evaluation conducted in a structured and practical way, evaluation research involving data collection and thoughtful analysis is necessary (Patton, 2002).

Evaluation research often studies the existing knowledge of a process and its outcomes, then aims at acquiring solutions (Clarke & Dawson, 1999; Patton, 2002). With its purpose of having a deep look at how transnational undergraduate programmes at University A are being carried out and finding a proper quality management model for such programmes, this study conducted evaluation research. In order to carry out the evaluation research, it is necessary to have an appropriate evaluation model. The next section discusses educational evaluation models in general and in particular the evaluation model adopted in this study.

#### **3.6.4. Educational Evaluation Models**

Patton (2002) believes that if “conducting an evaluation” is “a heavy load, evaluation models help with the heavy lifting” (p. 169). In the 1930s, Ralph Tyler—a forerunner of objectives-based curriculum assessment—was the first one to bring forward the term educational evaluation (Stavropoulou & Stroubouki, 2014). Through subsequent decades, several models of evaluations that originated from evaluation models in industry have been adapted to educational contexts (Stavropoulou & Stroubouki, 2014). These adaptations were based on the social trends and considered educational institutions as factories and elements of educational institutions as industrial elements such as curriculum as the means of production, students as raw materials, teachers as highly skilled technicians (Madaus & Kellaghan, 2000). The following section reviews some popular evaluation models that have relationships with education or educational services.

### ***3.6.4.1. The Service Quality Model and Service Performance Based Model (SERVQUAL vs. SERVPERF)***

Whilst higher education can be considered as a private good requiring customers to spend money to attain (Altbach, 2015b; Huang, 2007), the value it brings to customers seems immaterial. Evaluating the quality of higher education is like evaluating the quality of a service, which is claimed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) to have a few similarities such as the service provider's physical facilities, equipment, and personnel. Regarding service quality evaluation, Parasuraman et al. (1985) introduced a Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL). The most important point of this model is figuring out "four gaps in service provision that are likely to affect the service quality perceptions held by consumers" (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p. 49). That is the reason why SERVQUAL is also called the gap model. Service quality, according to SERVQUAL, is constructed by five dimensions: the tangibility aspects of the service, the reliability of the service provider, the assurance provided by the service provider, the responsiveness of the service provider, and the service provider's empathy with customers (Ali, Ali, & Radam, 2010, pp. 86-87).

According to Cronin, J Joseph and Taylor (1994, p. 125), the quality of service is evaluated by the SERVQUAL model by "perceptions-minus-expectations measures" or in other words, "service quality is deemed sufficient when consumer perceptions of service performance are equal to or greater than the expected level of service" (Ali et al., 2010, p. 88). Cronin and Taylor (1992) introduce another model—SERVPERF—in which "service quality should be measured as an attitude" (p. 64). The SERVPERF, also called "performance-based scales" excludes customers' expectations and focuses on measuring the performance of the service, and as such contradicts the gap model. Although there are still arguments about the efficacy of the two models, they are widely used in both industry and education. Furthermore, whilst the two models are described and carried out differently, they both work towards a common purpose, which is customers' satisfaction.

### **3.6.4.2. Educational Evaluation Models**

Educational evaluation is defined as “a wide array of activities, including student assessment, measurement, testing, programme evaluation, school personnel evaluation, school accreditation and curriculum evaluation” (Kellaghan & Stufflebeam, 2012, p. 1). According to Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014), there are 23 approaches<sup>2</sup> of educational evaluation belonging to five categories, which are listed in Appendix A (p. 252). Together with introducing 23 evaluation approaches, Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) insist that it is necessary to have evaluation standards “in the interest of ensuring and improving quality and protecting the public from shoddy, harmful, fraudulent or wasteful evaluation services” (p. 72). Using rating tools based on the *Programme Evaluation Standards* of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (the United States) and Stufflebeam’s programme evaluation meta-evaluation checklist, Stufflebeam and Coryn eventually decided upon four groups of approaches that they claimed to be the most useful for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These are quasi-evaluation approaches including success case method and case study approaches, improvement and accountability oriented approaches including context-input-process-product (CIPP) and consumer-oriented approaches, social agenda and advocacy approaches including constructivist and responsive or stakeholder-centred approaches, and eclectic approaches including utilization-focused approach (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) indicate that each group have their own purposes and their own strengths and weaknesses. As to their weaknesses, the quasi-evaluation approaches are “weak in meeting the standards of evaluation accountability” (p. 238). The social agenda and advocacy approaches’ weaknesses are the “lack of provision for advance formal contracting for evaluation; lack of focus on meeting published, professional standards for sound evaluations” and lack of “identifying and addressing conflicts of interest” (Stufflebeam

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<sup>2</sup> Stufflebeam and Coryn use the term “approach” instead of “model” for it is “broad enough to cover elicited as well as laudatory practices” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 109)

& Coryn, 2014, p. 240). The eclectic approaches, although assumed to be very popular, have weaknesses in “limiting service to only a subset of right-to-know stakeholders” and “not necessarily resulting in a printed report” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 240). The improvement and accountability oriented approaches are claimed to be “not strongly suited to internal evaluations for improvement” and “depend on a highly skilled evaluator who strongly guards independence and separation from program personnel”, but still “depends on program personnel for much of the information needed for the evaluation” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 239). After considering the alternatives, I decided to choose the context-input-process-product (CIPP) model (belonging to the improvement and accountability-oriented group) to carry out this study. The section below provides an overview of the model that clarifies the reasons why the model was chosen for this study.

#### ***3.6.4.3. The Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model***

The Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model is a comprehensive framework that is used for both summative and formative purposes in evaluations (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). It was created in the late 1960s by Daniel Stufflebeam in the United States and has been further developed by its application in a wide range of disciplines ranging from industry, business, and health care to education, religion, and other social issues (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The CIPP Model, which is a social system approach, is claimed to be an effective tool for educational evaluation as it can clarify the weaknesses and strengths of a programme as well as foster the understanding and connection among stakeholders (Mohebbi, Akhlaghi, Yarmohammadian, & Khoshgam, 2011; Zhang et al., 2011).

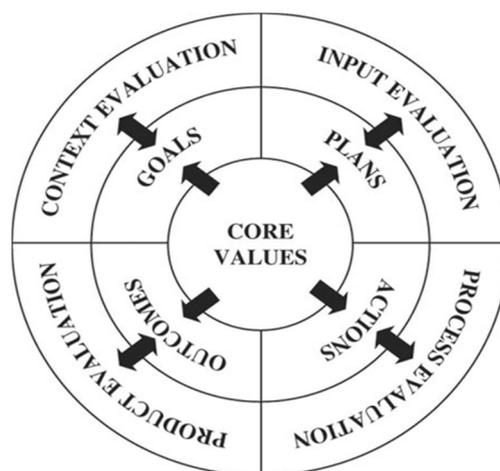
The core concepts of the CIPP model involve four evaluations. The first evaluation assesses an organisation’s context involved needs, problems, assets, and opportunities. The second evaluation assesses the organisation’s inputs such as procedural, staffing and budget plans that can help meet the needs. The third evaluation assesses the organisation’s processes

such as the actual enforcement and the needs for adjustments. The fourth evaluation assesses the organisation's products involving the costs and outcomes (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014; Zhang et al., 2011).

The four core evaluations of the CIPP model reflect both summative and formative purposes. It's flexibly supports the study of the outcomes as well as on-going development of a programme (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014; Yarmohammadian et al., 2011). Further, according to Frye and Hemmer (2012), the CIPP Model covers all phases of an educational programme, such as planning, application, and final judgement. Furthermore, as questions about needs and other potential hindrances like assets, problems, and opportunities are all asked in the context evaluation, the arena of context evaluation is assumed to include needs assessment (Frye & Hemmer, 2012; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Stufflebeam (2004) suggests the key components of a CIPP evaluation model and their associated relationships with programmes in Figure 1:

**Figure 1**

*The Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model*



*Note:* Extracted from *The 21<sup>st</sup> CIPP model: origins, development and use* (p. 5), by Stufflebeam, D.L., 2004, SAGE, 245-266. Copyright 2004 by SAGE.

In Figure 1, the central importance is the core values which should be identified and used to lead the evaluation. Circling around the core values are the four evaluative foci associated with programme: goals, plans, actions, and outcomes. The outer wheel illustrates four evaluation models that serve each focus, and the arrows present the relationship between a particular evaluative focus and a type of evaluation (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The four evaluative foci deal comprehensively with all elements of an educational programme, and the core values guiding the evaluation targets. The CIPP model can explore the operation of a programme as well as figuring out any problems resulting from the conflicts between following the core values and the real operation. Accordingly, in my experience, using the CIPP model would also be easier for evaluators to think about potential solutions to existing matters. In terms of investigating how the quality management mechanisms of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university work and how to improve the mechanisms' efficiency, the principles of the CIPP model seem to be best suited to guide my study design.

As discussed previously, the very first reason for quality management theory is to meet the expectations of customers. As a result, the purpose of the existence of quality management models is to maintain the satisfaction of customers with the products. Usually, an evaluation is conducted to decide if a quality management model can meet such requirements, and to do so, assessing customers' needs is necessary. In this study, customers are defined as stakeholders of transnational undergraduate programmes. The relationship of needs assessment, evaluation, and quality management in this study can be illustrated by the CIPP model. Satisfying stakeholders' needs means dealing with the gap between their perception of quality TNUPs and the actual quality they are provided, and understanding their expectations about quality of TNUPs, their suggestions to improve TNUP quality management system, and their perception about specific changes that should be made to

TNUPs' problematic issues. Satisfying stakeholders' needs is also the core value of the evaluation. Based on the core value, four elemental evaluations including context, input, process, and output evaluations are conducted to judge how each component of the existing quality management system serves the stakeholders' needs. As mentioned in the first chapter, there are many potential stakeholders of higher education, and this study chooses to mainly deal with the students. The voices of other selected stakeholders such as parents, alumni and staff contribute to student voice and help reach the final decision about the efficacy of the quality management models that University A applies to its transnational undergraduate programmes.

### **3.7. Summary**

The chapter has provided readers with a literature review of information including historical references to globalisation that help explain why this phenomenon influences every aspect of life including education. The acceleration of globalisation in education has led to the introduction of transnational education, which involves the movement of knowledge and capital from nation to nation and opens a new era in which education becomes a commodity that can be exchanged like other goods. Transnational education involves all kinds of education and exists in different types and approaches depending on the countries or territories where it is applied.

I have discussed details about quality in education and quality in transnational education. Although the concept of quality was widely used in industry and was about businesses trying to bring fine products to customer with reasonable costs, it is now important in education. With regard to transnational education, quality is even more important because it requires the effort of both the provider and the receiver that are universities. As a result, many quality assurance approaches have been introduced to maintain the quality of transnational education.

Because sustainability should align with development, the introduction of quality management to suit both targets is necessary. Starting from 1940s, quality management theory has rapidly become popular and is widely applied in both industry and education. Quality management models (QMM) of higher education in selected East Asian regions such as Hong Kong, China, and South Korea were reviewed to see if they shared the same features with the QMM of higher education in Vietnam. The quality management mechanisms applied to Vietnamese higher education as well as transnational undergraduate programmes of University A—the main context of my research were reviewed. The concept of student voice was subsequently discussed to emphasise that it is important in evaluation research about the quality of higher education institutions (HEIs) because it reflects how HEIs are implementing their activities.

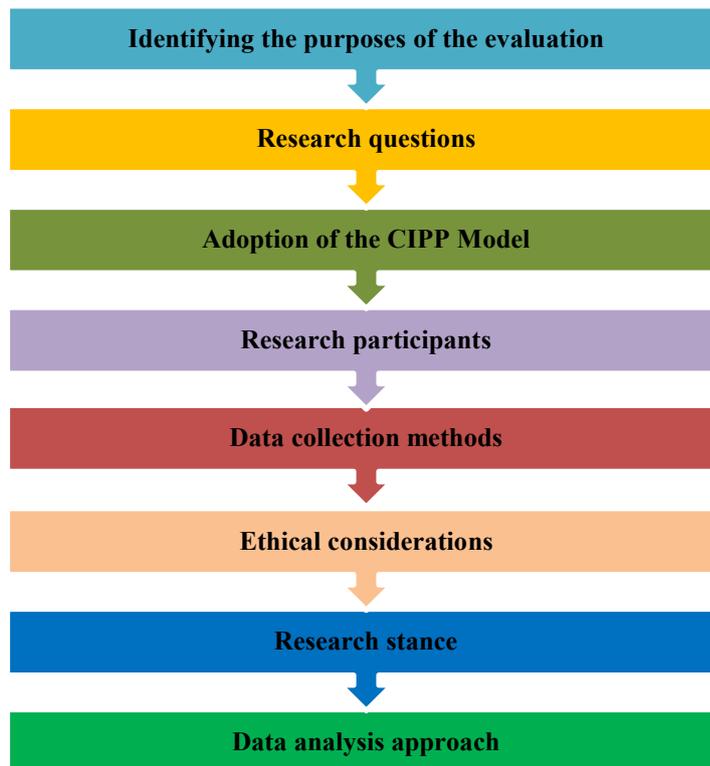
Theoretical perspectives of needs assessment, evaluation research and evaluation models are reviewed in order to clarify my choice of the CIPP evaluation model as the guidance of my research. The CIPP Model was described with detailed explanations of its evaluation foci and core values to help readers understand how they are adopted in the research. The following chapter discusses my evaluation methodology to explain how my research of the quality management mechanisms of University A was carried out.

## Chapter 4 Evaluation Methodology

My study, *An Evaluation of the Quality Management of Transnational Undergraduate Programmes in a Vietnamese University* is evaluation research that investigates the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders in transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs) at a Vietnamese University (hereby called University A or the University). The research was carried out following an evaluation methodology that is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

**Figure 2**

*Evaluation Methodology*



As shown in Figure 2, the evaluation methodology consists of eight steps. The first step is to identify the purposes of the evaluation research. This research was carried out in a

Vietnamese university where I used to work as a TNUP administrator, and helping its TNUPs to develop better quality systems was my biggest concern. I believe that understanding the voices of the selected TNUP stakeholders is valuable for the following reasons: they help to understand their viewpoints in respect of the quality management system applied to TNUPs, and may result in better support for stakeholders especially students. After these objectives were located, the overarching question for this study was posed: *What factors impact stakeholders' evaluations of the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university?* In order to research the overarching question, six subsidiary questions guided the study:

1. What does University A offer students and parents when choosing TNUPs?
2. How do students and parents evaluate the design and delivery of TNUPs at University A?
3. What is the nature of students' experiences when studying in the TNUPs of University A?
4. To what extent do the vested interests of administrators and quality assurance officers impact on the quality management of TNUPs at University A?
5. What do students consider to be benefits gained after studying in the TNUPs of University A?
6. What kinds of issues do students and parents experience when studying in the TNUPs, and how does University A respond to these?

Based on the research questions, I decided to adopt Stufflebeam's Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) evaluation model to explore the current quality management system of TNUPs at University A and to find out what students considered as the most important features of quality TNUPs (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Although students were identified as the main stakeholders to study in this context, students' parents were included in the scope of main stakeholders as parents play an important role in their children's choices of educational programmes, and take an active interest in their children's study. The voices of other selected stakeholders such as administrators, quality assurance officers, and alumni

were also elicited so that the ideas of students and parents could be better understood in a broader context; hence, the overall information would be enriched. The voices of lecturers and the partner universities were considered; however, they were not included in the scope of this study. More than half of the lecturers teaching in TNUPs were contracted staff coming from different universities and were difficult to approach. Further, with the tension of avoiding any exposure of the University due to Vietnamese cultural values, it would be hard for them to be objective in providing information especially when their number was limited. The partner universities usually play their part by connecting with the University's administrators, sending reports, and completing audits. It would be inappropriate for them to talk with a third party about their partner. With an evaluation, there are many data collection methods that could be used. This research used two qualitative methods: individual interviews and document analysis with view to listening to the voices of TNUP stakeholders directly, and having an in-depth look into the documents relating to TNUP quality management which may affect stakeholders' thoughts. Conducting an evaluation about an education institution is a sensitive matter because it requires a comprehensive view of what is actually happening at the institution and can bring unexpected results. Hence, it was important for me to consider ethical principles and choose my stance as an outsider when completing the research. The collected data was analysed using both inductive and deductive analysis approaches in order to gather all the information from open coding and coding guided by the CIPP model. The following sections of this chapter discuss in detail the steps carried out after the research questions were confirmed.

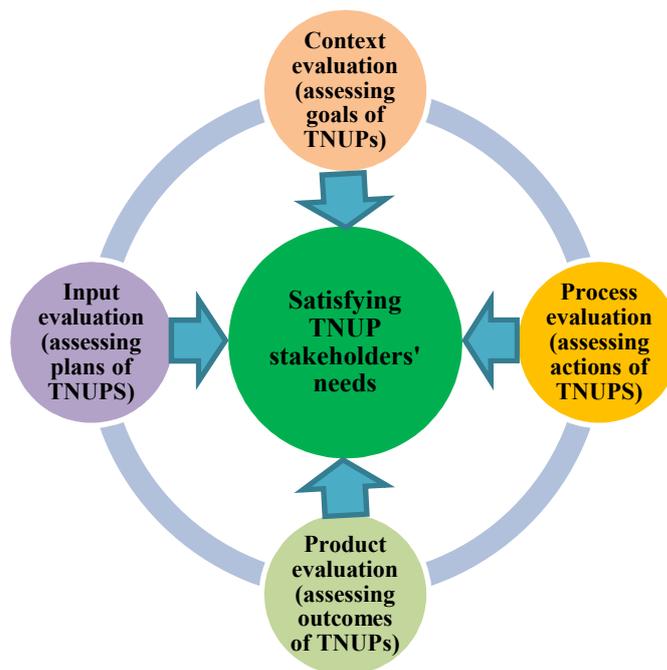
#### **4.1. The Adoption of the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model**

The Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) evaluation model introduced by Stufflebeam in the 1960s is claimed to be an effective tool for educational evaluations as it can clarify the weaknesses and strengths of a programme as well as foster the understandings

and connections between stakeholders (Mohebbi et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2011). The CIPP evaluation model consists of four evaluation foci. My evaluation adopted the CIPP model is illustrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*The Adoption of the CIPP Model*



The research considers satisfying TNUP stakeholders' needs as the core value guiding the evaluation. The overarching research question aims to explore whether the quality management system that University A applies to its TNUPs satisfies its stakeholders' needs. The stakeholders of TNUPs selected to study in this research were students, student parents, alumni, administrators and quality assurance officers, and students were considered the main focus. In order to find the answers to the overarching question, four component evaluations were conducted. These are context, input, process, and product evaluations.

The context evaluation assessed students' learning attainment before applying to study in TNUPs, the opportunities that TNUPs can bring to students, students' rationales for choosing TNUPs, students' preparation for application to study in a TNUP, and the

University's assistance for students' applications. The aims of context evaluation were to understand students' expectations when choosing TNUPs and to assess if the University's goals and priorities were responsive to these expectations. The input evaluation assessed the plans to carry out TNUPs of University A and the University's capabilities to meet stakeholders' expectations about TNUPs such as the University's services and support for students, and the distribution of administrative and academic staff. The input evaluation considered the admission requirements of TNUPs and the University's staffing, resource, and budget plans for TNUPs. The process evaluation assessed the University's actions when implementing TNUPs. This included evaluating the enrolment processes of the TNUPs and the actual academic, administrative, and quality assurance activities of the TNUPs. Information for judging the outcomes of the processes was also gathered. The product evaluation assessed the fees and the outcomes of TNUPs. The product evaluation considered the tuition fees in relation to the services provided by the University, and the outcomes that alumni of TNUPs can gain after studying in TNUPs. The product evaluation aimed to evaluate the accomplishments of TNUPs on the basis of comparing them with assessed goals, plans, and actions (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014; Zhang et al., 2011). The results of the four evaluations would not only contribute to assessing the efficacy of the TNUP's quality management system but also provide recommendations for the University and its stakeholders to improve the quality of TNUPs.

## **4.2. Research Participants**

### **4.2.1. Purposeful Sampling**

It is important to identify the participants of this study as their voices contribute to the results of the research. As the purpose of this research was to provide a full picture of the quality management system of University A, the potential participants were chosen from a range of stakeholders of the TNUPs who were involved with the programmes. These included

a board of rectors, partner universities, lecturers, staff members, programme administrators, quality assurance officers, alumni, students, and students' parents. The research aimed to access participants who were "information rich cases", who would be best placed to enable me to provide answers to the research questions (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

According to Patton (2002), the process of choosing these cases is called purposeful sampling. Apart from students and alumni whose voices are central to the study, students' parents, programme administrators, and quality assurance (QA) officers were also chosen as participants. Students' parents are students' families who are very close to them and are the most likely people who they will share their opinions about the TNUPs with. Administrators are the people in charge of operating the TNUPs and work directly with students. QA officers deal with every issue regarding the quality of the TNUPs, including students' feedback about the quality management system. Such stakeholders' information is potentially rich because it can fully reflect students' voices about the TNUPs.

#### **4.2.2. The Process of Selecting Participants**

At the outset of the research, I communicated by email with the Rector of University A to request his consent for me to complete the research in his university. I also requested some information to help me find the potential participants (see Appendix B (p. 253)). With the Rector's support, I constructed a list of students (in Year Two or Year Three given the length of TNUPs is four years) whom I thought might be interested in my research, or who could put me in touch with people who could best help me consider the quality management system of the institution. They were contacted via email or telephone. The emails and phone calls provided details about my research purpose and invited them to participate in this study. I applied the same approach to alumni, students' parents, programme administrators, and QA officers. Each of those who were willing to participate were provided with a Participant Invitation Letter, a Participant Information Sheet and a Participant Consent Form (see

Appendix C (p. 255), Appendix D (p. 260), and Appendix E (p. 263)) via email to ask for their informed consent to participate. After gaining the approval of a participant, I met each person separately and undertook semi-structured interviews with them to gather information.

The total number of participants in the study was 31 including students (8), alumni (8), parents (10), administrators (2), and quality assurance officers (3). The number of participants in each category was dependent of the number of people who had agreed to participate in my research. At University A, there are two TNUPs in English, and four students from each TNUP participated in my study. The same situation applied to the number of alumni. With the number of parents, there were six parents of students from one TNUP and four from the other. The numbers of administrators and QA officers were less than the parents, and alumni. The administrators were too busy to take part in the interviews, so there were only two of them, one representative for each TNUP. With regard to the QA officers, University A has three QA officers of TNUPs and all of them took part in the study. After finishing my participant selection, I moved on to the data collection phase. The data collection methods are presented in the following section.

### **4.3. Data Collection Methods**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used to collect data in evaluation research (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Two qualitative methods were chosen for this research, individual interviews and document analysis. These methods are discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.3.1. Individual Interviews**

Carrying out an evaluation about the quality of an educational institution required me to have appropriate methods to get the most useful information, given that the participants all had their own perspectives. Each participant's information is a story of their experiences with their TNUP. I decided to interview participants and learn from their true stories in order to

access important information in relation to their viewpoints about the quality of TNUPs.

According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), there are three main types of interviews: structured interviews (mostly used in quantitative research), unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews (both of which are mostly used in qualitative research).

Qualitative interviews can be divided into two types: face-to-face individual interviews and group interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2018). Each type of interview has its own pros and cons. The individual in-depth interview “allows the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters, whereas the group interview allows interviewers to get a wider range of experiences” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). The context of a university in Vietnam and the participants being Vietnamese people influenced by Asian culture, especially Confucian philosophy, was taken into consideration when choosing the type of interviews. Subject to the influence of Confucianism, Vietnamese students have little chance to exhibit their creativeness, responsibility, and independence and must show their obedience by not arguing with others, especially teachers (C. T. Nguyen, 2011). If these students are required to raise their voices in a group discussion, the results may not be as fruitful and even limited because everyone will tend to follow and agree with others to avoid conflicts. The same situation can happen to other participants who are not students as they were all educated within the same ideology. Therefore, I decided to collect data by using individual in-depth interviews. All interview questions aimed to answer the six sub-questions of my research. The interview questions were planned following my adoption of Stufflebeam’s CIPP evaluation model which consists of four components: context, input, process, and product evaluations (illustrated in Figure 3). The interview questions of each component evaluation are summarised as follows:

#### ***4.3.1.1. Context Evaluation***

Continuing students and alumni of the TNUPs were interviewed about their original reasons for choosing to study University A's TNUPs and their opinion about what University A offered in terms of the programme's admission requirements, partner universities' reputation, output standards, and the University's facilities. Students' parents were interviewed about their original rationale for supporting their children to study in the TNUP of University A and their opinions about what University A offered in relation to the programme's admission requirements, tuition fees, partner universities' reputation, output standards, the University's facilities, and their children's responses to what they experienced with TNUPs. Administrators and QA officers were interviewed about what they usually did to assist students before their study (such as consultation, recruitment, and induction) and their perceptions of the University's assets and other facilities or resources to support students' study.

#### ***4.3.1.2. Input Evaluation***

Students and alumni were interviewed about their perceptions of the programme's components such as enrolment processes, staffing (administrators, lecturers), programme structure and length, information provision, scholarships, and timetables. Students' parents were interviewed about their perceptions of programme components such as enrolment processes, staffing (administrators, lecturers), programme structure and length, information provision, scholarships, and timetables. Administrators and QA officers were interviewed about their participation in programme components such as enrolment processes, staffing, programme structure and length, information provision, scholarships, and timetables.

#### ***4.3.1.3. Process Evaluation***

Students and alumni were interviewed about their perceptions of the programme's purposes such as the teaching-learning process, the organisation of continuous assessments

and examinations, advising and resolving students' queries, partner universities' participation during their study, extracurricular activities, and student and alumni expectations for adjustments of problematic issues. Students' parents were interviewed about their perceptions of their children's experiences, the programme components, and their expectations in relation to adjustments for problematic issues. Administrators were interviewed about their roles in supporting students and resolving students' problems during their study, and making contact and exchanging information with partner universities. QA officers were interviewed about their roles in University A's quality assurance procedures in relation to the teaching-learning processes, organising examinations, or dealing with problems relating to different aspects of quality during the time programmes were running.

#### ***4.3.1.4. Product Evaluation***

Students were interviewed about their perceptions of programme costs and outcomes such as the tuition fees they have to pay and their expectations of what they will achieve upon graduation. Students' parents were interviewed about their perceptions of programme costs and outcomes such as the tuition fees they had to pay and their expectations of what their children would achieve upon graduation. Alumni were interviewed individually about their actual experiences when graduating from University A's TNUPs such as the achievements they gained when graduating from TNUPs (knowledge, social positions, jobs) and advantages and disadvantages of applying the knowledge they had developed at University A into their lives. Administrators were interviewed about their roles in supporting students after graduation such as assisting students in their degree recognition, linking students with organisations and companies. QA officers were interviewed about their roles in University A's self-evaluation procedures, the accreditation of TNUPs, and the advantages and disadvantages of dealing with the QA of TNUPs at University A.

(The guideline for interview questions can be found in Appendix F (p. 264))

#### ***4.3.1.5. The Interview Process***

Before being interviewed, each participant of the study was contacted via email or telephone to provide relevant background and experiences as well as to develop rapport and trust with me-the interviewer. This was done to help them recall their own experiences and be well-prepared for the upcoming interviews. Accordingly, the participants' ideas were collected through semi-structured interviews where I, as the researcher, maintained natural fluency and communication (Gillham, 2010). The questions were open and all possible answers were welcomed. I prepared both prompts and probes that enabled me to explore more of their ideas further (Gillham, 2010). While possible questions were identified and pre-set before the interviews, there were no limitations on either the researcher or the interviewees to ask and answer different questions that arose. This helped ensure the naturalness of the interviews.

The particular time and place for each interview was thoroughly discussed with the participants. All the students chose to be interviewed after classes and at places around the University so that they did not have to travel so far. The parents and alumni, who had to work during the week, preferred to carry out the interviews at weekends. All the interviews with parents and alumni were at cafes or at their houses where it was convenient for them. Most of the administrators and QA officers wanted me to see them at the University's reception room during their working time because their meetings with me were permitted by the Rector. Only one administrator could not see me at the University because they were too busy with operating final exams for students. Therefore, they arranged a meeting with me at their house on a Saturday.

Each interview lasted between 40–60 minutes depending on the interaction between me as the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviews were expected to be conducted in English; however, as the participants and I were both Vietnamese, they felt more confident

and comfortable to share information in Vietnamese. Accordingly, all of the conversations were conducted in Vietnamese. Also, the participants did not want me to record their interviews to make sure that their anonymity was respected. I carefully took notes of all the interviews in a personal notebook that was kept in a secure place. If the participants talked too fast or my recording was too slow, I asked them to repeat the words they said for accurate recording. I transferred the interviews from my notebook into electronic files afterwards. A copy of the transcript for each interview was sent to the relevant participant for review. After the participants agreed with the content of the transcripts of their interviews, these transcripts were labelled as final versions and stored in my personal computer.

After finishing all the interviews and returning from fieldwork, I started to translate all the transcripts into English. The transcripts contained participants' personal information. This may have been problematic for them if a third party gained access to and used such information. As a result, I translated and grammatically corrected the transcripts myself. This was an essential step for me to immerse myself in the data and get familiar with it prior to completing the analysis. To avoid any poor quality data, after translating each participant's comments, I asked them to check and edit the translations where necessary. I also asked for my supervisors' advice in relation to the translation. They helped me choose the right terms to express the participants' ideas most effectively. Differences in wording between the two languages were unavoidable. I have endeavoured to keep the participants' main ideas and spirit in my translation; hence, the quality of the interview data was not affected.

After translating and reviewing the answers of participants, I realised that the data collected from these interviews might not be adequate for me to carry out data analysis; hence, it might affect the research results. After the following discussion with my supervisors, I decided to have second interviews with students and parents who are the main stakeholders of the research. It would have been difficult for me to go back to Vietnam again, so I

contacted them via emails, Skype, and Facebook messenger. The second interviews were mostly via Facebook and Skype with the participation of eight students and seven parents. The same processes were applied as after the first interviews. The data used for my data analysis is the combination of the data collected from both interviews.

Below are Table 3 summarising the participants' key information, and Table 4 providing some samples of my translation of the data collected from Vietnamese to English:

**Table 3**

*Participants' Key Information*

No	Participant	Gender	Age	Years of study/ graduation/working in TNUPs	TNUP	Qualification	Interview times
1	Student	Female	19	1	Malaysian	N/A	2
2	Student	Female	20	2	Malaysian	N/A	2
3	Student	Female	20	2	Malaysian	N/A	2
4	Student	Male	19	1	Malaysian	N/A	2
5	Student	Female	20	2	American	N/A	2
6	Student	Male	21	3	American	N/A	2
7	Student	Male	20	2	American	N/A	2
8	Student	Male	20	2	American	N/A	2
9	Parent	Female	45	N/A	Malaysian	Bachelor	2
10	Parent	Male	52	N/A	Malaysian	Bachelor	1
11	Parent	Female	48	N/A	Malaysian	Bachelor	2
12	Parent	Female	43	N/A	Malaysian	Master	2
13	Parent	Female	50	N/A	Malaysian	Master	1
14	Parent	Male	57	N/A	Malaysian	Bachelor	2
15	Parent	Male	46	N/A	American	Bachelor	2
16	Parent	Female	49	N/A	American	Master	1
17	Parent	Male	51	N/A	American	Bachelor	2
18	Parent	Female	53	N/A	American	Master	2
19	Alumnus	Male	24	2	Malaysian	Bachelor	1
20	Alumnus	Male	23	1	Malaysian	Bachelor	1
21	Alumnus	Female	27	5	Malaysian	Bachelor	1
22	Alumnus	Male	25	3	Malaysian	Bachelor	1
23	Alumnus	Female	24	2	American	Bachelor	1
24	Alumnus	Male	23	1	American	Bachelor	1
25	Alumnus	Female	26	3	American	Bachelor	1
26	Alumnus	Female	25	2	American	Bachelor	1
27	Administrator	Female	28	5	Malaysian	Master	1
28	Administrator	Female	30	6	American	Master	1
29	QA Officer	Female	38	8	N/A	Master	1
30	QA Officer	Male	42	6	N/A	Master	1
31	QA Officer	Male	41	5	N/A	Master	1

**Table 4***Samples of Data Translation from Vietnamese to English (1)*

Participant	Participant's quote in Vietnamese	Participant's quote translated into English
Student 1	Lúc em tốt nghiệp cấp 3 em mới 17 tuổi nên cũng chưa có nhiều kinh nghiệm sống. Em nghĩ là nghe theo lựa chọn của bố mẹ sẽ tốt vì bố mẹ là người đi trước và hiểu được em mạnh hay yếu ở điểm nào	I was only 17 years old when I graduated from high school and I hadn't got much experience about life. I thought what my parents chose for me would be good as they are experienced and they understand my strong and weak points
Parent 2	Chú chọn cho con trai chú học chương trình này vì chú nghĩ nó sẽ dễ dàng kiếm được việc làm hơn sau khi ra trường nếu đạt được những chuẩn đầu ra như trường quảng cáo	When I chose this programme for my son, I thought with those outcomes, it would be easier for him to look for a job after graduation
Alumni 2	Cần thay đổi kết cấu của chương trình và cả phương pháp giảng dạy của giảng viên để giúp sinh viên học được nhiều kinh nghiệm thực tế thông qua các môn học	Changes are needed for the structure of the programme and the way the lecturers deliver their lessons in order to help students have more real life experience through papers
Administrator 1	Những giảng viên thỉnh giảng đó đúng là nên bị khiển trách vì họ hay thay đổi giờ dạy, gây khó khăn cho cả quản lý và sinh viên. Nhưng chúng tôi vẫn cần họ. Họ là những giảng viên có đủ trình độ và kinh nghiệm ở những môn học mà họ phụ trách. Thật chẳng dễ dàng gì để tìm được giảng viên khác thay thế vào những vị trí ấy	These part-time lecturers made sudden changes to their timetables that result in difficulties for us and our students, so they need to be blamed. However, we still need them. They are qualified lecturers with valued experiences in the papers they teach. It is not easy to find other lecturers to fill in their positions
Quality assurance officer 2	Để sắp xếp thời khóa biểu thì cần nhắc lịch sử dụng phòng và thời gian của giảng viên đã là quá đủ việc cho các quản lý rồi. Nếu lại bắt họ cân nhắc cả nhu cầu của sinh viên nữa thì chỉ thêm việc để họ phải làm mà chắc gì đã tốt hơn cho sinh viên.	Considering lecturers' time and room availability is enough for administrators to arrange study timetables. Considering students' needs just add more work for administrators and bring no better timetables to students

#### 4.3.2. Document Analysis

Document analysis as “a qualitative approach focuses on describing and tracking discourse, including words, meanings and themes over time” (Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese, & Schneider, 2008, p. 127). Documents help provide data on the evaluation's context, suggest questions to be asked or situations to be observed, provide supplementary research data, verify findings, and support evidence from other sources (Bowen, 2009). Hence, apart from collecting data through interviews, document analysis was completed as a means of triangulation given that evidence from documents can “minimise bias and establish credibility” (Bowen, 2009, p. 38). According to Flick (2004), if data from interviews are considered verbal, it should be triangulated with the visual data from another independent information source.

In my study, institutional and governmental documents relating to University A's quality management system were collected and analysed with the data from interviews to help reach more robust findings. The documents relating to institutional quality management regulations and statistics of surveys were provided by the University's Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing. The documents relating to transnational programme handbooks, statistics of student numbers from 2004 to 2010, the University's reports to Vietnam National University (VNU) were provided by the University's Department of Student Affairs and Academic Research. The rest of documents were collected by the researcher from the website of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), VNU or University A. When I was in Vietnam, during the time of doing the interviews, I also collected documents that could help me enrich the information I had. The document collection continued afterwards whilst I was analysing data to assist me with the triangulation process. My relationships with the officers of the institution made it easier to ask for help with the provision of documents. The collected documents are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5***List of Documents about Quality Management of TNUPs*

<b>Institutional documents</b>	<b>External documents</b>
Admission requirements of TNUPs (2006 to 2018)	The MOET's regulations on evaluating and ranking secondary and high school students (2011)
Statistics on the number of students of TNUPs (2017)	The government's circular letters about transnational higher education (2001, 2012)
University A's instructions on assessing programmes' quality through gathering stakeholders' feedback (2015)	The government's circular letter about accreditation of higher education institutions (2017)
University A's regulations on activities of its Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing (2015)	List of transnational programmes approved by the MOET (2017)
University A's regulations on organising and administering final exams in TNUPs (2016)	The MOET's regulations on university accreditation (2017)
Programme Handbooks and brochures of TNUPs in English (2010)	The MOET's instructions on how to apply for recognition of international degrees (2019)
University A's report on self-evaluation of TNUPs to the Vietnam National University (2010)	The Government's regulation on collection and management of tuition fees for educational institutions (from 2015–2016 to 2020–2021)
University A's report on the GE programme (2017)	The VNU's instruction on checking and assessing quality of transnational programmes (2012)
University A's report on students' feedback on facilities (2018)	The VNU's instructions about criteria of a research university (2013)
University A's report on local programme graduates' jobs upon graduation (2017)	The VNU's basic statistics of education and training (2015, 2016)
University A's report on students' feedback on papers of TNUPs (2017, 2018)	The VNU's instructions on quality assessment and how to carry out self-evaluation and external evaluation for training programmes (2013)
University A's report on employers' feedback on graduates of local programmes (2017)	

Most of the documents are in Vietnamese except for the programme handbooks of two TNUPs, which are in English. As recorded in Table 5, I have collected several types of documents and divided them into two different folders. Firstly, the admission requirements, the statistics of student enrolments through the years, the University's report on its GE programmes and TNUPs, and the University's regulations and instructions on quality management were compiled and gathered in my "institutional documents" folder. Then there were documents relating to the Vietnam National University and governmental policies concerning quality management in higher education that belonged to my "external documents" folder. I read them many times and underlined and noted down information that I thought might be important and helpful for my evaluation. Apart from that, the information from the documents assisted me in exploring more aspects in the interviews, which I might

not have thought about earlier. All of the information was very meaningful to me as the researcher in shaping an internal and external evaluation as well as acquiring reasonable and valid findings. As many of the documents contain confidential information about the University, I have translated and provided details of selected documents about the University's admission requirements and sample questionnaires of self-evaluation in Appendices H (p. 304) and I (p. 309).

#### **4.4. Ethical Considerations**

Quality is an issue that has always received much attention from both higher education (HE) institutions and students. With all higher education institutions in general, and transnational higher education institutions in particular, this is a crucial factor as it is about academic as well as business matters. If it seems to be easier for domestic programmes to assert their own positions as offshoots of the national education system, transnational programmes may need to exert more effort to be recognised by local customers. The reality is that “nothing attracts customers like quality” (Seymour, 1992, p. 58); therefore, if there is any negative information relating to the quality of the institution, it may have a serious effect on the institution and the students. I was required to apply for the approval of the University of Waikato to carry out my study under the Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations. Then, I emailed the Rector of University A to ask for his permission to undertake the research on his institution. After gaining ethical approval from the University of Waikato and the consent of University A's Rector, I sent letters to the participants of the research, asking for their consent before conducting interviews (see Appendix E (p. 263)). The letters stated that the participants' anonymity would be respected. Furthermore, the participants received an information sheet that told them more about the purpose of this research and explained that all information would remain anonymous (see Appendix D (p. 260)). The participants were able to request brief summaries of the research if they wished to.

To protect the participants as well as the institution, I chose to follow the set of foundational ethical principles introduced by Kitchener and Anderson (2011). These are non-maleficence, beneficence, respect for a person's autonomy, fidelity, and justice. These principles together with the *Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations* of the University of Waikato's Human Research Ethics Committee acted as my code of conduct in doing this research. The full explanation of my utilisation of these ethical principles in the research is as follows:

#### **4.4.1. Principle 1: Non-Maleficence**

Non-maleficence means causing no harm to people, including not intentionally harming or participating in activities that are harmful to others (Kitchener & Anderson, 2011). In this research, the people who consented to participate must not have been harmed or caused harm to other participants. The information they provided to me may affect the reputation as well as the business of the institution; therefore, there may be potential threat to them if someone knows that they gave me such information. Hence, I needed to make sure that their interviews with me were confidential and no one knew who participated in my study, even the participants themselves. This was to keep them safe and avoid any trouble that may have arisen due to the sharing of information.

#### **4.4.2. Principle 2: Beneficence**

Beneficence means bringing good things or benefits to others and consists of two aspects: undertaking activities that contribute to people's general well-being and avoiding potentially harmful ones (Kitchener & Anderson, 2011). Doing no harm to some extent means bringing benefits to people, but harm or benefits may be understood from different viewpoints. Therefore, in this study, I consciously reflected upon every issue that I thought may affect the participants, avoided the harmful ones, and tried as much as possible to enhance the beneficial. Anything that the participants thought beneficial to them and suitable

in the scope of the study was also considered. There were some people who agreed to participate at the beginning but wanted to change their decision prior to the interviews. I accepted that because the information must be provided willingly. If they considered that the information they provided might cause problems and would like to withdraw the words, their wish was respected. The aim of this research was to gain deeper understanding and stronger support for quality management mechanisms so that they would benefit participants in the long run. Individual interviews were conducted in private to ensure no information about the participants would be known by a third party. This was to protect the participants from being harmed in one way or another.

#### **4.4.3. Principle 3: Respect for a Person's Autonomy**

Autonomy means “freedom of actions and freedom of choice” (Kitchener & Anderson, 2011, p. 29). Respect for a person's autonomy means respect for their right in doing things and making choices even when the things they do or the choices they make are in conflict with the rights of other people (Kitchener & Anderson, 2011). In this research, if the people I talked with thought that my research was meaningful to them and it was worth spending time and providing information, they were more likely to be enthusiastic. Even if there had been any participants who wanted to change their mind and withdraw from their role as participants any time prior to data analysis, I respected their decisions.

#### **4.4.4. Principle 4: Fidelity**

Fidelity is claimed to cover three principles: “faithfulness, promise keeping, and truthfulness” (Ramsey, 1970, as cited in Kitchener & Anderson, 2011). In other words, fidelity means making a strong and meaningful relationship between humans by being honest, trustworthy, and consistently keeping promises (Kitchener & Anderson, 2011). I agree that fidelity should be the basis of every positive or beneficial relationship. Hence, in order to gain the participants' cooperation, I was honest to them about the aims and the approaches of my

research. Besides, when I insisted on doing no harm to them and respecting their rights to participate, such arrangements were always kept. The participants answered the interview questions in Vietnamese, and I carefully translated their responses into English to ensure that their ideas were captured exactly as they intended. The participants also had the right to look at their transcripts and make amendments if they wished. They also had the right to be kept informed about relevant outcomes of the research. This increased the likelihood that their contribution to this research would be of personal value to them.

#### **4.4.5. Principle 5: Justice**

Justice, in a broader sense, means fairness, but in research, it means people developing regulations and procedures to judge and classify claims in a fair manner (Kitchener & Anderson, 2011). In this research, the ideas all participants were all listened to and compared and contrasted in order to ascertain a more complete picture. Furthermore, all participants' ideas and their roles in contributing to the whole story were equally valued regardless of their present position, age, or experience.

#### **4.5. My Researcher Stance when Undertaking the Evaluation**

Determining my status as an insider or outsider of the community I was studying is very important to me as it might affect my interpretation of their viewpoints when receiving participants' ideas. "Insider research refers to when researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members (Kanuha, 2000) so that the researcher shares an identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants (Asselin, 2003)" (as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 56). Meanwhile, "outsider research is where the researcher is not previously familiar with the setting and people s/he is researching" (Hellowell, 2006, p. 485). As mentioned previously, I used to be an administrator of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university; therefore, I was obviously aware of the transnational higher education system of Vietnam. I could be viewed as an insider when I shared the same identity, language, and

experiences as the participants. Hence, choosing to be an insider in this situation might be advantageous due to my understanding of the research context and participants (Kanuha, 2000). However, because the research setting is in a state-controlled university of Vietnam, it could limit the usage of Western approaches to data gathering, particularly by an insider. Such a disadvantage originates from the cultural values of Vietnam that prevent stakeholders from expressing their truly critical viewpoints about people in authority at the University (Ninh, 2022; Vu, 2020). The disadvantage might have been worse if the participants knew that I used to work for the University and had connections with the staff. As a result, I would like to be perceived as an outsider who was carrying out this research with a view to having a deeper understanding about quality management mechanisms, and I should be consciously aware, as emphasised by Asselin (2003), of keeping my eyes open but assuming that I knew nothing about the subjects being studied (as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Although being an insider was easier for me to gather information or to gain contact with people, it may have been more difficult for me to be objective as an outsider. Nevertheless, I agree with Dwyer and Buckle (2009) that the important thing is maintaining “an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one’s research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience” (p. 59). Even though my role as an insider was in the past, it still existed in a sense; it partly affected my purpose for doing this research, which is for the sake of students as well as for the sake of transnational higher education in Vietnam.

#### **4.6. Handling the Raw Data**

As described in the section about interviews, I asked the participants to carry out individual interviews with me at times and places that were most convenient for them. I also asked for their permission to record the interviews because it would be easier for both me and them to follow our discussion. I promised them that their information would remain

anonymous. However, all the participants preferred not to be recorded as they worried that their voices might be listened to by a third party. Respecting their wish, I prepared a notebook to jot down all the conversations I had with the participants. This took me a lot of time and effort to listen to them, talk to them, and take notes at the same time without leaving out any important words or phrases. After each interview, I transferred all the paperwork to a separate file on my personal computer and protected it with a password in order to not let anyone else open it apart from me. Sharing the view of Kitchener and Anderson (2011) about doing no harm, assuring benefit, and respecting participants' autonomy, I sent a file of each conversation to the relevant participant to check if they wanted to change anything. When a participant wanted to change what they had said, I edited their ideas in the corresponding files. The transcripts used for data analysis were the ones in which information was agreed upon by participants.

#### **4.7. Data Analysis Using Inductive and Deductive Analysis Approaches**

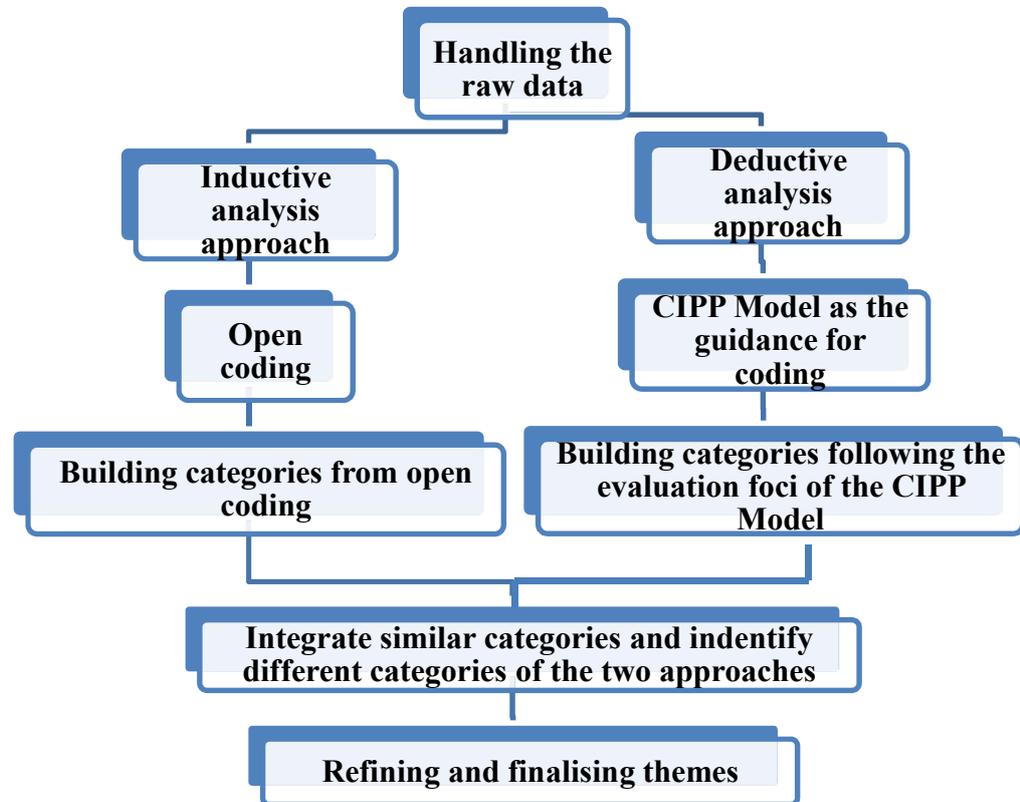
After collecting data, researchers process data and analyse the data. These are essential steps that focus on exploring concepts and themes in the data in order to answer the research questions (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). The processing of data analysis requires careful, proficient skills as well as structured and conscientious methodology (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

Within this study, I decided to apply both inductive and deductive approaches to analyse the data. There have been many approaches or traditions mentioned by researchers as useful in analysing qualitative data, but generally, they are mainly framed according to two main approaches: inductive and deductive (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, E., & Chadwick, 2008; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2006). The deductive approach is used when there is already a framework or theory, and the researcher uses the data to test or investigate the theory in a new context or situation. In contrast, the inductive approach analyses data without

having any prior framework or theory, and a framework is inferred from the data (Burnard et al., 2008). In comparison, the deductive approach is assumed to be quicker and easier; however, it can be limited in terms of developing themes and theories as the coding framework is already fixed (Burnard et al., 2008). Furthermore, in evaluation research, the inductive approach is claimed to be the most common approach, although it may be time-consuming (Burnard et al., 2008), because “it does provide a simple, straightforward approach for deriving findings linked to focused evaluation questions” (Thomas, 2006, p. 246). Figure 4 illustrates how the two approaches are combined in my data analysis phase.

**Figure 4**

*Analysing Data Using both Inductive and Deductive Analysis Approach*



As shown in Figure 4, after the raw data was handled carefully, I started to conduct the data analysis following the two approaches. The deductive approach based “analysis on pre-existing theory” (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013, p. 3) that is the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) Model in this research. The four evaluation foci of the CIPP Model were used to create a start list of categories aligned with the research questions and consists of context assessment, input assessment, process assessment, and product assessment (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These preliminary codes, as a set of guidance, made it easier for the researcher to put the data into relevant categories. However, I had to be careful not to press the data into these existing categories, when there was data that did not belong to only one category (Gale et al., 2013). On the other hand, the inductive analysis approach was

conducted without any predetermined codes. Building categories following the inductive analysis approach firstly required me to read and understand thoroughly what was said by the participants to ensure not to miss any important information (Bradley, Curry, & Devers, 2007; Thomas, 2006). The next step was the creation of categories in which “the evaluator is able to identify and defines categories or themes... from actual phrases or meanings in specific text segments” (Thomas, 2006, p. 241). Following on from this and based on the evaluation objectives, I labelled the segments of text to create categories. After the data was coded and categories were created following the two approaches, they were compared to identify the similarities as well as discrepancies. With this step, I had a more in-depth look into the data and also identified the links between the two sets of categories. The groups/clusters of categories were then created, and themes were finalised based on refining clusters of categories (Azungah, 2018).

#### **4.8. Summary**

In this fourth chapter, I have reviewed the evaluation methodology that I adopted to carry out my research. The methodology consists of eight primary stages starting from identifying the purposes of my evaluation including assessing the present quality management system applied to TNUPs of University A through selected stakeholders’ voices, and exploring how to enhance the efficacy of the system to meet stakeholders’ needs. The objectives of the evaluation helped me as the researcher determine the research questions. To answer the research questions, the CIPP model of (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014) that comprised four foci: context, input, process and product assessments was adopted. The next stage was choosing the research participants who were students, parents, alumni, administrators, and quality assurance officers whose voices could contribute to stronger findings for the research. A number of methods for data collection were considered. Individual interviews and document analysis were chosen to triangulate the data from the

interviews as information from documents could reduce the bias and improve the reliability for information from interviews (Bowen, 2009). The research has followed the *Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations* of the University of Waikato's Human Research Ethics Committee as well as a set of foundational ethical principles introduced by Kitchener and Anderson (2011). During the data collection phase, I tried to minimise any preconceptions gained from once being an insider and maintaining some detachment as an outsider. Both the inductive and deductive analysis approaches were used for data analysis as I believed their integration was effective to help me answer the research questions. The results of my data analysis or the findings of this research are detailed in Chapter Five.

## Chapter 5 Findings

This chapter provides readers with information found after the data from interviews and document analysis were analysed. The findings are presented in relation to the criteria for self-evaluation of transnational undergraduate programmes introduced by the Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU) as I believe these criteria cover the answers to my research questions (see Appendix G (p. 276)). The link between the CIPP model, the research questions, and these criteria, which is also the reason for my presentation of the research findings, is explained as follows before the research findings are presented in the rest of the chapter.

### 5.1. The Link between the CIPP Model, the Research Questions and the Self-Evaluation Criteria of the VNU

The reason for my choice of presenting the research findings is illustrated in Figure 6, which describes the link between the CIPP model, the research questions, and the criteria of self-evaluation for transnational programmes introduced by the VNU.

#### Figure 5

*The Link between the CIPP Model, the Research Questions, and the VNU's Self-Evaluation Criteria*



In Figure 5, the research questions, placed at the centre, were posed to explore selected stakeholders' views about the quality of TNUPs. To answer the research questions, the CIPP

model was adopted. The interview questions for participants were designed following the CIPP model, and the documents were collected for the purposes of the CIPP's evaluation foci. The themes found after data analysis were based on the integration of categories built on the CIPP model and categories built on open coding. Each evaluation focus consists of themes that suitable for it. For example, the context evaluation involves TNUP output standards, the input evaluation involves TNUP structures and contents, teaching and learning resources, and teaching staff, the process evaluation includes student support, recruiting learners, and carrying out assessment, the product evaluation includes programme outcomes. There were also themes that can belong to more than one evaluation foci. For example, the feedback of alumni and employers related to process and product evaluations, the role of administrators connects to context and input evaluations, or the quality of teaching activities associates with process and product evaluations. The presentation of the findings should cover all of these themes as well as emphasise on answering the research questions. As a result, the self-evaluation criteria for TNUPs introduced by the VNU were chosen. These criteria cover all facets of TNUPs that students experience if they study in these programmes so their scope matches the scope of the CIPP model (see Appendix G (p. 276)). The criteria also consider the vested interest of stakeholders of TNUPs and the impacts of their activities on TNUPs' quality. Hence, investigating how TNUPs met these criteria can answer the research questions. The themes and subthemes presented in the findings are summarised in Table 6 following the sequence of how they are reported in this chapter.

**Table 6***Key Themes and Sub-themes Presented in the Findings*

<b>Key themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>1. Structures and contents of Transnational Undergraduate Programmes (TNUPs)</b>	Length of TNUPs Papers of TNUPs The General English (GE) programme
<b>2. Output standards of TNUPs</b>	Students and parents' perception Alumni's perception
<b>3. Teaching and learning resources</b>	Facilities and education services Learning materials
<b>4. Teaching staff</b>	Qualifications Lectures
<b>5. Learners</b>	Admission requirements Recruitment process
<b>6. Implementation process</b>	Enrolment process Tuition fees Timetables
<b>7. Quality of teaching activities</b>	Teaching quality in the GE programme Teaching quality in the university programmes
<b>8. Administrators' role</b>	Effectiveness of administrators' work Administrators' workload
<b>9. Assessment system</b>	Effectiveness of the system Objectivity of the system
<b>10. Student support</b>	Scholarships Extracurricular activities
<b>11. Feedback of current students</b>	Collection of feedback Responses to feedback
<b>12. Quality assurance system</b>	Effectiveness of quality assurance system Difficulties of quality assurance system
<b>13. Staff development</b>	Staff's self-evaluation The University's plan for staff development
<b>14. Programme outcomes</b>	International bachelor's degree recognition Expectation for work-related knowledge and skills
<b>15. Feedback of alumni and employers</b>	Feedback of alumni Feedback of employers

The findings are drawn from the results of individual interviews with participants and the analysis of documents relating to the quality management system of TNUPs. Accordingly, participants' quotes and information from documents are used to support the themes. I interviewed five groups of participants: students (S), parents (P), alumni (Al), administrators (Ad), and quality assurance (QA) officers. To protect the participants' anonymity, acronyms were used (for example, Student 1 is named S1). Also, the numbers after the acronyms of students, parents and alumni refer to the programme they belong to. S1 to S4, P1 to P6, and

A11 to A14 are students, parents and alumni of the Malaysian TNUP. Similarly, S5 to S8, P7 to P10, and A15 to A18 are students, parents and alumni of the American TNUP.

## **5.2. The Research Findings**

### **5.2.1. The Structures and Contents of TNUPs**

University A's TNUPs are all franchise programmes where the franchise education provider in country A grants an institution in the host country B the rights to deliver its programme in country B or other countries. Accordingly, the qualifications are awarded by the franchise education provider in country A (Dos Santos, 2002; Knight, 2006; Naidoo, 2009). As a result, it is understandable that the programmes' structures and the contents of TNUPs in University A follow the structures and contents designed by the partner universities with the exception of the General English programme (GE programme).

The length of the GE programme ranges from three months to one year. This is tailored by the University for students whose English has not yet reached the level required to start a university programme. The main reason for this is that all subjects in TNUPs must be taught in English, and students need a certain level of English language proficiency to study in them. The TNUPs in English offer students a chance to gain both professional knowledge and English language proficiency. Successful delivery of these courses requires the students to possess a certain level of English language proficiency. The following is an overview of the two full-time TNUPs' structures in English:

#### ***5.2.1.1. The TNUP Collaborating with the Malaysian Partner***

The Malaysian partner is a university located in the centre of Kuala Lumpur – the capital of Malaysia. It offers a wide range of programmes covering business, law, management, economics, IT, the social sciences, and the humanities at undergraduate and graduate levels. It is an international university with a large foreign student population from 80 countries such as China, Indonesia, France, Denmark, Maldives, Mauritius, Vietnam,

Korea, India, Africa, the Middle East and others. It has also developed partnerships with universities in the UK, the USA, Australia, and France. It is the first private higher education institution in Malaysia to obtain the ISO 9001:2000 under AJA Malaysia, a Management Systems International Certification Body and Training Provider. Its programmes are accredited by the Malaysian Ministry of Education, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the Multimedia Development Corporation and many other universities in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA (VNU-IS, 2010a).

The programme structure is provided by the partner university and is approved by the Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU). Every year, the VNU sets a quota of 50 new recruits for this TNUP. The curriculum includes 32 compulsory papers and one graduation thesis. The curriculum has been designed to fulfil the requirements of professional accounting bodies like CPA Australia, ACCA, ICAEW, MIA and many others where exemptions can be obtained. All the textbooks and syllabuses are provided by the partner university. Students of the TNUP share the same campus with students of other programmes at the University. Students who are eligible to study in the university programme will study for four years in total including one year pre-university and three years of the university programme. There are two semesters in a year, each lasts for five months and includes from three to five compulsory papers. A paper has four contact hours per week and from ten to twelve hours for revision. There are 29 Vietnamese lecturers, including 15 Masters and 14 PhDs, teaching in the university programme. 18 of the lecturers are contracted staff, and 11 are tenured lecturers. The Vietnamese lecturers are charged with the responsibility of teaching all the papers and setting some assignments and continuous assessment questions. The lecturers from the partner universities are charged with the responsibility of providing revision for students and setting the mid-term and final exam questions. Graduates are awarded a Bachelor Degree of Business (Accounting) (Hons) by the Malaysian university (VNU-IS, 2010c).

### ***5.2.1.2. The TNUP Collaborating with the American Partner***

The American partner is an independent higher education institution, aged more than 100 years, and located in New York. It has a 157- acre campus situated on the shore of a lake. It offers 26 majors within eight academic divisions ranging from education, business management, social sciences, applied sciences to social work, arts, nursing, and occupational therapy. It is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. All of the business programs offered by this university are accredited by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) (VNU-IS, 2010a).

Similar to the collaboration with the Malaysian partner, the programme structure is provided by the American partner university and approved by Vietnam National University, Hanoi. Every year, the VNU sets a quota of 150 new recruits for this TNUP. The curriculum includes 42 papers that equates to 120 credits. All the textbooks and syllabuses are provided by the partner university. Students of the TNUP share the same campus with students of other programmes at the University. There are two semesters in a year, each lasts for five months and includes from five to six compulsory papers. A paper has four contact hours per week and from ten to twelve hours for revision. American lecturers are in charge of 10 papers, and Vietnamese lecturers are in charge of the rest. The lecturer of each paper teaches the students and sets up all the assignments and exam questions in the paper. There are 26 Vietnamese lecturers, including 18 Masters and 8 PhDs, teaching in the university programme. 16 of the lecturers are contracted staff, and 10 are tenured lecturers. Graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management by the American university (VNU-IS, 2010c).

#### *The Length of TNUPs*

The programme structures and content of the TNUPs were expected to be “modern” and “appropriate” for the majority of students (as mentioned by participant S3). Nevertheless,

almost all students had complaints about the modified structure that the University had developed for its GE programme. For many stakeholders (5/8 students, 8/10 parents, and 7/8 alumni), the fact that the TNUPs programmes were longer than the domestic programmes led to discomfort.

S1 expressed concern when comparing the length of TNUPs with other local programmes. According to S1, the duration of the TNUPs was too long and can become problematic: “It affects our financial ability and also our passion for studying”. Although a real complaint about the length of TNUPs was not mentioned in S3’s comment, indicates that some signs of dissatisfaction were evident: “If a student has good English, he/she can pass the general English programme and study the university programme without any complications. In this case, the programme will last three and a half years or four years, which is the same as the local programmes”. S3’s viewpoint indirectly showed an expectation that TNUPs could be made shorter than the current ones.

Parents also agreed with students’ ideas when being asked about the structure of TNUPs. P4 said,

I agree that there should be a general English programme, but the university needs to consider the total length of the course. We all compare this university programme with other local programmes, and we consider spending 5 years studying to be unreasonable.

On one side, P4 agreed with the University about the necessity of the GE programme, but on the other, P4 wanted TNUPs to have the same length as local programmes of other universities, which would be three and a half years to four years instead of four to five years like TNUPs. The administrators of TNUPs also had varying viewpoints regarding TNUPs. Ad1 said that it “is too long for students and limits their job opportunities because they may graduate later than their friends in other universities”. When saying this, Ad1 seemed to share

the same expectation with students and parents about shorter TNUPs. Unlike Ad1, Ad2 considered the structure to be “suitable for students” with no need for changes.

*The Papers of TNUPs*

Apart from stakeholder’s thoughts about the length of the courses, it is important to consider how students felt about the papers they were studying. Students’ feedback was collected in 2016/17 and 2017/18 via “*The Questionnaire to Collect Students’ Feedback about the Papers of University Programmes*” conducted by the University (Questionnaire 1 – Appendix I (p. 284)). Students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements relating to the papers completed. These included whether papers aligned with the syllabuses, had logical contents, had updated contents, had proper materials, and contributed to students’ professional knowledge and skills (see Appendix I (p. 284)).

In 2016/17, 1072 students participated in the survey, of which, 257 were students of TNUPs in English. The students’ feedback in this academic year is summarised in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Students' Feedback about the Papers of TNUPs (2016/17)*

Statement	Totally agree/Agree	Totally disagree/Disagree
The papers were aligned with the syllabuses	89.48	10.52
The papers had logical contents	89.01	10.99
The papers had updated contents	91.33	8.67
The papers had proper materials	90.44	9.56
The papers contributed to students’ professional knowledge and skills	90.01	9.99

*Note.* Adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the Papers of TNUPs (2017)*. VNU-IS Source. Copyright 2017 by VNU-IS.

Table 7 indicates that from 89-90% of the students had positive feedback on the papers they studied (VNU-IS, 2017d). The number of students who agreed that the papers they studied met the criteria about subject contents, materials, knowledge, and skills outweighed the

number of students who disagreed. Some students complained that the textbooks did not provide them with enough information to do the tasks they were assigned.

In 2017/18, 1199 students from both local and transnational undergraduate programmes participated in the survey, of which, 256 were students of TNUPs in English. The students' feedback is summarised in Table 8:

**Table 8**

*Students' Feedback about the Papers of TNUPs (2017/18)*

Statement	Totally agree/Agree	Totally disagree/Disagree
The papers were aligned with the syllabuses	94.99	5.01
The papers had logical contents	93.66	6.34
The papers had updated contents	94.84	5.16
The papers had proper materials	95.46	4.54
The papers contributed to students' professional knowledge and skills	94.76	5.24

*Note.* Adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the Papers of TNUPs (2018)*. VNU-IS Source. Copyright 2018 by VNU-IS.

As can be seen in Table 8, the results of the second survey were very positive. More than 93% students agreed with all of the statements about the papers they studied (VNU-IS, 2018a).

### *The General English Programme*

As mentioned above, in the structures of TNUPs, the GE programme is compulsory for students who do not meet the English language requirements. Although all of the interviewed students agreed that the GE programme was necessary because students should be proficient in English to study in the university programmes, 5/8 students still expressed their concern about the length of this programme. If a student starts from the GE programme and studies step by step, they may finish the TNUP up to five years later.

P5, whose child had to study the GE programme before entering the university programme was worried enough to say, "I don't understand why he needs to spend one more

year studying only English”. The same concerns were echoed by P10 when P10 stated, “Students normally feel bored if they have to study longer than four years, and I think their parents have the same feeling”. P10 considered this a common feeling among parents when their children had to spend a long time studying in TNUPs due to the existence of the GE programme. Sharing the same concern with P5, S8 worried about losing job opportunities when they had completed the GE programme but still had four years to complete the TNUP: “We don’t want to spend too much time studying here when there are many job opportunities waiting for us out there”. S8 also emphasised that, “It should be shortened so that the students can graduate sooner”.

A13 who studied the GE programme and graduated after five years admitted, “The programme took students a long time to complete and could affect their interest in learning, or reduce their opportunities for future careers”. S6 who had to study the GE programme indicated that their friends had finished TNUPs in four years, and they had taken five years to finish. This was a viewpoint shared by A14 when recalling the time spent in the GE programme. A14 stated, “This was very stressful for me and my friends”. 5/8 students hoped that the length of the GE programme could be changed so that the total length of the whole programme would be changed too.

University A also collected students’ feedback on the GE programme via “*The Questionnaire to Collect Students’ Feedback about the General English Programme*” conducted in 2016/17 (Questionnaire 2 – Appendix I (p. 286)). In the survey, students were required to provide their feedback about the GE programme with regard to their general feeling about the programme’s quality, the curriculum distribution, the assessment system, the materials, the knowledge and skills provided, and the University’s support for GE students in terms of facilities and staff support. Students were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements given in the questionnaire by the University. The results were

summarised and reported to the rector of the University. The data was collected over 23 days from 250 students of the GE programme. These students enrolled for both TNUPs and local programmes but studied together in the GE programme as the GE programme is compulsory for both local and TNUPs. The students' feedback about the GE Programme is summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9**

*Students' Feedback about the GE Programme (2016/17)*

Statement	Totally agree/ Agree	Totally disagree/ Disagree
Generally, you feel satisfied with the GE programme	82.4	17.6
The assessment system is appropriate	88.8	11.2
The total contact hours are distributed properly for different types of learning	79.6	20.4
The materials are updated	84	16
The programme provides students with useful knowledge and skill	84	16
The facilities meet students' needs	82.5	17.5
Students are assisted promptly by the University staff	82.4	17.6

*Note.* Adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the GE Programme (2017)*. VNU-IS Source. Copyright 2017 by VNU-IS.

Students' feedback about the GE programme and its assessment system was positive with over 79% of students agreeing with all the statements they were asked (VNU-IS, 2017c).

Apart from that, the students expressed some other ideas about the assessment system.

Students worried that the exam questions did not reflect what students had been taught, and they expected to have revision materials that were more closely aligned to the exam questions. Students' also considered that the level of difficulty in assessment questions was likely to affect their study results (VNU-IS, 2017c). As mentioned by students when talking about the length of TNUPs, TNUPs were longer than other local programmes because of the GE programme. Also, according to the handbooks of both TNUPs, students who fail the final exam of a paper have only one chance to retake the exam. If students fail the resit exam, they must re-enroll in the paper, and their course will be longer accordingly. Hence, apart from the

GE programme, the study results have a very close relationship to the length of the TNUPs. With regard to the programme content, students' feedback involved the distribution of contact hours, materials, and knowledge and skills provided by the programme. It can be seen from Table 9 that 79–84% of the students responded positively with the statements about the programmes content.

Apart from the statistics provided, the report also summarised students' thoughts about issues relating to the GE programme content. In relation to skills development in the programme, students were concerned that there were not many examples of sentence structure and sentence building in the coursebook lessons, and there was not enough time given for listening, reading and writing skills. With regard to materials, students thought that the materials for reading were not varied enough, and the reference materials were rather limited (VNU-IS, 2017c). Although responses were provided anonymously and in general terms they could provide a basis for the University to consider improvements to the GE programme in terms of the allocation of time for language skills and the quality of material resources.

In regards to the University's support for the GE programme, students' feedback was about facilities and staff support. The responses indicated strong support from the facilities and the staff of the GE programme. More than 80% of the respondents confirmed that they were satisfied with the services provided, but they were still concerned about some issues. Although students agreed that the facilities of the GE programme met their needs, they thought projectors, lights, class atmosphere, and the Internet should be improved. The administrators were considered strongly supportive in all activities relating to students, but there were times when they were not professional in their work such as showing uncomfortable attitudes towards students coming to ask questions, or reluctantly giving insufficient answers to students' questions. It seemed that the University's handling of GE students' feedback was not positive, and as a result students still expected more effective

actions from the University to show that their views were seriously considered (VNU-IS, 2017c).

### **5.2.2. The Output Standards of TNUPs**

TNUPs have their own advantages such as the international degrees and chances to integrate with international workplaces. It is easy to understand why people, especially students and their parents, pay attention to the advertised output standards of TNUPs. When asked what they thought about the output standards published by the university, almost all students interviewed (6/8 students) replied that those standards were very “attractive” and “promising”. S7 even asserted, “They [the output standards] are the only reasons why I chose this university”.

When asked the same questions, the interviewed parents also shared their positive viewpoints about the output standards of the University, although they agreed that achieving all of those standards depended on their children’s ability. Furthermore, the parents tended to focus on the job opportunities that their children might have after graduation. P3 said,

Our family has prepared a future job for my child, and we are only waiting for him to get his bachelor’s degree to [start] work. This is because we have seen the advertised output standards of the programme, and we think that if he gains such outcomes when he graduates, he can do that job very well.

Some parents emphasised the importance of English language proficiency when choosing the University’s TNUPs for their children. They even linked the English language proficiency with the job opportunities. P1 stated that, “I think if my child studies a transnational programme, she will have many chances to get good jobs because she is good at English. That was one of the standards they published when we considered this programme”. This viewpoint was echoed by P6: “I think she will have many good job opportunities if she is good at English. It was what the university promised my daughter when she applied for this programme”.

All of the interviewed alumni, who have graduated from TNUPs and have achieved the output standards, indicated that the output standards were not exaggerated and studying at TNUPs provided them with more future opportunities. The alumni said that graduates from TNUPs who have good English and international bachelor's degrees are often highly sought after by employers. However, the alumni shared the same viewpoint with their parents about the relationship between students' ability and the output standards they could achieve. An example of this opinion is A11's statement: "...the most important thing is each person's effort, if students don't look for chances, the chances will never come to them".

### **5.2.3. The Teaching and Learning Resources**

According to *The University's Report on its TNUPs to the VNU in 2010*, the University has 30 classrooms for language learning with space available for 10 to 20 students, 22 lecture halls with space available for 40 to 100 students, two computer rooms with 35 computers each, Wi-Fi included (VNU-IS, 2010c, p. 6). The classrooms and lecture halls are equipped with lights, air-conditioners, projectors, computers, speakers, and Wi-Fi. The university library has more than 10,000 books, of which more than 6,000 are in English. There are also computers and free Wi-Fi in the library to assist students in searching for online learning materials and using electronic libraries of partner universities. This is expected to give students of TNUPs many advantages in their study at the University, but whether the students agreed with this is another issue.

#### **5.2.3.1. The Facilities and Education Services**

Regarding the University's facilities for TNUPs, the students shared different views. Under half of the interviewed students (3/8) were positive about the facilities. S2 said, "The facilities are enough for us to study". Mentioning "how enough" depends on each person's own criteria. Others also clearly showed their satisfaction with the facilities. S4 complimented

the facilities: “The University’s facilities are very good”. S5’s optimistic viewpoint about facilities was described in detail:

The university has a lab room which consists of many computers for us to study. Apart from that, we can get access to the electronic databases via the computers in the library. Each classroom has a projector and an air conditioner which helps us to be more comfortable studying during summertime.

In contrast, other students (5/8 students) were quite critical about the facilities. S6 noted that, “The classrooms are shabby”. S6’s opinion was echoed by S8 who said, “The University’s facilities are fine, but they are not so modern. The computer systems and the Internet need to be upgraded”. Five out of 10 interviewed parents considered that the facilities were good enough for their children to study, compared to the other half who seemed not to be really satisfied with the facilities. P4 agreed with their child’s viewpoint when they said,

My daughter says that the facilities are not so modern. I have been to the university several times, and I must agree with her. It is not a big problem, but the university should invest more in its facilities, if possible.

P5 added more detailed information indicated that: “There are some things about the facilities that should be improved including widening the small library with little space for students; more frequent maintenance for classroom facilities such as projectors, air-conditioners, lights, and improvement of the Wi-Fi”.

When talking about the facilities, the students’ least positive comments were about the Internet or the Wi-Fi speed specifically. S1 complained, “The Wi-Fi is unstable.” S7 agreed with a stronger complaint: “The Wi-Fi is so slow; and as a result it is not helpful for us when searching for information or getting access to the online databases.” The Internet received considerable feedback from TNUP students because using the online library to get access to international databases is very important to them. Even the parents had very clear ideas suggesting that the University’s Wi-Fi system was not efficient enough for students to use and

to study with. Whilst P6, did not think students really needed Wi-Fi for their study, he understood his son’s complaint about the bad Wi-Fi:

My son said that the Wi-Fi is bad. I don’t think students really need Wi-Fi for their study, but according to my son, they have to surf the Internet to get access to necessary information for their study from the partner university, the administrators and also for their assignments.

Of the two administrators interviewed, Ad1 agreed with those students who thought the University assets were “not appropriate enough to assist TNUP students because of the low quality of classrooms”.

To better understand the students’ ideas about its facilities and education services, the University surveyed students in 2016/17 and 2017/18. The feedback was collected twice in each academic year via questionnaires. The students were required to state if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the education services and the facilities provided (VNU-IS, 2018c). The results of all the questionnaires collected in two continuous academic years are summarised in Table 10:

**Table 10**  
*Students' Feedback about the University's Education Services and Facilities (2016/17 and 2017/18)*

Issue	Year of survey	Number of students participated	Students' feedback	
			Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Education Services	2016/17 (1st time)	75	0	75
	2016/17 (2nd time)	75	0	75
	2017/18 (1st time)	86	0	86
	2017/18 (2nd time)	54	0	54
Facilities	2016/17 (1st time)	75	0	75
	2016/17 (2nd time)	75	0	75
	2017/18 (1st time)	86	32	54
	2017/18 (2nd time)	54	0	54

*Note.* Adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the University’s Education Services and Facilities (2016/17) and (2017/18)*. VNU-IS Source. Copyright 2018 by VNU-IS.

The results showed in Table 10 are quite positive and suggested that most of the students were satisfied with the education services and facilities provided by the University (VNU-IS, 2018c). There was an issue in the first survey of 2017/18 when 32/86 (nearly 40%) students stated that they were not satisfied with the facilities. In the second survey of 2017/18, the results were positive again. These statistics reflected that when students gave feedback about the facilities, the University took some action.

In their answers to the University's questionnaires, there were some negative comments made by the students about the slow Wi-Fi, broken air-conditioners, some dirty lecture halls, the need for adding more supplementary materials in the library, and a campus with insufficient space for extra-curricular activities. Students hoped to be informed about the tuition fees one month prior to each semester so that they could have enough time to prepare. Students also expected that the administrators and staff of the bursary section should be able to provide clear explanations to students regarding questions they had about tuition fees. Students complained that the changes in classrooms or notices of a lecturer's absence needed to be provided in a timely manner by the administrators because many students received notification after they had arrived at the university. Students considered that the librarians and some administrators were not as enthusiastic as they might be when supporting students and answering questions. The questions could be about when books students required could be available, whether the exam results would be released in the morning or in the afternoon, or whether students could be considered for sitting the final exam whilst they were absent more than 75% of the contact hours. Students indicated that some administrators and teachers failed to reply to students' emails in a timely manner. Students also considered that the timetable for the next semester should be provided by the administrators in a timely manner, indicating that this should be at least two weeks before the old semester ended. This would provide students time to prepare for the following semester (VNU-IS, 2018c).

Even though the statistics illustrate quite positive viewpoints about facilities and education services, students still had some concerns about the facilities in classrooms, the availability of extracurricular activities, and the ability of the University staff to communicate effectively. This could indicate that the University did not pay enough attention to facility issues, or that students expected more from the University.

### ***5.2.3.2. The Learning Materials***

In relation to learning materials, it was stated in *The Handbooks of TNUPs* that all the textbooks and learning materials of TNUPs are sent from partner universities (VNU-IS, 2010a). All of the interviewed students stated that they received their learning materials after the semester had started, and the materials were often considered out-of-date. Half of the students who were interviewed expressed their dissatisfaction about this. S1 complained, “Materials dated in the 1990s were used for accounting and finance papers”. S2 indicated that,

We have a very big textbook in every subject, and we need to read this before we attend the lectures; I think the university should provide us with textbooks at least 1 month before each semester instead of 1 week as is the case. We would then have time for self-study.

Given that the textbooks are all provided by the partner universities, the blame for lateness might fall at the feet of the partner universities. S6 did not seek to lay all the blame on the domestic University, suggesting that, “I know it is not the university’s responsibility, but they should have some recommendations to the partner university about this”. Students also seemed to be having difficulties with understanding the content of the textbooks. S2 noted, “The textbooks are in English, so it is not easy for us to read and understand everything”. S4 also had a view on the suitability and the availability of the materials suggesting that “the course materials are dated and not always available in the library because their numbers are limited”. S4 highlighted the out-dated textbooks noting that “many books and materials were published as far back as 1995 or 2000”.

When asked about the issues of late provision and out-dated materials, some parents' concerns were somewhat different. Their concerns were not about late provision or out-of-date information. They were dissatisfied with the fact that they had to pay for their children's materials given that were only photocopies. P8 reinforced this by saying, "My child has to borrow books from the library, takes photocopies and pays for them by himself. These costs aren't included in the tuition fees. I think the university should pay for this to support students."

#### **5.2.4. The Teaching Staff**

Another important aspect of every university or programme is the quality of teaching staff. More than half of the teaching staff of the University are freelancers who come from other universities or organisations. The parents were satisfied that the University lecturers were highly qualified and enthusiastic. P1 stated, "I think it deserves the tuition fee I pay for my child." What students cared about was not where lecturers came from, but the teaching quality they brought to the TNUPs. Generally, the students were happy when their lecturers were "well qualified" or "graduated from overseas universities", but some students wondered about their lecturers' style of teaching. S8 commented, "...some of them don't have good English speaking skills, and sometimes I feel sleepy when listening to their lectures." Sharing S8's viewpoint, S5 said, "Some lecturers do not have 'good' teaching methods, although their knowledge is very good". S7's statement is an example of a student finding it harder to understand the lessons because of the lecturer's teaching manner, "When I read the book at home, I thought that this paper would not be so challenging to study. However, the lecturer's way of explaining terms made me confused and feel that this paper was very difficult". S2, who had already thought that "the textbooks' contents were not easy to understand", added,

I expected to be enlightened by the lecturers about things I am not clear, but some lecturers made it more difficult to understand what is already not easy. I am concerned whether I can pass all the papers in this semester.

S6, who agreed that “there is no concern about the lecturers’ knowledge”, still wondered about how the knowledge was delivered to students,

In the previous semester, there were two papers that I thought I was lucky to pass. I had to seek for help from my friends and some alumni I know to accurately understand what was mentioned in the books. I know I was not the only one in my class who had the same problems. Maybe it was because of my limited ability, but I think it was also the responsibility of my lecturers when delivering the lessons.

Accordingly, S5 suggested, “I think the university should consider doing observations in some classes so that they can give comments to the lecturers properly”. It is reasonable to suggest that not all lecturers have good professional skills nor do they have good English or professional manners of teaching. This is more challenging given that English is not their mother tongue. Further, in the TNUP curriculums, lecturers of the partner universities, who are native speakers and also have good professional knowledge, only come to do revision or have little face-to-face teaching time with students. It can make students think that they have more limited time being taught by foreign lecturers than overseas students who study onshore, and Vietnamese lecturers are responsible for filling in the gap (C. H. Nguyen, Nhan, & Ta, 2021). Although students’ assessments of their lecturers’ English language proficiency and professional skills were based on personal experience, their feedback on their lecturers is also an important part of the University’s self-evaluation system. It was considered that the University should pay more attention to this.

## **5.2.5. The Learners**

### ***5.2.5.1. The Admission Requirements***

The admission requirements of a university are very important as they assist applicants in the application process and help a university to classify and choose the most suitable candidates. University A’s TNUPs have their own admission requirements that have changed several times over the past 12 years (see Appendix H (p. 279)). These changes were due to changes in the national examination system and the requirements of partner universities.

These have also resulted from global system changes, including the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) results, and the need for changes from the university itself including the requirement for applicants' results from their 12th grade. This has helped them to improve recruitment quality.

Some requirements remained the same over the 12 years of TNUPs. These include the requirements for applicants to provide details of their educational attainment at high school especially at the 12th grade (GPA from 6.5), their university entrance exam/high school national exam results (following the fundamental points set up by the MOET or Vietnam National University, Hanoi), and their English language proficiency (IELTS results 5.0–5.5 or equivalent CEFR Certificate). The University also had a requirement for good conduct from 2006 to 2009, but this requirement was removed in 2010. The omission of the conduct requirement is an adjustment of the University's TNUPs to align with the general policy of the MOET that undergraduate programmes do not put this requirement in their enrolment requirements. Whether some criteria of the admission requirements had changed or remained unchanged, there was a fact that the number of students admitted to study in TNUPs increased from 60 students in 2004 to 326 students in 2010. However, the number of TNUP students in 2017 was only 262 (141 students of the American programme and 121 of the Malaysian programme) which was smaller than the number in 2010 (VNU-IS, 2017e). Although what happened to the recruitment from 2011 to 2016 was not accessible for me, the number of students recorded in 2017 reflected a decrease in enrolment of these TNUPs.

Stakeholders also considered that the admission requirements were appropriate. S7 stated, "The admission requirements are suitable with students' ability". This was echoed by S1 who said, "The admission requirements followed the fundamental points of the university entrance exams, so they were suitable for students". Alumni, who had also applied to study in

TNUPs, agreed with the other students' ideas. A17 stated, "I think the requirements are not as high as those of some domestic programmes, so many students will find them appropriate".

#### **5.2.5.2. The Recruitment Process**

##### *Recruitment via Word of Mouth*

When asked for the reasons why they had chosen University A, students said that they were too young at that time, and they had followed their parents' choices. Student S1 said, "I thought that what my parents chose for me would be good as they are experienced, and they understand my strong and weak points" (S1). This student's viewpoint reflected the impact of the power of kinship—one of the Confucian ideals whereby children followed all the arrangements made for them by their parents (M. D. Nguyen, 1985). Apart from that, the University was recommended to potential students by the people they knew, such as friends and relatives. They considered those sources of information as trustworthy. S5 recalled, "It was recommended by a friend. She had been a student of this programme for more than a year, and she told me it was good, so I decided to choose it". This viewpoint was supported by parents who looked towards others who had experienced TNUP programmes. P7 said, "My child wants to study here because his friends talk to him about good things in this programme. That's the most important thing for me because if other students think it is good, that means it must be good". What was mentioned by the students and parents showed that matters of reputation, tended to be taken at face value, and as such they are important to the University when recruiting future students.

##### *Recruitment via Marketing Campaigns*

The University delivers marketing campaigns via the mass media and by its staff (recruitment staff and administrators) visiting high schools to complete direct recruitment. Every year, the University recruitment office develops a list of schools in Hanoi and surrounding areas. The office staff then visit each school to introduce the University's

programmes, to consult, and to deliver leaflets and programme brochures. S6 expressed their appreciation when they said, “The university staff came to my high school to recruit, and they introduced everything to me”. S6’s appreciation was echoed by S8: “I was introduced and advised by the University staff”. Some students stated that they accessed recruitment information via the Internet. This was confirmed by S4—a first year student: “I found all the information on the University’s website”.

Staff assistance could not be provided if the University did not carry out its recruitment workshops at high schools and provide information to all suitable students. S4 who decided to apply for the TNUPs of University A after attending the recruitment workshop held by the university at his high school indicated, “At that time, there were not many universities doing the same things, and I had heard good information about this university from friends and the mass media, so I decided to choose it”. Even though that student’s choice indirectly came from word of mouth, S4 also indicated that the workshop had provided useful information. Instead of advertising via the mass media and waiting for students to come, the University came to students and advertised itself via workshops. This gave the University a chance to be close to students, to listen to what they wanted, and to explain anything the students were not clear about. It was hoped that this would make students feel more confident in the choices they made in the future.

## **5.2.6. The Implementation Process**

### ***5.2.6.1. The Enrolment Process***

After students have been admitted to TNUPs, they go through an enrolment process before officially becoming students of University A. The requirements for students to complete this process are clearly listed in the University’s official invitation letter, which is normally sent to students two weeks after they have submitted their application form. To complete the enrolment process, students are required to bring the official invitation letter and

the certified copies of their high school records, high school graduation exam, university entrance exam, high school national exam results, and IELTS results to the Department of Academic and Student Affairs. The next step is to arrive at the bursary section to pay the tuition fees. University staff (mainly administrators) and volunteers assist during the process. Students do not have to prepare too many documents. They then need to pay the tuition fee.

It appears that this process was carried out effectively and successfully by the University because there were no complaints related to the process, and in fact many mentioned their appreciation for it. S1 said, “Generally speaking, it was good, and we were satisfied with it”. S3 added, “There were voluntary staff and students helping us on the enrolment day, and we found it quite easy and fast to complete the procedure”. Sharing agreement with those viewpoints, S5 confirmed, “Everything went quite fast and effectively, so I have nothing to complain about”. Having graduated, but still keeping memories about this process, A18 said, “The university staff were very supportive, and the enrolment process was rather fast”. Agreeing with A18’s opinion, A12 stated, “The procedure was simple, and I was enthusiastically instructed”. Apart from students and alumni, some parents also came to complete the process with their children. P10 expressed their satisfaction: “We only needed to follow their instructions and finished the process in about 30 minutes”. P2 was also very positive when they said, “We were instructed carefully by the administrators, and we had no difficulties at all”.

Additionally, the administrators’ assistance during the process was strongly supported by phrases like “thoughtful” and “enthusiastically” (A15 and A16); “helpful”, “immediately”, and “useful advice” (S2 and S7); “keeping the programme running smoothly” and “know everything” (by P1 and P4). This created an overall impression that the administrators’ input was very positive. Through all of the stakeholders’ descriptions, it can be seen that the enrolment process was carried out face-to-face, and students and parents were required to

bring documents to the university to do it directly. This is a big difference between Vietnam and many other countries in the world where most of the administrative procedures are digitised, and the use of paperwork is reduced considerably. It seems that the University staff, especially the administrators, did their work quite well, so the students and parents felt satisfied with the service they received.

#### **5.2.6.2. *The Tuition Fees***

As revealed in the interviews, tuition fees were an issue of concern for students and parents when choosing University A. Depending on the students' educational background, they start their study with either the GE programme or the university programme. The GE programme consists of five levels, 200 hours per level, and the tuition fee is set at USD 500 per level. The university programme lasts four years, two semesters per year, and the tuition fee is USD 1,400 per semester. Students can only start with the university programme if they meet the University's requirements for English language proficiency (adapted from *The University's Admission Notifications* through years from 2006 to 2018 – see Appendix H (p. 279)). The tuition fees are what many people consider when choosing a programme, and the situation was the same with the students and parents of University A. S6 said, "The tuition fees are very important to me as I had to think about our family finances when deciding to choose this university". P1 also said, "I have considered many things, but the most important thing was the tuition fees".

As students and parents chose the university, it is worth considering whether they found the tuition fees to be acceptable and reasonable. Their comments provided a range of views. Some students admitted that the tuition fees for transnational programmes should not be compared to those of local programmes. Some felt the tuition fees they were paying for the TNUPs of University A were unreasonable. S8 complained when asked about the tuition fees:

The tuition fees only cover the learning materials of the General English Programme, and we have to pay for those of the university programme. I have been spending a lot of money taking photocopies of learning materials, and I don't think this is reasonable.

A15 agreed with this viewpoint when they insisted, "In my opinion, with these high tuition fees, the learning materials should be free". Parents were also concerned about this. P9 said, "The learning materials are photocopied, not original textbooks; however, we still have to pay a lot of money for all of those". The tuition fees that they paid did not align with the facilities that were offered at the University.

A number of students considered a reduction in tuition fees warranted. Students repeated their viewpoints about reducing tuition fees via remarks such as "the tuition fees should be competitive" (S1) or "if the tuition fees are a little bit cheaper, it would be better" (S7) and "it will attract more students as the tuition fees will be affordable for more families" (S6). Sharing the same viewpoints, parents emphasised the need for this change by saying "the tuition fees should be changed to be less than now. I think all parents would be happier if the university could do that" (P2).

Students expected the tuition fees of TNUPs to be reduced. Their expectations are based on the differences between the tuition fees of local programmes and transnational programmes. In 2015, the Vietnamese government publicised that the tuition fees for local undergraduate programmes ranged between VND 1,750,000–VND 4,400,000 per month, and these tuition fees might increase to VND 5,050,000 per month by 2021 (GOV, 2015). University A advertised that the tuition fees of both TNUPs in English were USD 1,400 per semester or VND 7,100,000 per month (provided that a semester lasts 4 months and a half) (adapted from *The University's Admission Notifications* from 2006–2018 – see Appendix H (p. 279)). The tuition fees of TNUPs are much higher than the tuition fees of local programmes. In both of these circumstances, tuition fees did not cover learning materials, something parents and students wanted. It may inequitable to compare one side that is local

and the other is transnational. Also, there is nothing to say that if University A were to reduce the tuition fees of TNUPs, their quality would be the same or better.

### **5.2.6.3. *The Timetables***

The administrators of each TNUP are responsible for arranging timetables for the programmes. Timetables are closely aligned to student life and are what students have to follow until they graduate.

#### *The Study Timetables*

The study timetables depend on the academic calendar of the programme and the availability of lecturers. Administrators indicated that they were quite careful when arranging study timetables as they needed to “consider many things” such as “lecturers’ available time, exam schedules, class engagement schedules, national holidays and revision time” alongside “students’ needs” (Ad1). This may be the reason why students had positive ideas about the study timetables. S3 said, “We study both mornings and afternoons, but we still have the weekend off, and it is fine for us”. This idea was echoed by most of the students with this timetable.

When discussing the study timetables of TNUPs, the University’s quality assurance officers had varying ideas. Of the three quality assurance officers participating in the interviews, two officers thought that it was important that administrators considered a range of factors including students’ needs when making study timetables. However, QA2 considered that considering students’ needs when arranging study timetables made things more complicated. To emphasise their viewpoint, QA2 stated,

Students’ needs depend on their interest in many other things, not just study. In my opinion, considering lecturers’ time and room availability is enough for administrators to arrange study timetables. Considering students’ needs just adds more work for administrators and bring no better timetables to students.

If the academic calendar is fixed from the beginning of the term, the lecturers' available time is changeable. When mentioning lecturers' available time, Ad2 complained:

Although they (lecturers) provided us with their available time since the term began, there were several times when we received phone calls or emails from them apologising for not being able to teach, and asking us to rearrange the timetables just some hours before the lessons began. In such cases, we could only send urgent notices to students, and told them that they would have the make-up classes on other days.

That was why S2 became concerned when talking about lecturers' sudden changes of timetable: "There are some lecturers who often change their available time immediately before their lessons begin, and we have to study make-up classes when we are busy with other plans". The sudden changes could make students fall into an undesirable position because they had no time to adapt to the changes. Provided that one day a student finished their morning class and stayed at the University to wait for their afternoon class, suddenly, they received a message that their lecturer could not come, and they would have that lesson the day after that day. Unfortunately, on the day after that day, they had a plan to visit their grandmother who was unwell, so that new timetable put them in a very uncomfortable situation. As reported by the University, more than half of their lecturers are part-time lecturers, and they may have classes in different universities, and University A is only one of them. When asked about the reasons why such situations were still frequent, Ad1 explained:

These part-time lecturers made sudden changes to their timetables that resulted in difficulties for us and our students. However, we need them. They are qualified lecturers with valued experiences in the papers they teach. It is not easy to find other lecturers to fill in their positions.

### *The Exam Timetables*

Apart from the study timetables, the timetables of TNUPs also include the exam timetables. The study timetables are important to maintain teaching and learning activities for the University, and to provide students with knowledge about their papers. The exam timetables are necessary to schedule assessments that help lecturers and students know how

much knowledge students acquired from each paper. Based on the exam timetables, students have plans for their revision, administrators have preparation for exam rooms and invigilators, and lecturers have plans for marking. The exam period for all papers is fixed at the beginning of the semester. The University's administrators create exam timetables for each paper and send them to students. There are four to six papers each semester, and the exam periods are usually in the middle (for mid-term exams) or at the end of the semester (for final exams), and continuously last for one week. That means students have to take at least one exam a day during a week. Students were concerned that they received their exam timetables too close to the date they would sit exams. They usually had to take one or two exams every day, which was quite "stressful" (S1). Regarding the exam timetable, S8 complained: "We often have to take an exam every day in one week, both morning and afternoon, so it is really tiring".

### **5.2.7. The Quality of Teaching Activities**

The papers of TNUPs are taught mostly by Vietnamese lecturers who need to be qualified in their subject area and English language. Students acquire knowledge via their lessons in class, their self-study at the University library, and the online library of the partner universities. To understand what students think about the teaching activities of TNUPs, the University collects feedback about teaching activities. There are two types of feedback: feedback of GE students and feedback of university students. Because GE students and university students have different lecturers and different papers, there might be differences between the feedback of the two groups.

#### **5.2.7.1. Feedback of GE Students**

In 2016/17, 250 GE students were required to provide their feedback about the teaching activities of the 32 GE lecturers via *The University's Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the GE Programme*. In the questionnaire, given that a lecturer's instruction manner, time management, use of English, support for students, and effectiveness

of lectures were good, students were required to choose a number in an assessment scale that has 5 levels from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) which reflected how much they agreed about each criterion (adapted from *The University's Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the GE Programme* – see Questionnaire 2, Appendix I (p. 286)). Generally, the results showed that students were satisfied with the teaching activities of most of the lecturers. Nearly 93% of the students responded positively about their lecturers. 44.01% of the students agreed that their lecturers had good instructional styles. 61.59% thought that their lecturers had good time management. The lecturers' use of English received 56.72% positive feedback from the students. 45.13% of the students considered that their lecturers' support for students was strong. As to the effectiveness of the lectures, 38.24% of the students agreed that their lecturers delivered effective lessons (adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the GE programme (2017)* (VNU-IS, 2017c)).

#### **5.2.7.2. Feedback of University Students**

University students' feedback about their lecturers was collected via *The University's Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the University Programme* (see Questionnaire 1 – Appendix I (p. 284)). In this questionnaire, it was implied that the lecturer's skills in instructing the topic of study, delivery of lessons, support for students, use of English, and student's acquisition of knowledge from the lecturer's teaching were good. An assessment scale consisting of five levels from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) was provided, and the students were asked to choose a number showing how much they agreed with each criterion. The questionnaire had been completed twice in 2017 and 2018 by students of both TNUPs and local programmes. The results indicated that university students were positive about the teaching quality. In 2017, 701 university students were required to provide feedback about 52 lecturers. The results of 2017 showed that around 40% of the students agreed that their lecturers had good instructions, efficient delivery of lessons, and

they provided support for students. Over 50% of students agreed that lecturers frequently used effective English as well as provision of necessary knowledge. A student commented below their survey, “I was taught by five different lecturers this year. Although their English-speaking skill was not really good, I think it was enough for them to teach and explain professional terms in our papers”. Another student agreed that they received necessary knowledge required for their papers when they said, “I am satisfied with what I was provided in the papers of this year. I had no difficulties in reading the text books, or answering exam questions”. In 2018, 1019 university students were required to provide feedback about 89 lecturers. The 2018 results indicated that over 60% of students responded positively to all the criteria. Some students provided other comments rather than just choosing numbers. A student stated,

When using English to teach, my lecturers sometimes made me tired and hard to concentrate on the lessons. Listening to a foreign language every day in class was not easy at all. But I must say that most of the lecturers are very supportive whenever I had questions. Further, I could return to the textbooks and read more for what I was not clear. Therefore, with me, the lessons were quite effective.  
(extracted from *The Report to the University Rector on the Papers of University Programmes* (VNU-IS, 2018b)).

In the student’s statement, apart from the positive comments about the lecturers’ support, the students also had less positive comment about the lecturers’ teaching in English. Similarly, other students shared a number of less positive comments about the lecturers. They expressed a real concern about the lecturers’ use of language for teaching indicating that they often used only Vietnamese in class and had limited English speaking skills. The lecturers’ manner of delivering lessons was also of concern. They often only used slides to teach and spoke too fast. The questions for assessment provided by lecturers’ often did not align the revision content provided (adapted from *Report to the University Rector on the Papers of University Programmes* (VNU-IS, 2018b)).

## **5.2.8. The Administrators' Roles**

### ***5.2.8.1. The Effectiveness of Administrators' Work***

As mentioned above, the Department of Academic and Student Affairs plays a very important role in TNUPs operations. The administrators follow students throughout their course of study, from their enrolment, through their progress in programmes, and on to their graduation. The TNUP's administrators' roles are seen to be crucial. When students seek advice about TNUPs, administrators give consultations to students and provide them with all the information they need to consider.

According to stakeholders', the administrators were very "helpful" and "enthusiastic". S4 said, "They have enough up-to-date information about the programme and the partner university to ensure they are well-informed and can follow up without missing anything". A16 commented, "The administrators were thoughtful because when students needed to know about something, we were instructed enthusiastically". S2 had the same opinion with A16 about the enthusiastic instructions of administrators when they said,

I come to the Department of Academic and Student Affairs several times every week. We have a lot of questions to ask about lecturers, classrooms, assessment results, or revision schedules. When I come, the administrators spend time to listen to me, explain if I don't understand something clearly, and show me the right place or persons to meet when needed.

Parents, students, and alumni shared the same points of view. P9 remarked, "The administrators are always the people I want to see or make a phone call to when I have any questions relating to my child's study".

It is clear that administrators are usually the first people to ask when students have any queries relating to their study or other issues regarding the partner universities. They are the key link between University A and its partners. Apart from being a source of information for students or parents, administrators also provide information relating to weekly timetables, students' attendance (to both students and parents), and assessment (including mid-term

exam, final exam and assignment) schedules. The timetables or assessment schedules are clearly important for every student, and in TNUPs, the students' attendance is important too. The programme handbooks of the two TNUPs in English state that students must attend at least 75–80% of all the contact hours of every paper, otherwise they will not be qualified to take the final exam. Administrators of TNUPs are responsible for providing students and parents with information about how frequently students attend their classes every week, and warning if students are absent more than 10% of the contact hours of any paper. Some parents expected to be informed about their children's attendance more frequently. P3 said,

The administrators are doing quite well, but sometimes the information comes late. In such cases, we could not take appropriate actions like warning our children, or giving them some penalties if they are absent too much. Then the information is not as effective as we expect.

In TNUPs, the lecturers call the students' rolls, but it is the administrators' responsibility to inform the students and their parents about the attendance statistics. It looked like not only P3 had concerns about attendance information. P6 seemed to worry when they said,

I would like them to inform us more promptly about our child's attendance, at least once a week. Because at present, they only do this whenever our child has been off too many times and is about to be terminated from taking the final exam; then it would be too late to do so.

#### ***5.2.8.2. The Administrators' Workload***

For students, administrator's roles were vital as the information they provided directly affected students' study. Administrators commented that the University's staffing for administrative work (about 100 students per administrator) was reasonable. They were sometimes overloaded with programmes that had a lot of students. The students showed their concern that the administrators seemed to be overworked, and S1 complained that, "they may not be very nice if I come to ask them many questions as they are too busy doing something else". Stress might be one of other outcomes when administrators were overworked such as

providing inaccurate information, and ineffective communication with other staff leading to serious problems in their work.

Administrators of the partner universities work with the administrators of the home University through emails. They never meet face-to-face or send information directly to students. As a result, administrators of University A were the only administrative staff students could approach if they had any queries related to TNUPs or the partner universities such as: “When will the partner university release the final results?” (S3), “How can I appeal for the reconsideration of my results?” (S5), or “I was caught using personal mobile phone when taking my final exam, will I have to re-sit the exam?” (S8). The partner universities’ involvement in TNUPs seems to be unclear as they are working from a distance. The administrators are the university’s representatives who provide information to students. This can lead to work overload for the administrators of University A. When asked about the administrative staffing, the quality assurance officers of University A had different concerns. QA3 said,

With an international university, an administrator can coordinate many training programmes with hundreds of students, and they do not have many difficulties. Even in a local programme, an administrator is responsible for 2 or 3 student cohorts that consist of 300 to 500 students. However, in our university, one administrator is responsible for just about a hundred students. I think that it is a waste of human resources.

QA3’s comments indicated that administrators of TNUPs in University A did not have as much work as administrators of other universities or local programmes. Moreover, almost all important information relating to a TNUP is managed by its administrator such as student attendance, student study results, and contacts with parents, with other staff, and with the partner university. QA1 said worriedly, “There will be some risk if the programme administrator is off from work suddenly”. QA1 also recommended, “In order to avoid disturbance in management, there should be a clear and coherent administrative documentation process so that other administrators can help if such situation happens.”

### 5.2.9. Assessing Learners' Results

The assessment system is also a very important for students in every programme. The assessment of TNUPs is carried out mostly by University A. The assignment and exam questions are set up by lecturers at University A or the partner universities, depending on each paper. The lecturers of University A are responsible for assessment questions of foundation papers or papers about study skills. The lecturers of partner universities are responsible for assessment questions of papers about professional knowledge. The assignment questions are released at the beginning of each term, and students are given enough time to complete their answers before submission. The exam timetables are set up by administrators and made available to students at least five weeks before the exam dates. Students submit their assignments to administrators on due dates. Administrators transfer the assignments to lecturers to mark. Marked assessment scripts are returned to administrators about a week later, and then they are sent to lecturers of the partner universities to be moderated before the final results are released. Exam questions are sent to QA officers at least three days before the exam dates. QA officers are responsible for keeping exam questions confidential, releasing exam questions on exam dates, collecting exam scripts, and transferring exam scripts to lecturers to mark. During exam time, administrators and lecturers are invigilators, and QA officers are observers. Marked exam scripts are returned to QA officers, and then QA officers transfer them to administrators to send to the partner universities. To ensure the validity of the results, like assignments, exam results are moderated by lecturers of the partner universities before being sent to the administrators of University A to release to students (adapted from *The University's Regulation on Organizing and Administering Final Examinations of Transnational Undergraduate Programmes* (VNU-IS, 2016b)). It is required by the partner universities that the moderation reports are only accessible for lecturers of both sides in case there is disagreement between the first and the second phases of marking (adapted from

*Standard operating procedures for franchise programmes* (VNU-IS, 2010b)). According to both interviewed administrators, the moderated results were normally not different from the results of the first marking. Ad2 was very positive when stated, “I think the Vietnamese lecturers’ marking is qualified enough, and the partner lecturers’ moderation is just one more step to confirm that”. The assessment system conducted by University A looks like a circle starting from administrators/quality assurance officers, going through lecturers, and returning to quality assurance officers/administrators.

#### ***5.2.9.1. The Effectiveness of the Assessment***

Generally, students and alumni gave positive comments concerning the effectiveness of the assessment system. These related to the appropriateness of the assessment questions, and the reliability of the results. A15 said, “The assessment questions are clear and correspond with the knowledge we were taught”. S5 was quite thoughtful when saying, “If we prepare carefully, we can pass the exams with not too much difficulty”. S6 was more confident, “My results correspond with my performance”. Regarding the marking process, A11 expressed a satisfied comment, “The marking and the releasing of results were fast”.

The University was also concerned with the effectiveness of the assessment system. In 2017 and 2018, when students’ feedback about the university programme was collected via *The University’s Questionnaire to Collect Students’ Feedback about the University Programme* (see Questionnaire 1 – Appendix I (p. 284)), students were asked how they thought about the assessment system of the university programmes. The questions focused on two specific issues: the method of carrying out assessments (whether the assessments aligned with the contents of the papers, and whether the assessments tested students’ required knowledge and skills), and the results of assessments (whether the results helped students improve the quality of their learning). In 2017, 701 students completed the questionnaire, and in 2018 the number of student participants was 409. Positive results were provided in both

times. 70%–80% of students agreed that the assessment methods aligned with the papers' contents and provided a good indication of the knowledge and skills developed in the programmes. Students reported that the assessment results were released by the due date and also relevant to their learning performance. Students also indicated that the tight exam timetables did not give students enough time to revise, and the short duration of the final exams did not align appropriately with the number of exam questions (adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the Papers of University Programmes (2017) and (2018)* (VNU-IS, 2017d, 2018a)). These issues are discussed further in the next chapter of this thesis.

#### **5.2.9.2. The Objectivity of the Assessment**

There was some student concern about the objectivity of the system. The students' assignments and exam papers are submitted to the administrators first, then come to the quality officers, and are finally sent to the lecturers to be marked. S2 slightly disagreed with the marking process when they said, "I think the process is fine, but I think it will be better if we submit them directly to our lecturers". S8 was straighter, "I am not sure about the objectivity of the system". S7 suggested that, "Sometimes I see some friends who are not so hard-working get very high results. To be honest, there are rumours about them having some help from outside". This was echoed by S3, "The assignments are not submitted to the lecturers by us but by the administrators so we don't know if there is anything happening during that time". As for the administrators, they had no comments about the objectivity of this process except for affirming that the exam and assignment questions were all set up by the lecturers of University A or the partner universities.

#### **5.2.10. The Student Support**

##### **5.2.10.1. The Scholarships**

In order to give students more motivation to study, the University offers high performing students attractive and high value scholarships to which they can apply for at

enrolment or during their study. Every year, the University grants about three billion VND for long-term and short-term scholarships to support students (including students of GE programme). Students who are applying to study in TNUPs and have good results in the competency assessment examination held by Vietnam National University, students who have outstanding study results, and students whose families have difficulties are considered to be granted long-term or short-term scholarships. Students who want to apply for scholarships can access forms and application instructions at the Department of Academic and Student Affairs. (adapted from *The University's Admission Notification (2016)* – see Appendix H (p. 279)).

The wide range of scholarships offered can be a strong driving force to encourage students who are thinking about applying and students who have been admitted. Generally, the scholarships are based on study results and available to students with good educational backgrounds prior to starting at TNUPs or those with outstanding results during their study. Also, there are scholarships for students with difficult living conditions who need to be financially assisted.

When being asked about these scholarships, S2 said, “The scholarship requirements are quite difficult for students”. S4 agreed: “They are not easy to achieve actually”. S6, who is quite confident about their learning performance, said, “The scholarships correspond with my ability and effort”. Due to the scholarship conditions, those scholarships are not really easy to achieve. For example, the long-term scholarship requires students to have very high results in the competency assessment exam of the VNU or the national high school graduation exam. The short-term scholarship or partner universities’ scholarship is based on students’ outstanding performances. Being outstanding in a transnational programme is quite challenging. Regarding the scholarships, the administrators and the quality assurance officers agreed that the scholarships of TNUPs were very competitive but still feasible if students spent enough time and effort on studying.

### ***5.2.10.2. The Extracurricular Activities***

University A rents two buildings inside a residential area that consists of five buildings. The two buildings are used as University A's offices, library and lecture halls/classrooms. The other three buildings of the area are used for residential purposes with tenants living in them. The University students and tenants of the area share a common playground, so there is not much space for students to complete physical activities. Some students register to stay in the campus, but many of them live outside with their families as there are actually not many vacant apartments in the three residential buildings of the area. Within the campus, University A organises extracurricular activities for students on special occasions/festivals such as Vietnamese teacher's day, international women's day, mid-lunar festival, and New Year festival. There are students' clubs such as English clubs, music clubs, and science clubs for extracurricular activities. Volunteer activities such as helping students in highland areas, collecting warm clothes for poor people in winter are also organised within the campus. As students are not required to live on the university campus, and the university campus is not very big because it is a rented campus and is mostly used for teaching, learning and administration activities, and most students live with their families in private houses or they rent houses and apartments. Their interest in such activities varies considerably. When interviewed, half of the students were happy with those activities. S5 said, "There are many extracurricular activities that help me make more friends. I think it is one of the reasons why I like this university". That was also their friend's (S8's) idea: "I think the extracurricular activities are one of the university's strengths, and they should develop those activities to attract students". Half of the respondents were indifferent when asked about extracurricular activities with comments like, "I attended some festivals held by the University's Youth Union when I was a first year student, but I don't think they are interesting. We need something more creative" (S1), or "...my friends say that there are some clubs and groups

that encourage students to take part in, but I don't participate" (S4). Further, University A was renting two buildings of a residential area to be its campus, and students were sharing some common spaces with residents or tenants. Students had concern when having their extra-curricular activities in this shared space. S5 said,

The Youth Union of the University often organised activities to celebrate important festivals in our campus. The activities were quite interesting until the residents interfered. For example, their kids suddenly came out and were running around the stage when a student was singing a beautiful song, or their music and their chatting voices were too loud when we need some silence. It was hard not to feel irritated.

S3 shared the same concern with S5 and added, "When we discussing in our clubs, or even studying, we could still hear noises from residential apartments, and could imagine what they were doing. It was really distracting, I must say that".

#### **5.2.11. The Feedback of Current Students**

If students and their parents, or caregivers, are considered to be customers of a programme who pay to use the product, they would like to see things that meet their requirements. The University has built a needs assessment system to collect students' ideas about the programmes they are studying in order to improve the product. The Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing was established in 2015 to carry out this task, and the needs assessment system has been assessing the programmes' quality through gathering students', alumni's, and employers' feedback. Student feedback is gathered every semester. The students complained that they did not receive feedback from the University. They only knew that the University had responded to this feedback when "...something changed such as the classroom is facilitated with a more modern projectors or a new air-conditioner" (as S4 observed). S7 commented, "There are several times when our feedback was not replied to and if we asked the administrators, they said that there will be response, but we have to wait, and then we keep waiting". This feedback is not the general feedback given by ticking answers in

the questionnaires, but it is the feedback that students provided directly to the University relating to the facilities, teaching staff, or learning materials.

## **5.2.12. The Quality Assurance System**

### ***5.2.12.1. The Effectiveness of the System***

The quality assurance of the University in general and TNUPs in particular is carried out by the Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing (CQAT). The CQAT's activities are undertaken by quality assurance (QA) officers. In *the Decision of Founding the Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing* issued by University A, it is stated that QA officers are responsible for assuring quality of all educational programmes at University A. QA officers work collaboratively with all stakeholders to receive their feedback, to report promptly to the Board of Rectors, and to carry out actions in response to stakeholders' feedback. QA officers also coordinate with administrators and lecturers in undertaking assessment activities and assuring the transparency of assessment activities (VNU-IS, 2015a)

Students' feedback collection takes place twice a year, and feedback of other stakeholders (including academic staff, alumni and employers) is collected once a year. The CQAT sends their plan to the Department of Academic and Student Affairs (DASA). The CQAT also prepares and sends the feedback forms (the questionnaire) to the DASA. With TNUPs, students' feedback is the main channel for quality assurance. The collection of feedback from alumni and employers started in 2016 and has focused on alumni and employers of local programmes. All of the questionnaires are anonymous. In the questionnaires, stakeholders are requested to give feedback on the TNUPs in reference to what they have experienced. Generally, stakeholders' feedback is based on a set of criteria where they rank items on a 1 to 5 Likert scale (1-totally disagree, 2-basically disagree, 3-consider, 4-basically agree, 5-totally agree). Stakeholders are also encouraged to write down their own viewpoints about issues that they think need improvement (adapted from *The*

*University's Instruction on How to Assess Programmes' Quality through Gathering Stakeholders' Feedback* (VNU-IS, 2015b)).

The administrators in the DASA are in charge of distributing and collecting these forms. The completed forms are then sent back to the CQAT. The results are reported to the Board of Rectors to devise solutions (VNU-IS, 2015b). As stated in *The University's Instruction on How to Assess Programmes' Quality through Gathering Stakeholders' Feedback*, the roles of the CQAT and the quality assurance officers (QA officers) are important in this process. In reality, all of the interviewed students stated that administrators are the first people who they usually give feedback to, not the QA officers.

With regard to the reliability and effectiveness of the feedback, QA1 admitted that, “Stakeholders especially students may randomly tick when responding to the questionnaires” and “although we reported all positive and negative issues indicated by stakeholders to the Board of Rectors, not all of them have been dealt with”.

QA officers also confirmed that they took part in photocopying and transferring assessment papers to teachers as did the administrators; therefore, they “have no comment on the objectivity of this process” because they are “part of the process and do not want to assess others' work” (QA2). Regarding the quality assurance mechanisms, apart from undertaking the feedback collection annually, University A also has to self-evaluate following the instructions and criteria introduced by Vietnam National University (see Appendix G (p. 276)). To manage the quality of their franchise programmes at University A, the partner universities carry out an audit every five years. It can be an online or on-site-visit audit. In the audit, the partner universities check all the documents relating to academic and administrative activities of TNUPs such as the University's facilities, recruitment, academic staff, student statistics, student study results, and graduate statistics ((VNU-IS, 2010a). Both University A and its partners can recommend changes or solutions to make the current situation better. QA

officers stated that the audit is between University and its partners, and the Vietnam National University may require University A to send a report about it, but does not interfere with the audit process.

#### ***5.2.12.2. The Difficulties of the System***

According to QA officers, the budget plan of the University for TNUPs' quality assurance activities seemed to be inappropriate when QA3 said, "little money" was spent and this was "not much in comparison with the total expenses for TNUPs". QA2 also claimed, "The University paid attention to quality assurance conditions but just at a minimum level and due to requirements, not actively investing in the short and long term". When asked if there were any challenges in assuring the quality of TNUPs, QA officers presumed that the "quality assurance activities are heavily constrained by regulations, criteria, and reports" (QA1), and "people's self-consciousness about the importance of quality assurance is still limited" (QA3). According to QA1, they "need more flexible quality mechanisms so that quality assurance officers can deal with feedback or issues more appropriately". QA1's viewpoint can be clarified in QA2's comment, which emphasised on the responsibility of the Board of Rectors in responding to stakeholders' feedback,

When we receive feedback from students or staff about any problems, we have to write a report to the Board of Rectors, and wait for their decisions to take actions. It takes a long time until the problems are solved. Although the waiting time is long, not all problems can be dealt with properly because of unknown reasons from the authorities of the University, or the VNU, or the MOET. We know that some students are not satisfied with the outcomes. We also know that there might be other ways to solve some problems, but we must follow the final decisions of the Board of Rectors.

#### **5.2.13. Staff Development**

Regarding staff development activities, the partner universities required every lecturer of TNUPs to have a master's or a PhD degree. Annually, lecturers of the partner universities come to University A and carry out training activities for Vietnamese lecturers to ensure that they have the same approaches to TNUP papers (VNU-IS, 2010b). On its side, University

started to require their tenured teaching staff to do self-evaluations in 2017. The information gathered was passed on to the Board of Rectors who would then know how the tenured teaching staff were performing and what they should do to improve the quality of the teaching staff. The self-evaluation process is carried out by requiring lecturers to complete a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire provides a list of activities that lecturers do such as teaching activities, scientific research activities, administration and instruction activities, and professional development activities. Lecturers firstly ticked if they participated in each activity, and then self-evaluate their participation by choosing the items on a Likert scale from 1 (participated at the lowest level) to 5 (participated at the highest level). The lecturers could provide further comments or ideas after completing the self-evaluation report (adapted from *The University's Example of Staff's Self-Evaluation* (VNU-IS, 2018d)).

In 2017, 39 out of 42 (93%) lecturers submitted their self-evaluation reports. Three lecturers who did not participate in the self-evaluation process were overseas at the time. The results showed that the lecturers actively participated in scientific research activities (83%), professional development activities (71%), and teaching activities (68%). There were 37% of the lecturers who participated in administration work, tutoring or instructing students' internship. The lecturers also gave more attention to having their papers published in national and international journals. 22% of the lecturers had papers published in 2017. Some lecturers expressed concern about the scientific research activities. One lecturer commented:

I have two papers published in national economic magazines this year, and I had to cover most of the cost... After my papers were published, I had some reward from the University, but it was not much compared to what I had invested. I did not ask for bigger reward; however, if the University could consider a bigger budget for us to carry out scientific research, we will feel more motivated.

Another lecturer was also concerned that the budget for scientific research was insufficient when compared with previous years by emphasising:

The University often encourages scientific research and spends a lot of money on scientific activities in previous years. But this year, the University's financial support was not much, and lecturers who wanted to carry out research should use their own budget. Hopefully the University can consider and invest more because doing research is also a way for us to improve our professional knowledge.

Based on the self-evaluation of lecturers, *The Report of the University to the VNU on its Staff Development (2016/17)* that included proposals regarding its staff development was sent to the VNU. Although there were some concerns from the lecturers, few useful solutions proposed. The Board of Rectors considered providing more money for the teaching staff and other staff to participate in research development courses. Regarding the investment in scientific research, the University considered providing 10% more than the budget of 2017, which was 107 million VND. In 2017, 28/42 (66%) lecturers had achieved English language certificates such as IELTS 7.0, or equivalent TOEFL or TOEIC certificates. The University had a target of having 75-100% of the lecturers achieving these certificates in 2018 and 2019. Conferences for lecturers and specialists to contribute ideas about programme development were taken into consideration. The University aimed to ensure the teaching hour quota for all lecturers ranging from 200-350 hours/year. Also, the University encouraged lecturers, especially lecturers who had more than one task, such as doing both teaching and administrating work, to participate in courses about teaching methods (adapted from *The Report of the University to the VNU on its Staff Development (2016/17)* (VNU-IS, 2017f)). The University's proposals about improving English and teaching methods for lecturers were not really aligned with the lecturers' wishes because they did not mention-the needs of improving these issues in their report. One lecturer commented,

I think that having good teaching methods and appropriate English language proficiency are what lecturers must have before starting their jobs in the University. I think improving our expertise about professional knowledge is more important, and we really hope to have more support from the University in such fields.

Although the University undertook staff self-evaluation and carried out activities to assist staff development, it is surprised that the contracted staff or the part-time lecturers were not included in these activities. Given half of the lecturers of TNUPs are contracted staff, they definitely play a vital role in TNUPs. Therefore, it seems unreasonable for the University to ignore their participation in its staff development. Further, apart from following the University's amended policies in response to their feedback in self-evaluation reports, the lecturers were not informed about feedback of other stakeholders such as students or alumni about their performance. Hence, it is harder for lecturers to make any needed adjustments, and if they do, their adjustments may not be relevant to the reality due to their lack of information.

#### **5.2.14. The Programme Outcomes**

The final results or the outcomes of a programme are always the most important issue for stakeholders. For the students and parents, the most important outcome was attaining good jobs and using knowledge after graduation. Parents thought that the English language proficiency and the professional skills that their children had learned in the transnational programmes would be advantageous when applying for jobs in the future.

##### ***5.2.14.1. International Bachelor's Degree Recognition***

The students' biggest concern related to the process of degree recognition completed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Although TNUPs must be approved by the MOET before starting their recruitment, it is still required that students' bachelor's degrees are recognised by the MOET. The recognition is to make sure that students have completed all the necessary papers/requirements of TNUPs, and to ensure that the University offered students the conditions TNUPs had approved by the MOET. The MOET staff are responsible to check students' academic transcripts and require the University to submit other documents depending on specific features of each TNUP (GOV, 2019). S5 said, "Students who graduated from some transnational programmes are having difficulties as they need to

have their degrees certified and audited by the MOET”. According to S1, it was unfair for students because “we have been studying very hard, which I think is harder than some students of domestic programmes, but they still suspect our ability and our degrees” (S1). On the other side, students were still confident that their knowledge and English would be “highly appreciated by foreign enterprises and companies” and they “can work well with transnational degrees”, (S4).

#### ***5.2.14.2. Expectations for Work-Related Knowledge and Skills***

As mentioned in the TNUP Programme Handbooks, the curriculum of the Malaysian programme is designed so that graduates can be eligible to obtain the Certified Public Accounting (CPA) license of international accounting bodies (VNU-IS, 2010a). In Vietnam, accountants who want to be registered members of the Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants must hold a CPA certificate issued by the Vietnamese Ministry of Finance. With the Bachelor Degree of Business (Accounting) (Hons), graduates of the Malaysian programme have many advantages when applying for this certificate and working as professional accountants. Regarding the outcomes mentioned by alumni, most of the alumni interviewed had gained jobs within one year of graduation, and they agreed that English played an important role in applying for jobs and working. Although some alumni said that they had no difficulties in getting jobs with transnational bachelor’s degrees and “had more chances to apply for better jobs with a reasonable salary” (S5), they still admitted that there was not much of a relationship between the knowledge they were taught at the University and the knowledge they were using at work. To adapt to their jobs, they needed to acquire some real-life skills and improve themselves, such as learning diplomatic or soft skills. All alumni agreed that the salary they had been paid did not depend on the transnational degrees but their working ability; however, it could not be denied that their working capability was somehow built when they had been studying in TNUPs.

This issue might be the reason why interviewed alumni expressed their expectations for changes in the structures of the programmes. Because the alumni saw the division between what they were taught and what the labour market needs, many of them insisted on doing something about the structures of the programmes. This was expressed as follows: “changes need to be made for the structure of the programme and the way the lecturers deliver their lessons in order to help students have more real life experiences through subjects” (A12) or “eliminate some subjects that are unnecessary” (A13) or “provide more real life experiences and interaction for students” (A16). P2, one of the interviewed parents, also felt the need of “inserting some subjects relating to our country’s real situation because the knowledge from those subjects will help our children much when they work afterwards”.

### **5.2.15. The Feedback of Alumni and Employers**

If current students expect to gain promising outcomes upon graduation, alumni are people who have really experienced the outcomes they can achieve. Therefore, in order to evaluate the quality of their programmes, apart from collecting the feedback of students, the University also collects feedback from its alumni and their employers.

#### **5.2.15.1. Feedback of Alumni**

The University collected feedback from its alumni in 2016 and 2017 via *The University’s Questionnaire to Collect the Feedback of Alumni* (see Questionnaire 4 – Appendix I (p. 290)). However, due to the small number of TNUP alumni (in comparison with the number of students of other local programmes) and the lack of contact information for TNUP alumni, the University decided not to collect feedback of TNUP alumni. Yet, the feedback of alumni from other programmes was a valued source of information for the quality evaluation. Like TNUP students, students from other programmes study at University A, use the same facilities, may have the same lecturers, may work with the same staff, and may consider having a job after graduation important. Hence, alumni from other programmes and

TNUP alumni may share similar feelings about their programmes. The survey results discussed below clarify the alumni's thoughts.

### *Feedback of Alumni in 2016*

In 2016, 57 alumni completed the survey questionnaire because the University did not have contacts of all alumni at that time. Among those, only 2/57 alumni did not have jobs at the time of the survey. Their unemployment resulted from having insufficient experience, lacking professional knowledge, or lacking English language proficiency.

For those who were employed, 54.55% of alumni who had jobs confirmed that they found work within six months of graduation. Regarding the knowledge that they were taught at the University, such as general knowledge, professional knowledge, or other knowledge relating to their majors, most of them assumed that it could partly or basically meet the need of their jobs. A comment of A17, who confirmed that he had achieved his job three months after graduation, is an example for this,

I applied for jobs in three companies. One was an accounting company, and the other two were import-export companies. I had opportunities to be interviewed and chosen by all of them, but I chose the accounting company as the job was mostly related to my major. When they interviewed, I realised that their requirements about the work were not too different from what I was taught. I had just graduated at that time, but I was rather confident when answering their questions about professional fields. I was also confident that I could do my job properly with the skills I have learnt when I was at University A.

Apart from knowledge about their major fields, 87.5% of alumni were positive when mentioning that their English language proficiency or other soft skills met the demand of their jobs (adapted from *The Report of the University to the VNU on the Feedback of Alumni (2016)* (VNU-IS, 2016a)). I perceived the same confidence when I had interviews with the alumni. A13 asserted, "I am working in a big company as a sale representative. I am dealing with customers from many countries, and of course, we speak English. I have no difficulties

when using English to work with foreign customers”. A18 had the same viewpoint about English, and also added,

English is an advantage that students from this University have when applying for jobs. Also, we had many presentations, and frequently used computer skills to present when we were studying in TNUPs. Therefore, we are familiar with talking in front of other people, and we know how to make a presentation more interesting by applying technology. For me, these skills were advantageous, and helped my get the job I am doing now.

### *Feedback of Alumni in 2017*

In 2017, 97 alumni completed *The University's Questionnaire to Collect the Feedback of Alumni*. Among those, 83/97 alumni (85.56%) had jobs, and six alumni did not work but continued to study. Of the employed alumni, 31/97 alumni (31.95%) found work before graduation, and a further 40/97 alumni (42.23%) found work within six months of graduation. The statistics reflect that alumni had many chances of getting jobs soon after graduation or even before graduation if they had appropriate learning attainment. In the interviews, the students (6/8) and parents (9/10) stated that one of the reasons for them to choose University A was job opportunities. S1 was hopeful about job opportunities when they said, “I hope that upon graduation, I can find a desirable job”. S3 emphasised the importance of having a job to alumni of a university,

In our country, having good jobs is very important as we often judge the quality of a university, or a programme based on that. I mean if you have graduated and you could not find a job, that means you are not qualified and what you have learnt is not useful.

P2 had the same viewpoints about job opportunities and stated, “When I chose this programme for my son, I thought with the University’s advertised outcomes, it would be easier for him to look for a job after graduation”. Together with the above statistics, these ideas align with the University’s advertisements about students’ future careers and is a good signal for students and parents considering University A’s programmes, especially when finding a job is one of their most-wanted goals. As to professional knowledge, 67/97 alumni

(80.72%) thought that the professional knowledge they were taught in TNUPs could partly or basically meet the requirement of their jobs. They also had positive feedback about their English language proficiency, soft skills, or real life skills when nearly 50% of them agreed that their language or skills could basically meet the need of their jobs.

However, the alumni also had some other ideas that needed to be considered. They expected University A to pay more attention to training skills like independent thinking, presentation, and IT skills for students. They believed that professional knowledge should be taught more deeply, whereas some general knowledge could be self-studied. Moreover, alumni hoped that the University could connect with businesses to widen the chances of internship for students (adapted from *The Report of the University to the VNU on the Feedback of Alumni (2017)* (VNU-IS, 2017a)). Based on alumni's real experience, these expectations align the demands of the labour market and future employers, which are discussed in the next section.

#### **5.2.15.2. Feedback of Employers**

In 2017, University A started their feedback collection from employers about its graduates via *The University's Questionnaire to Collect the Feedback of Employers* (see Questionnaire 5 – Appendix I (p. 292)). Six employers participated in this survey. The employers were required to rank the assessment criteria from 1 (totally not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) to show their satisfaction with the University's graduates who were working in their companies. The results of the survey showed that the employers mostly ranked their employees as satisfactory to very satisfactory between 3 and 5, which is quite positive. The employers agreed that the knowledge that the University provided to its students was good, close to real life, and useful for their jobs. The employers also suggested some skills they thought would be necessary for TNUP students and the University could consider. Apart from professional skills, 90% of the employers agreed that skills such as communication,

presentation, information technology, and foreign language skills are highly appreciated

(adapted from the *Report of the University to the VNU on the Feedback of Employers (2017)*

(VNU-IS, 2017b)). An employer clarified their needs about employees' computer skills in his further comment,

I have an employee graduated from University A, and I am quite satisfied with his work now, but his computer skills used to be not so good. We are a tax company, and we require our employees to be skilful in using computers. Luckily, we have staff development courses annually. After he participated in one course, he is now more confident when using computer skills to deal with our tasks.

Another employer expressed the necessity of equipping students with communication and presentation skills when they were studying at the University in his comment:

It is important for students to have good social communication and presentation skills. When they work in real life, there are many situations that are not the same as described in the books. University A should consider providing them with courses or workshops to give them more opportunities to see different people and learn different experiences.

This information is very important, and the University should consider if or when to incorporate these necessary skills into both their TNUPs and domestic programmes.

### **5.3. Summary**

In this chapter, I have detailed the results of the interviews with students of TNUPs and the document analysis relating to quality management activities of University A. The themes were found by integrating the categories built on open coding and the categories built on coding guided by the CIPP evaluation model. Whilst I chose the CIPP model for my evaluation purposes, presenting the themes according to the CIPP evaluation foci could not cover all the information explored. Therefore, the presentation of the findings is based on the criteria for self-evaluation of TNUPs prescribed by the VNU. These criteria cover the whole process of enrolling, studying and graduating from TNUPs of students, so they can represent the four evaluation foci of the CIPP model. These criteria also consider the roles of

stakeholders in TNUPs, and the way their activities affect the quality management of TNUPs. The findings align with 15 key themes regarding the administrative, academic, and quality development activities of TNUPs. Quotes from students' interviews as well as numerical data from the University's documents were used as supporting tools to illustrate the findings. In Chapter Six, I discuss the findings in relation to concerns, issues and implications in relation to stakeholders' viewpoints.

## Chapter 6 Discussion

The motivation for this research was to improve the management of transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs) in Vietnamese universities in order to make them more beneficial for students enrolled in the programmes. Accordingly, knowing how stakeholders of those TNUPs viewed the programmes they were studying in became essential. With that purpose in mind, the study was completed by interviewing participants involved in the TNUP programmes and analysing documents relating to the quality management system of the University (also called University A). The results detailed the viewpoints of selected stakeholders about TNUPs. They also helped to answer the overarching question of the study: *What factors impact stakeholders' evaluations of the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university?* Vietnam is an Asian country with a very long history and diverse cultural background; therefore the study in University A also sought to understand whether the cultural values of Vietnamese people influenced their viewpoints about TNUPs. Firstly, I discuss how the findings reflect selected stakeholder's viewpoints about the quality of TNUPs. Secondly, the relationship between Vietnamese cultural values and selected stakeholders' viewpoints are investigated. I then discuss the advantages and disadvantages when the Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) evaluation model was applied in the study. Consideration is also given to the quality of the data collected from interviews with participants. Finally, the quality management models that applied to TNUPs by University A and by the Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU) are taken into account. These models are considered to clarify how the quality of TNUPs at University A is managed. An in-depth look into these models also explains the relationship between stakeholders' responses and the TNUP quality management system.

## 6.1. Discussion of the Findings

### 6.1.1. Stakeholders' Evaluations about the Quality of TNUPs

#### 6.1.1.1. Stakeholders' Viewpoints about what University A Offered Students and Parents of TNUPs

When graduating from high school, Vietnamese students face a difficult choice of where to apply for higher education. They need to consider whether their learning attainment, their financial conditions, and their interests match the requirements and offers of place and enrolment introduced by different higher education institutions. In Vietnam, there are two main types of universities. One type is Vietnamese universities that include public/state-owned universities and non-public/private universities with investment from the Vietnamese government or organisations. The other type is universities with foreign investment that is completely or partly funded by foreign investment (GOV, 2012a). The two TNUPs in this study are located in a Vietnamese university and are among the many choices for high school graduates. As a result, there are a number of factors that encourage them towards these programmes instead of other programmes. These factors include the followings:

#### *The Output Standards of TNUPs*

The benefits that can be gained and the occupations students can access after graduating are important for students and parents to consider when choosing a TNUP. With English proficiency and an international bachelor's degree, students have opportunities to work in big companies or international enterprises. These companies/enterprises are the doors for them to integrate with the worldwide labour market. After studying in TNUPs, students may also undertake further study abroad, and enhance their prospects of gaining good salaries from future employers, which they may not do with a local degree and limited English proficiency. According to students and parents I interviewed, among the benefits of TNUPs, having opportunities to get good jobs was considered the most important. The chances of achieving these jobs were considered to be the result of studying in TNUPs. Specifically,

TNUPs provide students with two important conditions for their future careers: English language proficiency and international bachelor's degrees. A parent supported this viewpoint and noted the reason why they agreed with their child's TNUP choice: "This is because we have seen the advertised output standards of the programme, and we think that if they gain such outcomes when they graduate, they can do that job very well" (P3). Further, more than 85% of TNUP alumni getting jobs relevant to their major fields after graduation is proof of the reliability of the output standards (VNU-IS, 2017a).

According to Knight and McNamara (2015), among the many motivations for students choosing transnational education (TNE) in the countries hosting transnational programmes, career development is the main reason given. TNE is a way to enhance students' future job prospects because it helps develop their professional knowledge by learning from overseas sources. Also, TNE helps students practise the necessary skills to work in international environment such as presenting in foreign languages, and communicating with foreigners (Knight & McNamara, 2015). Such knowledge and skills may not be as strongly encouraged in local programmes as in TNE. If students and parents believed that the TNUPs of University A were able to bring them this advantage, it could be said that University A did a good job in publicising and assuring the output standards of its TNUPs.

#### *The Scholarships and Extracurricular Activities*

The student support of TNUPs is reflected in two aspects of the programmes: the scholarships and the extracurricular activities. Although the TNUPs' scholarships were assumed to be competitive because they were "difficult" (stated by S2) and "not easy to achieve" (stated by S4), there were still students who were awarded these when showing good performance such as "working very hard" (claimed by S5) or being "above the average level" (claimed by S3). Different opinions were shared, but students agreed that the scholarship requirements "corresponded with students' ability and effort" (reflected by S6). The purpose

of every scholarship is to encourage students and support them financially. Accordingly, if the scholarships are too easy to achieve, their true worth may be diminished.

Due to the lack of space and the fact that not all students of TNUPs stay on campus, the interviewed students' opinions about the extracurricular activities were varied. Some students were interested because they took part in student clubs and had many chances to make friends through events held on special occasions, whereas some others were indifferent and even had little idea about the extracurricular activities because they were living off campus or did not feel like participating when spaces were limited.

Although some limitations are unavoidable, generally, it can be said that University A tries to provide its students with some encouragement via the scholarships and the extracurricular activities. The efficacy of the student support depends on the students and other factors which are beyond the University's control.

### *The Teaching and Learning Resources*

According to *The University's Report on Transnational Undergraduate Programmes to the VNU (2010)* (VNU-IS, 2010d), the University has a good range of learning resources to support students with their study. According to both of the interviewed administrators, the teaching and learning resources have remained the same since then. However, the interviewed participants indicated that many of the learning resources such as the facilities, assets, and materials were not up to the expected standard. The following sections consider the participants' concerns about these issues.

#### The Facilities and Assets:

The University's campus was originally designed for the living purposes of residents, not for teaching and learning purposes. The University renovated the apartments inside the two buildings by joining some small rooms together to get bigger spaces, and turned them into lecture theatres, library, and offices. Because the rooms were not designed for

educational purposes, much refurbishment was required for their dimensions and interiors to be suitable as lecture theatres. However, based on the results of the interviews with participants and the data collected by the University relating to education services and facilities in surveys, few of the students responded positively to the facilities. Students complained about the insanitary nature of the lecture theatres and the lack of space for individual study. In *The Report to the University Rector on the University's Education Services and Facilities (2016/17 and 2017/18)* (VNU-IS, 2018c), students claimed that the lecture theatres were dirty with broken air-conditioners, broken elevators, and were short of light and water. An administrator echoed those negative viewpoints by saying that the facilities were “not enough to assist TNUP students because of the low quality classrooms” (Ad1). There were many times when the students and parents mentioned the words “not modern” when talking about facilities. Specifically, respondents complained about low quality, “unstable” Wi-Fi leading to difficulties in accessing online sources of information and making connections with the partner university’s lecturers. Similarly, when students shared their study and leisure areas with other residents, some discomfort arose. The interference of residents and tenants through unexpected noises or daily activities when students were studying or having extracurricular activities were “distracting” (S3), and made them “irritated” (S7). Such inconvenience, especially things related to students’ learning including the low-quality Internet and lecture theatres, proved problematic and need to be improved.

#### The Teaching and Learning Materials:

Most of the students’ complaints about teaching and learning materials involved the limited access to the international learning databases and the out-of-date or limited number of textbooks. These limitations affected the quality of information that students acquired as well as impacting students’ assessment results. In *the University's Report on Transnational*

*Undergraduate Programmes to the VNU (2010)* (VNU-IS, 2010d), it was mentioned that the teaching and learning materials of TNUPs were provided by the partner universities via University A's administrators. As S6 said, "I know it is not the university's responsibility, but they should have some recommendations to the partner university about this". The teaching and learning materials have become a problem for both the University and its partners in terms of quality and provision.

#### ***6.1.1.2. Stakeholders' Viewpoints about the Design and Delivery of University A for TNUPs***

##### *The Structures and Contents of TNUPs*

The structures and contents of the programmes are very important things for students because these factors relate to what students want to study. The structures of the two TNUPs in this study comprise of a GE programme designed by University A to assist students in achieving the English language requirement and a university programme imported from the partner universities.

The GE programme requires students to be proficient in English. This is considered very important for higher education institutions that offer high-quality programmes (Altbach, 2004). In the case of TNUPs, it is reasonable that University A and its partners require students to achieve a certain level of English language proficiency prior to beginning their study. What is often questioned is how long it takes for students to reach that level. In their study, Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) tried to measure the approximate length of time for students of other languages to be proficient in academic English. The results of their study indicated that it takes from four to seven years for students to become proficient in academic English. Although there is no exact length of time for each person to become proficient in a second language, the University has introduced a GE programme with five levels. The programme takes between 800 and 1000 contact hours to complete. Students enrolled in TNUPs take an entrance exam, which helps determine their level of English to start with.

When students finish the GE programme, they are supposed to be at B2 level or 5.5 to 6.0 IELTS. During the GE programmes, students have to take end-of-level exams and can only move to the higher levels if they pass. Given that a student studies all five levels of the GE programme in one year, it seems much shorter than the expected length suggested by Hakuta et al. (2000).

English is a compulsory subject in almost all high schools in Vietnam. High school students are mainly taught English grammar and vocabulary to have basic knowledge of English. The GE programme offered by University A aims to equip students with academic knowledge, and students are required to study four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Therefore, finishing the GE programme means that students can understand their lectures, write assignments and discuss with their lecturers in English. Some students who have a certain level of English at high school may not start from the beginning and spend up to one year studying English before starting their university programme. However, when interviewed, many students and their parents considered that the GE programme was too long and that it had affected their financial situation in terms of paying more tuition fees, their passion for studying, and their future chances for employment after graduation. S1 complained: “It affects our financial ability and also our passion for studying”. The participants even compared the TNUPs of University A with other domestic programmes that only take three and half to four years to complete because of not having to study the GE programme. The administrator agreed that the TNUPs were “too long for students and limited their job opportunities because they often graduated later than their friends in other universities” (Ad1). This raised an issue that even when participants acknowledged that TNUPs could bring them a lot of benefits such as English language proficiency, international degrees, and international integration opportunities, it was hard for them to accept that they needed to spend this much time acquiring the necessary English language proficiency.

Although it is recommended that the University accepted IELTS or other equivalent English certificates of proficiency no matter where students studied, the required time to gain such certificates might not be shorter than the length of the GE programme. That may be the reason why most of the students still choose to study in the GE programme.

After finishing the GE programme, students continue with the university programmes that follow the same content as the partner universities. Although concerns mentioned in interviews such as the out-of-date materials provided too close to the starting date of a semester or the lecturers' limited use of English in teaching and limited methods of delivering lessons, students were positive about the university programmes. 90% of the surveyed participants agreed that the TNUPs papers had logical contents, proper materials, and strongly contributed to their professional knowledge and skills. As such most of the problems identified might relate to the GE programme, which is the University's creation.

All of these issues may affect students' motivation to study in TNUPs in general and more particularly in the GE programme. Motivation to study a second language is defined by Gardner (2001) as the combination of three elements: attempting to learn the language, desiring to achieve the language tasks, and enjoying the completion of language tasks. Given the situation described by students relating to the GE programme, it seemed that students did not enjoy their completion of the GE programme. Hence, their motivation to study English in the GE programme was affected. Gardner (2001) also discovers that language achievement is affected by motivation and language aptitude. Before starting the GE programme, students are required to do a placement test to identify their language aptitude. Based on the test results, students will follow the design of the GE programme to study until they achieve the English language requirements of TNUPs. If students were motivated when learning English in the GE programme, it was more likely for them to gain language achievement. Similarly, if students' motivation was not good, their achievement in the GE programme may not have

been as good as they had expected. As such, students would tend to assume that the GE programme was not well-designed, or the teaching quality was not good. Generally, such assumption may lead to their negative thoughts about the quality of the GE programmes and TNUPs.

### *The Procedure of Choosing Learners*

#### The Admission Requirements:

As mentioned in the findings, the admission requirements of the TNUPs had changed over 12 years based on the adjustments made by the partner universities, the MOET, and the University itself. The required English language proficiency was 5.0 or 5.5 IELTS or equivalent English certificates depending on the partner universities' requirements in different years. The required grade of applicants' high school educational attainment was 5.0 GPA of all subjects before 2006, but after 2006, only GPA of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade was required to be 6.5 upwards. Although these changes were made, it is noted that English language proficiency and the applicants' high school attainment were always the compulsory requirements. The requirement for good conduct at high school, which included seven characteristics regulated by the MOET (see Appendix H (p. 279)), had not changed for several years until 2010. This requirement was only for University A's TNUPs and not for other Vietnamese universities and local programmes. The concept of good conduct in Vietnam is determined by features which may be personal and does not relate to learning attainment such as having good relationships with friends, following all the rules of the high school, and actively participating in community activities. Therefore, when the good conduct requirement was removed from the enrolment requirements of TNUPs, many more students might be eligible to apply for TNUPs. All participants agreed that the admission requirements of University A for its TNUPs were achievable, "suitable" and "not as high as some domestic programmes" (quoted from students' comments on the admission requirements). For example, in 2016, whilst

University A only required applicants for TNUPs to graduate from high school and considered their high school educational attainment (see *The Admission Notification in 2016*, Appendix H (p. 279)), other local programmes required students to not only graduate from high school but also gain high results in the national high school graduation exam (Vietnamnet, 2016). According to *The Statistics on the Number of Students of TNUPs in English* (VNU-IS, 2017e), the number of recruited students increased from 60 in 2004 to 326 in 2010. This reflected that the University A's admission requirements were achievable for more and more students. Those numbers together with positive feedback from participants show that University A's admission requirements were suitable for many people and beneficial for the University's reputation.

#### The Recruitment Process:

The recruitment process of University A was via two channels: word of mouth and marketing campaigns. Word of mouth was based on two main sources: parents' advice and community beliefs. Parents' advice or family beliefs have a very strong influence on Vietnamese people's choices. The first reason for this is the impact of Confucian ideology on Vietnamese people's way of thinking where children are expected to respect their parents' advice. The second reason is in Vietnamese culture; even when an individual has their own interest and targets, those must be placed below their family's interest. This value is summarised by D'Andrade (2008): "issues concerning family success can overcome strong individual achievement wishes" (p. 77). Accordingly, if parents consider that these TNUPs are good for their children, they will direct their children to choose them, and students will tend to follow their parents' wishes. As mentioned previously, Chung and Bemak (1998) insist that Vietnamese people are collectivists, which means individuals are not self-governing but influenced by the family system. Generally speaking, an individual's beliefs are influenced by the wider community. That explains why half of the interviewed students

mentioned that their choices of TNUPs were affected by the recommendations of their parents, cousins, or friends. The statement of an interviewed parent, “If other students think it is good, that means it must be good” (P10), is an example of Vietnamese people’s collective nature.

The second channel was marketing campaigns. The University provided information about its programmes such as the majors offered for each year, the admission requirements, the output standards, and the recruitment quota on its websites. Also, the University had advertisements on the newspapers and television to give everyone more opportunities to get access to necessary information about the programmes they wanted. The idea of marketing educational programmes started from the idea of considering higher education as a commodity. Maringe and Gibbs (2008) suggest that education is considered as merchandise. As such, education can be bought or sold like any other products. It is not “a public good and public responsibility” (Maringe & Gibbs, 2008, p. 15). According to the interviewed students, University A also delivered its TNUPs, which was the product, directly to its students, who were the customers, by organising workshops at high schools to provide information, advise students, and assist students in relation to enrolment procedures. In such workshops, students could ask any questions, and could consult with the staff. The staff collected students’ information and kept in touch with students after the workshops as well. These marketing activities showed that TNUPs as a type of education was advertised and marketed to prospective customers. The reason why the marketing campaigns of University A’s TNUPs are seen to have a wide reach is that they use a different recruitment process from other universities. The way that most universities carry out their recruitment is by announcing their admission requirements on their websites and on the MOET’s website. Students can also find necessary information about recruitment of all universities in Vietnam such as majors, enrolment requirements, and recruitment quota published every year on the website of the

MOET. Going to each high school to market programmes and recruit students is not considered a popular way to market especially with Vietnamese universities offering local programmes. Most importantly, there were not many universities doing the same things. This may be due to the fact that public universities in Vietnam are financially supported by the government, so they do not have to worry much about the number of recruits. University A was different when its recruitment decided its budget. The recruitment process of University A was most effective when using both national and international trends in education to attract students.

### *The Teaching Staff*

Lecturers are like a bridge connecting the knowledge offered by a programme and its learners. As students studying in the TNUPs are taught in English, and University A required the English language proficiency from its students before commencing the university programmes, it was reasonable for students to expect their lecturers to be fluent when teaching in English. Even though there might be little doubt about the qualifications of the lecturers, their levels of English competency concerned students. Interviewed students perceived that their lecturers' use of English in delivering lessons was quite limited. Students also worried that their lecturers' English would not meet the requirements of TNUPs and would not help them acquire all the knowledge they required. Students' concerns about their lecturers' teaching manner and professional knowledge were also mentioned when they commented that some lecturers did not have good presentation skills, or some had boring teaching which made students sleepy.

In *The University Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the Papers of University Programmes*, there is a part to collect students' views in relation to teaching quality (see Questionnaire 1, Appendix I (p. 284)). The questionnaire results show that apart from the generally positive comments, there were negative comments about the ineffective

teaching and testing methods of some lecturers. For example, the lecturers did not use various teaching methods, did not focus on the paper contents, tested students about what they were not taught, did not use good English, or even used only Vietnamese to teach. With regard to knowledge and skills contributing to lecturers' effectiveness in teaching, the research of Liakopoulou (2011, pp. 70-71) indicates that lecturers' "use of appropriate forms, methods and teaching aids" and "understanding their (students') needs and adjusting teaching accordingly" are very important. The interviewed parents agreed with their children that lecturers of TNUPs did not seem to have effective lessons to improve students' knowledge and skills about their majors. One of them said: "My child doesn't feel positive about some papers, and he says it is because the lecturers' way of teaching is not effective" (P3).

According to the students I interviewed, there was a connection between the lecturers' English and their professional knowledge. There are two types of teachers involved in the programme delivery: the native English speaking teachers (NEST) and the non-native English speaking teachers (non-NEST). The NEST are defined as teachers who speak English as their mother tongue (Medgyes, 2001). According to *The University's Report on Transnational Undergraduate Programmes to the VNU (2010)* (VNU-IS, 2010d), apart from the lecturers from partner universities who are mainly in charge of revision classes, most of their lecturers in TNUPs are Vietnamese lecturers who are considered non-NEST. The issue here is whether a native speaker is able to deliver a better lecture because English is their first language. In education, non-NEST are assumed to bring benefits to their students, such as being more sensitive to students and using students' mother tongue to reduce language difficulties (Medgyes, 2001). However, there are also many challenges and disadvantages of non-NEST as they normally have difficulties with using English in context and introducing teaching activities with cultural information (Medgyes, 2001). This problem may be the result of cultural differences that lead to different ways of thinking and using language. With the same

knowledge, Vietnamese lecturers, influenced by cultural values like avoiding confrontation or having self-control, may use different words from what native lecturers may use to explain and teach students. Similarly, because English is their second language, Vietnamese lecturers tend to translate sentences from Vietnamese to English when teaching and limitations in expression were difficult to avoid. As a result, students' concerns about their lecturers' English seem justified especially when the teaching was delivered in English.

The teaching workload of Vietnamese university lecturers is quite heavy with 350 teaching hours a year and many other professional tasks required such as publishing papers, going to conferences, participating in university administrative tasks, and organising extra-curricular activities for students. However, university lecturers often earn low salaries. The highest salary of a university lecturer is 12,800,000 VND/month, which is around 600 USD and equal to an officer of a company with 1-2 year of experiences. Further, university lecturers have limited teaching materials and facilities such as dated textbooks, limited access to international online library, and limited teaching equipment (Hayden & Lam, 2010; Kristy, 2000). Considering that teaching is a job that earns their living, all lecturers should want to develop their professional knowledge and skills so that there may be opportunities for promotion and higher salaries. However, when lecturers think about getting access to more materials or information to improve their job, the heavy workload together with the low salary may provide a barrier for them by limiting their time and money. If they are too busy and cannot handle all the workload, it is difficult for them to find time to read books, to write papers, to go to conferences, or to get access to sources of information to develop their professional knowledge. If their salary from teaching is not enough for their living, and they may have to do other jobs, their interest in improving their teaching may be lessened. The limited teaching facilities such as the lack of and/or broken state of projectors and other

teaching equipment can also reduce lecturers' creativity and presentation when delivering their lectures.

Apart from the teaching quality, students were not happy with their lecturers' timetables. Lecturers provide their available time at the beginning of each semester, and the study timetable needs to be finalised at the same time. When interviewed, students complained that some lecturers still changed their timetables and sometimes "change their available time just before their lessons begin" (spoken by S1). This gave students no chance to develop a back-up plan. The same complaint was found in *The Report to the University Rector on the University's Education Services and Facilities (2016/17 and 2017/18)* (VNU-IS, 2018c). According to *The University's Report on Transnational Undergraduate Programmes to the VNU (2010)* (VNU-IS, 2010d), where more than half of the lecturers are part-time lecturers and conflicts sometimes arose because of clashes between their timetables at other universities and at University A. These part-time lecturers may be full-time lecturers of other universities, and prioritising their universities' tasks is obvious. They may have informed University A that they would be available on certain days; however, when their universities required them to do something which was not in the plan, they had to cancel their timetable at University A. In relation to lecturers' arrangement of teaching plans, Liakopoulou (2011, p. 70) suggests that "timely preparation and planning of teaching" contribute to the model of an effective teacher. This issue relates not only to arranging the teaching plans of the lecturers but also to University A's management of lecturers' work. It is suggested that even though there might be unexpected things from their universities, the lecturers were not carefully planning, and University A's administrators were not preparing properly for such situation including having back-up lecturers or back-up plans for students. Further, problems can always arise when the academic activities of TNUPs depend on such a large number of non-tenured lecturers whose main employment is not at University A. According to the *Circular*

24 /2015/TT-BGDĐT issued by the MOET, the national standard for tenured lecturers of a higher education institution is 20 students/lecturer (MOET, 2015b). Provided that the number of TNUP students in 2017 was 262 and the University had 11 tenured staff teaching in TNUPs (VNU-IS, 2017e), the ratio did not meet the requirement of the MOET. It is explained why University A had to employ contracted staff. However, if relying on the contracted lecturers resulted in problems with timetabling and other administration work, the University should consider employing more tenured staff as an urgent solution.

### *The Academic Staff Development*

University A's plan for academic staff development involves developing the quality of the teaching staff. In order to know how the teaching staff are performing and what should be done to enhance their teaching quality, University A requires its lecturers to complete self-evaluations every year. The self-evaluation is about teaching activities such as preparing and delivering lectures and assessing students, scientific research activities such as writing papers and participating in scientific conferences, professional development activities such as participating in workshops or courses to develop professional knowledge and skills, and other administrative activities such as being the head lecturer of a team or the manager of the faculty. In *The University's Report to the VNU on its Staff Development (2016/17)*(VNU-IS, 2017f), positive results were noted about lecturers' participation in scientific research activities (83%), professional development activities (71%), teaching activities (68%), and administration work, tutoring or instructing students' internship (37%). The results indicated that the teaching staff were engaged in scientific research publishing papers, yet the University did not invest much in this field. It was stated in *The University's Report to the VNU on its Staff Development (2016/17)*(VNU-IS, 2017f) that University A intended to spend more money on research development as well as provide opportunities for lecturers to participate in professional development courses. In their self-evaluation, the lecturers did not

pay much attention to improving their English or their teaching methods even though these two issues were strongly emphasised by students when discussing their lecturers. It is noted in the lecturers' comments that they think having good English and appropriate teaching methods are evident if they teach in TNUPs. Encouraging lecturers to participate in courses about teaching methods was also mentioned in *The University's Report to the VNU on its Staff Development (2016/17)*(VNU-IS, 2017f) in a general sense. It is assumed that the stress of the academic staff in Vietnam was caused by inadequate salaries and lack of teaching facilities (Hayden & Lam, 2010). Hence, if students' complaints about some inappropriateness of the facilities including the lighting system of lecture halls, the air conditioners, and the Internet were reasonable, it seems that the University's attention to improving teaching facilities was not strongly mentioned in *The University's Report to the VNU on its Staff Development (2016/17)*(VNU-IS, 2017f). If facilities to assist the lecturers and students are not sufficient, and the lecturers themselves do not have enough money for living, it is unlikely that effective staff development could be implemented.

### ***6.1.1.3. Stakeholders' Viewpoints about Their Nature of Experience When Studying in TNUPs***

#### *The Enrolment Process*

The enrolment process is completed after students have been admitted to study in the TNUPs. All necessary information, such as the required documents and the tuition fees, are clearly stated in the University's official invitation letter, which is sent to students two weeks before their semester begins. This allows students and their families enough time to prepare what they need to bring to the enrolment day at the University. Students are asked to show up on the enrolment date, submit their documents, and pay tuition fees directly to the University. Students are unable to complete the enrolment process online even though this may have taken them less time and saved money for the TNUPs. Interviewed participants including students, parents, and alumni all agreed that the University's enrolment process went

smoothly, and the University staff did a very good job of assisting them in the process. This made the enrolment process positive for University A's TNUPs. S1 commented: "Generally speaking, it was good and we were satisfied with it".

### *The Tuition Fees*

Since 1993, the Vietnamese government has allowed higher education institutions to calculate, collect, and use their tuition fees in a way they deemed appropriate. They are, however, required to report their plans to the MOET. The MOET controls the tuition fee ceiling (Hayden & Lam, 2010) and states that the tuition fees calculation does not need to take family income into account (Kristy, 2000). The MOET also allows public sector higher education institutions to grant tuition fee exemptions, student loans, and scholarships under special circumstances (Kristy, 2000). University A's tuition fees for TNUPs in English are about VND 7,100,000 per month, which are much higher than the tuition fees of other local programmes that are only about VND 4,100,000 per month (adapted from GOV (2015) and The University's Admission Notifications from 2006–2018 – see Appendix H (p. 279)). This may be the reason why interviewed participants considered the tuition fees of TNUPs to be too high. Hence, the comparison of tuition fees between local programmes and TNUPs may also affect the recruitment of TNUPs.

The tuition fees are one of the factors that are taken into consideration by many participants when choosing University A's TNUPs. When students had already chosen the TNUPs, it can be understood that the tuition fees were affordable for them. In reality, students, alumni, and parents were concerned that the tuition fees of TNUPs were rather high compared with local programmes. The problems were not only about the amount of money but also about what the University offered for the tuition fees they collected. Students believed that some facilities such as low quality lecture theatres, slow Wi-Fi, photocopied textbooks, and learning materials that they "still had to pay a lot of money for all of those" (as

S7 complained) were costly. Although the tuition fees of local programmes do not cover learning materials either, they are much lower than the tuition fees of TNUPs. For more than 10 years, the tuition fees of University A's TNUPs had not changed. The issues relating to facilities and materials were still the same, as University A had been renting the same campus and cooperating with the same partners. The University must have its own reasons for retaining the same fees for such a long time, which might be trying to maintain the same tuition fees for students of different cohorts, or being able to balance between its revenue and expenditure without changing the income through collecting tuition fees. In this instance, reducing the tuition fees may not be the best answer as students and their parents had chosen the TNUPs and were aware of the fees they would pay. Students only found the tuition fees problematic when comparing them with what the University actually provided. Hence, reviewing and improving the learning resources might be a more appropriate solution for the University.

### *The Timetables*

The timetables of University A's TNUPs include the study timetables and the exam timetables. The study timetables are arranged by the administrators based on the lecturers' available teaching time, revision time, room vacancies, public holidays, and students' needs. This received positive feedback from students. Some QA officers did not agree with the idea that students' needs should be considered when making study timetables, and compulsory timetables would be better to make things less complicated. However, QA officers' opinions did not affect the arrangement of administrators which took students' needs into account. In contrast, students themselves seemed to be happy when their needs were taken into account, and the only thing they were not happy with was when lecturers suddenly changed their timetables.

Similar to the study timetables, the exam timetables are scheduled by the administrators at the beginning of the semester. The timetables for the exams of each paper are fixed and sent to students a week before their examination period starts. The interviewed participants complained that the exam timetables were sent too close to the exam date, and the gap between the examinations of different subjects was too short. This issue brought students a lot of stress as they had little time for revision and were often in a rush when exam time came.

If the administrators were responsible for arranging the timetables of TNUPs, they seemed to do a better job with the study timetables than the exam timetables. It is difficult to arrange timetables that can satisfy the needs of everyone, but it is clear that there is no need for students to be more stressed by things that are not part of their study.

### *Assessing Learners' Learning*

In TNUPs, the students' learning is assessed according to a detailed procedure approved by the University's Board of Rectors. The procedure requires the participation of QA officers, administrators, and lecturers in organising an assessment for students. The QA officers are in charge of keeping the assessment questions and students' papers confidential. The lecturers are in charge of marking students' papers objectively, and the administrators are in charge of providing information for students and connecting University A and its partners with information relating to the students' exam results.

Generally, students and alumni were quite satisfied with University A' assessment arrangements. The moderation process of the partner universities, which is like an external evaluation of the assessment, is beneficial for both University A staff and students. This process double-checks and confirms the internal assessment of Vietnamese lecturers, and creates a chance for Vietnamese lecturers and foreign lecturers to discuss in case they have different ideas about the marking. The moderation process also shows the important role of

the partner universities in TNUPs when deciding the final results of students. However, students were concerned about the objectivity of the internal assessment process undertaken at University A with comments like, “I am not sure about the objectivity of the system” (S8), or “we don’t know if there is anything happening during that time” (S3). This concerns the participation of too many people in the procedure. For example, the assignments do not go straight to the lecturers to be marked but went to the administrators first, then transferred to the lecturers. The exam papers are collected by the administrators, transferred to the QA officers to verify, sent to the lecturers to mark, and returned to the QA officers to certify before going to the administrators to be sent to the partner universities. Students’ doubt about the transparency of this procedure was quite clear. S2 indicated, “I think the process is fine, but I think it would be better if we submit them [the assignments] directly to our lecturers”. It is worth considering, if the process was really “fine” as they stated, why it was necessary for them to suggest a “better” way that was different from the current one. Similarly, S6 gave an example of their concern, “Sometimes I see some friends who are not so hard-working get very high results. I don’t want to make suppositions, but there are rumours about them having some help from outside.” Though S6 did not mention this directly, it could be understood that S6 was not the only one who worried about the transparency of the assessment system. The fact that the assessment papers did not come to lecturers straight away could make students think about the interference of ‘invisible’ hands into the marking process; hence, it is understandable why they have such doubt.

In *The University’s Questionnaire about the Papers of TNUPs* (Questionnaire 1-Appendix I (p. 284)), the University had a part about assessment. In this part, students were asked whether assessment questions were of suitable design in relation to the features of the papers, assessment contents tested students’ required knowledge and skills, and assessment results helped students improve the quality of their learning. In their answers, students’

concerns mainly focused on the difficulty level of exam questions in comparison with the time given for the exam and the high frequency of exams in the exam period. According to students, if the exam questions were such a level of difficulty, they would need more time to answer them. Also, the exams are arranged in a very high frequency, such as two or three exams a day, and there are exams every day in one week, so students did not have enough time to revise for each exam. These comments were the same as mentioned about the exam timetables in the interviews questions (adapted from *The Report to the University Rector on the Papers of University Programmes (2017) and (2018)* (VNU-IS, 2017d, 2018a)). If the exam questions were provided by the partner universities as stated in the programme handbooks of the TNUPs, it may not be University A's authority to change or adjust the exam questions. Based on the participants' viewpoints, the procedure for dealing with exam and continuous assessment provided by University A is really worth considering with a view to making improvements.

#### ***6.1.1.4. Stakeholders' Viewpoints about the Vested Interests of Administrators and Quality Assurance Officers in TNUP Quality Management***

##### *The Administrators*

The administrators play a crucial part in the operation of TNUPs when they are responsible for advising students on information relating to TNUPs. The information involves programme regulations, student weekly attendance statistics, and information about the partner universities. Interviewed participants, including students, alumni, and parents, were very positive about the administrators' work except for concerns about information provision and class attendance. The first concern related to the way administrators provide students and parents with information about students' attendance. P3 mentioned, "Sometimes the information comes late, so it is not as effective as we expect". S1 noted that, "They may not be very nice if I come to ask them many questions as they are too busy doing something else". In *The Report to the University Rector on the University's Education Services and Facilities*

(2016/17 and 2017/18) (VNU-IS, 2018c), students complained that the administrators provided information that was not finalised. There were several emails coming to correct the first email, so they had to check emails several times and got confused. From the administrators' job description, it seems that they had a lot of work in a TNUP. As a result, the information they provided to students and parents may not have been timely and as accurate as the students and parents would have liked. These issues could become really problematic if the information impacted on students' learning outcomes.

The second concern was about the inappropriate management of students' attendance such as students' being absent from class or late for class without the lecturer noticing. Usually, student attendance is checked by the lecturers before every lesson by calling the roll. The attendance sheets were sent to the administrator after each lesson. It was the administrators' responsibility to summarise and send the statistics of student attendance to their parents every week (adapted from *The University's Instruction of Implementing TNUPs* (VNU-IS, 2008)). Students complained about some friends being absent or late for class without being noticed. The attendance sheet for those students indicated that they were still on time for class or present. Also, some students' parents complained about receiving the statistics quite late so they could not deal with the issue properly. Usually, apart from sending statistics of student attendance to their parents weekly, administrators need to make a phone call to parents who have children absent from class more than 10% of the contact hours of any paper. However, according to half of the interviewed parents, they did not receive the statistics as specified. In case their children were absent too much and they received information too late, parents could not take appropriate actions.

In terms of the effect on students' learning outcomes, the issue relating to students' attendance seemed to be more serious. Students' attendance is considered to be very important in the programme handbooks of both TNUPs. In the programme handbook of the

TNUP collaborating with the American university, lecturers decide students' grades in each subject based on their performance, attendance, achievement on homework and exercises, and test results. Students must attend between 60–80% of their classes for each subject, otherwise they will not be allowed to take their final exam or may even fail the subject (adapted from *The Programme Handbooks of TNUPs delivered in English* (VNU-IS, 2010a)). No matter what else the students blamed the administration system for, the problem with their attendance also had a very close relationship with the lecturers. Lecturers are people who check students' attendance first, and if their checking was inaccurate, it affected students. Also, if the teaching quality was poor and students did not want to come to class, it affected students' attendance records. As a result, in this case, apart from the administrators' responsibility, the lecturers' quality of teaching and class administration also affected students' learning results and students' trust in the TNUPs' quality management.

The administrators themselves indicated that they were sometimes overloaded. On the contrary, the QA officers considered that there was an efficient allocation of the labour force in TNUPs with one participant saying, “the staffing of TNUPs is too much, which is a waste, in terms of general administration” (shared by QA3). The administrators' workload could be reduced if there was “a clear and coherent administrative documentation process” (suggested by QA1). The reality is one administrator of TNUPs was in charge of about 100 students. This is comparable to the workload of the administrators of local programmes. TNUP administrators also cooperate with partner university administrators in terms of bringing up-to-date information to students about their papers and lecturers daily, sending assessment papers to partner universities to be reconsidered, receiving students' feedback about the partner universities, sending students' feedback to the partner universities to be considered, and returning the partner universities' feedback to students. It may not be an exaggeration to claim that they were overloaded with work, though not often, but it showed that the students

and parents' concerns were justified, and the University should obviously take them into consideration.

### *The QA Officers*

As stated in the documents of the University's Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing (CQAT), the QA officer's main tasks are dealing with all institutional and external issues relating to quality assurance and testing. Their tasks involve observing and assuring quality of assessment activities, gathering stakeholders' feedback about quality of programmes and undertaking the Board of Rectors' decisions to improve quality of programmes. If QA officers are a link in the long chain of testing activities, their role in quality assurance of TNUPs seems to be quite independent from the feedback system. The following sections discuss how the feedback system works in TNUPs.

Under the VNU's regulations, University A has to collect students' feedback about the programmes they study every semester via *The University Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the Papers of University Programmes* (see Questionnaire 1, Appendix I (p. 284)). Apart from that, University A has no other self-evaluation or accreditation process to assess the quality of its university programmes. The CQAT is in charge of these surveys from delivering the questionnaire to collecting students' answers, summarising the answers, and sending reports to the Board of Rectors. Also, students sometimes came to see administrators to report things that are challenging for them.

This process seems helpful for the University to listen to students' ideas. However, most of the interviewed students reported that they either did not know the results of their feedback to the questionnaire or had to wait a long time for the University's responses to their feedback. As one student complained, "...our feedback is not replied to, and if we ask the administrators, they say that there will be responses, but we have to wait, and then we keep waiting" (S7). The only way for students to know if their feedback had been considered was

through any changes made to the problematic issues. If there were no changes, students would keep making complaints and waiting for responses. This did not seem to be an effective way for University A to improve the quality of its TNUPs. Collecting feedback and then putting the feedback aside could make students feel that their feedback was not worth of consideration. If the situation persisted, students may become bored with providing feedback, especially valuable feedback, and may provide inaccurate feedback just to get it done.

On their side, QA officers claimed that the University did not have a good plan to develop QA activities. When a smaller budget was allocated to QA activities than other activities, the importance of such activities can be questioned. They often faced a lot of regulations and criteria that caused difficulties when carrying out QA activities. The most evident difficulty mentioned by QA officers was that they had to wait for the Board of Rectors' decisions to deal with any feedback. It looked like that QA officers had no authority to work and decide on their own. Although QA officers are in charge of assuring the TNUPs' quality, it was the administrators who were seen by students when they had problems.

It seemed that although the University had a system of keeping the quality of TNUPs under control, the system was not effective as everything was only going in one direction. Students were giving feedback but hardly receiving feedback from the University. Students were supposed to provide feedback to QA officers but often provided feedback to administrators. QA officers are in charge of assuring quality but played only a passive role in interacting with students. QA officers are representatives of quality assurance but had no power to make decision in response to students' feedback. The question is whether the quality of TNUPs was really being assured and whether students believed they had a good quality assurance system. The concern expressed by QA1 that "students may randomly tick when responding to the questionnaires", showed students' indifference when providing feedback to QA officers, is partly an answer for this question.

#### ***6.1.1.5. Stakeholders' Viewpoints about the Benefits Gained After Studying in TNUPs***

##### *The Training and Research Benefits*

The interviewed participants gave a lot of attention to the possible benefits of TNUPs, and one of the benefits they expected most was the job opportunities after graduation. In Vietnam, jobs relating to business or information technology sectors are very popular. All of the interviewed alumni in this research worked in companies doing business, and most of the employers who have employees graduated from University A had businesses in information technologies or taxation/auditing. The two TNUP in this study also offer majors in accounting and finance. Hence, there are advantages for students when applying and graduating from these TNUPs. This high expectation of a future career is supported in the study by Knight and McNamara (2015) about the effect of TNUPs on hosting countries. The bachelor's degrees of TNUPs provide good international knowledge and good English language proficiency, which can be advantageous for their graduates when finding jobs.

The students' biggest concern was the MOET's recognition of the bachelor's degrees as "they [the MOET] still suspect our [TNUP students'] ability and degrees" (S1). After four or five years of studying, whereas students of domestic programmes are awarded bachelor's degrees without any further action, students of TNUPs have to submit a request form and wait for their degrees to be recognised by the MOET. This issue may affect the reputation of University A and its partners as people may question why the MOET has to recognise the bachelor's degrees that are recognised by overseas universities. With regard to the recognition process, before 2012, thousands of people did not have their transnational degrees recognised by the MOET. The reasons were attributed to the fact that the Vietnamese government did not have regulations or quality accreditation systems in place for transnational education (Hien & Giang, 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable when students had such concern.

In contrast, the alumni's concern was not about the degree recognition but the work-readiness issue. According to most of the alumni, many of the skills or a lot of the knowledge needed in their jobs, such as soft skills like social communication and presentation, real life knowledge, and computer skills were not taught or covered in TNUPs, and they had to study more or acquire the knowledge themselves when working. In the TNUP curriculum, students are required to do group work and present their projects every year in order to practise their communication and presentation. Students also have two papers about computer skills in their first and second years. However, what students do at the University seems not enough for their future work which requires more real life knowledge. Hence, the alumni's concern about work-readiness was appropriate.

The Vietnamese Law of Higher Education states that higher education should help create knowledge, new products, and serve the requirements of socio-economic development (Government, 2012). A conflict arises when the number of unemployed graduates of higher education is growing but the social demand for higher education keeps increasing (Fry, 2009). Although the outcomes of TNUPs looked promising, it was necessary for the University to give more attention to the labour market's needs. If students are equipped with essential knowledge and skills required by the labour market, they will be more confident when applying for jobs, and their chances of getting jobs after graduation may also be higher. The requirements of employers are discussed in the following section.

#### *The Satisfaction of Alumni and Employers*

The satisfaction of alumni and employers was measured by University A via *The University Questionnaires to Collect the Feedback of Employers about the Quality of the University's Graduates* in 2016. Although the feedback of TNUP alumni was not collected, the feedback of alumni of local programmes at University A could reflect the situation. The alumni of local programmes shared the same ideas with TNUP alumni when being

interviewed. They considered that University A needed to review the knowledge provided to students. The requirements for deeper professional knowledge, soft skills training courses, and connection with future employers were strongly emphasised by the alumni of local programmes. Further, the expectation of changing TNUP programme contents was mentioned by many participants as a precursor to helping students to be well prepared for the labour market, and, as an alumnus recommended, “help students have more real life experience through papers”. The stakeholders expected some adjustments of the TNUP curriculums. Stakeholders hoped some papers not necessary such as the politics paper, and national defence paper to be taken out. Further, they would like more practical papers such as a computer skills paper, and papers about TNUP majors like taxation, accounting, business administration, auditing in Vietnamese context to be added.

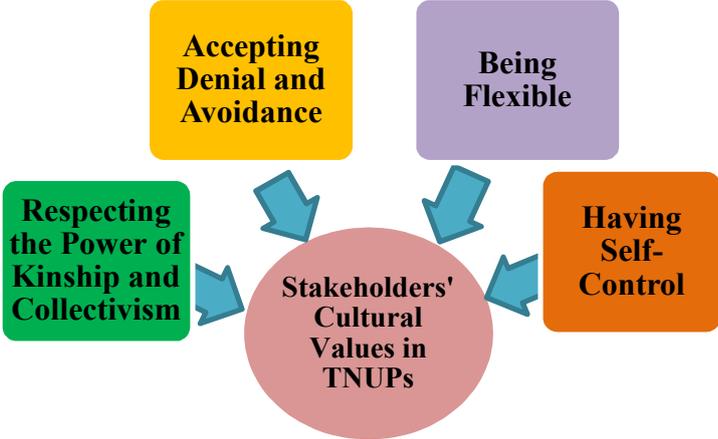
The employers’ feedback helped confirm what was mentioned by the alumni of local programmes when making their recommendations to University A about developing soft skills, professional knowledge, and foreign language proficiency. It can be said that these were expected by the employers in the labour market. It showed that these issues were not only related to TNUPs but also to other local programmes. Therefore, if there is a plan implemented to improve these issues, it can be applied for the whole institution not only the TNUPs.

### **6.1.2. The Relationship between Vietnamese Cultural Values and Stakeholders’ Evaluation about the Quality of TNUPs**

In this study, the main respondents were students, parents, and alumni, with a balance of gender. The interviewed students were 19 to 21 years old; the interviewed parents were 45 to 48 years old, and the alumni’s graduation years from TNUPs were between 2012 and 2017. The stakeholders’ viewpoints about the quality management of TNUPs were influenced by two important factors: how the quality of TNUPs was really managed, which was discussed in

the previous sections, and the stakeholders’ cultural background that might influence how they feel about the quality of TNUPs, which is discussed in the following sections. The history of Vietnam is marked by wars, and the culture of Vietnam is coloured by the culture of different countries such as China, France, and America, of which Chinese culture has left the biggest imprint in Vietnam through the influence of Confucian ideology. Cultural influences, combined with religious beliefs, have contributed to shaping the cultural values of Vietnamese people. Among cultural values of Vietnamese people discussed in Chapter Two, the stakeholders’ viewpoints in this research were mostly affected by the cultural values of respecting the power of kinship and the power of the group, attempting to accept denial and avoidance, having self-control, and being flexible (V. T. Le, 2016; M. D. Nguyen, 1985; Ninh, 2022; Vu, 2020). The impacts of these Vietnamese cultural values on stakeholders’ attitudes towards TNUPs are illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**  
*The Impacts of Vietnamese Cultural Values on Stakeholders' Attitudes towards TNUPS*



Stakeholders’ feelings about the quality of the TNUPs are considered in reference to the cultural values in Figure 6. The following sections focus on how Vietnamese cultural values affected their evaluation.

### ***6.1.2.1. The Power of Kinship and Collectivism***

When Vietnamese students respect the power of kinship, they tend to ask for their family's advice. The advice might or might not be what they expect to hear, but they are likely to follow it to satisfy their family. When discussing the TNUPs' output standards, students and parents agreed that TNUPs looked advantageous because they believe having TNUPs' output standards means having a chance of getting a good job. This is not only the stakeholders' belief but also the belief of many other people in the community. In this situation, the power of kinship and collectivism was strong and became the motivation for parents and students to choose TNUPs. Understanding the influence of the power of kinship and collectivism on students and parents' choice of TNUPs is also the reason why University A decided to put these output standards in advertisements for the TNUPs. This helps to make the advertisements more persuasive because they are aligned with the expectation of the wider community about TNUPs.

In terms of the University's design and delivery of TNUPs, the stakeholders' respect for the power of the group can be seen very clearly in the way they responded to University A's recruitment process. Because of the collectivistic nature of Vietnamese people, students tended to follow the viewpoints of the crowd/group (Ninh, 2022; Vu, 2020). In other words, the power of collectivism strongly affected stakeholders' choices of TNUPs. Hence, most participants chose to follow University A's message delivered by word of mouth. Students followed their parents' advice and parents followed the community's beliefs. The students and parents' expectations of TNUPs reflect the expectations of most Vietnamese people: those who are studying, or have family members studying, in higher education expect more job opportunities as a result of the study. The power of collectivism is strongly expressed in these shared expectations. Also, employers and alumni expect to develop a set of skills such as presentation, social communication or computer skills prior to graduation. These skills

should enable Vietnamese students to adapt to the labour market's needs and prepare for their future career. This aligns the Vietnamese people's value of being flexible which is discussed in the following section together with the values of accepting denial and avoidance, and having self-control.

#### ***6.1.2.2. Being Flexible, Accepting Denial and Avoidance, and Having Self-control***

Having self-control or attempting to accept denial and avoidance are normal responses of Vietnamese people when confronted with delicate questions that require them to give direct answers. This means Vietnamese people tend to avoid saying something that can make their listeners feel offended and try to find other ways of expression that satisfy their listeners. Accordingly, when asked about their teachers or education institutions, Vietnamese people normally have a habit of avoiding mentioning bad things and choosing neutral answers so that their ideas will not affect anyone. Similarly, students or staff of a university in Vietnam do not often mention problematic things about their university, nor challenge their university's decisions. Further, although students were not satisfied with the teaching staff, they did not express their dissatisfaction except for sharing with their parents and occasionally leaving some comments on the University's questionnaires. Students always showed respect to their lecturers, as respecting teachers and respecting morality is one of Confucius's most important theories of learning, and they tended to avoid questioning the teaching of their lecturers. This may have led to less creativity and less likelihood of further study by graduates. This way of learning may have affected students' knowledge acquisition and impacted on their future way of working and responding to work-related situations. Hence, the cultural values intangibly affect the quality of TNUPs through affecting students' learning and their attitudes towards the work of the University's staff. However, I did not perceive that situation when I reviewed the students' responses about services offered by University A. The participants did not hesitate to express their true thoughts about things that they considered not meeting their

demands because the students used words like “dirty” or “broken” about the facilities and “limited” and “out-of-date” about the materials. Based on their responses, I see that even when avoiding confrontation is considered to be particularly Vietnamese, the students still thought that their own ideas should have been heard. Maybe they hoped that if such comments were not spoken directly to the University because of some sensitive reasons, they could share with me as a researcher who could bring the comments to the University in my evaluation research. It is an example of being flexible, one of the Vietnamese cultural values. In this situation, the participants were flexible by revealing the truth to a third party (a researcher) who is able to publicise the problems they shared, and keep their information confidential.

When students expressed viewpoints in the interviews about their actual experiences of TNUPs, apart from concerns about having stressful exam timetables or lacking clarity about the assessment process, their comments such as: “the process is fine” or “generally speaking it was good” generally showed that they were satisfied with TNUPs. However, students’ views presented in *The Report to the University Rector on the GE Programme* (VNU-IS, 2017c), and *The Report to the University Rector on the Papers of TNUPs* (VNU-IS, 2017d) revealed that students were aware of what was happening in TNUPs, but it seemed easier for them to write on an anonymous piece of paper than voice directly. Though students were not happy with the fact that University A never released the results of the feedback they collected or responded slowly to feedback from students, they were not willing to react strongly. S7’s statement that “there are several times when our feedback is not replied to and...then we keep waiting” helped illustrate this situation. Students’ responses and comments reflected the cultural features of Vietnamese people of having self-control and accepting denial to avoid confrontation. The responses indicated that instead of questioning others and confronting others, Vietnamese people tend to look on the brighter side and accept

pre-defined situations even though these situations are not beneficial for them. It does not mean, however, that they cannot face confrontation, or they always avoid expression of disagreement. The responses of some students, who expressed uncomfortable feelings or concern about the assessment system, showed that they did not keep the problems for themselves, but were trying to reveal them in another way. Once again, stakeholders' viewpoints in this situation indicated the being flexible feature of Vietnamese culture.

There was a fact that when expressing their viewpoints via answering interview questions, stakeholders somehow identified things that they considered to be problematic and in need of change. Stakeholders showed that instead of having a passive attitude towards the truth, which was a sign of avoiding confrontation, they were trying to reveal the problems of TNUPs through describing insufficient things, which was a sign of being flexible. Stakeholders' expectations for changes and the way they voiced their opinion also meant they did not avoid causing disagreement. It is a positive sign that they had tried to overcome their self-control to be more open and get closer to the truth. Thanks to their openness, in my second interviews with students and parents, most of their ideas in the first interviews, which were not clearly expressed, were explained clearly.

## **6.2. Application of the CIPP Model in this Study and Quality of the Data Collected**

### **6.2.1. Application of the CIPP Model in this Study**

Based on the research purpose of having an in-depth look into the quality management system applied to TNUPs of a Vietnamese university, the CIPP model was adopted to be the research methodology of my study. I believed that the CIPP model would help identify the strong and weak points of transnational undergraduate programmes, encourage the development of the programmes, and foster the understanding among stakeholders (Mohebbi et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2011). To answer the overarching question: *What factors impact stakeholders' evaluations of the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university?*, the CIPP

model suggests evaluating aspects of a programme by using foci: concept, input, process, and product assessments. These foci surround the core value of the evaluation research, which was identified as satisfying TNUP students' needs. Adopting the CIPP as my evaluation methodology provided a clear instruction on how to carry out the evaluation about TNUPs. Using the CIPP model meant that I did not only evaluate the quality of TNUPs but also developed an understanding of what TNUP stakeholders especially the selected stakeholders thought about the TNUPs they were involved in. This helped me choose the research participants including students, parents, alumni, administrators and QA officers whose voices strongly reflected the real situation of TNUPs, and whose roles and relationships with other stakeholders affected TNUP's quality. Similarly, the purposes of investigating all aspects of TNUPs via stakeholders' stories indicated by the CIPP model urged me to choose the data collection methods including individual interviews and documents. The individual interviews enhanced my understanding about stakeholders' views, and the analysis of documents about TNUP quality management system strengthened my knowledge about TNUPs as well as triangulated the information collected through interviews with participants. Adopting the CIPP model as the research methodology required me to consider carefully the ethical issues that arose because of undertaking research relating to human's attitudes towards the quality of TNUPs, which was a sensitive matter. The CIPP model also required me as a researcher to carry out an objective evaluation by maintaining detachment with stakeholders of TNUPs although seeking their sharing of information (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). This requirement led to my choice of being an outsider in this research. At the data analysis stage, the CIPP model was useful as a guide for coding as it assisted me in building categories following its evaluation foci.

Despite the advantages that it brought to my study, there were some difficulties I had to deal with when using the CIPP model. Firstly, when using the CIPP model, being an

outsider in this study was necessary for me to keep my evaluation objective. Yet, being an outsider limited the approach to the stakeholders; hence, it could limit the information they provided. Further, I am a Vietnamese person, and also used to be an administrator of TNUPs. The participants knew that, and then it was harder for me to act like I had known nothing about TNUPs and for them to talk like they knew nothing about me. The CIPP model was configured to include evaluation concepts suggesting default assessments for evaluation research. This was an advantage, but it required me to consider carefully the focus of each evaluation to putting forward the relevant interview questions so that the questions were not overlapped. Likewise, it also took time to handle the information provided by participants because it could belong to more than one evaluation concept. Although the CIPP model had pre-defined categories to follow, it was important for me to not place data in inappropriate categories (Gale et al., 2013). That was the reason why I used both the deductive and inductive analysis approaches to analyse the collected data. Although having some disadvantages, the CIPP model was obviously a helpful model that could bring fruitful data to serve evaluation purposes. The following section discusses the quality of the data collected under my application of the CIPP model.

### **6.2.2. Quality of the Data Collected**

The data of this study was collected from two information sources: the selected stakeholders' answers to my interview questions and the documents relating to quality management of University A, the VNU, and the MOET.

Based on the CIPP evaluation model and my previous experience as a TNUP administrator, interview questions were designed for students, parents, alumni, administrators, and QA officers to answer. These were based on the four evaluation foci. The participants wanted to speak in Vietnamese and required me to take notes because it made them more confident. As a result, I needed to translate what they had said into English, which was not an

easy job for me, not to mention my translation may not reflect exactly what they wanted to say. To avoid any negative translation effects and to ensure the quality of the data and to keep the participants' information confidential, I sent the translation back to the participants to confirm the accuracy of my translation. They were able to check and edit the information if they wished. As I did not receive the feedback from all participants because many of them were busy, I asked for my supervisors' advice with the translation, and they helped me choose the right terms to help express the participants' ideas most effectively. Differences in wording between the two languages were unavoidable. I have tried my best to keep the participants' main ideas and spirit in my translation; hence, the quality of interview data was not affected. Table 11 below is an example of data translation from Vietnamese to English for readers' reference.

**Table 11**

*Samples of Data Translation from Vietnamese to English (2)*

Participant	Participant's quote in Vietnamese	Participant's quote translated into English
Quality Assurance Officer 2	Khi chúng tôi được sinh viên hoặc chuyên viên thông báo về bất cứ vấn đề gì, chúng tôi đều phải viết báo cáo gửi lên Ban Chủ Nhiệm Khoa rồi đợi quyết định của Ban Chủ Nhiệm Khoa. Từ lúc báo cáo đến lúc vấn đề được giải quyết thường lâu lắm. Nhưng lâu như thế cũng không chắc mọi vấn đề đều được giải quyết đâu nhé. Lý do thì có nhiều. Có thể lý do từ phía Khoa, phía Đại học Quốc gia, mà cũng có khi từ trên Bộ. Biết là sinh viên nhiều khi không hài lòng lắm đâu, mà có khi mình cũng có thể giải quyết theo cách tốt hơn. Nhưng làm thế nào được quy định vẫn là quy định mà.	When we receive feedback from students or staff about any problems, we have to write a report to the Board of Rectors, and wait for their decisions to take actions. It takes a long time until the problems are solved. Although the waiting time is long, not all problems can be dealt with properly because of unknown reasons from the authorities of the University, or the VNU, or the MOET. We know that some students are not satisfied with the outcomes. We also know that there might be other ways to solve some problems, but we must follow the final decisions of the Board of Rectors.

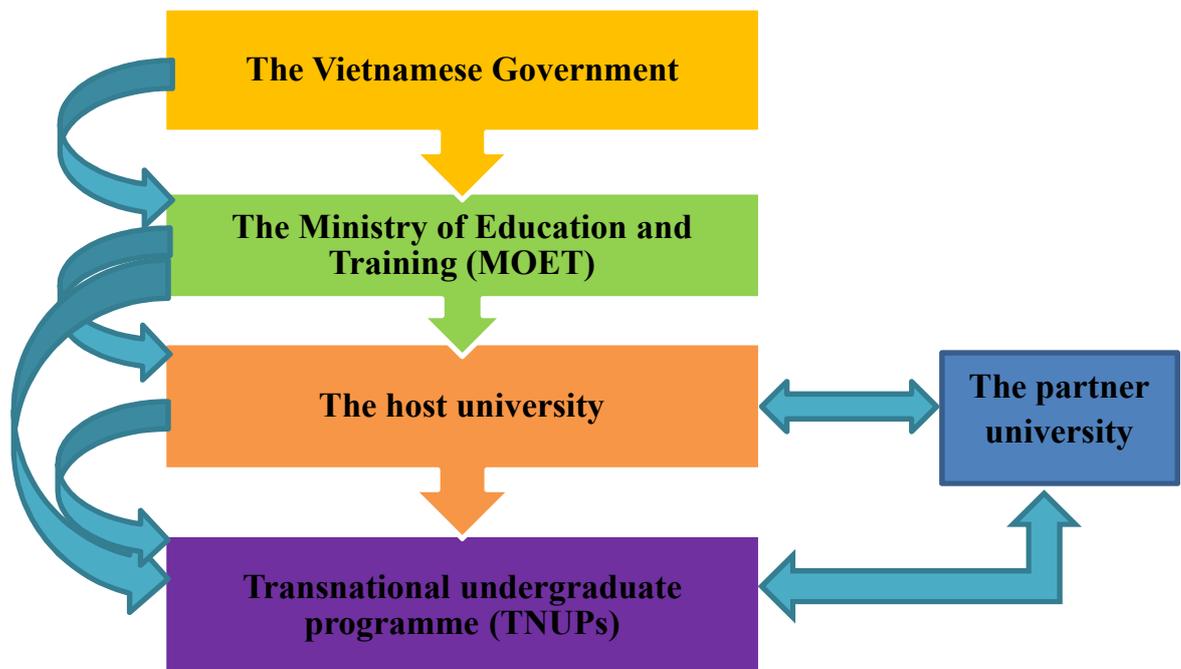
### 6.3. The Quality Management Models Applied to TNUPs

#### 6.3.1. The Quality Management Model of the Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU) Applied to TNUPs

The quality management model of a system is the backbone affecting all of the systems' quality assurance activities. Before considering University A's quality management model with its TNUPs, the general quality management model of the VNU applied to TNUPs is discussed. The model is described in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*The Quality Management Model of the VNU Applied to TNUPS*



(Referred to the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework for Vietnamese HEIs (Do, 2019; GOV, 2012b; H. T. Pham & Nguyen, 2019; Ta, Nguyen, & Pham, 2019; Nhi Thi Tran & Thi Vu, 2019))

In Figure 7, the Vietnamese government promulgates the Vietnamese education law and all policies relating to TNUPs. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) manages the Vietnamese higher education system, signs and seals higher education degrees and certificates issued by Vietnamese universities, issues directives and guidelines carried out by Vietnamese educational institutions (GOV, 2012b). The host university is the university delivering transnational programmes. The partner universities are overseas universities cooperating with the host university to offer transnational programmes. Transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs) are the transnational programmes delivered at the host university. In this research, the host university includes two units. One unit is the Vietnam National University (VNU) that is a national /multi-disciplinary university, and also a unification of different universities. The other unit is University A that is the main host university, and is also a member/an affiliated school of the VNU, delivering both local and transnational programmes. The TNUPs in this research are the two full-time transnational undergraduate programmes delivered in English.

The model shows complex relationships among units with the use of arrows. In terms of power, it is the hierarchical relationship among the Government–the MOET–the host university–TNUPs, where the unit of higher position controls the lower one. This model illustrates the dependence relationship in which each lower unit establishes its own quality management organisation to carry out the policies of the higher unit and reports to the higher unit. For example, the educational quality management organisation of the government is the MOET; the quality management organisation of the MOET is its Quality Management Department (QMD); the host university has its own quality management organisation which is responsible for managing the quality of its TNUPs.

Apart from the hierarchical relationship with the MOET in terms of general policy, the VNU also has a very special and independent role as an accreditation agency in terms of

quality assurance (H. T. Pham & Nguyen, 2019). When most Vietnamese universities have to follow accreditation instructions and criteria of the MOET, the VNU is authorised to set its own quality assurance and accreditation system with criteria based on the policy of the MOET, the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), and the US (H. T. Pham & Nguyen, 2019; Ta et al., 2019). Together with the VNU in Ho Chi Minh City, the VNU in Hanoi are principal units in developing the quality assurance and accreditation system for HEIs in Vietnam (H. T. Pham & Nguyen, 2019). The VNU has its Institute of Education Quality Assurance that controls the quality assurance and accreditation systems of its affiliated universities/programmes including University A. To carry out the VNU's policies, University A founded its Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing. However, the MOET still intervenes in the quality management of TNUPs by requiring the TNUP bachelor's degree to be recognised by a MOET organisation: the Vietnam National Academic Recognition Information Centre (VN-NARIC). Provided the VNU is authorised to manage its quality assurance and accreditation, the authority granted to the VNU in relation to degree recognition may be a matter of concern.

At the same level as the host university are its partner universities who cooperate to organise the TNUPs. The partner universities are not under the Vietnamese management system but in charge of awarding the bachelor's degrees to students graduating from TNUPs. In the case of University A, the partner universities have their own ways to manage the quality of their delivered programmes by organising an audit every five years. As a result, the partner universities are also indirectly responsible for the quality management of TNUPs. It can be drawn from the model that the TNUPs' quality is under the management of distinct organisations. On the narrow scale, it is under the management of University A and its partners. On the wider scale, it is under the management of the VNU (for the input and the whole process) and VN-NARIC (for the output).

As discussed in Chapter Three, the quality management models of higher education in China, Hong Kong, and South Korea—regions in the neighbourhood of Vietnam—may vary due to different cultural and economic contexts, but they share the same key processes such as internal evaluation (self-evaluation of institutions), external evaluation (evaluation by governmental offices or external agencies), and follow-up activities for quality improvement after evaluation. Similarly, the Vietnamese quality management model applying to all universities/programmes of the VNU consists of three processes carried out every five years, which are self-evaluation carried out by an institution/a programme themselves, external evaluation undertaken by the VNU or international agencies, and a final decision recognised by the VNU. An external evaluation is to assess whether an institution/a programme of the VNU has met its required standards for operating educational programmes. The external evaluation is a tool for both the VNU and its affiliated universities/programmes to have an insight into their activities. The VNU can also compare the external evaluation with the self-evaluation of universities/programmes to see their similarities and differences. Based on the external evaluation, the VNU can decide whether its universities/programmes need adjustments. The external evaluation is also a basis for the VNU to assist its institutions/ with programmes that have not yet achieved its quality standards to apply for a re-evaluation in one year, which is like the follow-up activities of the neighbouring countries. TNUPs in the VNU, especially franchise programmes, are only required to self-evaluate every year and report their self-evaluation to the VNU and the franchisors to undertake adjustments where possible. The external evaluation and final decision steps are not applied to TNUPs of the VNU (VNU, 2013). In this instance, the only source of information for the VNU to manage TNUPs' quality is their self-evaluation reports.

The difference of the quality management model applying to TNUPs in Vietnam is the participation of the partner universities. In case TNUPs of the VNU are not required to be

assessed by an external evaluation of the VNU, the partner universities' audit can be considered as the international/external evaluation. There seems to be little connection between the self-evaluation of TNUPs and the partner universities' audit because they are carried out independently. Further, the partner universities and the VNU do not have to report to each other. However, problems of TNUPs are still diagnosed based on the self-evaluation and the partners' audit. In such a situation, the position of University A is very important as it is the only unit that holds the responsibility of reporting to both sides and performs follow-up activities related to TNUPs required by both sides. If the evaluation of the Vietnamese government and the audit of partner universities are the outer circle of the quality management mechanism of TNUPs, its inner circle is the model that University A applies to its TNUPs, which is discussed in the next section.

### **6.3.2. The Quality Management Model of University A Applied to its TNUPs**

Apart from the management of higher units and partner universities with its TNUPs, University A has its own system to manage its programmes. The Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing was founded to manage the quality of all programmes through the feedback system. Quality assurance officers are responsible for collecting stakeholders' feedback, summarising reports to propose to the Board of Rectors, and undertaking the decisions of the Board of Rectors responding to stakeholders' feedback. Due to the real situation, there were not only the QA officers in charge of TNUPs' quality but also the administrators of the Department of Academic and Student Affairs. The administrators are mainly responsible for operating the programmes and keeping contact with the partner universities. In the TNUPs, the administrators are an important link in the assessment system and are the people whom students came to see first when they had feedback or problems about quality. The partner universities audit the TNUPs every five years and work with University A to carry out follow-up actions if needed. Lecturers provide their feedback through the annual self-evaluation that

mainly serves the purpose of staff development. The voices of students, alumni, and employers are collected mostly through periodical survey questionnaires, but the validity of these questionnaires was a concern for the interviewed QA officers. Student parents are not involved in this quality management system.

The truth is, when discussing issues relating to the quality of TNUPs, people who were mentioned more frequently by the interviewed participants were the administrators. It is quite difficult to say, between the administrators or the QA officers, who really were the quality assurers to students. However, both students and QA officers reported that the administrators seemed to be overloaded by their work, and this raises several issues. It is worth considering whether the participation of the administrators in both administrative work and quality management work is too much for them. As such, the University should explore whether it may rearrange and redistribute the responsibilities of administrators and QA officers so that they can do what they are expected to do (e.g., administrators for administration and QA officers for quality assurance). It is worth considering whether parents' voices should be included in the feedback system given that they have a very active role in students' studying in TNUPs. It is also worth considering whether there are more ways for lecturers, who are responsible for the quality of academic activities, to have their voices contribute productively to the quality management system. It may also be worth ascertaining if there are any recommendations to manage the quality of the TNUPs more effectively. Recommendations for the answers to these issues are discussed in the next chapter.

#### **6.4. Summary**

This chapter discussed emergent findings for the overarching question of this study when exploring what the stakeholders thought about the quality of the TNUPs they were provided. Generally, matches and conflicts were both happening in every issue like two sides of a coin. The discussion did not aim to outline the weaknesses of TNUPs but to uncover

experiences that stakeholders were having in TNUPs, and figuring out problematic issues that needed to be improved. The discussion also demonstrated that stakeholders' views were strongly influenced by Vietnamese cultural values. The CIPP evaluation model had a very important role in my research. The CIPP model provided me with clear instructions to choose the research participants, to decide the data collection methods, to consider thoughtfully ethical issues, to place myself as an outsider in the study, and to code data easier based on its evaluation foci. Although bringing benefits to my research, the CIPP model had limitations because of its predetermined evaluation concepts. Hence, difficulties were seen when I prepared the interview questions or analysed the collected data as I had to put the questions or data in the correct evaluation focus. Similarly, collecting data to serve the research purposes required more effort when both I and the participants knew our previous and recent roles. I also discussed how I assured the quality of the collected data with the assistance of both the participants and my supervisors when the data were in Vietnamese and needed translation into English. The quality management models applied to TNUPs by the Vietnam National University, Hanoi and University A were discussed to find out how they affected the quality of TNUPs. This chapter is the basis for recommendations discussed in the next chapter with a view to enhancing the quality management system of University A's TNUPs.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

The study was carried out as an evaluation of the recent quality management mechanism applied to transnational undergraduate programmes (TNUPs) of University A. The study provides an in-depth look into how the TNUPs are being operated, how stakeholders such as administrators and quality assurance officers assume and carry out their roles in the TNUPs, and how stakeholders view the mechanisms as well as anticipate the quality of TNUPs. This chapter presents the key findings of the study that answer the research questions, discuss the significance of the study, and proposes suggestions to improve the quality of TNUPs.

The study's overarching question about factors impact on selected stakeholders' evaluations of the quality of TNUPs in a Vietnamese university identified the main purpose of the research and was followed by six subsidiary questions. The answers to these questions are presented first. Secondly, the significance of the study in relation to the quality management of TNUPs and to my job as an administrator of TNUPs is detailed. Thirdly, as a result of the study's evaluation of the quality management model of University A, a quality management model for TNUPs is proposed. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented.

#### **7.1. The Quality of University A's TNUPs via its Stakeholders' Voices**

In this study, the main stakeholders are identified as students and students' parents. Compared to other stakeholders' roles in the quality management mechanism of TNUPs, these stakeholders' vested interests are very important and sit at the centre of the evaluative mechanism. If TNUPs are considered the products that University A sells, students and parents are customers who pay money to buy the products and directly experience the quality of the products. Therefore, among TNUP stakeholders, students and parents may have the most explicit and strongest expectations about the quality of TNUPs. Similarly, if there are

any issues relating to TNUP quality, they are likely to affect students and parents as they are customers. As such, through students and parents' voices, other stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, officers, or decision makers can evaluate the quality of TNUPs. Students and parents' voices about the quality of TNUPs were considered based on three main criteria: the service they received from TNUPs, their relationships with other stakeholders during their participation in TNUPs, and the impact of Vietnamese cultural values on their perspectives. Students and parents' voices indicated that there were a number of aspects they liked about TNUPs such as the content of the university programmes provided by the partner universities, the highly qualified lecturers, and the enthusiastic administrators. However, there were other factors they wished to see improvements in, such as the length of TNUPs, the teaching and learning resources, the assessment and feedback systems, the working manner of administrators and lecturers, and the introduction of some papers that students and parents assumed to be important for students' future career. This section presents the answer to the overarching question through discussing such views of stakeholders.

To attract students to its TNUPs in English, University A offers the output standards that provide them with the opportunity to obtain a good job after graduation such as an international bachelor's degree, a high level of English proficiency and professional knowledge in fields that were highly demanded in the Vietnamese labour market including business management, accounting, and finance. The university provides scholarships with tuition fees exemption for high performing students and students with financial difficulties (see *The University Admission Notifications for Transnational Undergraduate Programmes From 2006 to 2018* –Appendix H (p. 279)). Many extracurricular activities such as English, music and science clubs, important festival celebrations, and organised volunteer movements are provided to help students relax after classes and are incentives for students and their parents to consider the TNUPs. In contrast the University's facilities and assets in terms of its

provision of Internet access, the campus, and learning materials are considered by students and parents to be a weakness of the TNUP offerings.

The design and delivery of TNUPs involved stakeholders' opinions about University A's recruitment procedures, the structure and content of courses, and the qualifications of academic staff in the TNUP programmes. The University can be proud of its recruitment procedures. Their procedures for choosing learners including the admission requirements and the recruitment process received very positive comments from stakeholders. The structure of TNUPs is divided into two parts: the General English (GE) programme tailored by University A to equip students with English language proficiency, and the university programmes imported from the partner universities to teach students major subjects. Whilst students were reasonably satisfied with the imported university programmes, they were more concerned about the length of the GE programme. Designed by the University as a prerequisite for university programmes, the GE programme requires students to complete an additional year of study. When added to the TNUP programme, the total study time for the bachelor's degree was between four and a half to five years. Half of the interviewed students considered this to be too long compared to a three or four year domestic undergraduate programme. The issues relating to academic staff were more complicated. In one respect, students were happy with lecturers' professional backgrounds, but were concerned about their English language proficiency and inflexible approaches to working timetables. As mentioned by students, lessons were taught in English by lecturers with inappropriate English proficiency, and students received notices of lecturers' absence just before their lessons started. These issues were seen to be more serious because the University did not give much attention to the English language proficiency and working timetables of lecturers. Despite students' concern, the University considered lecturers' professional knowledge as the most important factor in evaluating their teaching quality.

The actual experiences of students when studying in TNUPs were strongly reflected through four facets: the enrolment process, the timetable, the tuition fees, and the assessment system. Whilst many students and parents complimented the enrolment process, their attitude towards the other three facets was less positive. The timetable would only be acceptable for students if the exam schedule was not too stressful. The tuition fees, which were nearly two times the tuition fees of domestic undergraduate programmes (DUPs) were reported to be too high. In 2015, the tuition fees for local undergraduate programmes ranged between VND 1,750,000–VND 4,400,000 per month (GOV, 2015) whilst the tuition fee of TNUPs was VND 7,100,000 per month (see *The University's Admission Notifications from 2006–2018* – Appendix H (p. 279)). The assessment system with the participation of many staff seemed not to be as transparent as one might expect. For example, the assignments go to the administrators first then they were transferred to the lecturers. The exam papers were collected by the administrators, transferred to the QA officers to verify, sent to the lecturers to mark, returned to the QA officers to certify before going to the administrators to be sent to the partner universities. In my opinion, marking is the responsibility of lecturers, so they should be the only people who receive and assess students' work. Hence, students' concerns about this complicated and quite redundant process seemed reasonable.

Administrators and quality assurance (QA) officers were the most important staff in assuring the quality of TNUPs. Administrators were responsible for providing students necessary information relating to TNUPs during their time of studying at University A. QA officers were in charge of assuring the quality of educational programmes and the assessment system at University A. Whilst it should be easy to know the roles of administrators and QA officers when looking at their job descriptions, it was difficult to know the delineations of the tasks completed by them in the quality management mechanisms of TNUPs. The administrators' job description covered a range of activities in the TNUPs at University A and

mainly related to dealing with information about programme regulations, student attendance statistics, the partner universities, and connecting with other departments about TNUP administrative work. Administrators admitted that they were sometimes overloaded with work and might not be as effective with their work. Students mentioned the overloaded work of administrators by referring to the stress that administrators conveyed when answering students' questions or providing them with inaccurate information.

The QA officers were responsible for activities relating to assuring quality of programmes, checking the objectivity of the testing and assessment system, and collecting and dealing with feedback of stakeholders about quality. However, normally, the QA officers were not the people to be seen when students had problems about quality. In reality, people who listened to students' feedback about quality were more often the administrators. Because of their closer relationship with students due to their daily work, it is understandable when the administrators became reluctant QA officers in such cases. If the administrators only did their work as required in their job description, information might not come to the right persons and might not be dealt with properly. However, although assigned to deal with stakeholders' feedback, QA officers did not have full authority to process their tasks such as taking immediate actions when there were any problems arose. QA officers had to wait for the final decision of the Board of Rectors before doing anything. As claimed by QA officers, the Board of Rectors did not always have proper answers or response to students' questions and demands. This was likely to be the reason why students were concerned when sometimes they provided feedback but received little response from the University. However, one thing is certain: the quality of TNUPs was only meaningful when both groups of staff participated appropriately and cooperatively, and shared the responsibility of bringing students good educational service.

Among the many outcomes of TNUPs that students can gain, it is the international bachelor's degree that gives them a greater chance of getting a good job. With an international bachelor's degree, students have a certain level of English as well as professional knowledge and skills to work in international environments. Hence, students' opportunities for future career are widened. In *The University's Report to the VNU on the Feedback of Employers (2017)* (VNU-IS, 2017b), TNUP graduates were highly appreciated by employers although the employers recommended the University to provide students with more practice of presentation skills, social communication skills, and computer skills. Further, having early connection with future employers was assumed to be important by the employers so that students would know what to prepare for their future work.

Despite problematic issues mentioned by stakeholders when discussing the quality of TNUPs, it was clear that TNUPs offered students benefits when studying as well as upon graduation. Such advantages and disadvantages of TNUPs evaluated by stakeholders were the primary matters that the research focused on. Further, stakeholders' attitudes towards the quality of TNUPs implicated the cultural values of Vietnamese people. The students' choices of TNUPs following their family and friends' recommendations were the evidence of the power of kinship (M. D. Nguyen, 1985; Ninh, 2022). Based on the collective nature of Vietnamese people that is also a result of the respect for the power of the group (V. T. Le, 2016; Vu, 2020), University A designed their marketing campaigns for recruitment. The recruitment was successful when students and parents indicated that they were interested in TNUPs because of the information provided in these campaigns. With the having self-control and accepting denial and avoidance nature, TNUP students tried to avoid mentioning negative things about the University. Hence, students were not completely open to share issues that they were not satisfied with when answering the University's survey questionnaires about its staff. Similarly, challenging the University's decision in dealing with problematic things were

not seen when students did not receive the University's responses to their feedback. However, students' attitude towards my questions about TNUPs' quality especially in the second interviews was more cooperative. It was a sign of being flexible, a value that enhances the adaptation to different situations of Vietnamese people (V. T. Le, 2016). Students shared with me the information with the hope that I could bring it to the University by an indirect way. Therefore, I could gather valued data to serve the research's purposes. The following section discusses the significance of the study when its purposes have been attained.

## **7.2. Significance of the Study**

The study as an evaluation provides a deeper look at the quality management model (QMM) of University A with TNUPs. After the research was carried out, there are four main points to be considered. Firstly, University A and its partners are not the only units that had authority over TNUPs. Actually, TNUPs are situated under the management of two other units: the Vietnam National University (VNU)—a multidisciplinary university consisting of University A and other affiliated universities—and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The MOET directly controls TNUPs by recognising the bachelor's degrees awarded by TNUPs, or it indirectly controls TNUPs via VNU and University A adopting the MOET's educational policies. Secondly, as stated by the University, its QMM is supervised via the activities of the Centre of Quality Assurance and Testing, and quality assurance (QA) officers are in charge of carrying out all the University's policies relating to quality assurance. Therefore, managing and ensuring that the QMM is working was the QA officers' responsibility. The reality is QMM functions as a result of the combination of QA officers and administrators' work because students came to administrators to provide their feedback about TNUPs, and QA officers collected students feedback about TNUPs via survey questionnaires. In reality, the administrators seemed to play a more important role with students than the QA officers because they communicated with students every day and administer all information

relating to students' study. However, if the administrators were busy with their own work and forgot to bring students' feedback to QA officers, the feedback might not be dealt with and students might feel disappointed. Hence, the QMM might not function properly. Thirdly, the bachelor's degree recognition of the MOET after graduation still requires students to prepare many documents and wait for a long time for the final results, which might not be expected. In case the MOET approves the cooperation of University A and its partner as well as always had TNUPs under its controls, the degree recognition might not sound reasonable. Fourthly, apart from the above factors, which influenced stakeholders' viewpoints about the QMM of University A, Vietnamese cultural values are another factor influencing how they felt about the quality of TNUPs. Students' choices of TNUPs were guided by their families because of the power of kinship. As a typical feature of Vietnamese people, attempting to avoid expression of disagreement and confrontation also affected students' feedback about TNUPs. Students tended not to give direct comments about things that were not positive about their lecturers or the University. Therefore, the feedback procedures of University A could not achieve the expected effectiveness because some less positive comments might not be voiced. As such, problematic things such as the lecturers' unprofessional management of timetables or improper use of English in teaching might not be considered and improved due to lack of information.

This study adopted an external evaluation process for stakeholders of University A to review its QMM with TNUPs. The combination of the study results and the results collected from University A's survey questionnaires can provide the University with information to identify the necessary changes to redevelop its QMM. These might include the adjustment to the length of the GE programmes, the addition of necessary skills required by the labour market, and the alignment between tuition fees and quality educational services. The University can consider the improvement of teaching and learning resources as well as the

alignment between staff development and facilities provided. The modification of assessment procedures with the appropriate participation of different staff at certain stages is also another issue that needs consideration.

There are few studies available about the quality management systems of TNUPs in Vietnam. The general development of transnational education in Vietnam was investigated by Lawrence (2011), G. Nguyen and Shillabeer (2013), N. Nguyen (2018), N. Nguyen and Lee (2020), and Phuong and Nguyen (2021). Australian transnational education in Vietnam has been studied by T. N. Nguyen (2013) and A. Truong (2018). Transnational education from the UK to Vietnam was researched by Phung, Higson, and Bartholomew (2016) and T. H. V. Nguyen (2018). Nhan and Nguyen (2018) and Phung (2020) have explored the quality of and effectiveness of TNUPs in Vietnam. In consideration of the broader picture of TNUP in Vietnam, my study provides research information and experiences for other universities in Vietnam when considering their operation of TNUPs from quality perspectives. My study has limited information about how the quality of TNUPs is managed in a Vietnamese university and the collected data relies on a small number of participants which did not include the academic staff, the franchisors and those involved in the external quality assurance of TNUPs in Vietnam. Still, the research findings can provide helpful information for further research into TNUPs and quality management of higher education programmes in Vietnam. Further, one of the main reasons for me to carry out this study was to understand what could be made better for students of TNUPs. As an administrator of TNUPs, I saw many student cohorts enrol in and graduate from TNUPs. I am still concerned that students were not really satisfied with what had been provided to them because many complained about aspects of their programmes. My research findings identify issues of concern to students and the reasons for their concerns. My research findings are also helpful for all the staff of University A,

especially administrators, in making their jobs more meaningful because they can assist students and their families more effectively.

### **7.3. The Proposed Quality Management Model for TNUPs of University A**

As discussed, the QMM of University A with its TNUPs was built on the combination of the work of administrators and QA officers and the feedback of stakeholders. The QA officers are responsible for carrying out the feedback procedures and participating in the assessment procedures. The administrators are in charge of administrative affairs, participating in quality assurance and testing activities, and maintaining the connection with the partner universities. The research findings indicated that problems of quality arose when administrators were overloaded and could not do some aspects of their work such as managing student attendance and providing information about TNUPs properly. The fact that students often came to administrators to give direct feedback about TNUPs makes QA officers redundant when they received no other feedback about TNUPs from students except for the feedback through survey questionnaires. The participation of both QA officers and administrators into assessment procedures resulted in unnecessary ambiguity and students' distrust about the objectivity of the procedures. The research findings also showed that the participation of important stakeholders such as lecturers and parents was not as effective as it might have been. The lecturers might consider contributing to managing the quality of TNUPs through their connection with students and other stakeholders, instead of only completing the self-evaluation report annually. The parents were not involved in the QMM however their voice is very important to their children's study.

In order to help University A cover all aspects of TNUPs and assure the quality of the TNUPs more effectively with the cooperation of stakeholders, I would like to propose a QMM with an extension of participants. In this QMM, TNUPs' quality will be managed by

the collaborative work of administrators, QA officers, lecturers and representatives of parents. The reason for the participation of parents and lecturers originates from the research findings.

University A might not want to delegate TNUP's quality assessment to lecturers because more than half of its lecturers work part-time, and they might be forced to move on if their teaching or availability times did not suit the TNUPs' needs. However, it cannot be denied that as long as the lecturers teach in the programmes, they are still in charge of the teaching quality, which is very important to students. Lecturers' interactions with students would be a good source of information for the University when managing TNUP quality by cooperating with administrators and QA officers in assessment activities, and by maintaining a relationship with student parents to keep them informed about their children's study.

The participation of parents in this model results from the fact that parents play a vital role in students studying in TNUPs. Although student feedback was the main source of information for quality assurance of TNUPs, the feedback system that University A was using seemed not to be working properly because it did not provide appropriate responses to students' feedback, and students sometimes provided feedback in a perfunctory manner. In this case, students' parents could help fill in the gaps because they are the closest people to the students, and if the students have any ideas about the University, they are likely to share them with their parents first. It is impossible to collect ideas of all students' parents, so the University could consider founding a parent association including the representatives of parents of Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 students. These parent representatives can work directly with the administrators and the lecturers as a source to provide students' feedback and receive feedback about students.

Basically, administrators and QA officers would maintain their responsibilities as before except for some necessary changes. Administrators would still be responsible for administrative affairs but only support QA officers in quality assurance and assessment work.

This would mean they would help with quality assurance work. The administrators could also receive feedback about TNUPs from students, but there should be an online system developed for them to share such feedback with the QA officers so that the QA officers would be updated with the information, and the University could respond in a more timely manner. With the assessment system, the administrators' work should be based on arranging exam timetables, invigilating exams, and releasing results to students. Collecting exam papers should be the work of QA officers, and marking and transferring exam results to the partner universities should be the work of lecturers. This proposed model suggests more clarification in work distribution for administrators, QA officers, and lecturers. The model also recommends the participation of student parents in contributing their helpful voice to the quality management activities of TNUPs.

The proposed model for quality management of TNUPs is based on what were studied about the recent quality management system. Through the study period, apart from obvious and expected results, there are issues involved and caused unexpected situations as well as possibilities to the researcher, which can be named limitations of the study. Such limitations are discussed in the following section.

#### **7.4. Limitations of the Evaluation**

As stated in the introduction of the research, quality management of higher education is a sensitive issue in Vietnam, and it is very difficult to access much information about this issue from a university. There are many reasons for this, but the most obvious one is universities do not want their information about quality to be publicised because it may affect their reputation and recruitment. This is the reason why my study was conducted in one university in Vietnam where I used to work. Also, the TNUPs in my research are TNUPs in English, and there are other TNUPs in French, Chinese, or Russian in University A as well as other universities. Although University A and its TNUPs in English may not represent all

Vietnamese universities and TNUPs in Vietnam, the detailed contextual information provided in this thesis as well as the findings can be a good source of information for the readers to access and use as long as their universities share the same characteristics as University A.

Furthermore, because of the caution of participants when talking about the University, which results from a Vietnamese cultural value about avoiding confrontation and expressing true feelings (M. D. Nguyen, 1985), I was not able to record interviews and took notes instead. There was a possibility that some important information could have been missed while I was taking notes. Thus, I was very careful when conducting interviews, and I stopped the participants when I needed to make sure all information was noted down or to ask the participants to explain points that were unclear.

Similarly, the participants, due to Vietnamese cultural values, were not prepared to speak up on their opinions about TNUPs. As a result, the data from interviews was not as rich as I would have liked. To deal with that, I accessed the website of the Vietnamese government and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training with the hope to get more information. However, there was not much for me on such websites except for lawful documents, circular letters, and degrees. Finally, I persuaded the University to provide me with its statistics of survey questionnaires relating to the quality of the TNUPs from 2004 to 2018. The University was cooperative and provided me with very useful information. Such statistics helped fill the gap in information from the interviews.

Apart from these limitations coming from outside factors, I, as a researcher, experienced difficulties when undertaking the research. Living in a foreign country and doing research about another country is never easy work. When coming to New Zealand and learning to adapt to the new living environment with no friends but a family to support, I was attempting to study like a researcher, which was also a totally new process for me. Speaking with supervisors, reading books and articles, and writing in English was challenging because

my cultural background and knowledge was based on Vietnamese context. Although my previous position was an administrator of TNUPs, there was still knowledge about management and quality that I needed to learn, and most of them are in English. To deal with the knowledge barrier, I asked for the recommendations of my supervisors to find material resources to access and searched for more materials in the online library of the University of Waikato. To overcome the cultural differences, I participated in the University of Waikato's student gatherings, shared thoughts with foreign friends, and found a job to have more opportunities to communicate and understand Kiwi people. These activities were very helpful for me to improve my English. Experience from such activities and the strong assistance of my supervisors made my translation of the data from Vietnamese into English and my thesis writing look much better.

Limitations were unavoidable during the process of doing research, and mine may be the same as many other researchers'. The important thing is the limitations did not limit my effort of studying, but encouraged me to try more to find a better way to deal with them, and sometimes, I gained better results because of overcoming limitations. There might be some changes to the situation since my research, but I believe the study still contributes to University A's development of quality management mechanisms by providing a deep look at stakeholders' voices.

### **7.5. Summary**

As evaluation research, this study provides the readers with detailed information about the quality management model currently being applied to the transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university. The Context-Input-Process-Product evaluation model has proved its effectiveness when helping me access every aspect of the programmes. The findings of the study have helped me to answer the overarching question by discovering stakeholders' attitudes towards the TNUPs. The study findings showed that the TNUPs have

positive features that should be maintained including the enrolment requirements, the output standards, the recruitment process, the enrolment process, and the support of administrators to students. Apart from the positive features, there are still issues that need to be improved. These include the teaching and learning resources, the programme length and content, the assessment and feedback procedures, the work of teaching and administrative staff, and the tuition fees. Furthermore, the study proved that not only the quality management mechanism of the University but also the Vietnamese cultural values can affect its stakeholders' views about TNUPs. The findings were the basis for recommendations for action and for further research relating to TNUPs and stakeholders of higher education in Vietnam. The real purpose of the quality movement is to serve stakeholders, as well as to better understand the present situation (Liston, 1999), whilst making some adjustments to the quality management model of the University. As a result, a proposed quality management model for TNUPs of University A is recommended with the hope that it can meet more of the stakeholders' needs and bring them the quality they deserve to have when choosing TNUPs. The study is meaningful not only to University A and its stakeholders but also to me as a researcher. After the study was carried out, I have come to realise that undertaking research is not simply investigating something but really a process of studying and developing oneself. The study helps me understand that an issue can be viewed from multiple standpoints, and finding out the answer to one question can lead to the answers of other questions or even suggest new questions. Furthermore, the responses of participants do not only show their attitudes towards the studied issues but also reflects the impact of their culture and customs on their thoughts.

Finally, to me, completing this research is like going through a self-discovering path. The starting point was hard, the process was even harder, and the results are unexpected but worth trying to gain. I believe that this path has no ending like a Vietnamese proverb says: *“Dao có mài mới sắc, người có học mới nên”* (“knives are sharper when sharpened, people

become better when studying”). This also means people’s ability of learning and discovering is unlimited. I can continue undertaking research into anything I am interested in as long as I have enough passion and will.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A Educational Evaluation Model

Evaluation Category	Approach
Pseudo-evaluations	Public relation studies, politically controlled studies, pandering evaluations, evaluation by pretext, empowerment under the guise of evaluation, and customer feedback evaluation
Quasi-evaluations	Objective-based studies, the success case method, outcome evaluation as value-added assessment, experimental and quasi-experimental studies, cost studies, connoisseurship and criticism, theory-based evaluation, and meta-analysis
Improvement and accountability-oriented	Decision and accountability oriented studies, consumer-oriented studies, accreditation, and certification
Social agenda and advocacy	Responsive or stakeholder-centred evaluation, constructivist evaluation, deliberative democratic evaluation, and transformative evaluation
Eclectic	Utilization- focused evaluation and participatory evaluation

Adapted from Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014)

**Appendix B**  
**The Researcher's Email to University A's Rector and Their Reply**

*(This email is to ask for the Rector's permission for carrying out this study at University A)*

**The researcher's email (in Vietnamese)**

28 September 2018

*Kính gửi thầy Thành,*

*Em là Hồng Thanh, trước làm ở Phòng Đào tạo của Khoa ạ. Em xin phép viết thư để trình bày và xin ý kiến thầy một việc, dù biết là thầy rất bận nhưng em hi vọng thầy bớt chút thời gian để đọc ạ.*

*Thưa thầy, hiện em đang làm nghiên cứu sinh ở Đại học Waikato, New Zealand. Đề tài nghiên cứu của em là về mô hình quản lý chất lượng các chương trình liên kết bậc cử nhân của ĐHQGHN, trong đó trọng tâm nghiên cứu là Khoa Quốc tế (vì em cũng đã có khoảng thời gian khá lâu công tác tại Khoa nên em rất mong muốn được tìm hiểu thêm về mô hình quản lý chất lượng hiện tại của Khoa mình). Để thực hiện nghiên cứu, em dự định phỏng vấn 1 số bạn sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp, đang theo học tại khoa và 1 số cán bộ của khoa. Em sẽ chủ động liên hệ với những người tham gia và sắp xếp lịch phỏng vấn phù hợp để tránh làm ảnh hưởng đến công tác chung của Khoa. Vì vậy, em viết thư để xin được sự đồng ý cũng như ủng hộ của thầy trong quá trình làm nghiên cứu này. Nếu được thầy chấp thuận, em sẽ về Khoa vào đầu năm tới để thực hiện phỏng vấn.*

*Em rất mong thầy xem xét và chấp thuận ạ.*

*Em cảm ơn thầy nhiều.*

*Em Thanh*

**The Rector's reply (in Vietnamese)**

28 September 2018

*Nhat tri.*

**The researcher's email (in English)**

*28 September 2018*

*Dear Professor,*

*My name is Thanh. I have been working as an administrator of transnational undergraduate programs in the Department of Academic Affairs of a Vietnamese University. I am writing this email to ask for your consent and support to conduct my research.*

*At present, I am a PhD student at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. My research is an evaluation in quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university. I would like to conduct this research at your University (as I have such a long time working as an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes, and I know that your university is experienced in this field). In the data collection phase, I will interview some students, parents, alumni, administrators, and officers of the University. I will contact them and arrange the meetings myself in order not to affect the University's general activities. However, I need your support during the research. If my proposal is approved, I will be at the University early next year to see you and start the process.*

*I look forward to hearing from you soon.*

*Thanh Dao*

**The Rector's reply (in English)**

*28 September 2018*

*Totally agree.*

## **Appendix C**

### **Participant Invitation Letter**

#### **For students**

Dear (*student's name*),

My name is Thanh Dao. I am a PhD student at Faculty of Education, the University of Waikato. I am undertaking research called, “*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*” as a requirement for my doctoral degree.

My research is a case-study which mainly focuses on University A. As a student, you are invited to provide your views concerning the transnational undergraduate programmes of University A. I am emailing you as I am in the process of gathering data by doing interviews with students about this topic.

As having been an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes for about 10 years, I really understand the situation of students in such programmes, and what I would like to do is to listen more from you about the quality of programmes to assist the staff and the decision makers of University A. I have been provided by the University with a list of some students who may be interested in this topic, and your name is on the list. Thus, I would like to ask you to join in this study by being interviewed.

You must be very busy with your study now as I know a transnational programme requires a lot from students, so I really appreciate if you can participate. You may refer to the Participant Information Sheet for more information about this research. Moreover, if you agree to participate, there is also a Consent Form for you to fill in.

If you are interested in taking part in my research, please leave me an email via this address: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com). Once I receive your email, I will contact you to talk more and set up a time and place for the interview. If I do not hear back from you before February 1st 2018, I will assume you are not becoming a participant.

I really hope that my research will be meaningful in assisting students of transnational undergraduate programmes one way or another. In doing so, your participant will be of great help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

All the best,

Thanh Dao (PhD Candidate, the University of Waikato)

**For parents/caregivers**

Dear *(parent's name)*,

My name is Thanh Dao. I am a PhD student at Faculty of Education, the University of Waikato. I am undertaking research called, “*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*” as a requirement for my doctoral degree.

My research is a case-study which mainly focuses on University A. Students will be invited from the transnational undergraduate programmes of University A. I am emailing you as I am in the process of gathering data by doing interviews with parents about this topic.

As having been an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes for about 10 years, I really understand the situation of students in such programmes, and what I would like to do is to listen more from you- a student's parent- about the quality of programmes to assist the staff and the decision makers of University A. I have been provided by the University with a list of some parents who may be interested in this topic, and your name is on the list. Thus, I would like to ask you to join in this study by being interviewed.

Due to the general information I was provided by the University, I have listed some parents I think may be interested in this topic, and your name is on the list. Thus, I would like to ask you to join in this study by being interviewed.

You must be very busy with your family, so I really appreciate if you can participate. You may refer to the Participant Information Sheet included for more information about this research. Moreover, if you agree to participate, there is also a Consent Form for you to fill in.

If you are interested in taking part in my research, please leave me an email via this address: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com). Once I receive your email, I will contact you to talk more and set up time and place for the interview. If I do not hear back from you before February 1st 2018, I will assume you are not becoming a participant.

I really hope that my research will be meaningful in assisting students of transnational undergraduate programmes one way or another. In doing so, your participant will be of great help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

All the best,

Thanh Dao (PhD Candidate, the University of Waikato)

**For alumni**

Dear (*alumnus' name*),

My name is Thanh Dao. I am a PhD student at Faculty of Education, the University of Waikato. I am undertaking research called, “*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*” as a requirement for my doctoral degree.

My research is a case-study which mainly focuses on University A. Alumni graduated from transnational undergraduate programmes of University A will be invited. I am emailing you as I am in the process of gathering data by doing interviews with alumni about this topic.

As having been an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes for about 10 years, I really understand the situation of students in such programmes, and what I would like to do is to listen more from you- a person graduated from a transnational undergraduate programme- about the quality of programmes to assist the staff and the decision makers of University A. I have been provided by the University with a list of some alumni who may be interested in this topic, and your name is on the list. Thus, I would like to ask you to join in this study by being interviewed.

You must be very busy with your work and your personal life now, so I really appreciate if you can participate. You may refer to the Participant Information Sheet included for more information about this research. Moreover, if you agree to participate, there is also a Consent Form for you to fill in.

If you are interested in taking part in my research, please leave me an email via this address: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com). Once I receive your email, I will contact you to talk more and set up time and place for the interview. If I do not hear back from you before February 1st 2018, I will assume you are not becoming a participant.

I really hope that my research will be meaningful in assisting students of transnational undergraduate programmes one way or another. In doing so, your participant will be of great help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

All the best,

Thanh Dao (PhD Candidate, the University of Waikato)

**For administrators**

Dear (*administrator's name*),

My name is Thanh Dao. I am a PhD student at Faculty of Education, the University of Waikato. I am undertaking research called, “*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*” as a requirement for my doctoral degree.

My research is a case-study which mainly focuses on University A. Administrators of transnational undergraduate programmes of University A will be invited. I am emailing you as I am in the process of gathering data by doing interviews with administrators about this topic.

As having been an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes for about 10 years, I really understand the situation of students in such programmes, and what I would like to do is to listen more from you- an administrator of a transnational undergraduate programme- about the quality of programmes to assist the students as well as the University. I hope that this can also help students and their parents have deeper empathy and understanding with the work of administrators of transnational undergraduate programmes. I have been provided by the University with a list of some administrators who may be interested in this topic, and your name is on the list. Thus, I would like to ask you to join in this study by being interviewed.

You must be very busy with your work now, so I really appreciate if you can participate. You may refer to the Participant Information Sheet included for more information about this research. Moreover, if you agree to participate, there is also a Consent Form for you to fill in.

If you are interested in taking part in my research, please leave me an email via this address: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com). Once I receive your email, I will contact you to talk more and set up time and place for the interview. If I do not hear back from you before February 1st 2018, I will assume you are not becoming a participant.

I really hope that my research will be meaningful in assisting students of transnational undergraduate programmes one way or another. In doing so, your participant will be of great help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

All the best,

Thanh Dao (PhD Candidate, the University of Waikato)

**For quality assurance officers**

Dear (*officer's name*),

My name is Thanh Dao, I am a PhD student at Faculty of Education, the University of Waikato. I am undertaking research called: “*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*” as a requirement for my doctoral degree.

My research is a case-study research which mainly focuses on University A. Quality Assurance (QA) officers of transnational undergraduate programmes of University A will be invited. I am emailing you as I am in the process of gathering data by doing interviews with QA officers about this topic.

As having been an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes for about 10 years, I really understand the situation of students in such programmes, and what I would like to do is to listen more from you- a QA officer- about the quality of programmes to assist the students as well as the University. I hope that this can also help the students and their parents have deeper empathy and understanding with the work of QA officers of transnational undergraduate programmes. I have been provided by the University with a list of some QA officers who may be interested in this topic, and your name is on the list. Thus, I would like to ask you to join in this study by being interviewed.

You must be very busy with your work now, so I really appreciate if you can participate. You may refer to the Participant Information Sheet included for more information about this research. Moreover, if you agree to participate, there is also a Consent Form for you to fill in.

If you are interested in taking part in my research, please leave me an email via this address: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com). Once I receive your email, I will contact you to talk more and set up time and place for the interview. If I do not hear back from you before February 1st 2018, I will assume you are not becoming a participant.

I really hope that my research will be meaningful in assisting students of transnational undergraduate programmes one way or another. In doing so, your participant will be of great help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

All the best,

Thanh Dao (PhD Candidate, the University of Waikato)

## **Appendix D**

### **Participant Information Sheet**

#### **Project Title**

*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*

#### **Information about the research:**

This research aims to answer the question of what constitutes “good quality management” mechanisms for transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university, which can both be applicable and beneficial for the university as well as to its stakeholders. The reason why I would like to do this research is because during my 10 years of working as an administrator of transnational undergraduate programmes, I have seen many students enrolling and graduating, many of whom are successful whilst others are not and tend to blame the quality of the programmes. Therefore, figuring out what lies behind quality management mechanisms is my concern.

The data collection is being carried out in University A, and the participants include continuing students, alumni, students’ parents, programme administrators, and quality assurance officers so that I can gain a fuller appreciation of the situation. I really hope that the findings of this research will help improve the reputation of transnational programmes in University A, and students will have better experiences during their study and better chances in their future.

#### **Voluntary Participation:**

It is your choice whether to participate in this research. At any time during my data collection, you can feel free to stop your participation if you wish to or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I just want to make sure that you volunteer to be interviewed and are not under any pressure if you do not participate. I would like to record the conversation between you and me, and I am willing to send you a recording to listen again or a transcript for you to decide whether to make any amendments. In case you do not want me to record the interview for any reasons, I am happy to take notes instead. Moreover, you can ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation or withdraw any information you have provided up until the data analysis stage of the research.

#### **Interview schedules and your role:**

I will contact you after receiving your confirmation of taking part in the research via email. The time and place for the interview depend on you and what makes you feel

comfortable. You do not have to prepare anything; just come and talk with me about your experience of University A’s quality management mechanisms. I want to encourage you to talk more about some particular topics relating to quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes. Relating to the interview content, the estimated time for an interview is around one hour.

I will be taking the utmost precautions to protect your confidentiality and anonymity. All the record of our conversation will be kept secret. After the raw data has been collected, I will transcribe (and translate into English if the interview is in Vietnamese) and include relevant points in my written thesis (you can request to see the transcription if you want). Only I and my supervisors will be privy to the notes, documents, recordings, and any subsequent publications. Access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded will be available to you, should you desire it.

Upon completion, the thesis will be uploaded electronically onto the University of Waikato’s Research Common digital repository for public access. Moreover, the research findings may be shared in academic conferences and/or publications. Please observe that notes and documents will be destroyed, and recordings will be erased 5 years after the research finishes. I will keep transcriptions of the recordings and a copy of the paper but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in the publications and every effort will be made to disguise your identity. Nonetheless, there is a small possibility that participants may be identified.

If you would like to know more about this research, please contact me via the email address: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com) or my supervisors as follows:

<p><b><i>Professor, Dr A.C. Tina Besley</i></b>          Chief Supervisor          Te Whiringa          School of Educational Leadership and Policy</p>	<p>The University of Waikato          Private Bag 3105          Hamilton 3240, New Zealand          Email: <a href="mailto:tina.besley@waikato.ac.nz">tina.besley@waikato.ac.nz</a></p>
<p><b><i>Professor, Dr Brian Findsen</i></b>          Co-Supervisor          Te Whiringa          School of Educational Leadership and Policy</p>	<p>The University of Waikato          Private Bag 3105          Hamilton 3240, New Zealand          Email: <a href="mailto:bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz">bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz</a></p>

A Participant Consent Form is also included in this email. Please complete it and return it to me if you would like to participate in my research. You can send it via email or give it to me when we see each other for interviewing.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

All the best,

Thanh Dao

PhD Candidate, the University of Waikato

## **Appendix E**

### **Participant Consent Form**

#### **Project Title**

*An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university*

#### **Consent Form for Participants**

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand I can withdraw any information I have provided up until data analysis.

I agree to provide information to the researcher in an interview under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Additional Consent as Required**

I agree / do not agree to my responses to be audio-recorded.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Researcher's Name and Contact information:*

Thanh Thi Hong Dao (Email: [daohongthanh1910@gmail.com](mailto:daohongthanh1910@gmail.com))

*Supervisors' Names and Contact information:*

Professor Tina Besley (Email: [tina.besley@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tina.besley@waikato.ac.nz));

Professor Brian Findsen (Email: [bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz))

## **Appendix F**

### **Guiding Interview Questions**

**Title:** An evaluation of quality management of transnational undergraduate programmes in a Vietnamese university from selected stakeholders' perspectives

*This set of questions are designed based primarily on four evaluations of the CIPP model: context, input, process and product. These are suggestive questions as when providing questions for each stakeholder group, there may be some modifications made, as necessary.*

#### **For students**

*General Introduction:*

Age, current living situation, year of study, hobbies, etc.

*Prior to study in University A and judgement of context:*

- Can you tell me what you were doing before enrolling in the TNUP of University A?
- Among many other choices, why did you choose University A to study?
- What do you think about the partner university and their reputation among other institutions?
- How were you feeling towards your study before you started this transnational programme?
- How did you know when to enrol and what requirements should you meet to study your TNUP in University A?
- What do you think about the admission requirements? (Prompts: Are they high or low or appropriate?)
- What do you think about the tuition fee of the TNUP you are studying? (Probes: How much is it? Does it sound proportional with the quality of an international programme? Why do you think so? Please tell me more)
- What do you think about the output standards advertised in the programme admission notification? (Probes: Do they meet your requirements when choosing to study this programme? Do you think they are exaggerated? Why so?)
- What do you think about the University's facilities and their support for your study? (Prompts: library, classroom, Internet access, etc.)
- Are there any other reasons which make you choose University A to study? Please tell me more about those reasons.

*Input judgment:*

- How was the enrolment process? (Prompts: How did you apply for studying in TNUPs of University A? When did you receive the offer of place? When did you come to enrol? What did you do when enrolling? How long did it take you since your enrolment to your starting of study?)
- What do you think about the programme's staffing in terms of administrators and teachers (Probes: How is the programme's staffing implemented? Is it appropriate for your study? Why or why not?)
- What do you think about the programme structure that University A uses for transnational undergraduate students? (Probes: What do you think about the GE programme? Do you think its design matches the transnational programme afterwards? Why or why not? How about the transnational programme? Do the offered subjects relate to the output standards of the programmes as cited in the University's advertisement?)
- What do you think about the length of the programme? (Prompt: Are they acceptable or too long?)
- How did you receive necessary information before officially studying? (Probes: Who informed you? When did they inform? What kind of information did you receive? Was the information enough for you to get started?)
- How do they provide the learning materials (e.g., books, handouts) for you? (Probes: Do the learning materials come to you before/after the semester starts? What do you think is the best time to receive them? Do you have to pay for them, or are they included in the course fee? If you have to pay for it, do you think it is reasonable?)
- Does University A have any scholarships for students of TNUPs? If yes, what do you think about them? (Probes: Do you think their value is consistent with the University's requirements? Do you think they are reachable for students? Why?)
- How do you feel about the timetable of the programme? (Prompts: suitable or unsuitable for students)

*Process judgment:*

- What do you think about the knowledge you have gained from the subjects of the programme? (Probes: If they are not the same as what you have expected, do you think it is because the way your teachers deliver or for other reasons?)
- How often are you informed or updated about the partner university's policy?
- How does the partner university participate in your programme? (Prompts: Do they come and teach any subjects?)

- What do you think about the continuous assessments of the programme? (Probes: Do the assignment questions correspond with what you have learnt? How are the processes operated? Do you think the processes are kept secure and objective? How do you receive your results? Do the results correspond with your performance?)
- What do you think about the exams of the programme? (Probes: Are the exam questions correspondent with what you have learnt? How is the process operated? Do you think the processes are kept secure and objective? How do you receive your results? Do the results correspond with your performance?)
- What do you often do if you have any queries relating to your study? (Probes: Who will you first see and talk about your queries? What do they often do for you? Do you think what they do is effective or not?)
- What do you do if your queries are not replied or replied but inappropriately? (Prompts: Will you see somebody else of higher positions to talk to or just accept and forget it?)
- Does the University ask you about your feedback on the programme? If yes, how often? In what way? How did the University deal with it?
- Besides teaching and learning, what extracurricular activities does University A provide for its students? (Probes: Do you think they are good/necessary/unnecessary?)
- Have you ever thought that you would stop studying in this programme? If yes, could you please tell me the reason why? What barriers to learning do you face?
- If you had the authority to change, what changes would you make for your transnational undergraduate programme for the better? (Prompts: structure, length, teaching process, etc.)
- If you had another chance to choose, would you still choose to study this programme or a domestic programme? Why so?

*Product judgment:*

- What do you expect to gain when you graduate from this programme? (Prompt: jobs, knowledge, etc.)

**For alumni:**

*General Introduction:*

Age, current living situation, current job, year of graduation, hobbies, etc.

*Prior to study at University A and judgment of context:*

- Can you tell me what you were doing before enrolling in the TNUP of University A?
- Among many other choices, why did you choose University A to study?
- What do you think about the partner university and their reputation among other institutions?
- How were you feeling towards your study before you started this transnational programme?
- How did you know when to enroll and what requirements should you meet to study your TNUP in University A?
- What do you think about the admission requirements? (Prompts: Were they high or low or appropriate?)
- What do you think about the tuition fee of the TNUP you studied? (Probes: How much was it? Did it sound proportional with the quality of an international programme? Why do you think so? Please tell me more)
- What do you think about the output standards advertised in the programme admission notification? (Probes: Do they meet your requirements when choosing to study this programme? Do you think they were exaggerated? Why so?)
- What do you think about the University's facilities and their support for your study? (Prompts: library, classroom, Internet access, etc.)
- Were there any other reasons which influenced you choose University A to study? Please tell me more about those reasons.

*Input judgment:*

- How was the enrolment process? (Prompts: How did you apply for studying in TNUPs of University A? When did you receive the offer of place? When did you come to enroll? What did you do when enrolling? How long did it take you since your enrolment to your starting of study?)
- What do you think about the programme's staffing in terms of administrators and teachers (Probes: How was the programme's staffing implemented? Was it appropriate for your study? Why or why not?)

- What do you think about the programme structure which University A uses for transnational undergraduate students? (Probes: What do you think about the GE programme? Do you think its design matches the transnational programme afterwards? Why or why not? How about the transnational programme? Do the offered subjects relate to the output standards of the programmes as cited in the University's advertisement?)
- What do you think about the length of the programme? (Prompt: Are they acceptable or too long?)
- How did you receive necessary information before officially studying? (Probes: Who informed you? When did they inform? What kind of information did you receive? Was the information enough for you to get started?)
- How did they provide the learning materials (e.g. books, handouts) for you? (Probes: Did the learning materials come to you before/after the semester starts? What do you think is the best time to receive them? Did you have to pay for them or were they included in the course fee? If you had to pay for it, do you think it would be reasonable?)
- Did University A have any scholarships for students of TNUPs? If yes, what do you think about them? (Probes: Do you think their value was consistent with the University's requirements? Do you think they were reachable for students? Why?)
- How do you feel about the timetable of the programme? (Prompts: suitable or unsuitable for students)

*Process judgment:*

- What do you think about the knowledge you have gained from the subjects of the programme? (Probes: If they were not the same as what you had expected, do you think it was because the way your teachers delivered or for other reasons?)
- How often were you informed or updated about the partner university's policy?
- How did the partner university participate in your programme? (Prompts: Did they come and teach any subjects?)
- What do you think about the continuous assessments of the programme? (Probes: Did the assignment questions correspond with what you have learnt? How were the processes operated? Do you think the processes were kept secure and objective? How did you receive you results? Did the results correspond with your performance?)
- What do you think about the exams of the programme? (Probes: Were the exam questions correspondent with what you have learnt? How was the process operated? Do you

think the processes were kept secure and objective? How do you receive your results? Did the results correspond with your performance?)

- What would you often do if you had any queries relating to your study? (Probes: Who would you first see and talk about your queries? What did they often do for you? Do you think what they do is effective or not?)
- What did you do if your queries were not replied or replied but inappropriately? (Prompts: Would you see somebody else of higher positions to talk to or just accepted and forgot it?)
- Did the University ask you about your feedback on the programme? If yes, how often? In what way? How did the University deal with it?
- Besides teaching and learning, what extracurricular activities did University A provide for its students? (Probes: Do you think they are good/necessary/unnecessary?)
- Have you ever thought that you would stop studying in this programme? If yes, could you please tell me the reason why? What barriers to learning did you face?
- If you had the authority to change, what changes would you make for your transnational undergraduate programme for the better? (Prompts: structure, length, teaching process, etc.)
- If you had another chance to choose, would you still choose to study this programme or a domestic programme? Why so?

*Product judgment:*

- How long have you been graduated from University A?
- How was your study like when you were a student in University A?
- What have you done since graduation?

*If the alumnus has already found a job:*

- How did you get your job? (Probes: You found it yourself or anyone introduced it to you? Is it easier to get the job with an international bachelor degree?)
- Is there any relationship between your degree and the salary you get? (Probes: Is it possible for you to ask for a higher salary with an international degree? Why or why not?)
- How does this job relate to the major you learnt in University A? (Prompts: the same/different/a little bit related, etc.) Does this matter?
- How much do you use the knowledge you gained at University A in this job?

- What knowledge or skills do you think you lack when doing this job? Is the programme you chose to study responsible for that?

*If the alumnus is still looking for a job:*

- Have you ever tried to apply for any jobs since you graduated?
- How do you think you will do if you have a job of your major? (Prompts: Is it easier because you have good knowledge?)
- What do you think is the reason why you have not acquired a job? Is there anything related to your international degree? (Prompts: Do you think having an international degree makes it more difficult for you to get a job?)

*For both:*

- Apart from getting a job, what do you think you have achieved when having an international bachelor degree? (Probes: your knowledge, your perceptions about the world/the society, etc.)
- If you can make a proposal for University A, what do you think the University should do more to assist students in their future pathway? (Prompts: Providing particular skills or techniques or giving more credence to experience, etc.)

### **For students' parents/caregivers:**

*General Introduction:*

Age, current living situation, jobs, number of children, etc.

*Context judgment:*

- How did you know about University A? (Prompts: Via friends, relatives, family members or other sources)
- Among many other choices, could you please tell me why you chose University A to advise your son/daughter to study?
- What do you think about the partner university and their reputation among other institutions? Is that one of the reasons for you to choose University A for your son/daughter?
- What do you think about the enrolment requirements of University A? (Prompts: Are they high or low or appropriate?)
- What do you think about the tuition fee of the TNUP your son/daughter is studying? (Probes: How much is it? Does it sound proportional with the quality of an international programme? Why do you think so? Please tell me more)

- What do you think about the output standards advertised in the programme admission notification? (Probes: Do they meet your requirements when advising your son/daughter to study this programme? Do you think they are accurate? Why so?)

- What do you think about the University's facilities and their assistance to your son/daughter's study? (Prompts: library, classroom, Internet access, etc.)

*Input judgment:*

- How was the enrolment process? (Probes: Do you have to assist your son/daughter in enrolling in University A? Does the enrolment process simple or complicated? Why so?)

- What do you think about the programme's staffing in terms of administrators and teachers (Probes: Is it appropriate for your son/daughter study? Why or why not?)

- What do you think about the programme structure which University A uses for transnational undergraduate students? (Probes: What do you think about the GE programme? Do you think its design matches the transnational programme afterwards? Why or why not? How about the transnational programme? Do the offered subjects relate to the output standards of the programmes as cited in the University's advertisement?)

- What do you think about the structure (e.g. length) of the programme? (Prompt: Are they acceptable or too long?)

- How did you receive necessary information before your son/daughter officially studying? (Probes: Who informed you? When did they inform? What kind of information did you receive? Was the information enough for you son/daughter to get started?)

- How do they provide the learning materials (e.g. books, handouts) for your son/daughter? (Probes: Do the learning materials come to your son/daughter before/after the semester starts? What do you think is the best time to receive them? Do you have to pay for them or are they included in the course fee? If you have to pay for it, do you think it is reasonable?)

- Does University A have any scholarships for students of TNUPs? If yes, what do you think about them? (Probes: Do you think their value is consistent with the University's requirements? Do you think they are reachable for students? Why?)

- How do you feel about the timetable of the programme? (Prompts: suitable or unsuitable for your son/daughter)

*Process judgment:*

- What do you think about the knowledge your son/daughter has gained from the subjects of the programme? (Probes: If they are not the same as what you have expected, do you think it is because the way teachers deliver or for other reasons?)
- Has your son/daughter ever complained with you about the programme they are studying? If yes, what do the complaints often about?
- Does University A provide any extracurricular activities besides teaching? If yes, you're your son/daughter participate? Do you think they are necessary or good for your son/daughter?
- Have you ever thought that your son/daughter should stop studying in this programme? If yes, could you please tell me the reason why? What barriers to learning does your son/daughter face?
- If you had the authority to change, what changes would you make for you transnational undergraduate programme for the better? (Prompts: structure, length, teaching process, etc.)
- If you had another chance to choose, would you still consult your son/daughter to study this programme or a domestic programme? Why so?

*Product judgment:*

- What do you expect your son/daughter to gain when he/she graduates from this programme? (Prompt: jobs, knowledge, etc.)

**For administrators:**

*General Introduction:*

Age, current living situation, hobbies, working experience, etc.

*Context judgment:*

- How do you provide students with information before they decide to choose University A? (Prompt: Consultation)
- What information do you often provide students for their induction in this programme? Why do you think such information is necessary for the students?
- What do you think about the University assets and other facilities supporting students' study? (Probes: Are they sufficient and suitable?)

*Input judgment:*

- How do you assist students in their enrolment process?

- What do you think about the University staffing in terms of administrators, teachers and other officers? (Prompt: Is that appropriate or not?)
- What do you think about the structure and length of the programme? (Prompt: Is that appropriate for students' study or not?)
- How often do you provide students with information during their study? Do students often satisfy with the information they are provided?
- How much time does it take for you to make timetables for the programme? Are there any factors affect your constructing timetable? Do you consider students' needs when constructing timetables?
- What do you think about the scholarships which University A offers students? (Probes: Do you think they are reachable/competitive/etc.?)

*Process judgment:*

- Within your mission of an administrator of a transnational undergraduate programme, what do you have to do for the students?
- How often do the students come to see you for dealing with their problems?
- How do you typically react when listening to the students' queries?
- *If it is an institutional query*, what do you often do when dealing with it? (Prompts: You will discuss with your manager or do it yourself?) How long does it take to have an answer for a student's query of this type? What are the constraints?
- *If it is a query relating to the partner university*, what do you often do when dealing with it? How long does it take to have an answer for a student's query of this type?
- Have you ever had students return to you more than one time for the same queries? If yes, what have you done?
- How do you organize the continuous assessments for the students? (Prompts: Who designed the questions? How will it be delivered to students? Who marks the continuous assessment? Who announces the results? How can you assure the objectivity of the marking process?)
- How do you organize the examinations for the students? (Prompts: Who designs the questions? How will it be delivered to students? Who marks the continuous assessment? Who announces the results? How can you assure the objectivity of the marking process?)
- How is the partner university's participation in organizing continuous assessments and examinations? (Probes: Do they control the process? How? Who will be in charge of making

the final decision about assessment and exam results? Will they be noticed if students have complaints about their results? How will such problems be solved?)

- Have you ever seen any students drop out while studying? What do you think are the reasons for that?

*Product judgment:*

- What do you do to support students after graduation? (Probes: As this is a transnational programme, does the degree need to be recognised by any organisation? If yes, do you have to assist student in such process? Do you help students by linking them with business organizations or companies which can provide them with more chances in their future career, etc?)

### **For QA officers:**

*General Introduction:*

Age, current living situation, hobbies, working experience, etc.

*Context judgment:*

- What do you think about the University assets and other facilities supporting students' study? (Probes: Are they sufficient and suitable?)

*Input judgment:*

- How do you assist students in their enrolment process?

- What do you think about the University staffing in terms of administrators, teachers and other officers? (Prompt: Is that appropriate or not?)

- What do you think about the structure and length of the programme? (Prompt: Is that appropriate for students' study or not?)

- What do you think about the timetable of the programme? (Prompt: Is it suitable for students?)

- What do you think about the scholarships which University A offers students? (Probes: Do you think they are reachable/competitive/etc.?)

- What do you think about the budget plans which University A is using for transnational programmes?

*Process judgment:*

- What do you do if there is any feedback from students, parents or staff about quality of transnational undergraduate programmes? (Probes: How can you analyze it? Do you think it is reliable? Who do you submit this feedback to? Do you think all the feedback can be responded appropriately? Why or why not?)
- Apart from feedback of students, parents or staff, does the University take the initiative to gather feedback from them? If yes, how often? Could you please describe the procedure? (Probes: How is the feedback be collected? Who will see it? Who will deal with it?)
- Do you participate in organizing examination of TNUPs? If yes, could you please describe the procedure and what you do to ensure its objectivity?

*Product judgment:*

- Does University A do self-evaluation? If yes, how often and could you please describe the self-evaluation process? (Prompts: Forms of self-evaluation, participants, forms of execution, results)
- Have any changes been made with the transnational undergraduate programmes after feedback has been collected? (Probes: If yes, could you please tell me more about the changes?)
- Are the transnational undergraduate programmes in University A accredited? If yes, could you please describe the process?
- What do you think are the challenges in managing the quality of transnational undergraduate programmes in University A?

**Appendix G**  
**Criteria for Self-Evaluation of Transnational Programmes in Vietnam National University, Hanoi**

1. Output standards of the programme (Does the programme publicise its output standards? If yes, what are they? Do they meet the requirements of the local/international labour markets? Are there any recommendations for the partner university as to the output standards?)
2. Implementation process of the programme (What is the implementation process of the programme? Briefly describe how to carry out this implementation process? Are there any recommendations for the partner university as to the implementation process?)
3. Structure and content of the programme (What is the structure and content of the programme? Clarify the suitability between the structure and content of the programme and its output standards? Are there any recommendations for the partner university to make the structure and content meet the demand of the local/international labour market?)
4. Teaching and learning activities (How are the teaching and learning activities implemented? How is the soft skill training for learners implemented? Are there any recommendations for the partner university to improve the teaching and learning activities?)
5. Assessing learners' results (Clarify the procedure and assessment requirements of the programme? How is the assessment process implemented? Are there any recommendations for the partner university to make the assessment more effective?)
6. Lecturers (Describe in detail the teaching staff of the programme (the number of lecturers, their qualifications. Do the qualifications meet the needs of a transnational programme?) And how to evaluate the teaching quality? Are there any recommendations for the partner university to improve the teaching quality?)

7. Specialists, technicians, and other staff (Describe in detail the staff who participate in operating the programme (the administrators, librarians, technicians, cleaning staff, etc.). (Are there any recommendations for the partner university to assist learners to get access fully and effectively to the programme resources?)
8. Learners (Describe briefly the rights and obligations of learners according to the university and its partner's regulations? Describe the methods carried out to choose qualified learners? Is there any notice in programme marketing to attract more learners?)
9. Learning consultation and support (How does the university support and consult learners? Are there any advantages and disadvantages? Are there any recommendations for the partner university in supporting and consulting learners?)
10. Teaching and learning resources (Describe the university resources to serve teaching and learning activities? Clarify how learners get access to the online library of the partner university? Any notice for the university to enhance the quality of teaching and learning resources?)
11. Teaching and learning quality assurance (Does the university collect feedback from learners after each subject and upon graduation? Are the results used? How are they used? Are there any recommendations for the partner university in carrying out teaching and learning quality assurance activities?)
12. Staff development (How is the staff development carried out? Are there any recommendations for the partner university in developing the quality of staff?)
13. Feedback of stakeholders (How does the university collect feedback from stakeholders such as learners, graduates, lecturers, employers, etc.? How are the results used?)
14. Training and research outputs (Provide the statistics of recruits, on-going learners, withdrawing learners, graduates, the average duration to graduate? Reasons why learners

cannot graduate or graduate later than their due time? Are there any recommendations for the partner university to enhance the output quality?)

15. Satisfaction of stakeholders (Viewpoints of stakeholders especially employers about the quality of graduates? Are there any recommendations for the partner university to meet the demand of stakeholders?)

(VNU, 2012, pp. 5-7)

**Appendix H**  
**The University Admission Notifications for Transnational Undergraduate Programmes**  
**from 2006 to 2018**

***The Admission Notification for 2006***

- Applicants must be high school graduates with good conduct;
- Applicants' learning attainment must be from average level;
- Applicants who have IELTS from 5.5 or pass the English examination held by the University will start from the university programme; otherwise, they must complete the GE Programme (from 300 to 800 hours depending on their English language proficiency) before studying the university programme.

(Adapted from University A's admission notification of the year 2006)

(Note:

- Every high school student in Vietnam has a high school record book which shows all of their study results at their high schools and their conduct as well. This record book must be submitted to the University as a means to compare a student's high school results with the admission requirements)
- Students' learning attainment/results and conduct are measured following the MOET's regulation as follows:

A student's learning attainment is recognized to be at average level if meeting the following criteria:

- a) The GPA of all subjects is from 5.0 in which the GPA of Mathematics or Literature must be from 5.0 (with students of gifted schools, the GPA of the specialised subject must be from 5.0)
- b) There is no subject whose GPA is lower than 3.5
- c) As to subjects assessed by comments, the comments must be "Acceptable"

A student's conduct is recognised to be good if the student meets the following criteria:

- a) Strictly follows the school's regulations and the law; actively struggles with negative actions, crime, and social evils
- b) Always shows respect to teachers and older people; helps younger people; contributes to the solidarity of the whole group and is trusted by friends
- c) Always improves self-morality; has a healthy and modest life style and takes care of his/her family
- d) Completes all learning tasks; always keeps trying and is honest in life and learning
- e) Actively exercises, shows personal hygiene, and protects the environment
- f) Participates in all educational activities and school activities; actively participates in activities of the Ho Chi Minh Young Pioneers and the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union
- g) Has the right attitude and actions in life style as guided in the Civic Education subject.

(MOET, 2011)

The learning attainment and conduct of all secondary and high school students in Vietnam are recognised following this regulation of MOET)

***The Admission Notifications from 2007–2009***

- Applicants must be high school graduates with good conduct;
  - Applicants' GPA of the 12th grade must be from 6.5 upwards
  - Applicants who have IELTS from 5.5 will be able to start the university programme;
- Applicants who do not have IELTS 5.5 must complete the GE Programme (consisting of seven levels with each level lasting 10 weeks) before studying in the university programme.

(Adapted from University A's admission notifications of the year 2007, 2008, and 2009)

***The Admission Notification from 2010–2012***

- Applicants must be high school graduates;
- Applicants' GPA of the 12th grade must be from 6.5;

- Applicants must have their university entrance exam results meeting the fundamental points set up by Vietnam National University, Hanoi
- Applicants who have IELTS from 5.0 or equivalent or pass Level 5 of GE Programme will start from the university programme; otherwise, they must complete GE Programme (consisting of five levels and each level lasts 20 weeks) before studying the university programme.

(Adapted from University A's admission notifications of the year 2010, 2011 and 2012)

### ***The Admission Notification for 2013***

- Applicants must be high school graduates;
- Applicants' GPA of the 12th grade must be from 6.5;
- Applicants must have their university entrance exam results meeting the fundamental points set up by the MOET
- Applicants who have IELTS from 5.0 or equivalent or pass Level 5 of GE Programme will start from the university programme; otherwise, they must complete GE Programme (consists of five levels and each level lasts 20 weeks) before studying the university programme.

(Adapted from University A's admission notification of the year 2013)

### ***The Admission Notification for 2014***

- Applicants must be high school graduates;
- Applicants' GPA for 12th grade must be from 6.5 upwards;
- Applicants must have their university entrance exam results meeting the fundamental points set up by the MOET what are these?
- Applicants who have IELTS from 5.5 or B2 Certificate (following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) or equivalent will start the university programme; otherwise, they must complete the GE Programme (consisting of five levels and each level lasts 20 weeks) before they are able to study in the university programme.

(Adapted from University A's admission notification of the year 2014)

***The Admission Notifications from 2015 to 2017***

- Applicants must be high school graduates;
- Applicants' total results of following three subjects in their 12th grade: Literature, Mathematics and Foreign Language must be from 17.0 and none of them is below 1.0 point;
- Applicants who have IELTS from 5.5 or B2 Certificate (following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) or equivalent will start from the university programme; otherwise, they must complete GE Programme (consisting of five levels, each level lasting 20 weeks) before studying the university programme.
- Applicants must pass the interviews set up by the University and its partners and meet the entrance quality requirements of TNUPs set up by the MOET.

(Adapted from University A's admission notification of the year 2015, 2016 and 2017)

***The Admission Notification for 2018***

- Applicants must be high school graduates in Vietnam or overseas and meet one of the following requirements:
  - + Applicants with their total results of any of the following three subjects in their 12th grade: Literature, Mathematics and Foreign Language/ Literature, Mathematics and Physics/ Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics or Mathematics, Physics and Foreign Language are from 18.0 and none of them is below 1.0 point;
  - + Applicants with their high school national examination total results of any of the above three subjects meet the standard entrance requirements of the MOET or of Vietnam National University, Hanoi for the year 2018
  - + Applicants who have A-level certificate awarded by Cambridge International Examination Board

- Applicants who have valid B2 Certificates (following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) or equivalent will start from the university programme; otherwise, they must complete GE Programme (consists of five levels and each level lasts 20 weeks) before studying the university programme.
- Applicants must pass the interviews set up by the University and its partners.

(Adapted from University A's admission notification of the year 2018)

**Appendix I**  
**The University Questionnaires to Collect Feedback of Students, Alumni, and Employers**  
**About Local and Transnational Programmes**

**QUESTIONNAIRE 1**  
**(The University Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the Papers of**  
**University Programmes)**

Paper name: ..... Paper code: .....  
 Major: .....  
 Lecturer's name: .....  
 Academic year: ..... Semester:  Semester 1     Semester 2

Dear student,  
 In order to improve the training quality of our university, please let us know your idea about the paper you have studied. Below are different statements about the paper. Please read them thoroughly and choose the best options for your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement. You do not need to write your name in this questionnaire.

**Assessing scale:**

①	②	③	④	⑤
<i>Totally disagree</i>	<i>Basically disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Basically agree</i>	<i>Totally agree</i>

**Please draw black the number you choose to reflect your idea following each issue in this table.**

Issue to be assessed	Draw black the most suitable number				
<b>The organisation of the subject</b>					
1. Lecture halls met the needs of the paper (dimension, light, atmosphere, hygiene, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. The equipment in lecture halls met the needs of the paper	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. You were assisted promptly while studying the paper (administration, service, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. The paper aligned with the syllabus	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. The total hours were distributed properly for different types of learning	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. The paper had updated content	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. The paper had logical content	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. The paper had proper materials (including the textbook and other supplementary materials)	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. The paper helped provide knowledge and skills for your future work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>The teaching activity</b>					
10. The lecturer instructed your study methods since the beginning of the paper	①	②	③	④	⑤
11. The lecturer's way of delivering lessons helped you develop your thinking	①	②	③	④	⑤
12. The lecturer created chances for you to take the initiative in	①	②	③	④	⑤

the learning process					
13.The lecturer helped you develop independent working skills	①	②	③	④	⑤
14.The lecturer helped you connect the paper with real life issues	①	②	③	④	⑤
15.The lecturer used teaching equipment effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
16.The lecturer cared about educating students' personality and work ethics	①	②	③	④	⑤
17.You understood what you had been taught	①	②	③	④	⑤
18.The lecturer usually and competently used the required foreign language	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>The assessment activity</b>					
19.Students' learning was assessed by various forms aligned with the contents of the paper	①	②	③	④	⑤
20.The assessment could test students' required knowledge and skills	①	②	③	④	⑤
21.The assessment results helped students improve the quality of their learning	①	②	③	④	⑤

Other ideas to help improve the teaching and learning quality:

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for your precious ideas!**

## QUESTIONNAIRE 2

(The University Questionnaire to Collect Students' Feedback about the General English programme – used when students have finished the programme)

<b>Personal Information</b>	
Male/Female: .....	Class: .....
Date of collection: .....	

**Assessing scale:**

①	②	③	④	⑤
<i>Totally disagree</i>	<i>Basically disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Basically agree</i>	<i>Totally agree</i>

*Please draw black the number you choose to reflect your idea following each issue in this table.*

No	Issue to be assessed	Draw black the most suitable number				
	<b>The organisation of the programme</b>	①	②	③	④	⑤
1	Classes met the needs of students (enough dimension, light, atmosphere, hygiene)	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	Students were assisted promptly by the university staff while studying (administration, service)	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>The content of the programme</b>					
3	The total hours were divided properly for different types of learning (theory, practice, skill, exercises, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The learning materials were updated (including the textbook and other supplementary materials)	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The programme provided you with useful knowledge and skills	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>General evaluation about the programme</b>					
6	You think that the testing and continuous assessment in the programme were appropriate	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	Generally, you feel satisfied about the programme	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>The teaching quality</b>					
	<b>The 1st lecturer's name:</b>	①	②	③	④	⑤
1	The lecturer's way of delivering lessons was easy to understand	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The lecturer assigned and corrected homework usually and properly	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	The lecturer instructed quality practical activities	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The lecturer answered students' questions effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The lecturer came to class on time	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The lecturer used the required foreign language usually and competently	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The lecturer used suitable references	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The class atmosphere was inspirational	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	Generally, you think the lessons were effective	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>The 2nd lecturer's name:</b>					
1	The lecturer's way of delivering lessons was easy to understand	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The lecturer assigned and corrected homework usually and properly	①	②	③	④	⑤

3	The lecturer instructed quality practical activities	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The lecturer answered students' questions effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The lecturer came to class on time	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The lecturer used the required foreign language usually and competently	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The lecturer used suitable references	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The class atmosphere was inspirational	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	Generally, you think the lessons were effective	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>The 3rd lecturer's name:</b>					
1	The lecturer's way of delivering lessons was easy to understand	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The lecturer assigned and corrected homework usually and properly	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	The lecturer instructed quality practical activities	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The lecturer answered students' questions effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The lecturer came to class on time	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The lecturer used the required foreign language usually and competently	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The lecturer used suitable references	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The class atmosphere was inspirational	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	Generally, you think the lessons were effective	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>The 4th lecturer's name:</b>					
1	The lecturer's way of delivering lessons was easy to understand	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The lecturer assigned and corrected homework usually and properly	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	The lecturer instructed quality practical activities	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The lecturer answered students' questions effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The lecturer came to class on time	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The lecturer used the required foreign language usually and competently	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The lecturer used suitable references	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The class atmosphere was inspirational	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	Generally, you think the lessons were effective	①	②	③	④	⑤
	<b>The 5th lecturer's name:</b>					
1	The lecturer's way of delivering lessons was easy to understand	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The lecturer assigned and corrected homework usually and properly	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	The lecturer instructed quality practical activities	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The lecturer answered students' questions effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The lecturer came to class on time	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The lecturer used the required foreign language usually and competently	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The lecturer used suitable references	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The class atmosphere was inspirational	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	Generally, you think the lessons were effective	①	②	③	④	⑤

Other ideas to help improve the teaching and learning quality:

.....  
 .....

**Thank you for your precious feedback!**

**QUESTIONNAIRE 3**  
**(The University Questionnaires to Collect Students' Feedback about the University's Support for Students)**

Dear student,

In order to improve the university's support for students, The Centre for Quality Assurance and Testing would like to collect your feedback about the quality of the programme you are studying.

Please spend your time completing this questionnaire. Your precious feedback will contribute to the improvement of our university's assistance for students.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**1. Assessing scale**

①	②	③	④	⑤
<i>Totally disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Consider</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally agree</i>

In order to complete the questionnaire, please read the statements thoroughly and put an "X" in the option of the assessing scale which you choose.

**2. Assessing issues**

If you are staying in the university dormitory, please start from number 1. If you are not staying in the university dormitory, please start from number 9.

No	Issues	Assessing scale				
		① <i>Totally disagree</i> → ⑤ <i>totally agree</i>				
1	The application and approval process for students to stay in the university dormitory strictly followed VNU's regulations	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The university dormitory met students' demand	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	The university dormitory had appropriate regulations	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The dormitory staff had good attitude	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The dormitory provided good food services	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The dormitory provided Internet with good quality	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The dormitory had good security	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The dormitory was usually clean	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	The learning consultant assisted students effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
10	The class affairs committee worked effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
11	Students were assisted well in scientific research	①	②	③	④	⑤
12	Students were informed properly about the government and the Communist Party's policies, the laws and VNU's regulations	①	②	③	④	⑤
13	Students could raise their voice about every issue	①	②	③	④	⑤
14	Students were complimented promptly and satisfactorily	①	②	③	④	⑤
15	Students were usually informed about scholarships	①	②	③	④	⑤
16	Scholarships were considered equally	①	②	③	④	⑤
17	Students were equally considered to take part in student exchange programmes	①	②	③	④	⑤
18	The university had fast a procedure for student loan	①	②	③	④	⑤
19	The staff in charge of student affairs had good attitude	①	②	③	④	⑤

No	Issues	Assessing scale				
		① Totally disagree → ⑤ totally agree				
20	Sport and artistic activities for students are usually carried out	①	②	③	④	⑤
21	Volunteering and extracurricular activities for students were well organized	①	②	③	④	⑤
22	Career orientation for students were carried out effectively	①	②	③	④	⑤
23	Clubs were helpful for students	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>(No 24 to 27 are only for students who have their health checked in the Hospital of VNU)</b>						
24	The Hospital's resources met students' demand	①	②	③	④	⑤
25	The healthcare service met students' demand	①	②	③	④	⑤
26	The psychological consulting service met students' demand	①	②	③	④	⑤
27	The hospital staff had good attitude/met students' demand	①	②	③	④	⑤
Other ideas to help improve the university's assistance for students:						
.....						
.....						
.....						
.....						
.....						

**3. Personal information**

Sex: Male ; Female       Year: One ; Two ; Three ; Four

*Thank you for your cooperation!*



①	②	③	④	⑤	4.7. Professional skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.8. Informatic skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.9. Thinking skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.10. Analyzing and evaluating skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.11. Information exploiting, classifying and processing skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>5. Personal quality</b>										
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.1. Self-confidence	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.2. Creativity	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.3. Professionalism	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.4. Motivation to work	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.5. Groupwork	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.6. Responsibility for work	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.7. Self-improvement	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.8. Work ethics	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.9. Adaptation to changes	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.10. Positive reaction to pressure	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>6. Soft skills and other abilities</b>										
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.1. Communication skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.2. Presentation skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.3. Effectively planning skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.4. Task organizing and coordinating skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.5. Time management skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.6. Problem defining skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.7. Problem solving skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.8. Conflict managing and solving skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.9. Effective group-work skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.10. Positive feedback skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.11. Basic administrative word processing skill	①	②	③	④	⑤

**7. After being employed, which skills or knowledge you had to add to meet the needs of your work (Please put an "X" in all of the knowledge/skills you needed)?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Did not need any more skill/knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Added information technology skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Added more professional knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Improved foreign language skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Added more professional skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Added soft skills
Others (please specify): .....	

**8. Have you got other ideas to help improve the quality of our university's programmes?**

.....  
 .....

**9. Some personal information:**

- 9.1. Sex:  Male  Female  
 9.2. Major: .....  
 9.3. Year of graduation: .....  
 9.4. Graduation classification:  
 Average  Good  Very good  Distinction  
 9.5. Contact number: .....E-mail: .....

## QUESTIONNAIRE 5

### (The University Questionnaires to Collect the Feedback of Employers about the Quality of the University's Graduates)

Dear employer,

In order to improve the training quality and meet the demand of the society well, our university would like to collect your feedback on the quality of our graduates who was or has been working in your company. Your feedback is precious for our quality assurance and enhancement. We assure that all the information provided is confidential and will only be used for improving the quality of our training programmes.

*Please put an "X" in the appropriate square you choose or answer the below questions:*

Name of your company: .....

Address: .....

Your position in the company: .....

**1. Type of the company:**

- 1.1. State-owned (including offices of the communist party or the unions):  Governmental  Provincial
- 1.2. Administrative:  Educational  Medical
- 1.3. Business:  Enterprise/corporation  Medium and small  Self-trading  Partnership  100% foreign investment
- 1.4. NGO:  Domestic  International
- 1.5. Other (please specify): .....

**2. Your company employ our graduate from which training programmes:**

.....

**3. The graduate's position:**

- Apprentice  Manager at department level  Manager at Office level  Staff
- Other (please specify): .....

**4. How long has our graduate been working in your company?**

- Less than 6 months  From 6 to 12 months  More than 1 year

*Below are criteria of knowledge, skills, professional ability, personal quality and soft skills of alumni. Please give us your feedback basing on the assessing scale on the left and right hand side.*

You put an "X" on the answer you choose to evaluate the importance of each criteria for your company	You put an "X" on the answer you choose to evaluate the level of your satisfactoriness with our graduate																				
The assessing scale to evaluate the level of importance (on the left)	The assessing scale to evaluate the level of satisfactoriness (on the right)																				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">①</td> <td style="width: 15%;">②</td> <td style="width: 15%;">③</td> <td style="width: 15%;">④</td> <td style="width: 15%;">⑤</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totally not important</td> <td colspan="2">←----→</td> <td>Very important</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	①	②	③	④	⑤	Totally not important	←----→		Very important		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">①</td> <td style="width: 15%;">②</td> <td style="width: 15%;">③</td> <td style="width: 15%;">④</td> <td style="width: 15%;">⑤</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totally not satisfied</td> <td colspan="2">←----→</td> <td>Very satisfied</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	①	②	③	④	⑤	Totally not satisfied	←----→		Very satisfied	
①	②	③	④	⑤																	
Totally not important	←----→		Very important																		
①	②	③	④	⑤																	
Totally not satisfied	←----→		Very satisfied																		

**5. Knowledge, skills and professional ability**

Assessing scale					Criteria	Assessing scale				
T	N	Consider	Im	Very		T	N	C	Sa	V

<i>o t a l l y n o t i m p o r t a n t</i>	<i>o t i m p o r t a n t</i>		<i>po rtn ant</i>	<i>important</i>		<i>o t a l l y n o t s a t i s f i e d</i>	<i>o t s a t i s f i e d</i>	<i>o n s i d e r</i>	<i>t i s f i e d</i>	<i>e r y s a t i s f i e d</i>
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.1.Knowledge about your major	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.2.Knowledge about the society	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.3.The ability to apply professional knowledge	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.4.The ability to do self-study/self-research	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.5.The ability to communicate in foreign language	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.6.The ability to use foreign language in doing your major	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.7.Professional skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.8.Informatic skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.9.Thinking skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.10.Analyzing and evaluating skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	4.11.Information exploiting, classifying and processing skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>6. Personal quality</b>										
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.1.Self-confidence	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.2.Creativity	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.3.Professionality	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.4.Motivation to work	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.5.Groupwork	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.6.Responsibility for work	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.7.Self-improvement	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.8.Work ethics	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.9.Adaptation to changes	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	5.10.Positive reaction to pressure	①	②	③	④	⑤
<b>7. Soft skills and other abilities</b>										
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.1.Communication skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.2.Presentation skill	①	②	③	④	⑤

①	②	③	④	⑤	6.3.Effectively planning skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.4.Task organizing and coordinating skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.5.Time management skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.6.Problem defining skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.7.Problem solving skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.8.Conflict managing and solving skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.9.Effective group-work skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.10.Positive feedback skill	①	②	③	④	⑤
①	②	③	④	⑤	6.11.Basic administrative word processing skill	①	②	③	④	⑤

**8. After being employed, which skills or knowledge our graduate had to add to meet the needs of your company?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Did not need any more skill/knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Added information technology skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Added more professional knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Improved foreign language skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Added more professional skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Added soft skills
Others (please specify): .....	

**9. When you employed, did you care about whether your employees graduated from our university?**

- Yes, we did
- No, we did not

**10. How many graduates from our university are working for your company?**

- Under 5
- From 5 to 10
- More than 10

**11. Your idea about our training programmes**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**12. Have you got other ideas to help improve the quality of our university's programmes?**

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you so much!**