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A COMPARISON OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ACADEMIC MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE IN VIETNAM

ABSTRACT: Since the late 1950s, a number of researchers have theorized about the nature of job satisfaction and developed models which attempt to explain differences of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a major concern of managers in business, executives in industry, and teachers and administration in educational organization. It is clear that very little research on university faculty job satisfaction has come from the developing world like Vietnam. This aim of this study was to determine the specific factors that affected the job satisfaction of academic members both universities. The study used a questionnaire to survey with 141 academic members from two public universities of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam which selected as a statistical sample. The study showed that academic members of two universities were only a moderate level of job satisfaction. However, faculty members in the University of Technology were more satisfied than faculty members in the University of Science. The present analysis found that no significant differences existed job satisfaction of academic members among the two universities; but, there were significant difference between male and female faculty. In addition, male faculty members were generally more satisfied than female colleagues. The study also recognized that job satisfaction of academic members were significantly affected by their work time and institutional characteristics.

KEY WORDS: Job satisfaction, Vietnamese higher education, academic members, work time, institutional characteristics, and developing country.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1950s, a number of researchers have theorized about the nature of job satisfaction and developed models which attempt to explain differences of job satisfaction (Sseganga & Garrett, 2005). Job satisfaction is a major concern of managers in business, executives in industry, and teachers and administration in educational organization. Although there is no universal definition of the concept (Evans, 1997), 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 E.A. 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 (cited also in Nguni, Slegers & Denessen, 2006). A more definitive describes job satisfaction an attitude developed by an individual towards the job and job conditions (Luthans, 1994). P.E. 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.

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There is a relationship between job satisfaction and very different variables. They include *life satisfaction* (Ho & Au, 2008); *demographic, job, and personality characteristics* (Miller, Mire & Kim, 2009; and Telman & Unsal, 2004); *performance* (Luthans, 1994); *organizational characteristics* (Glisson & Durick, 1988); and *leadership, climate, and culture of the university* (Grunwald & Peterson, 2003; Hagedorn, 2000; and Zhou & Volkwein, 2004).

Several studies of higher education sector are used different factors to measuring job satisfaction of academic members. T. Oshagbemi (1997) employed eight scales designed to measure satisfaction of university teachers in the United Kingdom, namely: (1) teaching, (2) research, (3) administration and management, (4) present pay, (5) promotions, (6) supervision/supervisor behaviour, (7) behavior of co-workers, and (8) physical conditions/working conditions.

The study of F. Kusku (2003) measured the job satisfaction of academics in a university in Turkey using the seven determinants: (1) general satisfaction, (2) management satisfaction, (3) colleagues, (4) other working group satisfaction, (5) job satisfaction, (6) work environment, and (7) salary satisfaction.

According to K. Sseganga & R.M. Garrett (2005), measured the job satisfaction of academics of higher education in Uganda using nine general elements of their work comprising: (1) teaching, (2) research, (3) governance, (4) remuneration, (5) opportunities for promotion, (6) supervision, (7) co-worker's behavior, (8) working environment, and (9) the job in general.

A study of S.H. Chen *et al.* (2006) measured the job satisfaction of teachers in a private university in China using six satisfaction factors, namely: (1) organization vision, (2) respect, (3) result feedback and motivation, (4) management system, (5) pay and benefits, and (6) work environment.

Although C.J. Cranny, P.C. Smith & E.F. Stone (1992) estimated that over 5,000 articles and dissertations have examined the topic of job satisfaction and it is a continuing topic for research. 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). Unfortunately, evidence from job satisfaction of academic members in higher education of the developing countries is seriously lacking and is a gap which needs to be filled (Garrett, 1999; Hean & Garrett, 2001; Sseganga & Garrett, 2005; and Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009). Furthermore, very little research has focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (Verret, 2012).

Hence, this study was conducted to explore factors influencing the job satisfaction among academic members both universities within technology and science fields. The present study was designed to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the general level of job satisfaction of academic members both universities in Vietnam?; (2) Do any significant differences exist in the level of job satisfaction with regard to discipline and gender characteristics?; and (3) How are job satisfaction of academic members affected by their work time and institutional characteristics?

STUDIES OF JOB SATISFACTION AND FACULTY HIGHER EDUCATION

There are several recent studies that addressed job satisfaction among academic members serving in the higher education context. The study of T. Oshagbemi (1997) comprised academics from 23 universities in the United Kingdom that teaching, research-related activities, and several miscellaneous dimensions of the jobs contribute significantly to both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of university academics. For job satisfaction among academic staff from thirteen universities in Turkey, H. Saygi, T. Tolon & H. Tekogul (2011) found that co-workers and promotions were considered more important than the pay. The most important factor in job satisfaction was co-workers, with working as a team and sharing also rated as important.

In another study, M. Springfield-Scott (2000) showed that sex and rank affected faculty job satisfaction; while age, race, and

tenure did not affect faculty job satisfaction in Piedmont, North Carolina University. In North Cyprus, S.Z. Eyupoglu & T. Saner (2009) explored that the job facets advancement, compensation, co-workers, and variety were found to be statistically significant with job satisfaction. Beside, this study also explained that academic in North Cyprus indicate only a moderate level of overall job satisfaction.

In their study with academic members of ten private universities in Bangladesh, T. Ali & I. Akhter (2009) recognized that faculty members are overall satisfied with their present condition, except the factors like training facilities, and some physical facilities and distribution of courses. Further, it has been found that there is no significant difference between male and female faculty members regarding job satisfaction.

In Asia–Pacific area, regarding the relationship between faculty job satisfaction and demographic variable of academics in a public higher education in Singapore, E.P. Paul & S.K. 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 F. Noordin & K. 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 173 teaching staff from three private universities in Malaysia, A.S. Santhapparaj & S.S. Alam (2005) found also 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 staff 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, N.C. 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, M. Gautam, K. Mandal & R.S. 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, the study of R.D. Sharma & J. Jyoti (2006 and 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. Unfortunately, very few studies have been conducted in the area of job satisfaction in Vietnamese higher education as well as other developing countries.

METHOD

Dependent and Independent Variables.

Job satisfaction has been identified as the dependent variable in this study. This study measured the job satisfaction of academics of higher education in Vietnam using six satisfaction factors, namely: (1) recreation and sport equipment, (2) medical facility, (3) in-service teaching training, (4) bonus and

welfare, (5) curriculum reform and evaluation, and (6) teaching load.

In this study, factor loading and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were conducted to assess the validity and reliability of this constructed measurement for job satisfaction of academic members (see table 1). According to J.F. Hair *et al.* (2006), the selected criteria are: factor loading ≥ 0.6 , cumulative explanation ≥ 0.6 (60 per cent), and instruments used in exploratory study have reliability of 0.6 and 0.7 or more (cited also in Nunnally, 1978). The Cronbach alpha estimated for this study shows acceptable level of 0.898. Hence, based on the validation of construct reliability which is concluded that research construct of job satisfaction is reliable.

The independent variables of this study include two blocks. The first block is work time per week, including teaching time, research time, community service time, and private time. The second block is institutional factors, including development aim, leadership style, campus landscape, and administration efficiency.

Sample. The population for this study was comprised of academic members from two public universities of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. They consist of University of Technology and University of Science. Those universities are member of Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC). A random sample of 141 questionnaires administered to potential subjects selected from the two universities. Participants were currently working on campus.

It is notable from table 2 that demographic data of responding academics was wide ranging. Of the 141 respondents, 29% were female and 79.4% of male faculty. Almost respondents consisted of 64.5% faculty were from 31 to 40 years old. Regarding marital status, 67% were single, 73% academics were married. In terms of their academic qualification, 36.9% had master's degrees, and 51% faculty had attained a doctoral degree.

Almost 91.5% of the respondents were lecturers and only 0.7% and 7.8% academic were associate professor and teaching assistant, respectively. The 39% faculty had from 6 to 10 years, 23.4% had from 11 to 15 years, and only

8.5% academic members had from 16 or more years teaching experience.

Data Analysis Method. Questionnaire survey was used to gather data in this study. The participants are weighted on a 4-point Likert's scale to measure job satisfaction of academic members and institutional factors which impact job satisfaction (1 = very dissatisfaction, 2 = dissatisfaction, 3 = satisfaction, and 4 = very satisfaction). For work time factors, however, there are used working hours per week to measure the influence of job satisfaction of academic (1 = 0 hour, 2 = 1 to 5 hours, 3 = 6 to 10 hours, 4 = 11 to 15 hours, 5 = 16 to 20 hours, 6 = 21 to 25 hours, and 7 = over 26 hours).

All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0 software. The statistical methods employed to analyze data are included. Descriptive analysis is computed to examine the general level of job satisfaction of academic members. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is enabled to examine the difference between job satisfaction and discipline, and gender. To study the key factors of work time and institutional factors which significantly affect job satisfaction, multiple regression analysis is used for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, the Level of Job Satisfaction of Academic Members among Different Universities. The results of table 3 display Means (*M*), Standard Deviations (*SD*), and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) of job satisfaction of academic members in two universities and to answer the first and apart of the second research question of this study. As shown in table 3, the *M* and *SD* job satisfaction level of the respondents were 2.69 and 0.82, respectively. This result indicated that academic members were only a moderate level of job satisfaction, mirroring the results of the studies by S.Z. Eyupoglu & T. Saner (2009) and N. Malik (2011).

According to S.H. Chen *et al.* (2006), quality in teaching and learning can only enhanced if the faculty members are satisfied and content; and the health of an educational institution depend on the job satisfaction of its employees

Table 1:
The Results of Dependence Variable in this Study

Dimensions of Job Satisfaction	Factor Loading	Cumulative Explanation	Cronbach's Alpha
Recreation and sport equipment	.858		
Medical facility	.854		
In-service teaching training	.848	66.630	0.898
Bonus and welfare	.812		
Curriculum reform and evaluation	.804		
Teaching load	.711		

Table 2:
Demographics Data of the Sample

Characteristics	n	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Male	112	79.4
Female	29	20.6
Age (Years Old):		
Under 30	31	22
31 – 40	91	64.5
Over 40	19	13.5
Marital Status:		
Single	67	47.5
Married	73	51.8
Widowed	1	0.7
Academic Qualification:		
Bachelor's Degree	17	12.1
Master's Degree	52	36.9
Doctoral Degree	72	51.0
Academic Rank:		
Teaching Assistant	11	7.8
Lecturer	129	91.5
Associate professor	1	0.7
Length of Employment (Years):		
Less than 1	17	12.1
1 – 5	24	17.0
6 -10	55	39.0
11 – 15	33	23.4
16 or more	12	8.5

(Wood, 1976). Furthermore, job satisfaction has serious implications for relations between the academics and the management of the higher educational organizations they belong to (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009). Thus, university management should invest more resources in enhancing the job satisfaction of academic members in designing institutional policies.

For job satisfaction of academic members in two universities, academic members in the University of Technology ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.89$) were more satisfied than academic members in the University of Science ($M =$

2.58 , $SD = 0.73$). However, the results of table 3 also found that there were no significant differences of academic members' job satisfaction among the two universities ($F = 2.198$, $p = 0.140 > 0.05$).

Second, Job Satisfaction and Gender of Academic Members among Different Universities. The findings of table 4 showed that a significant difference has been found between the level of job satisfaction of male and female academic members in the two campus ($F = 7.032$, $p = 0.009 < 0.01$), mirroring the results of studies by D.A.

Table 3:

Means (*M*), Standard Deviations (*SD*), and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) Results of the Job Satisfaction Level in Two Universities

Universities	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
University of Technology	2.79	0.89	2.198	.140
University of Science	2.58	0.73		
Average of two universities	2.69	0.82		

Note: The mean difference is significant at the $p \leq .05$

Table 4:

ANOVA Results between Job Satisfaction and Different Universities

Universities	Male	Female	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
University of Technology	2.86 (0.43)	2.26 (0.91)	7.032	.009
University of Science	2.67 (0.79)	2.37 (0.55)		

Note: The mean difference is significant at the $p \leq .01$

Pearson & R.E. Seiler (1983); M. Springfield-Scott (2000); S. Schulze (2006); N. Malik (2011); F. Mehboob, M.A. Sarwar & N.A. Bhutto (2012); and M.M. Ghafoor (2012). However, male academic members both universities are generally more satisfied with their job than the female academic members in this study, supported by the studies of T. Bas & K. Ardic (2002) and O.E. Olorunsola (2010).

As shown in table 4, male faculty members in the University of Technology had the highest job satisfaction ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.43$). The difference of job satisfaction among female academic members of the University of Technology ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 0.91$) and the University of Science ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.55$) were negligible in general. In addition, female academic members both universities were less more satisfied than male counterparts.

Third, Regression between Job Satisfaction and Work Time, and Institutional Characteristics. The regression model wielded rather different explanation power for job satisfaction of academic members among the two universities. The results of table 5 showed the regression model proposed by this study explained 58.7% of job satisfaction of academic members in the University of Technology ($R^2 = 0.587$) and 46.6% of the University of Science ($R^2 = 0.466$).

As shown in table 5, job satisfaction of academic members in the University of Technology had a significant positive effect on

community service time ($\beta = .346$, $p < 0.01$), private time ($\beta = .234$, $p < 0.05$), leadership style ($\beta = .436$, $p < 0.001$), and administration efficiency ($\beta = .586$, $p < 0.001$); however, job satisfaction of academic members had negative effect on teaching time ($\beta = -.269$, $p < 0.05$), and development aim of university ($\beta = -.428$, $p < 0.001$). Both private time ($\beta = -.417$, $p < 0.001$) and development aim of university ($\beta = -.287$, $p < 0.05$) had significant negative effect on job satisfaction of academics at the University of Science.

According to N. Hensel (1991), the average professor in higher education sectors works approximately 55 hours per week; and when added to home duties, it can grow 70 hours. There had no significant impact teaching, community service (Bameka, 1996) and research (Sseganga & Garrett, 2005) on job satisfaction academics. Research, teaching, and service are different dimensions of faculty work that often compete for faculty members' time and commitment and are in conflict with one another (Linsky & Straus, 1975; Fox, 1992; Hattie & Marsh, 1996; and Fairweather, 2005).

According to D. Olsen, S.A. Maple & F.K. Stage (1995), academics expressed greater satisfaction with teaching are less likely to receive support and recognition from their peer in their department. M.C. Liu (2001) found that academic members spend a greater percentage of time on teaching express greater dissatisfaction with their work; and faculty in

Table 5:
Regression Analysis Results between Job Satisfaction and Independent Variables at the Each University

Independent Variables	University of Technology	University of Science
	Beta (β)	
<i>Work Time (Per Week):</i>		
Teaching	-.269*	
Research		
Community Service	.346**	
Private	.234*	-.471***
<i>Institutional Characteristics:</i>		
Development Aim	-.428***	-.287*
Leadership Style	.436***	
Campus Landscape		
Administration Efficiency	.586***	
R²	.587	.466

Note: The mean difference is significant at the * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

the natural and engineering were more likely to spend time conducting research than teaching. M.F. Fox (1992) and H.W. Marsh & J. Hattie (2002) indicated that increased time spent on research positively impacts job satisfaction of faculty, however, their study was inconsistent with this study.

In addition, the results of this study are supported some suggestions by J.D. Kelly (1989) and K. Sseganga & R.M. Garrett (2005) that most frequently perceived as responsible for low satisfaction is university policy/aim. Morale is highest when faculty members participate in governance and decision making (Rice & Austin, 1988). The studies of T.N. Kyamanywa (1996); E.J. Venter (1998); and T. Ali & I. Akhter (2009) showed that leadership style significantly affected job satisfaction of academic members in higher education institution.

A research conducted by S.H. Packard & D.R. Kauppi (1999) found that employees with supervisors having democratic management styles experienced higher level of satisfaction than with autocratic leadership style. Furthermore, the important role management can play in the job satisfaction of academics. According to L.L. Van Tonder (1993), a manager could modify his/her management style to ensure that staff enjoyed maximum satisfaction and thrived emotionally and professionally. Specifically, job satisfaction of academics may affect their perceptions of the

effectiveness of the school as an organization (Schulz & Teddlie, 1989; Hemmasi, 1992; Maghrabi, 1999; and Judge & Church, 2000).

CONCLUSION ¹

It is clear that the findings of this study have practical implication for university management and policy makers in Vietnamese higher education. This aim of this study was to determine the specific factors that affected the job satisfaction of academic members from two public universities of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. Through the findings described in this study, academic members in the University of Technology were more satisfied than faculty members in the University of Science.

The present analysis found that no significant differences existed job satisfaction of academic members among the two universities; but, there were significant difference between male and female faculty. In addition, male faculty members were generally more satisfied than female colleagues. This study also recognized that job satisfaction of academic members both universities were significantly affected by their work time and institutional characteristics.

The findings of this study show that academic members both universities were

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moderate satisfied in their job. Thus, policy makers and management of university need to re-examine their reward structures, value systems, and expectations placed on faculty work in order to keep highly productive faculty more satisfied with their jobs. In addition, each university management and policy makers should take more position factors than other factors in the process of policy development for institution.

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.

The data of this study obtained through questionnaires were all self-reports from the participants; hence, the findings may be subject to response consistency effect. On the other hand, this study would not be generalized to all academic members across Vietnamese higher education. The findings of this study are restricted to the two public universities of Ho Chi Minh City which the samples were drawn.

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