FACTORS INFLUENCING ON JOB SATISFACTION OF PROFESSORS IN UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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Abstract:
The study focused on testing the sample data to find out the relationship between three factors (leadership style; employee benefits; and working environment) and their effects on professors' job satisfaction; and testing the model of factors' impact to job satisfaction. The items (or observed variables) in the questionnaire were tested by KMO, Cronbach alpha, and EFA. After eliminating some items which were not satisfactory, the results showed that the remaining items of all factors were valid. The test results from these factors by CFA, SEM showed that, there was the existence of correlation among the three basic factors and one moderating factor (university's policy) that lead to the professors' satisfaction in universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The tests of hypothesis showed that all the null hypotheses (H₀) from H₀1 to H₀6 are rejected. This means that there were significant correlations between three factors: leadership style, professor's benefits, and working environment and the professor's job satisfaction through the university’s policy. In these relations, the most powerful factor which affects professor’s job satisfaction was working environment, followed by professor’s benefits and then leadership style. From the above results, the summary on the theoretical model of the factors affecting professors’ job satisfaction was consistent with the actual data collected from the respondents' answers to the questions.

Keywords: Satisfaction, job satisfaction, professors, universities, Ho Chi Minh City

Introduction

Education is very important in the competitive environment. Education, as a service industry, is placing greater emphasis on meeting the expectations and the needs of their participating customers which are the students (Oscar et al., 2006). Even in student-centered educational systems, professors still remain important in the learning process, thus their satisfaction should be ensured if efficient education and healthy classroom environments are the goals. Teaching is a highly noble profession and professors are always a boon to the society. The ultimate process of education could be simplified as a meaningful interaction between the professor and the student. The professor thus plays a direct and crucial role in molding a student towards education. Obtaining and retaining quality professor is a continuing concern that is facing educational leaders at all levels. There is a growing debate about whether the concern lies with a shortage of professors entering the field or with retaining professors once they begin their careers (Hull, 2004). Hull also argued that professors play a major role in the whims and caprices of the educational system. They can influence the teaching -learning outcomes either positively or negatively because they determine the quality of instructional delivery and also influence quality education when it comes to implementation of the curriculum and educational policy. They are to be considered when addressing issues such as: quality assurance; quality delivery (teaching), quality context and quality learning outcomes.

The low quality of faculties lead to many consequences such as: quality of student output is low; graduates have difficulty finding jobs’, so the university cannot attract more students which resulted in reduced training scale; funds of universities are also reduced which influence directly on salary policies, benefits as well as on faculty investments, etc. Thus, many faculty members in the University of Vietnam are not satisfied with salary conditions and working environment. The status of faculty leaving their work appears increasingly popular. It's a vicious circle that doesn’t have an escape at many universities in Vietnam today. Therefore, this research on factors affecting the satisfaction of faculty members in universities in Vietnam takes on a great theoretical and practical meaning. The research results will help managers of the universities recognize more clearly the problems, identify factors that create faculty’s satisfaction and offer appropriate solutions for problems (Trung, 2013).
Literature review

Job satisfaction. According to Business Dictionary.com, job satisfaction is contentment (or lack of it) arising out of interplay of employee’s positive and negative feelings toward his or her work. Job satisfaction, a worker’s sense of achievement and success, is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well being. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well, and being suitably rewarded for one’s efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one’s work. Locke and Lathan (1990) defined job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience. Job satisfaction means the emotions, behaviors and the preferences about work (Chen, 2008). According to Hanh (2009), job satisfaction is defined as the good feeling of an individual about their professions.

Professor satisfaction. According to Chen (2006), quality in teaching and learning can only be enhanced if the faculty members are satisfied and contented and the health of an educational institution depends on the job satisfaction of its employees. 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. These goals cannot 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. 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 (Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Research has shown that the level of the professors’ job satisfaction is related positively to student achievement. Professor Job satisfaction improves job performance and positively affects student outcomes. Accordingly, a professor job satisfaction may influence the quality and stability of instruction given to students. Therefore, both low professor turnover and professor job satisfaction positively influence student achievement. Job satisfaction of secondary career and technical educators was found to influence professors’ decisions to leave the profession. Professor Job satisfaction can predict professor retention and also determine professor commitment, factors that affect school effectiveness (Shann, 1998).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is developed by integrating variables from different theories and related researches on professors’ job satisfaction from literature review. Independent variables are classified into job characteristics (leadership style; professor benefits; and working environment). On the other hand, dependent variable consists of job satisfaction which was used in major theories of Herzberg, Maslow, Alderfer, Locke and others. Mediate variable is university policy that lies intermediate between independent causal factor and a final outcome (dependent variable); and it is seen as intervening factors that can change the impact of independent variables on dependent variable. Mediate variable “university policy” was used in major theories of Locke; Rice & Schneider; Jonathan Cohen and other.

Leadership style and professor job satisfaction. Solansky (2008) posited that the leadership process affects the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of team members. The relation between professors and the leadership style may also have an impact on professors' job satisfaction. Researchers have maintained that the influence of leadership style on professors’ job satisfaction are as follows: Administrative support and leadership; professors were part of the school decision making and had control over their classrooms; supportive styles (Ingersoll, 2000); leadership variables play in the leadership process: (1) organizational effectiveness; (2) situations that shape how leaders behave; and (3) situations that influence the consequences of leader behavior (Vroom & Jago, 2007); stimulates and unifies the activities; the principal is expected to be an instructional leader who can support, inspire, and develop students and professors, as well as communicate effectively with all publics within the educational environment (Smith, 2000); decision making and offering sufficient administrator support professors (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007); (1) building school vision; (2) developing specific goals and priorities; and (3) holding high performance expectations (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Professor Benefits and professors’ job satisfaction. Some studies were examined that included salary or benefits as a factor to a professors’ satisfaction or level of commitment. Professor compensation are including salaries, benefits, and other opportunities within the university for income (such as coaching or mentoring), and outside employment (Perie & Baker, 1997). Some researchers have reported the influence of compensation and recognition on professors’ job satisfaction, including: compensation and reward (Luddy, 2005); Reward and recognition (Yang & Ngamkroekjotit, 2013); Salary and other benefits; Compensation includes the wages and benefits paid to professors for the performance of their duties (Gritz & Theobald, 1996); economic factor and motivation (George, 2008); and recognition of particular professional status.
Working environment and professors’ job satisfaction. The third factor that impacts professors' job satisfaction is working environment. According to Khan (2003) favorable working conditions would boost professor job satisfaction. Working environment creates intrinsic and extrinsic factors and both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect professor’s satisfaction. Some studies on working environment include climate and culture of the university (Zhou & Volkwein, 2004); students’ quality, and the prolonged working hours (Faruqui & Shoma, 2005); quality in teaching and learning (Chen, 2006); co-workers; atmosphere in the school: student discipline, collaboration among professors, school value, safety (Karen & Giacometti, 2005); availability of resources, communication with principal, cooperation among the staff, staff recognition, control in classroom; and high-achieving learning environments for all students (Tillman & Tillman, 2008).

The research concept and model can be described by the illustration below:

**Figure 1 - Theoretical Framework showing the research concept/model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Mediate Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP STYLE</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY POLICY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSOR BENEFITS</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>PROFESSOR JOB SATISFACTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKING ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>H3, H4, H5, H6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant impact of leadership styles to professors’ job satisfaction in universities through university policy;

H2: There is no significant impact of professor benefits to professors’ job satisfaction in universities through university policy;

H3: There is no significant impact of working environment to professors' job satisfaction in universities through university policy;

H4: There is no significant correlation between leadership style and professor benefits in universities through university policy;

H5: There is no significant correlation between leadership style and working environment in universities through university policy;

H6: There is no significant correlation between professor benefits and working environment in universities through university policy.

**Research Method**

This study used a mixed methods design that integrates qualitative and quantitative data through a transformative process. Qualitative method was used to define the factors (leadership style; professor benefits; and working environment) that impact on professors’ job satisfaction in the universities through university policy; relationship between these factors; setting of research objectives and questions; setting a model of these factors and the research hypotheses; analysis of actual situation; conclusion of research study, and so forth. Quantitative method was used in answering research questions; validating of samples; examining the correlation between factors; testing model and hypotheses, setting up a research strategy, making conclusions from results, and so forth. This study mainly used quantitative design, for which data was collected through simple descriptive survey questionnaires.
Research result

**Testing of items on Leadership Style factor:**

Among the 6 items on leadership factor (ls1; ls2; ls3; ls5; ls6; ls7), the most powerful item which affects leadership was Ls6 (*Leadership style has demonstrated academic atmosphere of the school, level relations between staff and students*) with the SRW of .86. The second item was Ls7 (*Leaders allow the autonomy of faculty members in teaching and they are aware of the process control of classroom instruction*) with a value of .83 and the one with the least weight was Ls1 (*Leader articulate a vision of the future attractively, share his/her vision towards a clearer vision to guide the direction of the University*) with a weight of .58. The results show that all items of the leadership factor were satisfactory.

The correlation coefficients were from the value >.50 to < 1.0, so all the items achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity (Gerbring & Anderson, 1988). The value of Critical ratio (CR) was greater than 1.96, and values of P were less than .05. (P with three asterisk (***) that means p-value <.001, very significant). Based on the result, these above items on leadership style factor had correlation and statistical significance (see table 18).

**Table 4 - Testing of items on leadership factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1-Default model)</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ls1 Leadership Style</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>48.33***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ls2 Leadership Style</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>20.00***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ls3 Leadership Style</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>29.26***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ls5 Leadership Style</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>146.00***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ls6 Leadership Style</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>30.71***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ls7 Leadership Style</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>36.09***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: surveyed data from universities in Ho Chi Minh City)

**Testing of items on Professor Benefits (Salary, Welfare, and Recognition) factor:**

The CFA test indicated that the scale of these items were all satisfactory. The most powerful item which affects the Professor Benefits factor was Sr6 (*Leaders create conditions favorable to increase income of professor inside and outside the university*) with the SRW of .93. The second most powerful item was Sr4 and recognize the professor’s achievement or better performance through welfare and salary) with the SRW of .91. The third powerful item was Sr5 (*Leaders always recognize the professor’s dedication and pay attention to his (or her) individual needs*) with a weight of .88. The item with the least weight was Sr3 (*In my university, I believe that my effort will lead to acceptable performance (expectancy); my performance will be rewarded (instrumentality); and the value of the rewards was highly positive (welfare and salary)*) with a weight of .59. The correlation coefficients were from the value >.50 to < 1.0, so all the items achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity. The Critical ratio (CR) was greater than 1.96, and values of P were less than .05. As a result, these above items on Professor Benefits factor had correlation and statistical significance (see table 19).

**Table 5 - Testing of items on Professor Benefits factor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1-Default model)</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sr3 Salary, Welfare, Recognition</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>24.58 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr4 Salary, Welfare, Recognition</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>27.58 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr5 Salary, Welfare, Recognition</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>32.59 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr6 Salary, Welfare, Recognition</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>25.83 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: surveyed data from the universities in Ho Chi Minh City)
Testing of items on working environmental factor:
Among the seven (7) items of working environment factor, the most powerful item was We3 (Working conditions are quite good such as classroom size, and learning materials availability) with the SRW of .92. The second item was We5 (Leader allows the professors autonomy in applying the training methods to accomplish tasks) with a weight of .91. The third item was We1 (Good working place and space) with a weight of .81; and We4 (Working conditions are quite good such as classroom size, and learning materials availability) had the least weight of .57.

The results showed that all items of working environment factor were satisfactory. The correlation coefficients were from the value >.50 to < 1.0, so all the items achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity (Gerbring & Anderson, 1988). The Critical ratio (CR) was greater than 1.96, and value of P were less than .05. As a result, eight items of the working environment factor had correlation and statistical significance (see table 20).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6 - Testing of items in working environment factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1-Default model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: P (***)<.001 very significant (Source, surveyed data from the Universities in Ho Chi Minh City)*

The testing of items on university policy:
Table 21 shows that the scale of the four items under university policy Factor was all satisfactory. The item that affects most was Up4 (Focusing on advanced training and qualifications for professors) with a weight of .89; the next was Up3 (Encourage the professors to work harder) with a weight of .79. The item with the least affect was Up1 (Appoint and recruit talent policy), with a values of .65.

The correlation coefficients were from the value >.50 to < 1.0, so all the items achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity. The value of Critical ratio (CR) was greater than 1.96, and values of P were less than .05. As a result, four items of university policy factor showed correlation and statistical significance (see table 21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7 - Testing of university policy's items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1-Default model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: P (***)<.001 very significant (Source, surveyed data from the universities in Ho Chi Minh City)*

The testing of items on Job Satisfaction:
The result of CFA test showed that all three items under job satisfaction were. The most powerful item which affects job satisfaction was Js1 (I am satisfied with my job in the university) with a SRW of 74. The second
was Js2 (Overall, I am satisfied with the leadership style in which I work); and the item with the least weight was Js3 (I am satisfied with the salary, welfare and other benefits, worthy of my effort) with a weight of .57. The correlation coefficients were from the value >.50 to < 1.0, so all the items achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity. The value of critical ratio (CR) was greater than 1.96, and value of P was less than .05. As a result, these above items on job satisfaction factor had correlation and statistical significance (see table 22).

Table 8 - Testing of items on professors' job satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1-Default model)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Js1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Js2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Js3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P (***) < .001 very significant
(Source, surveyed data from the universities in Ho Chi Minh City)

Testing which factor affects professors' job satisfaction:
There were three factors: leadership style; professor benefits and working environment. The most powerful factor which affects professors' job satisfaction was working environment with a weight of .76 (C.R >1.96; p<.05); the second factor was professor benefits with a weight of .61; and the third was leadership style with a weight of .53 (see table 23). The results showed that, to increase professors' job satisfaction, the universities in Ho Chi Minh City need to focus on the factors by the order of priority as: first, working environment; second, professor benefits; and the last is: leadership style. The test results from these factors by CFA showed also that, there was the existence and the covariance among three basic factors affecting job satisfaction with the most powerful relationship between professor benefits and working environment (value was. 88; C.R >1.96 and p<.05); the second correlation was leadership style and working environment (weight was .71; C.R >1.96 and p<.05). The correlation and covariance coefficients were from the value >.50 to < 1.0, so all of the factors achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity (see table 23).

Table 9 – Assessing the factor's effect to professors' job satisfaction

Result of hypothesis testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardized Regression Weights and Covariances: (Group number 1-Default model)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary, Welfare, Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary, Welfare, Recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P (***) < .001 very significant
(Source, surveyed data from the universities in Ho Chi Minh City)

The tests of hypothesis showed that all the null hypotheses (H0) from H01 to H06 are removed; that means there were significant correlations between three factors: leadership style; professor benefits; and working environment, and between them had positive relations through co-variances. In these relations, the most powerful
factor which affects the professors’ job satisfaction was working environment; the second factor was professor benefits; and the third was leadership style.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn out from the above analysis are as follows:

Firstly, based on the test result by CFA through SEM model, hypothesis testing showed that, there was significant relationship/effect of leadership style and professors’ job satisfaction in universities through the university policies (SRW.53). According to Chen (2008) Leadership plays a vital role within an organization. Furthermore, leadership style is related to employee job performance, which in turn affects organizational outcomes (Halldorsson, 2007).

Secondly, the test result by CFA through SEM model and hypothesis testing showed that, there was a significant relationship/effect of university’s professor benefits and professors’ job satisfaction in universities through the university policies, with SRW of .61. Regarding professors’ satisfaction, there are five factors affecting it which are: Training and Development, Reward and Recognition, Teamwork, Stress and Interest (Yang & Ngamkroeckjoti, 2013).

Thirdly, according to the test result by CFA through SEM model and hypothesis testing, there was a significant relationship/effect of working environment and professors’ job satisfaction in universities through the university policies, with SRW of .76. This involves giving employees opportunities for their personal growth, achievement, responsibility, recognition and reward to get high-quality productivity from employees (Cecunc, 2004). In this study, the following results were noted: We3 (Working conditions are quite good such as classroom size and learning materials availability) got 3.04/5 values; We7 (workers are responsible and are supportive) got 3.08/5 value. So, working environment in universities should be improved urgently.

Fourthly, according to Kohun (2005) work environment is the sum of the interrelationship that exists within the employees and between the employees and the environment in which the employees work. In this study, the result of CFA through SEM model and hypothesis testing showed that, there was a correlation between leadership style and professor benefits in universities through the university policies with coefficient got .65. This correlation belonged to positive and medium level.

Fifthly, Manning and Curtis (2009) defined that environmental theory of leadership is the premise that leaders emerge because of the time, circumstance, and environment that surround them. The conditions have to be right for the leadership skill to emerge and to be observed in an organization. According to environmental theory, leadership is about the occasion and historical circumstances rather than about the individual. Based on the test result of CFA through SEM model and hypothesis testing, there was a correlation between leadership style and working environment in universities through the university policy with SRW of .71.

Sixthly, Brenner (2004) argued that work environment designed to suit employee’s satisfaction and free flow of exchange of ideas is a better medium of motivating employees towards higher productivity. Work environment when appropriately designed, motivates employees toward higher productivity. The test result by CFA through SEM model and hypothesis testing showed that, there was a correlation between professor benefits and working environment in universities through the university policies (SRW.88). This correlation was positive and high level based on Cohen (1988).

Seventhly, theoretical model of professors’ job satisfaction in the universities through three factors: Leadership styles; Professor Benefits; Working environment is proposed. Testing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) proved that the model is consistent throughout the data collected.

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