

# REPOSITIONING VIETNAMESE ACADEMIC JOURNALS IN A NON-ENGLISH RESEARCH SYSTEM: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND OPEN SCIENCE PATHWAYS

## REPOSICIONAMENTO DE PERIÓDICOS ACADÊMICOS VIETNAMITAS EM UM SISTEMA DE PESQUISA NÃO INGLESA: DESAFIOS, OPORTUNIDADES E CAMINHOS PARA A CIÊNCIA ABERTA

Article received on: 8/29/2025

Article accepted on: 11/28/2025

**Van Hieu Nguyen\***

\*Lac Hong University, Dong Nai, Vietnam  
[vanhieulhu@gmail.com](mailto:vanhieulhu@gmail.com)

**Minh Hieu Nguyen\***

\*Lac Hong University, Dong Nai, Vietnam  
[minhhieulhu@gmail.com](mailto:minhhieulhu@gmail.com)

**Duy Phu Nguyen\***

\*Lac Hong University, Dong Nai, Vietnam  
[nguyenduyphu@lhu.edu.vn](mailto:nguyenduyphu@lhu.edu.vn)

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

### Abstract

Vietnam has experienced rapid growth in internationally indexed publications over the last decade, driven by performance-based funding, promotion criteria, and institutional ranking pressures. Yet domestic academic journals—most of which publish primarily in Vietnamese—have not benefited proportionally from this growth. They struggle to attract high-quality submissions, suffer from weak digital infrastructure, and remain marginal in research evaluation. This paper develops a system-level analysis of Vietnamese academic journals as part of an ecological chain shaped by national evaluation regimes, researchers' publishing strategies, journal-level capacity, and emerging open science practices. Drawing on policy documents, prior bibliometric studies on Vietnamese education and social sciences, and comparative evidence from China's Double First-Class initiative and international debates on responsible metrics and open science, the paper: (i) maps the Vietnamese journal ecological chain; (ii) diagnoses structural bottlenecks that weaken domestic journals; and (iii) outlines an open science-oriented reform pathway compatible with Vietnam's institutional context. The proposed framework integrates insights from policy studies, scientometrics, and journal governance, and is intended to guide both empirical research and practical reform scenarios

### Resumo

O Vietnã experimentou um rápido crescimento em publicações indexadas internacionalmente na última década, impulsionado por financiamento baseado em desempenho, critérios de promoção e pressões institucionais de classificação. No entanto, os periódicos acadêmicos nacionais — a maioria dos quais publica principalmente em vietnamita — não se beneficiaram proporcionalmente desse crescimento. Eles têm dificuldades para atrair submissões de alta qualidade, sofrem com infraestrutura digital frágil e permanecem à margem na avaliação da pesquisa. Este artigo desenvolve uma análise sistêmica dos periódicos acadêmicos vietnamitas como parte de uma cadeia ecológica moldada por regimes nacionais de avaliação, estratégias de publicação de pesquisadores, capacidade dos periódicos e práticas emergentes de ciência aberta. Com base em documentos de políticas públicas, estudos bibliométricos anteriores sobre educação e ciências sociais no Vietnã e evidências comparativas da iniciativa Double First-Class da China e debates internacionais sobre métricas responsáveis e ciência aberta, o artigo: (i) mapeia a cadeia ecológica dos periódicos vietnamitas; (ii) diagnostica os gargalos estruturais que enfraquecem os periódicos nacionais; e (iii) delinea um caminho de reforma orientado para a ciência



for repositioning Vietnamese journals in a non-English research system.

**Keywords:** Vietnam, Academic Journals, Research Evaluation, Open Science, Responsible Metrics, Non-English Publishing.

*aberta, compatível com o contexto institucional do Vietnã. A estrutura proposta integra conhecimentos de estudos de políticas públicas, cientometria e governança de periódicos, e visa orientar tanto a pesquisa empírica quanto cenários práticos de reforma para o reposicionamento de periódicos vietnamitas em um sistema de pesquisa não anglófono.*

**Palavras-chave:** Vietnã. Periódicos acadêmicos. Avaliação de pesquisa. Ciência aberta. Métricas responsáveis. Publicação em línguas não inglesas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Vietnam has become a visible emerging contributor to global research output, particularly in fields such as education, engineering, and health sciences. The number of articles indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science (WoS) has increased substantially, especially after Resolution 29-NQ/TW on educational reform and related policies that link institutional funding and promotion criteria to international publications. Bibliometric studies document both the rapid growth of Vietnamese educational research on Scopus and the increasing concentration of output in a small group of research-intensive universities (Luong, Phan, Dinh, & Pham, 2021; Nguyen, Dinh, Pham, Luong, & Pham, 2024).

This success, however, has come with side effects for domestic academic journals. In many disciplines, especially in the social sciences and humanities, Vietnamese journals continue to operate as low-influence, domestically oriented venues. They attract relatively few high-quality manuscripts, frequently fall short of basic indexing criteria, and rarely play a central role in doctoral training or knowledge translation for national policy (La, 2020; Nguyen, La, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2019). At the same time, generous internal reward schemes for Scopus/WoS publications have reoriented researchers' efforts towards international outlets, sometimes at the expense of building robust national journal ecosystems (Trinh, Tran, Le, Nguyen, & Pham, 2020).

International debates have also shifted towards more critical approaches to research evaluation. The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), the Leiden Manifesto, and related initiatives call for moving beyond simplistic metrics such as the journal impact factor and h-index towards more contextual, responsible

assessment practices (Butler-Adam, 2013; Hicks, Wouters, Waltman, de Rijcke, & Rafols, 2015; Moher *et al.*, 2018). Meanwhile, the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science frames open access, open data, and transparent peer review as key levers for equitable knowledge systems, particularly in the Global South (UNESCO, 2021, 2023).

Against this backdrop, Vietnam faces a core tension: the country's research capacity and international visibility are rising, yet its domestic journal infrastructure remains fragile. This paper argues that Vietnamese academic journals should be understood as part of an "ecological chain" that connects research production, dissemination, evaluation, and reuse. Within this chain, evaluation regimes, researchers' publishing strategies, journal-level capacities, and open science practices interact to either reinforce or undermine domestic journals. Taking a system-level view allows us to move beyond micro-level interventions (for example, improving editorial guidelines) and ask how policy, incentives, and infrastructure can be realigned to support both international excellence and a stronger domestic journal ecosystem.

## **2 VIETNAM'S RESEARCH EVALUATION REGIME AND DOMESTIC JOURNALS**

Vietnam's higher education system has progressively adopted performance-based indicators in line with regional and global trends. Studies of Vietnamese educational researchers show that promotion, salary supplements, and institutional prestige are strongly tied to publications in international indexed journals, especially those in Scopus and WoS (Luong *et al.*, 2021; Trinh *et al.*, 2020). Monetary rewards and promotion criteria often explicitly differentiate between international and domestic publications, with the latter receiving much lower recognition or being excluded entirely.

Bibliometric and editorial studies of Vietnamese education journals underline a persistent gap between national ambitions and journal capacity. Nguyen *et al.* (2019) find that many Vietnamese education journals do not fully meet the minimum criteria for indexing in regional databases such as the ASEAN Citation Index (ACI) and Scopus, particularly regarding English-language metadata, standardization of references, and peer-review transparency. La (2020) shows that citation patterns in Vietnamese education journals remain highly domestic, with limited engagement with international literature, which further reinforces their low visibility and influence.

At the same time, the structure of performance-based funding encourages a “publish abroad” logic. Trinh *et al.* (2020) report that Vietnamese educational researchers perceive international publications as the dominant route to career advancement, and that high-stakes evaluation regimes push them towards targeting Q1–Q2 journals in English, even when their research questions are deeply local. This creates an asymmetry: domestic journals depend largely on lower-stakes manuscripts (for example, student work, local reports, or pieces that failed to pass international peer review), while the best work flows outward.

In short, Vietnamese journals have to operate in an environment where evaluation policies, reward systems, and prestige hierarchies structurally privilege foreign outlets. The central question, then, is not simply how to “improve” Vietnamese journals in a vacuum, but how to reshape the entire ecological chain so domestic venues can play a meaningful role alongside international publishing.

### 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Non-English Journal Ecosystems and Evaluation Regimes

Global discussions of responsible research assessment provide important conceptual tools for understanding the Vietnamese situation. The Leiden Manifesto argues for ten principles that emphasize field differences, transparency, and the primacy of qualitative expert judgment over aggregate metrics (Hicks *et al.*, 2015). DORA similarly calls for decoupling hiring, promotion, and funding decisions from journal-based metrics and recognizing a broader diversity of research outputs and contributions (Butler-Adam, 2013). Moher *et al.* (2018) integrate these debates into a set of six principles for assessing scientists, including explicit credit for open research practices and broader societal impact.

Empirical work highlights how metricized evaluation systems can distort academic behavior. Quan, Chen, and Shu (2017) document the cash-per-publication reward schemes in Chinese universities, showing substantial monetary incentives for WoS-indexed publications and unintended consequences such as salami slicing and “journal shopping.” Chapman *et al.* (2019) describe how authorship conventions, the h-index, and journal impact factors shape academic gamesmanship and can crowd out

intrinsic motivations. These analyses are highly relevant to Vietnam, where similar monetary and symbolic rewards have been introduced without robust safeguards against perverse incentives.

For non-English-speaking countries, national-language journals often fall through the cracks of evaluation systems that overwhelmingly rely on international indexing and citation databases. Chinese scholarship on scientific and technical periodicals has examined how domestic journals struggle to position themselves within the Double First-Class strategy, which prioritizes world-class universities and disciplines. Zhou (2021) and Wang, Zhang, Xie, Tian, and Zhang (2021) show that university-founded journals in China have had to reorient their strategies, including bilingual publishing, thematic specialization, and digital outreach, to remain relevant in this new environment. Hu and Cao (2021) further caution against common misunderstandings and misuses of journal evaluation indicators and argue for more nuanced, multi-dimensional assessment frameworks.

### 3.2 Open Science and Journal Governance

The UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science defines open science as a set of practices that promote transparency, inclusiveness, and knowledge sharing, including open access, open data, open peer review, and open educational resources (UNESCO, 2021, 2023). Systematic reviews such as Tennant *et al.* (2016) show that open access can increase readership and citation impact, while also enhancing the social and economic value of publicly funded research.

For journals in the Global South, open science is both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, open access models can amplify the visibility of local knowledge and reduce access barriers for domestic readers. On the other, open access may require sustainable funding mechanisms and professional publishing infrastructure that many universities lack. Studies of Vietnamese bibliometric patterns suggest that while research output on Scopus has increased, domestic access to these articles remains uneven, and open access adoption is inconsistent across institutions (Luong *et al.*, 2021; Trinh, Pham, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2020). Emerging Vietnamese work on open science competencies also indicates that researchers and practitioners are interested in integrating open practices into their workflows but face barriers related to infrastructure, training,

and incentives, for example limited recognition of data sharing or preprints in promotion criteria (Le, Nguyen, Vu, & Pham, 2025). This suggests that journals could become key sites for operationalizing open science principles, for example by standardizing data availability statements, adopting open peer review options, and aligning editorial policies with national open science agendas.

### 3.3 Lessons from the Double First-Class Initiative and SWOT-based analyses

China's Double First-Class initiative provides a reference case for understanding how national policies shape the development of university journals. Zhou (2021) highlights both opportunities (for example, preferential support, talent concentration, and increased submissions) and challenges (administrative control, competition with major society journals, and metric-driven pressures) faced by university journals under the initiative. Wang *et al.* (2021) apply a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) framework to Chinese university scientific journals, identifying disciplinary advantages and national policy support as strengths, but also pointing to structural weaknesses such as fragmented publishing platforms and excessive competition among small, generalist journals. The broader SWOT literature suggests that such analyses can act as useful tools for strategic planning when combined with a nuanced understanding of institutional context. Benzaghta, Elwalda, Mousa, Erkan, and Rahman (2021) synthesize six decades of SWOT applications and stress the importance of linking SWOT matrices to actionable strategies and governance reforms. Recent historical work on the origins of SWOT analysis emphasizes that SWOT evolved as a practical decision-support tool for complex organizations rather than a purely academic framework (Puyt, Lie, & Wilderom, 2023).

Finally, the law journal *Veredas do Direito* offers an instructive example of a journal that has expanded its remit from doctrinal legal scholarship to cross-cutting topics such as environmental governance, sustainable development, and the ethical implications of artificial intelligence. Pavoni and Piselli (2016) explore how the Sustainable Development Goals intersect with international environmental law, while more recent articles address explainable AI in education and bibliometric patterns in overtourism research (Kırmacı & Cavus, 2025; Meylani, 2025). This trajectory illustrates how a thematically focused but methodologically open journal can reposition itself as a platform

for interdisciplinary dialogue on governance and rights—an approach that Vietnamese journals could emulate in areas such as higher education policy, digital transformation, and open science.

## 4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 4.1 Vietnamese Journal Ecological Chain

Building on ecological-chain thinking, this paper conceptualizes Vietnamese academic journals as part of a multi-layered system consisting of four interconnected layers:

#### 4.1.1 *Policy and evaluation regime*

This layer includes national regulations on promotion, salary supplements, and institutional ranking; internal policies of universities and research funders; and external ranking systems. The regime is characterized by strong emphasis on quantitative indicators, especially the number of Scopus/WoS publications and journal impact factors (Luong *et al.*, 2021; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

#### 4.1.2 *Researchers' publishing behaviors*

Individual scholars respond to these incentives by prioritizing international high-impact journals, often in English, especially for their best work. Domestic journals are typically chosen for lower-stakes outputs or when language barriers limit international submissions (Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

#### 4.1.3 *Domestic journal capacity and positioning*

Journal-level factors include editorial capacity, peer review networks, language policy (Vietnamese vs. bilingual), digital platforms, and indexing status. Many Vietnamese journals struggle with resource constraints, part-time editorial staff, limited reviewer pools, and weak web presence (La, 2020; Nguyen *et al.*, 2019; Tao & Fu, 2021).

#### 4.1.4 Systemic outcomes

At the system level, these dynamics can lead to the marginalization of domestic journals: they contribute little to international visibility, provide limited training grounds for early-career researchers, and are rarely used as key evidence in policy debates.

**Figure 1**

*Vietnamese Journal Ecological Chain under a Non-English Research System*

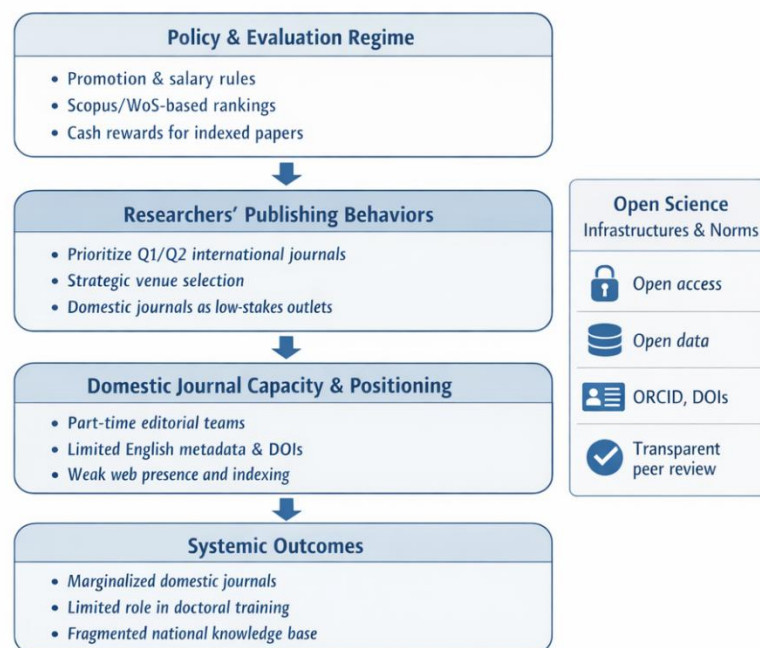


Figure 1 depicts the four-layer ecological chain: (1) policy and evaluation regime at the top; (2) researchers' publishing behaviors; (3) domestic journal capacity and positioning; and (4) systemic outcomes. Arrows indicate how evaluation rules shape researchers' strategies, which in turn influence manuscript flows and journal performance, feeding back into policy debates and ranking exercises.

#### 4.2 Governance Bottlenecks and open science levers

Within this ecological chain, the Vietnamese journal system faces several structural bottlenecks:

- **Language and Discoverability.** Vietnamese remains the dominant language of domestic journals, while indexing databases and global readers primarily operate

in English. Many journals lack consistent English titles, abstracts, keywords, or author affiliations, and do not systematically assign DOIs or ORCID identifiers (La, 2020; Nguyen *et al.*, 2019).

- **Evaluation and incentives.** Reward systems emphasize international publications to such an extent that domestic journals are effectively bypassed for high-stakes outputs. In some institutions, publications in domestic journals are either uncited in promotion dossiers or carry negligible weight (Luong *et al.*, 2021; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).
- **Editorial Capacity and Labor.** Editorial work is often treated as a secondary administrative duty, assigned to senior academics without dedicated time, training, or professional support. This limits the capacity for strategic development, innovation in peer review, and adoption of international standards (Tao & Fu, 2021; Zhou, 2021).
- **Digital and Open Science Infrastructure.** Many journals operate basic websites without robust submission systems, standardized metadata, or integration with discovery platforms. Open access policies are inconsistent and rarely aligned with broader open science strategies (Le *et al.*, 2025; UNESCO, 2021).

Each of these bottlenecks can, in principle, be addressed by specific open science levers, such as adopting modern publishing platforms (for example, Open Journal Systems), standardizing DOIs and metadata, experimenting with open peer review, and aligning journal policies with national open science recommendations.

**Figure 2***Governance Bottleneck Layers in Vietnamese Journal Development*

Figure 2 presents a layered “bottleneck” model with four horizontal layers—Language & Discoverability, Evaluation & Incentives, Editorial Capacity & Peer Review, and Digital Infrastructure & Open Science—each marked with key constraints and potential levers for reform.

### 4.3 Research questions

The framework motivates four research questions:

- **RQ1 – System Level:**

How do current research evaluation and reward mechanisms in Vietnam shape the role and perceived value of domestic academic journals?

- **RQ2 – Actor Level:**

Which factors influence Vietnamese scholars’ decisions not to submit high-quality manuscripts to domestic journals?

- **RQ3 – Organizational Level:**

What governance, staffing, and infrastructural limitations constrain the development of Vietnamese academic journals, and how do these vary across disciplines and institutional types?

- **RQ4 – Policy and Reform Level:**

In what ways can open science principles and evaluation reforms be mobilized to reposition Vietnamese journals without undermining incentives for international publishing?

## 5 METHODOLOGY

This study is designed as a qualitative, mixed-source policy and governance analysis rather than a single quantitative bibliometric study. It combines three components that can be implemented sequentially or in parallel.

### 1. Document and Policy Analysis

- National-level documents: regulations on academic titles, promotion criteria, funding schemes, and national rankings.
- Institutional-level policies: university reward schemes, internal guidelines on journal evaluation, and research performance contracts.
- Journal-level documents: editorial policies, author guidelines, and calls for papers of selected Vietnamese journals in education, social sciences, and law.

### 2. Secondary Bibliometric Synthesis

- Integration of published bibliometric studies on Vietnamese higher education and social sciences (La, 2020; Luong *et al.*, 2021; Nguyen *et al.*, 2019; Nguyen *et al.*, 2024; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).
- Comparative insights from Chinese university journal reforms under the Double First-Class strategy and related SWOT-based analyses (Wang *et al.*, 2021; Zhou, 2021).

### 3. Semi-Structured Interviews (Proposed)

- Editors-in-chief and editorial staff of selected Vietnamese journals (including both ACI-indexed and non-indexed titles).
- Researchers across career stages and disciplines, particularly those with mixed domestic–international publishing portfolios.
- Policy-makers or administrators involved in designing evaluation and reward schemes.

Qualitative data from documents and interviews would be analyzed using thematic coding, focusing on how actors describe incentives, bottlenecks, and reform possibilities.

At the system level, SWOT analysis would be applied to derive strategic options for domestic journals (Benzaghta *et al.*, 2021; Puyt *et al.*, 2023).

## **6 RESULTS: MAPPING BOTTLENECKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Because this paper primarily synthesizes existing evidence and policy texts, the “results” take the form of a structured diagnosis rather than new numerical indicators. Three clusters of findings emerge from the ecological-chain analysis.

### **6.1 System-level incentives and the marginalization of domestic journals**

First, evaluation policies and reward schemes strongly steer researchers toward international outlets. Trinh *et al.* (2020) and Luong *et al.* (2021) show that institutional prestige, salary supplements, and promotion eligibility often hinge on a minimum number of Scopus-indexed papers. Domestic journals typically do not count, or count only marginally, in these calculations.

As a result, domestic journals occupy a peripheral position in the symbolic economy of research. Authors may still submit to them for pedagogical purposes (for example, co-authored papers with students) or to disseminate local case studies in Vietnamese, but rarely treat them as priority venues for their best work. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle: low prestige leads to fewer high-quality submissions, which in turn prevents journals from meeting indexing criteria and improving their metrics.

### **6.2 Journal-level capacity gaps**

Second, evidence from Science Editing and related studies indicates that many Vietnamese journals lack the technical and organizational infrastructure needed to operate as modern scholarly communication platforms. Nguyen *et al.* (2019) identify weaknesses such as inconsistent English metadata, limited use of DOIs, and non-standard referencing practices. Editorial work is often performed by part-time staff with heavy teaching and administrative loads, which hinders systematic policy updates, reviewer training, and digital innovation (Tao & Fu, 2021).

Comparative studies of Chinese journals suggest that targeted investments in professional editorial offices, dedicated journal websites, and multi-channel communication strategies (for example, social media, bilingual summaries) can substantially enhance journal visibility and perceived quality (Tao & Fu, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2021). However, such measures require long-term commitment from university leadership and alignment with institutional strategies, which are often missing for Vietnamese journals.

### 6.3 Emerging open science and digital infrastructure

Third, there are early but notable signs of open science adoption in Vietnam. Work on open science competency frameworks for educational researchers indicates growing awareness of open access, data sharing, and transparent peer review as desirable practices (Le *et al.*, 2025). Yet these practices are still weakly embedded in journal policies, and open access is frequently implemented as free online access without robust metadata, licensing, or archiving strategies.

At the same time, global evidence suggests that open access and open data can significantly enhance the reach and reuse of research, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Tennant *et al.*, 2016; UNESCO, 2021). Vietnamese journals are thus situated at a critical juncture: they could either remain passive recipients of international evaluation policies or actively position themselves as hubs of open science that connect local research communities with global knowledge flows.

## 7 TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS

**Table 1**

*Vietnamese Education Journals and Selected ACI/Scopus Criteria*

Criterion	Typical Situation in Vietnamese Education Journals	Gap Relative to ACI/Scopus Expectations
Journal website	Basic, often static; limited English pages	Need for bilingual, regularly updated site with clear scope, policies, and archives
Editorial board	Local, mostly from host institution	More diverse board, including external and international members
Language policy	Primarily Vietnamese; some English abstracts	Clear bilingual strategy; English titles, abstracts, keywords, affiliations

Criterion	Typical Situation in Vietnamese Education Journals	Gap Relative to ACI/Scopus Expectations
Peer review process	Single-blind, sometimes opaque	Transparent, documented peer review procedures; timelines and ethics statements
Metadata and identifiers	Irregular use of DOIs; missing ORCID integration	Systematic DOIs, ORCID, standardized references and citation styles
Indexing status	National or no formal indexing	Inclusion in ACI or equivalent regional databases as stepping stone to Scopus

(Adapted from Nguyen et al., 2019; La, 2020; Tao & Fu, 2021.)

**Table 2**

*Governance Bottlenecks and Open Science Levers*

Bottleneck Domain	Typical Problems in Vietnam	Open Science–Oriented Levers
Language & Discoverability	Limited English metadata; weak search visibility	Bilingual titles/abstracts; standardized keywords; DOIs; ORCID
Evaluation & Incentives	Domestic journals undervalued in promotion and funding	Recognize domestic OA journals; reward data sharing and peer review contributions
Editorial Capacity	Part-time editors; limited training; small reviewer pool	Professional editorial roles; training programs; regional reviewer networks
Digital Infrastructure	Basic websites; manual workflows; limited archiving	Adoption of OJS or similar; integration with Crossref, DOAJ; repositories
Open Science Practices	Ad hoc OA; rare data-sharing policies	Clear licensing (for example, CC BY); data availability statements; optional open peer review

**Figure 3**

*Open Science–Driven Reform Pathway for Vietnamese Journals*

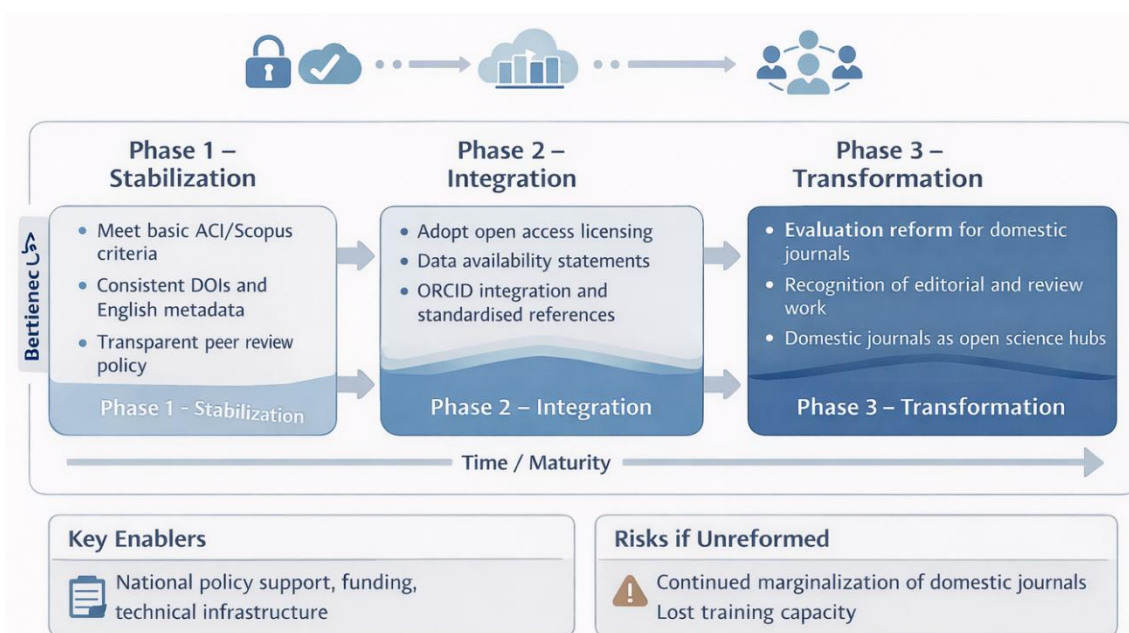


Figure 3 presents a staged reform pathway with three phases: (1) Stabilization (basic compliance with ACI/Scopus criteria and DOIs); (2) Integration (embedding open science practices such as data availability statements and ORCID); and (3) Transformation (revising evaluation policies to recognize a broader range of journal contributions and open research outputs). Feedback arrows highlight the iterative relationship between journal reforms and changes in institutional evaluation practices.

## 8 DISCUSSION

The ecological-chain framework, combined with the SWOT perspective, underscores that Vietnamese journals are not merely passive victims of global English dominance. Rather, they occupy a structurally constrained position within a larger system that can, in principle, be reshaped.

First, evaluation reform is a necessary but not sufficient condition for revitalizing domestic journals. International experience shows that simply declaring a commitment to “responsible metrics” or endorsing DORA is unlikely to change behavior unless promotion criteria, funding rules, and everyday assessment practices are concretely adjusted (Butler-Adam, 2013; Hicks *et al.*, 2015; Moher *et al.*, 2018). Vietnam could experiment with additional indicators that value contributions to domestic journals, such as high-quality Vietnamese-language reviews, editorial service, or datasets published in local repositories.

Second, professionalization of editorial work is essential. Comparative studies from China illustrate that when universities treat journals as strategic assets—providing stable staffing, digital infrastructure, and clear positioning—journals can improve their international visibility without abandoning their national mission (Tao & Fu, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2021; Zhou, 2021). For Vietnam, this implies shifting away from purely voluntary editorial arrangements towards hybrid models that combine academic oversight with professional publishing expertise.

Third, open science provides a coherent narrative for justifying investment in domestic journals. Rather than framing local journals as second-best venues for researchers who cannot publish internationally, they can be repositioned as key nodes in a national open science infrastructure, responsible for curating locally relevant knowledge, hosting high-quality Vietnamese-language content, and ensuring long-term

accessibility of research outputs. UNESCO’s open science framework provides a vocabulary and set of principles that Vietnamese policy-makers and universities can adapt to their own context (UNESCO, 2021, 2023).

## 9 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND REFORM PATHWAYS

Drawing on the analysis above, three policy directions appear particularly promising.

### 1. Recalibrating Reward Systems

- Introduce differentiated recognition for high-quality publications in domestic journals that meet defined open science and quality criteria (for example, DOIs, English metadata, transparent peer review).
- Count editorial service and peer review contributions (for both domestic and international journals) as recognized components in promotion and performance evaluations (Moher *et al.*, 2018; Chapman *et al.*, 2019).

### 2. Strategic Upgrading of Selected Journals

- Identify a limited number of “priority” journals in key disciplines (for example, education, social sciences, law, engineering) for targeted support, similar to the focus on university journals in the Double First-Class strategy (Wang *et al.*, 2021; Zhou, 2021).
- Provide funding for professional editorial positions, modern submission systems, and bilingual publication models, with clear performance indicators linked to indexing, citation, and open science adoption.

### 3. Embedding Open Science into Journal Governance

- Align journal policies with national open science initiatives, including open access licensing, data sharing standards, and transparent peer review options (Le *et al.*, 2025; UNESCO, 2021, 2023).
- Encourage partnerships between Vietnamese journals and international platforms or regional initiatives (for example, SciELO-style models, regional indexing services) to share infrastructure and expertise (Pavoni & Piselli, 2016; Wang & Wang, 2020).

These reforms require coordinated action among ministries, funding agencies, universities, and journal editorial boards. Without such coordination, piecemeal

improvements risk being absorbed by the existing incentive structure, leaving the structural marginalization of domestic journals intact.

## 10 CONCLUSION

Vietnam stands at a crossroads in the development of its scholarly communication system. On the one hand, the country's strong emphasis on international publishing has generated a rapidly growing body of Scopus- and WoS-indexed work, contributing to global debates and enhancing national prestige. On the other, domestic academic journals remain fragile, under-resourced, and structurally undervalued within current evaluation regimes.

By conceptualizing Vietnamese journals as part of a broader ecological chain and diagnosing governance bottlenecks across language, evaluation, capacity, and infrastructure, this paper proposes an open science-oriented reform pathway. The key message is that domestic journals can and should play a complementary role to international publishing: providing spaces for Vietnamese-language scholarship, supporting doctoral training, enabling policy-relevant research communication, and operationalizing national open science commitments.

Future empirical work can build on this framework by conducting in-depth case studies of specific journals, mapping manuscript flows across domestic and international venues, and evaluating the impact of pilot reforms in evaluation policy or journal governance. In doing so, Vietnam may offer a model for other non-English-speaking systems seeking to reconcile international excellence with a robust, locally grounded journal ecosystem.

## REFERENCES

- Benzaghta, M. A., Elwalda, A., Mousa, M. M., Erkan, I., & Rahman, M. (2021). SWOT analysis applications: An integrative literature review. *Journal of Global Business Insights*, 6(1), 55–73. <https://doi.org/10.5038/2640-6489.6.1.1148>
- Butler-Adam, J. (2013). DORA: The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. *South African Journal of Science*, 109(7/8), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1590/sajs.2013/a0032>
- Chapman, C. A., Bicca-Marques, J. C., Calvignac-Spencer, S., Fan, P., Fashing, P. J., Gogarten, J. F., ... Stenseth, N. C. (2019). Games academics play and their

consequences: How authorship, h-index and journal impact factors are shaping the future of academia. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 286(1916), 20192047. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2019.2047>

Hicks, D., Wouters, P., Waltman, L., de Rijcke, S., & Rafols, I. (2015). Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics. *Nature*, 520(7548), 429–431. <https://doi.org/10.1038/520429a>

Hu, X., & Cao, Q. (2021). Scientific journal evaluation: Misunderstandings, misuses, and development directions. *Chinese Journal of Scientific and Technical Periodicals*, 32(10), 1246–1254. <https://doi.org/10.11946/cjstp.202103180242>

Kırmacı, E., & Cavus, A. (2025). A bibliometric analysis of research on overtourism: Global trends, themes, and contributions. *Veredas do Direito*, 22(5), e223922. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v22.n5.3922>

La, T. P. T. (2020). Citations in scientific journals in Vietnam: An analysis from the field of educational science. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 13(9), 179–187.

Le, T. T. T., Nguyen, T. T. H., Vu, N. Q. D., & Pham, H. H. (2025). Đề xuất khung năng lực khoa học mở cho các nhà nghiên cứu và thực hành giáo dục tại Việt Nam [Proposing an open science competency framework for educational researchers and practitioners in Vietnam]. *Tạp chí Giáo dục*, 25(14), 1–10. (in Vietnamese)

Luong, D. H., Phan, T. T. T., Dinh, D. T., & Pham, H. H. (2021). Năng suất công bố của các cơ sở giáo dục đại học ở Việt Nam giai đoạn 2016–2020: Dữ liệu từ Scopus [Research productivity of Vietnamese higher education institutions, 2016–2020: Evidence from Scopus]. *Tạp chí Giáo dục*, 498(2), 1–6. (in Vietnamese)

Meylani, R. (2025). Rethinking explainability in educational artificial intelligence: A critical systematic review of models, applications, and ethical dimensions. *Veredas do Direito*, 22(3), e223553. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v22.n3.3553>

Moher, D., Naudet, F., Cristea, I. A., Miedema, F., Ioannidis, J. P. A., & Goodman, S. N. (2018). Assessing scientists for hiring, promotion, and tenure. *PLOS Biology*, 16(3), e2004089. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.2004089>

Nguyen, C. H., La, T. P., Nguyen, T. T., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2019). Compliance of education journals in Vietnam with the minimum criteria to be indexed in the ASEAN Citation Index and Scopus. *Science Editing*, 6(2), 142–147. <https://doi.org/10.6087/kcse.175>

Nguyen, T. T. T., Dinh, D. T., Pham, H. H., Luong, D. H., & Pham, T. O. (2024). Nghiên cứu khoa học giáo dục Việt Nam trên cơ sở dữ liệu Scopus trong 10 năm thực hiện Nghị quyết 29-NQ/TW: Xu hướng và hợp tác quốc tế [Vietnamese educational research in Scopus after ten years of Resolution 29-NQ/TW: Trends and international collaboration]. *Tạp chí Giáo dục*, 24(1), 1–6. (in Vietnamese)

- Pavoni, R., & Piselli, D. (2016). The Sustainable Development Goals and international environmental law: Normative value and challenges for implementation. *Veredas do Direito*, 13(26), 13–60. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v13i26.865>
- Puyt, R. W., Lie, F. B., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2023). The origins of SWOT analysis. *Long Range Planning*, 56(3), 102304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2023.102304>
- Quan, W., Chen, B., & Shu, F. (2017). Publish or impoverish: An investigation of the monetary reward system of science in China (1999–2016). *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 69(5), 486–502. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-01-2017-0014>
- Tao, J., & Fu, S. (2021). Website construction and influence improvement of Chinese academic journals under the background of building world-class scientific journals. *Chinese Journal of Scientific and Technical Periodicals*, 32(11), 1411–1417. <https://doi.org/10.11946/cjstp.202103180245>
- Tennant, J. P., Waldner, F., Jacques, D. C., Masuzzo, P., Collister, L. B., & Hartgerink, C. H. J. (2016). The academic, economic and societal impacts of Open Access: An evidence-based review. *F1000Research*, 5, 632. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.8460.3>
- Trinh, T. P. T., Pham, H. H., Nguyen, T.-T., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2020). Comparative analysis of national and international educational science articles in Vietnam: Evidence from the IMRaD structure. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 9(3), 1367–1380. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.9.3.1367>
- Trinh, T. P. T., Tran, T., Le, T. T. H., Nguyen, T.-T., & Pham, H. H. (2020). Factors impacting international-indexed publishing among Vietnamese educational researchers. *Learned Publishing*, 33(4), 419–429. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1323>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Recommendation on Open Science*. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54677/XOIR1696>
- UNESCO. (2023). *Open Science Outlook 1: Status and trends around the world*. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54677/GIIC6829>
- Wang, J., & Wang, Z. (2020). Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of China's prevention and control strategy for the COVID-19 epidemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(7), 2235. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17072235>
- Wang, Y., Zhang, L., Xie, X., Tian, J., & Zhang, L. (2021). Opportunities and challenges for Chinese university scientific journals: A SWOT analysis based on literature review. *Chinese Journal of Scientific and Technical Periodicals*, 32(11), 1383–1389. <https://doi.org/10.11946/cjstp.202105240420>
- Zhou, Z. (2021). Challenges and opportunities for university scientific journals in the Double First-Class construction. *Chinese Journal of Scientific and Technical Periodicals*, 32(1), 41–48. <https://doi.org/10.11946/cjstp.202008040714>

### **Authors' Contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

### **How to cite this article (APA)**

Nguyen, V. H., Nguyen, M. H., & Nguyen, D. P. REPOSITIONING VIETNAMESE ACADEMIC JOURNALS IN A NON-ENGLISH RESEARCH SYSTEM: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND OPEN SCIENCE PATHWAYS. *Veredas Do Direito*, e234068. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v23.n2.4068>