

Human Resource Management Process Applied in Conditions for Autonomy at Universities in Vietnam



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ABSTRACT: Human resource management in general, and human resource management at universities in particular, has been the subject of numerous studies both domestically and internationally, with various approaches. Building on the affirmed research outcomes, this paper constructs a theoretical model of the human resource management process at universities. Based on analysis of influencing factors such as strategy, policy, institutional development planning, political institutions, legal frameworks concerning university autonomy, and the influence of the social community within the specific context of Vietnam; the paper proposes a human resource management process to be applied to public universities in Vietnam.

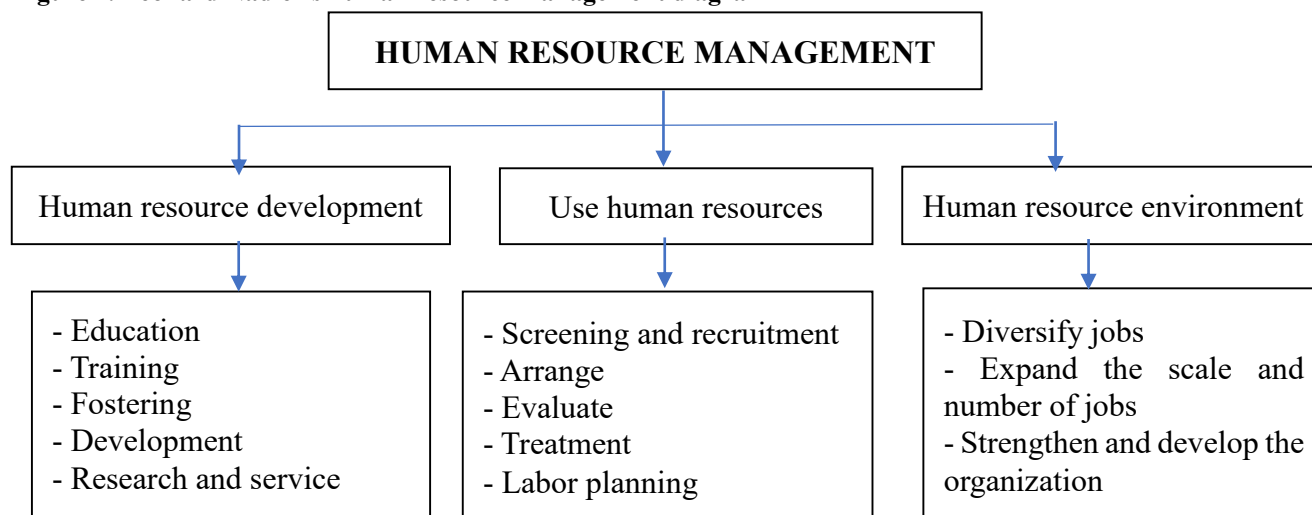
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1. INTRODUCTION

The human element always plays a particularly important role in the development of an organization. Among management issues, human management can be said to be the most difficult and complex. Ultimately, all management tasks relate to human management. Therefore, human resource management is considered a central and pivotal activity. Human resource management in general, and human resource management at universities in particular, has been studied by many experts and human resource managers both domestically and internationally.

Nadler (1980) posited that the content of human resource management includes three components: 1) Human resource development, comprising educational organization activities, training, and development to ensure human resources meet and exceed training standards; achieving quality and capabilities; 2) Utilization of human resources, which involves constructing civil servant criteria for screening, selecting, and recruiting additional human resources into the team of civil servants and employees in a way that ensures adequate quantity, improved quality, and a reasonable structure; and 3) Creation of a human resource environment, including diversifying jobs, expanding employment, and developing the work environment (see Figure 1). These results were then further developed and have been widely used in many countries (Nadle & Wiggs, 1986).

Figure 1. Leonard Nadler's human resource management diagram



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Hilb (2000) introduced a model of human resource management oriented towards the organization's development prospects (Figure 2), in which human resource management is considered one of three elements (along with leadership and influencing factors) that determine the organization's development.

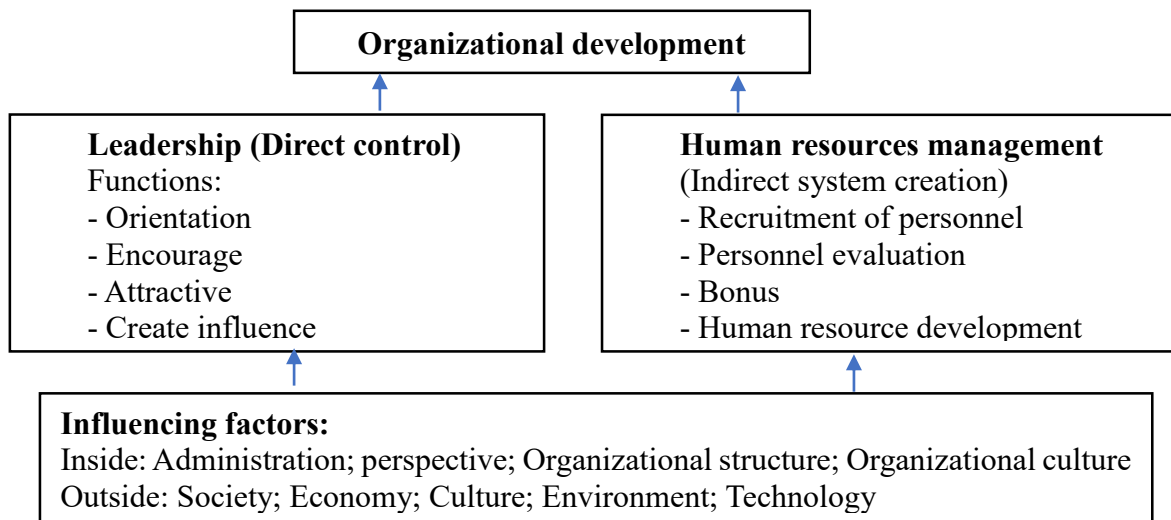


Figure 2. Martin Hilb's human resource management model

Author Tran (2018) developed a model of human resource management based on functional components, which suggests a human resource management process for application in an organization (see Figure 3).

The perspectives on human resource management content by Leonard Nadler, Martin Hilb, and Tran Kim Dung, though varying in approach, fundamentally align with the synthesis presented by the Coursera website, in collaboration with over 275 leading universities and companies worldwide (Coursera, 2024). Accordingly, the content of human resource management typically includes the process of attracting, screening, and selecting qualified candidates for jobs; evaluating and managing employee



Figure 3. Model of human resource management according to functional components by Tran Kim Dung

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performance to ensure alignment with organizational goals; developing salary, bonus, and benefits policies; providing opportunities for employee career development through training and development programs; managing the relationship between employers and employees, addressing issues such as work-life balance, conflict resolution, and employee rights; ensuring a safe working environment; and complying with labor laws and regulations to protect the organization and its workforce.

Just like other organizations, human resource management is also very important for universities. Coursera (2024) has also stated that human resource management at universities is a crucial aspect to ensure that these institutions operate effectively and productively. It involves strategically managing the faculty and staff to support the mission and objectives of the university. Consequently, universities require effective human resource management to attract and retain talented individuals, ensure legal compliance, and create a positive work environment that promotes success and employee satisfaction.

Given its importance, human resource management at universities has been prioritized for research. According to Lee et al (2020) in Asia, the continent's rise in socio-economic development has made it extremely significant. Therefore, human resource management issues have seen robust development. The development of social human resources is closely related to the development of human resources at universities. Universities are pioneers in research and the human resources of universities play an important role in training high-quality human resources for society. Therefore, human resource management at universities has become extremely important and urgent.

In researching human resource management at Vietnamese universities, author Pham (2023) concluded that university autonomy has a positive impact on the work effectiveness of faculty members at higher education institutions. Specifically, autonomy in human resource management greatly influences the promotion of work motivation, the creation of a positive work environment, and encourages faculty members to enhance their creative abilities. These findings are consistent with the research of Suriyansyah and colleagues (2019) and Tentama (2020).

Another study by Avidov-Ungar and colleagues (2014) indicated that in an autonomous university environment, faculty members are granted more authority, leading to greater responsibility for educational competency goals, improving their work outcomes, and as educators, they are also more strongly encouraged and motivated towards student success.

The research by Suriyansyah and colleagues (2019) also showed a significant and positive correlation between the autonomy of universities in Indonesia and the work outcomes of faculty members. This demonstrates that granting autonomy to universities in human resource management has created positive effects.

In summary, the research studies have presented a theoretical framework for human resource management, models of human resource management, and processes for applying human resource management in organizations in general and schools in particular. They also emphasize the necessity of granting human resource autonomy to universities. However, these studies have not clearly analyzed the context and environment of university autonomy in Vietnam to propose the most suitable human resource management process for universities. This paper analyzes the context of higher education management in Vietnam and proposes a model of human resource management in an autonomous environment for public universities in Vietnam.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted through the analysis, synthesis, classification, and systematization of scientific documents, and legal normative texts of the state related to human resources and human resource management, theoretical research works were published and observation of the actual situation of human resource management activities in the autonomous environment at public universities to propose a human resource management process for universities set in an autonomous university environment and the context of Vietnam.

The research questions posed and the specific research methods are:

- What is the basis for building a human resource management process at universities? It is the inheritance of research results from scientists around the world, with selection and arrangement appropriate to the organizational structure, and specific management hierarchy at universities.
- What are the characteristics of the management context of higher education in Vietnam? This question is addressed through the factors influencing the human resource management process of the university in the Vietnamese context. These are strategic factors, school development policies; political and legal factors of the state; and cultural and economic factors of the community where the school operates.
- What should the human resource management process in the autonomous environment at public universities in the context of Vietnam be like? It is the application of the theoretical process that has been built (the resolution of question 1) in a manner appropriate to the influencing factors placed in the autonomous university environment and the context of Vietnam (which has been noted and considered in question 2).

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

3.1. Basis for building human resource management processes in an autonomous university environment

Human resource management is an important activity of universities aimed at attracting, developing, and retaining talent for the educational and scientific research activities of the institution. Human resource management in an autonomous environment involves placing this process within the framework of legal regulations concerning university autonomy. How can a process be created that ensures the effective development of human resources within certain legal constraints?

From the aforementioned studies, the following can be deduced: The primary target of the human resource management process is the human resources of the university, with three main issues being the development of human resources, the utilization of human resources, and the establishment of a developmental environment for human resources (Nadler, 1980). The human resource management process at universities comprises the following steps (Hilb, 2020; Tran, 2018 & Coursera, 2024):

- *Identifying human resource needs*: This involves analyzing internal and external factors that affect human resource needs, such as strategic objectives, development plans, training programs, and labor market trends... to determine human resource needs.
- *Human resource planning*: This involves developing detailed plans regarding the quantity, quality, structure, timing, and supply sources of human resources for the institution, based on identified needs.
- *Recruiting human resources*: This involves carrying out activities to attract and select suitable candidates for required positions, through various information channels, promotional means, and evaluation methods.
- *Training and developing human resources*: This involves providing learning opportunities and enhancing the capabilities of the institution's human resources, aiming to improve work efficiency, adapt to environmental changes, and prepare for individual advancement and institutional progress.
- *Evaluating the effectiveness of human resources*: This involves measuring and assessing the work outcomes of the institution's human resources, through objective and fair criteria and methods, to recognize achievements, address shortcomings, and improve quality.
- *Motivating the development of human resources*: This involves establishing and applying policies regarding salaries, allowances, bonuses, and other benefits for the institution's human resources, to acknowledge contributions, encourage efforts, and strengthen long-term affiliation with the institution.

These are the theoretical bases that we refer to and apply in proposing a human resource management process in the autonomous environment at public universities in Vietnam.

3.2. Perspectives and Context for Proposing a Human Resource Management Process in an Autonomous Environment at Public Universities in Vietnam

From the standpoint of modern human resource management approaches, the structure of activities within human resource management is transforming: 1) The activity of developing strategies, policies, and human resource planning in the traditional model accounts for 10% of the workload, shifting to the modern model must increase to 20%; 2) The focus on business partners increases from 30% to 60%; 3) The activities that are administrative and managerial in nature decrease from 60% down to 20% (Ravin & Boudreau, 2019). Thus, the focus of human resource management will be directed towards developing strategies, policies, planning, and concentrating on satisfying partner satisfaction; administrative activities must be lightened and can be outsourced.

Consequently, constructing a human resource management process at universities must be based on identifying a strategic approach, and comprehensive and clear school development planning; the focus of human resource management is on the sustainable development of the school, meeting the expectations of learners and society. To achieve this, a significant focus on people is required, placing them at the center of all activities and minimizing costs into administrative, non-specialist tasks; thereby facilitating personal development and ensuring welfare for the school's workforce; human resource management relates to all decisions and management actions that affect relationships; human resource management focuses on maximizing the use of the school's human resources and improving the efficiency of staff and civil servants to achieve common goals; human resource management ensures the seamless and effective application of other policies and management processes.

From the aforementioned approaches, human resource management at public universities in an autonomous environment must be placed in a unique context, compatible with the economic and social characteristics of Vietnam. Intuitively, the context for constructing the human resource management process can be depicted in Figure 4 (Human resource management is influenced by the school's development strategy and policies; political institutions, and the legal corridor regarding university autonomy; and the influence of the social community through cultural, psychological, and customary factors...).

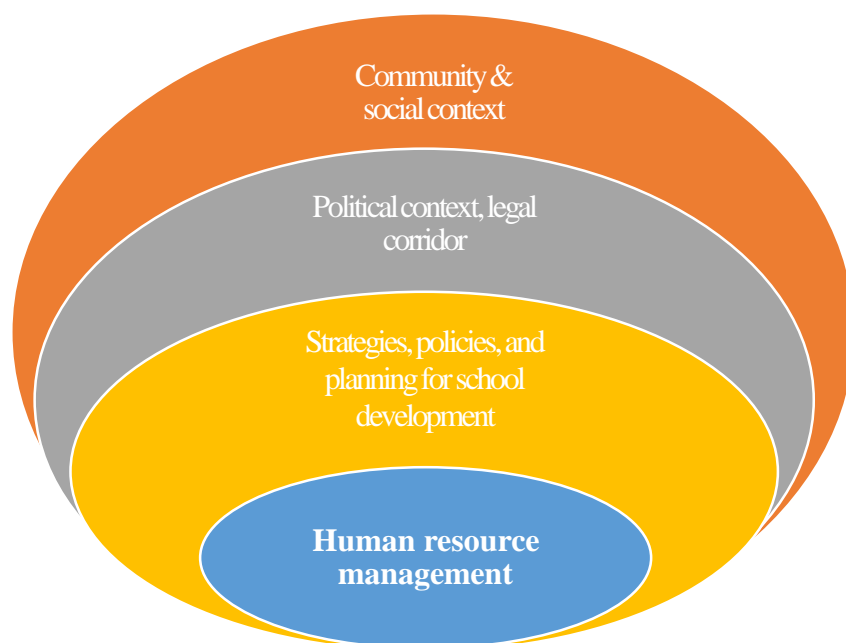


Figure 4. Context of building the human resource management process

As depicted in Figure 4, the human resource management process at public universities must simultaneously meet the requirements of the school's development strategy, planning, and policies; be influenced by political institutions; comply with the state's legal regulations on university autonomy (the legal corridor for university autonomy, which is the autonomous environment of human resource management); and at the same time, meet the community's demands, specifically the standards of community culture, social ethics, societal psychological habits about learning, and the society's learning needs, directly reflecting the learners' requirements.

The strategy, policy, and development planning of the school forms the foundation for university human resource management. Human resource management is a tool to implement strategy and development planning and is also a factor influencing the success of human resource management, specifically: Strategy, policy, and planning help define the goals, vision, mission, and core values of the university, creating a reference framework for human resource management (including recruitment, training, evaluation, rewards and punishment, and career development for staff, faculty, and employees); help determine resource priorities for managing human resources flexibly, creatively, and adaptively to changes; create an organizational culture that promotes commitment, cooperation, and quality in work, requiring human resource management to be respectful, fair, and transparent.

University human resource management must also adapt to the political context and the legal corridor for autonomy. This requires universities to have human resource policies and measures that are appropriate to their external and internal environments. The legal environment mandates that the content and steps in the human resource management process must comply with legal regulations and are inevitably influenced by political institutions.

The community and societal context, such as rapid development and change, and the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0, also have profound impacts on human resource management at universities. Autonomy in human resources at universities is an important factor in improving the quality of education and contributing to societal development. However, intense competition for human resources among universities, the diversification of learners' needs and desires, and changes in educational quality standards and regulations... are factors that affect human resource management. To manage human resources effectively, universities need to have strategies and human resource policies that are appropriate to the current community and societal context, such as building a culture of autonomy, encouraging participation and feedback from stakeholders, creating a conducive and safe working environment for employees, implementing fairness and transparency in evaluation and rewards and punishment, investing in enhancing the capacity and expertise of employees, creating opportunities for career development and lifelong learning for them. The psychology and habits of the community and society impact university human resource management in two ways: One from the perspective of the administrators, and two from the perspective of the employees. From the administrators' perspective, psychology and habits influence how they perceive, evaluate, and treat employees. From the employees' perspective, psychology and habits affect their work, cooperation, and attachment to the organization. The psychology and habits of the community and society are indispensable factors in university human resource management. Psychology and habits are not only the result of social activities and cognitive processes but are also the cause of social actions and interactions. Therefore, researching and applying knowledge about the psychology and habits of the community and society to human resource management at universities is very necessary and meaningful.

3.3. Proposal for a Human Resource Management Process at Public Universities in the Context of Vietnam

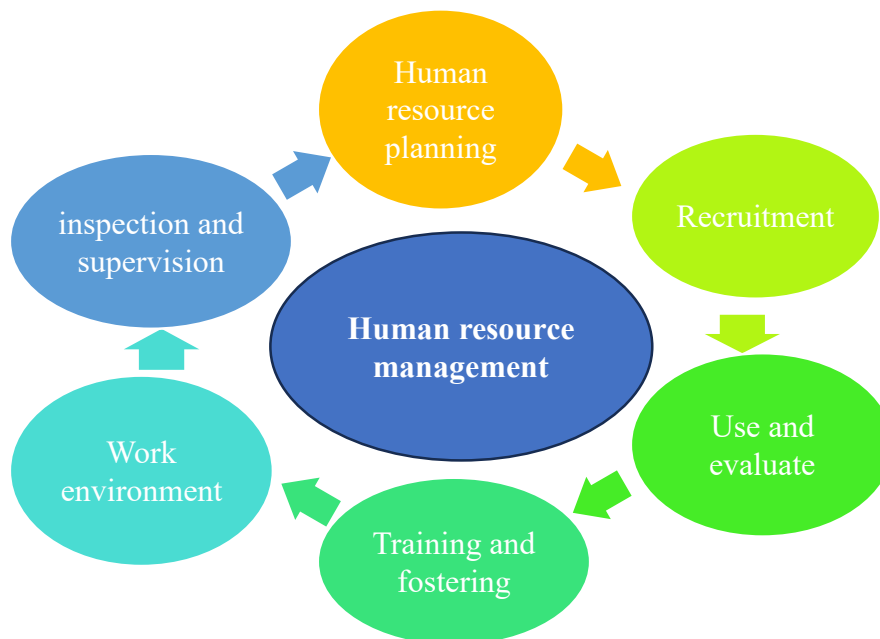


Figure 5. Human resource management process at university

From the context of university autonomy in Vietnam, along with an overview of research on human resources and human resource management, we propose the following human resource management process in the autonomous environment of Vietnam's public universities (see Figure 5).

The human resource management process in the autonomous environment at universities, as presented above, is an inheritance of the steps and approaches of theoretical research that have been affirmed. The novelty of the process lies in the content of the steps, which have demonstrated the integration of influencing factors in the context of autonomy into the specific conditions of universities in Vietnam today.

According to the amended law (National Assembly, 2018) some articles of the Higher Education Law (National Assembly, 2012) and Decree No. 99/2019/ND-CP of the Government (Government, 2019) provide detailed guidance on the implementation of some articles of the amended law, which stipulates the autonomy rights concerning the organizational structure and personnel of universities, including the establishment, reorganization, and dissolution of affiliated units; deciding or presenting to the competent authority the decision on the number of employees and job positions within the university; the right to recruit, employ, and dismiss civil servants and other workers, and to decide on administrative and management personnel in higher education institutions in accordance with legal regulations.

Thus, the autonomy in human resource management at public universities is manifested in two main categories of activities organizational structure and personnel, with the following characteristics:

- *Autonomy in organizational structure*: The right to autonomy in establishing, reorganizing, and dissolving affiliated and subordinate units to effectively carry out training activities that meet the vision, mission, and goals of the university at each stage of development.

- *Autonomy in personnel*: The right to participate in deciding the number of employees and job positions in public universities; the right to recruit, employ, and dismiss civil servants and other workers in accordance with the organizational structure and machinery chosen by the university, aiming to improve the quality of the school's training services.

Based on the degree of autonomy, public universities exercise their rights to autonomy over organizational structure and personnel within the authority granted. Specifically, the issue of personnel autonomy in the autonomous environment at public universities is currently implemented as follows:

a) Human Resource Planning in the Autonomous Environment

In human resource planning within an autonomous environment, public universities need to fully implement the following contents: (1) Fully determine the legal basis for university autonomy, theories on human resource management, analyze and evaluate the human resource status of the previous phase, the vision, goals, and development targets of the university's human resources to build a human resource development plan for the university; (2) Based on the approved human resource development plan, organize the construction of a Job Position Project for each stage of the university's human resource development plan according to Decree No. 106/2020/ND-CP dated September 10, 2020, by the Government (Government, 2020a) which stipulates job positions and the

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number of employees in public service units; (3) Based on the approved Job Position Project, annually, the university develops a human resource development plan that is suitable for the characteristics and situation of the school.

b) Recruitment of Human Resources in the Autonomous Environment

Based on the job requirements, positions, professional title standards, and salary fund, public universities carry out recruitment, selection, and employment decisions, and evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment activities after each recruitment phase according to Decree No. 115/2020/ND-CP dated September 25, 2020, by the Government (Government, 2020b) which regulates the recruitment, use, and management of civil servants.

c) Allocation, Use, and Evaluation of Human Resources

The allocation, use, and evaluation of human resources in the autonomous environment at public universities include: (1) Based on the Job Position Project and the employment contract, the university rector develops a plan for allocation and assignment of tasks; assigns duties, checks the execution of tasks by civil servants; ensures the necessary conditions for civil servants to perform their duties; (2) Along with the human resource utilization plan, the rector of the public university develops a plan to periodically or unexpectedly evaluate human resources when required.

d) Training and Development of Human Resources in the Autonomous Environment

Based on Decree No. 101/2017/ND-CP dated September 1, 2017, by the Government (Government, 2017) on the training and development of officials, civil servants, and public employees; amended and supplemented by Decree No. 89/2021/ND-CP dated October 18, 2021 (Government, 2021), based on the results of human resource evaluation, and according to the conditions, standards, and job requirements of each position, public universities conduct an analysis of needs and objectives to guide the planning and implementation of training and development of human resources and evaluate the effectiveness of training and development through the degree of achievement of the set training and development goals.

e) Establishment of Policies and Environment for Human Resource Development in the Autonomous Environment at Universities

Establishing a human resource development environment at universities includes a compensation policy comprising salary and various incentive schemes; the compensation policy aims to attract and retain human resources, especially to 'retain' and enhance the capabilities of talented individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of public universities, thereby contributing to creating motivation and increasing the efficiency of the human resources. Concurrently, universities need to focus on building an environment and creating work motivation to inspire the team of civil servants to have the desire and voluntary work to intensify efforts aimed at achieving the organization's objectives.

g) Inspection, Supervision, and Evaluation of the Results of Human Resource Development

To effectively perform the functions of inspection, supervision, and evaluation of the results of human resource development, the university rector needs to organize activities: (1) Develop and perfect standards and criteria for inspecting, supervising, and evaluating the results of human resource development; (2) Specifically assign and delegate the activities of inspecting, supervising, and evaluating human resource development activities; (3) Establish a directive and reporting information channel; stipulate the type of report, content, and reporting deadline for all authorized management subjects; (4) Collect and process information to make timely management decisions or consider adjusting the activity plan when necessary; (5) Periodically organize preliminary and final reviews to evaluate the results of implementation; from there, draw lessons to improve for the next management cycle.

4. CONCLUSION

The determination of the human resource management process has practical significance for public universities in the current context of university autonomy in Vietnam. This process serves as a guideline for universities to carry out effective, proactive, and flexible human resource management activities, meeting the human resource requirements to enhance the quality of education in the current context of educational innovation. The application of a human resource management process that is appropriate to the practical context will ensure high feasibility./.

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