Innovation in general education governance towards the school autonomy model: International experiences and implication lessons for Vietnam's education

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Abstract

Innovation in general education governance is one of the development trends not only in Vietnam but also in the world. This is also an important measure to change and improve the quality of education, especially expand autonomy of high schools and universities. The paper focuses on some main contents: overview of general education; the experiences of some countries in the implementation of the school administration model towards the school autonomy model so that give lessons for Vietnam's education can be learned in the context of development conditions nowadays. The results in this work would be used to classify the schools into the various groups. The data also analysts on decision-making capability, on what we called an "index of school autonomy", expressed the possible level of school-level decision-making.

Key words: School governance; General education innovation; School Autonomy

I. Introduction

Currently, Vietnam education and training is facing to the requirements in the new context that requires fundamental and comprehensive renovation. New general education curriculum is one of the directions of education innovation in Vietnam [1]. It was the most comprehensive assessment documents of the positive and negative side of Vietnam education in the 30 years since the renovation process and is important, which clearly defines the goals and solutions to by the year 2030 "Vietnam's education reaches regional advanced level". However, in order for the process of renewing the governance of high schools towards the autonomy model in Vietnam, the article presents the model of school management in some countries in the world. This work has shown the advantages and disadvantages of countries. Since then, the authors have drawn lessons for Vietnam and other countries in the region to meet the requirements of promoting and developing education in the future. Alvin Toffler *et al.* defined a general education as a curriculum (or part of a curriculum) to impart common knowledge and develop common intellectual capacities, different from professional, vocational, or technical

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curriculum [2]. Alvin Tofler's definition for general education focuses on cognitive skills, which involve teaching people to think and learn. With this perspective, general education emphasizes the breadth of knowledge across a number of disciplines. Furthermore, Kosslyn emphasized that the general education curriculum is a place where learners can be brought to understand how to deal with and deal with everything that happens in their lives [3]. The author also gave the definition of liberal education for the twenty-first century as a case study of The Harvard University. The term "school management" is a comprehensive concept, relating to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of educational policies. A school is formed through an organizational process which then forms a school governance method, corporate culture and schooling [4]. School governance has defined in many different terms. Some important definitions are given by Campbell and Gregg (1957) suggested that school governance involves facilitating the development of basic goals and policies for teaching and learning, stimulate the development of appropriate programs to teach and learn, invest in facilities and manage personnel to conduct teaching and learning [5]. Based on the concept of general school administration, school administration is the process of developing orientations, regulations, operation plans in high schools, organizing teaching and educating students through mobilization. The use of resources, monitoring and evaluation on the autonomy and accountability developed the school according to the school's mission, vision and educational goals.

1.1. The definitions and concepts about autonomy model in schools

Recently, the model of school autonomy in various countries has been attracting many researchers and publications on educational development. In general, it is a process of renewing the thinking about school management mechanism, combining a rational and effective way between clearly defining the functions and tasks of administration between the government and ensuring the right of self. It also helps to strengthen social responsibility, enhance the social responsibility and transparency of schools. We also need to promote the activeness and initiative of public and private schools in the education reform process, with the core of teachers and administrators at the core. In other words, we should transform public schools into autonomous, fully legal institutions. Schools have the right to make decisions and are responsible for training, research, organization, enrollment, personnel and finance. In addition, it is also necessary to have an education development policy towards ensuring autonomy and social responsibility of schools. The administration of each nation's government plays a role in the oversight and evaluation of social factors for those schools. In general, some concepts and definitions of school autonomy model could be investigated as follows:

o School autonomy is the right of a school to run and manage its own activities without being controlled from outside factors.

o It is the right of schools to be free to make decisions about how the organization is organized, as well as the school's goals and directions.

o It is the right of schools to decide on the means and means to achieve the goals that are determined by the governments of each country.

o School autonomy can also be defined as conditional autonomy over schools in accordance with general government regulations.

1.2.   Current models of school autonomy

The above concepts and concepts may contain different content, but all have one thing in common: (i) The relationship between the government and the school; and (ii) The ability of the school to be autonomous in its operations. The World Bank (2004) has introduced and cited the concept of school autonomy mechanisms in the world according to the following four management models [6, 7]:

i.   The model of government control completely (State control) in Latin America countries and Malaysia before and some other countries;

ii.   Semi-autonomous model in France and New Zealand;

iii.   Semi-independent model in Singapore and some other countries;

iv.   Independent model (Independent) in USA, UK, Australia, Canada.

1.3.   Research methods and techniques

In the scope of this project, we have used the following research techniques:

- Data analysis: Data analysis of basic contents of reference materials, autonomy models of countries in the world, research works, reference books, magazines, education development strategies.

- System method: Using for systematize reference materials, research works, then sort and classify for scientific purposes and make future researches future perspectives.

- Methods of synthesis and statistics: Summary of results obtained from reality through data and statistical reports in a reasonable and effective manner.

- Historical method: Learn the history of formation, development and transformation process of the implementation of school autonomy model of schools in Vietnam and in the world.

- Social survey method: Interview, get opinions of some schools that are implementing autonomy model in Vietnam and in the world. From there, draw practical lessons learned on issues to be studied for Vietnam.

II. International experience in high school governance towards autonomy model

2.1 Lessons from The American countries

2.1.1   *The United States of America (USA)*

USA has the most diverse and developed education system in the world, with a network of public and private schools in all levels of education ranging from kindergartens to universities [8]. General education is compulsory for children in all states with the amount of time lasting from 8 to 13 years (depending on the state) and usually applicable for those who are between the ages of 6 and 16 or 18. The country's compulsory education lasts for 12 years on average, however, this length of time may reduce in rural areas or small towns. The United States does not have a federal education system and each state or county is required to be responsible for the education in its region. As a result, the classification of American upper secondary school education system is various based on policies of each state or region where the school is located. In the USA,

88% of the students attend public schools while 9% register at parochial schools, 1% at private schools and 2% are home-schooled [9]. Most of public upper secondary schools in the USA are only applicable for native residents and do not accept international students. Some schools accept international students through cultural exchange program. International students provide with the option of attending private/independent schools. Public schools receive funding from three sources including the federal, state and local administration. The state administration sets minimum standards related to most of the school's activities as well as sponsorships and provides tax incentives for schools. The federal administration's funds also offered to state and local schools, which are able to meet the federal's minimum criteria. Private schools are those that are independent in finance and administration. Their primary financial resources are mainly from tuition fee in addition to other funds and financial contributions. There is a substantial number of private schools funded and operated by churches and religious organizations. To some extent, the management of these schools is influenced by their own religious policies.

There are approximately 30900 private schools in the USA with 5.1 million students [10]. Private schools are those that are independent in finance and administration. Their primary financial resources are mainly from tuition fee in addition to other funds and financial contributions. There is a substantial number of private schools funded and operated by churches and religious organizations. The classification of education levels in public schools are diversified with some offering pre-kindergarten to grade 12 system while some providing education programs from kindergarten to grade 8. Private schools usually have their own curriculum. However, their students are still provided with general knowledge similar to students in every other school. In addition, they are offered with the option of selecting other different subjects for their curriculum. Private school administrators often focus on developing art-emphasized programs than those of public schools. These schools are allowed to create complicated plays and musicals, which offer students the opportunity to explore their talents and express themselves. Due to some regulations by the government, public schools are unable to spend their funding on art education. In contrast, private schools are not limited by these regulations, which results in more freedom to develop and expand their wanted programs. Some private schools even provide courses on film production, and 87 % of the students attending private schools are highly appreciated for their capability, qualification, autonomous learning style and leadership while only 39 % of students attending public schools receive the same evaluation. Additionally, 78 % of private schools' students are well educated and well prepared for the entrance into universities which only 23 % of students in public schools posses these features. Moreover, 50 % of private schools' students obtain Advanced degrees while only 21 % of those from public schools do.

2.1.2   Canada

The Canadian education system consists of public and private schools ranging from kindergartens to universities [11]. According to the Constitution, each provincial government is responsible for their education system, which means there are differences in the education system of each province. A notable feature of the Canadian education system is the different age suitable for each stage of education in each state. Nevertheless, the nationwide standard is considered as being synchronization throughout all states. Canadian government also allows local authorities to directly manage their education's quality and curriculum as well as establish their own education system. In addition, local governments are able to manage the registration and licensing for training institutions as well as education curriculum in order to ensure nationwide systematic and homogeneous

characteristics. Each local legislature constructs its own education system and mechanism based on the nation's general guiding principles on education with the aim of developing similarities and differences. Legal responsibilities of each local unit on education will be promulgated by education-related authorities under the administration of Ministries. Additionally, series of policies regarding education development such as the establishment of private schools, training centers, teaching programs systems… are also determined. Each local unit has one or two agencies specializing on education. There is no existence of any ministry or ministerial agency that specializes in federal education. However, there is a forum in, where heads of education authorities discuss and exchange opinions on popular issues, exploit the directions of co-operation, share information as well as coordinate educational and international exchange activities.

Public upper secondary schools are directly managed by provincial governments and funded by the state budget. In particular, the provincial governments are responsible for developing the curriculum. Public schools offer homestay programs (accommodation with Canadian family) for international students. Tuition and homestay fees range from CAD $21,000 to $26,000 depending on each school. There are two prestigious public school systems in Toronto and Vancouver for international students who desire for the baccalaureate which are Toronto District School Board and the Vancouver School Board [11]. In Canada, 95% of parents send their children to public schools where government-certified teachers are working. Private upper secondary schools in Canada are primarily funded by tuition fees and other financial contributions from individuals or organizations. Classes often have fewer students and the development of curriculum is more active. However, the quality of books and curriculum must be approved by provincial governments. Regarding international students, they can choose to live either at the school's dormitory or homestay. Most of the private schools offer financial support (scholarships, loans) for financially-disadvated individuals. Depending on each school, tuition fee and dormitory expenses range from CAD $24,000 to 27,000 per year. In addition, both public and private school systems provide international students with language courses (English - French) as a form of support.

2.2 Lessons from European countries

2.2.1 The United Kingdom (UK)

In the UK, the government has encouraged schools to become more autonomous [12]. Public schools are established by local authorities, while private schools are founded by groups of people, teachers and organizations. In fact, the autonomy mechanism clearly presents in private schools. The system of academies in the UK was established 13 years ago and has been in the process of development. By January 2014, 3,657 institutes had been opened and 216 schools had been in the preparation for operation. There have been approximately 24,200 primary and post-primary schools opened in the UK. In the UK, public schools are under the administration of authorized agencies. However, they are not dependent on their local goverment. In fact, they are ruled by the government. Recently, the establishment of eight Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) has provided private schools with operating locations [13]. RSCs are responsible for supporting newly-established schools, working with the organization of ineffective events and private schools in the region. Academies such as private schools are run by non-profit funds that set many distinguishable terms including the salary for employees. They are freely extended and not compromised by any co-operative arrangements, pay rate or regulation-dependent agreements. Local governments tend to provide a range of ancillary and support services, such as behavioral support services, which are partly similar to some of those provided in Ireland by

agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) [14]. When a school applies autonomy mechanism, it is required to self-supply and manage all services used to be provided by the local government services. Consequently, this transition led to the status of school ownership, resulting in schools being in compliance with additional financial and legal responsibilities as well as requests to report. Institutes and private schools are allowed to establish and manage their system of human resources, which leads to the existence of negotiations for each individual's salary. Therefore, each teacher or staff has their own different salaries and employment terms. As a result, there has been rising concern in the UK regarding the impact of this trend on employees. The trend supports that there are some personal values that deserve to be rewarded. There is also a concern that institutions seek to recruit young or unqualified teachers, whom they can offer lower salaries resulting in cost reduction and more school funding allocations being retained.

2.2.2 Finland

One of the basic principles of Finnish education is that everyone should have the equal access to high quality education and training, similar educational opportunities should be available to all citizens regardless of their ethnicity, age, wealth or residence [15]. The national education administration is divided into two levels. Education policies are managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry of Education is the highest educational institution in Finland. Education is primarily based on objectives regulated in The Basic Education Act and Decree (1998) and in the National Core Curriculum [16, 17]. Policies of Finnish education system is defined in a national Education and Research Development Plan, which is approved by the Government every four years (Eurydice 2008) [18]. The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) is a national development agency, which is responsible for the development of education [19]. Missions of FNBE involve the establishment of a national curriculum, implementation of educational development programs, maintenance of national and international databases, and the evaluation of academic results. Autonomous cities are in charge of providing education and achieving targets. Besides, the main duty of Finnish Education Evaluation Council, which was appointed in 2003, is to deploy national evaluation and quality development in education [20]. Management of local education is the responsibility of local authorities, most of which are commonly municipal or joint municipal governments. Decisions made by these agencies relate to funds' allocation, local curriculum development and human resources recruitment. Cities also have autonomy rights to delegate decision-making righs to schools. To be specific, principals self-recruit the staff for their own institutions. Schools are responsible for the arrangement of practical learning periods as well as the effectiveness and quality of education that they provide. For example, there are no regulations, which manage class sizes and schools are free to determine how students are grouped.

Basic education in Finland consists of nine-year comprehensive education for students aging from 7 to 16. In Finland, students can repeat a grade; about 2% of the students have to repeat a year (mostly in the first or second year), about 0.5% of students do not have a general education certificate. Less than 3% of the pupils in general education attend non-public schools. Private education institutions follow the national core curriculum and qualification guidelines validated by FNBE. They also receive the same amount of public fundings as the publicly funded schools do. The responsibility for education funding is assigned between the State and the city. Cities receive one-time funding and then allocate money within their jurisdiction. Currently, the Finnish

education system is considered to be flexible, and the government agrees with the principal's policies on local implementation. Cities are responsible for organizing education and implementing goals, and they determine the degree of authority would be delegated to schools. Within the framework of the law and core curriculum, schools and cities create their own curriculum, which is suitable with the local context. Teachers select their own teaching methods and have the freedom to choose their own teaching materials.

The purpose of Finnish education policies is to provide all citizens with equal access to education regardless of age, accommodation, financial status, gender or mother tongue. The objective of the plans for development of the upcoming phase is defined in the University and Education Research Development Plan [21]. It is to enable an effective, equal and high quality basic education. Major subjects in the current teaching scheme are mathematics and science, linguistics and internationalization and lifelong learning. The Finnish National Board of Education acknowledges education is a competitive element and desires to enhance all education levels as well as population's capacity, especially the labor force. Additionally, politicians have shared the idea of education as a guarantee of success in the global market. There are no national tests for academic results as well as school competitions or external agencies managing teachers or principals in the Finnish system. General education is managed only by the national core curriculum. Education in Finland is strongly influenced by the society and the belief in knowledge serving as a means to compete in the world market. Finland's education policies emphasize on quality, equality and internationalization. They concentrate on the demand for a well-educated workforce as well. In order to achieve greater effectiveness, decentralized efforts have been conducted, starting at urban level; however, schools also enjoy greater autonomy.

2.2.3   Norway

In Norway, the State, through the Ministry of Education and Research, has the overall responsibility for all education-related fields. Compulsory education is governed in compliance with the Education Act, 1998 [22]. Besides, the Ministry defines standards and general teaching frameworks through a national curriculum. There are two education ministers in Norway, one is responsible for education from kindergartens to upper secondary schools and the other is in charge of higher education and university research [23]. The General Department of Education and Training is the administrative agency of The Ministry of Education and Research, which is responsible for establishing national curriculum, assessing, monitoring and developing primary and secondary education. This department also has the responsibility for the new National Quality Assessment System (NQAS) regarding primary and secondary education [24]. The system is created in order to ensure that high quality education is received by all students. The city authorities regulate compulsory education and conduct its purposes and regulations [25]. Compulsory schooling in Norway is applied for primary and secondary schools, whose students' age is from 6 to 16 years old. Class repetition is not permitted in Norwegian schools, and most of the students in primary and lower secondary education enroll in public schools, while independent schools are considered as a complement to public education. Since 1986, primary and secondary education has been funded through the city's tax revenue and government grants. Cities have significant autonomy in terms of their spending decisions. However, some of the grants are for teaching the mother tongue and Norwegian as the second language for immigrant children. Meanwhile, approved public schools have 85% of their costs paid by the government.

Norway has a centralized curriculum for all subjects in grades from 1 to 13. In the curriculum's framework, significant decentralization is given to local schools and teachers so that they make their own decisions regarding organizational and teaching methods. In terms of the management of different schools in cities, each city government decides to delegate the autonomy to their schools. Cities are often responsible for operating schools, constructing and maintaining school buildings, receiving students and appointing teachers. The Knowledge Promotion Reform (2006) introduced certain changes in quality, structure and organization of educational institutions [26]. This new reform has a different point from the previous one - the Curriculum (1997), that it strongly focuses on and provides details about the learning content and teaching methods, which would be applied to students. To be specific, they are the Promotion of Wisdom Brings Freedom at the localities regarding working methods, teaching materials and classroom organization [27]. While principals reported the school's autonomy level in PISA 2006, the old curriculum with less degree of autonomy was being implemented [28]. The general objective of Norway's education policies is to provide equal opportunities for all of the people, regardless of gender, geographic location, economy, society or culture. The goal is to provide all children with an education that is appropriate for each student's abilities. In addition, the high quality of general education in the entire population and lifelong learning opportunities are highlighted (The Ministry of Education and Research 2009) [23]. Educational reform in Norway often emphasizes equality. Particularly, school quality must be the same across the country and the principle of comprehension is the key element (Telhaug 1999) [29]. There was an ideological change in 1990 with a stronger concentration on school subjects and students' achievements. In 2004, national tests in math, reading and English were deployed in grades 5 and 8 to ensure the quality of education in the country. Regarding the new reform implemented in 2006, the program encourages knowledge and prioritizes the development in basic skills so as to ensure that students have necessary competencies to deal with the challenges of the knowledge society. The reform introduces five basic skills that will be applied in all subjects in every levels; speaking skill, writing skill, reading skill, numerical skill. In addition, more teaching periods have been allocated to mathematics and science at lower grades. Students in PISA 2006 followed the old curriculum, but the new curriculum was first implemented in the fall of 2006 [25, 30]. The Knowledge Promotion program clearly provides directions in promoting competition with an emphasis on the competencies needed in a knowledge society. Norway also desires a highly-educated workforce and calls for lifelong learning among its citixens. The new reform orientates towards decentralization with more freedom for education staff to select teaching materials and working methods by themselves. With more freedom, national and international testing is introduced to ensure quality in education.

2.2.4   Sweden

The national government, through the Ministry of Education and Research, is responsible in general for education and the establishment of education framework at all levels in Sweden. Similar to Norway, there are two ministers, one is responsible for education from kindergartens to upper secondary schools and the other is in charge of higher education and university research. State regulations for the education system are stated in The Education Act and the government establishes a national program and curriculum for compulsory schools. Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE), which is the largest central authority in the school system, makes recommendations and is responsible for national examinations as well as school supervision and evaluation. Additionally, a newly established centralized institution, the National School Inspectorate, is responsible for inspecting, monitoring and licensing independent schools, while the Swedish National Agency

for School Improvement is in charge of developing education system [31]. Municipalities's mission is to provide and operate schools as well as complete the objectives set by the central government. Cities are responsible for compulsory schools, while the state is for special schools and schools for indigenous people; for instance, Sami School [30]. Compulsory education in Sweden is deployed in a 9-year long comprehensive plan for children from 7 to 16 years old. Depending on the parents, children can start when they are 6. In Sweden, the annual progress in upper secondary school is automatic. The main language for teaching is Swedish. In addition, there are public schools for Sami citizens in the northern Sweden, where the basic curriculum is taught in both Swedish and Sami. Most of the students in general education attend city-run schools; however, the number of students attending private schools has been increasing at a rate of 8% in the school year of 2006-2007. Private schools are open to everyone. These schools follow the same curriculum as with public schools and receive grants from cities based on the same criteria as for urban schools. General education is funded by the city budget, state grants and local property tax. Although there are no national regulations on how to allocate resources among schools, cities usually determine the amount of money based on the number of additional students and students with special needs. In terms of capital spending for school buildings, the model used by each city is not synchronized. Some cities are in favor of decentralizing responsibility of these expenditures to each school, while others are in charge of local costs at the city level. Additionally, some cities select self-manage capital spending in other aspects such as school building planning and management.

In recent years, education policy has been governed by a positive reforming process, and the structure of responsibility and management has been modified. A centralized national curriculum is maintained, but authorities are decentralized from state to municipalities. At each different degree, cities delegate schools' administrative responsibility to local organizations so that they themselves can decide on the organization of their tasks and responsibilities. Each city is obliged to establish general objectives for its schools and the school's plan is required to be closely based on national requirements. Additionally, it is necessary for each school to establish a working scheme based on national objectives and school's plans. The principal should set up a work plan when he/she refers to teachers' opinions and identifies issues such as course contents, teaching methods and organization. In addition to determining teachers' salary, each local school is also requested to hire teachers and other staff. As aforementioned in the national curriculum, principal is not only a pedagogical leader but also a teacher or non-teaching staff. Concurrently, the school's principal possesses a general responsibility to ensure that the entire school's activities are aiming towards achieving national objectives [32].

Swedish curriculum for secondary education is valid nationwide. It is a relatively brief document clearly stating the basic values and missions for the school. A basic principle of the Swedish education system is that all children and young people have equal access to education, regardless of gender, geographic residence or financial background. The purpose of the 1994 curriculum-an educational program for preschool, primary and secondary school system- is to support the integration of activities with the aim of achieving the schools' obejectives. In addition to the customized curriculum, there is a national curriculum for each subject. In 2000, new textbooks and grading criteria for compulsory schools were approved, while a number of curricula were revised in 2008. The Government aims to improve the quality of the entire education system as well as advanced quality at all levels of education. Swedish, English and Mathematics play important roles in compulsory schools and they have their own national assessment at the end of the third year (Swedish and Mathematics) which are grade 5 and 9. Several methods have been implemented to improve math and science achievements based on the

results of national and international studies. In addition, the Swedish National Education Agency also studied to develop new textbooks for all subjects which were implemented in 2011 [32]. New curricula would pay more attention on concrete practical knowledge to achieve accurate results in learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the targets would not reduce teachers' freedom in the process of promoting education. In Sweden, not only at the urban degree, a great concentration on decentralization was deployment throughout all levels and the decision-making power is given to each school. The Swedish Democratic Party stated that it introduced a decentralized policy as a means of improving democracy and efficiency, while others considered it as the application of neoliberal policies (Daun 2003). Sweden also helped schools, which can be considered as a part of financial-driven reforms and an answer to how education is paid? In addition, the responsibility to ensure the quality of education was enhanced by national and international tests.

2.3   Lessons from Australia and Asian countries

2.3.1   Japan

The current Japanese education system was established shortly after World War II between 1947 and 1950, taking the USA's system as a model [33, 34]. It includes 9 years of compulsory education (6 years of primary school and 3 years of secondary school), which is followed by 3 years of non-compulsory upper secondary school and 4 years of university. The education system in Japan consists of 6 years of primary education, 3 years of lower education, 3 years of upper education and 4 years of university. In particular, the primary and secondary education systems are compulsory, so all children between the age of 6 and 15 must go to school. With the policy named "No children and family in the community be uneducated", Japan aims to ensure the harmonious development of children in all aspects including physicality, mentality, knowledge, attitude, value system. This has become the basic education philosophy of Japan. The compulsory education system in Japan is from elementary to lower secondary schools, therefore, every child between the ages of 6 and 15 must go to school. The upper secondary school graduation rate in Japan is 90%, in which 53.4% would continue to study at vocation schools, colleges or universities. Japan is one of those countries having the highest educational level in the world, which the percentage of illiteracy being nearly 0%. Consequently, Japan is one of the developed countries in the world with the actual illiteracy rate of 0% and 72.5% of the students attending universities and colleges. This figure is on par with that of the USA and has outperformed some European countries. This has created the foundation for Japanese economic and industrial development in the modern era.

After graduating from lower secondary school, students can continue to study at upper secondary school (high school) or vocational school. However, as it is not a compulsory education, students who want to continue their studies must apply for admission. Upper secondary school lasts for 3 years (it takes more than 3 years for part-time or distance learning). In Japan, upper secondary schools such as agricultural high schools, industrial high schools and commercial high schools… offer courses teaching specialized skills for employment. Professional secondary schools (vocational schools) lasting for 5 years provide courses related to further professional study. Students after graduation can go to work immediately or continue to study at universities. Popular majors include industry, boat industry, electronics, maritime ... Students in part-time upper secondary schools and distance-learning high schools after graduation are still eligible to enroll colleges or universities' entrance exams. Upper secondary education program in Japan is optional. However, the current enrollment rate

of upper secondary school in Japan has reached nearly 100%. Additionally, the government's goal until 2020 is to universalize upper secondary education.

2.3.2   Singapore

Singapore is an island nation with a small acreage and population; however, Singapore has an education system that inherited and developed from the long-standing British education system [35]. Singapore considers education as a key element in social growth and development. As a multi-ethnic country, English is the official language in all schools and offices in Singapore. Secondary schools in Singapore are state-funded partly/completely or operated independently. Students must study for 4 to 5 years in local school programs under two systems: Special system, Express system or Normal system. Special and Express system last for 4 years as a means for students' preparation the GCE 'O' examination (Singapore - Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary'). Students enroll in the Normal system can study cultural programs or technical majors. Both of these programs provide knowledge for students to achieve the GE 'N' (Singapore – Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'Normal'). After four years, students will study for another year to be eligible for GCE 'O' examination. The program for lower secondary education includes English, Native Languages, Mathematics, Science and Humanities. In the 3rd year of lower secondary school, students are able to choose their elective subjects depending on whether they study arts, science, commerce or technology. In Singapore, the variety of private school sectors with extensive training programs has made the overall picture of the nation's education become more diversify. There are currently more than 300 private schools specializing in commerce, information technology, arts and languages in Singapore. These private schools offer courses that meet the needs of a large number of local and international students. The vast system of private schools offers quality training programs that add diversity to the country's education. Private educational institutions (PEI) offer courses with certificates, diplomas, bachelor degrees and postgraduate degrees for both domestic and international students. Through partnerships with many prestigious universities in the UK, US, Australia, these parochial schools in Singapore offer students the opportunity to possess an international degree in a safe and friendly environment. Each school has its training programs and admission procedures. To ensure students' benefits through the application of rigorous quality management standards; the Private Education Council (CPE) - a management board under the Ministry of Education of Singapore was established, to handle all issues related to private education in this country. In addition, Singapore also has private educational institutions that provide primary, secondary and post-secondary programs for international students. A typical example is St. Francis Methodist School (SFMS), which has partnership with The Family of Methodist Schools of Singapore, provides training programs suitable with the education systems in many countries around the world (United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore...). SFMS has a licensed registration with the Ministry of Education of Singapore and they are well-known for their flexible, advanced, various, stringent curriculums and concurrently, their programs respect the individual's ego and integrate creative thinking into courses.

2.3.3   Taiwan

Taiwan has a Private School regulation, which specifies the establishment procedure and the conditions for holding a position in the board of directors (BOD) [36]. The Law was detailed to the extent that it clearly states "the rate of married couples or people who are three-generation relatives must not exceed one-third of the Board of Directors at a school" . The Law also stipulates in which cases the Board members are dismissed,

under what conditions the Board meeting is considered valid, in which situations the principal is allowed / not allowed to participate in the Board meeting. Notably, the regulation states that the Board of Directors cannot hold the position of principal or other administrative positions in the school as well as receive salary but only the incentive for meetings and business trips. Taiwan's Private Law does not address profit or non-profit but does stipulate that all revenues of the school are used for planning expenses and the residue will be added to the fund. The degree of revenue is also required to be within a range regulated by authorized agencies. The law requests schools to register for the establishment of funds. In case of violations noticed, the school may be forced to dissolve. The above regulations indicate that Taiwan tends to have a strict control and management over private schools, and schools must operate within the legal framework of the non-profit model. However, in practice, whether these schools are truly non-profit organizations is a different issue). In Taiwan, under certain circumstances, the state will also provide funds to private schools. The degree of funding also depends on the quality of the school's operations, and donations for independent schools are tax-free.

2.3.4   Thailand

Thailand has specific regulations for private education, which was first promulgated in 1979 and amended in 1992 and 2003. They state in detail the conditions to open schools, license procedure as well as terms, rights and responsibilities of the Board of Directors. The Board include Principal, the representative of lecturers, and three persons appointed by the Ministry of Education. Both the Chairman of the Board and the Principal are also selected by the Ministry of Education. The license to open a school and a branch may be revoked or placed under supervision of the government if the school has problems in operation. Another special feature is that Thailand's Law on Education also stipulates punishments for violations in private schools [37, 38]. It even regulates the violation related to wrongly wearing formal clothes and uniforms or to use business cards not compatible with their actual status. These behaviors will be sentenced to six months in prison or requested to pay a fine of 300,000 baht. In addition, Thailand's Law on Education also stipulates in detail the property and its usage as well as the establishment of funds and the distribution of revenue to funds. Article 66 requests that the surplus distributed to the school owner shall not exceed 30%. The annual financial statements must be audited, and the Principal must submit this report to the Office of the Commission after being approved by the Board of Directors. On the other hand, Thailand imposes that the State supports private schools in setting up Development Investment Funds, exempting taxes on goods and equipment used in teaching and research, and assisting in the process of sharing resources (libraries, laboratories) between public and private schools.

2.3.5   Australia

Australia does not have an exclusive national education system, as the country has a Federal Government with a Federal Education Minister who commands six states' administration and two territories. Each state and territory has a different Ministry of Education, which is constitutionally responsible for the management of their schools. States and territories also devise their independents standards for teachers' qualifications, revenue and other statistics tracking; however, the overall structures among these states are similar [39]. Since 1993, the co-operation between the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and the Education Ministries of each territory and state has been achieved through the Ministers Council on Education and Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) [40]. In 2007, a new department was created and named as Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), replacing

DEST and Department of Employment. Despite not playing any important constitutional role, the Federal government has increased its influence over the past few decades and played an active role in supporting states and territories in meeting their educational objectives. (DEEWR 2009). In Australia, education is compulsory for children in the age of 6 to 16 and even for some states, they extend the age complying with the compulsory for education. In elementary and secondary schools, students gradually improve each school year, but under special circumstances, they may be retained for another year at the end of grade 10. The primary responsibility for sponsoring for public school education is under the ownership of respective governments in each states and territory. Tax revenues provide most of financial resources for public school's operation, but many schools also seek voluntary contributions from parents and fundraising from other local sources and the national Government also supports additional funding. The government's regular subsidies for public education systems are provided as grants calculated on each student. Funds used for financing private schools is partly based on regional socioeconomic conditions and the remaining is from tuition fee and funds from donors. Church schools were established before public schools and due to their long history, the government continue to support them at a certain extent. Education in Australia can be described as a complex interaction among different levels of politics, public/private schools and the ambiguous financial system. Australian schools have experienced many innovations since the 1970s when the education system was decentralized and the management was deployed based on School-Based Management (SBM) as a strategy and methods of introducing educational reforms. The central departments in each state establish the curriculum framework and standards, and the scope of SBM varies depending on regional jurisdiction. In most legal area, schools have autonomy rights in deciding the details of the curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods at the elementary and secondary school levels. To some extent, it is responsible for managing budgets and human resources. In 2004, the Federal Minister of Education released the National Framework for Schools, a 10-point plan for education in Australia with a higher level of school autonomy as one of the main characteristics (DEST 2004). The 10-point plan which was announced in 2004 is a national agenda of education with the purpose of strengthening schools' quality in every aspect. National consistency in the key aspects of the curriculum has been emphasized along with a strong focus on literacy, mathematics and technology. All schools are responsible for their performance and the plan clearly indicates the need to enhance indigenous education results (DEST 2004) [41]. In December 2008, MCEETYA (Ministers Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs) issued the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians which orientated the education in Australia in next 10 years. The Melbourne Declaration replaces the Hobart Declaration issued in 1989 and the Declaration on National Goals for Education in the 21st Century promulgated in 1999. In the Hobart Declaration, the Minister of Education, the Territory and Federal Education Declaration, a commitment of co-operation to ensure a high-quality school for all young individuals in Australia was made. The National Objectives in the Adelaide Declaration (1999) [42] concentrated on mathematics and science as the main areas of learning; moreover, it provided a framework for the national report of students' achievement and public accountability of school administration. The Melbourne Declaration was built on the same objectives but it also identifies new modifications in a global world that are placing new and greater demands on Australian education. With the Melbourne Declaration, Ministers of Australia's Ministry of Education looked forward to complying with all disciplines to ensure world-class curriculum which strongly focus on literacy and numerical skills, and become the best among the greatest school systems in the world [42]. In order to achieve greater national unity, areas under jurisdiction are required to

develop their own Declaration of Learning in five aspects: English, Mathematics, Science, Citizenship and Civil rights, and Information and Communication technology (ICT).

2.4   Lessons and real experience from China and India

The world is entering an industrial revolution 4.0, India and China are the two countries redefining the world equation of political, economic, social power and educational development. The development of these two countries is determined by a knowledge society and high quality education. Education is a key factor in shaping these emerging superpower nations. Education in these two countries has a history of hundreds of years and is trying to innovate itself with rapid changes in educational technology.

2.4.1   China

The Chinese Education Law, issued on August 29, 1992, has a limited of regulations for private education [43]. However, China has a Regulation on socialized schools in 1997 and the Law on Promoting Non-public Education issued on December 28th, 2002, and came into effect on September 1st, 2003. It replaces all previous documents related tp non-public education. This law includes 10 chapters and 68 articles, ranging from the procedure of establishment, modification, dissolution and from the organization to the operation, management and supervision, property matters as well as liability of private schools. Article 3 of this Law defines a private school as a public beneficiary enterprise (which is also translated as a social enterprise) and an integral part of the socialist education system. Possibly due to the sensitive situation of privatization education in China, organizations and individuals may apply for the establishment of an independent school, and also their criteria and conditions are the same as for public schools. Regarding the organization, the Law indicates that the Board of Directors consists of founders, principals and lecturers' representatives. One-third of BOD members must have over 5 years of experience in education and teaching. The Board of Directors is the highest decision-making department in the school, has the right to recruit and dismiss the principal but must report for approval by the competent authority. Regarding the asset issue, the Law states that non-public schools have the business ownership to school assets including those contributed by the founder or public assets and accumulated assets. The school has the entire disposal of these assets. Chinese law does not the same degree of specification as Thailand. They only state general provisions such as the tuition fee should be mainly used for teaching, educatiing, and improving learning conditions. However, schools are required to submit reports of annual financial statements. Although the constitution allows for the allocation of profits to founders (called bonuses) at a reasonable degree after being allocated to the school development funds, it does not specify what is "reasonable" and transfer that right on deciding on a specific calculation to the State Council. The law also specifies the supervision of school activities. Annual financial statements must be reviewed and approved by the competent authority. Admission advertisements must also be submitted to the competent authority for retention. Similar to Thailand, it is worth noting that the Law clearly stipulates prohibited behaviors, such as fabricated advertising, certificates' grating to people who do not go to school, usage of fake identifications.

2.4.2   The autonomy of schools in India and current model

India is now one of the leading countries for international students to study, including developing countries such as Vietnam [44]. India has 35% more students than China, but the total number of schools is four times that. India attracts international students from around the world who are looking for a high quality

education. With more than 320 universities and 15600 colleges, India has a full range of programs to meet the needs of international students. However, the biggest challenge of India's higher education today is that the Indian education system is highly dependent on the private sector. The quality of education in public schools is increasingly degraded because the country cannot sustain it. To understand this cause, there are many schools that have given different causes and factors. Many issues have contributed to the deterioration of the higher education system since India's independence accordingly:

- o *Funds allocated for higher education;*
- o *Quality of teacher resources in higher education;*
- o *Quality of infrastructure, advanced science and technology;*
- o *Weak management system and lack of management responsibilities;*
- o *Degradation of society and morals;*
- o *Lack of cooperation and cooperation of research institutes in the field of research;*
- o *Lack of attention to the natural sciences and society.*

A research in the end of 2016, found that the number of pupils in junior high school in math in poor areas in the capital New Delhi are 3.5 times slower than the regional average [45]. Besides these factors, the fact that India has invested too little in high quality education is one reason. Each year, the country spends only 2.7% of its GDP on educational development, lower than developing countries such as Brazil. About two-thirds of the classrooms in New Delhi even lack basic infrastructure such as electricity, and the internet. More school autonomy models have given to school agencies within the Indian government. Recently, the government in New Delhi will hand over authority the school autonomy for school management committees (SMCs) in public schools, providing that the student's parents must account for 75 % of the total members in SMCs and holding responsibility. The Delhi Supreme Court also has received an official statement in a government submission that an SMCs in every government-funded school will consist of 16 members, of which 12 members are elected as representatives of student's parents and the rest must be the principal/director of the school, a teacher, a social worker, a local councilor. One question here, where SMCs stands for school autonomy model in public/private partnership system. It would need to be solved in the future, if we want to contribute meaningfully to the present situation on education development.

III. Practical lessons for Vietnam society

The similarity between Vietnam and the above stated countries and territories is the requirement to promote education autonomy as a driving force to increase the competitiness for the knowledge economy. A typical feature of Vietnam is that the market economy is not fully developed and the general education has just stepped out of the period of centralized planning economy. Also, both managers and the public still posses a part of the subsidy era's mindset. Therefore, it is not easy to accept general education as a factor contributing positive effects to the national higher education system. This means that, in addition to improving the capacity to formulate policies and perfecting the legal framework for general education towards autonomy, the State is required to focus on communication in order to improve the society's awareness. Private schools should be encouraged to develop accurately and successfully in terms of long-term investments, effective internal

governance, and produce positive results for learners as a means of good publicity. Additionally, the government should support schools with ineffective operation by applying appropriate measures including having them under the government's administration as Thailand did. Lessons for Vietnam drawn from the situation of above-mentioned countries are stated as below:

3.1 Autonomy and the connection among schools

Greater school autonomy does not result in less cooperation between schools and school leaders; on the contrary, cooperation can complement the school autonomy to promote more empowering schools and horizontally, the network can also support more innovation by schools. Occasionally, leaders in schools who have been given greater autonomy have not been trained in all aspects. However, they are now responsible for mostly everything, when school commanders lack expertise, the simplest form of cooperation such as sharing management and administration resources can reduce the school leadership volumes of administrative workload and minimize the inefficiency. More importantly, there are more advanced forms of cooperation, including collective learning, can support the development of leadership. The school network can solve the isolation of individual schools and educators and this can provide opportunities for professional exchange, development and enrichment. For example, in the United Kingdom, the government has been offering a variety of approaches to enhance the cooperation between schools and school leaders since the early 2000s. Funding for school innovation projects often requires schools to co-operate in the form of clusters rather than individual units.

Recently, when schools were allowed to possess greater autonomy by registering the academy status with the Institute, the government also encouraged high-perfroming institutions to partner with low-performing schools to raise standards. Some academies have joined an online store chain, which acts as a common belief for all schools. Partnerships between independent institutions and their leaders have also been developed such as the online Challenge Partner network which uses peer-to-peer testing as a way of fostering continuous improvement. In Scotland (the UK), all leaders are a national online community that mutually share their experience, policies and ideas. It was launched after a successful testing phase in 2003, and has since become a part of the national intranet for schools, named Glow. In Shanghai (China), policies supporting collaboration among higher-performing and lower-performing schools aim to transfer leadership from the current leader to the successor. There is also an aspect called empowered governance, which is a school administration program requiring public high performing schools to manage low performing ones. In this program, a high-performing school appoints its experienced leaders such as a vice principal to become the principal of low-performing school, and also sends an experienced team of teachers to work. This leads to high-performing schools' ethics, management process and teaching methods are transferred to low-performing ones. In addition, a network of schools is established where the high-performing and low- performing, old and new, public and private schools are grouped with the highest-performing school being the center. However, the authentic and effective cooperation among autonomous entities cannot simply depend on decisions. Research results from OECD project on improving school leadership state an extremely concerning lesson that in reality, the cooperation is forced to carry out rather than being voluntarily.

3.2 The management ability of the governing agencies

In systems where teachers and principals collaborate more frequently in the school's management, autonomy rights is positively related to efficiency in mathematics. The school principal may form the

profession's development of teachers, determine the educational objectives of the school, ensure that practical instruction is deployment with the aim of achieving these targets, propose amendments to improve teaching practices, and help solve problems that may arise in the classroom or between teachers. Principals are not only administrators, they can also become instructional leaders that motivate teachers to improve the quality of their practice and provide a framework for effective collaboration between teachers. The Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012 requires the school principal to regularly report the frequency of activities and behaviors related to school management including teacher involvement in school management in the previous school year [46]. The Principal's answers to questions in building a continuous improvement culture in the school are integrated to develop an integrated indicator regarding school management and teachers' engagement. Principals were also asked about their own management methods. The responses to these questions are combined to develop three composite indicators: an indicator related to the framing and promotion of school objectives and extracurricular activities' development; an indicator regarding leadership and another indicator related to the promotion of professional development. In general, schools with principals reporting that they are able to demonstrate leadership in framing and promoting school's objectives and extracurricular activities' development also tend to be those who positively express their effective leadership in operating the school. Relationships at the school level are also doubled at the system level. System of a school in which principals regularly engage in framing and communicating school's objectives and extracurricular activities' development tend to be the system in which principals report that they express their effective leadership. In addition, in the high-level system above the principal, there are more teachers involving in the school management.

IV. The legal system, policies and guidelines impact to the Government and society

Based on a popular mindset not only in Vietnam but also in other countries, private schools were viewed negatively as mere profit organizations and can be detrimental to learners. This is due to the result of education is not as conspicuous as when you buy other forms of instant products or services. Therefore, there is a growing pressure on the State to administrate private schools to avoid any serious consequences and protect the rights of learners and society. Conversely, an unreasonable and strict control can suppress the dynamism, creativity and flexibility of schools in response to the constantly-changing needs of the market. Therefore, policymakers always face the question of what to control and to what extent they can do to balance the two contradictory forces mentioned above. Compared with Vietnam's current regulations for private schools, the above mentioned nations' regulations are more open and reasonable while maintaining a considerable degree of autonomy for the school. Currently, there are also regulations to obligate their accountability. For example, Thailand and China clearly specify which violations including fake advertising are unacceptable and can lead to revocation of licenses. Another noteworthy point is that all of the mentioned countries separate the roles of the Board of Directors (ownership, the highest decision-making power on big issues, the right to recruit and dismiss the Principal) from the principal's role in operating affairs. All three countries do not allow any concurrent position. This is suitable with Western culture and demonstrates the importance of separating these two forces in order to preserve the necessary balance in ensuring academic quality and building up a healthy framework of management. The main purpose of empowering higher education systems can operate effectively and best meet the needs of society. School autonomy is the key to the success of university reforms, especially those that aim

to diversify and use resources effectively. In addressing the relationship between government agencies, governments and school facilities, the division of power and supervision still ensures the state's implementation of macro management, and increases autonomy of the schools. Higher school autonomy, more participation is the basis for building a sense of accountability of school facilities, as well as monitoring methods to reduce opportunity, corruption, and ineffective spending.

There is another notable point regarding how these countries deal with assets and profits. Most of the world's operating-for-profit schools were legally nonprofit. They had many ways to earn profits without having to share them with shareholders. However, this could easily cause internal conflicts as the money flow was complicated. To resolve this issue was extremely difficult; therefore, in the 1990s, Brazil made a practical decision admitting that operating-for-profit institutions existed legally. These experiences are notably important for Vietnam as throughout many years, the issue of operating-for-profit or not-for-profit in Vietnam has been controversially discussed without any positive results for the public, government or stakeholders. It is clear that all three countries/territories above do not specify two categories for profit/non-profit schools, although many researchers are constantly warning that the working model of operating-for-profit schools is similar to business companies (students are customers and Board of Directors and Senior Executives holds the highest authority while the academia's role is insignificant). This model may cause some damages for public school's academic standards. Nowadays, modern upper secondary education is remarkably different compared with the traditional one. Currently, this is an organization involving many individuals and agencies, which results in the requirement for all issues to be evaluated from many aspects and by every party. Also, all parties' stance and perspectives are required to be assessed in the policy-making process. Therefore, the role of policymakers is to deploy an appropriate agreement for all parties in order to achieve the greatest benefits for the society. Autonomy and self-responsibility are two sides of a problem. Excessive autonomy without requiring self-responsibility would lead to anarchy, deterioration in quality and economic interests. On the contrary, increasing the accountability but limiting autonomy will bind schools, not create motivation and mechanism for natural operation. This will limit the flexibility, flexibility, and ability to meet the diverse needs of society. Maintaining state intervention through the legal, regulatory, financial, and gradual abandonment of direct intervention in microfinance, increasing autonomy for schools is necessary. On the other hand, in order to use market forces to motivate education, we need the involvement of social forces inside and outside the school to regulate and improve accountability of the schools.

V. Critical assessments and future perspectives

Innovating mechanisms and policies in the model of school autonomy in the direction of giving autonomy, independence and self-responsibility to educational agencies, especially public educational agencies is a tendency to mandate today. In recent years, the implementation of the school autonomy mechanism in countries over the world and in Vietnam has been implemented and achieved practical results. However, these mechanisms still need further research and innovation to promote this mechanism in the future. This study analyzes the status of school autonomy in schools to identify opportunities, and challenges to propose some practical solutions to improve school autonomy for schools.

Based on the research results on the status and models of school autonomy, we draw a number of recommendations and recommendations accordingly:

- Schools are proactive to build enrollment regulations, management regulations in accordance with the characteristics of each school. Thereby it will reduce the management of the government and the state;

- Promote schools to expand scale, improve quality, diversify educational activities;

- Ensuring the management in schools is implemented in a democratic, open and transparent manner;

- Schools investigate the consistent concept of school autonomy and clarify the parameters of local governance and decision-making.

VI. Conclusion

In the current global context, education will have to catch up with the strong transformation, thereby setting an effective school governance model, which aims to increase the autonomy in education of every school unit. In order to approach that trend, in recent years, Vietnam has attached great importance to the fundamental and comprehensive renovation of the country's education with the goal of developing an advanced national education. This has met the requirements set out in the current social development situation. Learning from the experiences of other countries, from which, lessons can be learned about renovation in high school governance towards autonomy model, which will contribute to the development of education in a way that is close to the educational development level of advanced countries in the region and in the world.

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