
Well-being and Capability Approaches to Social Injustice in Internationalization of Higher Education: Evidence from Vietnam

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Abstract:

This mixed-method study investigated social injustice in higher education produced from the internationalized high-quality program (HQP) characterized by adapting the curriculum from prestigious universities abroad and employing English as the medium of instruction in Vietnam, based on White's (2010) well-being approach as well as Sen's (2001) capability approach. Using the questionnaire administered to 120 students and 30 lecturers and semi-structured interviews conducted with eight students in a university in Vietnam, the findings suggested that from subjective dimensions of well-being, the superior features of the HQP and pre-session English language training were perceived values of endowments that HQP students and their parents situated themselves in. That established a solid linkage to material dimensions reflected in the possibility of securing the economy after program completion. From the capability approach perspective, although such a disparity in endowments was unjustifiable due to problematic program delivery, there were no different entitlements that might have led to social injustice, providing that students of any program could fulfil their education. The issue of financial affordability relating to the HQP implementation has raised concern about unequal access to educational opportunities for all.

Keywords: High-quality program, Internationalized higher education, Endowments, Entitlements, Social injustice

1. Introduction

Education embraces its paramount importance as an indispensable instrument in preparing citizens to constitute a knowledgeable and skillful workforce that can succeed professionally in a globalized world. In response to globalization where an interconnected environment has been established for the flow of information and knowledge to one world community (Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007), a considerable need is to make effective investments in

education and training that could make knowledge accessible to future workers and promote applicable orientation to practical working environment (Le, 2014).

Higher education is an important element of this trajectory. Nation-states have gradually recognized their priorities over what aspects to allocate government expenditure for and regulate education policies to help countries grow their economic competitiveness (Khalf, 2011). One approach to achieving this, as to Khalf (2011), is grounded by the introduction of reforms in education policies, curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation in which one of the prominent examples refers to the comparative analysis and adoption of national curriculum, and pedagogic methods in response to globally standardized knowledge.

There is an emerging movement in which Vietnam tries to keep up with this development by offering higher education programs that would qualify their students for international labor markets. More private institutions have accordingly been established, changing the funding structure of higher education (Le, 2014). This has resulted in public schools being prompted to provide students with an education that is relevant to international standards. In response to this trend, several higher education institutions in Vietnam have developed educational programs as informed by globalized values of modern education. The Central Vietnamese University (CVU) (pseudonym) is no exception and offers, in similarity to many other higher education institutions in Vietnam, a high-quality training program (thereafter called high quality program and abbreviated as HQP) in several majors with higher tuition fees. Around 50 percent of lectures are held in English, which requires students to learn the curriculum in the global language, as well as speaking and logical thinking. The students are getting qualified to meet the requirements in both domestic and foreign enterprises by learning good-case practices from the integration of higher educational training programs of the world combined with the essence of higher education in Vietnam. The commitment to knowledge, thinking, skills, behavior, and attitudes is believed to bring added values and difference to learners. By only having 40 students in class, each student needs to participate more in discussions held in the lecture. The program is also taught by lecturers holding a PhD or Master's degree abroad. HQP students have the opportunity to study abroad because of cooperation in countries like the United States, England and Netherlands.

As the implementation of high-quality education programs often come with higher costs than regular education program, leading to more inequalities caused by social and economic reasons (Le, 2014; Rigg, 2016), financial access to higher education has emerged as a disturbing problem in Vietnam (Tran & Do, 2022). Although the HQP aims to offer high-quality education, this seems to gain the part of the population that is capable of paying for them. The social injustice as the result of the HQP implementation have never been exhaustively examined, especially in the educational contexts of Vietnam. To shed light on this issue, this study attempts to explore the HQP at the CVU. By connecting it with well-being dimensions, the study aims to elaborate on the endowments that the program offers, how these may result in entitlements after completion; and the ways in which differences in endowments and entitlements have been associated with social injustice as the result of the HQP implementation. The research questions are as follows:

- What are the perceptions of students and lecturers of the HQP at the CVU?
- What are the reasons for investment in the HQP from the perspective of well-being dimensions?

- To what extent does the HQP implementation translate into social injustice from the perspective of endowments and entitlements?

2. Literature review

2.1 Internationalization of higher education

Internationalization of higher education is, from the historical perspective, characterized by attachment to progress in restructuring the national economy. According to Le (2016), the impact of globalization on higher education in Vietnam was attributed to reconstruction of the economy from being centralized to market-oriented since 1986 when Vietnam adopted the reform policy and raised demands to improve competitiveness in the Asia-Pacific region. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) investigated the effects of globalization process linked to modifications to education policies. They believe that both developed and developing nations are supposed to face challenges from this development. Nevertheless, the case is not one-size-fits-all. According to them, the globalization process has demonstrated more power in shaping its influences on developing countries, rather than developed countries in that developing countries are in the position of balancing their education systems with expectations set by global educational practices.

Internationalization of higher education can be characterized in three main strands. First, it is interpreted as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the goals, teaching/learning, research and service functions of a university or higher education system (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Due to globalization, higher education has been significantly transformed across the world, especially in developing countries to stress integration or infusion of an international dimension into teaching, research and service through policies and procedures (Torress & Schugurensky, 2002). In this light, curriculum design is restructured as to global standardized content, promoting the predominant use of English as medium of instruction for scientific communication, the growth of information technology and communications, international labour market for researchers and research integration (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Second, the internationalization of higher education is concerned with academic mobility of education agents (Knight, 2014). One trend is highlighted by the accelerating number of education providers delivering programs to students in their home, coupled with the establishment and operation of foreign educational and cultural institutions across the borders. Another trend is the undertaking of collaborative programs in partnerships among educational institutions in different countries that offer double or joint programs where students benefit from experience of international academic environment to improve future opportunities for employment. Third, internationalized higher education is associated with financial management of institutions being decentralized and privatized in accordance with Western practices (Hayden & Lam, 2010). Le (2014) found that universities have been made more democratic and autonomous in institutional mechanism, which enables the levying of tuition fees under governmental supervision. Further to this notion under the lenses of privatization of institutions, non-state schools have established low requirements for admission, offering fee-paying place of enrolment to fund their operations. Drawing on those aforementioned studies, there is a tendency for researchers to follow the pre-eminent model in problematizing internationalization of higher education where the historical development of nations is placed in center, surrounding reforms of higher education in light of globalization in terms of (a) curriculum reconstruction as aligned international content, (b) the import of English-medium programs and degrees, (c) specific initiatives including privatization

approaches and cross-border collaborative arrangements. Given the pervasiveness of this movement, its impacts were, however, only measured on the nationwide scale. There has been no specific investigation into how changing higher education practices at internationalization exert impact on learners of different backgrounds. This is the gap in literature that the study attempts to investigate further. Social injustice of the HQP as to discrepancies in the program endowments and how they lead to different entitlements is the target of the study, helping education policy makers and practitioners to develop insights into minimizing the negatives of such socio-economic impacts and enhancing the positives of this trend.

2.2 The Wellbeing approach

Wellbeing is viewed as a social process with material, relational and subjective dimensions (White, 2010). This section will give a brief outline of the concept of wellbeing. As White (2010) explains, this approach emphasizes a focus on individuals own perceptions and participation in their own lives, in addition to the objective measures of welfare. There are three key dimensions in this wellbeing approach, i.e., the subjective, the material and the relational (White, 2010).

- The subjective dimensions include two aspects where the first is based on people's perceptions of their (material, social, and human) positions, and on the other hand cultural values, ideologies, and beliefs, which is linked to the idea of "Feeling well".
- The material dimension of wellbeing includes economic prosperity, the standards of living, welfare, and assets, which is grounded by the notion of "Doing well".
- The relational dimension is split in the social sphere and the human sphere. The former includes social relations and access to public goods, while the latter is about capabilities, personal relations, and attitudes to life.

The three dimensions are put in a triangle to show that every dimension is interdependent. In other words, the different aspects of wellbeing are linked, and none of them exists without the others.

2.3 Capability approach as a conceptual framework

Amongst existing paradigms, the capability approach is concerned with social justice in education by emphasizing how education contributes to differential individual functionings as equal citizens engaging in their conduct of life. Considering increased social heterogeneity and inequality as major challenges of institutionalised educational processes, the capability approach to 'just education' is argued to be more appropriate than the conventional alternative, i.e., a Rawlsian 'primary goods' approach to 'allocative justice' where "the chief primary goods at the disposition of society are rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth" (Rawls, 1971, p. 62). Rawls' approach only concentrates on the resources-based evaluation of well-being to individuals' equal opportunities; in other words, "on means to freedom, rather than on the extent of the freedom that a person actually has" (Sen, 1992, p. 81).

In response to this shortcoming, Sen (1992; 1999; 2009) proposes a freedom-based approach. Under this umbrella, a person's life is a combination of various doings and beings (i.e., functionings) and it requires assessing the substantive freedoms (i.e., capability) to understand the life one has reason to value (Sen, 2009). The quality of life, deprivation, inequality and injustice is, therefore, not based on resources one possesses, but rather associated with his substantive freedoms to evaluate the implications of individual well-being and respective consequences on social arrangements attached to capabilities, i.e., real opportunities or

freedoms people have to achieve what they value in life (Sen, 1992; 2009). Central to this approach is the conversion of resources (i.e., instrumental means) into genuine ends of the individuals concerned (i.e., the intrinsic value these resources are deployed for).

A further understanding of this can be further explained through Sen (2001) distinguishing between endowments and entitlements. Each individual can have endowments such as education, labour, land and savings. That is linked to the subjective, material and relation dimensions of one's well-being according to White's (2010) well-being approach. Grounded by these endowments, each individual can translate these assets into goods. In other words, entitlements can be seen as capability to claim resources in the context of the society (Farvaque & Bonvin, 2004). It is maintained that individuals and their communities should be entitled to decide for themselves about the capabilities that they value since "in this view, the good life is partly a life of genuine choice, and not one in which the person is forced into a particular life" (Sen, 1999, p. 45). Reflecting on more complex functions such as happiness or participation in communal life, Williams (2002) additionally suggests that the overall fulfillment of these functions might be contingent upon such driving forces other than equality of resources as one's attitudes to life and ambitions.

Taken together, by combining White's (2010) well-being approach and Sen's (2001) capability approach, this study shed light on students' endowments from the HQP, i.e., the resources that students could claim from their education and that were linked to the subjective, material, and relational dimensions of their well-being as well as their entitlements to the HQP, i.e., the opportunities they could derive from realizing their claimed educational resources. By viewing the evidence of endowments and entitlements in comparative light, the study attempted to associate it with social injustice as the result of the HQP implementation.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study combined both qualitative methods and quantitative methods to provide more in-depth elaboration. It specifically adopted the sequential mixed method to "answer research questions that may evolve as a study unfolds" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 777). The qualitative method was concerned with subjective understandings, while the quantitative provided statistical descriptions of the research question (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003) to give a thicker data description. Semi-structured questionnaires were initially employed and administered to the focused groups of students and lecturers. All quantitative measurable indicators were collected in percentage to exhibit their mainstream perceptions of the HQP. Following that were semi-structured interviews with two randomly selected groups of students, one from the regular program, and the other from the HQP. This component added more subjective answers to the research in depth, being opened up for unpredictable and spontaneous answers giving crucial information for analysis.

3.2 Participants

The research targeted both students and lecturers at an economics institution member of the CVU. The institution was chosen because it was easy to establish contacts within the university beforehand and have consent from gatekeepers. There were 120 students responding to an online questionnaire in mid-March, 2022, 62% of whom enrolled in the HQP while 38% of whom pursued the regular program. Eight of them as senior students participated in interview sessions one week after having responded to the questionnaire at the researcher's request, with

four students pursuing regular programs and the other four pursuing the HQP. They were all encoded from P1 to P8 (Table 1). Student interviewees were selected against random sampling which is convenient, inexpensive and time-saving (Salkind, 2006). There were 30 lecturers responding to an online questionnaire in mid-March, 2022. Of all the surveyed lecturers, 45% of them taught for the regular program and 55% of them taught for both high-quality and regular programs; 62% of them earned Master's degree and 38% of them obtained a PhD degree. All the lecturers in the HQP received their education abroad, which affirms its legitimacy.

Table 1. Demographic information of student interviewees

Program mode	Participants	Major
High-quality program	P. 1, 2	Foreign Trade
	P. 3, 4	Finance
Regular program	P. 5, 6	Finance
	P. 7, 8	Foreign Trade

3.2 Data collection methods

3.2.1 Questionnaires

To get an understanding of perceptions of HQPs and what are influential in the decision to invest in HQPs at the CVU, two electronic questionnaires were administered in addition to interviews (Appendices 1 and 2). Questionnaires place less pressure on respondents than interviews which may involve bias and cause difficulty due to straightforward answers (Gillham, 2008). Two separate questionnaires made for lecturers and students were created online and only accessible via students' and lecturers' institutional email addresses to ensure the targeted respondents.

The questionnaires were developed and validated through the three steps as follows.

(1) Questionnaire items were generated based on the features of the HQP and in light of the underlying content of the RQ to be answered.

(2) The questionnaires were initially given to different groups of participants for their comments on content relevance, representativeness, and appropriateness. They were then trialed with a group of non-targeted lecturers and students from both HQP and regular program. These participants were timed to see how long it took them to answer the questions. They were also invited to comment on the content coverage, clarity, and format of the questionnaire. As a result of the initial trialing, a number of improvements were made regarding the format, the clarity of the instructions, and the wording of questions.

(3) The revised questionnaires were piloted with two lecturers teaching HQP and another two teaching the regular program as well as two students from HQP and another two pursuing the regular program. They were asked to answer the questionnaire in the first author's presence, explaining how they understood each item, what their answers were, why they chose those answers, what words or expressions could be used for better clarity, whether the questions were appropriate, and what other questions should be included. A few further changes were made to the questionnaires, for instance, the use of some more natural and culturally acceptable expressions.

3.2.2 Interviews

By interviewing both high-quality and regular program students in the same major, it is possible to gain a certain level of diversity in perceptions. The interviews were semi-structured, with the interview questions being formulated based on the emergent themes from the questionnaire and the research question to aim at producing valid findings, allowing for follow-up questions to generate more in-depth. The purpose of having semi-structured interviews was to open up for a flexible discussion that went beyond the set questions (Willis, 2006). The interviewees were separated by either high-quality or regular program during the interviews and the interaction was done through direct communication. By separating the students during the interviews, it was less likely for them to withhold their honest answers to avoid any uncomfortable situation.

Due to limited time connecting with the students, group interviews in the length of approximately 30-45 minutes with a semi-structure were scheduled. This may have had an impact on the answers, in contrast to having individual interviews where their answers would not have been affected by other students' answers. However, it was manageable to extract crucial information for research questions. The participants from the regular program answered in both English and Vietnamese depending on their ability to answer certain questions in English while the HQP students answered mainly in English.

"Interviews are used to explore the meanings of people's worlds - the myriad of personal impacts of impersonal social structures, and the nature and causes of individual behaviour" (Sullivan & Brockington, 2003, p. 57). In this sense, spontaneous and non-verbal reactions to some sensitive questions were also observed as they, to an extent, shaped our understanding of the students' perceptions of the programs. To exemplify this, where some of the regular program students were asked about their own judgment over the HQP's quality, they would refuse to answer the question, giving the impression that they were uncomfortable talking about the HQP implementation.

3.3. Data analysis procedure

All the questionnaire items were processed in SPSS 23. To ensure item reliabilities, Cronbach Alpha for all the items was calculated to see whether it fell into the acceptable range from 0.7 to 0.94 (Taber, 2018). Cronbach Alpha analyses showed that all the items had satisfactory Cronbach Alpha from .83 to .91. The thematic approach (Creswell, 2013) was adopted to analyze interview responses. Firstly, the interview transcript was read repeatedly. Subsequently, individual codes as "a feature of the data that appear interesting to the analyst" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88) were identified by the eyeballing technique (Bernard, 2000) by which relevant texts were marked with different colours, named with corresponding themes, and accompanied by lines and arrows to associate with their meaning (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The explored themes generated from the interview accounts were aligned with the research questions to be addressed.

Data gathered from the questionnaires and the interviews were analyzed and discussed by applying relevantly selected concepts and theories from the literature. To answer the questions about the perceptions of the HQP among students and lecturers and the factors influencing the decision on higher education investments, the wellbeing approach was used for analysis mainly because it reveals the extent to which the majority valued education as an investment for their wellbeing. The last research question is grounded upon the theory of Capability Approach to shed light on how the HQP creates social injustice.

4. Findings

4.1 Perceptions of the HQP

According to Table 2, 62% of both lecturers and students stated that the HQP laid a foundation for students to succeed in overseas education after graduation. The HQP provided a complete set of knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and presentation that are necessary for students' future job, with improvements in English skills as what the majority of lecturers and students agreed to be beneficial. The idea of developing English language proficiency was held by the largest 65% of students believing in how the HQP could strengthen their speaking and writing abilities in English. An average 60% of lecturers and students also answered that the HQP provided access to more choices of future employment.\

Table 2. Perceptions of lecturers and students about the HQP

Statements	Lecturers			Students		
	Totally agree/ Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree/ Totally disagree	Totally agree/ Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree/ Totally disagree
Graduates have more employment opportunities after studies.	65%	24%	11%	61%	26%	13%
Graduates stand more chances of success in overseas education later.	62%	28%	12%	62%	24%	14%
Graduates can work in the field that matches with degree specialization.	48%	31%	21%	46%	29%	25%
Students have a complete set of knowledge and skills for future jobs.	79%	11%	10%	60%	24%	16%
Students can develop the ability to use English proficiently.	72%	21%	7%	65%	26%	9%
Students are more encouraged to develop research skills.	48%	38%	14%	52%	37%	11%
Students receive support network from highly-qualified lectures.	72%	24%	4%	64%	25%	11%
Students are instructed to follow effective study methods.	38%	21%	41%	44%	29%	27%
English as medium of instruction leads to difficulty understanding knowledge.	62%	17%	21%	55%	23%	22%
Knowledge output and overall quality is not worth higher tuition fee.	69%	14%	17%	57%	26%	17%
Academic performance is affected by inadaptability to Western teaching and learning styles.	59%	24%	17%	46%	33%	21%

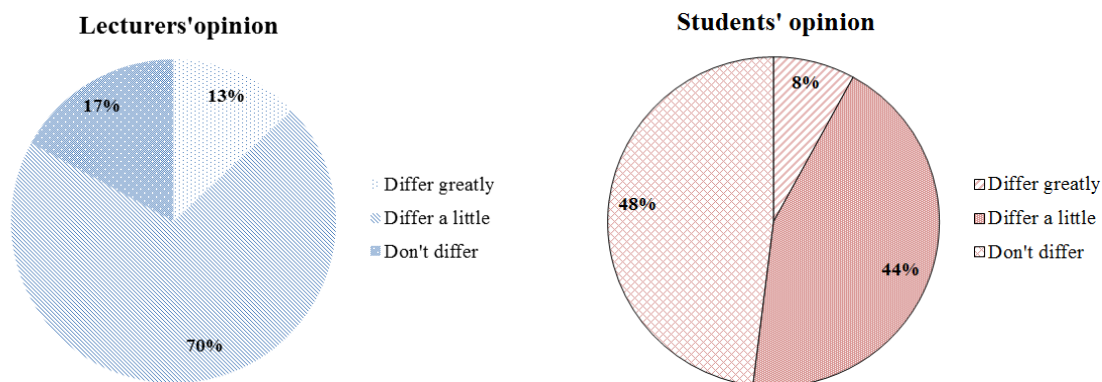


Figure 1. Opinions of lecturers and students on career prospects of both programs

However, according to Figure 1, there was barely to no difference in career prospects offered by the programs of both modes. The following extracts reflected some insights of students and lecturers into career prospects upon the completion of tertiary studies.

“If regular program students have good academic ability and make great efforts, they can still compete with HQP students of the same major, or even surpass them. The only thing that makes difference is additional credentials that students take afterwards, or foreign language proficiency, not the program at the university.”

(Lecturer’s response)

“The nature of work is the same, different abilities will demonstrate different performance of working. Students entirely study the same major and it should depend on how much autonomy they develop during education and their competence after graduation.”

(Lecturer’s response)

“I think there is not much difference in the quality of education that can lead to HQP students being superior to regular program students in terms of career prospects. No matter what program students pursue, they will have equal chances of good career prospects.”

(Student’s response)

“It depends on attitudes towards study, students’ adaptability to develop professionally in the actual work environment, and the level of commitment to a well-defined career after graduation.”

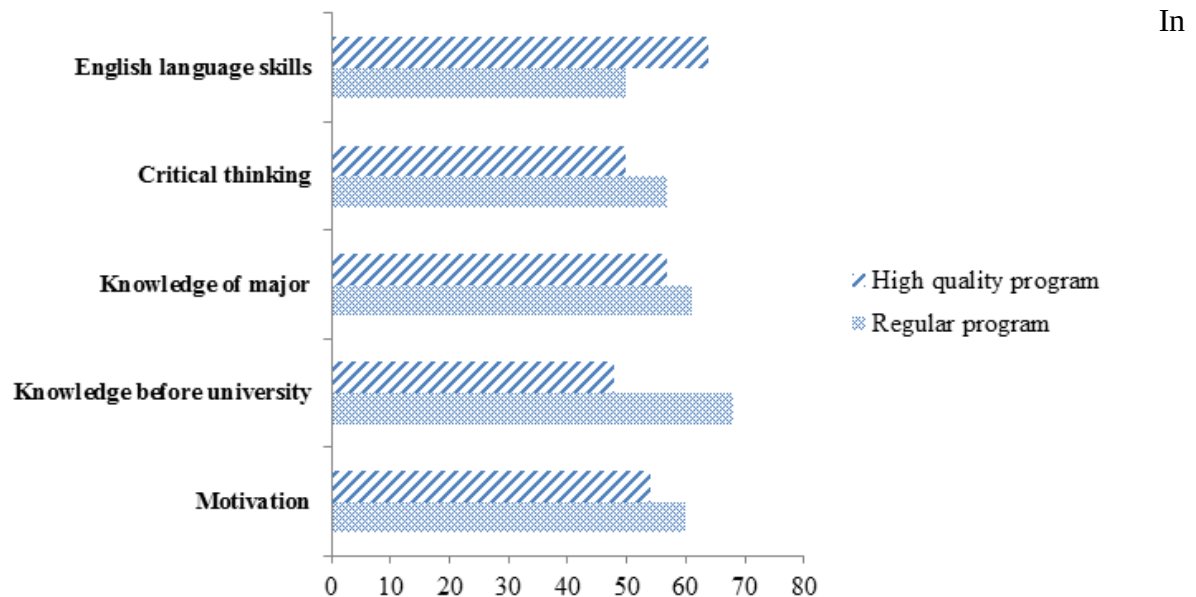
(Student’s response)

“The amount of knowledge that students are resilient to accumulate and how active they are in pursuing their career are decisive factors. In some cases, if students have good English proficiency, there would not be any notable difference as to who would be better off.”

(Student’s response)

“When it comes to job application, practical skills and working attitudes count more than academic knowledge. Regular program students, despite having no chances to access better study environment, should not mean having lower job positions.”

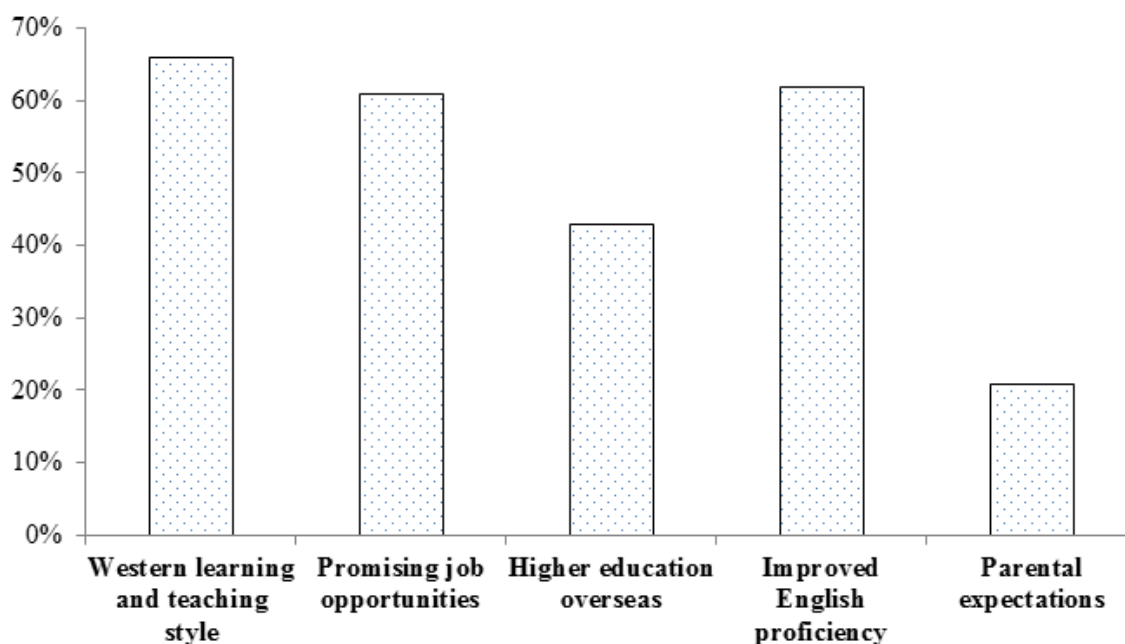
(Student's response)

Figure 2. Lecturers' evaluation on the regular and high-quality program

light of Figure 2, regular program students outperformed the HQP students in terms of foundational knowledge tested in national university entrance exam before tertiary studies. This fact showed the perception of lecturers that freshmen students of the HQP were less academically prepared for higher education after high school completion; and established their belief that the HQP requires lower eligibility and admission score in order to maintain good acceptance rate. Even though the HQP created more favourable learning environment, it nurtured lower motivation for the students. Lecturers' evaluation also indicated that HQP students did not cultivate knowledge as well as regular program students over the course of university studies; and the HQP students showcased less capacity for critical thinking. Referring to English language proficiency skills, lecturers believed that they proved more competent, which is exemplified by the following response. "English ability input of the majority of HQP students is weak and thanks to intensive training focus on English language improvement in the first three semesters, students get well-prepared for the core and specialized subjects in English".

4.2 Reasons for investment in the HQP

Figure 3. Reasons for investment in the HQP



Regarding doubled tuition fee, four interviewees studying the HQP stressed their background from financially secure families. When asked about if they ever intended to switch to the regular program, they responded without a concern relating to financial security, but with the anticipation that high study expenses payment will merit its superior features. “My mother doesn’t care about how much the tuition fee is because she always wants the best of quality for me so there was no need to convince them to take me to the program.” (P.1)

English as the medium of instruction for many specialized subjects is well-acknowledged as one of the HQP’s traction for investments. English has been described both as the prerequisite for higher education in Vietnam and the indispensable tool for professional experience. However, 12% of regular program students could not enroll in the HQP because of their fear for insufficient English ability and failure to pass the English placement test (Figure 4). Therefore, 62% of surveyed students were motivated by opportunities from the HQP to enhance English proficiency in general “as well-preparedness to accumulate knowledge of major” in particular (Figure 3). “The knowledge is the same as the regular program, but what adds up the program quality is that it allows students to enhance English use as part of classroom instruction.” (P.2)

With respect to future job seeking, this element makes significant difference to financial investment decisions. 60% of HQP students designated their university education in this manner because of expectations for promising working opportunities (Figure 3). “With the current program, it is good preparation for me to work in another country. I can get to firmly equipped with updated knowledge and skills from the experienced and highly qualified lecturing staff that necessitates future job performance.” (P.2)

Moreover, another aspect that makes sense of the increased investment in the HQP is the underpinned precursor making fellow students more qualified to succeed in pursuing overseas education as continuity, compared with the regular program. 66% of HQP students were

inspired by Western learning and teaching style in the student-oriented environment and 43% of them regarded the HQP as a medium for future plans of higher education overseas (Figure 3).

“I want to study overseas in England after graduation and become a financial analyst. This HQP is an important vehicle for me to realize this ambitious plan” (P.3)

“I would like to study more before I get a job, because once I have higher education, job application is easier. Right now, I feel quite assured to study Masters’ abroad either in Singapore or Australia after finishing my degree.” (P.4)

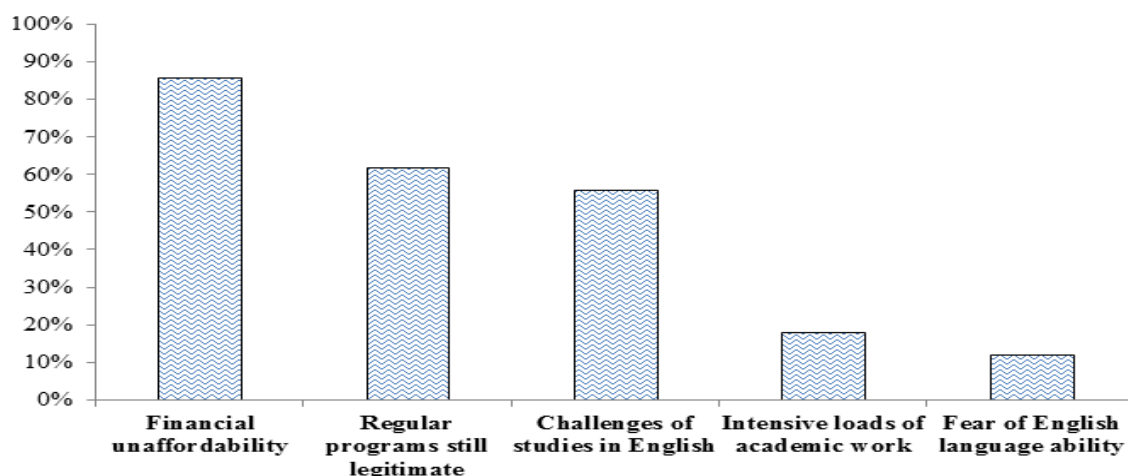
Even some interviewed students from regular programs also share the similar standpoints on how English-based curriculum could be able to facilitate students after graduation.

“Both programs have pros and cons, but I am convinced that the high quality program outweighs because schoolwork is conducted and academic knowledge is imparted in English, which greatly supports overseas studies.” (P.5)

In summary, several factors have elaborated on impetus behind financial decision on the HQP investment. Using English for teaching and learning has been a common explanation to various aspirations for future pathways, ranging from promising employment, working environment to further overseas education. The optimal environment for focused academic development has also been a contributor to the program selection.

Figure 4. Reasons against enrollments in the HQP

HQP



implementation, despite offering preferable features, remained controversial and open to criticism. 86% of students surveyed reflected that financial unaffordability was the compelling reason that discouraged them from pursuing it (Figure 4). Due to additional downsides of the program suggested as follows, social injustice in higher education investments have been made very distinct.

62% of regular program students found that enrollments in regular programs still guaranteed legitimate access to higher education with a satisfactory quality (Figure 4). The interview responses indicated that it seemed unnecessary and cost-ineffective to pay for double tuition fee, merely for approaches to English-instructed curriculum while many other alternatives remained accessible.

“I think high quality programs are made twice expensive, partly because of using English as language of learning and teaching. I don’t think they are worth it while I could manage certain amounts of free time to improve my English by further English training courses outside of school at much more affordable prices.” (P.5)

“We are sometimes guided to expand knowledge by looking for English learning resources and use them as reference materials. They help us a lot with English skills as well.” (P.6)

With regards to job application, regular program students put forward the idea that being able to have room for working experience paired with soft skill development should be indicated as a merit of regular programs in the successful pursuit of good jobs. From their perspective, it is one of the limitations facing HQP students who trade off those elements with more focus on accomplishing heavy schoolwork of readings and course assignments in English.

“I have the chance to grow active out of school settings and learn soft skills, which increases my attractiveness for internships and job vacancies.” (P.7)

“I have more free time to accumulate first-hand work experience and learn more of professional behavior. I can take other language classes like Chinese and Japanese which is beneficial to future job seeking in economics.” (P.8)

A number of academic aspects were, furthermore, found to widen the social injustice while the majority of regular program students sought to settle their study by spending money appropriately in the way they felt safe to get full understanding of academic knowledge. Comparing both programs, 56% of regular program students positioned their view that language barriers pertaining to English instruction would lead to challenges of understanding and acquiring knowledge (Figure 4).

“Teachers on the regular program speak and explain terminology in Vietnamese, which makes it easier to understand and get full knowledge. I have deeper comprehension of the major because we study in Vietnamese” (P.6)

That statement was exemplified by 62% of lecture participants and 55% of surveyed students displaying the attitudes towards the HQP that language complexity and unfamiliar terms would affect the acquisition of specialized knowledge as students have to study in English (Table 1). There have been worries from 18% of regular program students about the pressure of intensive readings and writing in the HQP, not to mention the adaptability to new learning environment (Figure 4). Western-based approach of study and teaching requires student-centeredness and self-autonomy to get knowledge for success, which is stated as the challenge by 46% of participating students who believe that academic performance could be downgraded in that sense (Table 1).

Put into another perspective, when asked about the scenario that if families with stronger financial capabilities would send their children to the HQP, 66% of the students and 62% of lecturers argued that families would likely make investments since they were convinced by the positive outcomes as intended. However, student interviewees from regular programs showed an opposite way of thinking, suggesting that the program did not deserve unnecessarily higher investment. This is because they believed overseas study could have been more dependable than the adapted program delivered in Vietnam.

“I would say it is a waste of money because if you have the finance needed, it would be better to invest in education in other higher educational institutions instead.” (P.7)

“If you have enough money, you probably would study abroad. The professors in schools abroad are better qualified than lecturers at [the CVU].” (P.6)

To conclude, the HQP has been translating into various directions of higher education investments, mainly resulting from financial affordability as the primary precondition. However, based on the opinions of regular program students, HQP implementation created social boundaries in what people intend to acquire from higher education and their decision was powered by both extrinsic and intrinsic agents. The former was connected to financial worries of expensive tuition fees, and unnecessarily demanding workload of study that restrains other opportunities. The latter originated from the appreciation for practical experience that should be concurrently accumulated with academic studies.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Internationalization of Higher Education and Well-being Dimensions

The subjective dimension indicates how the students and families feel about the higher education course, and which impact this exerts on the students. Among the interviewed students from the HQP, there was a ruling perception of their own position as more fortunate than the regular program students in terms of employment or higher education overseas upon the completion of their degree. The emphasis on a good quality education is also connected to the subjective understanding of living a good life. As an embodiment of beliefs at home, parents of HQP students with financial security placed higher values on their education in this manner, which prove how valued functionings as the students' good life are converted and derived from primary goods and resources as their education in HQP (Farvaque & Bonvin, 2004). A connection to the material dimension of well-being is established on the ground of economic aspects. In a logical sense, the accessibility to gainful occupation opportunities is inextricably linked to secure economy as the result of tertiary education at internationalized standards. One limitation in viewing this research under dimensions of well-being is the inadequacy of evidence to reveal relational dimensions on what social networks the two groups of students will possibly gain from attending the different programs. However, considering the ambition for working internationally among some HQP students, there could be relevance for a possible difference in which networks of professionals the two groups of students would value expanding.

5.2 Issues of endowments and entitlements at internationalization of higher education

As a great number of the HQP students made an informed decision on investing in their program based on their ambition of prospective employment or future pursuit of higher education overseas, the greatest discrepancy in endowments between the two programs seems to be the ability to learn good English. However, the findings reveals that it is not the program features that come to be questionable; but social difference in financial capabilities and students' intellectuality as well as weaknesses in program delivery are identified as three contributors rendering the program endowments unfulfilled.

HQP designers and school board adjusted lower admission scores released from entrance exams so that unsuccessful exam candidates affording high tuition fees could manage to place themselves in higher education, which is comparable to a characteristic of internationalized education stated by Le (2014). University admission process in Vietnam proves to be greatly competitive as the exam result determines if students are qualified to pursue their intended major stated in test application form before test-taking attempts. Successful test takers are

officially the most suitable and motivated students to study their major; and despite being automatically placed at mass regular training programs and informed of an alternative option as the HQP at the same time, they are inclined to be satisfied with the affordable mode of education because it secures their family's finance and affordability. This perception is aligned with the principle of capability approach wherein how one engages in the life he values is realized by understanding practical use-value and internal goods affecting their capabilities (Robeyns, 2006). As to the HQP, lessening admission requirements is considered as the compensation for high tuition fee while this practice also creates a win-win situation, making higher education accessible to those unqualified by the entrance exam from the beginning. It is such a short-sighted view to deny good intent of students who reconsider to take the HQP after their successful attempts in the national entrance exam so that they can acquire program benefits for future intentions of job or oversea education. However, on balance, accepting low achievers of test results and prior knowledge for university studies with demanding expectations of internationalized curriculum is problematic. As their education is empowered by strong financial capabilities of the family, not competence-based, choosing the inappropriate targets of people who cannot make full use of knowledge and skills from an optimized program has accidentally diminished the program's values and translated into unreasonable endowments of education for all.

It is also understandable that HQP providers are under the obligation to ensure their students are well-prepared for good command of English to address academic assignments and course activities efficiently. The research has proclaimed this element of the program as a component of internationalization in higher education suggested by Altbach and Knight (2007), depicting that HQP students can cultivate their English proficiency skills. However, in academic aspects, HQP students remain inferior to regular program students who appear to demonstrate stronger academic performance. Again, this stance can be traceable to lower academic ability on program admission that fails to guarantee the resilience for heavy academic workloads, especially in a foreign language. Even though they receive pre-session English immersion programs to progress with English ability, this additional training from higher educational services is paradoxically found to make them inferior in terms of knowledge acquisition and output, which proves the stance made by Dean (2004) that skill training provision, despite enhancing one's functioning, will not ascertain his enhanced capacity. In this sense, the program endowments are not fulfilled.

Even though the different endowments that students receive from the two different programs will presumably lead to social injustice in entitlements based on how the students envisage to embark on their career trajectory, either internationally or nationally, the perceived social injustice is not necessarily problematic, as long as the students are able to choose the program giving them the endowments that they value, which also connects to their overall wellbeing. Career prospects should be contingent upon on each student's navigation and not affected by the program itself. Students' attitudes towards formal study and genuine capability attached to real-life working conditions will largely identify the field of profession they will target and how much they may accomplish. Therefore, irrespective of the program enrollment, students will embrace equal chances as "different people need different types and different amounts of capability inputs to reach the same well-being" (Robeyns, 2006, p. 6). Although the HQP distinguishes itself with attractive features, it does not mean, in its entirety, that their students would surpass academically over regular program students to make further steps in the occupation title. One argument for this is based on curriculum content as curriculum designers

are found to be under the obligation to equip students equally with professionally acceptable standard of academic knowledge to build platform for future job intentions. It is believed that additional components of English as medium of instruction, or the priority to learn with highly-educated faculty member are not equivalent factors to lower job positions for regular program students. The difference in endowments as to the implementation of internationalized programs does not necessarily result in social injustice of entitlements, providing that the students are determined to cultivate the ability for success in the program of their choice. This idea, therefore, affirms the philosophy of the capability approach that “the resource a person has, or the primary goods that someone holds” may be very essential but still be “very imperfect indicators of the freedom that the person really enjoys to do this or be that” (Sen, 1980, pp. 37-38).

However, heightening the tuition fee of the HQP is an impediment to program’s accessibility and contributes to social injustice between the different programs caused by economic inequality (Rig, 2016), not by the ambitions of the students. Even though the HQP is perceived as an advantage in students’ academic future, everyone does not have access to this opportunity. By having a higher tuition fee, the program is made financially inaccessible to all, and that the equality of opportunity is being neglected. One can argue that the students living in low-income families would possibly never be able to get the same job opportunities as the students who could afford the HQP, limiting their ability to move up the social ladder. However, the results from our research showed how the perception of motivation, ability and will to study and work is more commonly valued than a high-quality education, as argued by Dworkin (2000), Williams (2002), and Stubbs (2002) that where there is a will, there is a way. This is a testament to inequality of educational opportunities not necessarily equivalent to social inequality even though Eleweke and Rodda (2010) concluded that inadequate entitlements to services may impede inclusion. Students educated in regular programs who do not claim the benefits of the HQP would in fact not be incapable of situating themselves in the job opportunities that students of internationalized programs were qualified for.

5. Discussion & Implications

In line with the findings above, implications can be given. If the issues of HQP delivery are to be mitigated, it is essential that university’s departmental leaders and program developers be committed to providing students with high-quality tertiary education regardless of their financial backgrounds. As Le (2016) argued:

The gap between the rich and the poor may enhance since more and more students from the middle class choose international programs while poorer students cannot afford the tuition fee of those programs (p. 33)

Bridging such a gap in access to higher education from financial perspectives might be achievable by fulfilling endowments expected by programs of any mode. In this manner, students who are only financially capable of enrolling in regular programs should be self-assured about how the program of their choice could be instrumental in preparing them to claim adequate resources and realize valued entitlements (Sen, 1999). Considering no notable discrepancies in job prospects perceived by students of both programs, prospective regular program students should not be intimidated by the sense of inferiority about their future entitlements when putting themselves in comparative light of those affording programs at internationalized standards. This might involve putting into place a comprehensive support network between teaching and learning in which lecturers might navigate their learners to

enrich personal repertoires of expertise and required competences out of the designated curriculum's content through introduction of professional good-case practices relevant to their majors.

The study indicated the issue of commitment to designated outcomes of internationalized higher education. Tran et al. (2014) pointed out the drive for internationalization of higher education in response to shortcomings of domestic higher education quality. However, student admission to the HQP is found with lower academic eligibility, which does not merit the difference in the program endowment and makes it open to criticism. In this light, the program managers should seek to ensure that the program delivery is intended for legitimate beneficiaries through raising academic requirements. As Le (2016) identified the navigation towards internationalized higher education at both national and institutional levels to ameliorate national academic quality and generate a high-quality workforce for integration into global scenes, the priority for selecting academically competent students will guarantee the endowments of the HQP being reasonably fulfilled and program graduates meeting international standards.

In conclusion, the majority of students and lecturers perceived that the HQP students would embark on a better future after their studies in terms of both overseas education and academic skills for future jobs while the HQP students commonly perceived that they would gain an advantage in securing gainful employment. The research, however, unveiled that career prospects had no differences in terms of which program the students enroll in. The HQP was in fact problematized with many weaknesses relating to lower admission scores and lower student results than its counterpart. The overall findings showed that students' motivation, attitudes towards working environment combined with work experience were of more value than the major itself from the HQP, which consequently makes the perceived values of the HQP not conform to its outcomes.

Decisions on higher education investments from students and their families in the HQP were influenced by a variety of factors. Although the HQP's characteristics were to some extent influential in these decisions, wellbeing dimensions played an important role. Students embraced the subjective perception of their future position when choosing the HQP. This was also connected to the families' values and expectations of their children's wellbeing. With respect to the material dimensions, the HQP benefited the students in terms of job opportunities, which would logically have an impact on their economic future. Despite a lack of evidence from the relational dimension to investigate the outcomes of possible professional contacts, more gainful job opportunities perceived as distinct endowments of the HQP students might produce possible discrepancy in entitlements from students of regular programs. One of the reiterated features of the HQP was concerned with the ability to cultivate English language skills and instructional curriculum adapted from higher educational institutions of advanced countries. Those endowments were the ground for discrepancy in the future trajectory between both groups of students as to the plan for either occupation or further education overseas. However, this pattern was not supposed to be negative, providing that the students are able to fulfill their ambitions and benefit the most out of their program selection. The arising problem was underscored at double tuition fee required for attending the HQP, which gave a negative picture of unequal access to educational opportunities and discriminated the students based on financial affordability.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Lecturers

1. Age

A. Under 30 B. From 30-40 C. From 40-50 D. Over 50

2. Gender

A. Male B. Female C. Prefer not to specify

3. What is your highest level of degree?

A. Master B. PhD

4. Where did you earn your highest degree?

A. In Vietnam B. Overseas

5. How many years of teaching have you had?

6. Which program have you been teaching at your college member?

A. Regular training program B. High quality training program C. Both

7. Rate your level of agreement on those perspectives of high-quality training programs.

Statement	Totally agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Totally disagree
Graduates have more employment opportunities after studies.					
Graduates stand more chances of success in overseas education later.					
Graduates can work in the field that matches with degree specialization.					
Students have a complete set of knowledge and skills for future jobs.					
Students can develop the ability to use English proficiently.					
Students are more encouraged to develop research skills.					
Students receive support network from highly-qualified lectures.					
Students are instructed to follow effective study methods.					
English as medium of instruction leads to difficulty understanding knowledge.					
Knowledge output and overall quality is not worth higher tuition fee.					

Academic performance is affected by inadaptability to Western teaching and learning styles.					
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8. Please state other opinions regarding what you think of the high-quality program.

9. Do you think students enrolling for high-quality programs will differ from those in regular training programs in terms of career prospects?

A. Differ greatly

B. Differ a little

C. Don't differ

10. How likely do you think families with stronger financial capacities will get their children in high quality education programmes?

A. Families will certainly make such investment

B. Families will very likely invest because they are convinced by promising features of the program.

C. Families are unsure of their decision because of needs for further consideration.

11. For teachers working for both programs, how may you assess students of regular training programs based on those criteria? (1-lowest, 5-highest)

	1	2	3	4	5
English language skills					
Critical thinking					
Knowledge of major					
Knowledge before university					
Motivation					

12. For teachers working for both programs, how may you assess students of high quality training programs based on those criteria? (1-lowest, 5-highest)

	1	2	3	4	5
English language skills					
Critical thinking					
Knowledge of major					
Knowledge before university					
Motivation					

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Students

1. Age

- 18 years old
- 19 years old
- 20 years old
- 21 years old

- 22 years old

2. Gender

- A. Male B. Female C. Prefer not to specify

3. Which year of study are you in?

- A. 1st year B. 2nd year C. 3rd year D. 4th year

4. What is your mode of study program?

- A. Regular training program B. High quality training program

5. Rate your level of agreement on those perspectives of high-quality training programs.

Statement	Totally agree	Partly agree	Neutral	Partly disagree	Totally disagree
Graduates have more employment opportunities after studies.					
Graduates stand more chances of success in overseas education later.					
Graduates can work in the field that matches with degree specialization.					
Students have a complete set of knowledge and skills for future jobs.					
Students can develop the ability to use English proficiently.					
Students are more encouraged to develop research skills.					
Students receive support network from highly-qualified lectures.					
Students are instructed to follow effective study methods.					
English as medium of instruction leads to difficulty understanding knowledge.					
Knowledge output and overall quality is not worth higher tuition fee.					
Academic performance is affected by inadaptability to Western teaching and learning styles.					

6. For students of the high-quality training program, choose the factors from the list below to explain why you decided to pursue the high-quality training program.

- A. Western learning and teaching style
 B. Promising job opportunities
 C. Higher education overseas
 D. Improved English language proficiency

Published by:

E. Parental expectations

F. Others (please specify):

7. For students of the regular training program, choose the factors from the list below to explain what discouraged you from pursuing the regular training program.

A. Financial unaffordability.

B. Regular training programs still remaining legitimate

C. Challenges of studies in English as medium of instruction

D. Intensive loads of academic work

E. Fear of English language ability.

F. Others (please specify):