

# Researching on Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of Lecturers in Universities of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Le Hong Linh \*

University of Foreign Trade, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

\*Corresponding author: [lehonglinh.cs2@ftu.edu.vn](mailto:lehonglinh.cs2@ftu.edu.vn)

**Abstract** Universities are increasingly relying on the demographically diverse workforce as the effect of globalization on competitiveness continues to exact pressure on availability of skilled lecturers. Developing a coherent human resource policy for motivating lecturers is a challenge facing universities' leaders in Hochiminh City of Vietnam. The findings from this research indicated that professional development, salary, fringe benefit, superiors, colleagues, promotion, and work itself have a positive relationship with the lecturers' job satisfaction, of which professional development has strongest impact and work itself has weakest influence on job satisfaction. The results also pointed out that there is a statistically significant correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the lecturers. Furthermore, the research revealed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and demographic factor. The results of the research can help universities in orienting strategic solutions for meeting the needs of lecturers, enabling them to be more dedicated and committed to the workplace of the universities.

**Keywords:** *factors, lecturers, job satisfaction, university, Hochiminh City*

**Cite This Article:** Le Hong Linh, "Researching on Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of Lecturers in Universities of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 6, no. 7 (2018): 1056-1062. doi: 10.12691/education-6-7-26.

## 1. Introduction

People's satisfaction at work is very important as positive feelings about a job can create greater satisfaction with their lives. Being happy and satisfied with job may lead people to be healthier psychologically and physically [1]. Job satisfaction concept has been largely mentioned since early twentieth century in order to increase the productivity of employees [2,3]. In the field of higher education where the university creates the future qualified employees for the country, the motivation and satisfaction of the lecturers with the job will greatly affect the quality of the lecture, the quality of education. In any of the educational organizations, the educational goals and objectives can be obtained only if the lecturers are satisfied with their teaching job as when they are happy and satisfied at work they will have long-term commitment with the organization and therefore they will be dedicated at work. It is important for any university to develop and obtain its strategic goals and that can be done by attracting, retaining and maintaining competent and satisfied employees. Therefore, the research intends to find out solutions to improve lecturers' satisfaction is very necessary.

According to the Ministry of Education and Training, by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, there are 235 universities and institutes (including 170 public, 60 private and private ones and five have foreign investment capital). In addition, there have 37 scientific research institutes which are assigned to provide doctorate training,

33 colleges of pedagogy and 2 intermediate schools of pedagogy. About the teaching staffs, in the year of 2016-2017, the total number of lecturers in universities is 72,792 people, up 4.6% over the school year 2015-2016, of which the doctorate degree is 16,514 (increased 21.4%) and the masters (43.665%).

However, universities are always in state of lack of lectures due to the trend of transferring careers among them because of the fact that universities' policies and treatment are not appropriate; especially income and working condition do not meet lecturers' demand. In 2016, Ho Chi Minh City had 546 trainers resigning and transferring jobs, which increased 30% over the same period of previous year, meanwhile, 65% of them has been trained in advanced countries such as England, France, USA, New Zealand, Japan (City Department of Education, 2017). The reason is that these lecturers feel the pressure of learning, education and time while incomes do not match their contributions. In addition, university lecturers and intellectuals have a high level of professional knowledge, opportunities for job selection, and sophistication in communicating behaviors, how to satisfy them. In a balanced relationship with the condition of the organization is very difficult [4]. In some recent years, some researchers have studied job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of lecturers at universities in developed countries, not much has done on job satisfaction of lecturers in the developing countries like Vietnam. Only some researchers studied for the only one university such as Hieu [4] studied in An Giang University and Nguyen Thanh Hoai [5] researched on lecturer satisfaction in Technology and Travel University in Viet Nam. There has

no research conducting for a job satisfaction of group of universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. With data collected from sample surveys and through processing, statistical data analysis, this research provides hope for the higher level of human resource management in universities, academies insight into the factors that can bring about job satisfaction for universities' lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City. Since then they have helped oriented appropriate policies to use, as well as training plan to develop human resources to stabilize universities.

## 2. Literature Review and Research Model

### 2.1. Job Satisfaction

In the research by Lambert et.al [6], job satisfaction is explained as one's feelings or state of mind in relation to the work. Job satisfaction can be affected by many factors such as the quality of the relationship between staffs/workers and their supervisors, the quality of the physical working environment and the level of fulfillment. In this paper, the author considered job satisfaction to be the satisfaction of the lecturers on the factors of the work environment and conditions that have a positive impact on the psychology and thinking of them so that they feel happy and relaxed and show a positive response to their work aspects.

### 2.2. Related Researches and Studies

Job satisfaction is a complex concept because it is a worker's psychological issue, which means that for different individuals there may be different ways to satisfy. It is a sense of personal acceptance toward a result that has been achieved [7].

Researchers have looked at a large number of factors that may have effect on job satisfaction. Although researchers share the same major research interests on the side of job satisfaction, the researchers have little consensus on the determinants of satisfaction (Spector, 2008). The factors and the level of impact of the factors are different; individuals doing the same work in the same environment do not all have the same results on level of satisfaction because of the complexity of identifying psychological perspectives of each worker. Many studies in this field are limited by sample size, scope and subject matter; on the other hand, many researchers focus on the impact of a large group of influencing factors. Others argue that elements influencing job satisfaction can be grouped as personal factors, internal factors, and external factors. Internal factors are factors that directly relate to the characteristics of the work. External factors are factors that directly relate to working conditions such as working environment, pay, welfare, promotion, development, relationships with superiors and colleagues, the creative and professional environment for occupational skills development, job security, organizational structure and organizational culture. Personal factors are the controlling factors of the respondent's demographic characteristics by gender, age, years of experience, educational attainment, monthly income, and other characteristics related to personality and motivation, knowledge and

skills. However, most of these factors can be categorized into two main categories: (1) *environmental factors* and (2) *factors of individual characteristics/ demographic factors* [8,9]. Boke and Nalla [10] also assert that in these two groups, the working environment is more predictive of job satisfaction than individual demographic factors.

### 2.3. Environmental Factors

Spector [1] and many other researchers argued and confirmed that the working environment positively impacts employee satisfaction. However, the views and perceptions that employees have about different aspects of the work environment explain in different ways the impact and the degree of impact of the factors. According to Chen [11], job satisfaction includes salary, welfare, working environment, job characteristics, organizational decision, leadership, interpersonal relationship, self worth, and overall job satisfaction. Khalid Latif (2011) [12] suggested that satisfaction level of academic staffs of private colleges were salary, benefits and promotion opportunities. Usha Rani [13], found that respondents were satisfied with payment policies, working hours, cooperation with co-workers, job security, promotional opportunities, good job, extra benefits. Chen et al., [14] studied the job satisfaction of lecturers in a private university in China mentioning six satisfaction elements including organization perception, esteem, performance feedback, management scheme, compensation and perks and working environment. Seniwoliba [15] found that teachers were dissatisfied with their payment compared to their input as suggested by Adam's equity theory of motivation.

In the field of higher education, many researchers point out that the satisfaction of teachers in higher education institutions is also influenced by factors such as regulation and institution, leadership styles, relationships with students and communication in the university environment, assessment of the society (sector position), climate characteristics and local university culture. **Demographic factors**

Demographic characteristics according to many studies are influencing the rate of job satisfaction of teaching staff. Job satisfaction, however, was influenced by unpopular demographic factors in studies that led to much controversy over the impact of this factor among researches [16]. Noordin and Jusoff [17] in a research study at a public university in Malaysia found that job satisfaction teachers were strongly influenced by marital status, age and salary. As shown in study of Akhtar & Ali [18] female teachers to be happier with the teaching job than men. According to Kim [19], for female employees, job satisfaction on aspects such as wages, job security, job and promotion has varying degrees of significance comparing to male's rating. Bolin [20] claims that there is a significant correlation between age and job satisfaction. Accordingly, older faculty members are more likely to be able to meet their own needs, pay, and university relationships. On the other hand, young lecturers are less satisfied with their work. The study by Dawal et al. [21] mentioned that workers who were married were happier at their work than those who were single or divorced or widowed workers and married workers with a high degree of commitment to work than single people. Akhtar and Ali

[18] point out that teachers with lower education levels are much more satisfied than those with higher education because

highly qualified teachers lack the ability to be promoted and develop, and factors related to wage levels and other responsive regimes. However, the link between demographic factors and satisfaction at their job has not been confirmed in all relevant field studies because other studies have different views.

From the theoretical and practical grounds at the public and private universities in Ho Chi Minh City, this research was conducted to consider two main groups of factors that may influence the satisfaction: the working environment and group of factors belongs to lecturers.

In terms of environmental factors, although there have different views on factors related to the work environment,

the author considers the environmental factors within the scope of this research in eight aspects: salary, promotion, supervision, colleagues, work itself, working condition, fringe benefits and professional development. In terms of demographic variables that belong to the respondents, the factors included: gender, age, marital status, educational level and teaching experience. Organizational commitment is another issue that has received significant attention from researchers. Nguyen [5] mentions that there is also a very positive and important relationship between job satisfaction and commitment. The organization's commitment is the interconnected power of personal orientation and dedication to the work of an organization [22], therefore, in this research framework, the author wanted to examine this relationship between lecturers' satisfaction and their commitment (Figure 1).

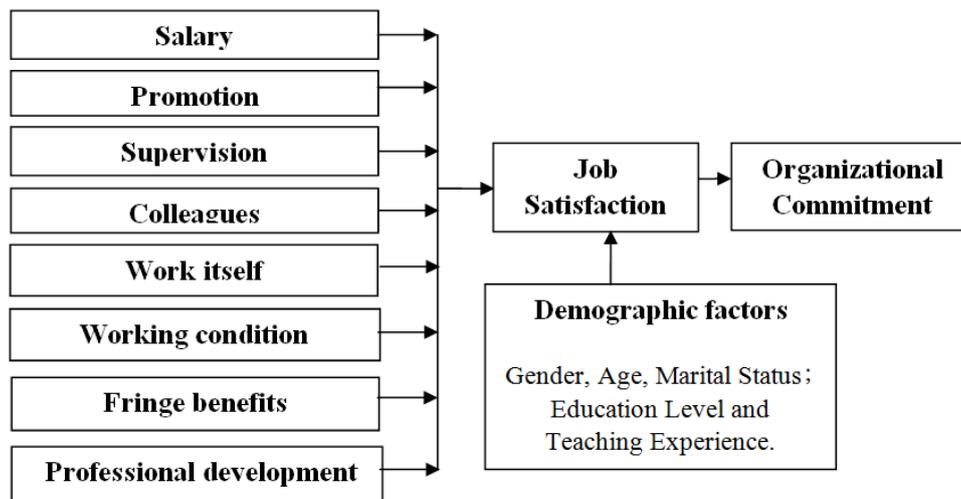


Figure 1. Research model

### 3. Research Method

#### 3.1. Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

In Hochiminh City, according to preliminary statistics, there are nearly 50 universities including 37 public universities and 13 private ones. In the research, questionnaire survey was carried out with 10 selected universities in Ho Chi Minh which have a large number of students, offering many training programs, establishing for many years with long history of development and they have great prestige in the field of higher education in Hochiminh City in particular and in Vietnam in general.

In the research, the author used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative research aims to quantify the relationship between factors through the application of statistical analysis tools – SPSS 20 and AMOS 20, that are often applied in economic researches based on the research model. Quantitative research was conducted through the sampling survey of 500 lecturers in selected universities in Hochiminh City. Based on Slovin's formula and Nguyen Van Ngoc technique, we calculate total observations are 130 with error 5%. According to latest statistics (2017), there are 5,000 lectures in selected university in Hochiminh City. Combining the above sampling patterns and the number of

lecture, a samples of at least 500 observation is needed to ensure the reliability of the research. Accordingly, the author conducted the survey by sending questionnaires to 600 lecturers who are currently working at 10 universities specializing in selected universities in Hochiminh City. The research used convenient sampling technique, it means sampling based on convenience or on the accessibility of the object.

#### 3.2. Questionnaire Development

The research used Likert scale to find out the 5 importance level of factors. The survey of this research was done in the form of direct questionnaires via the labor lists supplied by the universities. The dimensions/ items of factors are largely based on Boeve [23], Teck-hong & Waeed [24], Luu Thi Bich Ngoc [25]; Alam and Farid [26], Stringer and Didham [27], Eyal & Roth, [28], Sharma and Jyoti [29]. The dimensions/ items are the background for designing the scale of the research. There are 50 observational items belonging to 8 independent factorial groups and 5 observed variables for each dependent variable, which are satisfaction and commitment. The questions were translated into Vietnamese and were given to 50 different trainers to assess the level of comprehension and vocabulary used, and then adjusted through group discussion to evaluate the uniformity of the language during translation.

### 3.3. Statistic Treatment

The researcher used tools as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 20 (SPSS) and AMOS 20 to obtain research objectives through techniques: *Descriptive Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Reliability Analysis by Cronback Alpha Value, SEM, T-test and ANOVA.*

## 4. Results

With 600 questionnaires sent out, there were 525 questionnaires returned, accounting for 87.5%. The number of valid questionnaires was 500/525 (95.23%), of which 380 lecturers from 07 public universities (76%) and 120 lecturers from 03 private universities, make up (24%) participated in the survey. Most selected public universities have long history and the same working condition and policies. The oldest one is University of Sciences, Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City (since 1942) and the youngest is Foreign Trade University in Ho Chi Minh City, Brach 2 (since 1993). For the private universities, all most are younger than public with the history of 10 – 20 years' performance. The schools selected in the research located near the central districts have similar facilities, living conditions, and travel condition (Table 1).

According to descriptive statistics, most of the public universities, with many years of history of formation and development, have established a number of teaching staff rich in teaching experience with higher age and

educational level; obtained higher degree qualifications; better meet the requirement of university teaching qualifications in Vietnam.

### 4.1. Results of the Preliminary Evaluation of the Scale

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient test showed that all factors had a reliability greater than 0.6 and a coefficient of variation greater than 0.3. However, the Cronbach's Alpha result also indicated that there were 10 variables excluded from its group which were SALARY5, SUPER1, SUPER7, SUPER8, COLLE5, COLLE6, WCOND2, WCOND4, PROF3, and PROF5. After the Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing, there were 40 independent observations (8 factors) and 10 dependent variables. The observed variables are retained for each group of factors achieving internal consistency.

On the first Exploratory Factor Analysis, variable WCOND6 was excluded from the working condition factor since this variable has its factor loading of 0.409 (< 0.5). After removing WCOND6, 49 variables were retained (consisting of 39 independent variables and 10 dependent variables) for the second Exploratory factor analysis. The results show that the scales meet the requirements of the factor analysis, KMO is greater than 0.5 and Bartlett's Test sphericity is 11012.254 with a significance level of 0.000 < 0.05, which proves that the analysis data is perfectly consistent. All factor loadings are greater than 0.5, and factors have the Eigenvalue > 1 which explains is greater than 50% (72.668%), the observed variables are grouped exactly as the initial scale.

**Table 1. Profile of selected public and private universities of the research**

No	Name	Main training program	Training program	Year of establish-ment	Address	Type of university
1	Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology	Engineering	Graduate, Undergraduate education. (Master and Doctor)	1957	District 10	Public university
2	Ho Chi Minh City University of Transport	Transport, Engineering	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master and Doctor)	1988	Binh Thanh District	Public university
3	University of Sciences Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City	Science and Technology	Graduate, undergraduate and post-graduate education.	1942	Quận 5	Public university
4	University of Social Sciences Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City	Foreign language, culture, journalism	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master and Doctor)	1955	District 1	Public university
5	University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City	Economics	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master and Doctor)	1976	District 3	Public university
6	Foreign Trade University in Ho Chi Minh City	International economics	Graduate, undergraduate education. (Master and Doctor)	1993	Binh Thanh District	Public university
7	Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy	Pedagogy	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master and Doctor)	1957	District 5	Public university
8	University of Economics and Finance - UEF	Economics	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master)	2007	District 1	Private university
9	Van Hien University	Multi-disciplinary	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master)	1999	District 3	Private university
10	HCM University of Technology (HUTECH)	Multi-disciplinary	Graduate, undergraduate education (Master and Doctor)	1995	Binh Thanh District	Private university

### 4.2. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA

To measure the fit between the theoretical model and the actual data, CFA was used. The values are considered appropriate if  $GFI > 0.8$ ;  $TLI, CFI > 0.9$  (Bentler & Bonelt, 1980),  $CMIN/df \leq 3$  (Carmines & McIver, 1981);  $RMSEA \leq 0.08$  (Steiger, 1990). The results of CFA indicated that  $Chi-square = 2545.143$ ;  $df = 1031$  ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ );  $Chi-square/df = 2.469$  ( $df < 3$ );  $TLI = 0.898$ ;  $CFI = 0.907$  ( $TLI, CFI > 0.9$ );  $GFI = 0.833 > 0.8$  and  $RMSEA = 0.054 < 0.08$ . Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the model is compatible with market data.

### 4.3. Results of Structural Equation Modeling - SEM

The first estimated results show that the relationship between job satisfaction and work condition was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). The working condition variable is eliminated and the second SEM analysis is carried out.

The second result indicates:  $df = 1041$ ,  $Chi-square = 1557.155$  with  $p-value = 0.000 < 0.05$ ,  $Chi-square/df = 1.788 < 3$ ,  $CFI = 0.956$ ,  $TLI = 0.953$  ( $TLI, CFI > 0.9$ ),  $GFI = 0.877 > 0.8$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.040 < 0.08$  (Figure 2). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the model achieves compatibility with market data.

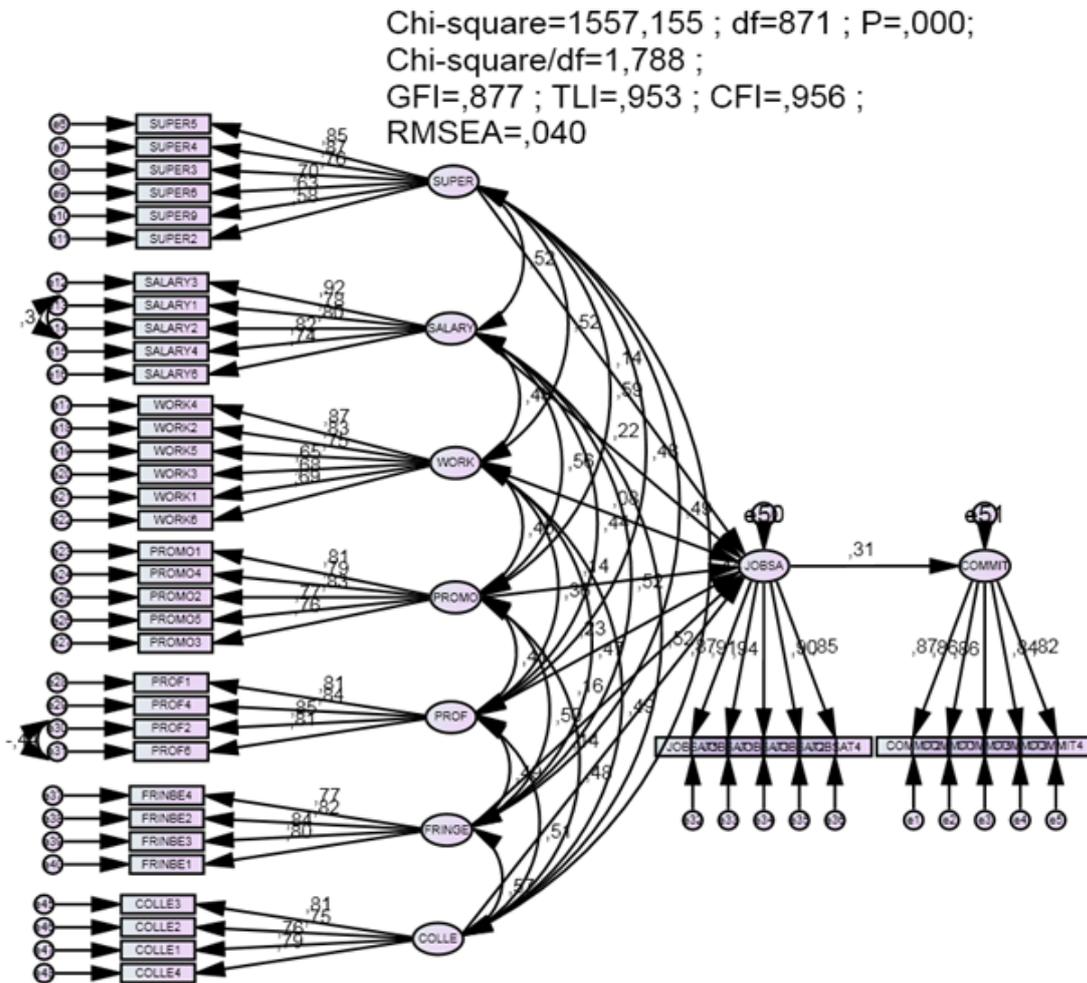


Figure 2. Results of SEM model (standardized)

Table 2. Results of testing relationship between factor

Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
JOBSAT	<---	SUPER	,137	,043	3,190	,001	H3
JOBSAT	<---	SALARY	,209	,039	5,426	***	H1
JOBSAT	<---	WORK	,069	,033	2,069	,039	H5
JOBSAT	<---	PROMO	,135	,039	3,459	***	H2
JOBSAT	<---	PROF	,242	,040	6,100	***	H7
JOBSAT	<---	FRINGE	,171	,045	3,783	***	H8
JOBSAT	<---	COLLE	,148	,047	3,139	,002	H4
COMMIT	<---	JOBSAT	,329	,049	6,715	***	H9

Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H7, H8, H9 are accepted ( $p$ -value less than 0.05) (Table 2). It means that Salary, Promotion, Supervision, Colleague, Work itself, Profession development, Fringe benefit have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. H6 is rejected, which indicates that Working Condition does not affect the lecturers' job satisfaction. Profession development has strongest impact on job satisfaction of lecturers and Work itself has weakest effect on the lecturers' job satisfaction. Moreover, Job satisfaction has a positive influence on Commitment of lecturers.

Research has finally confirmed the difference in gender, age, teaching experience and educational level to lecturers' job satisfaction of selected universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Particularly, female lecturers were more job satisfied than male ones. The lecturers at the age of 36 to 44 had highest job satisfaction and lecturers working for 5 to 10 years also had highest job satisfaction in comparison to other groups. Lecturers who hold post doc degree had lowest job satisfaction than others. Finally, there was no difference of job satisfaction between marital status groups.

## 5. Discussion and Suggestion

Combining primary and secondary data analysis, the research has assessed the influence of environmental and respondents' factors on job satisfaction of lecturers at selected universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Based on the valid responses of 500 respondents who participated in the survey, the empirical evidence of this research shows that the factors of influence are different. There were 7 factors affecting lecturers' job satisfaction, of which professional development had strongest influence on job satisfaction, followed by salary, fringe benefits, colleague, supervision, and promotion and work itself. Professional development has greatest impact on job satisfaction as a result of the research. It means that if the universities provide lecturers with enough work-related training to improve lecturers' development, enough resources for teaching and researching, and fair chances for profession development, lecturers feel satisfied as higher education institutions requires lecturers quickly adapt to changes of learner [30]. The research pointed out that the salary has a strong influence on employees' job satisfaction because it is considered a significant reward to motivate lecturers and their behavior towards the goals of employer as well as the commitment at work. Inadequate salary may prevent lecturers' efforts in striving towards higher-order needs such as achievement, responsibility, or their esteem-needs. This was suitable with Maslow's Theory and was supported by other previous studies like Nielsen and Smyth [31], Chang, et al., [32] and Duong [33]. Other variables such as fringe benefits, promotion, supervision, colleagues and work itself also affect lecturers' job satisfaction, which is in consistency with other studies such as Artz [34], Choi and Tang [35], Xiaofu and Qiwen [36], Saifuddin [30], Salman Khalid [37], Boeve [23], Newsham et al. [36].

Public universities in Vietnam are currently providing financial support and facilities for teaching by government public funds. Government financing, however, is also accompanied by regulations on pay systems and state financial discipline that make it difficult for schools to

make self-determination in terms of wages and benefits. According to their assessment about the salary elements, the salary level based on seniority and the position of the lecturers at public universities in Vietnam make them fairly satisfied. On the other hand, lecturers at non-public universities tend to move to public schools. This is contrary to developed countries like France and the United States, and it can be said that this is a limitation of non-public schools because they are completely independent, human and financial, on the organization ..., can create a separate mechanism to attract and retain faculty. This shows that non-public schools currently should have better policies to stimulate, motivate, enhance the motivation for the faculty to retain and attract lecturers [38].

Although the research has found out some important results, due to some objective and subjective factors, research cannot avoid some limitations. Firstly, the research is limited in 10 selected universities in Ho Chi Minh, implying that the results obtained may not be generalized to many other universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Secondly, participants may not feel free to express their views concerning the environmental factors as these factors to some extent may reflect the management and supervision. Finally, this research is limited to research on the environmental factors and personal factors of staffs, meanwhile job satisfaction may be due to many other factors such as internal factors (reputation of the university, organizational culture, leadership style, labor arrangement, staff evaluation and reward) and external factors (state policy and law, status of sector or factors belong to employees (such as personal needs, personality traits). Further research should be undertaken on a broader scale than selected universities in Ho Chi Minh City and in Vietnam, ensuring consistency and the representation of the sample, helping to propose solutions on a broader scale. On the other hand, future researches may add a number of other internal and external factors to enhance the fit of the model. Finally, subsequent studies should remove individual factors during process of collecting responses to help the questionnaire be collected objectively, ensuring that the results of the research are accurate.

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