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Abstract

Job satisfaction is an elusive and complex concept that has been a subject of intense research since the emergence of organizational studies. Little is known about faculty job satisfaction in higher education as well as in the developing countries like Vietnam. The purpose of this study was to ascertain job satisfaction level of academic members in Vietnamese universities. The study used a questionnaire to survey with 200 academic members from five member colleges of Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City was selected as a statistical sample. The findings of study showed that most academic members of Vietnamese universities were satisfied with their job. Male faculty members were more satisfied than their counterparts. Academic members were generally satisfied with teaching support equipment, working insurance, teacher promotion, gender equality, in-service teaching training, in-service research training, work autonomy, colleague academic interaction, colleague social relationship, teaching load, research pressure, development aim of school, leadership style, campus landscape, and administration efficiency. Recommendations on the study's finding to the university management and policy makers are discussed to enhance the faculty job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, developing country, higher education, working equipment, university environment, regulations, Vietnamese universities.

I. Introduction

Quality in teaching and learning can only be enhanced if the faculty members are satisfied and content (Chen et al., 2006), and the health of an educational institution depends on the job satisfaction of its employees (Wood, 1976). On the other hand, the goals of higher education are to provide in-depth knowledge, seek academic development, educate students, and to coordinate national development demands (Johnes & Taylor, 1990). These goals can not be accomplished efficiently and are barriers to ability utilization if low satisfaction or dissatisfaction exists amongst the academics in higher education sector. Therefore, Syed et al., (2012) recognized that faculty satisfaction is the most significant aspect in higher education and is important for the improvement, efficacy and effectiveness of the upper education system.

Although there is no universal definition of the concept most of the definitions that exist in literature have a common theme. Different authors have different approaches towards defining job satisfaction. The most used definition of job satisfaction in organizational research is that Locke (1976), who described job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences and as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006). Job satisfaction is an attitude developed by an individual towards the job and job conditions (Luthans, 1994). Spector (1997) refined the definition of job satisfaction to constitute an attitudinal variable that measures how a person feels about his or her job, including different facets of the job.

Telman and Unsal (2004) recognized that the factors affecting job satisfaction into internal, external and personal. Internal factors include characteristics related to the basic nature of work. External factors are the conditions such as physical work, promotion conditions, relationships with superiors and co workers, creativity, job security, organizational structure and culture. Personal factors include factors such as demographic characteristics (gender, age, length of service, educational level etc.), personality traits and incentive, knowledge and skills. Furthermore, satisfaction of academic members in higher education institutions is also shown to be affected greatly by the institutional variables, including leadership, collegial and student relationship, climate and culture of the university (Grunwald & Peterson, 2003; Hagedorn, 2000; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004).

There are several recent studies that addressed job satisfaction among academic members of higher education in Asia – Pacific area. Regarding the relationship between faculty job satisfaction and demographic variable of academics in a public higher education in Singapore, Paul and Phua (2011) indicated that satisfaction over interpersonal relationships with students and co-workers, the autonomy and flexibility that the job offered. Conversely, they expressed dissatisfaction over the amount of administrative/non academic work they had to shoulder, heavy workload, salary, presence of ‘red tape’ and other corporate practices and dealing with disruptive students. Age and job position affected the job satisfaction levels of the respondents. However, variables such as gender, academic qualification, length of employment and marital status showed no significant difference. The study of Noordin and Jusoff (2009) comprised two hundred and thirty-seven of academics from a public university in Malaysia that overall the academic staff of the university has a moderate level of job satisfaction. In addition, current status, marital status, age and salary appear to have significant impact on the respondents’ level of job satisfaction. In their research with faculty from three private universities in Malaysia, Santhapparaj and Alam (2005) found that pay, promotion, working condition and support of research have positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. On the other hand, benefits and support of teaching have negative effect, and female faculty members are more satisfied than their counterpart. Regarding the relationship between incentives, rewards and recognition on employee motivation and job satisfaction of two hundred and nineteen of academic member of Hue University in Vietnam, Nguyen et al., (2013) found that significantly positive relationship between reward and recognition, satisfaction with supervision and the job characteristics, with job satisfaction as well as a very positive and significant relationship was also observed between job satisfaction and personal motivation.

In another study, Gautam, Mandal and Dalal (2006) surveyed faculty members of Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu, India that job satisfaction is a multidimensional phenomenon with a number of factors operating simultaneously. The overall job satisfaction of the faculty members is fair and moderate. Moreover, the younger faculty members are more satisfied as compared to those with a longer service period although the relationship is not linear. Again, Sharma and Jyoti (2010) comprised one hundred and twenty faculty members of Jammu University in India that professors were more satisfied than lecturers and job satisfaction decline in the middle age. Addition, intrinsic, extrinsic and demographic factors were effecting academic staff’s job satisfaction.

Although Cranny et al., (1992) estimated that over 5,000 articles and dissertations have examined the topic of job satisfaction and it is a continuing topic for research. Job satisfaction has been an important topic over the years (Akfopure et al., 2006). Most of the research that has been conducted in the field of job satisfaction has focused on organizational business and industrial setting (Platsidou & Diamantopoulou, 2009). However, in recent years, a clear increase has been observed in the number of studies related to the job satisfaction of academics (Neumann, 1978). Several studies have examined the job satisfaction of academic members in higher education of the developed countries, unfortunately, evidence from developing countries is seriously lacking and is a gap which needs to be filled (Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005; Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009).

Very few studies have been conducted in the area of job satisfaction in Vietnamese higher education sector. Hence, this study identifies and discusses factors, considerations or aspects of Vietnamese university academic’s job which contribute most to their satisfaction. The findings this study will contribute to fill in the literature gap in developing countries in general as well as Vietnamese higher education in particular. The present study was designed to shed light on the following research questions: 1) what is the general level of job satisfaction of academic members of higher education in Vietnam? 2) How are differences of the job satisfaction level between male and female academic members in Vietnamese universities?

II. Methodology

Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

To measure the job satisfaction level of academic members in Vietnamese universities, twenty-one dimensions of university job were carried out the study. It consists of research room space and equipment, internet and computer, teaching support equipment, library (e-journals), recreation and sport equipment, working insurance, teacher promotion, gender equality, in-service teaching training, in-service research training, salary, bonus and welfare, work autonomy, colleague academic interaction, colleague social relationship, teaching load, research pressure, development aim, leadership style, campus landscape, and administration efficiency.

Sample and Instrument

The population for this study was comprised of academic members working from five member colleges in Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC). They are the University of Technology, the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, the University of Science, the University of Information Technology, and the University of Economics and Law. A random sample of 230 questionnaires administered to potential subjects selected from the five member colleges in VNU-HCMC, 200 usable questionnaires were returned yielding a response rate of 87 per cent.

Questionnaire survey was used to gather data in this study. Structured questionnaire was constructed to provide answers to two research questions generated under introduction. The participants are weighted on a 4-point Likert’s scale to measure job satisfaction of academic members. The scale ranged from 1 to 4 representing: 1 = very dissatisfaction, 2 = dissatisfaction, 3 = satisfaction, 4 = very satisfaction.

Data Analysis Method

All collected data were analyzed with the help of computer program statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 13.0. The statistical methods employed to answer two research questions. Descriptive analysis is computed to examine the general level of job satisfaction of academic members. T-test is enabled to examine the job satisfaction level between male and female faculty in Vietnamese universities.

III. Results and Discussion

Participants of the Study

The findings of Table 1 show that out of the 200 academic members, 72.5% were male and remaining 27.5% of female faculty. The respondents consisted of 61% were from 31 to 40 years old. Regarding marital status, 45% of faculty were single, 55% were married. In terms of their academic qualification, 42.5% of faculty had master’s degrees, and almost 46.5% had attained a doctoral degree. The distribution of length of employment shows that 36.5% had from 6 to 10 years, and 8.5% academic members had from 16 or more years teaching experience. For national graduation, 5% of faculty graduated America, 11.5% were Europe, only 2.5% were Oceania, and almost of 76% academic staff graduated in Asia. Regarding academic members’ discipline, 38% faculty were technology areas, 18.5% were fields of social sciences and humanities, 32.5% were science sectors, 5% were information technology areas, and remaining 6% faculty were fields of economics and law.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents of the Study

Characteristics	n (200)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	55	27.5
Male	145	72.5
Age (years old)		
Under 30	54	27.0
31–40	122	61.0

Over 40	24	12.0	
Marital status			
Single	90	45.0	
Married	110	55.0	
Academic qualification			
Bachelor's degree	22	11.0	
Master's degree	85	42.5	
Doctoral degree	93	46.5	
Length of employment (years)			
Less than 1	23	11.5	
1 – 5	42	21.0	
6 -10	73	36.5	
11–15	45	22.5	
16 or more	17	8.5	
National graduation			
America	10	5.0	
Asia	152	76.0	
Europe	33	16.5	
Oceania	5	2.5	
Discipline			
Technology	76	38.0	
Social Science and Humanities	37	18.5	
Science	65	32.5	
Information Technology	10	5.0	
Economics and Law	12	6.0	3.2
			The

Level of Job Satisfaction of Academic Member in VNU-HCMC

In terms of Table 2 the results indicate that the range of twenty-one dimensions of university job were between 2.16 and 3.25 for mean scores, and 0.52 and 1.10 for SD scores. The average scores of academic members job satisfaction of VNU-HCMC were $M = 2.89$ and $SD = 0.50$. This finding reported that academic members of VNU-HCMC were satisfied with their university job. Mirroring the results of the studies by Castillo & Cano (2004), Eyupoglu and Sanner (2009), Ghazi et al., (2010), Malik (2011), Mehboob et al., (2012), Noordin and Jusoff (2009), and Syed et al., (2012).

Regarding the twenty-one dimensions of job, academic members of VNU-HCMC had the highest satisfied with career promotion ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.10$), subsequently followed by satisfaction with development aim of school ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.67$), teaching support equipment ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.74$), colleague social relationship ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.52$), work autonomy ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.52$), working insurance ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.79$), leadership style ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.70$), colleague academic interaction ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.59$), campus landscape ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.89$), teaching load ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.87$), administration efficiency ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.07$), research pressure ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.87$), in-service teaching training ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.93$), in-service research training ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.81$), and gender equality ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.79$).

However, the findings of Table 2 also shows that academic members of VNU-HCMC had the lowest satisfied with salary ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.76$), subsequently followed by recreation and

sports equipment (M = 2.46, SD = 1.07), bonus and welfare (M = 2.52, SD = 1.08), research room space and equipment (M = 2.68, SD = 1.05), internet and computer (M = 2.69, SD = 0.72), and library (M = 2.70, SD = 0.86). Thus, university management and policy makers should invest more time, budget, facilities, and technologies in enhancing academic members' job satisfaction in higher education institutions.

Table 2: Results of Mean (M), and Standard Deviations (SD) of Job Satisfaction Level of Faculty

No.	Dimensions of job	M	SD
	Average	2.89	0.50
S-1	Teacher promotion	3.25	1.10
S-2	Development aim of school	3.19	0.67
S-3	Teaching support equipment	3.16	0.74
S-4	Colleague social relationship	3.13	0.52
S-5	Work autonomy	3.12	0.52
S-6	Working insurance	3.08	0.79
S-7	Leadership style	3.07	0.70
S-8	Colleague academic interaction	3.02	0.59
S-9	Campus landscape	3.00	0.89
S-10	Teaching load	3.00	0.87
S-11	Administration efficiency	2.94	1.07
S-12	Research pressure	2.93	0.87
S-13	In-service teaching training	2.86	0.93
S-14	In-service research training	2.84	0.81
S-15	Gender equality	2.82	0.79
S-16	Library (e-journals)	2.70	0.86
S-17	Internet and computer	2.69	0.72
S-18	Research room space and equipment	2.68	1.05
S-19	Bonus and welfare	2.52	1.08
S-20	Recreation and sports equipment	2.46	1.07
S-21	Salary	2.16	0.76

The Job Satisfaction Level between Male and Female Academic Members

As shown in Table 3, the level of job satisfaction among male academic members (M = 2.95, SD 0.48) and female academic members (M = 2.71, SD = 0.51) were found in this study. This finding recognized that male faculty of VNU-HCMC were more satisfied than their counterparts. This results were similarly several past studies namely Bilimoria et al., (2006), Callister (2006), Hult et al., (2005), Settles et al., (2006), Seifert and Umbach (2008).

Comparative ranking of job dimensions between male and female faculty based on the average scores of the each group. Only two cases, both groups are lowest satisfied in same way with salary (ranked 21st), and internet and computer (ranked 17 th). The findings of Table 3 also indicated that male and female faculty of VNU-HCMC had different level of job satisfaction toward various factors. Both male and female faculty members were more satisfied with career promotion, development aim of school, colleague social relationship, and working autonomy. Female faculty were more satisfied with research pressure (ranked 2nd) and administration efficiency (ranked 5th), however, male faculty were ranked 14 th and 13 th. On the contrary, male faculty were more satisfied with campus landscape (ranked 4th) and their counterparts were ranked 16th. Moreover, both male and female faculty members of VNU-HCMC were dissatisfied with salary, bonus and welfare, library, recreation and sports equipment.

Table 3: Comparative Ranking of Job Dimensions between Male and Female Faculty Members

No.	Dimensions of job	Ranked	
		Male	Female
	Average M (SD)	2.95 (0.48)	2.74 (0.51)
S-1	Teacher promotion	1st	5th
S-3	Teaching support equipment	2nd	10th
S-2	Development aim of school	3rd	1st
S-9	Campus landscape	4th	16th
S-4	Colleague social relationship	5th	3rd
S-5	Work autonomy	5th	4th
S-6	Working insurance	7th	8th
S-7	Leadership style	8th	7th
S-8	Colleague academic interaction	8th	12th
S-10	Teaching load	10th	11th
S-13	In-service teaching training	11th	15th
S-14	In-service research training	12th	14th
S-11	Administration efficiency	13th	5th
S-12	Research pressure	14th	2nd
S-15	Gender equality	15th	9th
S-16	Library (e-journals)	16th	18th
S-17	Internet and computer	17th	17th
S-18	Research room space and equipment	18th	13th
S-19	Bonus and welfare	19th	20th
S-20	Recreation and sports equipment	20th	19th
S-21	Salary	21st	21st

IV. Conclusion

Job satisfaction of academic members is important for improvement, efficiency and effectiveness of the upper higher education sector. It is clear that very little research on job satisfaction of academic members has come from developing countries like Vietnam. Therefore, there is a need for more data to be gathered from developing countries, and for theories to be tested in different cultural contexts, professional, social, and economic environments.

The findings of study showed that most academic members of Vietnamese universities were satisfied with their job. Male faculty members were more satisfied than their counterparts. Academic members were generally satisfied with teaching support equipment, working insurance, teacher promotion, gender equality, in-service teaching training, in-service research training, work autonomy, colleague academic interaction, colleague social relationship, teaching load, research pressure, development aim of school, leadership style, campus landscape, and administration efficiency. Moreover, faculty were dissatisfied or neutral with the job dimensions namely salary, bonus and welfare, research room space and equipment, internet and computer, library (e-journals), recreation and sports equipment. Hence, one way of addressing this could be by refresher courses and training workshops must be arranged for university academic faculty to keep them abreast with the contemporary skills and techniques as well as teaching and research; to provide adequate protective equipment. University management should provide abundant research space and facilitate supportive. Provision of sufficient funds to universities for the availability of modern tools, scholarly publications, properly equipped libraries and

laboratories. Moreover, higher education management clearly needs to reexamine their current institutional policies on faculty work in order to keep highly productive faculty more satisfied with their job and to make the necessary changes in the policies and practices to enhance job satisfaction.

It is hoped that the barrier to the job satisfaction of academic members are found in this study may be useful for management institutes to develop work environment and culture that would allow higher levels of faculty job satisfaction and can contribute to a great extent to improve the level of academic members in developing countries in general and Vietnamese higher education in particular.

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