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RESEARCH ON QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

In the overall context of human resources, lecturers are a special workforce because their work directly trains other human resources for society, contributing to the achievement of national economic and social development goals. Therefore, the quality of lecturers directly influences the quality of human resources in society, becoming a crucial and significant issue for universities and the labor market. From both research and management perspectives, lecturer quality is reflected in many criteria, including political qualities, professional qualifications, work competencies, etc., among which work capacity - teaching capacity and research capacity - is emphasized in the evaluation and ranking of lecturers. This places demands on universities to implement appropriate policies to develop the teaching and research capabilities of lecturers, aiming to maintain lecturer quality to meet the strategic goals of the institution. This study develops a theoretical framework on faculty quality, analyzing the impact of policies for developing teaching competencies and research competencies on faculty quality. The theoretical model is designed with two independent variables: "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO), and one dependent variable: "Quality of lecturers" (QLE). Based on the theoretical framework and model, the author surveyed a sample size of N = 280 lecturers, including 140 lecturers from 5 public universities and 140 lecturers from 5 non-public universities. The survey results provide empirical evidence on the quality of university lecturers in Vietnam; helping to identify and compare lecturer development policies of public and non-public universities in Vietnam. From this, the author draws research conclusions and discusses appropriate solutions in the context of Vietnam.

KEYWORDS: University lecturers; Quality of lecturers; Teaching competencies; Research competencies; Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam, university lecturers (hereinafter referred to as lecturers) are defined legally (VNA, 2025) as human resources with political qualities, professional qualifications, teaching competencies, research competencies, and other necessary skills, working in higher education institutions, including universities, colleges, academies, doctoral research institutes, and other educational institutions as prescribed by law.

The Vietnamese higher education system comprises 238 member institutions; of which 25 Vietnamese higher education institutions are ranked among the top universities in Asia according to the standards of the Quacquarelli Symonds - QS AUR ranking organization (PDN, 2025). By 2030, with a vision to 2045, Vietnam aims to develop a network of higher education institutions with a rational, synchronized, and modern scale, structure, and distribution; expand the development space and improve the competencies of higher education institutions, ensuring that 100% of higher education institutions meet the standards; and establish an open, fair, equitable, high-quality, and efficient higher education system (PM, 2024).

To achieve this strategic goal, the development and improvement of lecturer quality is an urgent requirement, posing new demands and tasks for universities and education administrators in Vietnam. This is also the reason attracting the attention of many education administrators and researchers in Vietnam today, and is the topic chosen by the author in this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lecturers are a special workforce because their work directly trains other human resources for society; and the quality of lecturers directly affects the quality of the workforce in society, becoming an important and significant issue for universities and the labor market. According to Akiba, M. et al. (2007) and Multi, S. (2014), the quality of lecturers is expressed through criteria such as political qualities, ethics, professional qualifications, work capacity - teaching capacity and research capacity..., but teaching competencies and research competencies are emphasized in evaluating and ranking lecturer quality. Huong, N.T.T (2012) and Christopher, B.M. et al. (2013) share this view and emphasize that the quality of lecturers directly affects the development of universities in terms of both competitive competencies and the quality of products and services. And according to Hue, N.H. et al. (2021), developing lecturers and improving lecturer quality

is a breakthrough solution to improve the quality of human resource training and achieve national development goals.

The research perspectives presented above have provided a fairly comprehensive explanation of the quality of lecturers: Besides ethical qualities and a high standard of professional expertise required, lecturers must demonstrate practical competencies in research and teaching activities, showcasing intellectual, artistic, and creative work. The general meaning of "Quality of lecturers" is expressed, implying the following main points: Lecturers possess good political qualities, good ethics, and professional responsibility, social responsibility, and responsibility towards students; Lecturers have professional qualifications that meet professional standards and continuously learn to improve their skills to meet the requirements of higher education development; Lecturers have good teaching and research capabilities and continuously train, practice, and work creatively to develop their profession and meet the requirements of higher education development.

Given the professional characteristics of lecturers and their role in the development of society, many recent studies (Huong, P.T. et al., 2020; Thao, N.T.T., 2024) emphasize that universities need to implement appropriate policies to develop the teaching and research capabilities of lecturers, aiming to maintain the quality of lecturers to meet the strategic goals of the university. In that sense, this study is conducted with the hypothesis that: Developing teaching competencies (H1) and Developing research competencies (H2) directly affect the quality of lecturers, helping to maintain and develop high-quality human resources to achieve the strategic goals of the university [Figure 1].

- Firstly, developing teaching competencies is a measure to enhance the knowledge, skills, teaching methods, and creative thinking of lecturers. Chang, Z. (2013) and Nair, M. P. (2017) emphasize that developing teaching competencies is an important and ongoing policy solution to improve the quality of lecturers; universities build and implement policies appropriate to the characteristics of their training fields and practical capabilities to develop teaching competencies and improve the quality of lecturers. Kulshrestha, A. K. et al. (2013) and Anh, D.N. et al. (2024) emphasize policy/incentive measures to develop lecturers' teaching competencies, such as professional development training, teaching method training, and practical assessment of

teaching competencies; and seminars to exchange experiences by inviting leading education experts and reputable lecturers to discuss and share modern teaching methods and techniques. Organizing experiential learning programs and practical work courses to update knowledge, skills, and methods, and enrich the teaching content of lecturers, aims to stimulate and motivate them to strive and develop their teaching abilities. With a theoretical approach combined with practice, the studies above interpret the meaning of "Developing teaching competencies," implying the following main points: Universities provide support/encouragement through specific policies (funding, time, technical assistance, technology, etc.) to help lecturers improve their professional skills and develop teaching competencies; Universities also provide support/encouragement through specific policies to help lecturers learn and practice methods and skills, exchange practical experiences, practice their profession, and develop their teaching abilities; Universities have specific and appropriate policies to regularly evaluate the practical teaching abilities and promptly reward and create opportunities for the professional development of lecturers.

- Secondly, developing research competencies is a measure to enhance the knowledge, skills, and ability of lecturers to independently search for and practice scientific methods. Christopher, B.M. et al. (2013) and Hai, P.T.T. (2023) explain the research capacity of lecturers and analyze it in depth from the perspective of organizing research and applying research results to serve professional teaching activities. According to Yen, P.T. et al. (2025), the research capacity of lecturers plays a key role in improving the quality of training and affirming the academic position of universities in the context of internationalization; therefore, universities need to combine internal

mechanisms with business cooperation and international integration to implement policies supporting research, training, and multilateral cooperation networks to form an open academic ecosystem, create knowledge, and enhance the value of applied research. Similarly, San, N.M. (2024) affirms that the scientific research capacity of lecturers is a synthesis of knowledge, attitudes, skills, experience, and scientific research capabilities, ensuring that lecturers' scientific research activities are proficient, professional, high-quality, and highly effective. To develop research capacity, higher education institutions need to strengthen the training of knowledge, skills, and research experience for lecturers, and at the same time, need to implement policies to motivate and encourage lecturers to conduct scientific research. With a diverse approach, the above studies interpret the meaning of "Developing research competencies" implying the following main contents: Universities support/encourage lecturers through specific policies (funding, time, technical assistance, technology, etc.) to conduct research and apply research results to develop research competencies; Universities support/encourage lecturers through specific policies to collaborate on research, learn/share research experiences to develop research capabilities; Universities support/encourage lecturers through specific policies to regularly evaluate research capabilities and recognize and acknowledge creativity, promoting the development of research capabilities of lecturers.

Thus, from an overall perspective, many studies have explained the meaning of "quality of lecturers"; and teaching competencies and research competencies are two important aspects in evaluating and ranking lecturer quality. The author inherits these contents when building and developing the theoretical framework for research on lecturer quality, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research theoretical framework.

Research content	Related research	Developing research scales.
1. Developing teaching competencies (TCO)		
- Measures to enhance the knowledge, skills, teaching methods, and creative thinking of lecturers. - Training to develop professional skills, improve teaching methods, and evaluate the practical teaching competencies of lecturers.	Chang, Z. (2013); Kulshrestha, A. K. et al. (2013); Nair, M. P. (2017); Anh, D.N. et al. (2024).	1. TCO1. Universities provide support/encouragement through specific policies (funding, time, technical assistance, technology, etc.) to help lecturers improve their professional skills and develop teaching competencies.

<p>- Organize experiential learning programs and practical work assignments to update knowledge, skills, and methods, and to enrich the teaching content of lecturers.</p>		<p>2. TCO2. Universities also provide support/encouragement through specific policies to help lecturers learn and practice methods and skills, exchange practical experiences, practice their profession, and develop their teaching abilities.</p> <p>3. TCO3. Universities have specific and appropriate policies to regularly evaluate the practical teaching abilities and promptly reward and create opportunities for the professional development of lecturers.</p>
2. Developing research competencies (RCO)		
<p>- Measures to enhance the knowledge, skills, and ability of lecturers to independently research and practice scientific methods.</p> <p>- Enhance the competencies of research organizations and apply research results to support the professional teaching activities of lecturers.</p> <p>- Enhance the knowledge, skills, and research experience of lecturers; implement policies to motivate and encourage lecturers to conduct scientific research.</p>	<p>Christopher, B.M. et al. (2013); Hai, P.T.T. (2023); San, N.M. (2024); Yen, P.T. et al. (2025).</p>	<p>4. RCO1. Universities support/encourage lecturers through specific policies (funding, time, technical assistance, technology, etc.) to conduct research and apply research results to develop research competencies.</p> <p>5. RCO2. Universities support/encourage lecturers through specific policies to collaborate on research, learn/share research experiences to develop research capabilities.</p> <p>6. RCO3. Universities support/encourage lecturers through specific policies to regularly evaluate research capabilities and recognize and acknowledge creativity, promoting the development of research capabilities of lecturers.</p>
3. Quality of lecturers (QLE)		
<p>Criteria for evaluating and ranking the quality of lecturers: Political qualities, ethics, professional qualifications, work capabilities</p> <p>- teaching competencies and research competencies.</p>	<p>Akiba, M. et al. (2007); Huong, N.T.T (2012); Christopher, B.M. et al. (2013); Multi, S. (2014); Hue, N.H. et al. (2021).</p>	<p>7. QLE1. Lecturers possess good political qualities, good ethics, and professional responsibility, social responsibility, and responsibility towards students.</p> <p>8. QLE2. Lecturers have professional qualifications that meet professional standards and continuously learn to improve their skills to meet the requirements of higher education development.</p> <p>9. QLE3. Lecturers have good teaching and research capabilities and continuously train, practice, and work creatively to develop their profession and meet the requirements of higher education development.</p>

Source: Compiled by the author through the review

Based on the research overview, the theoretical framework and theoretical model were constructed to analyze the influence of two independent scales/variables, “Developing teaching

competencies” (TCO) and “Developing research competencies” (RCO), on the dependent scale/variable “Quality of lecturers” (QLE) [Figure 1].

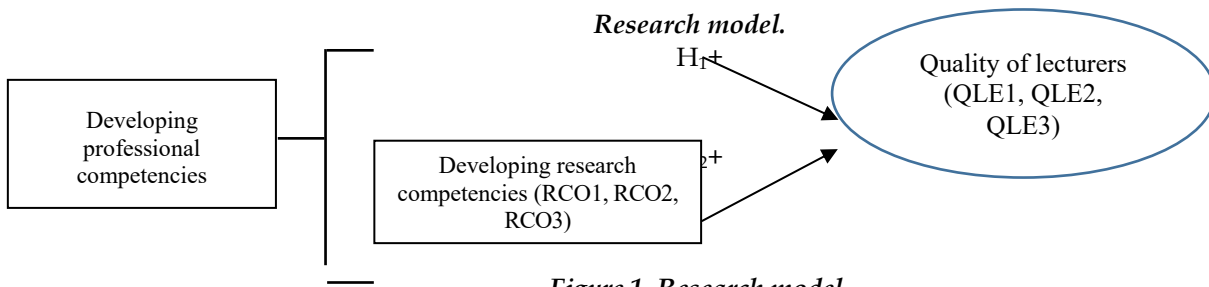


Figure 1. Research model.

In the theoretical model above, the author designed 3 scales comprising 9 observed variables into 9 corresponding questions in the survey questionnaire and measured them using a 5-point Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Neutral; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree. The author conducted a survey to collect data for analysis, evaluation, and to draw conclusions from this empirical study on the quality of lecturers in Vietnam.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

To conduct this study, the author used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method involved collecting and analyzing secondary data to build a theoretical framework and model (Table 1, Figure 1). The quantitative method involved conducting surveys to collect and analyze primary data and draw empirical conclusions about the quality of Vietnamese lecturers (Tables 2, 3, 4, 5).

The author chose the survey sample size based on the scientific principle of Hair, J.F. et al. (2009): $N = 5 * m$ (m is the total number of observed variables). In this study, the theoretical model consists of 3 scales and 9 observed variables, therefore the minimum

survey sample size required is $N = 9 * 5 = 45$. In practice, the author surveyed with a sample size of $N = 280$ lecturers ($N > 45$), including: 140 lecturers from 5 public universities and 140 lecturers from 5 non-public universities.

The survey was conducted selectively by the author: The survey subjects included 280 lecturers with doctoral degrees or currently pursuing doctoral studies; the author distributed survey questionnaires based on their consent to answer; the survey results showed that all 280/280 responses were valid, achieving a 100% response rate.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data collected from 280 survey responses, the author tested the reliability of the scales and observed variables in the theoretical model. Hair, J.F. et al. (2009) stated that the scales have reliability when meeting the Cronbach's alpha standard > 0.6 ; the observed variables have reliability when meeting the Corrected Item-Total Correlation standard > 0.3 . The test results showed that all 3 scales and 9 observed variables in the initial theoretical model had sufficient reliability to perform further analysis (Table 2).

Table 2. Statistical results and scale testing results.

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Developing teaching competencies (TCO)	TCO1	280	1	5	4.25	.715	.729	TCO1 = .605
	TCO2	280	1	5	3.89	.722		TCO2 = .487
	TCO3	280	1	5	4.14	.687		TCO3 = .568
2. Developing research competencies (RCO)	RCO1	280	1	5	4.19	.696	.718	RCO1 = .529
	RCO2	280	1	5	3.93	.703		RCO2 = .492
	RCO3	280	1	5	4.09	.711		RCO3 = .534
3. Quality of lecturers (QLE)	QLE1	280	1	5	4.21	.689	.741	QLE1 = .612
	QLE2	280	1	5	4.13	.667		QLE2 = .578
	QLE3	280	1	5	4.15	.710		QLE3 = .610
Valid N (listwise)		280						

Source: Author's survey results

Statistical data in Table 2 shows that the observations of the scales "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO), "Developing research competencies" (RCO), and "Quality of lecturers" (QLE) were all rated at mean > 3.89 and mean ≤ 4.25 ,

which are statistically significant according to the Likert scale (1-5) as determined, specifically:

- Firstly, the observations on the "Quality of lecturers" (QLE) scale/dependent variable are rated highly, contributing to the evidence that,

overall, Vietnamese lecturers possess good political qualities, good ethics, and professional and social responsibility towards students; have professional qualifications that meet professional standards and continuously learn to improve their skills; have good teaching and research capabilities and continuously train, practice, and work creatively to develop their careers and meet the requirements of higher education development.

- Secondly, the observations for the two independent scales/variables, “Developing teaching competencies” (TCO) and “Developing research competencies” (RCO), show a certain discrepancy. The highest-level observations (Mean(TCO1) = 4.25, Mean(RCO1) = 4.19) indicate that universities provide specific policy support/encouragement (funding, time, technical assistance, technology, etc.) for lecturers to improve their professional skills, develop teaching and research capabilities,

and apply research results to enhance their research capacity. The lowest-level observations (Mean(TCO2) = 3.89, Mean(RCO2) = 3.93) show that lecturers are rarely encouraged/supported to exchange practical experience and practice their teaching profession. Collaborative research, learning, and sharing of research experiences are rarely encouraged or supported, directly impacting the development of faculty members' teaching and research capabilities.

The survey results, with their scales and observed variables meeting reliability standards, contribute to demonstrating the practical application of lecturer quality and the implementation of policies to develop professional competencies for lecturers in Vietnamese universities. With the reliability standards met, all three scales and nine observed variables in the model were used for further analysis. The author conducted exploratory factor analysis using Varimax rotation to preliminarily assess the unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the scales and to test the fit of the theoretical model.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.744
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4501.134
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.610	40.112	40.112	3.610	40.112	40.112	3.144	34.931	34.931
2	2.939	32.661	72.773	2.939	32.661	72.773	2.902	32.244	67.176
3	1.042	11.582	84.355	1.042	11.582	84.355	1.546	17.179	84.355
4	.480	5.329	89.684						
5	.425	4.722	94.406						
6	.159	1.770	96.176						
7	.142	1.580	97.756						
8	.106	1.180	98.936						
9	.096	1.064	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Author's survey results.

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a				
Scales	Observed variables	Component		
		1	2	3
1. Developing teaching competencies (TCO)	TCO1	.826		
	TCO2	.874		
	TCO3	.861		
	RCO1		.833	

2. Developing research competencies (RCO)	RCO2		.815	
	RCO3		.796	
3. Quality of lecturers (QLE)	QLE1			.824
	QLE2			.857
	QLE3			.835
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

Source: Author's survey results

5. SOURCE: AUTHOR'S SURVEY RESULTS

Survey data shows: $KMO = 0.744 > 0.5$, confirming that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the dataset; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level $Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that the observed variables are linearly correlated with the representative factor; Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = $84.355\% > 50\%$, showing that 84.355% of the variation in the representative factors is explained by the observed variables (Table 3). All observed variables have Factor Loading > 0.5 (Table 4), indicating that the observed variables are statistically significant.

Initial Eigenvalues stop at 3 factors with Eigenvalues > 1 (Table 3), indicating that the observed variables were extracted into 3 factors

corresponding to the 3 initial factors. Thus, the original theoretical model is preserved and is scientifically sound; confirming the suitability of the theoretical model on lecturer quality with 3 scales and 9 observed variables as constructed.

Based on the exploratory factor analysis results above, all three scales and nine observed variables have good reliability and statistical significance. Further multivariate regression analysis can be performed to examine the relationships between the scales in the theoretical model: the two independent scales/variables "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO), and the one dependent scale/variable "Quality of lecturers" (QLE). The regression analysis results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Multivariate regression results.

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1. Public university lecturers (N=140) R ² = .745 Durbin-Watson = 2.025	(Constant)	1.104	.423		10.192	.000		
	TCO	.412	.119	.391	9.384	.000	.522	1.821
	RCO	.474	.108	.410	9.547	.000	.545	1.784
2. Non-public university lecturers (N=140) R ² = .752 Durbin-Watson = 2.104	(Constant)	1.112	.387		10.815	.000		
	TCO	.403	.110	.371	9.576	.000	.465	1.852
	RCO	.451	.096	.396	9.322	.000	.519	1.814
a. Dependent Variable: Quality of lecturers (QLE)								

Source: Author's survey results

Table 5 shows the regression results comparing the impact of developing teaching competencies and developing research competencies on the quality of lecturers, including Model 1 - Survey of public university lecturers; and Model 2 - Survey of non-public university lecturers. The survey data shows

that in both models there is a correlation, a positive impact of the factors "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO) on "Quality of lecturers" (QLE), specifically:

- Model 1: $R^2 = 0.745$ ($R^2 > 0$), confirming that

the "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO) scales explain 74.5% of the variation in the "Quality of lecturers" (QLE) scale. $VIF = 1.821$ and $VIF = 1.784$ ($1 < VIF < 2$), indicating that the regression results of Model 1 do not exhibit multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.025 ($1 < d < 3$), indicating that the regression results of Model 1 do not exhibit autocorrelation, confirming that the "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO) scales are independent and together influence the "Quality of lecturers" (QLE) scale. Model 1 is summarized as: $QLE = 1.104 + 0.412*TCO + 0.474*RCO$.

- Model 2: $R^2 = 0.752$ ($R^2 > 0$) confirms that the "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO) scales explain 75.2% of the variation in the "Quality of lecturers" (QLE) scale. $VIF = 1.852$ and $VIF = 1.814$ ($1 < VIF < 2$) indicate that the regression results of Model 2 do not exhibit multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.104 ($1 < d < 3$) indicates that the regression results of Model 2 do not exhibit autocorrelation, confirming that the "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO) and "Developing research competencies" (RCO) scales are independent and together influence the "Quality of lecturers" (QLE) scale. Model 2 is summarized as follows: $QLE = 1.112 + 0.403*TCO + 0.451*RCO$.

Table 5 data also shows that both Model 1 and Model 2 have positive regression coefficients ($B > 0$), confirming a positive relationship between the two independent variables "Developing teaching competencies" (TCO), "Developing research competencies" (RCO) and the dependent variable "Quality of lecturers" (QLE); hypotheses H1 and H2 are accepted.

The statistical results, tests (Table 2), and regression analysis (Table 5) of this study further confirm the results of empirical research in Vietnam, that:

1. Overall, Vietnamese lecturers possess good political qualities, strong ethics, and a sense of professional responsibility, social responsibility, and responsibility towards their students; they have professional qualifications that meet professional standards and continuously strive to improve their skills; they have good teaching and research capabilities and constantly train, practice, and

work creatively to develop their careers and meet the requirements of higher education development.

2. Universities do a good job of supporting and encouraging lecturers through specific policies (funding, time, technical assistance, technology, etc.) to improve their professional skills, develop their teaching and research capabilities, and apply research results to further their research capacity. However, there are limitations in encouraging and supporting lecturers to exchange practical experiences, practice teaching, and collaborate on research, learning/sharing research experiences.

These limitations directly affect the development of teaching and research capabilities of lecturers. To achieve the strategic goals of higher education development, Vietnamese universities need to adjust their governance policies towards developing the professional capabilities of lecturers. This involves both improving professional qualifications and enhancing practical work skills through a combination of training, professional development, and collaborative training and research. This will allow lecturers to regularly exchange practical experiences, practice teaching, and collaborate on research, learning/sharing research experiences.

Discussing policy solutions for developing the professional capacity of lecturers, this study supports the views of Kulshrestha, A. K. et al. (2013) and Anh, D.N. et al. (2024) that universities need to implement policy/incentive measures to develop the teaching capacity of lecturers, such as professional development training, teaching method training and practical assessment of teaching capacity; seminars to exchange experiences by inviting leading education experts and reputable lecturers to discuss and share modern teaching methods and techniques; organizing study tours and practical work programs to update knowledge, skills, methods and enrich the teaching content of lecturers, in order to stimulate and motivate them to strive and develop their teaching capacity.

In explaining this point, the author emphasizes the element of social change, stating that society is constantly moving and developing, always posing new demands on the awareness, thinking, and actions of individuals.

For lecturers, in their role as a special workforce and the elite of society's human resources, they must constantly update and supplement their knowledge, skills, and research and teaching methods so that their professional work yields scientific results that

are relevant to social reality.

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