

## Examining the socialization of new faculty members through the cultural lens

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### ABSTRACT

The study explores new faculty socialization in Vietnam. At the same time, it seeks to understand the organizational culture of institutions of higher learning in Vietnam, particularly teacher education universities, through the dimension of socialization. An illustrative case study is used as it helps to focus on understanding a phenomenon in a given context-new faculty socialization in a Vietnamese university-especially when this phenomenon is as complex as the organizational culture whose parts socialization partially represents. The study also introduces the application of the three-level theory introduced by Schein to investigate matters regarding socialization, considered a dimension of organizational culture. The research showed that socialization mainly depends on the departments, as well as the learning history, skills, and proactivity of the faculty members. The institution has few strategies and activities to help new academics integrate into the work environment. From the organizational-culture perspective, there are various factors that influence the socialization process and are considered fundamental including norms for teacher trainers and hierarchical culture within the university.

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### 1. Introduction

Numerous studies concern socialization in an educational environment, in general, and in the context of higher education, in particular (Jennifer, 2018; Pham, Nguyen, Ho, Hoang, & Pham, 2020). In the domain of higher education, socialization is of critical importance to faculty members. Adapting to higher education is a stressful and even overwhelming process for newcomers who must strive to meet institutional expectations and create their own professional values (Lichty, 1999). Hence, socialization can be a crucial step in preparing future lecturers to enter the academic environment (Stoerm & Baaska, 2012). Moreover, the ways that institutions of higher education providers to address faculty socialization could determine how satisfied, motivated, professional, and effective these individuals are (Austin, 2002; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Obviously, the success of various efforts, such as teaching and research activities of lecturers, is also contingent upon their acculturation to the new workplace (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Integration into academia is stressful, and successful socialization can also help to reduce the anxiety that novices must experience (Austin, 2002; Bowman, Klossner, & Mazerolle, 2017).

As many researchers define it, socialization is usually a process through which individuals learn and use the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and expectations of a group in a particular community or organization, to effectively participate in that community or agency (Hayden, 1995;

Tierney, 1997). Young faculty members, integrating into the new university environment with different cultural contexts, require multiple types of support from departments and groups, including opportunities for networking, social interaction, and managerial support. Thanks to these supportive measures, newcomers can incorporate values of the organization and contribute new values in their turn (Kondakçı & Haser, 2019).

Examining socialization in the higher education sector, Tierney (1997) associates it with organizational culture. His argument is, on the one hand, that new faculty learn the culture of the university, including “how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to succeed or fail” (Tierney, 1997, p. 4). On the other hand, they contribute to forming the meaning of the culture of the organization, through various kinds of interaction with other organization members and even with the profession. In other words, socialization is a mutual process where newcomers make impacts on their organization and vice versa (Austin, 2002; Walker, 2008). In another work, Tierney and Rhoades (1994) also affirm that the elements of organizational culture coexist with the socialization process since it eventually leads to assimilation and homogeneity. Previously, Tierney had also declared that socialization is one of among various dimensions of a university’s organizational culture (Tierney, 1988).

In the academic year 2018 - 2019, the total number of full-time faculty members in Vietnamese higher education institutions was 73,312 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018). Although the levels of academic qualifications have increased considerably, an effective system of talent management for yielding and cultivating outstanding academic staff is still absent (Nguyen, 2020, 2021). Concerning socialization in the context of higher education, there is almost an absence of studies exploring this topic, especially from cultural perspectives. In fact, when the context is larger than Vietnam’s, in developing countries and such Asian countries as China, the majority of studies focus on the socialization of undergraduate students and doctoral students, rather than of new faculty members (Weidman & Deangelo, 2020). One of the few research works on the subject is by Le (2016), which reveals some relevant aspects of investigating the nature and significance of academic culture and the formation of academic identity in the higher education system in Vietnam. The research indicates that the types of organizational socialization at the four public institutions selected primarily come from the quality of the working relationships established in each department. The institutions themselves are said to lack impacts on this domain. In other words, “informal processes of organisational socialisation therefore prevailed” (p. 84), without any deep analysis of the reasons for this situation.

Taking these gaps in the literature into account, this study aims to understand the current situation of socialization of new faculty members in the cultural context of Vietnamese universities, as well as the elements necessary for their ability to meet the cultural requirements for integration into this environment. Achieving these goals can occur through finding answers to the main research questions: “How do new faculty members socialize with their institutions?” and “What and from whom new faculty members learn from their organization for their socialization?”

The research aims to contribute a different approach to considering the socialization of lecturers, namely, reading socialization from a cultural perspective. The majority of studies suggest that integration is about learning and using the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of a group in a certain community or organization, but they do not state what those are and how to find these implicit items for use. This study hopes to fill that gap through this approach. The findings from the illustrative case study can also add more detailed information on literature, currently lacking, about faculty socialization and organizational culture of Vietnamese higher education.

## **2. Theoretical framework and research methodologies**

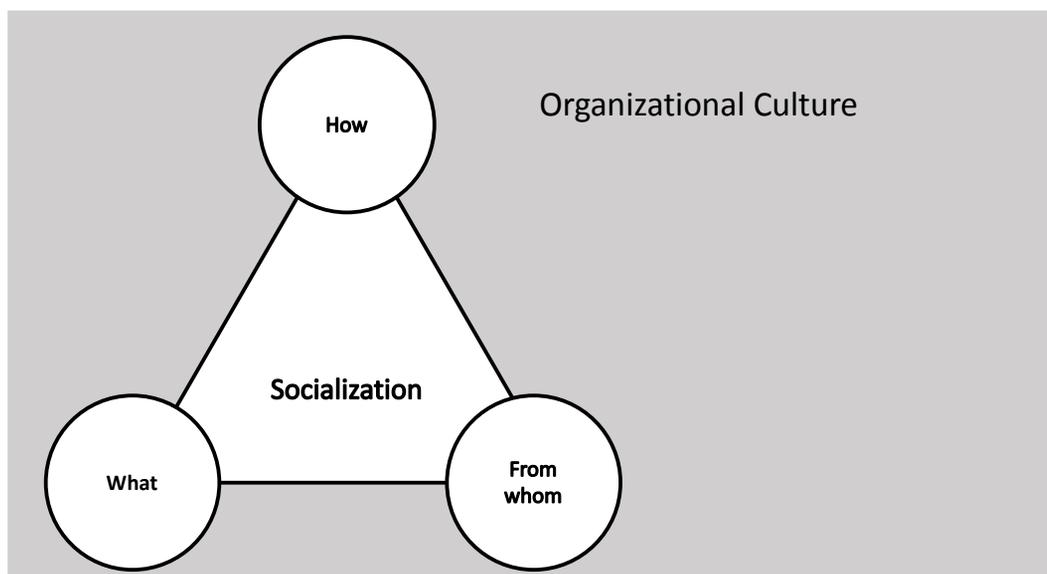
### ***2.1. Theoretical backgrounds and framework***

Theories concerning the relationship between individuals and their organizations with the presence of cultural elements can be found in studies in the fields of management, organization, culture, etc. (Ryan, Healy, & Sullivan, 2012). Specifically, sociocultural researchers have developed the theory of social identity. Pioneering theorists such as Tajfel and Turner have suggested that individuals will rely on comparisons of their characteristics such as knowledge, goals, values, emotions, age, gender, race, and status with others' in order to fit in or separate themselves from a certain group and to form an identity (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Having identified themselves as belonging to this group, individuals, through various activities, will increasingly integrate and engage with other members, the group, and the organization. Institutional theories are also used commonly to examine the relationship between individuals and their organizations. According to Scott (2008), institutions are made up of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars. Specifically, regulative pillars denote rules, regulations, and mechanisms of the organization, which the members have to obey. Normative pillars consist of values and norms that show how an organization member should think and do. Cultural-cognitive pillars are "the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made" (Scott, 2008, p. 57). As can be seen, many aspects of organizational culture such as taken-for-granted values and beliefs which influence the organization members' ways of thinking and doing are revealed through this theory. However, these theories only mention organizational culture as a part of many factors affecting the integration into the organization of individuals instead of focusing on analyzing it with various features. While the matter of organizational culture has not been deepened, the application of these theories requires the examination of a wide range of factors such as staff psychology, personal identity, policies, rules, etc., many of which are not the focus of this study.

To investigate faculty socialization, this study utilized the theory by Schein (1990, 2017), which deeply analyzes theoretical matters related to the organizational culture-the lens through which this research intends to view examining faculty socialization. This theory considers three levels of an institution's organizational culture, including artifacts, values and beliefs, and assumptions, and it "is widely-cited in the higher education literature and forms the conceptual basis for many studies of culture" (Smerek, 2010, p. 392). Level 1 of Schein's (2017) theory of organizational culture, "Artifacts", is composed of the established physical and social circumstances of an organization that can be heard, seen, or perceived when a person has interactions with the organization, such as written and spoken language as well as jargon used in an organization, office layout, dress codes, norms of behavior, and rituals. People outside the organization as well can perceive these artifacts but have difficulty understanding their meanings without further investigation. Hence, there is a popular practice that studies organizational culture first examine artifacts, and investigate their symbolic meaning to the staff afterwards (Schneider, Ehrhart, & William, 2013). As indicated by Schein (2017), Level 2 of organizational culture, "Values and Beliefs", is composed of attitudes, strategies, goals, ethical and moral codes, philosophies, beliefs, and values. In comparison with Level 1, Level 2 is about an understanding of what is expected to be, "as distinct from what is" (Schein, 2017, p. 29). However, espoused values and values in use may differ. Hence, the exploration of a deeper degree of culture is required. Level 3, "Basic Underlying Assumptions", is the deepest and most significant level of organizational culture, allowing for prediction of behavior (Lim, 2016). According to Schein (2017), this is "the essence of culture or its DNA" (p. 28), which has "become so taken for granted that you find little variation within a social unit" (p. 31). Thus, a thorough and comprehensive

understanding of the organizational culture and what the two other levels mean requires investigating basic assumptions, to see why the organization members have certain behaviors and beliefs (Schneider et al., 2013).

To explore one of the aspects of the organizational culture of Vietnamese universities-socialization, a framework proposed by Tierney (1988, 2008) was used for this study. According to Tierney (1988), a university's organizational culture is made up of many dimensions and one of them is socialization. As such, it can be seen that this framework directly addresses the socialization aspect in a relevant context that the study wants to understand-the university environment. The framework also considers socialization as one of the primary dimensions of organizational culture besides environment, mission, strategy, information, and leadership. Specifically, Tierney (1988, 2008) addresses three main aspects when considering socialization, including how people learn about the organization, what they learn from the organization for their socialization, and from whom. The theoretical framework of this research is illustrated as follows.



**Figure 1.** The theoretical framework

In summary, this study uses the theory by Schein (1990, 2017) to understand faculty socialization in Vietnamese universities-a dimension of the university's organizational culture. Some major aspects of this dimension, which Tierney (1988, 2008) provides, include the ways individuals get to know about the organization, what people learn, and whom they learn from. The information that the answers to these questions provide are signals to enable people to realize what the organization values and beliefs, and how they should act (Tierney, 1988). Given the relationship between socialization and organizational culture, the attention to only one of the different dimensions of organizational culture not only help deeply investigate the selected dimension but also "enables an analysis of the interconnections that exist in organizational life and encourages participants and scholars alike to investigate ways to strengthen culture and highlights how the ignorance of culture can stymie innovation." (Tierney, 2008, p. 28).

## **2.2. Research methodologies**

Case-study research helped to answer the research questions and to focus on understanding a phenomenon in a given context - i.e., new faculty socialization in a Vietnamese university-especially when this phenomenon is as complex as the organizational culture whose parts socialization partially represents (Yin, 2014). Rather than providing generalizable information, an illustrative case study can make the unfamiliar familiar, prevent oversimplification of real-world

situations, and provide the reader with a common language about the topic (General Accounting Office, 1990).

To select interview participants, this research used both snowball and purposeful self-sampling approaches. Using these ways, the study selected samples according to the criteria developed for the study to make sure that suitable participants are chosen. This appropriate selection can help in meeting various targets of the research, respecting unmatched characteristics of the study, and addressing research problems (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). To be more specific, the participants comprised full-time lecturers at the chosen university for at least two years, long enough for them to have gained insights into the organization's culture after completing a mandatory one-year probationary period for most of the new instructors (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018). The study required that they come from different departments within the institution, to ensure the comprehensive reflection of the socialization, as well as the organizational culture. The research also tried to secure the participation of both male and female lecturers.

Eight participants from a public university that provides both teacher and nonteacher training programs met the criteria. They were Vietnamese lecturers who had worked at the university for at least four years in various departments. To guarantee the correctness of the information, published profiles of the lecturers on the university's website were carefully checked before the interviews were conducted. At the interview, the participants were once again asked about their demographic information for cross-checking. Some ethnographic information about the interviewees is provided in Table 1. The number of participants stopped at eight as the information reached saturation after the seventh interview. This quantity is also within the range suggested by Dworkin (2012), who indicates that the number usually believed to be enough for a qualitative case study ranges from five to fifty. Concerning the matter of how many interviews are enough for a case study, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) also share the idea that it is possible to determine high-level, overarching themes from six interviews for a homogeneous sample.

**Table 1**

Basic information of the research participants

The codes of the participants	Gender	Tenure (years)	Departments	Used to study at any level of study at the university selected as a case study
Interviewee 1	Female	6	Primary education	Yes
Interviewee 2	Female	6	History	Yes
Interviewee 3	Male	8	Biology	Yes
Interviewee 4	Male	5	History	No
Interviewee 5	Female	4	Special education	Yes
Interviewee 6	Female	5	Chemistry	No
Interviewee 7	Female	5	English	Yes
Interviewee 8	Female	7	Special education	Yes

Source: The researcher's data analysis

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) state that researchers frequently use two approaches for thematic analysis in qualitative research, namely, deductive and inductive approaches. The former way involves prioritizing themes before conducting an analysis based on a literature review and the latter denotes seeking emerging themes during and after analyzing data. This research used the deductive approach in which the main themes were created based on the three aspects of socialization in need of investigation as presented in the theoretical framework: how people learn about the organization, what they learn for their socialization, and from whom. To be specific, the recorded interview information was typed and sent to the research participants to check for accuracy and make corrections if necessary. No transcripts were requested to be modified. These transcripts were then carefully read and coded based on three general aspects proposed in the theoretical framework. After that, the information (phrases, sentences, or paragraphs) with the same code was copied and put into one theme in the three main themes. In each theme, the information was further read and classified so that it could be grouped into sub-themes if possible or adjusted (removed or moved to another theme). All of the themes were also compared with each other to make sure the ideas belonged to the appropriate theme, find the relationship between the themes, and create new themes if any.

### **3. Findings**

#### ***3.1. Guidance on faculty socialization is mainly the responsibility of the department***

Despite the fact that socialization is of significance to faculty members' attachment to their university and good job performance, as shared by a number of lecturers, the university does not take notice of this matter. Instead, it mainly depends on the department (according to six interviewees). All of the research participants stated that what the university guides is primarily related to professional knowledge and pedagogical matters. Even such a political and social organization as the Youth Union which specializes in organizing activities to assist early-career staff members and students in academic as well as political terms has provided a very small number of activities in this domain (Interviewee 2).

*"I think the university does not have many activities to help young lecturers integrate into the environment. For me, during the first two years, I did not know many other faculty members. Now I know a little more but not much."* (Interviewee 6)

*"I do not know what other departments are like, but in my department, when there is a new member, there will be an experienced lecturer assigned to guide this person. The guidance is both about expertise and the culture of the workplace."* (Interviewee 8)

#### ***3.2. Guidance on faculty socialization may include disparities among departments***

The support for new faculty socialization might reflect differences among departments. Lecturers in some departments are given opportunities and motivated to attend others' classes, given some tasks to help them interact with more staff members, and guided toward participating in student affairs and other activities organized by their department and other units. Some lecturers in the department provide this guidance voluntarily (Interviewee 2). In addition, when it comes to professional skills, novices receive encouragement as well as support, to better their qualifications, and supervision from a skilled faculty member(s) appointed for a probationary period (one year) (Interviewee 3). Nonetheless, some new lecturers receive almost no guidance from their departments.

*"Whereas there are departments in which new faculty are warmly welcome and given opportunities to share their opinions and meet others to help them quickly get used to the environment, there are sections that do not provide newcomers with opportunities to interact with and understand other members."* (Interviewee 3)

### ***3.3. Integrating into the university environment is more difficult than into the department***

Most participants shared that the integration into the department was not regarded as a serious challenge. It is much easier for those who had studied previously at the university. The university prefers those who were students of the department in recruiting lecturers, so these novices are already acquainted with the large number of lecturers in their unit. Since the university is not interested in faculty socialization, especially for their integration into the university environment as a whole, some lecturers hold the idea that compared to integration into the department, engagement with the university is much thornier and more tiring.

*“We may be excellent students but do not have many skills to become a good lecturer who can effectively manage classes, as we were not trained on teaching methods at the level of higher education during our student years. Instead, we just learned about the methods of teaching pupils and high school students. We do not know about the psychology of university students and how to work effectively in the university environment.” (Interviewee 1)*

Furthermore, although it seems less challenging for lecturers to socialize at the departmental level, in general, the majority of research participants shared the idea that whether socialization is successful and how successful it is “depend on what department it is” (five interviewees). In some departments, “lecturers must compete with each other for everything from professional development to scientific research and other aspects, such as rights and positions” (Interviewee 3). Similar to Interviewee 3, Interviewee 4 said that there exist “scrambles for teaching hours and titles” in some departments and thought that “I think sometimes this is also quite a harsh environment.”

### ***3.4. Socialization with colleagues and students is a “self-directing” and “do more” journey, smoother for those with acquired skills and established relationships***

Although some newcomers may have support from their department, they take the main responsibility for seeking ways to socialize with others, by observing other colleagues and experiencing different activities at their workplace, which all of the interviewees mentioned. Along with Interviewee 2’s opinion, information shared by Interviewee 4 clearly shows this feature.

*“They should attend seminars and other activities organized by the Youth Union, help others, participate in research projects, and join volunteering events. The similar behavior and attitudes toward their department are also important for new lecturers’ successful integration into the new environment.” (Interviewee 2)*

*“Sometimes the department also organizes some entertainment activities for lecturers and administrative staff, such as karaoke. Personally, I do not like karaoke because it is noisy and time-consuming. I never joined. One day there was one colleague asking me to join for fun. I felt it would be hard to say no to her, so I agreed. After the event, I could clearly see that my relationship with some colleagues had become much better.” (Interviewee 4)*

Not only are new lecturers expected to actively interact with others; they also must be “respectful and polite to others while working with them” (Interviewee 4). Besides, newcomers are to proactively get information about the individuals they are interacting with, their unit, their colleagues’ research orientation, and their institution’s main directions of development as well as merits and demerits (Interviewee 2). Apart from that, there exists a thought that “for young lecturers, it is natural for them to take charge of lots of work because young people have a lot of energy and enthusiasm to contribute to the development of the organization” (Interviewee 3).

To work effectively with others, newcomers must have personal skills; if these skills are not great enough, socializing is challenging for them. Interviewee 1 shared this viewpoint, stating

that “in the working environment, we need to have good communication skills to interact with others and create relationships because people in Vietnam traditionally work with each other based on relationships” (Interviewee 1). In addition, the mentioned skills seem to be more crucial since the institution provides new lecturers with almost no guidance on socialization and facilities necessary for this dimension, including a library on the central campus of the university and rooms serving purposes other than teaching (Interviewee 2).

Due to the job characteristics - i.e., working with learners-these individuals also contribute to new lecturers’ ability to socialize and the degree of socialization of lecturers. Put differently, lecturers must socialize with students. Therefore, new faculty members must find ways to comprehend “characteristics of the students of their department and of the university in general” (Interviewee 2). Interviewee 7 appreciated the quality and dynamism of the students, saying that “my university has a relatively high entrance requirement, so the capacity of the students in various fields is relatively good compared to many other institutions” (Interviewee 7).

*“Since students are very competent, active, and dynamic, lecturers must be active, enthusiastic, and strong, in order that students will respect them (...) If we do not understand students and are not respected by students, our research results, however excellent, are not accepted by them and cannot be successfully shared with them.” (Interviewee 2)*

### **3.5. Reasons for the existence of certain attitudes, beliefs, values, and expectations**

All of the interviewees believed that the existence of such attitudes, beliefs, and values at the university, as well as expectations for faculty’s doing and thinking in mentioned ways, result from this university’s long tradition of training teachers. That is why organization members are expected to have good professional knowledge, effective teaching methodologies, professional ethics (show mutual respect, support each other, and be able to work with different subjects appropriately, etc.).

*“Morality is always held in high regard. The reason for this is that, unlike many other universities, our organization is a teacher education university, which always expects lecturers to pay attention to morality. Vietnamese people think that the word “teachers” contains many ethical values. Apart from expertise, teachers are expected to behave in an appropriate way with their peers, their students and with the environs. As “the teachers of teachers,” lecturers of the university are assumed and demanded for possessing such characteristics.” (Interviewee 4)*

*“Once having great knowledge, we can complete our work. Once having our tasks done, we can affirm our presence in this environment.” (Interviewee 5)*

*“Since this is a teacher education university that trains high-quality human resources for the country, lecturers must have good professional knowledge and teaching methodologies. Besides their academic backgrounds, lecturers must actively participate in different activities and events such as workshops, seminars, and training courses to improve their competencies.” (Interviewee 7)*

Additionally, one of the underlying reasons for the establishment as well as the existence of the mentioned attitudes, beliefs, and values is that faculty members in this higher education institution show their respect for hierarchical order, including being respectful to those who have spent more time working at the organization as well as a higher position at the organization. This is why new lecturers should actively interact with and respect colleagues in their departments and in other units. Respecting the hierarchy is also associated with obedience to university decisions. All of the research participants considered it a matter of fact that they also abide by it.

*“Usually, lecturers have no choice but to comply with the university decisions as they are similar to “the law of the King.” If I want to have any complaint, I must give it to the department leaders who, after considering the content, sent this complaint to the unit in charge and/or the leaders of the university. Afterwards, these leaders or the unit in charge makes a final decision.” (Interviewee 5)*

#### **4. Discussion**

Various researchers note that to facilitate faculty socialization in a new environment, universities usually adopt a wide range of methods, depending on their circumstances, such as offering mentoring programs, orientation sessions, teaching seminars, developmental workshops, and social networks, which may include colleagues, mentors, and supervisors (Bowman et al., 2017; Tierney, 1997; Turner & Thompson, 1993). The lecturers who participated in this study also said that new lecturers should attend seminars, take part in activities the Youth Union organizes, support others, take part in research projects, and participate in volunteering events. Nonetheless, the interviewees found that the university does not provide much support in this domain, which is similar to what Le (2016) found. Investigating the formation of Vietnamese university lecturers’ academic identity, through interviewing 30 lecturers/leaders from four universities in the North of Vietnam, Le (2016) reveals that there are no actual induction programs that exist at these higher education institutions at the institutional level. Organizational socialization mainly exists in an informal form and lecturers feel a “family atmosphere” through relationships with colleagues (p. 85). In this study, department responsibility for faculty socialization is taken for granted. In reality, some departments offer certain types of activities to help new lecturers get familiar with the workplace more easily; others fail to offer this kind of help. These visible and concrete elements belong to Level 1 of organizational culture.

Successful socialization in this environment implies many expectations of new faculty members. From what they have experienced and observed, the participants shared the idea that to integrate into this working environment new members are required to actively communicate as well as work with other individuals in the university, through a wide range of activities. In other words, new members have to proactively socialize. To socialize in this environment, lecturers also need to work successfully with various subjects, including lecturers in their department, other academics in various departments, and students. Some researchers also advised that faculty members must take the initiative to integrate effectively into the new workplace. A wide range of ways to do so includes finding mentors and joining in activities that can provide them with opportunities to gain insights into values, norms, and other elements of the culture of the organization and its expectations for them (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Turner & Thompson, 1993). Organization members can reveal organizational aspects, the understanding of which helps new members understand the organization fully, then integrate into it more easily. Hence, newcomers must pay close attention to others (Golde, 2008; Mazerolle, Barrett, & Nottingham, 2016). Many researchers call individual initiative in integrating into the new environment “individual mechanisms” and consider them to be an important part of successful socialization, in addition to “organizational mechanisms,” the support from the organization (Mazerolle, Nottingham, & Coleman, 2019). Le (2016) also presents a similar picture in other Vietnamese universities. The individuals participating in her study said that, in order to integrate into academic life, they also need to learn how to work in groups, do research, teach, and establish professional relationship with other scholars in the department. The level of socialization is also believed to depend on faculty members’ disciplines. What the participants regarded as what new faculty members should do for their engagement with the organization are also elements of Level 2 of the organizational culture of the university.

While newcomers must seek ways to be able to socialize with other members, whether or not this process is successful mainly depends on each person's skills and proactivity. The recognition of appropriate ways to socialize with the organization is primarily a function of the lecturer's self-consciousness and exploration as well. Another factor that affects faculty socialization is their academic backgrounds. If integration into the university environment is tough for most new lecturers, socialization with the department will be easier for those who were students of the university. Returning to the department where they have studied, to work in the present, means that these newcomers bring with them information about, as well as relationships with, those who have lectured to them. This echoes other scholars' views. Austin (2002) and Bowman et al. (2017) share the idea that to integrate into the environment, some lecturers must resort to the foundations they have already formed and transform them into knowledge and agreement with their position in the new environment.

As shared by the research participants, their behavior, beliefs, and attitudes are guided by the conviction that faculty members at teacher education universities are models of professional knowledge, professional etiquettes, and teaching methodologies, and they must respect hierarchy and abide by the university rules and regulations. These things may lie in Level 3 - the deepest level of organizational culture. The values that a teacher training institution and its faculty believe they must preserve dominate much of the existing behavior, values, and beliefs, as well as expectations for newcomers. Probably, the focus on professional morality has caused faculty members to have certain ways of behaving, such as helping others with their work, respecting others, and taking responsibility for their tasks. Besides, a good command of professional knowledge and skills requires these teacher trainers to participate in different activities, and to develop themselves comprehensively through such activities as attending conferences and participating in research projects. Because of these norms, the lecturers also think that they must socialize with students through strong performance of their knowledge and teaching methodologies, to make the learners respect them, thereby leading to successful teaching. According to the interviewees, the beliefs that new lecturers must perform different tasks, respect current organization members, obey the university regulations and decisions, and proactively interact with other members are some manifestations of hierarchy. Therefore, to be able to integrate into this environment successfully, newcomers, in particular, and faculty, in general, must respect these values and beliefs.

The existence of these values attributed to faculty members of the selected university may come from the aim of education in Vietnam in general, namely, to change learners into good citizens in terms of knowledge and morality, as Phan and Phan (2006) mention. Hence, those in the teaching profession, playing the role of ethical guides or role models are taken for granted. With these missions and expectations, they "tend to develop themselves both in knowledge and morality to meet the social, cultural, and educational expectations as moral guides" (Phan & Phan, 2006, p. 136). These values probably reflect the philosophies of ancient Vietnamese education (around 2000 BC to 1 AD) and of dominant cultures in Vietnam, including Confucianism and Buddhism, which appreciate the role of "*nguoì thay*" (including teachers and lecturers in formal and informal environments) and pay attention to the moral roles of the teacher and the learner (Duong, 2002). When a teacher training institution is an illustrative case, everyone is highly likely to maintain these values since faculty members are "teachers of teachers". These characteristics of the university hierarchy differ from those that Alvesson (2004) reveals. Regarding the nature of work as well as the management and leadership styles, in such knowledge-intensive organizations as institutions of higher learning, degrees of staff autonomy is great and hierarchical divisions are nearly nonexistent. The existence of hierarchy in the organizational culture of this university may

be country-specific or unit-specific, believed to have derived from the influence of the Soviet management model (Jamil & Pham, 2019) and the Confucian ideas of relationships, such as between elder brother and younger brother, as well as between ruler and subject, the bases for how individuals behave in this culture to achieve humanism, harmony, and hierarchy (Starr, 2012).

## **5. Conclusion**

The results of interviewing eight lecturers at the university in Vietnam show that socializing with the new environment includes integrating with the university environment, in general, the department, and various individuals. Socialization mainly depends on the department and on academic backgrounds, skills, and proactivity of the academics. The institution has few strategies or activities for helping academics integrate into the work environment. Support from the departments is also voluntary and not always available in all departments. The research shows that for successful socialization, lecturers should actively interact with others, support others in their work, carry out different tasks, respect each other, know how to work with various stakeholders, have relationships with others in the institution, and improve their knowledge, teaching methodologies, and professional ethics.

The underlying assumptions of the organizational culture of the institution of higher learning, which causes new faculty members to behave in these expected patterns to fit with the environment, are norms for teacher trainers and the hierarchical culture within the university. Teacher trainers are seen as models for students and the general public, so they must pay attention to the improvement of their morality, professional knowledge, and teaching methodologies. Current lecturers also perceive new faculty as “younger brothers/sisters” who must respect them and assist them with their work. The newcomers also must abide by the university regulations, rules, and decisions, with no expectations that they will offer unfavorable ideas, similar to the behavior of the subject toward the ruler.

This reality causes difficulties for some new academics socializing with the environment. The obstacles are even greater for lecturers who did not study at the university and do not have many skills considered necessary for integrating into this environment. Therefore, to help new members successfully socialize in this environment, the institution must have supportive policies and activities. Since departments may have different characteristics, these activities should occur at the departmental level, with direction, supervision, and support from the university. The implementation of these supportive measures may correlate with cultural changes. Given that culture is a set of basic assumptions ingrained in the organization members, this changing process must be carefully planned, as “‘changing’ culture is so anxiety provoking” (Schein, 2017, p. 31).

## **6. Limitations**

Although some measures have been implemented to ensure that the findings of this study are trustworthy enough, it is significant to note that the findings are the personal point of view of the research interviewees in the particular setting-one of the common features of the case study method. In addition, the results from the interviews are only the first foundation for further understanding the socialization of lecturers from the perspective of organizational culture in practice when the quantity of research studies related to this topic in Vietnam is still limited. Further related studies with further design of interviews or questionnaires are needed to make this topic more comprehensive and in-depth.

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