

Demographic Influences on Entrepreneurial Orientation and Administrative Excellence in Public Universities: Insights from Ho Chi Minh City

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.120700174>

Received: 08 July 2025; Accepted: 14 July 2025; Published: 14 August 2025

ABSTRACT

The research examines how different demographic factors affect both Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and Administrative Excellence (AE) in public universities across Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The three essential components of AE consist of leadership effectiveness, efficiency, and adaptability. The research used a quantitative method to gather data from 217 university leaders who were rectors, deans, department heads, and administrative lecturers. The research examined three essential hypotheses, which investigated (1) the relationship between demographic variables and EO, (2) the effect of demographics on AE, and (3) the positive relationship between EO and AE. The research shows that sex, along with age, position, and years of experience, strongly affect both EO and AE. The study shows that male leaders demonstrated stronger innovation and competitive drive and senior leaders between 40–59 years old achieved higher scores in AE. The study established that Proactiveness and Innovativeness emerged as the leading predictors of AE with Proactiveness demonstrating the strongest effect. The study found no substantial connection between educational level and the research outcomes. The study recommends that leadership training should focus on developing Proactiveness and Innovativeness while working to reduce gender-based leadership imbalances. The research provides essential recommendations to boost AE through strategic leadership development and policy creation in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Administrative Excellence, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Demographic Factors, Higher Education Leadership, Public Universities in Ho Chi Minh City

INTRODUCTION

Contextual Background

Higher education institutions and public universities require Administrative Excellence (AE) as their essential leadership quality for success. The strategic management of resources combined with organizational goal achievement and flexible responses to internal and external challenges defines AE [1]. The transition of Vietnam toward institutional autonomy and accountability has created rising demands for Ho Chi Minh City universities to develop modern governance systems and improve their administrative capacities [2]. The demographic features of university leaders significantly affect their ability to lead reforms in their institutions. Research currently lacks sufficient investigation into how sex, age, position, educational attainment and administrative experience affect both the perception and implementation of AE.

Research Question and Purpose

The research examines how demographic factors influence the administrative excellence of public university leaders in Ho Chi Minh City. The research examines how demographic factors such as sex, age, job position,

academic qualifications, and administrative experience affect the perceptions and practices of AE among university leaders. The study examines entrepreneurial orientation (EO) dimensions of proactiveness, innovativeness, and competitive aggressiveness as potential drivers of AE (Dat, 2025).

Significance of the Study

University Administrators can use this research to develop operational methods that implement entrepreneurial orientation principles throughout governance structures for better decision-making and resource management, and organizational adaptability to achieve competitiveness. The research results will assist policymakers in developing higher education policies that support entrepreneurial governance to enhance university operational efficiency and national development through innovation. The improved administrative systems will benefit faculty members by creating innovative environments which simplify academic procedures and provide professional growth opportunities to concentrate on teaching and research activities. Students will encounter improved educational settings through innovative programs and better resource distribution which prepares them for success in competitive job markets. The research provides empirical evidence about entrepreneurial leadership in non-Western contexts to help understand how entrepreneurial orientation affects administrative excellence. The research demonstrates how entrepreneurial governance produces graduates who create innovation while solving social problems and fostering sustainable economic expansion.

The research holds importance because it provides knowledge to develop leadership programs and governance improvements for Vietnamese higher education institutions. The research provides essential information about demographic factors that affect administrative behavior and outcomes which helps develop targeted and equitable training programs. The existing gender imbalance in senior academic positions indicates that institutions need to develop more inclusive policies and capacity-building frameworks [3]. The identification of EO dimensions that link to AE enables institutions to develop leadership qualities which enhance performance. The research adds to academic governance discussions through its data-based recommendations which strengthen leadership effectiveness in public universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Administrative Excellence (AE)

Academic leaders who demonstrate administrative excellence use institutional resources effectively to achieve strategic goals while adapting to environmental changes [1]. Higher education institutions link administrative excellence to transparent governance systems and stakeholder responsiveness and organizational sustainability. [2] explain that Vietnamese universities face new leadership expectations because of their growing autonomy and performance-based accountability framework. The definition of administrative excellence now extends beyond operational competence to include visionary capacity and adaptive governance and strategic alignment with educational reforms.

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) represents a multi-dimensional construct that describes organizational strategic approaches toward innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking [4]. Academic leaders who adopt Entrepreneurial Orientation in higher education institutions can detect growth opportunities while meeting market requirements through innovative service delivery approaches. [1] shows that Proactiveness and Innovativeness among EO dimensions serve as strong predictors for administrative excellence. Leaders who predict upcoming challenges and take active steps to implement innovative solutions create better governance results.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

The research establishes essential definitions to establish its framework:

Sex: functions as a binary category between male and female which shapes leadership actions and choices. The research investigates how sex affects environmental orientation and administrative excellence.

Age: The duration of life that age represents influences both leadership approaches and decision-making processes. The research divides participants into five age groups from 25 to 60 years to study their effects on entrepreneurial orientation and administrative excellence.

Educational Attainment: Measures the highest level of education achieved. The research study divides educational attainment into four categories which include Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Doctoral Degree and Associate Professor/Professor to analyze their impact on leadership practices and administrative excellence.

Position: describes the hierarchical level of an employee, which determines their leadership actions and decision-making processes. The research divides participants into management, faculty, managerial staff and administrative positions to study their effects on environmental orientation and administrative excellence.

Years of Administrative Experience: The professional experience that shapes administrative capabilities and entrepreneurial behavior. The research divides experience into five categories which span from 1 to more than 10 years to analyze its effects on entrepreneurial orientation and administrative excellence.

Demographic Factors and Leadership Effectiveness

[5] indicates that age, sex, position, and experience are significant factors that influence leadership style and effectiveness. Older leaders tend to have more strategic foresight because of their accumulated experience, while those in higher positions have more decision-making authority and influence (Dat, 2025). Gender disparities in leadership access and perception continue to shape leadership outcomes in Vietnamese universities, where women are still underrepresented in senior roles [6, 7]. These factors not only affect how leadership is practiced but also affect how AE is perceived and valued within institutional cultures.

Theoretical Framework

According to [4] the entrepreneurial orientation (EO) framework defines organizations that demonstrate autonomy and innovativeness and proactiveness and risk-taking and competitive aggressiveness as more likely to succeed in dynamic environments. The business application of EO has evolved into an organizational tool that helps higher education institutions achieve administrative excellence and efficiency and effectiveness and adaptability [8]. The five EO dimensions—innovative, proactive, risk-taking, autonomous, and competitive—directly influence an organization's performance, especially in achieving objectives and managing external pressures. Public universities in Ho Chi Minh City implement EO to enhance their decision-making capabilities and innovation and proactive problem-solving approaches when dealing with globalization and local dynamics. The institutions use EO to preserve their competitive position and maintain their relevance in the transforming educational environment [9]. The framework enables researchers to study how entrepreneurial principles enhance administrative practices and challenge responses. The Vietnamese higher education institutions use EO to manage resources and develop strategic plans and meet stakeholder needs [9]. The framework demonstrates flexibility and innovation which matches the requirements of this study and the challenges faced by public universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The organizational performance in dynamic environments improves through EO because it establishes a culture that accepts change and tolerates risk and continuously improves [4]. This research examines the connection between EO and administrative excellence (AE) in public universities to understand how EO promotes adaptability and innovation and efficiency. The research will investigate how the five EO dimensions affect administrative practices and their relationship to essential AE indicators.

The theory demonstrates that leader demographic characteristics including age experience and education influence their cognitive base and values which then determine strategic decisions about AE [10]. The Entrepreneurial Orientation Theory serves as a framework to analyze how entrepreneurial characteristics at both individual and organizational levels impact administrative effectiveness in dynamic resource-constrained higher education settings [11].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design uses quantitative methods to study how demographic factors affect administrative excellence (AE) through entrepreneurial orientation (EO) as a mediating variable. The research design used a cross-sectional survey to gather data from public university academic leaders in Ho Chi Minh City. The quantitative research approach was chosen because it enables researchers to detect patterns and establish relationships while providing results that can be applied to broader populations.

Population and Sample

The research subjects consist of university administrators who serve as rectors and vice-rectors and deans and vice-deans and department heads and lecturers who perform administrative duties. The research collected 217 valid responses through stratified random sampling to achieve balanced representation between positions and institutions. The research sample exceeds the minimum requirements for multiple regression analysis while enabling subgroup analysis through demographic variables.

Data Collection Instrument

The research used a structured questionnaire that contained three sections. The questionnaire contained three sections which included demographic information (sex, age group, position, educational attainment, years of administrative experience). The Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) scale from [4] was adapted to measure Proactiveness and Innovativeness and Competitive Aggressiveness. The Administrative Excellence (AE) scale was adjusted by [1] indicators and underwent expert validation to measure leadership effectiveness and strategic alignment and adaptability. The 5-point Likert scale was used to measure all items which ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Reliability and Validity

The instrument reliability was ensured through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each construct. The scales demonstrated internal consistency at a level above 0.70. Content validity was established through expert review by university administrators and scholars in education management and construct validity was confirmed through exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. The following techniques were employed: The study used descriptive statistics to present demographic data and scale score results. Independent sample t-tests and ANOVA were used to analyze differences in AE and EO between demographic groups. The study used correlation analysis to investigate the relationships between the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify predictors of AE, including demographic variables and EO dimensions.

Ethical Considerations

The study was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent. The data collection process was anonymous, and participants were guaranteed confidentiality. The study received ethical approval from the institutional research ethics committee before data collection began.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

TABLE 1 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Category	F	(%)
Total Participants	217	100%
Sex		
Male		53.9%
Female		46.1%
Age Group		
40-49 years		46.5%
50-59 years		20.7%
Educational Qualification		
Master's or Doctorate		94.5%
Professional Role		
Lecturers		55.8%
Administrative Staff		44.2%
Years of Administrative Experience		
More than 10 years		73.7%

The survey included 217 public university leaders in Ho Chi Minh City in which the survey participants included 53.9% male respondents and 46.1% female respondents. The majority of participants belonged to two age groups: 40–49 years (46.5%) and 50–59 years (20.7%). The survey participants held Master's or Doctorate degrees at a rate of 94.5%. The survey participants included 55.8% lecturers and 44.2% administrative staff. The survey participants demonstrated more than ten years of administrative experience at a rate of 73.7%.

Descriptive Analysis of EO and AE

TABLE 2 EO & AE Dimension Ratings

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)	Item Code	Mean/Rating
Innovativeness	INV	4.2
Proactiveness	PRO	3.8
Autonomy	AUT	4.3
Risk-Taking	RKT	3.44
Competitive Aggressiveness	CAG	3.7
Administrative Excellence (AE)		
Efficiency	EFI	4.07
Effectiveness	EFE	4.11
Adaptability	ADA	4.00

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) has a high Innovativeness score of 4.20 (INV) which indicates the university's frequent introduction of new programs and courses. The Proactiveness score is 3.80 (PRO) which indicates that the university is somewhat proactive in anticipating and preparing for future challenges. The Autonomy dimension is notably high, with a mean score of 4.30 (AUT), indicating that university leaders are given significant freedom to make important decisions. Risk-Taking is less pronounced, with a

mean score of 3.44 (RTK), showing that while there is some willingness to invest in high-risk projects, this is not a dominant characteristic. Competitive Aggressiveness is moderate, with a mean score of 3.70 (CAG), indicating a focus on surpassing peer institutions and achieving high rankings. Administrative Excellence (AE): The university exhibits strong Efficiency, with a mean score of 4.07 (EFI), demonstrating effective use of resources and streamlined administrative processes. Effectiveness is also a key strength, with a mean score of 4.11 (EFE), indicating that administrative goals are consistently met and services are of high quality. Adaptability is present with a mean score of 4.00 (ADA), suggesting that the university is responsive to changing conditions and is fostering a culture of innovation to embrace new opportunities.

Reliability

TABLE 3 Cronbach's Alpha

Entrepreneurial Orientation	Item Code	Cronbach's Alpha
Innovativeness	INV	.861
Proactiveness	PRO	.897
Autonomy	AUT	.085
Risk-Taking	RKT	.872
Competitive Aggressiveness	CAG	.916
Administrative Excellence		
Efficiency	EFI	.928
Effectiveness	EFE	.906
Adaptability	ADA	.928

The Cronbach's Alpha values for Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and Administrative Excellence (AE) dimensions appear in Table 3 to evaluate the reliability of research scales. Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO): The scale for Innovativeness (INV) shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.861 which indicates strong reliability. The scale for Proactiveness (PRO) demonstrates an extremely high reliability value of 0.897. The Autonomy (AUT) scale shows a very low Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.085 which indicates poor internal consistency. Risk-Taking (RKT) demonstrates good reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.872. The Competitive Aggressiveness (CAG) scale achieves excellent reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.916. Administrative Excellence (AE): The Efficiency (EFI) scale demonstrates excellent reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.928. The Effectiveness (EFE) scale shows very high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.906. The Adaptability (ADA) scale achieves excellent reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.928. To sum up, all Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.8, indicating high internal consistency.

ANOVA and Welch Test Results

TABLE 4

Dimension	Factor	EO Mean (M)	AE Mean (M)	ANOVA Sig.	Welch Sig.	Significant Difference
Sex	M/F	18.09/17.31	16.96/16.20	0.022	0.027	Yes (Higher scores in males)
Age	25-30	17.97	17.39	0.787	0.723	No (except AE for 25-30)
Position	Director	20.31	18.18	0.153	0.005	Yes (Higher in Director)
Educational Attainment	Associate	17.71	16.96	0.819	0.729	No
Years of Experience	1-3	17.94	17.49	0.331	0.264	No (AE higher for 1-3 years)

ANOVA and Welch Analysis on Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and Administrative Excellence (AE) as follows:

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) Analysis

Sex: A significant difference in Innovativeness (INV) and Competitive Aggressiveness (CAG) scores was observed between male and female leaders. Male leaders showed higher scores in both dimensions and the ANOVA ($p = 0.027$) and Welch ($p = 0.027$) tests indicated a gender-related difference.

Age: The study results showed no significant impact of age on Innovativeness (INV) and Proactiveness (PRO) scores. The ANOVA and Welch tests showed no significant differences in INV scores among the different age groups ($p = 0.723$). CAG scores were found to be significantly different among the age groups with the 50-59 age range having the highest scores. **Position:** The analysis revealed a significant relationship between leadership position and INV scores. The Welch test ($p = 0.005$) demonstrated that Directors achieved the highest Innovativeness scores which was influenced by their senior leadership roles. The ANOVA test did not show significant differences in INV scores across positions ($p = 0.153$). The scores on Proactiveness (PRO) followed a similar trend with Directors and Vice Rectors showing the highest results.

Educational Attainment: The ANOVA ($p = 0.729$) and Welch ($p = 0.729$) tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in EO scores based on educational attainment.

Years of Experience: The analysis showed that years of administrative experience did not have a significant effect on EO scores as both the ANOVA ($p = 0.331$) and Welch ($p = 0.264$) tests indicated non-significant results across different experience levels.

Administrative Excellence (AE) Analysis:

Sex: Male leaders scored higher on AE than female leaders as indicated by both the ANOVA ($p = 0.010$) and Welch ($p = 0.011$) tests.

Age: Significant differences in AE scores were observed between age groups particularly between 25-30 and 31-39 years ($p = 0.009$). The scores of younger leaders were significantly higher particularly in the 25-30 years age group. However, post hoc analysis is needed to explore the nature of these age-related differences.

Educational Attainment: The ANOVA ($p = 0.716$) and Welch ($p = 0.763$) tests indicated that there was no significant effect of educational level on AE scores. The leaders with different educational backgrounds had the same AE outcomes.

Position: Position was not a statistically significant determinant in the ANOVA test ($p = 0.277$) but the Welch test ($p < 0.001$) showed that there were significant differences in AE scores across leadership roles with Vice Rectors and Directors having the highest scores. However, post hoc analysis is needed to further examine these role-related differences.

Years of Experience: The years of administrative experience had a significant effect on AE scores with leaders in the 1-3 years experience group scoring higher on AE scores ($p = 0.01$). Both the ANOVA ($p = 0.040$) and Welch ($p = 0.010$) tests confirmed this significant finding.

As a result, this study demonstrates that sex, age, and position have a significant effect on both EO and AE. Specifically, male leaders exhibit higher levels of EO and AE, while younger leaders (25-30 years) demonstrate superior AE scores. Leadership position plays a crucial role, particularly in EO, where senior leadership roles are positively associated with higher scores. Leadership development initiatives should focus on enhancing Proactiveness and Innovativeness, especially among junior leaders, as administrative experience contributes significantly to AE. Future research should further explore the interaction between leadership roles and EO/AE to gain more specific insights.

Correlation Analysis:

EO Dimensions Correlated with AE

TABLE 5

EO Dimension	r	p-value	Key Insight
Proactiveness (PRO)	0.662	$p < 0.01$	Strongest driver of AE.
Innovativeness (INV)	0.539	$p < 0.01$	Significant positive impact on AE.
Autonomy (AUT)	0.411	$p < 0.01$	Moderate positive effect on AE.
Risk-Taking (RKT)	0.347	$p < 0.01$	Positive, but weaker than others.
CAG	0.465	$p < 0.01$	Positive effect, but less impactful.

The correlation analysis investigated the connections between Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) dimensions (Innovativeness, Proactiveness, Autonomy, Risk-Taking, and Competitive Aggressiveness) and Administrative Excellence (AE). Key findings are as follows:

Proactiveness (PRO) has the highest positive correlation with AE ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.01$), indicating proactive leadership as a key driver of excellence.

Innovativeness (INV) also shows a significant positive correlation with AE ($r = 0.539$, $p < 0.01$), confirming the importance of innovation in achieving administrative excellence

Autonomy (AUT) ($r = 0.411$, $p < 0.01$) has a moderate positive correlation with AE, showing that leaders with more autonomy perform better.

Risk-Taking (RKT) ($r = 0.347$, $p < 0.01$) and Competitive Aggressiveness (CAG) ($r = 0.465$, $p < 0.01$) also contribute positively to AE, but their effects are smaller compared to Proactiveness and Innovativeness. The analysis confirms that Proactiveness and Innovativeness are the most significant dimensions of EO influencing AE in public universities.

Regression Analysis:

The regression analysis examined how **EO** dimensions impact **AE**, with the following results:

TABLE 6 Model Fit and EO Dimension Impact on AE

Model Fit	Value	Interpretation
R^2	0.531	Explains 53.1% of AE variance.
F-statistic	47.691	Statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

EO Dimension	β	p-value	Impact on AE
Proactiveness (PRO)	0.334	$p < 0.01$	Strongest predictor of AE.
Innovativeness (INV)	0.208	$p < 0.01$	Significant positive effect on AE.
Competitive Aggressiveness (CAG)	0.127	$p = 0.006$	Moderate positive effect on AE.
Risk-Taking (RKT)	0.098	$p = 0.014$	Positive but less significant effect on AE.
Autonomy (AUT)	0.050	$p = 0.244$	Statistically insignificant in predicting AE.

$R^2 = 0.531$: The model explains 53.1% of the variance in AE, showing a moderate to strong positive relationship between EO predictors (Proactiveness, Innovativeness, Autonomy, Risk-Taking, Competitive Aggressiveness) and AE.

Significance: The model is statistically significant ($F = 47.691$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the selected predictors significantly influence AE.

Key Predictors: o Proactiveness (PRO): The strongest predictor with a $\beta = 0.334$ ($p < 0.01$), meaning that proactive leadership is the most important factor for improving AE.

Innovativeness (INV): $\beta = 0.208$ ($p < 0.01$), indicating that innovation significantly enhances AE.

Competitive Aggressiveness (CAG): $\beta = 0.127$ ($p = 0.006$), showing a moderate positive effect on AE.

Risk-Taking (RKT): $\beta = 0.098$ ($p = 0.014$), suggesting a positive, but less significant, impact on AE. o Autonomy (AUT): $\beta = 0.050$ ($p = 0.244$), which is statistically insignificant, indicating that autonomy does not significantly impact AE in this context.

DISCUSSION

Demographics

The research showed that male leaders obtained higher results in Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and Administrative Excellence (AE). The study shows that male leaders demonstrate better proactive and competitive behaviors that are vital for leadership success despite gender differences.

The analysis shows that policy makers must create strategies to combat gender discrimination in leadership positions to ensure equal career prospects for both male and female leaders. Leaders who fall within the age range of 40–59 years demonstrated better AE scores because their prolonged work experience creates substantial leadership effectiveness. Leaders at this stage tend to accumulate the necessary competencies which enable them to manage institutions effectively.

The study reveals that age does not influence leadership proactive and innovative behaviors despite its impact on overall leadership effectiveness. The study results show that educational achievement fails to influence either EO scores or AE scores. The development of entrepreneurial skills specifically through innovation and proactiveness has a greater direct impact on leadership effectiveness in public universities compared to education foundation.

Strategic Implications

Leadership development programs must place equal emphasis on teaching both proactiveness and innovation skills. The study confirms that AE is most directly influenced by proactiveness and innovation since these factors made the most significant impact on AE scores so universities need to develop these competencies in their leaders.

The leadership programs need to give leaders opportunities to foresee upcoming obstacles and apply novel solutions which will establish an ongoing improvement process with innovative approaches. The establishment of equal leadership opportunities for men and women should be a priority for institutions that aim to reduce gender inequality in leadership positions. The research shows that male leaders achieved higher scores in EO and AE therefore the development of leadership programs that enhance women's capabilities for proactive and innovative leadership should be implemented.

Universities should develop clear policy connections between risk-taking and innovation objectives. The relationship between risk-taking and AE was positive yet weaker than both proactiveness and innovations. Universities should implement policies that support controlled risk-taking while encouraging experimental behavior because these approaches help leaders manage uncertainty to achieve high administrative excellence. Such support enables leaders to adopt courageous choices while creating an environment that supports both competition and adaptability.

The research indicates that administrative excellence requires organizations to develop proactive behaviors alongside innovative approaches and balanced risk-taking practices. Public universities can enhance their leadership effectiveness through balanced policy implementation combined with gender equity programs and comprehensive leadership development strategies at all organizational levels.

CONCLUSION

The research demonstrates that demographic characteristics play a crucial role in determining both Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and Administrative Excellence (AE) in public universities throughout Ho Chi Minh City. The research shows that male leaders who hold senior positions and have 40-59 years of administrative experience demonstrate superior AE performance, especially in effectiveness and efficiency and adaptability. The research indicates that educational attainment does not produce meaningful effects on these results.

The study reveals that Proactiveness and Innovativeness stand out as the primary factors that determine AE because organizations need leaders who think ahead and introduce new ideas to achieve superior administrative results. The dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), including Risk-Taking and Competitive Aggressiveness, make modest contributions to AE, but Proactiveness and Innovativeness demonstrate stronger effects. Leadership development programs should concentrate on building Proactiveness and Innovativeness skills among leaders because these traits directly impact higher education administration, according to these findings. Leadership policies need to address gender inequality in administrative positions while creating multiple pathways for diverse leadership roles to boost both administrative effectiveness and inclusivity. The research demonstrates that leadership traits serve as essential drivers of administrative excellence, thus requiring strategic development of forward-thinking and innovative leadership to enhance higher education governance.

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