

BUILDING A FRAMEWORK OF CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING ACCOUNTABILITY IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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University autonomy is the most important feature of modern education and is associated with accountability. By implementing the autonomy mechanism associated with accountability, universities will maximize their resources to continuously improve the quality of training, scientific research and community service. Based on the identified bases, the article proposes a Criteria Framework to evaluate the results of implementing accountability in public universities, including 03 standards and 18 criteria. This criteria framework can be used to evaluate the accountability performance of each public university.

Keywords: University autonomy; accountability; public universities; criteria; evaluate.

1. Introduction

University autonomy is the most important feature of modern education because it promotes the development of a natural law system in a globalized educational environment with healthy competition: state orientation and strictly controlled quality. Autonomy and accountability mechanisms are the keys to university governance innovation, helping to solve a series of problems in the current and future higher education system.

Domestic and foreign authors have studied the issue of accountability. There are studies conducted abroad by Pan (2009), Amaral *et al.* (2013), Agasisti (2015), and Jones & Noumi (2017). These authors' studies have clarified the need to increase university autonomy and accountability, the content of implementing university accountability, the requirements for implementing university accountability, and The role of the Government in implementing university accountability. In the country, studies have been conducted by U. V. Dang (2016), P. Pham (2016), Le & Pham (2016), and Q. B. Dang & Nguyen (2017). The common point of these authors is to study accountability concerning university autonomy.

However, currently, there are only a few studies on evaluating the accountability performance results of universities in general; Build a framework of criteria to evaluate the results of implementing accountability of universities in particular. Therefore, research to develop a framework of criteria to evaluate the results of implementing accountability of universities is urgent; it has both theoretical and profound practical significance. This study aims to 1) Clarify the basis for building a framework of criteria to evaluate university accountability performance and 2) Propose a framework of criteria for evaluating the results of implementing university accountability.

2. Research content

2.1. Research methods

To carry out this research, we used several theoretical research methods such as analysis - synthesis of theory and generalization of independent judgments to propose a criteria framework for evaluating performance results and accountability of universities in the current context.

2.2. Research results

2.2.1. Basic concepts

a. Accountability

Accountability is a term that is both ethical and legal. Ethics is shown in taking responsibility for assigned work and trying to perform that job with the best results. Legality is reflected in suffering the consequences of not completing the assigned work. From there, accountability is the acknowledgement of responsibility for every action, every product, and every decision or policy made in leadership, management, and work performance (Tran, 2018). Accountability is understood as the ability to fulfil the obligation of complete information, the ability to justify one's actions in the past or future, and to be punished if such actions violate the rules and ethical and legal principles.

b. University accountability

The university's accountability is responsible for explaining to the State, relevant agencies, and society the university's functions and tasks and the results it achieves in its activities. University accountability has a close relationship with university autonomy. Universities have autonomy in certain aspects and must have accountability in that aspect (T. L. Pham, 2012).

c. Criteria for evaluating university accountability

Criteria are “properties and signs that serve as a basis for recognizing and classifying an object or a concept” (Institute of Linguistics, 2003). Criteria are also considered specific standards set and used to make the most specific and objective assessments of a sure thing or event. Criteria are an indispensable element in any area of socio-economic life, broadly speaking, of each country.

Criteria for evaluating university accountability are the contents and requirements universities must meet to carry out their accountability to the State, society and relevant parties. Each accountability assessment criterion has assessment indicators.

2.2.2. Basis for determining the framework of criteria for evaluating university accountability

a. Law on higher education

Clause 6, Article 32, Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Law on Higher Education stipulates the Accountability of higher education institutions as follows: Explanation on the implementation of quality standards and policies quality, regulations and implementation of regulations of higher education institutions; Be responsible before the Law if you do not comply with regulations and commit to ensuring operational quality; Publish annual reports on performance indicators on the higher education institution's website; Implement periodic and irregular reporting regimes with owners and competent management agencies; Explanation of salaries, bonuses and other benefits of leadership and management positions of higher education institutions at conferences of officials, employees and employees; Perform audits on financial statements, annual settlement reports, investment and procurement audits; explain the operations of the higher education institution to the owner and competent management agency; Implement honest disclosure of annual financial reports and other Content on the website of higher education institutions according to regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training; Carry out other contents and forms of explanation according to the provisions of Law (National Assembly, 2018).

b. Content of implementing accountability of public universities

Based on autonomy, the content of university accountability will include accountability for the organization and management, an explanation of financial activities, and an explanation of academic activities.

Explanation about training, science and technology: Teaching and scientific research are the leading academic activities of the university. Teaching activities are associated with training program development, innovating training methods and forms, evaluating training results, compiling documents and textbooks, developing knowledge and learning resources, and applying information technology in training and training management. Scientific research activities are associated with research, application, and technology transfer to commercialize research results and encourage subjects to research, apply, and transfer technology... In addition to teaching and scientific research, academic activities are also related to academic freedom. Building a proper university education and revitalizing it is a prerequisite for making countries rich, intense and civilized. There can only be a proper university education with academic freedom. Like other freedoms, academic freedom always goes hand in hand with academic responsibility, the most important of which is objectivity and loyalty to the truth and compliance with ethical, professional and intellectual standards. Intellectual property: respect for the academic freedom of other academic community members and fair treatment of differing academic viewpoints.

Explanation of organizational structure and personnel: Universities must explain so relevant parties can see the reasonableness and effectiveness of the university's organizational structure and apparatus. The establishment, restructuring or dissolution of affiliated units in accordance with the functions, tasks and development at each time/phase of the university. Recruitment, appointment, and remuneration of officials, lecturers, and experts according to job position, ensuring openness, transparency, objectivity and competition.

Financial explanation: Finance is a vital resource to promote the development of higher education. With financial resources, there is a basis to develop other resources, such as people and facilities, which determine the quality of higher education. Financial autonomy is the most challenging and complex part of university autonomy. It is difficult because universities must make their own decisions on exploiting and finding financial sources, using existing financial resources - assets and balancing revenue and expenditure. It is complicated because all financial activities of the university must comply with the Law, avoiding negativity and waste. Therefore, the accounting of financial performance must be conducted regularly by universities. Thanks to that, the university's financial activities are controlled by the state management agency for higher education and related parties. The most important content in the accountability of a university's financial activities is that the state budget and other budget sources are used effectively and according to regulations.

The implementation of accountability is an important basis for building a criteria framework for evaluating the accountability of public universities.

c. University autonomy

The university's autonomy will determine its accountability. Therefore, when building a framework of criteria to evaluate the accountability of public universities, it is necessary to rely on a criteria framework to evaluate the autonomy of public universities.

d. Requirements of relevant parties

The requirements of relevant parties affect the content of the explanation and the construction of the standard framework, which consists of criteria for evaluating the accountability of public universities. These criteria frameworks must reflect stakeholders' requirements regarding the issues they must know about and monitor for university operations.

2.2.3. Criteria framework for evaluating the accountability of public universities

Based on the identified foundations, the article proposes a framework of criteria for evaluating the accountability of public universities, as in Table 1, which includes three standards and 18 criteria.

Table 1: *Criteria framework for evaluating the accountability of public universities*

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
<i>Standard 1: Accountability in training, science and technology</i>	
1.1: Explanation of admission criteria and methods. Proof: Document explaining the university's admission criteria and methods.	1: Admission criteria and methods have not been explained
	2: Explains the enrollment criteria but needs help explaining the enrollment method
	3: Explanation of admission criteria and methods that need to be completed
	4: Clear explanation of criteria and enrollment methods
	5: Complete and convincing explanation of admission criteria and methods

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
<p>1.2: Explanation of training quality and conditions to ensure training quality. Proof: Document explaining the quality of training and conditions to ensure the training quality of the university.</p>	1: The university's training quality and conditions to ensure training quality have not been explained
	2: Explains the quality of training but needs to explain the conditions to ensure training quality
	3: Explanation about training quality and conditions to ensure training quality but needs to be completed
	4: Clear explanation of training quality and conditions to ensure training quality
	5: Complete and convincing explanation of training quality and conditions to ensure training quality
<p>1.3: Explanation of the development, appraisal, promulgation, implementation, and accreditation of training programs at university, master, and doctoral levels. Proof: Document explaining the development, appraisal, promulgation, implementation, and accreditation of training programs at university, master, and doctoral levels.</p>	1: The development, appraisal, promulgation, implementation, and accreditation of training programs at university, master's, and doctoral levels have not been explained
	2: Explanation on construction, appraisal, promulgation, and implementation, but no explanation on accreditation of training programs at university, master, and doctoral levels
	3: Explanation on the construction, appraisal, promulgation, implementation, and accreditation of training programs at university, master, and doctoral levels but is not complete
	4: Clear explanation of the construction, appraisal, promulgation, implementation, and accreditation of training programs at university, master, and doctoral levels
	5: Explanation on the development, appraisal, promulgation, implementation, and accreditation of complete and convincing training programs at university, master, and doctoral levels
<p>1.4: Explanation of training organization and management for different levels and forms of training. Proof: Document explaining the organization and management of training for different levels and forms of training.</p>	1: The organization and management of training for different levels and forms of training have not been explained
	2: Explanation of training organization and management for training levels but not explanation of training organization and management for training forms
	3: Explanation of training organization and management for different levels and forms of training that need to be completed
	4: Clear explanation of training organization and management for different levels and forms of trainin
	5: Explanation of training organization and management for levels and forms of training that are complete and convincing
<p>1.5: Explanation of the organizational model and operating methods of science and technology organizations.</p>	1: The organizational model and operating methods of science and technology organizations have yet to be explained
	2: Explanation of the organizational and operational model of the science and technology organization but not the operating method of the science and technology organization

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
<p>Proof: Document explaining the organizational model and operating methods of science and technology organizations.</p>	<p>3: Explanation of the organizational model and operating methods of science and technology organizations, which is incomplete but still needs to be completed</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of the organizational model and operating methods of the science and technology organization</p> <p>5: Explanation of the organizational model and operating method of the science and technology organization is complete and convincing</p>
<p>1.6: Explanation of the joint training program with a foreign training facility at a level corresponding to the level at which the training facility is organizing.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the joint training program with a foreign training facility at a level corresponding to the level at which the training facility is organizing.</p>	<p>1: The joint training program with a foreign training facility at a level corresponding to the level at which the training facility is organized has yet to be explained</p> <p>2: Explanation about the joint training program with a foreign training facility, but the level corresponding to the level at which the training facility is organizing the training needs to be explained</p> <p>3: An explanation of the joint training program with a foreign training facility at a level corresponding to the level at which the training facility is organized must be completed</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of the joint training program with a foreign training facility at a level corresponding to the level at which the training facility is organizing the training</p> <p>5: Explanation of the joint training program with the foreign training institution at the level corresponding to the level at which the institution organizes complete and convincing training</p>
Standard 2: Accountability for organizational structure and personnel	
<p>2.1: Explanation of the university's organizational structure.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the university's organizational structure</p>	<p>1: The university's organizational structure has not been explained</p> <p>2: Explains the university's organizational structure but needs to explain the university's apparatus</p> <p>3: Explanation of the university's organizational structure is incomplete</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of the university's organizational structure</p> <p>5: The university's explanation of organizational structure is complete and convincing</p>
<p>2.2: Explanation of the establishment, merger, division, separation, and dissolution of university organizations.</p>	<p>1: The establishment, merger, division, separation, and dissolution of university organizations have not been explained</p> <p>2: Explanation of establishment, merger, division, separation, but no explanation on the dissolution of university organizations</p>

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
<p>Proof: Document explaining the establishment, merger, division, separation, and dissolution of university organizations.</p>	<p>3: Incomplete explanation of the establishment, merger, division, separation, and dissolution of university organizations</p>
	<p>4: Clear explanation about the establishment, merger, division, separation, and dissolution of university organizations</p>
	<p>5: Complete and convincing explanation of the establishment, merger, division, separation, and dissolution of university organizations</p>
<p>2.3: Explanation of recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, discipline and management of officials and employees.</p> <p>Proof: Written explanation on recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, discipline and management of officials and employees.</p>	<p>1: The recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, discipline and management of university officials and employees have yet to be explained</p>
	<p>2: Explanation on recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, and discipline but no explanation on the management of public employees and employees</p>
	<p>3: Explanation on recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, discipline and management of officials and employees is incomplete</p>
	<p>4: Clear explanation of recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, discipline and management of officials and employees</p>
	<p>5: Explanation on recruitment, use, appointment, dismissal, reward, discipline and management of officials and employees is complete and convincing</p>
<p>2.4: Explanation of regimes and policies for attracting, using, training, fostering, and remunerating civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, and highly qualified workers.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining regimes and policies for attracting, employing, training, fostering, and remunerating civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, and highly qualified workers.</p>	<p>1: Regimes and policies for attracting, using, training, fostering, and remunerating civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, and highly qualified workers have yet to be explained</p>
	<p>2: Explanation of regimes and policies to attract, employ, train and foster, but not explain regimes and remuneration policies for civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, highly qualified workers</p>
	<p>3: Fully explain the regime and policies for attracting, using, training, fostering, and treating cadres, civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, and highly skilled workers</p>
	<p>4: Clear explanation of regimes and policies for attracting, using, training, fostering, and remunerating civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, and highly qualified workers</p>
	<p>5: Explanation of regimes and policies for attracting, using, training, fostering, and remunerating civil servants, public employees, scientists, managers, and fully qualified workers and convincing</p>

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
<p>2.5: Explanation on organization of examinations or consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the organization of exams or consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations.</p>	<p>1: The organization of exams or consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations has not been explained</p> <p>2: Explains the organization of the exam but does not explain the consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations</p> <p>3: Explanation on organization of exams or consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations is incomplete</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of the organization of exams or consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations</p> <p>5: Complete and convincing explanation of the organization of exams or consideration for promotion of professional titles according to current regulations</p>
<p>2.6: Explanation for developing and approving job position projects, number of employees, and labour structure by occupational title.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the development and approval of the project for job positions, number of employees, and labour structure by professional title.</p>	<p>1: The development and approval of the job position project, number of employees, and labour structure by occupational title have yet to be explained</p> <p>2: Explanation of the construction and approval of job position projects and number of employees, but an explanation of labour structure by occupational title is needed</p> <p>3: Explanation of the construction and approval of job position projects, number of employees, and incomplete labour structure by occupational title</p> <p>4: Clearly explain the construction and approval of job position projects, number of employees, and labour structure by occupational title</p> <p>5: Explanation of the construction and approval of job position projects, number of employees, and labour structure by professional title entirely and convincingly</p>
Standard 3: Financial accountability	
<p>3.1: Explanation of tuition and fee rates.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining tuition and fees.</p>	<p>1: The university's tuition and fees have yet to be explained</p> <p>2: Explains the tuition fee collection rate but does not explain the fee collection rate</p> <p>3: Explanation of tuition and fees, but incomplete</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of tuition and fees</p> <p>5: Complete and convincing explanation of tuition and fees</p>
<p>3.2: Explanation of revenue from higher</p>	<p>1: The level of revenue from higher education services in the form of continuing education has not been explained</p>

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
<p>education services by continuing education method.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the level of revenue from higher education services under the continuing education method.</p>	<p>2: Brief explanation of revenue from higher education services in the form of continuing education</p> <p>3: Explanation of revenue from higher education services by continuing education method is not complete</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of revenue from higher education services in the form of continuing education</p> <p>5: Complete and convincing explanation of revenue from higher education services in the continuing education method</p>
<p>3.3: Explanation of state budget sources for irregular tasks or orders for training, science and technology.</p> <p>Proof: Document explains the use of state budget sources for irregular tasks or training, science and technology orders.</p>	<p>1: The use of state budget sources for irregular tasks or training orders, science and technology has not been explained</p> <p>2: Explanation on the use of state budget sources for irregular tasks but no explanation on the task of ordering training, science and technology</p> <p>3: Explanation on the use of state budget sources for irregular tasks or incomplete training, science and technology orders</p> <p>4: Clear explanation on the use of state budget sources for irregular tasks or training, science and technology orders</p> <p>5: Explanation of the use of state budget sources for irregular tasks or ordering training, science and technology thoroughly and convincingly</p>
<p>3.4: Explanation of aid, sponsorship, donations, gifts and endowments.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the use of aid, sponsorship, donations, gifts and endowments.</p>	<p>1: The use of aid, sponsorship, donations, gifts and endowments has yet to be explained</p> <p>2: There is an explanation of the use of aid and sponsorship capital sources, but there needs to be an explanation of the use of donated capital sources</p> <p>3: An explanation of the use of aid, sponsorship, donations, gifts, and endowments must be completed</p> <p>4: Clearly explain the use of aid, sponsorship, donations, gifts, and endowments</p> <p>5: A complete and convincing explanation of using aid, sponsorship, donations, gifts, and endowments</p>
<p>3.5: Explanation of the university's spending activities.</p> <p>Proof: Document explaining the university's spending activities.</p>	<p>1: The university's spending activities have yet to be explained</p> <p>2: Brief explanation of the university's spending activities</p> <p>3: Explanation of the university's spending activities needs to be completed</p> <p>4: Clear explanation of the university's spending activities</p> <p>5: The explanation of the university's spending activities is complete and convincing</p>

Criteria & Proof	Rating levels
3.6: Explanation on establishing funds (career activities development fund, reward fund, welfare fund, student support fund and others). Proof: Document explaining the establishment of funds.	1: The establishment of funds has yet to be explained
	2: Explanation of establishing career development and reward funds as well as welfare funds but no explanation of the student support fund
	3: The explanation of establishing funds needs to be completed
	4: Clear explanation of establishing funds
	5: The explanation of establishing funds is complete and convincing

2.2.4. Survey of expert opinions on the criteria framework for assessing the results of implementing accountability of public universities

Instead of surveying the necessity and feasibility of the criteria framework for assessing the results of implementing accountability of public universities on a large number of subjects, the article directly asked for opinions (or via questionnaires) from several public university managers and experts in the field of higher education and received the following comments:

- The criteria framework is built on a scientific basis.
- The criteria framework covers all areas of assessing the results of implementing accountability of public universities.
- Each criterion is assessed according to 05 levels; the levels have particular distinctions.

2.2.5. Using the criteria framework to evaluate the accountability performance of public universities

This criteria framework can be used to evaluate the accountability performance of each public university. When using the criteria framework, combining quantitative and qualitative assessments is necessary.

- **Quantitatively:** Each criterion is evaluated according to 5 levels, corresponding to 5 accompanying points: Level 1: 01 points; Level 2: 02 points; Level 3: 03 points; Level 4: 04 points; Level 5: 05 points. The maximum score of the criteria frame is $18 \times 5 = 90$ points. The accountability performance results of public universities are classified into five categories, with the following scores:

1. Very Weak Level: From 18 points to 31 points.
2. Weak Level: From 32 points to 45 points.
3. Average level: From 46 points to 60 points.
4. Good Level: From 61 points to 75 points.
5. Very Good Level: From 76 points to 90 points.

- **Qualitatively:** It is necessary to rely on the standards of the Criteria Framework for evaluating the results of implementing accountability of public universities to analyze the strengths and limitations of the results of implementing accountability of public universities. From there, draw out the causes of these strengths and limitations.

3. Conclusion

Accountability is closely related to university autonomy, a natural attribute of university autonomy. By implementing the autonomy mechanism associated with accountability, universities will maximize their resources to continuously improve the quality of training, scientific research and community service. In order to evaluate the results of implementing accountability in public universities, it is necessary to develop a framework of criteria to evaluate the results of implementing this activity. The criteria framework for evaluating the results of implementing accountability of public universities proposed by the article includes 03 standards and 18 criteria. This criteria framework can be used to evaluate the accountability performance of each public university. When used, it is necessary to combine quantitative and qualitative assessments.

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TÓM TẮT

XÂY DỰNG KHUNG TIÊU CHÍ ĐÁNH GIÁ KẾT QUẢ THỰC HIỆN TRÁCH NHIỆM GIẢI TRÌNH CỦA TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG LẬP

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Ngày nhận bài 19/9/2024, ngày nhận đăng 11/12/2024

Tự chủ đại học là yếu tố cốt lõi của nền giáo dục hiện đại, đồng thời gắn liền với trách nhiệm giải trình. Việc thực hiện cơ chế tự chủ gắn với trách nhiệm giải trình giúp các trường đại học tối ưu hóa nguồn lực, nâng cao chất lượng đào tạo, nghiên cứu khoa học và đóng góp cho cộng đồng. Bài báo này đề xuất khung tiêu chí đánh giá kết quả thực hiện trách nhiệm giải trình của các trường đại học công lập, bao gồm 3 tiêu chuẩn và 18 tiêu chí. Khung tiêu chí này có thể áp dụng để đánh giá hiệu quả thực hiện trách nhiệm giải trình của từng trường đại học công lập, qua đó hỗ trợ quá trình quản trị và phát triển.

Từ khóa: Tự chủ đại học; trách nhiệm giải trình; trường đại học công lập; tiêu chí; đánh giá.