JOB SATISFACTION: WHAT REALLY MATTERS TO VIETNAM FEMALE LECTURES?

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Abstract: ***This study aims to identify factors affecting the job satisfaction of female university lecturers. Based on the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) model, the study examines the role of career achievement factors such as education level, job position, experience, and income, along with factors of work-family conflict and support from colleagues. The results of the analysis of 457 survey questionnaires at 22 public universities in the field of economics and business showed that there was no significant difference in job satisfaction among groups of lecturers with different education levels, experience, and income. However, job position had a statistically significant effect on satisfaction. In particular, work-family conflict had a significant negative impact, while support from colleagues played a positive role in enhancing job satisfaction. This finding has important implications for higher education management, suggesting that universities should focus on building a supportive work environment and developing policies to help women faculty members balance work and family.***

• Keywords: *education, income, job position, job satisfaction, lecturer, university, work-family conflict.*

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1. Introduction

Lecturers are an important resource in higher education institutions because they play an important role in achieving the goals and successes of universities (Sharma and Jvoti, 2009). Job satisfaction of lecturers is one of the factors contributing to improving the quality and learning outcomes of students (Waqas et al., 2012). Besides that, job satisfaction is said to be one of the key concepts that show employees' responses to their work, which is also a sign of their commitment to the organization (De Cuyper et al., 2009). Higher education always requires the dedication and commitment of the lecturers' organization, so managers need to understand why lecturers remain consistent in their careers or leave the organization (Marston and Brunetti, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to research and identify factors that increase job satisfaction. Job satisfaction of female academics is influenced by various factors, including career development, work-life balance, and organizational support. Understanding these determinants is important to improve their overall satisfaction with their work.

Among the major determinants of job satisfaction, work-family balance plays an important role. Handayani et al., (2023) found that work-family balance and work engagement significantly influenced job satisfaction, explaining 67.8% of the variation in satisfaction levels of female academics. In addition, job characteristics such as job role, recognition, and development opportunities were also important factors. According to Bui (2019), job characteristics had the strongest impact on satisfaction, while salary and benefits had insignificant effects. Regarding the environment and organizational support, Trung et al. (2024) found that a positive work environment, including relationships with colleagues and recognition, plays an important role in job satisfaction. To contribute, this study applies the JDI Model, which assesses employee job satisfaction based on simultaneously 5 key factors: The nature of the job, Training and advancement opportunities, Leadership, Colleagues, and Income. Specifically, we describe the nature of the job in the JDI model primarily in terms of actual job content and the level of job challenge and variety, but measured through the lens of work-family conflict.

2. Literature review

2.1. Job satisfaction

The theoretical schools of job satisfaction have developed over many periods with different perspectives. Besides the needs school and value school, the job characteristics school approaches the issue from the perspective of job design, pointing out that job characteristics such as the level of autonomy, task variety, and skill development opportunities are key factors affecting employee satisfaction.

The job characteristics school in the study of job satisfaction has notable strengths and limitations. In terms of advantages, this school demonstrates high practicality and applicability by providing specific criteria for job evaluation and design, easy to apply in management practice with clear measurement

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tools (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). At the same time, this school is comprehensive when considering multidimensional aspects of work, evaluating both objective factors, such as job characteristics, and subjective factors, such as psychological experiences, thereby connecting the relationship between job design and job outcomes. In addition, this school is verified through many empirical studies, showing high reliability in different contexts, and is widely recognized in the academic community (Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006).

Accordingly, measuring the job satisfaction effect can be used as a job description index scale (JDI); The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS); A job satisfaction scale based on facial expressions; and the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). Among these, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) model has many significant advantages in assessing job satisfaction. First of all, the model has a solid theoretical foundation when it was developed by Smith et al. (1987) and is based on the theory of Smith et al. (1969), and its reliability has been verified in practice (Spector, 1997) and is widely used in the research community. The JDI allows for a comprehensive assessment of aspects of job satisfaction through five core factors, including the nature of the job, training and promotion opportunities, leadership, colleagues, and income.

Another outstanding advantage of the JDI model is the ability to measure both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Regarding intrinsic factors, studies by Malik et al. (2010) and Na et al. (2011) show that the model is effective in assessing aspects such as the job itself, recognition, and promotion opportunities. Regarding extrinsic factors, a study by Krieg et al. (2013) has demonstrated the model's ability to assess factors such as salary, supervision, and administrative policies.

In particular, in the context of assessing faculty job satisfaction, the JDI has shown high effectiveness in not only reflecting factors related to job performance but also measuring important aspects such as education level, experience, and job position (Qayyum, 2013). The model's flexibility allows for adaptation to different industries and contexts, and allows for further study of field-specific factors. From a management perspective, the JDI model provides detailed information on areas that need improvement, thereby helping managers prioritize how to effectively improve employee satisfaction.

The factors used in job satisfaction in this article include:

1) Professional improvement (income, position of work, education and training, experience)

2) Factors belong to work and the work environment.

Applying the scale of Hackman and Oldham (1975); Cammann et al. (1979), Job satisfaction (JS) in this paper is measured through 5 criteria.

2.2. Professional improvement factors

Studies on job satisfaction of university faculty using the JDI model have shown mixed results among influencing factors. Professional qualifications have mixed effects: some studies suggest that faculty with a doctorate are more satisfied due to higher status and income (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009), while others note that they are less satisfied due to pressure and high expectations (McGuinness & Wood, 2009; Green & Zhu, 2010). Job position has a significant effect on satisfaction due to different challenges and opportunities at each level (Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2014). Work experience often improves time management and reduces stress, thereby increasing satisfaction (Lu et al., 2017), although some studies do not find a significant relationship. Finally, although income is an important factor (Hagedorn, 2000), this relationship is still strongly influenced by intrinsic motivation and career development opportunities (Machado-Taylor et al., 2016). Therefore, faculty job satisfaction is the result of a complex interaction between many individual and organizational factors.

2.3. Work and work environment factors

Work-family conflict

Measuring the nature of work in the JDI model through work-family conflict is theoretically sound and offers many practical advantages. This variable directly reflects the pressure, flexibility, and intrusion of work into personal life - prominent features of the university teaching profession (Kinman & Jones, 2008). This approach allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of work on mental health, emotional exhaustion, and overall satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000). Recent studies continue to confirm that work-family conflict has a strong negative impact on lecturers' job satisfaction and turnover intention (Wang et al., 2020), especially in the context of post-Covid-19 remote working, which has blurred the boundaries between the two domains (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Conversely, support from the organization and colleagues can significantly mitigate this impact and enhance satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2019). Therefore, including work-family conflict in the study not only increases the explanatory power of the JDI model but also brings high application value to policies supporting work-life balance for Vietnamese university lecturers.

The role of colleagues in job satisfaction

Relationships with colleagues are one of the five core factors of the JDI model and play an important role in determining job satisfaction, especially in the academic environment. Lacy and Sheehan's (1997)

study showed that relationships with colleagues are one of the strongest predictors of job satisfaction among university lecturers. Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) through meta-analysis confirmed the positive impact of support from colleagues on job performance and organizational commitment.

For female lecturers, support from colleagues becomes even more important in the context of work-family balance. According to Grzywacz and Marks (2000), support networks from colleagues can help reduce work-family conflict and increase job satisfaction. In particular, a culture of mutual support in the workplace can help female lecturers cope better with work pressure and family responsibilities (Thompson et al., 1999).

Based on the theoretical overview and previous studies on job satisfaction of lecturers, this study focuses on two main questions:

1. What factors affect (positively or negatively) the job satisfaction of female university lecturers?

2. How do career achievement variables affect job satisfaction?

From there, the study proposes the following six hypotheses:

H1: Female lecturers with a doctorate degree have higher job satisfaction than those with lower education.

H2: Female lecturers with 15 years of experience or more have higher job satisfaction than those with less experience.

H3: Female lecturers with an income of 15 million VND or more per month have higher job satisfaction than those with lower incomes.

H4: Female lecturers with the position of senior lecturer or concurrently holding a managerial position have a higher level of job satisfaction than other position groups.

H5: Work-family conflict has a negative impact on female lecturers' job satisfaction through increased pressure.

H6: Support from colleagues has a positive impact on female lecturers' job satisfaction.

This research framework allows for a systematic examination of both professional achievement factors and work environment factors affecting female university lecturers' job satisfaction. The hypotheses are built on the theoretical basis of the JDI model, while taking into account the characteristics of the teaching profession and the research context in Vietnam.

3. Research methods

3.1. Measurement

In this study, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) model was adapted to the research context. Overall job satisfaction was measured using the scale of Cammann et al. (1979), which assesses the individual's overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with work. Based on the core elements of the JDI model, the study developed observation variables for each specific aspect.

The nature of work was measured through work-family conflict (WFC) using the multidimensional scale of Carlson et al. (2000). Specifically, conflict was assessed in two directions: work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW). Each direction was considered through three types of conflict: time, stress and behavior. This 6-dimensional model includes 24 observed variables, with each dimension having 4 variables, measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The training and promotion factor is assessed through the achievements that lecturers have in terms of educational level, job position, work experience and income level. For the colleague factor, the study focuses on assessing the level of support and relationships with colleagues at work. Adjusting the JDI model and designing these observed variables aims to ensure comprehensiveness in assessing the job satisfaction of female lecturers, while being consistent with the characteristics of the profession and the research context.

3.2. Research sample

The quantitative survey was conducted in two forms: in person and online. The selection of the research subjects was based on the theoretical foundations of work-family conflict. The author focuses on a group of female lecturers who are married, have at least one child, and are teaching at autonomous public universities, representing many different fields in Vietnam.

Regarding sample size, the questionnaire was sent to 518 female lecturers via email and live broadcast. The results obtained 457 valid responses (76%) from 22 public universities. The sample selection was carried out using a purposive sampling method combined with stratified random sampling, ensuring representativeness for different age groups, fields of expertise, and work positions.

4. Research results

The exploratory factor analysis and the measurement scale reliability analysis

Job satisfaction

The results of the job satisfaction scale test presented in Table 1 show some important findings. First, in terms of the unidimensionality of the scale, the eigenvalue of the first factor (3.27) is significantly larger than that of the next factor (0.56). At the same time, the first factor explains 65.47% of the total variance (greater than

the required 50%), which confirms that the observed variables in the scale are unidimensional.

Second, in terms of the reliability of the scale, the factor loading coefficients of all observed variables are greater than 0.6, ranging from 0.813 to 0.856, far exceeding the usual acceptance threshold of 0.5. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale reached 0.867, much higher than the 0.7 level - the accepted threshold in social science research. The total item correlation coefficient of the observed variables ranged from 0.623 to 0.792, all greater than 0.3, indicating that the observed variables had high internal consistency. Third, regarding the suitability of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the KMO index reached 0.816 (greater than 0.5) and the Bartlett test was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Combined with the above indicators, it can be concluded that the job satisfaction scale fully meets the requirements of reliability and validity, suitable for use in subsequent analyses.

Table 1: Measure scale of job satisfaction

Variable	Loading factor	Correlation factor of total variables	Cronbach's Alpha
	Job Satisfaction (JS)		
JS1	0.856	0.623	0.867
JS2	0.813	0.792	
JS3	0.832	0.721	
JS4	0.842	0.682	
JS5	0.853	0.636	
Eigenvalue for 1st factor: 3.273			
Variance extracted (%): 65.470			
KMO = 0.816 > 0.5 and Bartlet's Test of statistical significance (p<0.001) *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.861*			

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Work-Family Conflict

The results of the Total Variance Explained analysis show important findings about the factor structure of the work-family conflict scale. The eigenvalues of the first six factors (greater than 0.99) are all larger than the next factor (0.27), meeting the Kaiser criterion for factor extraction. At the same time, these six factors explain 61.4% of the total variance (exceeding the required 50%), confirming the unidimensionality of the components in the scale.

Regarding the indicators assessing the suitability of factor analysis, the results show that the factor loading coefficients of all observed variables are greater than 0.6, meeting the convergence requirement. The KMO index reached 0.858, far exceeding the threshold of 0.5, combined with the statistically significant Bartlett test ($p < 0.005$), showing that the data is completely suitable for factor analysis.

The analysis results show that the observed variables form 6 main factors as presented in Table 2. Of which, there are two notable adjustments: the 3rd component (WIF_B - behavior conflict from work to family) is cut to WIF_B4 and the 4th component (FIW_T - time conflict from family to work) is cut to FIW_T4. This adjustment is based on statistical indicators and ensures the unidimensionality and reliability of the scale.

Table 2: Results of findings analysis

Variable	Loading factor					
	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5	factor 6
WIF_T1	.778					
WIF_T2	.772					
WIF_T3	.778					
WIF_T4	.781					
WIF_S1		.725				
WIF_S2		.775				
WIF_S3		.767				
WIF_S4		.819				
WIF_B1			.882			
WIF_B2			.842			
WIF_B3			.856			
FIW_T1				.861		
FIW_T2				.892		
FIW_T3				.877		
FIW _S1					.787	
FIW_S2					.770	
WIF_S3					.778	
WIF_S4					.854	
FIW _B1						.795
FIW_B2						.846
FIW _B3						.784
FIW _B4						.883

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The results of testing the reliability of work - family conflict variables show that the Cronbach's Alpha factor is greater than 0.8, the higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. The Corrected item-total

Correlation of component variables is greater than 0.6. The smallest is the WIF_S3 variable of the Work-Family Conflict factor in the level equal to 0.638 (Table 3). This shows that the research concepts built from the observed variables all have intrinsic consistency and are well-measured.

Table 3: The results of testing the reliability of factors scale that reflect the work-family conflict

Variable	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. Time-based work-to-family conflict (WIF_T). N=4. α=0.868		
WIF_T1	.721	.831
WIF_T2	.732	.827
WIF_T3	.719	.832
WIF_T4	.705	.837
2. Strain-based work-to-family conflict (WIF_S). N=4. α=0.859		
WIF_S1	.712	.818
WIF_S2	.721	.814
WIF_S3	.638	.848
WIF_S4	.749	.802
3. Behavior-based work-to-family conflict (WIF_B). N=3. α=0.902		
WIF_B1	.813	.855
WIF_B2	.797	.868
WIF_B3	.814	.857
4. Time-based family-to-work conflict (WIF_T). N=3. α=0.902		
FIW_T1	.756	.858
FIW_T2	.807	.816
FIW_T3	.774	.835
5. Strain-based family-to-work conflict (WIF_B). N=4. α=0.897		
FIW_B1	.748	.876
FIW_B2	.787	.861
FIW_B3	.732	.885
FIW_B4	.827	.848
6. Behavior-based family-to-work conflict (WIF_B). N=4. α=0.833		
FIW_S1	.641	.798
FIW_S2	.644	.796
FIW_S3	.631	.802
FIW_S4	.732	.756

Normality distribution test

The results of the normality distribution test mentioned in Table 3 show the level of satisfaction according to the non-normal distribution (P-value for each feature of the control variable is <0.05) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Kolmogorov - Smirnov test for normality distribution

Control variable	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Degree			
Bachelor	.368	33	.000
Master	.253	320	.000
Doctor	.261	104	.000
Work position			
Manager	.286	10	.020
Both lecturer and manager	.290	68	.000
Permanent lecturer	.250	340	.000
Temporary lecturer	.312	39	.000
Experience			
Less than 5 years	.290	56	.000
5-10 years	.222	160	.000
10-15 years	.269	125	.000
More than 15 years	.322	116	.000
Income			
Less than 5 million Vietnamese Dong (VND)	.460	12	.000
5-10 million VND	.237	241	.000
10-15 million VND	.281	131	.000
More than 15 million VND	.292	73	.000

Conducting the Mann-Whitneym, Kruskal-Wallis tests to evaluate the difference in job satisfaction levels according to the characteristics reflecting job achievement.

Table 5: Summary of tests (Mann-Whitney, Kruskal -Wallis) differences in average satisfaction of job achievement

Control variable	Mann-Whitney/Chi-square Kruskal -Wallis	Sig.
Degree		
Bachelor	12.485	.002
Master		
Doctor		
Work position		
Manager	9.440	.024
Both lecturer and manager		
Permanent lecturer		
Temporary lecturer		
Experience		
Less than 5 years	7.949	.047
5-10 years		
10-15 years		
More than 15 years		
Income		
Less than 5 million VND	15.517	.001
5-10 million VND		
10-15 million VND		
More than 15 million VND		

The p-value <0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a difference in satisfaction level among female lecturers and the characteristics in each group reflect the work achievement.

Analysis of regression models and testing of research hypotheses

The analysis results show that the regression model has high suitability and statistical significance. The adjusted R square coefficient reflects the level of influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. Specifically in this study, the independent variables explain nearly 80% of the change in the dependent variable (job satisfaction), the remaining 20% is due to variables outside the model and random errors.

Table 6: Estimated results of the regression function

Variable	Satisfaction		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Doctorate	.067	.027	-.037
Experience over 15 years	-.141(*)	-.099	-.030
Income over VND 15 million a month ≈ USD 650 a month	.114	.132 (*)	.036
The position as permanent lecturer or both lecturer and manager	.136	.219 (***)	.205 (***)
Family-to-work Conflict		-.394 (***)	-.121 (***)
Work-to-family Conflict		-.508 (***)	-.812 (***)
The support of colleagues			.498 (***)
R Square	**0.013**	**0.368**	**0.795**
Adjusted R Square	**0.005**	**0.356**	**0.793**

** p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.*

To test the suitability of the model, the study uses the Durbin-Watson test and the F test in ANOVA. The Durbin-Watson test result is 1.880, showing that there is no first-order autocorrelation in the model (model 3). The F test is used to examine the generalizability of the regression model. The results show that the sig

value of the F test is 0.000 < 0.5 for both Model 2 and Model 3, confirming that the linear regression model is statistically significant and suitable for the population.

The research results show some important findings on factors affecting the job satisfaction of female university lecturers. Regarding factors reflecting professional achievements, the study found no evidence of a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction between the group of lecturers with a doctorate degree and the group with a master's or university degree. This finding is consistent with the study by Eyupoglu and Saner (2009) that educational level does not increase job satisfaction. Similarly, work experience and income (over 15 million VND/month) also did not make a significant difference in the level of satisfaction, reaffirming the results of previous studies (Schroder, 2008; Castillo and Cano, 2004).

Meanwhile, job position showed a statistically significant effect on the satisfaction of lecturer groups in different positions (H4). In particular, the study confirmed the important role of work-family conflict, especially work-family conflict (H5), reflecting the stressful nature of university. To minimize these pressures, support from colleagues plays a key role (H6) in enhancing the job satisfaction of female lecturers.

These findings have important implications for policy making in managing and developing the teaching staff. Instead of focusing on factors such as education level, experience or income, universities should focus on building a supportive working environment and policies to help balance work and family for female lecturers.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the role of factors reflecting professional performance, working environment, and job satisfaction of female university lecturers. The results of the study show that the influence of job performance factors on the career satisfaction of female lecturers is not uniform. It is worth noting that while the job position factor has a significant impact (positive regression coefficient .205 with $p<0.01$), factors such as education level (coefficient -.037, not statistically significant), work experience (coefficient -.030, not statistically significant) and income level (coefficient .036, not statistically significant) do not show a clear influence on their job satisfaction. This finding has important implications for the practice of managing the higher education environment. According to the research results from the regression model, work pressure and role conflict are the main challenges that negatively affect the career satisfaction of lecturers in general and female lecturers in particular, as shown by the coefficients of work interference with family (-.812, $p<0.01$) and family interference with work (-.121, $p<0.01$). In particular, for female lecturers, colleague support plays a key role in helping them balance work and family, thereby reducing pressure and improving job satisfaction (regression coefficient .498, $p<0.01$). The research model achieved high reliability with an adjusted R^2 of 0.793, showing that the independent variables explained 79.3% of the variation in job satisfaction. Based on the research results, several policy recommendations are made to improve the effectiveness of the management and development of female lecturers:

- Build a supportive and flexible working environment, creating conditions for female lecturers to balance work-family responsibilities.

- Develop mentoring and networking programs to enhance connections and support among female lecturers.

- Establish fair evaluation and promotion policies that focus on actual capacity and achievements.

- Invest in professional development and leadership programs specifically for female lecturers.

Understanding the factors that influence female lecturers' job satisfaction is meaningful to them and helps managers have a multi-dimensional view in policy making. This will contribute to creating an equal, professional, and effective working environment in higher education while promoting the sustainable development of female lecturers in the future.

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