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**MANAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF JUNIOR  
FACULTY THROUGH MENTORING AT HIGHER  
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN VIETNAM**

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Rationale

In the context of Vietnamese higher education undergoing a profound transition toward institutional autonomy, international integration, digital transformation, and quality-based competition, faculty development has become a strategic imperative for enhancing educational quality, research capacity, and the competitiveness of higher education institutions. Major policy orientations of the Party and the State, particularly the spirit of Resolution No. 71-NQ/TW on breakthroughs in education and training, affirm the pivotal role of faculty members in improving the quality of higher education.

The requirements placed on faculty members today are no longer confined to teaching and research in the traditional sense. They now extend to digital competence, critical thinking, innovation, international collaboration, and the capacity to adapt to a rapidly changing academic environment. These requirements pose significant challenges for junior faculty members, who are still in the formative stage of professional competence development while also constituting the next generation of academic staff crucial to the sustainable development of their institutions.

However, a considerable gap remains between the demand for standardizing and modernizing the faculty workforce and the actual professional competence of junior faculty members. This gap is evident in teaching, research, technology application, career development orientation, and adaptability to an increasingly complex academic environment. Without timely support through appropriate mechanisms, these limitations may directly affect faculty quality, educational quality, research performance, and institutional competitiveness.

The core issue lies not only in the individual competence of junior faculty members, but also in how their professional competence development is managed within higher education institutions. In practice, support for junior faculty members in many institutions still lacks a systematic approach, appropriate management tools, and effective mechanisms for organization, coordination, and evaluation. As a result, such support often depends heavily on individual units or persons, making it difficult to ensure sustained effectiveness.

Among various forms of professional development support, mentoring holds considerable potential because it enables direct interaction between experienced and junior faculty members, thereby influencing multiple components of professional competence. However, without systematic organization and management, mentoring may easily become spontaneous, symbolic, or limited to the sharing of personal experience. In Vietnam, although initial regulations have been introduced regarding the assignment of experienced faculty members to support junior faculty members, mentoring has not yet been fully integrated into faculty development strategies, lacks a coherent management mechanism, and has not been systematically evaluated against professional competence standards.

Against this background, the dissertation addresses the following scientific problem: how can junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring be managed systematically, aligned with competence standards,

and responsive to the requirements of higher education reform? Theoretically, the dissertation contributes to clarifying a management approach to professional competence development in higher education, in which mentoring is viewed as a managerial tool for faculty development. Practically, the study provides a basis for higher education institutions to organize, coordinate, and evaluate mentoring activities in a feasible manner, thereby improving the quality of junior faculty members and contributing to educational quality, research performance, and institutional competitiveness.

## **2. Aim of the Study**

On the basis of systematizing the theoretical foundations and examining practice in Vietnamese higher education institutions, the dissertation aims to clarify the current state of junior faculty members' professional competence, their professional competence development through mentoring, and the management of this process. On that basis, the dissertation proposes scientifically grounded and feasible management measures to enhance the effectiveness of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring, thereby contributing to improving faculty quality and meeting the requirements of current higher education reform.

## **3. Research Object and Focus of the Study**

### **3.1. Research Object**

The process of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring activities in higher education institutions.

### **3.2. Research Focus**

The management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in Vietnamese higher education institutions.

## **4. Research Hypothesis**

If mentoring activities in higher education institutions are managed systematically, aligned with professional competence standards and appropriate evaluation mechanisms, thereby providing continuous and purposeful support for junior faculty members, then their professional competence will be developed in a substantive and sustainable manner.

## **5. Research Objectives**

To achieve the aim of the study, the dissertation pursues the following objectives:

- To develop the theoretical foundation for junior faculty members' professional competence development and the management of such development through mentoring in higher education institutions.
- To survey, analyze, and evaluate the current state of junior faculty members' professional competence, mentoring activities, and the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development in higher education institutions.
- To propose management measures for junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in order to enhance its effectiveness; and to assess the necessity and feasibility of the proposed measures as well as pilot-test one management measure.

## **6. Scope of the Study**

### **6.1. Content Scope**

The dissertation focuses on the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in public higher education institutions in the field of economics in Vietnam.

### **6.2. Survey Participants**

The survey participants include institutional- and faculty-level administrators, junior faculty members, and experienced faculty members involved in mentoring activities at public higher education institutions in the field of economics.

### **6.3. Geographical Scope**

The study was conducted at eight public higher education institutions in the field of economics, representing the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Vietnam. Specifically, these institutions include:

- *Northern Vietnam*: Foreign Trade University; National Economics University; University of Economics and Business, Vietnam National University, Hanoi; Thuongmai University.

- *Central Vietnam*: University of Economics, The University of Danang; University of Economics, Hue University.

- *Southern Vietnam*: University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City; University of Economics and Law, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City.

These institutions were selected to ensure regional representation and comparability in terms of management mechanisms within the field of economics, in line with the study's focus on public higher education institutions in this field.

### **6.4. Time Scope**

The research data were collected between May 2023 and December 2023.

## **7. Approaches and Methodology**

### **7.1. Approaches**

In line with the research aim and focus, the dissertation adopts a set of primary and supplementary research approaches to guide the entire research process.

#### *7.1.1. Primary Approaches*

#### *7.1.2. Supplementary Approaches*

### **7.2. Methodology**

The dissertation employs a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative research in order to ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of the research findings.

#### *7.2.1. Theoretical Research Methods*

#### *7.2.2. Empirical Research Methods*

#### *7.2.3. Data Processing Methods*

## **8. Key Arguments of the Dissertation**

- Junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in higher education institutions can be effective only when it is managed systematically, aligned with competence standards, and implemented coherently through core management functions.
- In Vietnamese higher education institutions, the development and management of junior faculty members' professional competence through mentoring

currently reveal limitations in both the content of professional competence development and the management of this process. These limitations stem from constraints in mentoring capacity as well as institutional management factors.

- If management measures for junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring are designed and implemented coherently, they will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of junior faculty members' professional competence development in the context of higher education reform.

## **9. Major Contributions of the Dissertation**

### **Theoretical Contributions**

The dissertation:

- Conceptualizes mentoring as a managerial tool for professional competence development, thereby adding a complementary perspective to research on faculty development in higher education.
- Develops a theoretical framework for the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring, grounded in core management functions, and clarifies the content, mechanisms, and processes of management in higher education settings.
- Identifies and operationalizes a streamlined, systematic, and empirically measurable framework of junior faculty members' professional competence, providing a basis for competence development and assessment.
- Systematizes the key components of professional competence development through mentoring and establishes an analytical framework for surveying and analyzing the current situation.

### **Practical Contributions**

The dissertation:

- Provides systematic empirical evidence on junior faculty members' professional competence, mentoring activities, and the management of these activities in Vietnamese higher education institutions.
- Identifies systemic limitations in management, reflected in the lack of coherence among management functions and the gap between formal implementation and substantive competence development.
- Demonstrates that limitations in junior faculty members' professional competence development largely stem from weaknesses in management, and that mentoring has not yet been managed as a strategic tool for faculty development.
- Proposes a system of management measures grounded in the functional management approach and validates their necessity and feasibility through empirical appraisal and pilot testing, confirming their practical relevance to Vietnamese higher education.

## **10. Structure of the Dissertation**

In addition to the Introduction, Conclusion, References, and Appendices, the dissertation is organized into three chapters:

- *Chapter 1. Theoretical Foundations for the Management of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring in Higher*

*Education Institutions.* This chapter reviews domestic and international studies related to professional competence development and the management of professional competence development among university faculty members. It develops and clarifies the key concepts underpinning the study, establishes a framework of junior faculty members' professional competence in the current higher education context, and discusses the components of professional competence development through mentoring as well as the management of this process from a functional management perspective. On this basis, the chapter also analyzes the factors influencing the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring.

- *Chapter 2. Empirical Foundations for the Management of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring in Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions.* This chapter examines international experience and the Vietnamese context in managing junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring. It describes the survey design and the characteristics of the selected higher education institutions; analyzes the current state of junior faculty members' professional competence by competence component; evaluates the current state of professional competence development through mentoring; and analyzes the management of this process according to core management functions. On this basis, the chapter identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in managing junior faculty members' professional competence development.

- *Chapter 3. Management Measures for Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring in Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions.* This chapter identifies the orientations and principles for proposing management measures in the context of higher education reform. It proposes a system of management measures for junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on core management functions, analyzes the relationships among these measures, and presents the results of the validation of their necessity and feasibility, as well as the pilot testing of one measure to examine the feasibility of the proposed measures.

## CHAPTER 1

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### **1.1. Literature Review**

##### ***1.1.1. Studies on Professional Competence Development among University Faculty Members***

###### *1.1.1.1. Studies on Professional Competence*

###### *1.1.1.2. Studies on Professional Competence Development among University Faculty Members*

- *Studies on professional competence development among university faculty members in general*
- *Studies on professional competence development among university faculty members through mentoring*

##### ***1.1.2. Studies on the Management of Professional Competence Development among University Faculty Members***

###### *1.1.2.1. Studies on the Management of Professional Competence Development among University Faculty Members in General*

###### *1.1.2.2. Studies on the Management of Professional Competence Development among Junior Faculty Members*

###### *1.1.2.3. Studies on the Management of University Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring*

##### ***1.1.3. Synthesis of Published Studies and Research Gaps Addressed by the Dissertation***

A synthesis of domestic and international studies indicates that professional competence development among university faculty members has attracted considerable scholarly attention, with approaches ranging from individual-oriented to organization-oriented perspectives. International studies have clarified the concept and components of professional competence, as well as the role of support mechanisms such as mentoring, communities of practice, and junior faculty development programmes. A notable trend is the shift from an emphasis on individual effort toward an organizational perspective, in which professional competence development is viewed as a systematically managed process aligned with the human resource development strategy of higher education institutions.

In Vietnam, existing studies have begun to examine faculty members' professional competence development in relation to teaching, scientific research, technology application, and professional training. However, most remain largely descriptive and fragmented in scope, and have yet to establish a systematic management-oriented analytical framework. In particular, research on junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring remains limited, while the role of management in designing, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating mentoring activities has not been sufficiently clarified.

The literature review reveals three main research gaps. First, there is a lack of studies examining junior faculty members' professional competence development from a management perspective. Second, empirical evidence on mentoring in Vietnamese higher education remains limited and unsystematic. Third, factors influencing the management of this process, particularly in the context of university



autonomy, digital transformation, and the demand for stronger links with professional practice, have not been adequately analyzed (Hoàng Văn Hùng et al., 2023; Mao, 2021; Zheng, 2023).

These gaps affirm the scientific and practical significance of the dissertation. The study contributes to the theoretical foundation for managing junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring and provides empirical grounds for proposing management measures suited to the current context of Vietnamese higher education.

## **1.2. Key Concepts**

### ***1.2.1. Junior Faculty Members***

#### *1.2.1.1. Faculty Members*

#### *1.2.1.2. Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions*

### ***1.2.2. Professional Competence of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions***

#### *1.2.2.1. Competence*

#### *1.2.2.2. Professional Competence*

#### *1.2.2.3. Professional Competence of Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions*

### ***1.2.3. Professional Competence Development of Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions***

#### *1.2.3.1. Professional Competence Development*

#### *1.2.3.2. Professional Competence Development of Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions*

### ***1.2.4. Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***1.2.5. Management of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

#### *1.2.5.1. Mentoring*

#### *1.2.5.2. Mentoring for Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions*

#### *1.2.5.3. Management*

#### *1.2.5.4. Management of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring*

## **1.3. Professional Competence Requirements for Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions**

### ***1.3.1. The Contemporary Higher Education Context***

### ***1.3.2. Characteristics of Junior Faculty Members***

### ***1.3.3. Foundations for Defining the Professional Competence of Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions***

**Table 1.1. Key Sources Informing the Professional Competence Framework for Junior Faculty Members**

<b>Competence Domain</b>	<b>Law on Teachers 2025</b>	<b>Circular No. 40/2020/TT-BGDĐT, Circular No. 05/2024/TT-BGDĐT, Circular No. 07/2023/TT-BLĐTBXH</b>	<b>Practice-Oriented Approaches (POHE and International Perspectives)</b>
Subject-matter competence	Requirements for qualifications and competence	Standards for qualifications and professional development	Embedded in professional functions
Pedagogical and teaching competence	Article 7, Clause 2(a)	Professional standards for teaching practice	Educational function
Research competence	Article 7, Clause 2(c)	Standards for research and publication	Research function
Community engagement competence	Article 7, Clause 2(d)	Standards for community service	Knowledge transfer
ICT application and digital transformation competence	Embedded in professional activities	Embedded in requirements for task performance	Emphasized in international digital competence frameworks, such as DigCompEdu

*Source: Synthesized by the author.*

#### **1.3.4. Professional Competence Framework for Junior Faculty Members in Higher Education Institutions**

**Table 1.2. Professional Competence Framework for Junior Faculty Members**

<b>Competence Domain</b>	<b>Description</b>
Subject-matter and professional competence	The ability to master disciplinary knowledge, update one's knowledge, and apply it effectively to teaching, research, and career guidance for learners.
Pedagogical and teaching competence	The ability to design, organize, and manage teaching and learning activities oriented toward learners' competence development, and to use teaching methods, instructional formats, and assessment approaches aligned with the

	objectives of higher education.
Research competence	The ability to conduct research, publish and transfer research outputs, engage in research collaboration, and develop research capacity within an academic environment.
Social and community engagement competence	The ability to contribute to institutional governance and development, engage with academic and professional communities, and apply disciplinary knowledge to serve society and the community.
ICT application and digital transformation competence	The ability to use information technology and digital technologies effectively in teaching, research, learner assessment, and professional development in the context of digital transformation in higher education.

### ***1.3.5. Significance of the Professional Competence Framework for Junior Faculty Members***

## **1.4. Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

### ***1.4.1. Significance of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Development through Mentoring***

#### *1.4.1.1. Significance for junior faculty members*

#### *1.4.1.2. Significance for higher education institutions*

### ***1.4.2. Principles of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***1.4.3. Theoretical Model of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***1.4.4. Objectives of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***1.4.5. Core Components of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

#### *1.4.5.1. Development of Subject-Matter Competence*

#### *1.4.5.2. Development of Pedagogical and Teaching Competence*

#### *1.4.5.3. Development of Research Competence*

#### *1.4.5.4. Development of Social and Community Engagement Competence*

#### *1.4.5.5. Development of ICT Application and Digital Transformation Competence*

### ***1.4.6. Modes of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

#### *1.4.6.1. Face-to-Face Modes*

#### *1.4.6.2. Indirect Modes*

#### *1.4.6.3. Technology-Mediated Modes*

### ***1.4.7. Evaluation of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

#### *1.4.7.1. Evaluation Objectives*

#### *1.4.7.2. Evaluation Methods and Tools*

#### *1.4.7.3. Stakeholders Involved in Evaluation*

#### ***1.4.8. Enabling Conditions for Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

Junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring is shaped by conditions at both the individual and organizational levels. The effectiveness of this process depends on the interaction among three sets of enabling conditions: those related to faculty mentors, junior faculty members, and the organizational environment.

First, faculty mentors play a guiding and developmental role in the competence development process. This role is reflected in their disciplinary expertise, professional experience, mentoring skills, and capacity to provide individualized support to junior faculty members.

Second, mentoring is more likely to be effective when junior faculty members demonstrate proactivity, professional awareness, and reflective capacity in their own competence development. These factors determine the extent to which they can receive, apply, and transform mentoring support into professional competence in practice.

Third, organizational conditions concern the institution's role in creating an enabling environment and support mechanisms through policies, resources, and academic culture. These conditions help ensure the systematic implementation, continuity, and effectiveness of professional competence development through mentoring.

On the basis of these three sets of conditions, the specific components and practical mechanisms for ensuring them are systematized in Table 1.6 of the dissertation.

### **1.5. Management of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring in Higher Education Institutions**

#### ***1.5.1. Foundations for Defining the Management Content of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring in Higher Education Institutions***

#### ***1.5.2. Levels of Management in Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development in Higher Education Institutions***

#### ***1.5.3. Management Content of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

The management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring is approached as a goal-oriented developmental management process. It aims to guide, organize, and coordinate resources to support the formation and enhancement of junior faculty members' core professional competences. From this perspective, mentoring is not merely a form of individualized support; rather, it is situated within the institution's management framework as a tool for faculty development.

The management content of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring comprises the core stages of the management cycle: planning; implementation organization; direction; monitoring, inspection, and evaluation; and management of enabling conditions. These stages are closely

interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and therefore need to be implemented coherently to ensure that mentoring is aligned with competence development needs, strategic objectives, and the practical conditions of the institution.

### **1.6. Factors Influencing the Management of Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring in Higher Education Institutions**

The management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring is shaped by multiple factors operating at different levels, including organizational, human, policy, and socio-environmental factors. From a human resource development perspective, the effectiveness of competence development activities depends not only on the content of the intervention, but also on the appropriateness of the management system, enabling conditions, and supportive organizational environment (McLean, 2006).

On this basis, the factors influencing the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development can be grouped into three main categories: organizational factors, human factors, and contextual factors.

### **Conclusion of Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 establishes the scientific foundation for examining the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in higher education institutions by integrating the literature review, theoretical foundations, and the main analytical framework.

After identifying key research gaps, the chapter clarifies the core concepts underpinning the study. It then analyzes the professional competence requirements for junior faculty members in the context of higher education reform, drawing on relevant legal foundations, development requirements, and practical conditions. These analyses inform a streamlined and systematic professional competence framework that supports empirical investigation and reflects the core professional roles of contemporary higher education faculty.

The chapter also systematizes the theoretical components of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring and clarifies the management of this process from a developmental management perspective. It further identifies key influencing factors, including organizational, human, policy-related, and external environmental factors. These foundations inform the development of the survey instruments and the analysis of the current situation in Chapter 2.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **EMPIRICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF JUNIOR FACULTY MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MENTORING IN VIETNAMESE HEIs**

Chapter 2 examines the empirical foundations for the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in higher education institutions. It begins by synthesizing international experience and national-level initiatives in faculty professional competence development in Vietnam, thereby identifying contemporary management trends in faculty development. The chapter then analyzes the current implementation of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring in the selected higher education institutions. These empirical analyses identify key strengths, limitations, and underlying causes, providing a scientific basis for proposing appropriate management measures in the following chapter.

#### **2.1. International Experience in Managing Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

##### ***2.1.1. Experience from the United States***

##### ***2.1.2. Experience from the United Kingdom***

##### ***2.1.1.3. Experience from Japan***

##### ***2.2.1.4. Experience from Singapore***

#### **2.2. Vietnamese Experience and Context in Managing Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

#### **2.3. Overview of the Selected Higher Education Institutions in Economics and Business**

#### **2.4. Organization of the Empirical Survey**

##### ***2.4.1. Objectives***

The survey aimed to collect and analyze primary data from questionnaires and in-depth interviews, while selectively drawing on secondary data from reports, management documents, public disclosures, and relevant studies. The combination of these data sources was intended to provide contextual evidence, strengthen the basis for comparison, and support an objective, comprehensive, and systematic assessment of the current state of junior faculty members' professional competence development and its management through mentoring in Vietnamese higher education institutions. Primary data served as the main source of evidence, while secondary data were used as supplementary evidence to contextualize and further interpret the survey findings.

##### ***2.4.2. Survey design***

The survey was designed to collect information for assessing the current situation across the following key areas:

1. The current state of junior faculty members' professional competence, with a focus on the core competence domains established in the theoretical foundation of the dissertation.
2. The current implementation of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring, including its objectives, content, modes, methods, outcome evaluation, and enabling conditions.

3. The current management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring, with attention to the core management functions of planning, implementation organization, direction, inspection and evaluation, and management of enabling conditions.
4. The extent to which different factors influence the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring.

### **2.4.3. Survey Participants and Sites**

#### **2.4.3.1. Survey Participants**

For the assessment of junior faculty members' professional competence, the study surveyed three groups of participants: administrators, faculty members, and students.

For the assessment of professional competence development activities and their management through mentoring, the study focused on three groups of participants: administrators, junior faculty members, and faculty mentors.

#### **2.4.3.2. Survey Institutions**

The survey was conducted at eight public higher education institutions in economics and business across the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Vietnam. These institutions were selected to ensure relative comparability in disciplinary fields, while also reflecting regional diversity and differences in the organizational conditions for developing junior faculty members in Vietnamese higher education institutions.

Specifically, the survey sites included:

- Northern Vietnam: Foreign Trade University; National Economics University; University of Economics and Business, Vietnam National University, Hanoi; Thuongmai University.
- Central Vietnam: University of Economics, The University of Danang; University of Economics, Hue University.
- Southern Vietnam: University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City; University of Economics and Law, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City.

### **2.4.4. Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

#### **2.4.4.1. Data Collection Methods**

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the current situation through questionnaire data and to gain deeper insights into the experiences, perceptions, and views of relevant stakeholders.

In addition to primary data collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the study selectively drew on secondary data from reports, management documents, publicly available reports, and relevant studies. Secondary data were not used as the primary source of evidence; rather, they served a supplementary role by providing contextual information, enabling comparison, and helping to interpret selected survey findings.

#### **2.4.4.2. Survey Instruments**

Two questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale were developed and administered in line with the research objectives, survey content, and participant groups.

Questionnaire 1: Survey on the current state of junior faculty members' professional competence

- Participants: administrators, faculty members, and students.
- Structure: two sections, comprising (i) general information and (ii) items on junior faculty members' professional competence.

Questionnaire 2: Survey on the current state of junior faculty members' professional competence development and its management through mentoring

- Participants: administrators, faculty mentors, and junior faculty members.

#### **2.4.5. Survey Administration and Data Analysis**

##### **2.4.5.1. Survey Administration**

Data collection was conducted in two phases: questionnaire administration and in-depth interviews.

##### ***Phase 1: Questionnaire Administration***

- Step 1: Designing and piloting the survey instruments.
- Step 2: Administering the official questionnaires.
- Step 3: Compiling and cleaning the data.

##### ***Phase 2: In-Depth Interviews***

***Participants:*** The study purposively selected 41 participants from four groups: administrators, junior faculty members, faculty mentors, and students.

***Interview focus:*** The interviews explored participants' perceptions of junior faculty members' professional competence, professional competence development through mentoring, the management of this process, advantages, challenges, influencing factors, and proposed management measures.

***Interview format:*** The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on practical conditions and participants' convenience.

##### **2.4.5.2. Data Processing and Analysis**

Questionnaire data were checked, coded, and entered prior to analysis. SPSS and xcel were used to process the quantitative data. Before the analysis of the current situation, the reliability of the scale groups in the two questionnaires was tested. The results showed that all scale groups demonstrated acceptable reliability (see Appendix 7 for details).

#### **2.4.6. Evaluation Criteria and Standards**

### **2.5. Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence**

#### **2.5.1. Subject-Matter Competence**

#### **2.5.2. Pedagogical and Teaching Competence**

#### **2.5.3. Research Competence**

#### **2.5.4. Social and Community Engagement Competence**

#### **2.5.5. ICT and Digital Transformation Competence**

#### **2.5.6. Summary of Findings on Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence**

### **2.6. Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

#### **2.6.1. Objectives of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

#### **2.6.2. Content of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

#### **2.6.3. Modes of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

#### **2.6.4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**



### ***2.6.5. Enabling Conditions for Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.6.6. Summary of Findings on Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

## **2.7. Management of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

### ***2.7.1. Planning for Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.7.2. Organizing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.7.3. Directing the Implementation of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.7.4. Monitoring and Inspection of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.7.5. Managing the Enabling Conditions for Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.7.6. Factors Influencing the Management of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

### ***2.7.7. Summary of Findings on the Management of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring***

## **2.8. Overall Assessment of the Management of Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

### ***2.8.1. Strengths***

### ***2.8.2. Weaknesses***

Alongside these initial achievements, the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring still reveals several systemic weaknesses. First, junior faculty members' research competence remains limited, as reflected in low indicators for leading research projects, international publication, and research collaboration. Insufficient qualifications, limited research experience, and weak academic integration constrain their ability to develop independent research capacity.

Mentoring also remains largely formalistic, often confined to classroom observation, the sharing of teaching experience, or informal academic exchanges. Higher-value developmental forms, such as co-supervision of research, interdisciplinary research groups, university–industry collaboration, and participation in international projects, have not been implemented on a regular basis. As a result, mentoring has mainly supported initial professional adaptation, but has not yet generated a substantial impact on competence development in line with contemporary standards.

From a management perspective, planning, implementation, inspection and evaluation, and the provision of enabling conditions remain insufficiently specified and lack effective operational tools. Although many institutions have introduced general orientations, they have yet to establish clear plans, transparent evaluation criteria, two-way feedback mechanisms, or appropriate recognition and incentive policies for faculty mentors.

These weaknesses stem from both objective and subjective factors, including limited financial resources, insufficiently strong policy mechanisms, heavy teaching

and administrative workloads, limited motivation among faculty mentors, and an organizational culture that remains more administratively oriented than learning-oriented. Overall, these limitations reveal a considerable gap between macro-level policy orientations and practical implementation capacity.

### **2.8.3. Opportunities**

In the context of reform and international integration, the management of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring is benefiting from several favorable opportunities. First, the Party and the State's policies on educational reform, university autonomy, and faculty development have created an important legal framework for higher education institutions to proactively develop mechanisms for supporting junior faculty members, in which mentoring can serve as a central form of support.

Second, digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution provide new tools for teaching, research, and management. Online platforms, learning management systems, data analytics tools, and digital interaction technologies help expand mentoring modes, combining face-to-face and online formats and overcoming limitations of time and space.

Third, international integration enables junior faculty members to participate in academic exchange, training, research collaboration, and international publication, thereby developing their competences in line with higher standards. At the same time, societal demand for a high-quality workforce further encourages institutions to place greater emphasis on faculty development. Overall, favorable policy conditions, digital transformation, international integration, and societal demand constitute important opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of managing this process.

### **2.8.4. Challenges**

## **Conclusion of Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 analyzed junior faculty members' professional competence, their professional competence development through mentoring, and the management of this process in the higher education institutions covered by the study. The survey findings indicate that mentoring has been implemented and has had some initial impact; however, it has not yet become a professional competence development mechanism with clearly defined objectives, pathways, resources, and evaluation procedures.

With regard to professional competence, junior faculty members demonstrate a certain foundation in teaching, social and community engagement, and technology application, but their competence development remains uneven. The most notable limitations are found in research, academic publication, independent research capacity, technology-supported personalized learning, the design of assessment for learner development, and the generation of broader academic and professional impact.

In terms of professional competence development through mentoring, mentoring activities mainly support tasks closely related to teaching, such as lesson preparation, classroom organization, peer observation, feedback, and experience sharing. However, longer-term competences, including research, publication, digital

transformation, engagement with academic and professional communities, and continuous professional development, have not received adequate attention.

Regarding enabling conditions and management, mentoring still depends heavily on the individual commitment, experience, and personal arrangements of faculty mentors, while time, resources, tools, funding, recognition policies, and mentor training remain limited. Although planning, organization, direction, monitoring, and inspection have received some attention, weaknesses remain in specifying objectives, developing competence pathways, coordinating resources, building learning communities, establishing evaluation criteria, using feedback data, and making results-based adjustments.

The influencing factors reveal a notable paradox: quality assurance, international integration, leadership commitment, and the demand for faculty development create clear pressure for change; yet implementation capacity at the school/department level, role allocation across management levels, a learning-oriented culture, guidance systems, and implementation resources remain insufficient.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR JUNIOR FACULTY MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MENTORING IN VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

#### **3.1. Foundations for Proposing Management Measures for Junior Faculty Members' Professional Competence Development through Mentoring**

The management measures proposed in this dissertation are grounded in the integration of theoretical foundations, empirical findings, and the current development context of Vietnamese higher education. National policies and strategic orientations for higher education development not only reflect the system's reform priorities and development requirements, but also provide an important basis for formulating appropriate management measures in the current period of higher education reform.

#### **3.2. Principles guiding the proposed measures**

##### ***3.2.1. The principle of ensuring systemic and coordinated management***

##### ***3.2.2. The principle of ensuring relevance, practicality, and feasibility in management***

##### ***3.2.3. The principle of ensuring flexibility and personalisation in the management of competence development***

##### ***3.2.4. The principle of outcome orientation and sustainable development***

##### ***3.2.5. The principle of strengthening technology application and digital transformation in management***

#### **3.3. Measures for managing the professional competence development of junior faculty through mentoring**

Grounded in the theoretical foundations of managing the professional competence development of junior faculty through mentoring, the findings from the situational analysis presented in Chapter 2, and the broader context of higher education development in Vietnam, together with selected secondary data, Section

3.3 proposes a set of management measures aimed at enhancing *the effectiveness of junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring*.

**3.3.1. *Improving the planning of junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring based on a competence-based approach***

**3.3.2. *Organising and coordinating mentoring activities through a multi-level coordination mechanism for junior faculty professional competence development***

**3.3.3. *Innovating the direction and implementation of junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring based on core competencies***

**3.3.4. *Innovating the monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring based on an outcome-based approach***

**3.3.5. *Ensuring enabling conditions and strengthening the application of technology in junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring***

**3.4. The interrelationship among the proposed measures**

**3.5. Organising the validation of the necessity and feasibility of the proposed measures**

**3.5.1. *General introduction***

**3.5.1.1. *Purpose of the validation***

The purpose of the validation was to collect evaluative feedback from relevant stakeholders in Vietnamese higher education institutions on the perceived necessity and feasibility of the measures proposed in this dissertation for managing the professional competence development of junior faculty through mentoring. The validation results provided additional practical evidence for refining the proposed set of measures and enhancing their applicability to management practice in higher education institutions.

**3.5.1.2. *Validation participants***

The validation involved two main groups of participants, namely:

- Managers at institutional, faculty, and departmental levels;
- Junior faculty members, defined as those under 35 years of age with fewer than seven years of teaching experience.

The institutions selected for the validation were five of the eight higher education institutions that had participated in the situational survey reported in Chapter 2. This selection helped ensure continuity between the situational analysis and the validation of the proposed measures, while also enabling feedback to be collected from participants with direct knowledge of the management context of junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring.

**3.5.1.3. *Content of the validation***

The validation focused on two main aspects:

- First, whether the proposed measures for managing the professional competence development of junior faculty through mentoring were considered necessary in the current context;
- Second, whether, under existing conditions, these measures were considered feasible for implementation in higher education institutions.

#### 3.5.1.4. Validation method

The validation was conducted using survey questionnaires administered both in person and via Google Form. The results were analysed using descriptive statistics, including response frequencies, mean scores, and the ranking of each measure according to two criteria: perceived necessity and feasibility.

#### 3.5.2. Validation results

##### 3.5.2.1. Validation Results Regarding the Necessity of the Proposed Measures

**Table 3.1. Results of the Validation of the Necessity of the Proposed Measures**

No.	Proposed Measure	Highly Necessary	Necessary	Not Necessary	Mean Score	Rank
1	Improving the planning of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on a competence-based approach	140	36	4	2.76	1
2	Organizing and coordinating mentoring activities through a multi-level coordination mechanism	135	40	5	2.72	2
3	Innovating the direction of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on core competences	122	50	8	2.63	4
4	Innovating monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on an outcome-based approach	130	45	5	2.69	3
5	Ensuring enabling conditions and strengthening the use of technology in junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring	118	55	7	2.62	5
<b>Total number of participants in the validation: 180</b>						

*Note: Decimal commas in the Vietnamese original are presented as decimal points in English academic formatting.*

The validation results showed that all five measures were perceived as highly necessary, with mean scores ranging from 2.62 to 2.76 on a three-point scale.

3.5.2.2. Validation results regarding the feasibility of the proposed measures

**Table 3.2. Results of the Validation of the Feasibility of the Proposed Measures**

No.	Proposed Measure	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Not Feasible	Mean Score	Rank
1	Improving the planning of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on a competence-based approach	120	55	5	2.64	1
2	Organizing and coordinating mentoring activities through a multi-level coordination mechanism	115	60	5	2.61	2
3	Innovating the direction of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on core competences	112	62	6	2.59	3
4	Innovating monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on an outcome-based approach	105	70	5	2.56	4
5	Ensuring enabling conditions and strengthening the use of technology in junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring	95	75	10	2.47	5
<b>Total number of participant: 180</b>						

The validation results showed that all five measures were perceived as highly feasible, with mean scores ranging from 2.47 to 2.64 on a three-point scale.

*3.5.2.3. Validation results regarding the correlation between the necessity and feasibility of the proposed measures*

**Table 3.3. Correlation between the Necessity and Feasibility of the Proposed Measures**

No .	Proposed Measure	Mean Score (Necessity)	Rank (Necessity)	Mean Score (Feasibility)	Rank (Feasibility)	Rank Difference (d)	d <sup>2</sup>
1	Improving the planning of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on a competence-based approach	2.76	1	2.64	1	0	0
2	Organizing and coordinating mentoring activities through a multi-level coordination mechanism	2.72	2	2.61	2	0	0
3	Innovating the direction of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on core competences	2.63	4	2.59	3	1	1
4	Innovating monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring based on an outcome-based approach	2.69	3	2.56	4	-1	1
5	Ensuring enabling conditions and strengthening the use of technology in junior faculty members' professional competence development through mentoring	2.62	5	2.47	5	0	0
<b>Spearman's rank correlation coefficient: <math>\rho = 0.90</math></b>							<b>2</b>

Overall, the strong positive correlation between the perceived necessity and feasibility of the proposed measures indicates that the set of measures developed in this dissertation was formulated on the basis of a relatively balanced consideration of developmental requirements and implementation capacity. This result further strengthens the empirical and theoretical justification for implementing the measures in a coordinated, flexible, and contextually appropriate manner, aligned with the current management context of Vietnamese higher education.

### **3.6. Organisation of the experimental trial**

#### **3.6.1. *Rationale for selecting the experimental content***

Among the five measures proposed in this dissertation for managing the professional competence development of junior faculty through mentoring, the researcher selected Measure 3, namely *Innovating the Direction and Implementation of Junior Faculty Professional Competence Development through Mentoring Based on Core Competencies*, for the experimental trial. This measure plays an important role in translating planning and organisational mechanisms into specific management interventions that directly guide the process of developing junior faculty's professional competence through mentoring.

However, Measure 3 is a management measure with a broad scope of influence and comprises multiple components. Therefore, within the scope of the experimental trial conducted in this dissertation, the researcher selected one core component of Measure 3 - developing mentors' capacity to perform their mentoring role as the focus for implementation and assessment of its initial effects.

#### **3.6.2. *Purpose and hypothesis of the experimental trial***

##### **3.6.2.1. *Purpose of the experimental trial***

The experimental trial conducted in this dissertation aimed to assess the initial effects of a training programme designed to develop mentors' capacity to perform their mentoring role, as a core component of Measure 3. Through the trial, the dissertation examined the extent to which development-oriented leadership directions could be translated into concrete changes in mentors' awareness, skills, and practical competence in mentoring junior faculty.

##### **3.6.2.2. *Hypothesis of the experimental trial***

#### **3.6.3. *Experimental design***

##### **3.6.3.1. *Type and design of the experimental trial***

The experimental trial in this dissertation adopted a one-group pre-test/post-test design, without a control group. This design was selected to assess changes in mentors' capacity to perform their mentoring role before and after their participation in the training programme, which constituted a core component of Measure 3.

##### **3.6.3.2. *Scope and limitations of the experimental trial***

##### **3.6.3.3. *Controlling factors that may affect the reliability of the experimental results***

#### **3.6.4. *Participants and context of the experimental trial***

#### **3.6.5. *Experimental programme***

##### **3.6.5.1. *Objectives of the experimental programme***

##### **3.6.5.2. *Structure and content of the experimental programme***

##### **3.6.5.3. *Mode and methods of implementing the experimental programme***

##### **3.6.5.4. *Procedures for conducting the experimental trial***

#### **3.6.6. *Analysis of the experimental results***

### **Conclusion of Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 proposed a system of measures for managing the professional competence development of junior faculty through mentoring, grounded in the integration of theoretical foundations, findings from the situational survey, the context of higher education reform, and the characteristics of junior faculty within the



scope of the study. The system comprises five measures structured according to the logic of the management cycle for development: competence-based planning; organising and coordinating mentoring through a multi-level coordination mechanism; renewing leadership and direction based on core competencies; improving monitoring, supervision, and evaluation using an outcome-based approach; and ensuring enabling conditions while strengthening the application of technology.

The proposed measures are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. They reflect the fundamental management functions and are directed towards addressing the limitations identified in Chapter 2. The validation results showed that all five measures were rated as highly necessary and feasible; the Spearman correlation coefficient reached  $\rho = 0.90$ , indicating a high degree of consistency between the two criteria. However, this result is used as a source of practical reference and should not be generalised uncritically across all contexts.

The experimental trial of one component of Measure 3, conducted with 36 mentors at Foreign Trade University, indicated a trend of improvement after the training programme. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution, given the absence of a control group and the reliance primarily on self-assessment data. Overall, the key contribution of Chapter 3 lies in transforming mentoring from a support activity largely dependent on individual experience into a managerial tool for faculty development, with defined objectives, operational mechanisms, outcome evaluation, and enabling conditions.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. General conclusion**

In the context of Vietnamese higher education reform towards autonomy, international integration, and quality enhancement, this dissertation examined the management of junior faculty professional competence development through mentoring as an issue of both theoretical and practical significance. The dissertation systematised the theoretical foundations, clarified the key concepts, the structure of professional competence, the contents of management, and the influencing factors. It also investigated the current situation at eight public higher education institutions in the economics discipline.

The findings show that mentoring has begun to emerge but still lacks systematic implementation, coherent management mechanisms, and clear alignment with competence development outcomes. On this basis, the dissertation proposed five management measures following the logic of the management cycle for development. The validation and initial experimental results indicate that these measures are necessary, feasible, and have practical reference value.

### **2. Recommendations**

On the basis of the research findings, the dissertation recommends that mentoring should be approached as a management mechanism for developing junior faculty, rather than merely as an experience-based or spontaneous support activity. State authorities responsible for higher education should continue to refine policies

for faculty development, with particular attention to junior faculty as a future academic workforce. They should also encourage the integration of mentoring into policies on quality assurance and academic human resource development.

For higher education institutions, mentoring should be incorporated into faculty development strategies, with clearly defined objectives, content, coordination mechanisms, expected outcomes, and enabling conditions. This activity should be managed through a competence-based approach and linked to planning, organising, leadership and direction, monitoring and evaluation, management data, and technology application. In particular, institutions should provide mentor training in establishing mentoring relationships, identifying developmental needs, giving constructive feedback, supporting career pathways, and fostering reflective capacity.

At faculty and departmental levels, it is necessary to proactively identify the developmental needs of junior faculty, select suitable mentors, organise professional development activities, and connect academic and professional resources. In economics-related disciplines, particular attention should be paid to supporting applied research capacity, university-industry engagement, scholarly publication, knowledge transfer, and technology application. Mentors should act as developmental facilitators and supporters, rather than imposing personal experience, while junior faculty should actively define their goals, engage in self-assessment and reflection, and seek opportunities for development. Future studies should expand the survey scope, conduct longitudinal experimental studies with control groups, and further examine the application of technology in the management of mentoring practices.

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