

# FACTORS AFFECTING QUALITY CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper aims to determine factors affecting quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Besides, this paper is the purpose of policies for enhancing the quality culture of universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The authors used simple random sampling technique. Testing Cronbach's Alpha and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and model testing with Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis. Besides, the study surveyed 400 lecturers and answered 23 questions, but 385 samples were processed. The data collected from June 2020 to October 2020 at public universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Authors calculated and had the findings of the study that have five factors affecting the quality culture of universities in Ho Chi Minh City with significance level 0.01. This result is a vital science document for developing quality culture that concerned in higher education institutions. Each educational institution's development goals are a prerequisite for improving the quality of training, scientific research, and community service, creating a unique identity in the context of educational globalization in the future.*

**Keywords:** Quality, Culture, Public, University, SGU.

## INTRODUCTION

The views on the quality culture of the authors have specific differences. However, the definitions have some essential common points (Naureen, 2020): Quality culture is a branch of organizational culture in quality planning that encompasses an organization's values system to create an environment conducive to the establishment and continual improvement in quality (Sattler & Sonntag, 2018). Value systems include thoughts, views, orientations, responsibilities, and work-solving methods built by the organization, facilitated by the development, nurtured by self-awareness and belief of collectives and individuals in the organization. The role of quality culture for higher education institutions is significant, showing the following points (Ahmed & Nulland, 2016). (1) Building a quality culture will help higher education institutions orient their mission, vision, and appropriate development strategy, position based on the quality and quality culture formed (Lucien, 2007). (2) In the right culture of quality, all members (leaders, administrators, faculty, staff, and students) and organizations and units of higher education institutions follow. Values, standards, processes, and commitment towards quality with the spirit of self-discipline, voluntariness, trust, cooperation, sharing, accountability, and innovation improve the quality of products or services because they see it as an important and crucial issue (Xenikou, 2019). (3) A culture of quality has been affirmed as a culture that emphasizes continuous improvement processes (Whalen, 2020). A culture promotes a work environment

that satisfies customers to help the organization succeed. A quality culture helps higher education institutions improve the quality of education - the decisive factor for success in competition in the context of declining public budgets for higher education and decreasing student numbers helping higher education institutions to become world-class universities with high-quality research and training standards (Kairiša & Lapiņa, 2019).

On the other hand, forming a quality culture will help higher education institutions quickly adapt to changes in the system of national and international quality standards; demonstrate a clear commitment to quality to society; forming a quality management environment; has a clear orientation in the development of human resources (Loukkola & Zhang, 2010). In other words, Quality culture is the foundation and motivation for higher education institutions to maintain and improve their quality, their own identity, and their advantages (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). There is a competition between higher education institutions. Above mentioned things, this study aims to find out the factors affecting the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City. This study helps public universities' managers apply the research results to improve the quality culture better in the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Quality Culture (QC)

Quality culture is a relatively new concept introduced into higher education in the early twentieth century at some universities in the United States and developed into researches, projects, and cultural quality of lectures (Berings et al., 2017). In recent years, the Ministry of Education and Training has repeatedly organized training seminars on quality culture to raise awareness of leaders, lecturers, and experts in universities about a point, approach, and build quality culture (Trowler & Cooper, 2019).

A quality culture is a type of organizational culture in which quality improvement is considered a permanent job. Quality culture consists of two distinct elements (Taye et al., 2019). The first is cultural and psychological factors, including values: beliefs, expectations, and commitment to quality; The second is the management factor consisting of rules. Well-defined submission is intended to improve quality and to coordinate individual efforts. The quality culture and the internal quality assurance structure have an organic, reciprocal, interdependent relationship (Čepel, 2019). The interior quality assurance structure will not produce a lasting effect without a quality culture (Wilkesmann & Schmid, 2018). A combination of a quality culture, specific work processes, rewarding and disciplinary systems, will create the order, expected performance, and many shared values that everyone in the university is expectations. The concept of quality culture is understood by many as learners' broad participation and instructors in quality-related activities (Yorke & Mantz, 2017). Quality culture also encompasses quality assurance tools and processes to build a quality management system that is unique to the organization (Zake & Lazim, 2015). The view of quality culture is the consensus to apply quality to an organization's activities to create its own culture (Kolhi, 2015). A quality culture is a system of organizational values that creates an environment conducive to continuous establishment and improvement (Tedla, 2016).

### Academic Environment (AE)

The academic environment is where academic activities occur: teaching and learning, research, intellectual exchange, and advanced research and educational methods (Mahmood, 2018). An academic environment is one in which academic activities take place, including research activities and academic interactions (Oliver, 2017). Higher education institutions must have high autonomy and self-determination of academic activities (Mozanai & Ling, 2017). AE1: Develop appropriate strategies, plans, and investments for the mission's appropriate academic activities (Mozammad & Aksoy, 2014). AE2: Exercise autonomy and social responsibility for academic performance (Soruel & Solano, 2014). AE3: Encourage academic cooperation and sharing among universities. AE4: Implement continuously fostering and developing academics for teachers and leaders (Thomas & Pyrros, 2018). With the above-mentioned financial capacity, the researchers have hypothesis following:

*H<sub>1</sub> Academic environment has a positive impact on the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

### **Social Environment (SE)**

The social environment is the environment in which social relationships, including the organizational framework, the educational institution's operational framework, and its members' behavior, are established and adjusted (Mozammad & Aksoy, 2014). The social environment is the environment in which social relationships are based, including the organization and the laws, institutions, regulations, commitments, and orientations for higher education activities and behaviors (Naala, 2016). Learning and its members, as a rule, create collective strength and additional resources for development to continually improve the quality of that higher education institution (Zulu et al., 2014). SE1: Build a vision, mission, and goal appropriate to the university's resources and position (Kolhi, 2015). SE2: Establish organizational structure and clearly define functions (Okoli, 2019). SE3: Set up, delineate roles, duties, responsibilities, and powers of functional units in the university (Smit, 2016). SE4: Establish the operating mechanism, coordinate activities, and evaluate available faculty and others (Naala, 2016). For the above-mentioned human resources, the researchers have hypothesis following:

*H<sub>2</sub> Social environment has a positive impact on the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

### **Humanistic Environment (HE)**

The humanistic environment is the environment in which members and stakeholders' rights and obligations are established transparently and followed (Nife, 2016). The humanistic climate is an environment in which the rights and obligations of the members and stakeholders of the higher education institution are explicitly established (Sattler & Sonntag, 2018) and comply with implementation, providing resources to continually improve the quality of the operation of University education (Okoli, 2019). HE1: Exercise comprehensive democratic rights to the contingent of cadres, faculty, staff, and learners (Berings et al., 2017). HE2: Fully implementing essential benefits under the state policy regime to delegate cadres, lecturers, staff, and learners. HE3: Develop mechanisms, policies, and measures for staff, lecturers, staff, and learners to fully implement (Mahmood, 2018). HE4: Develop quality and effective policy on internal responsibility and social responsibility (Mozanai & Ling, 2017). The technology mentioned above capability, the researchers, have hypothesis following:

*H<sub>3</sub> Humanistic environment has a positive impact on the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

### **Cultural environment (CE)**

The cultural environment is the environment in which a system of standards, values, beliefs, and standards of conduct accepted by all people (Vilcea, 2014). A cultural environment is an environment in which a system of cultural norms, values, ideas, and codes of conduct is considered acceptable and agreed upon and implemented by members of higher education institutions (Smit, 2016). Strength for quality activities and continuously improving the quality of that higher education institution (Soruel & Solano, 2014). CE1: Building codes of conduct in university (Ahmed & Nulland, 2016). CE2: Respecting, cooperating, and supporting each other among the members for the university's cause and reputation (Soruel & Solano, 2014). CE3: Practicing ethics, living a healthy lifestyle, preserving, and promoting good traditions (Wilkesmann & Schmid, 2018). CE4: Implementation of exchange, cooperation, and integration activities with the domestic and foreign communities (Zulu et al., 2014). The Marketing as mentioned above, the researchers have hypothesis following:

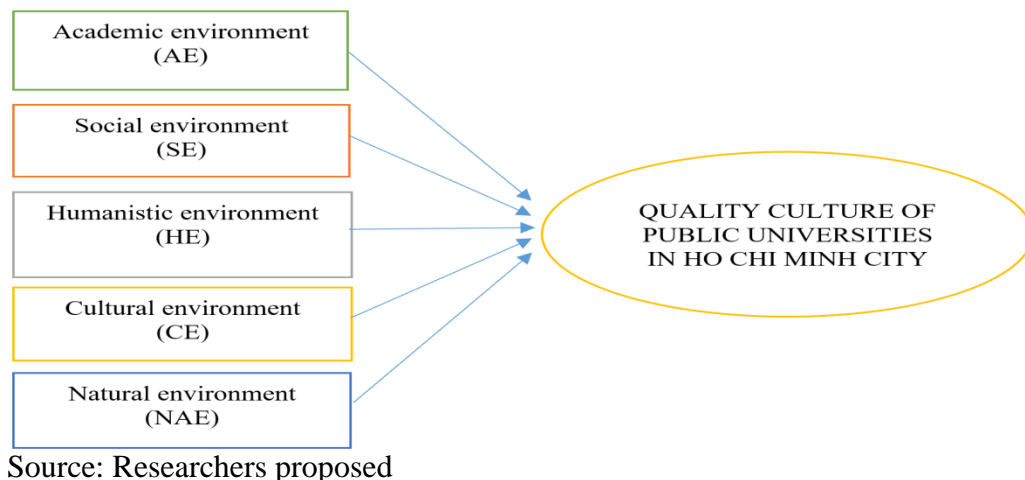
*H<sub>4</sub> Cultural environment has a positive impact on the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

### **Natural environment (NAE)**

The natural environment is the landscape environment and facilities that contribute to ensuring and improving the quality of the higher education institution's operations (Tang & Stensaker, 2018). The natural environment is the landscape environment; the facilities contribute to safeguarding and enhancing the quality of higher education institutions (Thomas & Pyrros, 2018). NAE1: The university's architecture and landscape are green, clean, beautiful, harmonious, and reasonable (Yorke & Mantz, 2017). NAE2: Dormitory and right living conditions guarantee boarding students (Zake & Lazim, 2015). NAE3: The library ensures good service for teaching, learning, and scientific research (Zulu et al., 2014). With the management as mentioned above capability, the researchers have hypothesis following:

*H<sub>5</sub> Natural environment has a positive impact on the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City.*

A research model for factors affecting the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City following Figure 1:



**FIGURE 1**  
**A RESEARCH MODEL FOR FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY CULTURE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY**

**METHODS OF RESEARCH**

This study presents the research methods and processes used. Research methods are in the paper, including a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This section's qualitative research content has presented the implementation method and qualitative research results to determine the preliminary scale of 5 factors affecting quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) with 23 observed variables. The initial quantitative research content is to test the reliability of the scale and analyze 23 observed variables.

This article aims to collect information for the research topic; the author uses data secondary and primary data. Secondary data: the researchers collected the criteria used to study quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The authors had synthesized secondary data sources from documents, books, magazines, websites, data from statistical agencies, excess benefit from research projects related to the topic, and annual reports. Primary data is information and data collected through surveys and consultations with 30 leaders and experts in educational management (Hair et al., 1998). Besides, the paper used many different research methods.

The researchers applied both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative method examines numerical data and often requires the use of statistical tools to analyze data collected (Wu et al., 2011). This method allows authors to have the measurement of variables and relationships between them established. This type of data can be represented using figures and tables. Qualitative data is non-numerical and focuses on establishing patterns. Mixed methods are composed of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The researchers have the research process for factors affecting the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City with three phases following (Hair et al., 1998).

Research methods in the paper, including a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods: The researchers applied preliminary research carried out by available theoretical research methods and through in-depth interview techniques to explore, correct, and develop critical elements and components of the quality culture (Njiro, 2016). The researchers interviewed 30 leaders of 10 public universities. The surveying results had 30 leaders

who agreed that all of the factors affecting quality culture at public universities' quality culture in Ho Chi Minh City (Hair et al., 2010). Finally, the researchers created a list of possible factors gathered from the literature reviews, as mentioned in the above studies.

Quantitative methods: The researchers surveyed the completed questionnaires, which were directly collected from the lecturers related to 10 public universities in HCMC. The authors spent less than 35 minutes, finishing each survey. There are 400 lecturers related to 10 public universities in HCMC observed among more than 15.000 lecturers represented and answered 23 questions but the sample size of 385 lecturers processed, 15 samples lack information (Hair et al., 1998). The primary sources of data were collected from June 2020 to October 2020 in HCMC. The researchers surveyed by hard copy distributed. All data collected from the questionnaire are coded, processed by SPSS 20.0 and Amos. Besides, the researchers testing scale reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficient and exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were performed (Hair et al., 2010).

The purpose of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) helps the author to clarify: (1) Unilaterality, (2) Reliability of scale, (3) Convergence value, and (4) Difference value. A research model considered relevant to the data if Chi-square testing is P-value > 5%; CMIN/df ≤ 2, some cases CMIN/df maybe ≤ 3 or < 5; GFI, TLI, CFI ≥ 0.9. However, according to recent researchers' opinions, GFI is still acceptable when it is greater than 0.8; RMSEA ≤ 0.08. Apart from the above criteria, the test results must also ensure synthetic reliability > 0.6; the Average variance extracted must be greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 1998).

### RESEARCH RESULTS

Testing Cronbach's alpha for factors affecting the quality culture of public universities in Ho Chi Minh City following Table 1:

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>CRONBACH'S ALPHA OF THE QUALITY CULTURE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES</b>	
<b>The quality culture (QC)</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</b>
QC1: Academic environment affecting the quality culture of public universities in HCMC	0.848
QC2: Social environment affecting the quality culture of public universities in HCMC	0.793
QC3: Humanistic environment affecting the quality culture of public universities in HCMC	0.860
QC4: Cultural and natural environment affecting the quality culture of public universities in HCMC	0.805
<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.866</b>	

Source: Researchers proposed by SPSS 20.0

Table 1 showed that Cronbach's alpha of the quality culture of public universities is 0.866 > 0.6.

Table 2 showed that Cronbach's alpha of the academic environment (AE) is 0.933; for social environment (SE) is 0.865; for humanistic environment (HE) is 0.951. They are 0.866 > 0.6.

<b>Table 2</b>
<b>CRONBACH'S ALPHA FOR FACTORS OF THE QUALITY CULTURE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES</b>

<b>Academic environment (AE)</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
AE1: Develop appropriate strategies, plans, and investments for the proper academic activities for the mission	0.907
AE2: Exercise autonomy and social responsibility for academic performance	0.917
AE3: Encourage academic cooperation and sharing among universities	0.933
AE4: Implement continuously fostering and developing academics for teachers and leaders	0.895
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.933	
<b>Social environment (SE)</b>	
SE1: Build a vision, mission, and goal that is appropriate to the resources and position of the university	0.817
SE2: Establish organizational structure and clearly define functions	0.822
SE3: Set up, delineate functions, duties, responsibilities, and powers of functional units in the University	0.853
SE4: Establish the operating mechanism, coordinate activities, and evaluate the effectiveness of functional faculty and others	0.821
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.865	
<b>Humanistic environment (HE)</b>	
HE1: Exercise comprehensive democratic rights to the contingent of cadres, faculty, staff, and learners	0.930
HE2: Fully implementing primary benefits under the state policy regime for the contingent of cadres, lecturers, staff, and learners	0.941
HE3: Develop mechanisms, policies, and measures for staff, lecturers, staff, and learners to fully implement	0.948
HE4: Develop quality and effective policy on internal responsibility and social responsibility	0.925
<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.951</b>	

Source: Researchers proposed by SPSS 20.0

<b>Table 3</b> <b>CRONBACH'S ALPHA FOR THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT (CE) AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (NAE)</b>	
<b>Cultural environment (CE)</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
CE1: Building codes of conduct in university	0.926
CE2: Respecting, cooperating, and supporting each other among the members for the cause and reputation of the university	0.937
CE3: Practicing ethics, living a healthy lifestyle, preserving and promoting good traditions	0.941
CE4: Implementation of exchange, cooperation, and integration activities with the domestic and foreign communities	0.918
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.947	
<b>Natural environment (NAE)</b>	
NAE1: The university's architecture and landscape are green, clean, beautiful, harmonious, and reasonable	0.833
NAE2: Dormitory and good living conditions guarantee boarding students	0.794
NAE3: The library ensures good service for teaching, learning, and scientific research	0.859
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.879	

Source: Researchers proposed by SPSS 20.0

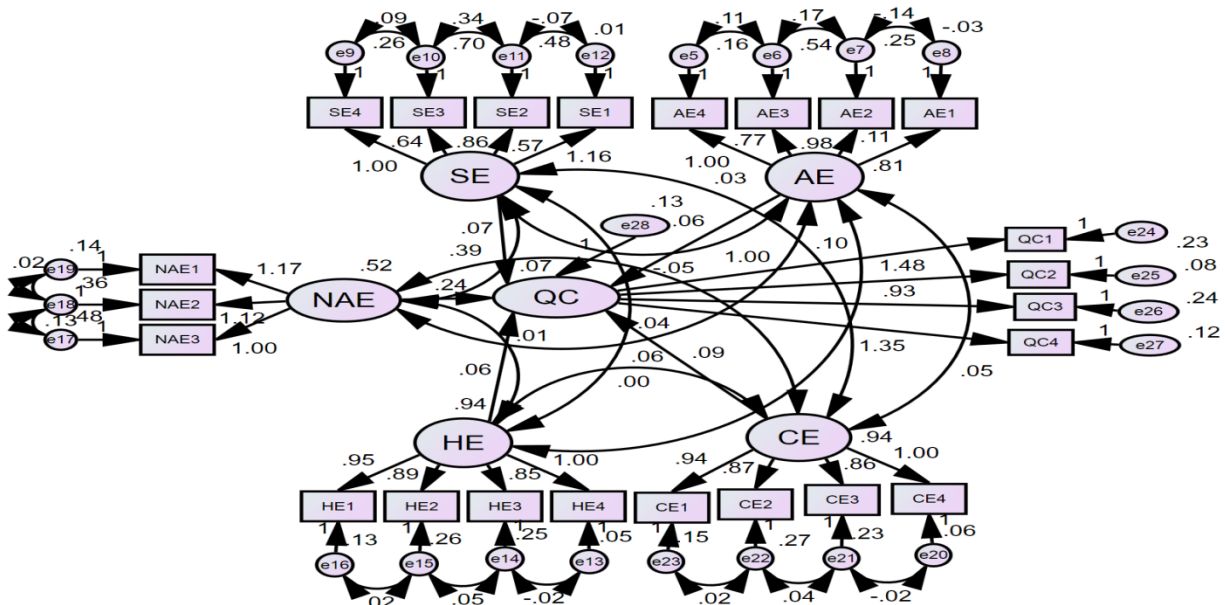
Table 3 showed that all of Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7. Table 3 showed that Cronbach's Alpha for cultural environment (CE) is 0.947; for natural environment (NE) is 0.879 and for the quality culture (QC) is 0.866.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY CULTURE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN HCMC</b>
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Relationships			Coe.	Standardized Coefficient	S.E	P
QC	<---	SE	0.073	0.122	0.028	0.009
QC	<---	AE	0.063	0.127	0.023	0.005
QC	<---	NAE	0.239	0.384	0.043	***
QC	<---	HE	0.057	0.123	0.022	0.008
QC	<---	CE	0.091	0.197	0.028	0.001

Source: Researchers proposed by SPSS 20.0 and Amos

Table 4 showed that column “P” < 0.01 with significance level 0.01. This result showed that five factors affected public universities' quality culture in Ho Chi Minh City with a significance level of 0.01.



Source: Researchers proposed by SPSS 20.0 and Amos

**FIGURE 2**  
**THE STRUCTURAL MODEL SHOWING THE STRUCTURAL LINKAGE BETWEEN AE, SE, NAE, HE, CE, AND QC**

Figure 2 had the Chi-square = 405.274; df = 201; p = 0.000; Chi-square/df = 2.016; GFI = 0.917; TLI = 0.966; CFI = 0.973; RMSEA = 0.051.

**CONCLUSIONS**

A quality culture is formed and developed in parallel with the organization's development, a communication culture, and its core values, rules, management styles, and methods. The quality culture had activities and behaviors, attitudes of all members of the organization. The importance of a quality culture comes into play when it helps universities adapt to external environment changes. Building and developing a quality culture of a higher education institution is a long process. Therefore, it is vital to maintain all organization members' implementation and voluntary participation to meet quality standards throughout the organization's research and training activities in higher education departments. The study surveyed 400 lecturers and answered 23 questions, but 385 samples were processed. The data



collected from June 2020 to October 2020 at public universities in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Simple random sampling technique. Cronbach's Alpha and the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were analyzed and used for multiple regression analysis. Finally, the study's findings have five factors affecting public universities' quality culture with a significance level of 0.01. Research results are an essential scientific basis for universities to refer to and apply in practice.

## **Managerial Implications**

Based on the results mentioned above, to enhance public universities' quality culture in Ho Chi Minh City.

- (1) Managerial implication for the natural environment (NAE). Public universities need to improve the natural environment by building a beautiful landscape environment, modern facilities to ensure teaching, learning, scientific research, and enhancing foreign activities' quality - a course for students. Simultaneously, launching the movement to plant trees, flowers and take good care of them; regularly clean the campus and classrooms to ensure the studying environment is always clean and beautiful; propagate so that children do not play dangerous games and consciously protect the environment anytime, anywhere. Public universities need to improve building a friendly, healthy, safe environment, ensuring the best teaching and learning conditions. This policy is considered a meaningful job for each student, thereby forming a sense of preserving and protecting the environment from the time they are still sitting in public universities.
- (2) Managerial implication for the cultural environment (CE). Public universities need to improve the cultural environment, such as establishing a system of standards/criteria, values, beliefs, code of behavior that are considered acceptable and are agreed upon by members of higher education institutions and voluntarily perform. Develop and effectively implement values, codes of conduct, cooperation, support, and mutual respect among members, units, and regulations on civilized lifestyle at work. Each team is interested in developing a sense of self-awareness in each individual in teaching, working, living, learning, implementing a healthy lifestyle, and promoting the university's good traditions and national cultural identity. The universities, organizations, and unions share an interest in building cultural life, culture, sports, and sports for all members; ensure safety, security, order, and hygiene in the university campus. The university members are conscious and endeavor to preserve and promote the collective's good values, practice a civilized lifestyle, and protect the living environment. Determine the organizational structure, functional roles, responsibilities of Leaders, collectives, and individuals in the organization.
- (3) Managerial implication for the academic environment (AE). Public universities need to improve the academic environment, such as periodically supplement and adjust training programs, course outlines, lectures based on domestic and foreign advanced programs, and feedback from employers and students, graduates. Develop, periodically update, and effectively implement relevant legal documents and policies for quality development of training, scientific research, and external cooperation activities. Information on training and scientific research on the university's website is regularly updated, ensuring the need for sufficient and timely communication of learners and stakeholders. Academic activities, cooperation, and experience sharing in training and scientific research in each unit, between units, and external institutions are interested in the departments, facilitated by the university to maintain and develop. The contingent of cadres and lecturers are conscious and making efforts to improve their professional qualifications and competencies, pedagogy and foreign languages, enthusiasm in teaching and scientific research, maintaining teacher ethics, and professional ethics.
- (4) Managerial implication for the humanistic environment (HE). Public universities need to improve the academic environment by creating the best conditions to play the democratic rights and fully exercise the fundamental rights according to the State's policies and regimes towards the contingent of civil servants, public employees, employees, and learners. Develop and implement mechanisms, systems, and solutions virtually to delegate civil servants, public employees, workers, and learners to fully, quality, and effectively execute their responsibilities to university and communes. The spirit of solidarity and mutual affection had a collective, between collectives and society, the community is cared for by the university and each collective and individual. There is no sectarian phenomenon

- causing internal disunity. Learners are considered the university's main service subjects and are cared for wholeheartedly and thoughtfully in learning, living, and handling work. They are forming the organization's core values, quality values, quality management tools and systems, technical elements, and perfecting the internal quality assurance processes; external evaluation. Quality culture include: (a) we are all together; (b) uniform, irrespective of superiors or subordinates; (c) open and honest communication; (d) everyone is aware of all information about all activities; (e) focus on processes; (f) no success or failure, only experiences learned. Thus, it can be seen that the core values of Quality culture not only include the spiritual values, traditional values but also the importance of working style, conception, and behavior among individuals and collectives inside and outside the organization.
- (5) Managerial implication for the social environment (SE). Public universities need to improve the academic environment, such as functions, responsibilities, and authorities of departments, administrators, lecturers, and staff, clearly defined and have an effective work quality assessment mechanism. Document system to organize and manage the university is periodically updated, is processed, and has necessary implementation instructions, which are fully posted on the university website. The university members are fully aware of their responsibilities and rights, consciously and dedicated, making an effort to complete the assigned tasks on schedule and with quality, practice thrift, do not corruption, protect public property. Public universities should be noted: The quality standards, the assessment toolkit, are only valid for a certain period. During the implementation process, it is necessary to periodically review to have a basis for adjustment and supplementation for completion. Lecturer standards), assessment toolkit (teacher evaluation, subject assessment, service evaluation), rules, regulations, quality standards, assessment tools, practices. Each higher education institution has its value system and must be shared and agreed upon by all stakeholders and concretized into each member or organization's duties. It should be noted: The quality standards, the assessment toolkit, are only valid for a particular time.

Despite the highlighted contributions of this paper, some limitations continue serving as proposals for future research. (1) our model needs to test on a sample of other universities in Vietnam. (2) reinforced by adding control variables such as training quality (3) compared the longitudinal databases available over time due to eventual changes in the variables and improved samples more and more.

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