

Improving the level of financial autonomy of public service units in the cultural field under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

Nguyen Van Nam¹, Dinh Van Son²

¹ Nguyen Trai University, Vietnam. Email: nvnam.ntu@gmail.com

² Thuongmai University, Vietnam. Email: dvson@tmu.edu.vn

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the urgent need to enhance the financial autonomy of public service units (PSUs) in the cultural sector under Vietnam's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Despite growing societal demand for quality cultural services and innovation, these units remain heavily dependent on state budgets. This dependency restricts flexibility, stifles motivation, and impedes service improvement. The study analyzes the current state of financial autonomy, identifies systemic challenges, and proposes strategic solutions through regulatory reform, diversified revenue models, capacity building, and piloting autonomy mechanisms. By referencing international practices and aligning with Vietnam's public administration reform agenda, the paper offers a roadmap for sustainable transformation. The article proposes recognizing socio-professional sports organizations as legitimate entities authorized to commission education services under specialized training programs. The proposed financing model combines both public and non-public resources and is grounded in a system of legal obligations, economic transparency, and competitive fairness through independent evaluation councils.

Keywords: Public administration, Financial mechanism; Physical culture, sport, public sports organizations, Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture, including physical culture and sports, constitutes a fundamental dimension of national identity and a key component of state social policy. To fulfill its responsibilities in this area, the Vietnamese government has traditionally allocated state budget resources to support the development of public service units (PSUs) operating in the cultural sector. However, in the context of increasing socio-economic pressures, demographic transitions, and the shift toward fiscal discipline and decentralization, public funding for cultural development faces significant constraints.

Much like the challenges experienced in other transitional or crisis-affected nations, such as Ukraine, cultural PSUs in Vietnam are encountering similar systemic issues that impede their ability to function sustainably. These challenges include outdated legal frameworks, fragmented management structures, insufficient delineation of responsibilities among relevant authorities, corruption risks, and limited state investment in operational development. In particular, the lack of a transparent and effective mechanism for allocating budget resources has hindered the sector's capacity to modernize and to respond flexibly to public demand.

According to Prots T.A. (as cited in international literature), effective state support for cultural and sports education requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing not only financial resources but also improvements in organizational, regulatory, human, material, scientific, and informational infrastructure. These insights highlight the need for a more holistic, well-coordinated financial mechanism to support the long-term development of Vietnam's cultural PSUs.

Moreover, external assessments of crisis situations (e.g., the destruction of educational and cultural infrastructure in Ukraine) serve as cautionary examples of how vulnerable cultural institutions are to resource scarcity. In

Vietnam, although not directly affected by war, the COVID-19 pandemic and shifting fiscal priorities have similarly reduced access to public cultural services in several regions. Inadequate financial resources, underutilized human capital, and deteriorating infrastructure have all contributed to declining performance and limited innovation within cultural PSUs.

Given these factors, enhancing financial autonomy emerges as an urgent and strategic objective. Rather than relying solely on central or local government budgets, cultural PSUs should be encouraged and empowered to diversify their funding sources. This includes exploring extra-budgetary mechanisms such as service commercialization, public-private partnerships (PPPs), cultural entrepreneurship, and philanthropic contributions. Developing a robust financial mechanism that supports autonomy, accountability, and performance is essential to ensure the resilience and vitality of the cultural sector in Vietnam.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to propose a comprehensive framework for improving the financial autonomy of public service units in the cultural field under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. This framework will include policy recommendations, legal reforms, and capacity-building measures to enable PSUs to operate with greater independence while still fulfilling their public missions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the academic literature, numerous scholars have addressed the financing of public service provision in the fields of culture, physical education, and sports. While researchers such as Vlasenko, Gasyuk, Bakhrushyn, and others have specifically analyzed the Ukrainian context particularly within the domain of higher education in physical culture their perspectives hold significant relevance for Vietnam's ongoing reforms in the cultural sector. Key research areas include the determination of minimum training costs in public education, the role of the state in promoting cultural development, the analysis of public investment mechanisms, international experience in higher education financing, and the mobilization of private and off-budget resources.

In Vietnam, similar questions arise in the discussion on improving the financial autonomy of cultural public service units (PSUs), especially those under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Legal and regulatory reforms in the past two decades have attempted to increase institutional autonomy, yet significant limitations remain. As in Ukraine, challenges include insufficient funding, underdeveloped infrastructure, an imbalanced reliance on central budget allocations, and a lack of diversified revenue streams.

Research presented at international scientific conferences, such as Ukraine's IV International Scientific and Practical Conference on education under martial law, examined how geopolitical instability reshapes budget execution and financial planning in public sectors, including culture and education. In the Vietnamese context, while not operating under conditions of war, public cultural units are nonetheless affected by post-pandemic recovery, demographic shifts, and tight fiscal conditions all of which necessitate a reevaluation of funding models.

As noted by Vlasenko (2022), "expenditures on physical culture and sports are social relations regulated by law and associated with the systematic use of centralized and decentralized state funds." The same can be said for expenditures in other cultural domains such as heritage preservation, performing arts, and public libraries in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government, like its Ukrainian counterpart, aims to ensure that public service institutions contribute to national identity, social cohesion, and human development. However, this requires both adequate financing and flexible mechanisms for institutional self-management.

Gasyuk (2022) highlights the persistent issue of deteriorating physical and technical infrastructure in education and cultural institutions a challenge also prevalent in many Vietnamese cultural PSUs, where limited autonomy restricts investment and reinvestment in facilities and programming. Furthermore, Bakhrushyn (2022) underscores the need for improved budget allocation mechanisms, better alignment with regional labor demands, and greater participation of private actors in co-financing public service delivery insights that are directly applicable to the Vietnamese policy landscape.

According to Article 47 of Ukraine's Law "On Physical Culture and Sports," the financing of public services in culture and sports must be conducted via a combination of state, local, and legally permitted extra-budgetary sources. Vietnam has adopted similar provisions, encouraging PSUs to seek funding through service fees,

intellectual property, cultural events, and partnerships. Nonetheless, these mechanisms remain underutilized due to regulatory inertia, limited managerial capacity, and insufficient incentives for innovation.

In international comparison, Bakhrushyn (2022) draws attention to the share of public versus private funding in higher education systems, noting that countries like Finland and Norway maintain high levels of public support (over 85%), while others like the UK and USA rely heavily on private inputs (20-40%). Vietnam, currently operating closer to the centralized model, may benefit from exploring hybrid models that balance public investment with autonomous, self-generated revenue a shift that aligns with global trends in public finance reform.

The above scholarly perspectives reinforce the urgent need to rethink how Vietnam's public service units in the cultural sector are financed and governed. Particularly in the context of limited public budgets and rising public demand for high-quality cultural services, enhancing financial autonomy is not merely a matter of fiscal reform it is foundational to institutional sustainability, innovation, and relevance.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Document Analysis

The first phase of the research involved a comprehensive analysis of primary legal documents and policy frameworks relevant to financial autonomy in Vietnam's public cultural institutions. This included key legislative instruments such as Decree No. 60/2003/NĐ-CP on financial autonomy for public service units, Decree No. 16/2015/NĐ-CP which provides updated regulations on autonomy in task performance and financial management, and the Law on Public Investment (2014), which outlines the principles of budget allocation, decentralization, and project evaluation within the public sector. These documents were selected for their foundational role in defining the fiscal relationship between the state and public service units (Government of Vietnam, 2015).

The document analysis revealed a substantial gap between the regulatory ambitions of these policies and their practical enforcement, especially at the local and institutional levels. Although the decrees formally encourage PSUs to increase self-reliance and generate independent revenue, the existing legal frameworks remain heavily input-based and fail to provide sufficient autonomy in expenditure decision-making (Nguyen & Le, 2021). Furthermore, constraints are compounded by procedural bottlenecks, such as multi-tiered budget approval systems and stringent expenditure reporting requirements that discourage flexibility. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) has issued internal guidance to promote innovation in the sector, but these have yet to be translated into systemic reforms that empower PSUs on the ground (MCST, 2022).

3.2. Expert Interviews

To enrich the legal and policy analysis with practical insights, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 key informants, including senior officials at the MCST, directors of cultural PSUs, public finance specialists, and provincial-level administrators. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their roles in managing institutional budgets or implementing autonomy-related reforms. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards, including informed consent and anonymity.

The interviews offered valuable perspectives on the practical limitations of current financial autonomy mechanisms. Many respondents emphasized that despite formal autonomy rights, the actual discretion PSUs have over budget allocations is minimal due to legal ambiguities and inconsistent implementation across provinces. Several directors noted that income-generating activities such as museum ticketing, cultural event rentals, and performance services are often subject to unclear or restrictive regulations, limiting their effectiveness as revenue sources (Tran, 2023). In addition, the majority of interviewees highlighted a serious skills gap in public financial management, particularly among middle managers, which reduces the ability of PSUs to design, track, and optimize their budgets strategically.

Another recurrent theme in the interviews was the lack of performance-based incentives. Current funding models do not reward institutions that generate additional income or improve service delivery. Instead, budget allocations are often based on historical norms, which reinforces dependency and inertia. As a result, PSUs have little motivation to innovate or pursue entrepreneurial approaches, perpetuating a cycle of underperformance and low

accountability (Pham & Nguyen, 2022).

3.3 Case Studies

To contextualize these findings and assess how financial autonomy plays out in practice, the study conducted three in-depth case studies of cultural PSUs: the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology (Hanoi), the Dak Lak Provincial Cultural Center, and the Ho Chi Minh City Symphony, Opera and Ballet Theatre (HBSO). These cases were selected for their diversity in location, institutional type, and operational scale.

At the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, although the institution benefits from national-level recognition and relatively high visitor traffic, it remains constrained by central budgetary control, particularly for capital expenditures and staff-related costs. The museum's leadership reported bureaucratic delays in approving new initiatives and limited authority in re-allocating internally generated funds (Nguyen, 2023).

In contrast, the Dak Lak Provincial Cultural Center which operates under a hybrid model with both state and community-based services illustrated moderate flexibility in budgeting and modest success in community engagement projects. However, the lack of legal clarity regarding revenue retention and the absence of a reinvestment mechanism hindered its long-term sustainability.

The HBSO, while more entrepreneurial, reported difficulties navigating multiple layers of regulatory oversight. Although the troupe has attracted private sponsorships and international collaborations, the approval process for using such funds remains complex and time-consuming. Furthermore, strict procurement rules prevent timely investment in equipment, artist mobility, and marketing areas essential to growth and competitiveness (Le, 2023).

These case studies demonstrate that financial autonomy is influenced not only by national policy but also by institutional leadership, local governance dynamics, and organizational culture. The ability to innovate financially depends as much on internal capabilities and risk tolerance as on external regulatory space.

3.4 Data Analysis

To synthesize findings from the document analysis, interviews, and case studies, the study employed thematic content analysis using NVivo software. Transcripts and policy texts were first open-coded to identify recurring terms and patterns. Codes were grouped into broader categories such as “legal and regulatory constraints,” “budget rigidity,” “revenue generation mechanisms,” “managerial capacity,” and “incentive structures”. This coding process allowed for both deductive analysis (based on the research questions) and inductive discovery (emergent themes from the data).

A key insight from the triangulation process was the consistent identification of misalignment between autonomy in principle and autonomy in practice. While legal documents support decentralization, financial decision-making remains highly centralized, and PSUs face numerous disincentives to act independently. The cross-case comparison further reinforced the role of institutional maturity and leadership capacity in mediating how autonomy is interpreted and utilized.

The methodology, therefore, offers a robust empirical foundation for the policy recommendations presented later in the paper, ensuring that proposals are grounded in actual institutional experiences rather than abstract frameworks.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Presentation of the main material

The analysis of Vietnam's state budget allocations for the cultural sector reveals both challenges and opportunities in advancing the financial autonomy of public service units (PSUs) under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST). As outlined in the budget estimates for 2024–2026, the Vietnamese government has articulated a set of strategic objectives: promoting national identity and cultural values, investing in the preservation and promotion of intangible and tangible heritage, and fostering youth development and public engagement through cultural and artistic activities.

According to the 2025-2026 medium-term financial plan, Vietnam seeks to enhance the role of culture in nation-

building by empowering local communities, especially youth, to engage in creative expression and civic identity formation. This ambition aligns with goals such as: (1) ensuring equitable access to cultural spaces and services, (2) preserving traditional art forms and folk heritage in line with UNESCO conventions, and (3) digitizing cultural content to promote global outreach and intergenerational transfer.

Despite these aspirations, funding for culture has remained modest compared to sectors like education and healthcare. In the 2023 budget, approximately VND 5,200 billion (USD 220 million) was allocated to the MCST. Of this, only 35% was designated for operational support of cultural PSUs, while the rest focused on central administrative activities, infrastructure renovation projects, and subsidies for high-profile festivals and exhibitions.

The disaggregation of this budget includes:

VND 1,800 billion for the maintenance and operation of over 40 national museums, cultural heritage centers, and performing arts institutions;

VND 650 billion to support the organization of more than 1,200 national and international cultural events, exhibitions, and art competitions;

VND 1,200 billion allocated to the conservation and restoration of 126 cultural relics recognized at national and provincial levels;

VND 750 billion earmarked for the training and development of cultural human resources, including scholarships for students at art academies and conservatories;

VND 500 billion for public-private cooperation in digitizing cultural archives and launching pilot cultural industries in film, design, and literature;

VND 300 billion in subventions to provincial Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism for implementing local-level cultural programs and community arts projects.

However, unlike in countries such as Ukraine, where substantial proportions of the budget are channelled toward elite performance, rehabilitation, and identity-based cultural engagement, Vietnam’s spending is still heavily centralized and project-driven. This centralization poses a barrier to the financial autonomy of local cultural PSUs, which often lack the discretion to initiate revenue-generating services or retain earnings.

According to MCST’s 2024 budget draft, a tentative increase of 18% is proposed, focusing on enabling cultural institutions to access blended finance (state and non-state sources) and incentivizing performance-based funding schemes. Notably, a new allocation of VND 200 billion is earmarked for a pilot “Autonomous Culture Initiative” aimed at allowing selected PSUs in Hanoi, Hue, and Ho Chi Minh City to operate under semi-autonomous models with the ability to price services, sign contracts, and reinvest surplus revenues.

Such reforms signal a shift toward a more decentralized, accountable, and innovation-driven funding mechanism, aligned with the broader public financial management reform strategy led by the Ministry of Finance. Nevertheless, without parallel investments in institutional capacity building and a coherent legal framework for financial self-management, these initiatives may fall short of transformative impact.

Table 1. Indicators of state budget expenditures and state budget loans for 2022-2026

Year	Total MCST Budget Allocation (VND trillion)	Key Expenditure Areas	Notes
2022	5.20	Cultural heritage preservation - Organizing national and international cultural events - Supporting public service units (PSUs)	
2023	5.50	Infrastructure development for cultural institutions - Expansion of cultural programs - Training and capacity building	

2024	6.00	Digital transformation initiatives - Promotion of cultural industries - International cultural exchanges	
2025 (plan)	6.50	Implementation of National Target Programme on Culture Development - Establishment of cultural centers abroad - Enhanced support for PSUs	
2026 (plan)	7.00	Continuation of 2025 initiatives - Evaluation and scaling of successful programs - Strengthening public-private partnerships	

Source: developed based on [12].

The figures are approximate and based on available data and projections.

The National Target Programme on Culture Development for 2025-2030 has a projected total investment of VND 122.25 trillion (approximately USD 4.81 billion), with 63% expected from the state budget.

The program aims to enhance cultural infrastructure, preserve and promote cultural heritage, and expand Vietnam's cultural presence internationally.

As we can see, the indicators of state budget expenditures in the field of physical culture and sports are constant and do not actually increase in quantitative terms. This hinders the development of this social sphere and is a demotivating factor for future physical education and sports professionals. After all, budget funding takes the lion's share in financing the physical education and sports sector.

The next stage in the study is to review the data on higher education funding. Thus, in particular, 'budgetary funding involves the provision of irreversible funds from the state or local budgets to institutions in the field of physical culture and sports to cover their costs in full or in part. The structure and content of budgetary funding is characterised by the current budget classifications. The distribution of budgetary funds is carried out by central and local executive authorities in the field of physical culture and sports, taking into account proposals of public organisations in this area' [13].

Table 2 shows the types of budgets and corresponding expenditures for higher education.

Table 2. Expenditures on higher education by sources of funding

Type of budget	Type of expenses
State budget	Higher education - payment for training services for specialists, researchers and academic staff on the terms of a state order in state-owned higher education institutions
Budgets of cities of oblast significance, rayon budgets, budgets of amalgamated territorial communities	Higher education - payment for training of specialists, scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel in higher education institutions of I-IV accreditation levels of state and municipal ownership in accordance with the programmes of socio-economic development of the regions
Regional budgets	Higher education - payment for training services for specialists, scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel on the terms of a regional order in higher education institutions of municipal ownership, as well as on the terms of a state order in higher education institutions of state ownership according to the list determined by the CMU

Source: developed based on [12].

In addition to direct allocations from the state budget, enhancing the financial autonomy of public service units (PSUs) in Vietnam's cultural sector requires a strategic shift toward mobilizing extra-budgetary funding. These diversified revenue sources can play a pivotal role in bridging the persistent gap between operational costs and state-provided funding, while fostering a more dynamic and entrepreneurial culture within PSUs.

Firstly, income from business activities presents a practical and largely untapped opportunity. Cultural institutions can generate additional revenue through activities such as: ticket sales to exhibitions and performances, fees for guided tours and educational workshops, rental of performance spaces and heritage sites, sale of publications (including cultural catalogues, educational booklets, and promotional materials), branded merchandise (souvenirs, cultural-themed products), licensing rights for media broadcasting, and the monetization of digital content and trademarks. These commercial endeavors, if appropriately regulated and reinvested, could serve as a sustainable financial buffer and facilitate innovation.

Secondly, revenue from public social funds such as Vietnam Social Security and national cultural development programs can be redirected to support activities that intersect between culture, health, and education. For example, art therapy programs, cultural community outreach for youth mental health, and heritage-based education could qualify for cross-sectoral funding, aligning with both cultural and social policy objectives.

Thirdly, regulated income from entertainment and gaming-related businesses, particularly state-run lotteries or cultural event sponsorship programs, could be earmarked for specific cultural initiatives. Countries such as South Korea and the UK have successfully employed lottery-based funding mechanisms to support creative industries, festivals, and the preservation of national heritage.

Moreover, sponsorships and strategic alliances with private firms and civil society organizations can be formalized through cultural contracts and memoranda of understanding (MOUs). These partnerships may provide PSUs with financial resources, in-kind contributions (such as equipment, materials, or digital services), and promotional support. In return, corporate partners benefit from brand visibility, public recognition, and contributions to corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals. For instance, a theater could collaborate with a fashion brand to co-host a cultural night, or a museum might partner with a tech company to digitize its archives.

An effective model for such collaborations can be seen in the proposed mechanism whereby non-governmental cultural organizations (NGCOs) or cultural associations serve as authorized clients or co-funders for public cultural education and training. These entities, which have close community engagement and operational flexibility, could contract public cultural training institutions to deliver specialized programs under specific themes such as performing arts, heritage management, or curatorial studies. This not only supplements state funding but also introduces a performance-based culture in public education services within the sector.

To implement this mechanism effectively, public cultural institutions such as art universities, conservatories, and training centers should meet clearly defined selection criteria, including:

Possession of valid licenses and accreditation from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and MCST;

Demonstrated excellence in faculty qualifications, curriculum relevance, and research outcomes;

A robust material and technical infrastructure capable of supporting advanced training;

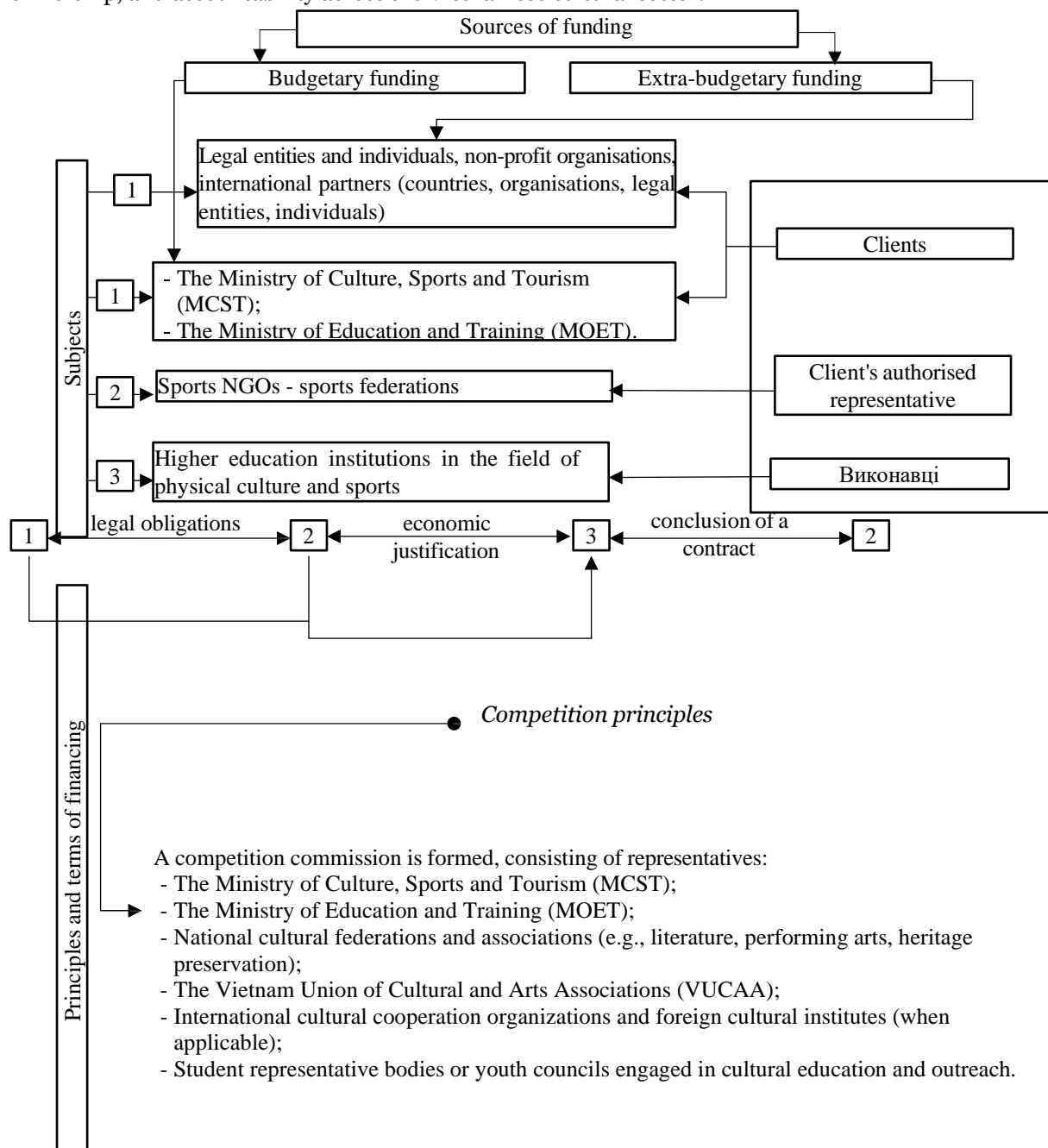
Active engagement with stakeholders including artists, community leaders, and private sector partners;

Proven impact in national or international cultural initiatives, events, or exchanges.

Furthermore, sector-specific federations (e.g., traditional arts associations, performing arts guilds) can establish additional eligibility benchmarks, tailored to their field. A steering and evaluation committee, comprising representatives from MCST, MOET, national cultural institutions, private sponsors, and student representatives, should be tasked with assessing applications and monitoring outcomes to ensure transparency, quality assurance, and alignment with national cultural objectives.

The choice between using budgetary or extra-budgetary funding sources will depend on the scale of the project, risk profile, and resource mobilization capacity of the implementing organization. This dual-source funding strategy will

not only increase the resilience of PSUs against fiscal constraints but also promote a culture of innovation, ownership, and accountability across the Vietnamese cultural sector.



Source: developed by the author

Fig. 2. The mechanism of financing the development of higher education in the field of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this study indicate that Vietnam's cultural public service units (PSUs) operate within a constrained fiscal environment, where legal provisions for autonomy are often undermined by bureaucratic inertia, inconsistent local implementation, and underdeveloped institutional capacity. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated and multi-level policy response that moves beyond legal reform to tackle structural, managerial, and incentive-based barriers. The following implications are proposed to guide future policy direction:

7.1 Clarify and Strengthen Legal Frameworks

While Decree No. 16/2015/NĐ-CP outlines financial autonomy rights for PSUs, its language remains vague, particularly regarding permissible income-generating activities and the autonomy to allocate self-generated revenues. The government should revise and clarify legal texts to ensure consistency and enforceability, and issue sector-specific guidelines tailored to cultural institutions. Codifying financial discretion such as revenue retention thresholds or reinvestment autonomy will reduce local variation and risk aversion in interpretation.

7.2 Introduce Performance-Based Funding Mechanisms

The current budget allocation process is largely input-based and historical, which fails to reward innovation or service expansion. Introducing performance-based budgeting—where a portion of state subsidies is tied to outcomes such as audience reach, cultural programming diversity, or earned income ratios can create incentives for better management. This approach aligns with international practices and supports the cultural sector's public value mission while encouraging financial responsibility.

7.3 Strengthen Institutional Capacity and Leadership

The effectiveness of financial autonomy depends heavily on internal institutional capacity. Training programs in public financial management, cultural entrepreneurship, strategic planning, and performance monitoring should be institutionalized for directors and mid-level managers of PSUs. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism could establish a national resource center or partnerships with universities to build sector-wide competencies.

7.4 Promote Public-Private and Community-Based Financing Models

The government should play an enabling role in supporting PSUs to develop partnerships with private sponsors, NGOs, and international donors. This may include providing legal facilitation for sponsorship agreements, offering tax incentives to cultural philanthropists, or supporting social enterprise models in the cultural field. Encouraging community-based financing mechanisms, such as local fundraising campaigns or membership schemes, may also be particularly effective in rural or underfunded regions.

7.5 Standardize Implementation Across Localities

Inconsistent implementation across provinces creates inequities and limits learning. National oversight bodies should issue standardized performance indicators and establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track how autonomy policies are applied at local levels. This would allow for benchmarking, policy learning, and the identification of good practices that can be scaled.

7.6 Institutionalize Innovation Funds and Cultural Investment Platforms

To catalyze innovation, the Ministry could create a Cultural Innovation Fund competitively allocated to PSUs based on project proposals for digital transformation, inclusive outreach, or service co-design with communities. In parallel, the development of a national cultural investment platform can pool resources from government, businesses, and donors to finance capital projects in the sector.

8. CONCLUSION

Improving the level of financial autonomy for public service units (PSUs) in the cultural field is not merely an administrative reform it is a strategic imperative for preserving Vietnam's rich cultural heritage and enhancing the resilience, creativity, and sustainability of public cultural institutions. This paper has shown that despite recent efforts to reform financial mechanisms, the operational landscape for PSUs under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism remains constrained by outdated regulations, weak institutional capacities, and limited access to diverse revenue sources.

A holistic approach is therefore essential. This includes revising legal frameworks to provide PSUs with the authority to price services, retain earnings, and enter partnerships; developing institutional competencies in financial management and innovation; and fostering stronger linkages between public institutions and private, community, and international partners. Importantly, public investment should be strategically aligned with performance, impact, and relevance to national cultural goals.

The study also emphasized the importance of alternative financing mechanisms including sponsorships, public-private partnerships, and income-generating activities as key pillars of long-term sustainability. By introducing competition-based funding models, transparent selection criteria, and a broader ecosystem of cultural stakeholders, Vietnam can foster a new governance model for the cultural sector one that is dynamic, inclusive, and future-oriented.

Ultimately, empowering cultural PSUs with greater financial autonomy is not about reducing state responsibility, but about transforming the role of the State from sole provider to strategic enabler. Such transformation will not only enhance institutional accountability and efficiency but also inspire innovation and diversity in Vietnam's cultural life, making it more adaptive to the needs of a rapidly changing society and a globally interconnected world.

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