

26.7.2024

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**Title**

English-medium instruction and self-governance in higher education : the journey of a Vietnamese university through the institutional autonomy regime / Huong Thu Nguyen ; M. Obaidul Hamid ; Karen Moni

**Publication year**

2016

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 72 (2016) 5, S. 669 - 683

**Inventory number**

44810

**Keywords**

Ausland : Vietnam : einzelne Hochschulen ; Hochschulreform : allgemein

**Abstract**

As neoliberal ideals of deregulation, accountability, quality and financial autonomy take hold of education worldwide, higher education institutions (HEIs) in developing economies are adopting strategies to improve educational quality; attract local and international students; enhance institutional ranking and global competitiveness; and, more critically, increase their income. These strategies include internationalising education and developing partnerships with high-ranking universities, particularly those in English-speaking countries. Introducing English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has been a key element of these strategies. Using language-in-education planning as an analytical framework, this study investigates how a Vietnamese public university deployed EMI as a strategy to navigate through the new regime of institutional autonomy (IA) mandated by the government in the context of neoliberal approaches to HE reform. We argue that this top-down policy reform challenged Vietnamese universities to find ways to become autonomous. Although the pursuit

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of autonomy may lead to financial success, it may also result in HEIs not giving due consideration to questions of educational quality. Furthermore, in the absence of adequate structural planning, IA may have a negative impact on HEIs and the HE system in the country. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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