

The Role of The Intellectual Workforce in Higher Education in Vietnam – A Case Study of Universities in Khanh Hoa Province

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Abstract

The intellectual workforce in higher education institutions is regarded as a group of highly educated individuals with deep expertise and the capacity for independent and creative thinking. They play a crucial role in enhancing public knowledge, training human resources, fostering talent, and developing a knowledge-based economy. In the context of the digital transformation revolution, intellectuals in universities not only engage in teaching activities but also actively contribute to scientific research and innovation. They are key factors determining the existence and development of universities, contributing to improving the quality of education and facilitating technology transfer. This study focuses on analyzing and presenting general issues regarding the development and promotion of the role of intellectuals in Vietnam. It further discusses the role of the intellectual workforce in higher education within Khanh Hoa province in the current period of international integration, aiming for rapid and sustainable national development in the new era.

Keywords: Intellectuals, Khanh Hoa, higher education, Vietnam,

Introduction

In the context of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, higher education plays a pivotal role in training high-quality human resources to serve the socio-economic development of every nation. Particularly, the intellectual workforce in higher education institutions is not only responsible for teaching and research but also

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plays an essential role in innovation, creativity, and the transfer of knowledge and technology. In Vietnam, the development and enhancement of the intellectual workforce in higher education have always been a priority for the Party and the State. However, the distribution and effective utilization of this workforce across different localities remain uneven, especially in developing provinces like Khanh Hoa. As the economic and cultural hub of the South Central Coast, Khanh Hoa requires a strong intellectual workforce in higher education to meet the demands of sustainable development in the new era. Therefore, studying the role of the intellectual workforce in higher education institutions in Khanh Hoa province not only helps assess the current status and contributions of this group but also proposes solutions to enhance their quality and optimize their role in the overall development of the locality and the nation.

Research Methodology

Research on the intellectual workforce and the development and promotion of their role in meeting the demands of industrialization and

modernization is a significant direction that is increasingly attracting the attention of scholars, particularly in the field of social sciences in Vietnam. The development of the intellectual workforce is not only a key factor in enhancing the quality of human resources but also contributes to the process of innovation, scientific and technological advancement, and international integration. Therefore, accurately identifying the role and position of the intellectual workforce, especially in higher education, holds great significance in formulating long-term development strategies for the country.

Studies related to this topic have been conducted from various perspectives, reflecting the diversity and richness of approaches by scholars. In the field of economics, research focuses on analyzing the impact of intellectuals on economic development. Philosophy emphasizes the role of intellectuals in shaping social thinking and values. Political science highlights the influence of intellectuals in policy formulation and implementation. Meanwhile, sociology focuses on the status, roles, and relationships of

intellectuals within social communities. This diversity in approaches contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the intellectual workforce in the current development context. In conducting this research, the author applied the dialectical materialist methodology, grounded in a historical-specific and comprehensive perspective. This approach facilitates an objective, scientific, and holistic analysis of the subject matter, avoiding one-sidedness and ensuring that all arguments align closely with historical realities and the specific conditions of contemporary society. A systematic approach was also employed to ensure logical coherence in analyzing and evaluating factors related to the role of the intellectual workforce in higher education. Additionally, the author inherited and developed findings from previous research to strengthen and refine the theoretical framework and provide accurate assessments of the current status of the intellectual workforce at the local level. Referring to prior studies not only enhanced the scientific and practical value of this research but also helped identify knowledge gaps that

require further exploration and deeper investigation.

Throughout the research process, the author flexibly and effectively employed various interdisciplinary research methods to ensure objectivity and scientific rigor. Methods such as analysis and synthesis were used to systematize and generalize collected information and data. Historical and logical approaches helped analyze the dynamics and development of the intellectual workforce over specific periods. Statistical and comparative methods were applied to analyze quantitative data, offering clearer assessments of the current status and development trends of the intellectual workforce.

The flexible and scientific combination of these methods not only ensured the reliability and accuracy of the research arguments but also facilitated the formulation of practical conclusions and recommendations. This approach contributed significantly to achieving the research objectives effectively and comprehensively.

Results and Discussion

Vietnam's Perspective on Developing and Promoting the

Role of the Intellectual Workforce

The intellectual workforce comprises individuals engaged in intellectual labor, possessing high levels of education and deep expertise in specific fields, with independent and creative thinking abilities. They are characterized by strong patriotism, ethical values, and revolutionary ideals. This group plays a vital role in enhancing public knowledge, training human resources, fostering talents, elevating national intelligence and strength, and making significant contributions to the cause of innovation, national construction, and defense.

This perspective is firmly affirmed by the Communist Party of Vietnam, which emphasizes the position and role of the intellectual workforce in the country. The Party has stated: "Building a strong and comprehensive intellectual workforce is an investment in nurturing the 'national vitality' and ensuring sustainable development. It is the responsibility of the Party, the State, the political system, and society." (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023, p.2).

The resolution sets a goal for 2030 to "develop the intellectual workforce in terms of both

quantity and quality, especially focusing on leading experts and scientists in key, strategic, and emerging fields to meet the demands of the country's industrialization and modernization." The vision for 2045 aims for "a strong, high-quality, and well-structured intellectual workforce, ranking among the top in the region and approaching the standards of developed countries. Many Vietnamese scientists will gain global recognition, winning international awards across various fields. Numerous scientific and technological organizations, as well as educational and training institutions, will meet international standards, fulfilling the requirements of a developed nation." (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023, p.3).

To successfully achieve the outlined objectives, the Resolution identifies five key tasks and solutions, focusing on the following areas: (i) Innovating Mindsets and Raising Awareness. Strongly innovate thinking, elevate, and unify awareness across Party committees, political organizations, and the broader society regarding the position, role, and importance of developing an intellectual workforce. This

workforce must meet the demands of national industrialization, modernization, and the cause of national construction and defense; (ii) Establishing Breakthrough Mechanisms and Policies. Develop innovative mechanisms and invest resources to advance key institutions such as Vietnam National University, Hanoi; Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City; the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences; the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology; and other leading research and educational institutions. These institutions must be elevated to meet international standards, serving as core hubs for education, research, and intellectual contributions. Additionally, encourages domestic education and research institutions to collaborate with advanced international partners to exchange experiences and enhance operational capabilities; (iii) Refining Specific Mechanisms and Policies. Enhance specific mechanisms and policies suited to the intellectual workforce's activities. Innovate scientific and technological management, promote creativity, and facilitate the absorption and dissemination of advanced knowledge. Increase decentralization and autonomy for

scientific organizations and universities regarding leadership appointments and scientific titles. Consider revising retirement ages to align with intellectual roles. Improve processes for evaluating and recognizing scientific titles, reviewing the national and sector-specific award systems, and implementing policies to honor and recognize intellectual achievements; (iv) Prioritizing Resource Allocation. Allocate resources from the state budget while mobilizing societal and international resources to develop science, technology, education, and innovation infrastructure. Establish investment funds for scientific research and innovation, creating favorable environments for intellectuals to work, research, innovate, and contribute to national progress (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023, p. 3-7).

Current Status of Promoting the Role of the Higher Education Intellectual Workforce in Khanh Hoa Province

In Teaching and University Training Activities

As higher education administrators and lecturers directly involved in teaching, the intellectual workforce in higher education in Khanh Hoa plays a crucial role in

disseminating specialized knowledge and providing career orientation for students. Each year, the province welcomes thousands of students enrolling in local universities. Additionally, hundreds of postgraduate candidates in various disciplines are admitted for advanced studies. This poses a significant responsibility for the staff, particularly lecturers, who must adopt appropriate teaching approaches and guide students in effective learning and research methods.

With solid and in-depth expertise, extensive teaching experience, and a strong background in scientific research, this intellectual workforce not only excels in disseminating scientific knowledge but also in mentoring

and guiding students throughout their academic journey. They help shape students' career paths and foster their aspirations, ensuring that upon graduation, students become valuable citizens and high-quality human resources, ready to contribute their skills to the nation's rapid and sustainable development in the new era.

Currently, at the three universities located in Khanh Hoa Province Nha Trang University, Khanh Hoa University, and Thai Binh Duong University there are 869 academic staff members holding master's degrees or higher. Among them, there are 7 professors, 63 associate professors, 288 doctoral degree holders, and 511 master's degree holders. This workforce has made significant contributions to both teaching and scientific research.

Table 1: Number of students trained and graduated in 2023 and Percentage of students having jobs in the right field or related field after 01 year of graduation

University	Number of students trained and graduated in 2023 (people)	Percentage of students with jobs in their field or related fields within 1 year of graduation (%)
Nha Trang	3.166	92,57
Khanh Hoa	541	86,76
Thai Binh Duong	308	85,77

The most specific and notable contribution of the higher education intellectual workforce in Khanh Hoa is reflected in the field of human resource training. Students admitted to and studying at local universities come from various regions across the country, participating in diverse academic and vocational disciplines. Under the dedicated teaching and guidance of faculty and lecturers, a high proportion of graduates secure employment in positions directly related to their fields of study. This demonstrates the high quality of education and effective career orientation efforts at these universities. Lecturers not only fulfill their teaching responsibilities in the classroom but also actively participate in career fairs and provide career counseling to students, thereby helping them secure suitable employment upon graduation.

However, in terms of the quality of training and competitiveness with major universities nationwide, the intellectual workforce in Khanh Hoa faces several limitations in maximizing their professional capabilities, particularly in specialized fields such as Biotechnology, Ship Engineering, Tourism Management, and

Aquaculture. The primary reason for these limitations is the lack of equipment, tools, and facilities for laboratory work, practical training, and simulation activities. This is a common challenge and a complex issue for these universities. On one hand, financial resources are limited, and on the other, existing policies on institutional autonomy are not sufficiently flexible. As a result, despite the desire to improve, universities are unable to independently procure, upgrade, or build the necessary infrastructure to meet teaching and learning demands.

Regarding Scientific Research Activities:

In addition to their responsibilities in teaching and guiding students' academic and career development, higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa also excel in scientific research. Recently, the number of scientific studies published in reputable international and national journals has steadily increased. Many provincial, ministerial, and national-level projects and research topics have been successfully reviewed and applied. The number of faculty members actively enhancing their academic profiles for academic title recognition has also been on

the rise. The quantity of scientific works including state-level, ministerial-level, provincial-level, and institutional-level research projects, as well as scientific articles published in both

international and domestic journals has significantly increased since 2020. Specifically, in 2023 alone, the scientific publications by faculty members were as follows:

Table 2: Number of scientific works of staff and lecturers at universities in Khanh Hoa

University	Scientific topic		Journals indexed by WoS and Scopus.	Journal article in the list of Professor Title Council
	Ministry Level	Grassroots Level		
Nha Trang	17	28	93	162
Khanh Hoa	0	22	31	57

According to published statistics, in 2024, Nha Trang University had 151 articles published in domestic scientific journals and 137 articles published in journals indexed by WoS and Scopus. These figures highlight the notable progress in scientific research by the university's faculty members. Starting from January 2025, lecturers are assigned specific targets regarding the number of international publications and

articles in national journals listed by the State Council for Professorship Titles. This approach ensures that the contributions of higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa are quantitatively measured through tangible teaching and research achievements, moving beyond the general and qualitative assessments previously used. This clearer evaluation helps to better visualize the contributions of this group to the development

strategies of the province and the country. However, higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa have yet to match their counterparts in major cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in terms of both the quantity and quality of research and scientific products. The primary reason is that these intellectuals have not been provided with the optimal conditions and environment to work and contribute effectively. Resolution 45/NQ-TW has emphasized: *"Priority should be given to allocating state budget resources and mobilizing social and foreign resources to invest in the development of infrastructure for science, technology, education, and training; in scientific and technological development funds, innovation initiatives; and in creating favorable environments for intellectuals to work, research, innovate, and contribute"* (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023, p.6).

In practice, according to university policies, intellectuals especially those holding academic titles such as professor and associate professor should be provided with well-equipped workspaces to maximize productivity during their work hours. However, at universities in Khanh Hoa

province, faculty members still face significant difficulties in teaching and research due to inadequate infrastructure and technology that do not meet their essential needs. This challenge is difficult to overcome, partly due to limited local funding and partly because of restrictive mechanisms and policies that hinder universities from autonomously upgrading their infrastructure and technology as desired.

Regarding Consultation and Social Criticism

Khanh Hoa is accelerating its efforts to meet the targets necessary to become a centrally governed city by 2030. As part of Khanh Hoa's overall development strategy, the Government has issued a resolution to develop Nha Trang University into a regional university by 2030. This university is expected to meet the demands for high-quality human resource training for both the Central region and the entire country, aiming to be on par with major universities in the region. The Action Program No. 78-CTr/TU of the Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee also sets the task of "Upgrading Nha Trang University into a regional university, with a focus on developing key training sectors

that are on par with developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region” (Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee, 2024, p.4).

To achieve this goal, higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa have made significant contributions, including developing project proposals, advising on policies, and participating in the implementation of specific plans across various disciplines and specialized sectors. They are also actively involved in building a digital university as part of the broader initiative to develop a digital government and digital society. These efforts aim to position Khanh Hoa as a locality with high-quality higher education, thereby contributing significantly to the successful implementation of socio-economic development policies and ensuring the quality of national livelihood and welfare.

However, higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa have yet to fully realize their role in receiving, critiquing, and proposing recommendations regarding educational and socio-economic policies at both local and national levels. There are two main reasons for this limitation. First, in practice, universities in Khanh Hoa

have long been regarded as local institutions, which has led to limited attention, recognition, and investment from authorities at both provincial and central levels. Although the intellectual community in Khanh Hoa has grown in both quantity and quality in recent years, their roles and contributions have not been adequately acknowledged, and their voices have not carried significant weight. This lack of recognition has, to some extent, diminished their motivation to contribute. Second, higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa tend to be passive, mainly receiving and implementing plans assigned by higher authorities. They have not been proactive or pioneering in receiving, critiquing, or proposing recommendations for those plans. This passivity reduces the value of their critiques and proposals and, consequently, undermines their role in the local and national development process.

Some Solutions to Enhance the Role of Higher Education Intellectuals in Khanh Hoa Province

First, the Party's resolution clearly states: *“Encourage the Vietnamese intellectual community to uphold their pride, honor, and*

responsibility towards the nation, and continuously strive to enhance their political, ethical, and professional qualities to contribute to the country's development” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023, p.3). The Action Program No. 78-CTR/TU of the Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee also emphasizes: *“Strengthen the leadership of Party committees and authorities at all levels regarding intellectual affairs; fundamentally renew thinking and unify perceptions within Party committees, organizations, the political system, and society as a whole regarding the position, role, and importance of building the intellectual workforce, considering it an essential, urgent, and long-term task”* (Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee, 2024, p.4).

The role of intellectuals is vital as they are the driving force behind the development strategy of every nation. Therefore, *"attracting and respecting talents"* and treating intellectuals with due recognition is a critical necessity to contribute to Vietnam's development (People's Army Online Newspaper, 2023). The Khanh Hoa provincial government should collaborate with the Provincial Intellectuals' Association to develop comprehensive and long-

term plans to attract the active participation of intellectuals, especially higher education intellectuals. The aim is to encourage them to contribute their voices and provide consultations on the province's socio-economic matters.

It is also essential to frequently organize meetings and discussions between local government and Party leaders and the intellectual community. This approach will help foster strong relationships and maximize the role of local intellectuals, including the extensive group of higher education intellectuals.

Second, the working environment of intellectuals is crucial, as it significantly influences their productivity and scientific contributions. Universities in Khanh Hoa still face many limitations regarding infrastructure and facilities that could provide comfortable and effective workspaces for intellectuals. Although universities have been granted greater autonomy in recent years, autonomy remains limited for Nha Trang University and Khanh Hoa University, especially regarding the renovation, construction, or enhancement of classrooms, laboratories, and

practical facilities. This long-standing issue requires essential changes initiated by governing bodies (such as the Ministry of Education and Training and the Khanh Hoa People's Committee). Decisive reforms are necessary to streamline administrative procedures, enabling universities to upgrade infrastructure and modernize their campuses. These improvements will help foster motivation among local intellectuals and encourage their dedication to academic and research excellence.

Conclusion

Vietnam urgently needs intellectuals and scientists with profound patriotism, deep empathy for the people, and a grand aspiration to dedicate themselves, integrate into the vibrant life of the nation, and accompany the Party and the nation in realizing the goal of building a prosperous, strong, democratic, fair, and civilized society while advancing toward socialism. Intellectuals are consistently regarded as the "*elite of the nation*," and building a strong and comprehensive intellectual community is akin to nurturing the "*national essence*" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2023, p.2). This is the

responsibility of the Party, the State, the political system, and society as a whole. Among these intellectuals, higher education intellectuals represent the pinnacle of national intellect, playing a particularly significant role in training high-quality human resources to meet the demands of rapid and sustainable development in the new era. Higher education intellectuals in Khanh Hoa are always aware of their responsibility towards the nation's destiny. They are committed to contributing their capabilities to developing the country's education system and, through this, contributing to Vietnam's process of development and international integration.

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