

INTRODUCTION

1. The reasons to choose the topic

The trend of globalization and international integration have taken powerful place all over the world. The world economy has been gradually shifting from industrial economy into a post-industrial or intellectual economy owing to the strong development of science, technology, because the development of information technology the Internet are noticeable features of the world at the beginning of the XXI century. The above features, together with the process of decentralization and educational massification, have led to the increasing requirements for educational institutions' self-management capacity. If this capacity is poor, the quality of education will not meet the requirements set forth. Meanwhile, quality management (QM) would be an effective tool to enhance school educational quality. Self-assessment (SA), a link in the process of quality assurance (QAS), is intensely focused on.

- *In theory*: SA in QAS issues have been concerned by a lot of scientists and managers in developing countries. In the world nowadays there exist lots of approaches to the concept of SA. How to select SA concept and build theoretical framework for SA operations (especially determining the role, conditions and contents of SA) so that high school educational quality will increase after conducting SA are important issues that need studying to clarify.

- *In practice*: The rpractice of self-assessment in quality management in high schools shows that: High schools in the United States, the Scotland (UK) and some other countries like Croatia; Slovenia ... among which some countries that are in the same transition process as Vietnam have paid considerable attention to managing as well as implementing SA activities in QAS such as determining the quality target; building quality standards and processes; implementing quality processes; self-evaluating according to standards and processes ...

In Vietnam, high schools have initially been interested in self-evaluating school quality. However, whether the SA activities conducted by these high schools are part of QAS and can enhance the school quality or just activities that help accredit quality is still unclear.

Stemming from the above reasons, PhD student chooses the subject: "*Fundamentals of rationale and practice of self-assessment in quality management in High Schools*" for his doctoral thesis.

2. The objectives of the study

To identify the rationale and practice of self-assessment in quality management (focusing on quality management level) at high schools, basing on which, propose certain measures to innovate the SA activities at high schools in Vietnam.

3. The object of the study

3.1. The study object: *Quality control work at high schools.*

3.2. The study subjects: *Self-evaluation in quality assurance at high schools.*

4. The content and scope of the study

4.1. The research contents

- To synthesize, analyze, and determine the rationale for SA in QC at high schools, focusing on SA according to QAS levels.

- To study the quality SA practices in high schools throughout the world.

- To evaluate the current situation of SA activities at high schools through a typical case study in Thai Binh province.

- To propose certain measures to innovate SA activities at high schools in Vietnam.

- To experiment a number of measures proposed in the thesis.

4.2. The scope of the study

- The rationale behind SA in QC at high schools has been studied, focusing on SA according to QAS levels.

- The study of SA situation in QM in Vietnamese high schools is limited in the scale of the typical case study in Thai Binh.

- In-depth interviews are carried out with 30 interviewees including scientists, experts on education QC in the Department of Education and Training (DOET), Vietnam Educational Science Institution, Vietnam Social Science Academy, provincial DOET divisions' managers in Thai Binh, Dien Bien, Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Kien Giang as well as high school principals (or vice principals) in Thai Binh...

- The survey conducted using questionnaires is for 200 managers and teachers at 10 high schools in four districts and the city of Thai Binh province.

- To conduct implementation of some proposed measures.

5. The study hypothesis

In theory as well as in practice of education QC in developed countries, SA are identified as a stage (components) of the QAS system; meanwhile SA in high schools in Vietnam that thesis author has surveyed only perform the function to meet the requirements of quality accrediting (external assessment); more over, the SA activities have been conducted neither systematically, under reasonable process and contents, nor on both levels (school and discipline levels). Identifying and implementing SA measures are considered a phase (part) of the QAS system which performs two functions: (1) to maintain and enhance the regular quality and (2) to meet the requirements of AQC (external assessment) at high schools.

6. The study approach and methodology

6.1. Study approach

The thesis is carried out on the basis of using the systems and QM approaches in accordance with the changes of the economic and social system, transferring from subsidized to market system, changing the QM level from QC into QAS, approaching QM in objectives.

6.2. Study Methods

Three main groups of research methods have been used.

- The group of theoretical study methods;
- The group of practical study methods, including survey with questionnaires, group as well as in-depth interviews, observation, product study, experiment, implementation and experience review;
- The group of statistical methods.

7. The institute undertakes the study

The Vietnam Education Sciences Institution.

8. The study scientific thesis

- Currently SA at high schools has not been conducted systematically in a rational process and the content is not yet reasonable; it has not been conducted on both levels (school and discipline); SA has only met AQC but has not yet met the requirements of improving regular quality.

- To implement SA in QAS, the first thing that needs doing is to conduct internal QC.

- Identifying and implementing SA measures in QAS will contribute to improve the quality as well as to meet high school AQC.

9. The study new contributions

- To determine, clarify the concept of SA in QAS.
- To propose the conditions for implementation and the core contents of the SA in QAS at high schools.
- To discuss the practices of SA at high schools (in some other countries in the world as well as in Vietnam through a typical case study in Thai Binh); SA experience for high schools in Vietnam.
- To propose and implement some measures to innovate SA at high schools in Vietnam.
- To propose a number of recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the provincial departments of Education and Training (DOETs) as well as for the high schools in organizing SA activities in QAS.

10. The thesis outline

The thesis consists of the introduction, conclusion, recommendations and 3 chapters.

Chapter 1: The rationale of SA in QM at high schools

Chapter 2: The practical bases of SA in QM at high schools

Chapter 3: The measures to innovate SA in high schools in Vietnam

Chapter 1. THE RATIONALE OF SELF-ASSESSMENT IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT HIGH SCHOOLS

1.1. The historical studies of QM and SA in QM

1.1.1. The history of quality control formation and development, quality self-assessment

In foreign countries, QM has been widely used in production in enterprises for a long time and has gradually been applied in education.

SA has been used by a lot of education institutions to improve their quality. In Vietnam, school QM in general and SA for high school education quality accreditation (QAC) in particular are not new. However, high school education SA targeting at: (1) maintaining and enhancing regular quality and (2) meeting QAS requirement (SA in QAS) are new issues.

1.1.2. Some studies about the quality control, quality SA

In foreign countries: "*Quality without Tears*" by Crosby P. (1984); "*Studies in Educational Evaluation*" by Gerry McNamara, Joe O'Hara (2008); "*Total Quality Management in Education*" by Sallis E. (1993) and "*Quality Management and Quality Assurance in European Higher Education*" by Van Vught FA & Westerheijden D.F. (1993) have suggested different approaches to the concept of quality; analyzed and clarified the issues of improving quality in schools as well as improving quality towards the school development; have pointed out that the issues of QC at a number of schools fail to meet the requirements proposed by the society; and have mentioned the levels of QC and the relationship between them.

- The other authors, Alexander Bilcik, Ph.D., Jozef Kadnar, MSc. Eng. (2011) in "*Self-evaluation in Managerial Work within Educational Institutions*"; Gerry McNamara, Joe O'Hara (2008) in "*Studies in Educational Evaluation*"; Nada Pozar Matijašič, Mateja Gajgar in "*Self-evaluation in the system of quality assessment and Assurance in Slovenia*" and the Scottish quality accrediting specialists in the book "*Instructions on assessing and assuring quality in schools*" have shown the importance of SA, presented, analyzed and clarified the process, procedure and

methods of SA; the sequence of steps towards SA in high school QC. Autonomy and social responsibility (SR) for the SA in high schools have also been suggested by Gerry McNamara, Joe O'Hara and other Scottish specialists in education accreditation.

Domestically: There are not many studies of education SA and QC, focusing on higher education. Some typical authors such as Nguyen Duc Chinh (chief-editor) (2002) with his book "*Accrediting quality in higher education*", Pham Thanh Nghi (2013), "*Managing the quality of education*", Nguyen Kim Dung (2008) with "*The quality assurance models in the world and suggestions in Vietnam*" and Pham Xuan Thanh (2005) with "*Assuring the quality of higher education: The application in Vietnamese practices*"... have studied the basic rationale; the approaches towards QAS in the world; the principles and aspects of QC in schools; different levels of QC; the roles, the processes and contents of higher education establishment SA... The concept, contexts, SA requirements, contents, steps as well as the process designed and conducted are also outlined by Pham Thanh Nghi in his book.

1.1.3. The contribution of the previous studies and some issues raised

The contribution of the previous studies which have been stated:

- The previous studies have pointed out the approach to the concept of quality, the position and the role of QC, different levels of QC and the relationship between QC levels in education.

- About SA, the studies have pointed out the position and the role of the SA as well as the issues need to be evaluated in schools; schools' autonomy and social responsibility when organizing school SA and SA organizing experiences in some countries and schools ...

Some issues related to the thesis that have not been clarified in the studies mentioned above

- A number of concepts related to SA in QAS at high schools.
- The position, the role ... of SA in QAS at high schools.
- The conditions and contents of SA in QAS at high schools....

1.2. Quality and quality control in secondary schools

1.2.1. Quality

- The concept of quality: The concept of quality is dynamic and multi-dimensional. In the world nowadays there are 4 basic approaches, and the thesis has combined the strengths of the third and the fourth approaches to introduce the new concept of quality. Then *quality is the conformance to the determined standards, and the standards determined must match the objectives set forth in order to meet the users' demands.*

- The quality of education and the quality of high schools in the thesis is understood as follows:

Education quality is conformity with the determined quality standards, and the standards are determined based on the education objectives proposed, meeting the requirements of service users and educational products.

High school quality is the level achieved by the schools in comparison with the determined quality standards and quality standards must be consistent with the objectives set by and for the schools.

Each high school has a different quality target, therefore, they need different quality standards basing on the quality standards set forth by the MOET.

1.2.2. Quality management

There are a lot of different concepts of QM, the thesis has employed third concept to introduce the new concept of high school QC. According to this concept, *high school QM consists of all the management activities in schools in order to determine the objectives and tasks of the quality policy, the responsibility of the subjects related to quality; and organizing the implementation of these policies and responsibilities.*

The objective of the quality policy is to raise the level of pleasing and satisfaction of those who are interested in the quality of school on the basis of optimum cost.

The tasks of the QC policies include quality planning, implementing quality plans; assessment and improving quality.

The responsibilities of the school different subjects related to quality are of the managers', teachers' as well as learners', in order to create educational "*products and services*" which meet the proposed standards and quality targets.

1.2.3. Quality assurance system and QC levels in secondary schools

1.2.3.1. The elements of the quality assurance system in high schools

The elements of the QAS system in secondary schools include internal QC (designing and implementating quality plans); SA (internal assessment) and quality accrediting (external assessment).

1.2.3.2. Different levels of QM in secondary schools

There are three levels of QM, developing from low to high, including Quality Control (QC), Quality Assurance (QAS) and Total Quality Management (TQM).

- Quality control level:

At QC level, quality standards are defined by the higher management levels, then the subordinates ought to execute them. The superiors' role in to inspect and control the subordinates' performance. This QC level is in accordance with the centralized management, with the decisive role belongs to the higher-level executives.

For high schools, QC focusses on detecting and **eliminating part or all** of the final "*products*" of the educational process in high schools that do not meet the standards under the current regulations. The "*Products*" mentioned here are actually the students (Ss).

- Quality assurance level:

At the level of QAS, the collaboration between the managers and implementers, between the superiors and subordinates must be very tight. This QM level is consistent with the process of decentralized management during the transition period.

For high schools, QAS is a system of processes, mechanisms for impacting on the educational process in the school to prevent the emergence of educational low-quality "*products*". These effects occurs right at the time an educational process starts and will continue until these educational "*products*" are "*taken out of the oven*".

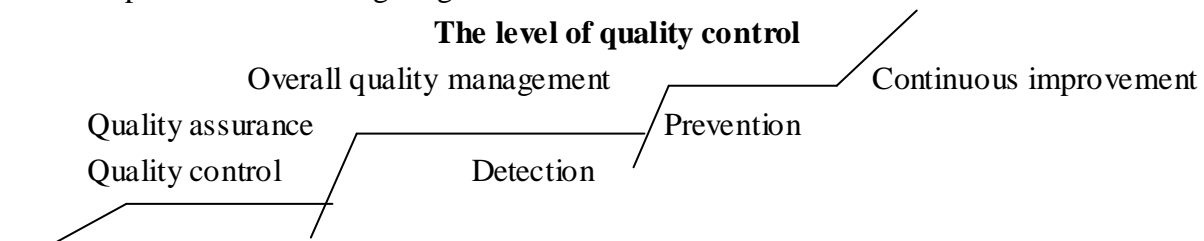
- Total quality management (TQM) level:

Managing the overall quality level aims at continually improving the quality, considering the change of the value system and culture of the organization as the concentration. TQM is only suitable for developed organizations, with a decentralized structure and flexible operating mechanism which is consistent with the systems in which the education institutions are assigned

the autonomy and responsibility to elucidate everything to the clientele, donor agencies and the whole civil society.

For high schools, TQM fulfills all the objectives, the norms prescribed by competent authorities for certain educational level. TQM also studies the clientele's expectancy and desire, thereby identifies the targets, the standards that are higher than the prescribed in order to design the "products" and the services that meet the clientele's needs (clientele here is the State, society, students, students' parents, universities, colleges, vocational schools ...).

- The relationship between the levels of QC: according to Sallis in "*Total Quality Management in Education*" (1993), the three levels of QC can be put in the increasing relationship as in the following diagram:



With the opportunities and challenges faced by high schools in the conditions of the market economy, international integration, in order to survive and develop sustainably, high schools should apply appropriate QAS levels in controlling their high school quality.

1.3. Self-assessment and self-assessment in quality assurance at high schools

1.3.1. The concept of self-assessment (SA)

- Self-assessment: Pham Thanh Nghi in the book "*Managing the quality of education*" (2013) has suggested out that "SA will be seen as a step toward innovating educational institutions' activities through increasing quality, training performance, researches, each unit as well as the whole institution's service results. By the time, writing an inspection report for the accreditation or colleague peer-evaluation group will only be number two goal (secondary target).

- Quality SA in secondary schools: the MOET has defined the concept of SA, and quality SA at high schools in this thesis is understood as follows:

Quality SA at high schools is the action of self-examining, taking into consideration the identification of strengths and weakness, designing and implementing the school quality plans to see whether it is possible to meet the quality standards set by the MOET as well as the school and if the expectations of the subjects interested in the quality of schools are met.

Quality SA at high schools, either SA within QAS (SA is one of three components of QAS) or SA within AQC, directs itself at improving the school quality. However, SA actually contributes to improving quality if only it is SA within QAS, while SA as part of AQC only contributes to determine the quality, but do not help much to improve the school quality.

1.3.2. SA in quality assurance in high schools

SA actually exist with its true meaning only at the level of QAS. The thesis focuses on clarifying some signs and characteristics of SA in QAS in secondary schools: *the purpose, the position of the SA, the role, dynamics, principles and conditions for SA; resources, the levels of SA, SA aspects, standards, criteria, process, structure, direction, evaluation, autonomy, social responsibility and the final outcomes of SA activities.*

1.3.3. The conditions for SA in QAS at high schools

The conditions for SA in QAS at high schools include general and prerequisite conditions.

- General conditions: The first general condition is high school SA operations are legally guaranteed. The second general conditions are high schools must have their own autonomy and must be socially responsible for their SA activities.

- Prerequisite conditions:

The first prerequisite: The school designs quality plans with two contents: first, to determine the missions, including both quality objectives and quality standards that must be achieved; secondly, to establish quality procedures.

The second prerequisite: The school regularly performs the quality plans (implementing quality procedures to achieve quality standards and objectives).

1.4. The basic contents of SA in quality assurance at high schools

High school SA in our country nowadays is just school SA (school level). The MOET Circular 42/2012/TT-BGDĐT has gauged the standards to assess certain components (units) in high school but there have not been the criteria to assess one of the the most important parts (units) in the school that is to evaluate of the quality of separate disciplines. In reality, the actual quality of the discipline plays a very important role in creating the overall school quality. Standardized disciplines assure the whole school standards. Therefore, to perform high school SA in QAS it is necessary to conduct SA simultaneously in two levels: school level (educational institution) as well as disciplinary level.

1.4.1. The contents of school-level SA

School-level SA consists of the following six main issues: selecting evaluation model; designing SA plans (Selecting SA areas; specifying the methods of collecting proofs and establishing SA processes); staffing, allocating time, identify funding sources for implementation; assessing in chronological order; analyzing, evaluating and preparing SA reports; announcing SA results.

1.4.1.1. Selecting evaluation model: Based on the two models analysis, elements and procedure, the thesis points out that the procedure model is appropriate for high schools.

1.4.1.2. Designing SA plans: The contents of forming SA planning include choosing SA fields, determining the methods for gathering evidence; constructing SA process.

- Selecting SA fields

By comparing the basis SA domains prescribed by the MOET with the SA fields suggested by the two scientists Alexander Bilcik and Jozef Kadnar, the thesis points out the necessary to add and rearrange the order of the SA aspects.

- Identifying methods for collecting proofs

The thesis has proposed and analyzed some common data collection methods. The analysis results showed that, to ensure the reliability of the evidence it is necessary to combine several different collection methods.

- Establishing procedures for SA in secondary schools

By comparing the results of the SA processes outlined by the scientists (in Scotland, Alexander Bilcik and Jozef Kadnar in Slovakia and Pham Thanh Nghi in Vietnam) and the SA processes set by the MOET, the thesis has shown some important stages in the SA process such as to determine the reasons for SA, to prepare for SA, to use the SA results to improve the

quality... which have not included in the MOET SA process. Therefore, it is necessary to supplement and accomplish the process of SA in high schools in harmony with the levels of QAS.

1.4.1.3. Personnel staffing, time allocating, fund identifying

- Staffing the personnel: it is essential to mobilize the whole staff, teachers in schools participating in SA; it is necessary to identify clearly the designers, the executives, the supervisors, and the people who check and adjust the SA operations.

- Allocating time: time should be allocated for each stage in the process, for each SA content appropriately, following the schedule planned. Unlike the current regular SA at high schools which is carried out every school year, SA according to different QAS levels is operated in a 5- year cycle that means for the first time assessing 5 years, the following times maybe 5 or draw down to 3 years depending on specific contexts.

- Identifying sources of funding for organizing SA activities: using of State budget and school internal financial resources as prescribed. Besides, it is possible to exploit and mobilize other external financial resources in the form of socialization.

1.4.1.4. Conducting the self-assessment process

After making SA plans, staffing the personnel, allocating time and preparing the budget, schools operates SA fields (the contents) identified successively. Conducting SA determined fields (contents) must base on the performance indicators (standards, criteria) and identified quality to find out the accomplishment level of each content.

The fields need to be self-assessed in sequence include: *mission and objective statement; SA requirements; learning program content development and management; the school organization and management; the teaching and learning environment, the staff, teachers, students; school facilities, technology and finance; the relations between the school, families and society; educational activities; educational outcomes; comparing the the school's SA results with that of other high schools*’.

1.4.1.5. Analyzing, evaluating and preparing SA reports

- Analysing and assessing the level of accomplishment complying with the determined quality standards: after gathering all the data and proofs collected, the SA board and the team of experts conduct a detailed analysis, review attainment extent of each field evaluated and compare with the determined quality standards.

- Preparing SA report: SA report is the output of SA operations. Therefore, this report ought to reflect the entire work that the SA council has done, the results obtained, the comments and recommendations of the council for the school in order to maintain as well as improve quality. The SA report is edited by the group of the SA council secretaries.

- Proposing measures to improve the quality of the contents and the fields that fail to reach the quality standards.

1.4.1.6. Announcing the SA results

- The SA results are publicly reported to groups of subjects interested in the school quality.

- The SA results are sent to the competent authority, the DOET, to ask for the their plan of external assessment and evaluation, and recognition of the extent of the school's achieved standards. Schools need to store the recorded their own SA operations, SA documents, related evidence and SA outcomes to compare to the next cycle's results.

1.4.2. Subject- level SA contents

The Circular Number 42/2012/TT-BGDĐT issued by the MOET mentions some subject-level assessing contents. However, these contents have not been assessed deeply and the assessment results have not reflected the quality of the subject. Therefore, if the subject-level SA is considered a level in the school's SA activities, the subject-level SA should focus on evaluating the management of standards, the subject quality process, and the subject QAS conditions. Meanwhile, the subject-level SA ought to focus on the following important issues:

- Evaluating the subject-level quality planning work: identifying the subject objectives; identifying the subject's standards with corresponding reference systems; specifying the reference system by the contents and activities (the first prerequisite).
- Evaluating the guidance and quality process implementation according to the identified subject standards (the first and the second prerequisites).

In order to assess according to the subject standards a lot of contents ought to be evaluated, in which assessing the quality of the subject is the most important content. Subject-level SA in this thesis focuses on the subject quality SA with the main contents as: *building outcome standards; benchmark for evaluation; constructing and implementing subject quality SA processes.*

1.5. Some factors affecting self-assessment in quality control at high schools

There are two types of factors that affect SA operations, which are the factors impacting from the school outside (abbreviated to *the external influencing factors*) and the factors influencing from the school interior (abbreviated to *the internal influencing factors*).

- The school external factors directly impact on the SA operations are the MOET's regulations and the DOET's guidance.
- The school internal factors including: the personnel, organizational structure, QC innovation, school facilities, equipments, technology, finance,... but the internal elements that have the strongest impact on SA operations are the factors for innovating the school QC work (of subject-sections, groups of subjects).

Chapter 1 conclusion

In chapter 1, the thesis has proposed:

- The concepts of quality, high school quality, high school QM and SA at high schools.
- Three levels of high school QC. QAS is the most appropriate level of QC with high schools in the present time.

SA actually exists with its true meaning at the level of QAS. SA in QAS has two basic functions: SA to improve the regular quality and SA in preparation for AQC. SA in QAS will determine the extent of quality the school has achieved compared to the objectives and quality standards proposed. SA in QAS is self-assessing on the basis of standards implementing quality processes.

- SA in QAS should have good conditions to implement SA (02 general conditions, 02 prerequisites)
- SA in QAS should be implemented in 2 levels, 06 contents at school-level; 03 contents with subject-level.
- The factors that affect SA operations include external as well as internal influencing factors.

Chapter 2. THE PRACTICAL BASES OF SELF-ASSESSMENT IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT HIGH SCHOOLS

2.1. Quality self-assessment in schools worldwide

2.1.1. SA at high schools in some developed countries

The thesis introduces SA in the western United States, subjects SA in high schools in Michigan, USA and SA in Scotland –the UK.

2.1.2. SA at high schools in some developing countries

The thesis has introduced SA at high schools in Croatia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Besides, the thesis has already presented SA at the school of St. Cettina, in Malta.

2.2. Quality self-assessment at high schools education in Vietnam

2.2.1. A summary of quality self-assessment at Vietnamese schools

Let us take 2003 as the year the Department of Education Assessment and Accreditation, belonging to the MOET was established as a signpost, the thesis briefly discusses school quality SA in Vietnam before 2003 as well as from 2003 up to now. Quality SA at high schools in Thai Binh from 2003 up to the present time is also presented in this section.

2.2.2. The current quality self-assessment situation at high schools Vietnam through a typical case study in Thai Binh

2.2.2.1. Research Methods: The thesis has applied several research methods such as group and in-depth interviews; questionnaire survey; product research to assess the status of quality SA at high schools in Thai Binh.

2.2.2.2. Research results

a) The results of interviewing high school management staff:

The interviews focused on certain contents like *objectives, positions, roles, SA motivation and principles; SA levels; implementing, directing, evaluating, and adjusting SA operations; and the results obtained after implementing SA*. Interview results show that SA activities have already been established and implemented at schools. However, with the lack of SA motivation; the purpose of SA is only to deal with inspection activities, external accrediting; with such faint role of SA; with the SA principles that have not been applied strictly and with the heavy dependence of the schools in the superior management agencies it is obvious that high school SA has not been conducted in QAS.

b) The results of surveying the teaching staff, together with researching products and interviewing managers on the status of SA at high schools

*** To develop and implement SA conditions**

To determine and implement the general conditions

- High school SA has been guaranteed on a legal basis. However, the system of documents related to the work of general education QC is changeable and is not consistent with reality.

- High schools' autonomy and social responsibility in SA.

The autonomy: the survey results show that the schools have not been given much autonomy on two areas of *leadership, administration* (35.5%) and *recruitment, training, retraining and using the staff involved in SA* (29.5%), but in these two areas the schools have already had part of the autonomy (the respectively rates are 60.5% and 65.5%); having part of the autonomy for *financing autonomy to conduct SA* (64%). The schools do not have autonomy in the

two most important areas: *identifying quality objectives, quality standards, quality processes and SA procedures; identifying SA fields (contents), selecting methods of collecting evidence for the schools* (the respectively rates for the schools without autonomy are 69% and 53%)

- Social responsibilities: the schools have publicly mobilized and use of resources from the State, from the society considering the schools' established plans when conducting SA; but have not performed their social responsibility well with two criteria: *stating the mission, quality objectives, quality standards, quality processes; QAS conditions have been completely announced to the public, the management agencies, students, students' parents as well as the whole society; The domains, procedures and SA development processes, SA results have been timely informed to the school members, the subjects interested, the parties involved in the school quality so that they can take part in monitoring or play the role of an advisory to the school.*

Identifying and implementing prerequisites

32% of the staff and teachers surveyed confirmed that the schools had established quality plans, among which 12% supposed that SA activities had been included in the quality plans; 69% did not know about the schools' mission and quality objectives; 63% agreed that school SA had based on the quality standards validated by the MOET; and nobody (0%) agreed with the idea that school SA which based on the quality standards validated by the MOET and supplemented by the school clarified that most high schools had not succeeded in performing the content that schools should determine the mission, quality goals and quality standards which are consistent with their own school, basing on the quality standards regulated by the MOET. The majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that the schools have not managed to develop necessary quality processes. Experts' opinion: without implementing standard SA through quality processes, SA does not contribute much to improve high school quality and high schools have not performed SA following standards and quality processes well. Therefore, it can be said that the schools have not been successful in identifying and implementing the prerequisites for SA in QAS.

*** The school-level SA current situation**

Deciding evaluation model: High schools surveyed had selected process model for their schools' SA model.

Establishing SA plans: Determining the SA fields: 97% of the respondents confirmed that the schools had done SA in 5 fields regulated by the MOET and had implemented SA according to the school year; 6% identified that the schools had executed SA in 5 areas regulated by the MOET and some other additional fields. Experts' opinion: considering whether the mission and quality goals the school has determined are appropriate for the school's situation at the time of evaluation; assessing the staff and teachers' SA needs is a very important field of SA. The DOET and managers' opinion: Among SA fields, it is necessary to assess the management of content development and learning curriculum for the students. *Thus*, the fields decided by the school for SA have not met the requirements of the fields to be assessed for SA in QAS.

- Deciding the methods of collecting proofs: With 94% and 86% of the respondents respectively determined the 2 methods *Data statistics* and *Products research* are the methods used by the schools to collect proofs. Other methods: *Expert; Questionnaire survey; Interview; Observation* have the percentage of respectively 5.0%; 7.5%; 3.0% and 34%. This clarifies that

the high schools still use traditional methods to collect evidence, while other new methods of collecting evidence (new to the schools) that bring high accuracy have not been applied much.

- Building and implementing SA in process: The survey results also demonstrate that the schools had implemented the SA processes set by the MOET.

The personnel structure, time allocation, executive budget determination

The context of staffing, allocating time, determining the budget for the high schools SA implementation are shown in the table below:

Questions	Answers	Selection Results	
		No.	Rate (%)
Has the school been able to mobilize all members of the school to participate in SA?	True	24	12.0
	False	154	77.0
	Don't know	22	11.0
Has the school got the "specialization" in allocating the personnel to conduct SA activities (that is to indicate clearly the people to do the action, the people to supervise, inspect, and make necessary adjustments)?	Yes	24	12.0
	No	142	71.0
	Not sure	34	17.0
Has the school succeeded in establishing an advisory group and the technical expert group so that these groups can take part in consulting, directing the techniques for implementing SA activities inside the school?	Yes	22	11.0
	No	138	69.0
	Not sure	40	20.0
When organizing internal SA activities, has the school allocated enough time and estimated expected sources of funding to do each evaluation operation?	Yes	27	13.5
	No	156	78.0
	Not sure	17	8.5

The data in the above table apparently show that the high schools have not done well the staffing, time allocating, or determining the funding for SA implementation.

The results of SA implementation according to the selected fields

The SA fields selected by the high school and the extents of SA operations fulfilled are reflected in the following table:

Self-assessment aspects	The school has implemented SA (rate %)		Results achieved if implemented SA (rate %)		
	No	Yes	Good	Fair	Not good
Considering the mission and goals	100.0	0.0			
Each individual, groups, courses, schools' assessment needs	98.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Managing the development of the students' learning contents and syllabus	100.0	0.0			
Evaluating: staff, teachers and students, learning environment and the school atmosphere	2.5	97.5	29.0	51.0	17.5

School facilities, teaching equipments, financing and student learning documentation.	0.0	100.0	18.0	61.0	21.0
The relations between schools, families and the society	0.0	100.0	25.0	47.0	28.0
Educational activities and results	0.0	100.0	11.5	63.5	25.0
The school organization and management	0.0	100.0	9.0	53.0	38.0
Comparing the school's SA results with that of other high schools'.	100.0	0.0			

The data in the table when combined with the results of the in-depth interviews make it obvious that: the high schools have already conducted school SA in the areas prescribed by the MOET, among which assessing the staff, teachers, students, and learning environment has been best performed; the field of personnel organization and management work has been performed worst. Some important areas such as: considering the mission and goals; assessing each individual, collective, discipline, and school's needs of assessment; evaluating content development management, students' learning syllabus; comparing the school's SA results with that of the other high schools' has not been executed.

Fulfilling SA reports: SA reports have reflected the quality of the schools in the school year, proposed some suggested adjustments to maintain the schools' quality, but have not come up with measures and proposals for changes to improve quality. SA reports are not extensively given to staff and teachers to consult their ideas so as to be able to edit and make perfect before publication.

Announcing the SA results: 100% of the staff and teachers confirmed that results had been widely reported to the schools' staff, teachers, students and students' parents. However, the SA results have not been notified widely to all the subjects interested in the school quality.

*** The current situation of disciplinary level of SA**

Establishing and implementing subject-quality plans

Survey results showed that:

- 95.5% of the teacher and student respondents confirmed that specialized subject collective conduct their teaching following the targeted objectives regulated by the MOET. Thus, the high schools perform their tasks basing closely on the subject teaching targets prescribed by the MOET. This is a kind of limitation because of the desire of students in each class, each school is different, and therefore, to organize teaching activities as mentioned does not meet the students' ambitions.

- 100% of the teachers and students affirmed that the high schools have not identified the subject standards corresponding to appropriate reference systems consistent with the subject objectives constructed by specialized groups.

- Most of the of the teachers and students confirmed that neither the schools nor specialized collectives (groups) have specified the reference systems of contents, what to do; guided teachers how to implement the quality processes or implemented the quality process according to the defined discipline standards.

The combination of interviews, surveys and product research shows that the schools and subject collectives have not done well the establishment or the implementation of the subject quality plans.

Managers' opinion: Basically and comprehensively innovating education and training set out the requirements of enhancing learners' implementing capacity. Therefore, education institutions should focus on forming skills, educating behavior, attitude to students on the basis of the knowledge provided. In high schools, the knowledge in many subjects primarily aims to form performing skills and capacity for students.

The subject quality SA current situation

- About evaluating course objectives: 85% of the staff and teachers identified that their objectives of assessing course quality focused on assessing knowledge. The survey results, combined with the results of the interviews, showed that the trend towards featuring knowledge enhancement but paying inadequate attention to forming skills, behaviors and attitudes are prevalent in schools.

- About learning outcomes and the course assessment standards: 93.5% of the staff and teachers said subject section (group), course are complying with the outcome standards, the course evaluation standards proposed by the MOET and DOET; 23.0% of the staff and teachers supposed that outcome standards, course assessment standards have actually constructed by specialized subject collectives (groups). This suggests that the high schools have not succeeded in self-building outcome standards, course evaluation standards consistent with the school students' level.

- About the SA process and using the results of subject SA:

Implementation of the SA process: the survey results show that the high schools have not managed to implement discipline quality SA processes in QAS. *Collecting and processing evidence:* 84.5% of the staff and teacher respondents said that the schools have not collected and processed the proofs following the steps approved. *Using the results of course SA:* 100% of the staff and teachers identified that the subject SA results are used as metrics to report to subject collectives, groups and schools. Meanwhile, only 40.5% said that the SA results are used to improve teaching and learning. *Approving report:* Team and group leaders have discipline quality SA reports and the school Managerial approved these reports. Teachers of other disciplines have not had similar reports.

In conclusion, the present discipline quality SA has not been able to meet the requirements of discipline quality SA according to QAS levels.

*** Comments on a number of factors affecting the quality SA at high schools**

- The MOET regulations do not give good conditions for the high schools to have their own autonomy and social responsibility for the SA operations. The DOET's administration for the high school SA operations has not been drastic enough; The DOET has no mechanism to motivate the secondary schools to volunteer and voluntarily conduct SA activities. As a result, the school SA activities have taken place slowly, naturally, and thus the SA results lack persuasiveness.

- High schools quality has received the staff and teachers' attention. However, some staff and teachers' information and knowledge about SA is really limited. The schools lack facilities, equipments, technical and financial resources for conducting SA. The managerial staff's ability to operate SA operations is inadequate. High schools have not implemented SA following standards and quality processes...

* **The general comments on implementing SA at high schools in Thai Binh province**

Achievements in SA operations: high schools have implemented the SA activities planned by the MOET and DOET. SA operations are guaranteed in terms of legal bases. The schools have used some autonomy but their social responsibility is not high.

Some limitations / weaknesses of SA operations

- The SA motivation is low and the SA purposes are not clearly defined
- The principles of SA, basing on graded levels have not been strictly implemented.
- The schools are heavy depended on the superior management agencies about the plans to organize, direct, inspect the implementation, and adjust the SA operations.
- The general as well as prerequisite conditions for the schools to organize SA activities at the level of QAS are mostly unmet.
- For the school level SA, the schools have not done a good job of planning, organizing and implementing the SA plans.
- For subject-level SA: The specialized collectives (groups) have not succeeded in identifying the subject quality objectives that are consistent with the students' expectations; have not managed to build outcome standards, assessment standards and subject quality assessment procedures.

The causes of the above weaknesses

- The outer reasons: SA in QC at high schools is a new issue so the schools have not well prepared and have not been ready for organizing SA operations.

The high schools have not fully identified and have no effective measures to prevent these factors from affecting SA activities at high schools negatively...

- The inner reasons: The schools have not succeeded in building momentum for SA operations and have insufficient ability and capacity to organize SA activities...

2.3. The world experiences and Vietnamese limitations in quality SA at high schools

2.3.1. The world experience for high school SA activities in Vietnam

From the practices of conducting SA in some foreign countries, 08 experiential lessons have been drawn for high schools in Vietnam when conducting their school SA.

2.3.2. The limitations in quality SA at high schools in Vietnam

- High schools in Vietnam have not identified the exact position of SA in the QAS system.

- The general and prerequisites conditions for implementing SA in QAS have not been determined and implemented. High schools have not yet conducted SA according to standards or following quality processes consistent with their school actual situation.

- High Schools have not conducted quality SA in QAS at disciplinary level. There has also been the lack of cooperation among high schools in the implementation of SA in QAS.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

- Quality SA in high schools around the world: SA in high schools is the activity carried out regularly and systematically in many countries all over the world. In some countries (the USA), SA is carried out at two levels: the school and the discipline.

- Quality SA in Vietnamese schools: SA has recently been paid more attention to by the high schools. However, in the process of deploying, implementing SA, there have been a lot difficulties and shortcomings.

In Thai Binh, high schools have performed SA according to the plans approved by the DOET and the MOET. SA has been implemented by the schools, academic disciplines, and teachers. However: The schools have not implemented internal QC to set the premise of SA; The ongoing SA procedure has not good enough for SA in QAS; the resources for SA implementation have not met the actual requirements. High schools have not fully implemented the SA contents selected at the school level; SA has only focused on the school level but has not been implemented at the disciplinary level; The staff and teachers' both awareness and determination for SA activities are not adequate; Their SA capacity is limited; There have not been coordination or support among high schools in conducting SA.

- From the SA practices around the world and in Vietnam (the typical case study in Thai Binh) the thesis has proposed eight experiential lessons for high schools in Vietnam when conducting SA in their schools. Some countries in the world have done two good basic functions of SA in the QAS which are SA to improve regular quality and SA to prepare for AQC. SA at high schools in Thai Binh province has only performed the SA function preparing for AQC.

The above rationale and reality show that it is necessary to devise effective measures to innovate SA at high schools to meet the requirements of *Fundamentally and Comprehensively Innovating Vietnamese Education and Training*.

Chapter 3. THE MEASURES TO INNOVATE SELF-ASSESSMENT AT HIGH SCHOOLS IN VIETNAM

3.1. The background and principles to propose measures

3.1.1. The contexts, opportunities and challenges to the quality and SA activities in high school

- The contexts: *In the world*, the trend of integration, globalization; the strong development of the scientific and technological revolutionary; the process of decentralization and massification of education ... requires improving the quality of education and training. In Vietnam, education and training quality and human resources have not met the requirements. The Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW poses the requirements of fundamentally and comprehensively innovating Vietnamese Education and Training.

- Some issues faced by Vietnamese high school education

The thesis has outlined three opportunities and two challenges for general education; and in order to take advantage of opportunities as well as to deal with challenges, high schools ought to implement SA in QAS.

3.1.2. The principles to propose measures

The assurance principles: rationality; practicality; synchronism; urgency and feasibility.

3.2. Some measures to innovate self-assessment activities at high schools

The thesis proposes 6 measures to innovate self-evaluation at high schools.

3.2.1. To implement internal quality control to create the premise for SA

The implementation of internal QC focuses on a number of contents: determining mission, setting objectives and quality standards of the school and each discipline.

The significance and goal of the measure

The measure significance:

- Defining the schools' mission, setting the targets of the schools and courses' quality are necessary steps, showing respect for the students' rights. This measure helps schools, staff and teachers pay adequate attention to students learning needs.

- Good quality standards for schools, courses are the specification of the mission stated, quality objectives identified; indicating the quality objectives that the school and teachers need to target their work towards.

The measure objectives: The school's goal and discipline's objectives, together with the school and discipline quality standards, closely connected to the standards approved by the MOET, matching the school students' capacity are proposed by the schools.

The measure implementation contents:

- Schools and courses (groups) assess and review their quality plan establishments; compile, edit and supplement the plans if necessary.

- Identifying the areas (contents) the schools and course groups need to assess in the orientation towards QAS, and constructing outcome standards as well as standards for course evaluation.

Conditions for implementing the measure:

- Applying the Education Act 2005, the Amendments of the Education Act 2009 and the Decision No. 1215/QĐ-BGDĐT, April 4, 2013 of the MOET.

- The school and teachers need to understand the students' needs as well as expectations of learning and regularly update the students' needs and desires.

3.2.2. Perfecting the SA process to performing SA according to different levels of QAS

The measure significance and objectives

The significance: school and courses quality SA process in QAS will help school and courses SA activities obtain high results.

Objectives: to complete the process of school and courses quality SA in chronological order of steps elaborately.

The measure implementation contents:

Accomplishing the school quality SA process with 5 steps: *Preparing for SA; Designing the SA process and tools for collecting proofs; Implementing SA; Writing SA report, proposing improvement measures; Announcing SA results. Proposing the quality SA process including 3 steps: Establishing course quality SA plans; Conducting SA (collecting, analyzing, evaluating evidence, conclusions and recommendations); Announcing SA results, Using the SA results in improving teaching and learning.*

Conditions for implementing the measure:

Schools, collectives, specialized groups, the staff and teachers are awarded the autonomy associated with social responsibility to develop procedures for school and courses quality SA.

The practice of accomplishing school and discipline quality SA process needs the participation of experts and technical staff.

3.2.3. Strengthening the resources and the implementing the quality SA contents selected in school-level

The measure significance and objectives

The significance: Resource is an indispensable element to perform SA; school quality SA in the fields selected help the school to determine the level of quality achieved, compared to the objectives and quality standards determined, so as to decide the appropriate adjustments.

The Objectives: To identify the resources needed to implement the SA in QAS; to establish the plans for staffing, allocating time, identifying funding sources for implementation; implementing SA in the fields determined.

The measure implementation contents:

- Strengthening the resources: the resources discussed here include the human resources quality, facilities, equipments, technical and financial resources.
- Developing plans for staffing, allocating time, identifying funding sources to implement the SA plans in the cycle of 5 years (60 months).
- Implementing quality SA in the identified fields (contents).

Conditions for implementing the measures:

- Applying the Decree No. 43/2006/NĐ-CP; The Resolution No. 05/2005/NQ-CP and some other government documents to enhance SA resources.
- This measure will not be implemented, or implemented without achieving the desired results if the school does not perform or poorly performs the internal quality management (does not set quality objectives; does not have quality standards with the fields assessed or the quality standards are not detailed; has no SA process or the school does not strictly comply with the SA procedures proposed).

3.2.4. Implementing disciplinary level quality SA

SA at disciplinary level in the thesis focuses on self-assessing discipline quality.

The measure's significance and objectives

Course quality SA helps the teaching staff to evaluate properly the quality of the course compared with quality standards proposed, to determine the drawbacks, to find remedies to improve the quality of the courses.

The objectives of these measures are to establish SA plans, implementing SA and announcing the course quality SA results.

The measure implementation contents:

- The specialized collectives and teachers, basing on the outcome standards, assessing standards and the course quality SA process, establish the course quality SA plans.
- Disseminating course quality SA plans to the teaching staff in specialized collectives and performing SA skills training for the staff.
- Implementing the course quality SA process in secondary schools.
- Using the SA results to improve the teachers' teaching and students' learning.

Conditions for implementing the measure:

Firstly, specialized collectives, professional groups and the teachers determine the course objectives for each student population for each year and all the educational level. *Secondly*, specialized collectives, professional groups and the teachers need to build the learning outcomes, assessment standards and master courses quality SA process. *Thirdly*, there is the school leaders' support. *Fourthly*, there is the support of the teachers in professional groups. *Fifthly*, there is the students' cooperation.

3.2.5. Improving quality SA capacity for the staff and teachers

This measure focuses on two key issues: Raising awareness, providing information and fostering SA capabilities for the staff and teachers.

The measure significance and objectives

The significance:

- The majority of the staff and teachers in high schools are neither fully aware of the SA nor correctly identify their own responsibilities so they are not actively or voluntarily engaged in SA. Identifying and implementing this measure will contribute to raising awareness, clarifying the responsibilities of the staff and teachers to participate in their school SA activities
- The quality of human resources plays a decisive role in increasing the SA results. Hence, training and retraining to improve SA capacity for the staff and teachers are really essential.

The objectives:

- After implementing this measure, high school staff and teachers voluntarily and actively participate in SA activities as well as actively participate in fostering SA capacity events arranged by their school and the superior authorities.
- To identify the important issues and conditions for implementing the training plans and fostering staff and teachers' capacity for quality SA.

The measure implementation contents:

- To develop and implement a plan for advocacy, raising awareness for the staff and teachers.
- To determine and provide the staff and teachers with necessary information related to SA activities. To give guidance and help the staff and teachers to find information related to SA in books, newspapers and on the Internet.
- To strengthen the staff and teachers' SA capacity, following 3 main issues: *Firstly*, mobilizing all the school staff and teachers to involve in SA activities; transferring SA techniques to the school staff and teachers. *Secondly*, implementing the plans to foster the staff and teachers' capacity to carry out quality SA. *Thirdly*, performing the action of specializing the staff and teachers to implement SA at school level.

Conditions for implementing the measure:

- Planning to develop the Education Sector human resources period 2011-2020; the Government's Education Development Strategy 2011- 2020,...
- High schools management staff should demonstrate exemplary role, pioneer in implementing this measure.
- Adequate finance, equipments, techniques, time ... to implement training plan.

3.2.6. Strengthening the cooperation and support among the upper secondary schools in organizing SA

The measure significance and goal

SA in QM is a new activity. Thereby enhancing the coordination and support among high schools will provide opportunities and the best conditions for high schools to implement SA in QAS successfully.

High schools should identify the contents to coordinate and support one another to conduct SA in QAS.

The measure implementation contents:

- Identifying each school's strengths and weaknesses and determining the objectives, contents and common interests that can be coordinated and supported one another.
- Developing and implementing cooperation and assistance in organizing and managing SA operations.
- Assessing the levels of cooperation and benefits obtained in relation to cooperation and mutual assistance among the schools to perform SA operations.

Conditions for implementing the measure:

Transparency, openness in the cooperation among schools, ensuring the principles of respecting the interests of the schools involved, there does not appear a threat to the quality of any school.

3.3. Assaying and experimenting the measures proposed

3.3.1. Assaying the urgency and feasibility of the measures

- Assay purpose: Assaying to study and analyze high school staff and teachers' viewpoint on SA innovative measures at high schools proposed in the thesis.

- The contents of the assay: Assaying the urgency and feasibility of the 6 measures to innovate SA in high schools.

- Assay models: (see the appendix)

- Assay method and participants: Assaying using questionnaire; The trial respondents are 200 teachers and office workers of 10 high schools in four districts and the City of Thai Binh province.

- The results of the assay are presented in the chart No. 2 and No. 3 in the thesis.

The assay results show that the measures proposed in the thesis are really urgent and feasible with the total of the *very urgent* and *urgent* as well as *feasible* and *really feasible* levels both of over 75%, in which the 4th measure *Performing discipline level SA has the highest urgency and feasibility; To implement SA in QAS high schools should soon implement the measures to perform internal QM to create premises for SA; Accomplishing the SA process to implement SA following levels of QAS; ...*

3.3.2. Testing the measures proposed

-The test cause, purpose and requirements:

The test cause: Discipline quality SA has not been conducted by high schools so it should be tested; Discipline objective, quality standards and quality processes have not been performed; There have no coordination among small-sized high schools or there have been few teachers of particular discipline to perform SA.

The test purpose and requirements: To verify the feasibility of a number of measures proposed. The testing is done openly and transparently.

The test hypothesis: High schools and professional groups and disciplines of the same school collaborate to determine outcomes, evaluating standards, SA processes, implementing discipline quality SA will contribute to the success of discipline-level SA.

- The test contents: Testing part of measures 1, 2 and 6 as well as implementing measure 4 *Innovating discipline quality SA with the specific discipline Biology in secondary schools.*

- The test prototypes: 2 samples.

- The test evaluation criteria: the staff, teachers, and students of two schools actively participate in the case study. Learning outcomes, assessment standards and procedures to assess the Biology course in high school are constructed and fulfilled.

- The test time and place

Trials time: From August 2013 to May 2014.

Test location: Dong Tien Hai and Chu Van An High schools.

- Description of the context of the high schools elected

- The test progress:

From August to December 2013, PhD candidate, the two school manager board representatives and the Biology teachers experimented part of measures 1, 2 and measure 6.

From January to May 2014, experimented measure 4 for the Biology course. In June, 2014, summarized the results of testing the mentioned measures.

- The test results: The test plan is highly consented to by the DOET with the two schools' unanimity.

The results achieved are:

+ The number of staff, teachers, and students participated in testing: There are 15 staff and teachers of the two high schools involved in the testing activities, in which the number of Biology teachers is 9/9 (=100%). 1500 students in all the 3 grades 10, 11 and 12 of the two high schools were assessed their learning outcomes, 700 are from Chu Van An and 800 are from Dong Tien Hai High schools.

+ In terms of science and specialization: outcome standards, assessment standards and the procedure of assessing the quality of the Biology course in high school were approved by the two schools. The results of applying assessment standards built into assessing the results of students studying Biology in two the schools are listed in the table below:

Levels of Achievement	Number of students passed / applied	Rate (%)
Level 4	122/1500	8.1
Level 3	263/1500	17.5
Level 2	618/1500	41.2
Level 1	459/1500	30.6
Failed	38/1500	2.6
Total	1500	100%

+ From the social angle: testing activities were actively participated in by the staff, teachers as well as students and were enthusiastically supported by the students' parents.

- Organizing seminars and experts assess the test results.

The first seminar: Introduction to the measures of innovating SA activities at high schools and proposal plans to test a number of measures.

Results achieved: The leaders of the DOET and the leaders of the two high schools agreed to implement testing.

The second seminar: Implementing testing in high schools.

Results achieved: The managerial staff, the staff of Biology teachers and students supported and committed to actively participate in the experimenting plan.

The third seminar: Assessing the test results

Results achieved: Test results reports and conclusions of the trial.

Reporting the experiment results:

For testing part of measures 1, 2 and measures 6

(1) The strengths:

- Both high schools have succeeded in collaboratively organized SA operations.
- Having maximized the strengths of each school as well as overcame the basic limitations as being inexperienced in organizing SA activities and manpower shortage...
- Saving funds, shortening the time and improving the quality of the learning outcomes, the assessment standards and course assessment procedures established.
- Outcome standards, benchmarks and the procedures of the Biology course quality SA at high schools (applied for Thai Binh) were successfully constructed.

(2) Weaknesses:

- The staff and teachers have not grasped the rationale and their capacity to organize SA is limited.
- There have not been the mechanisms to form coordination among high schools in organizing SA operations. There have also been shortages of resources, facilities and finance... to conduct SA.

For measure 4 *Implementing discipline quality SA*

(1) Strengths:

- The Biology teachers from both schools have actively participated in and responded to the experiment.
- Applying assessment standards in assessing quality in learning Biology in schools has brought the desired results.

(2) Weaknesses: The cost of effort, time and financial

Conclusions about the experiment:

- The experiment has been successful, the test hypothesis has been proven. The experiment results show that these measures have solved the problems of SA in QAS rose, which is sufficient for a wide application in the future.
- Course quality SA in QAS is necessary, and should be applied to all the other courses.
- The experiment results should be widely disseminated.
- The PhD candidate should continue testing the remaining measures.

Chapter 3 conclusion

- Integration and globalization require high schools to innovate SA activities to improve the school quality.
- Basing on the basic rationale and practical SA operations, the thesis has proposed six measures to innovate SA in QAS in high schools.
- The assaying results show that all the six measures above actually have the urgent and feasible characteristics. The experimentation of part of measures 1 and 2 as well as measures 6 and 4 were all successful. The test results show that well-performing SA functions aiming to improve regular quality will contribute to implementing SA functions in preparation for AQC.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONCLUSION

1.1. About the rationale

- Based on the results of comparing, analyzing the approaches to the concept of quality, the thesis proposes the concepts of quality, high school quality, high school quality management, and quality SA at high schools.

- SA actually exists with its full meaning at the level of QAS. SA in QAS has two basic functions that are improving regular quality and preparing for AQC (external assessment). SA in QAS is implemented according standards via quality processes.

- The conditions for implementing SA in QAS are high schools have their own autonomy and social responsibility for SA activities, perform 02 prerequisites: i) the school has quality plans; and ii) the school frequently implements quality plans (implementing quality processes to achieve quality standards and objectives).

- SA in QAS contents: High schools should implement QAS at two levels, discipline as well as school levels. At discipline level, the main content is self-assessing academic discipline quality.

- The school-level SA includes 6 main contents: (i) *selecting evaluation model*; (ii) *establishing SA plans (selecting SA areas, determining methods of collecting proofs, making SA processes)*; (iii) *staffing, allocating time, identifying funding sources for implementation*; (iv) *conducting SA*; (v) *analyzing, evaluating and preparing SA reports*; and (vi) *announcing SA results*.

Discipline-level SA focuses on self- assessing disciplinary quality with the following main contents: *constructing learning outcome standards and benchmark*; *constructing and implementing academic subject quality SA process*.

- SA activities at high schools are directly and indirectly affected by many factors such as the MOET regulations, the DOET direction and the school related elements.

1.2. On the practical basis

- SA at high schools is activities conducted systematically in many countries around the world.

- In Vietnam: high schools have already deployed SA as planned by DOET and MOET. However, the results of the typical case study in Thai Binh show that high schools have not performed internal QC to create the premise for SA activities; the current SA process has not meet the requirements of SA in QAS; the resources to implement SA are limited; the school has not performed the SA contents selected actually well, has not conducted SA at discipline level; the staff and teachers lack SA information and knowledge and their SA capacity is limited..., consequently, SA at high schools has just performed the accrediting functions, but failed to perform the functions of improving the school quality.

From these SA practices, the thesis has drawn out 08 experiential lessons for high schools in Vietnam when conducting their school SA. Practice also shows that a number of countries around the world have performed well both functions of SA in QAS, high schools in Vietnam (the typical study case in Thai Binh) have just performed the function of SA in **AQC**.

1.3. About measures: Based on the rationale, combined with the practices, the thesis has proposed six measures to innovate SA in QAS.

The results of assaying the staff and teachers' opinions indicate that the proposed measures are highly appreciated about the urgency and feasibility. Part of measures 1 and 2, and measures 6 and 4 have been experimented successfully. This clarifies the feasibility of the measures proposed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. For the MOET

The MOET should promptly launch the movement of innovating general education curricula, creating a legal framework to give high schools the autonomy in organizing SA operations in QAS.

2.2. For the DOETs

- The DOETs should develop the mechanisms to promote SA in QAS at high schools.
- Providing (supporting) high schools with finance so that schools can establish and implement training plans, enhancing the staff and teachers' capacity to manage, organize and conducting SA operations.
- The DOET is the essential joint between high schools coordinating in organizing SA activities.

2.3. For high schools

- Implementing SA in QAS (SA according to the Standard using the quality process) and before conducting SA high schools need to implement internal QC).
- Complying correctly and accurately all the steps of SA in QAS at two levels: school as well as discipline.
- Advancing education socialization when performing SA in QAS.
- High schools should continue to develop procedures to improve high schools quality; go on to test discipline quality SA with other subjects; develop mechanisms and policies to create SA incentives for other divisions, professional groups and individuals in schools.

The issues that need further study after the thesis presented

The process to improve high school quality.

The mechanisms and policies to motivate SA for schools, professional sections, individuals.

Experimenting discipline quality SA with other subjects.