

# Developing Vietnamese University Lecturers Through Promoting Satisfaction

Tran Thi Bao Khanh<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Lecturers are the core human resources of universities - directly performing the task of training human resources for society. Therefore, developing lecturers is of great significance, determining the strategic development of universities. Universities often implement the main measure to develop lecturers, which is to train to improve the qualifications and capacity of lecturers. However, in reality, there are many other measures to develop lecturers and this study deals with measures to promote lecturer satisfaction so that lecturers can be creative, actively teach, research and contribute to the success of the university. The author conducts an overview of the study and establishes two main contents/factors to promote lecturer satisfaction, including the factor "Income" and the factor "Development opportunities"; conducts a survey of 500 lecturers, including 250 lecturers at public universities and 250 lecturers at non-public universities in Vietnam. The results of the research and survey show that public university lecturers are more concerned with the factor "Promotion opportunities", while non-public university lecturers are more concerned with the factor "Income". From the results of this research, the author discusses policy issues to promote lecturers' satisfaction with the two types of universities in Vietnam.*

**Keywords:** *University Lecturer, Satisfaction, Income, Promotion Opportunities, Vietnam.*

## Introduction

The Vietnamese higher education system is regulated by law to include universities, colleges, and research institutes that offer doctoral training, and is generally referred to as universities (VNA, 2012). There are currently 224 universities in operation in Vietnam, including public and non-public universities, with over 78,000 lecturers (MOET, 2024). Vietnamese universities are equal in organization and professional activities, aiming to train high-quality human resources for society and serve national development.

In fact, Vietnam is a developing country with a population of 100.3 million people (GSO, 2024), but the quality of Vietnamese labor is still low (Hoa, V.P., 2023), creating many conditions and opportunities for universities to implement human resource training strategies to serve the country's development. That also raises the requirement for developing lecturers so that universities can be proactive in training and improving training quality to meet the human resource needs of the labor market. While the traditional measure is to train and improve the quality of lecturers, psychological measures to promote lecturer satisfaction are also necessary to promote the initiative and creativity of lecturers. This is also the reason why the author chose to conduct this study.

### *Theoretical Overview*

Developing human resources of an organization in general, developing lecturers of a university in particular, is not only about quantity and training to improve professional qualifications, but also about promoting qualities, working capacity and creativity, and dedication of lecturers so that they are attached to and serve the development strategy of the university. Within the scope of this study, the author mentions psychological measures to promote lecturers' satisfaction so that lecturers can promote qualities, capacity, creativity and attachment to the university - this is the issue/content of developing lecturers from the internal organizational factors of the university.

In terms of theory, Spector (1997) asserted that a job that meets the needs of employees will create satisfaction and it is considered a type of emotion at work. Expanding this concept, the author further emphasized that when lecturers are satisfied with their work, such as the need to work and be paid

---

<sup>1</sup>Trade Union University, Hanoi city, Vietnam, Email: [khanhttb@dhcd.edu.vn](mailto:khanhttb@dhcd.edu.vn).

commensurate with their qualifications and learning efforts; the need to develop professional capacity, promotion opportunities, affirm their value... then lecturers will be satisfied and have no intention of leaving the organization. This is pointed out by Kaur (2019) with strategic significance, that the satisfaction of lecturers is created, playing a role in ensuring the promotion of quality implementation of universities, making lecturers attached to the university and working more effectively, creatively, and less likely to look for new jobs in a new environment.

Many theoretical and empirical studies on employee satisfaction in organizations have pointed out the main factors that affect employee satisfaction, such as income, promotion opportunities, working environment, colleague relationships, job characteristics, etc. According to Smith et al. (1969), employee satisfaction is expressed through 5 factors, including salary; promotion opportunities; colleague factors; job characteristics and supervision. Cross (1973) inherited the 5 factors of Smith et al. (1969) and added the work motivation factor. By Hackman et al. (1975), in addition to salary, promotion opportunities, etc. like Smith et al. (1969) and Cross (1973), there was also the addition of job security; social relationships when discussing employee satisfaction in organizations.

Over time, there have been many studies that continue to discuss the satisfaction of human resources in organizations and expand the subject to university lecturers. These studies emphasize the role and significance of measures to create satisfaction for lecturers and develop scales to study lecturer satisfaction in the context of many specific empirical studies. Accordingly, lecturer satisfaction plays an important role in the success of universities (Bentley et al., 2013); and lecturer satisfaction increases lecturer commitment, affecting the quality of university education (Webber et al., 2018); or as Gessesse et al. (2023) affirmed that promoting lecturer satisfaction helps universities ensure the quality of lecturers, the effectiveness of lecturers and will determine the quality of human resources of the country, because university training is technical and professional training at a high level, creating high-quality human resources for the country and society. Based on many different approaches and research contexts, the main content of the "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) scale is interpreted as follows: Lecturers love their work and feel respected for their profession (LS1); Lecturers feel happy and satisfied with their work and income commensurate with their learning process and efforts (LS2); Lecturers feel happy with their work and confident and happy when their achievements are recognized, expected to be promoted, and have career development opportunities (LS3).

In the studies of Smith et al. (1969), Cross (1973), Hackman et al. (1975) and Bentley et al. (2013), Webber et al. (2018), Gessesse et al. (2023) later, satisfaction measurement scales were also increasingly developed, adjusted to suit each empirical research context, but all mentioned 2 of the main components, including: Salary; promotion opportunities. The author inherits the research content on salary and promotion opportunities to build a theoretical framework for this study, which is explained in detail below.

Firstly, lecturers' income includes salary, bonus, other income earned from teaching and scientific research at university. Accordingly, lecturers' satisfaction with income is reflected in the content: Lecturers have a salary that is appropriate to the intellectual work requirements (teaching, scientific research) that they have worked hard to study and practice for a long time (IN1); Lecturers receive bonuses commensurate with their value - qualities, abilities, work results and achievements (IN2); Lecturers have the ability and opportunity to realize income from professional capacity (teaching, scientific research) in addition to income from official salary (IN3); Lecturers satisfy/achieve expectations about income from salary, bonus and other income from their professional activities - meeting the personal and social needs of lecturers (IN4).

Second, the promotion opportunities of lecturers include promotion opportunities; opportunities to study to improve professional qualifications and teaching capacity, scientific research capacity. Accordingly, lecturers' satisfaction with promotion opportunities is reflected in the content: Lecturers have equal opportunity to demonstrate professional capacity, academic freedom to assert themselves (PO1); Lecturers have fair competition to promote capacity and be promoted to corresponding management positions (PO2); Lecturers are given many opportunities to study to improve professional qualifications (PO3);

Lecturers are given many opportunities to practice, exchange academic knowledge to improve teaching capacity, scientific research capacity (PO4).

In terms of theory and practice, satisfaction with income is a material factor, satisfaction with promotion opportunities is a psychological factor (spiritual factor) that every lecturer needs. When lecturers are satisfied with their income, they will not be under economic pressure to focus on developing their professional capacity and career capacity to serve the development of the university. When lecturers are satisfied with promotion opportunities, they will have more motivation to promote their capacity and stick with the university. And the ideal way for lecturers to promote their professional capacity, career capacity, creativity in work and stick with and be loyal to the university is that they need to have both satisfaction with income and satisfaction with promotion opportunities. With that interpretation, the hypothesis for this study is: *Income (H1) and Promotion opportunities (H2) have a positive impact, creating University lecturers satisfaction.*

Through the research overview, the author built a theoretical research framework with a model consisting of 3 scales: "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) - 01 dependent variable; and "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO) - 02 independent variables. The above scales include 11 observed variables, designed by the author into 11 questions in the survey form and measured by a 5-level Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No opinion; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1, Figure 1).

**Table 1.** Theoretical Framework

No	Scales	Code	5-level Likert scale				
			1	2	3	4	5
<b>I</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>IN</b>					
1	Lecturers have a salary that is appropriate to the intellectual work requirements (teaching, scientific research) that they have worked hard to study and practice for a long time.	IN1					
2	Lecturers receive bonuses commensurate with their value - qualities, abilities, work results and achievements.	IN2					
3	Lecturers have the ability and opportunity to realize income from professional capacity (teaching, scientific research) in addition to income from official salary.	IN3					
4	Lecturers satisfy/achieve expectations about income from salary, bonus and other income from their professional activities - meeting the personal and social needs of lecturers.	IN4					
<b>II</b>	<b>Promotion opportunities</b>	<b>PO</b>					
5	Lecturers have equal opportunity to demonstrate professional capacity, academic freedom to assert themselves.	PO1					
6	Lecturers have fair competition to promote capacity and be promoted to corresponding management positions.	PO2					
7	Lecturers are given many opportunities to study to improve professional qualifications.	PO3					
8	Lecturers are given many opportunities to practice, exchange academic knowledge to improve teaching capacity, scientific research capacity.	PO4					
<b>III</b>	<b>Lecturers' satisfaction</b>	<b>LS</b>					
9	Lecturers love their work and feel respected for their profession.	LS1					
10	Lecturers feel happy and satisfied with their work and income commensurate with their learning process and efforts.	LS2					
11	Lecturers feel happy with their work and confident and happy when their achievements are recognized, expected to be promoted, and have career development opportunities.	LS3					

Source: Synthesized through literature review

### Research Model

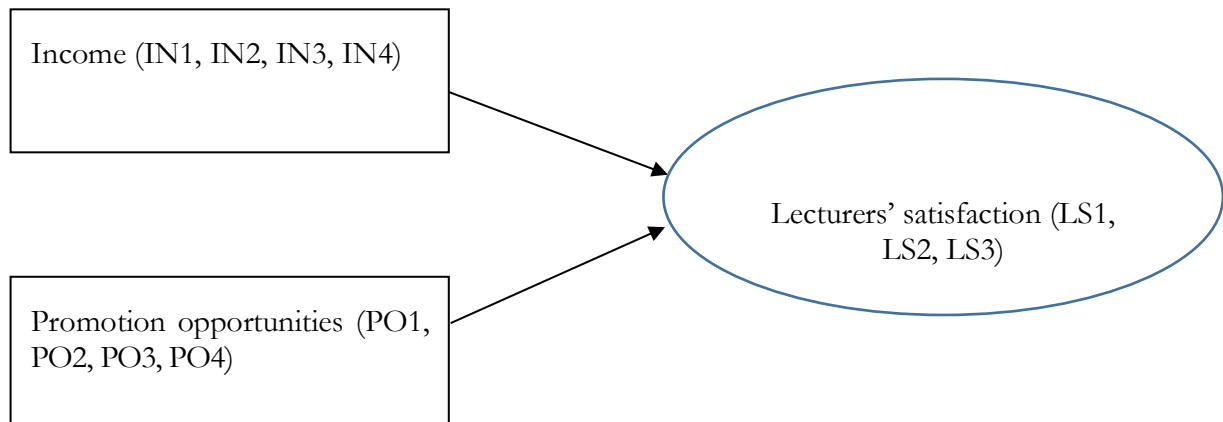


Figure 1. Research Model

## Methodology

The author uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method is used to synthesize information and secondary data from many previous studies to build a theoretical framework for this study. Accordingly, the theoretical framework and research model are designed to include the scale "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) as the dependent variable; and the scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO) as 2 independent variables.

Quantitative methods were used to test the scale, model and research hypothesis; empirical research was conducted to explore the differences in satisfaction between lecturers of public universities and lecturers of non-public universities in Vietnam. The author directly surveyed the opinions of 500 lecturers, including 250 lecturers of public universities and 250 lecturers of non-public universities in Vietnam.

According to Hai, D.H. (2019), the minimum sample size required for regression analysis in a research model consisting of 03 scales with a total of 11 observed variables is  $N = 11 * 5 = 55$ . In fact, the author conducted a sample size of  $N = 250 > 55$ , showing high reliability when conducting survey research. The primary data collection survey is conducted in two steps: Preliminary survey and official survey.

**Preliminary survey:** After designing and completing the survey form, the author conducted a preliminary survey at a public university and a non-public university with a sample size of  $N = 80$  lecturers from each university. The preliminary survey results showed that the scales and observed variables were reliable enough to be used in an official survey on a larger scale.

**Official survey:** The author conducted an official survey at 5 public universities and 5 non-public universities with a sample size of  $N = 250$  lecturers for each university. The survey subjects were selectively identified, which were lecturers with 3 years or more of working experience. The author conducted preliminary interviews to obtain information about the standards of the respondents and distributed the survey forms based on their consent to respond.

The survey results collected 250/250 valid responses from public university lecturers and 250/250 valid responses from non-public university lecturers; achieving a response rate of 100% for both groups of survey respondents. With the collected data, the author conducted scale testing, regression analysis to test the relationship between the scales and drew research conclusions.

## Research Results

First, the author tested the reliability of the scales and observed variables in the research model. According to Hai, D.H. (2019), the scales are reliable when meeting the standard condition of Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.6$ ; the observed variables are reliable when meeting the standard condition of Corrected Item-Total Correlation  $> 0.3$ . The test results show that all 3 scales and 11 observed variables in the research model are reliable enough to perform further analysis [Table 2].

**Table 2.** Statistical Results and Testing Results of the Scales

Survey subjects	Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach ' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Lecturers of public universities	1. Income (IN)	IN1	250	2	5	4.02	.535	.641	IN1 = .492
		IN2	250	2	5	3.96	.592		IN2 = .453
		IN3	250	2	5	3.91	.623		IN3 = .389
		IN4	250	2	5	3.88	.612		IN4 = .401
	2. Promotion opportunities (PO)	PO1	250	2	5	3.98	.623	.672	PO1 = .512
		PO2	250	2	5	3.95	.621		PO2 = .481
		PO3	250	2	5	4.07	.589		PO3 = .484
		PO4	250	2	5	3.92	.599		PO4 = .396
	3. Lecturers' satisfaction (LS)	LS1	250	2	5	3.99	.644	.648	LS1 = .450
		LS2	250	2	5	3.93	.675		LS2 = .481
		LS3	250	2	5	3.89	.663		LS3 = .335
	Lecturers of non-public universities	1. Income (IN)	IN1	250	2	5	4.21	.511	.638
IN2			250	2	5	4.07	.601	IN2 = .497	
IN3			250	2	5	4.13	.587	IN3 = .523	
IN4			250	2	5	4.33	.568	IN4 = .469	
2. Promotion opportunities (PO)		PO1	250	2	5	4.20	.626	.665	PO1 = .471
		PO2	250	3	5	4.12	.601		PO2 = .422
		PO3	250	2	5	4.14	.588		PO3 = .394
		PO4	250	2	5	4.09	.593		PO4 = .379
3. Lecturers' satisfaction (LS)		LS1	250	2	5	4.05	.594	.681	LS1 = .522
		LS2	250	2	5	4.15	.602		LS2 = .518
		LS3	250	2	5	4.10	.598		LS3 = .496
Valid N (listwise)			250						

Source: Authors' survey results

Observations on the scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO), "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) were all rated at an average of Mean  $> 3.88$  (for lecturers at public universities) and Mean  $> 4.05$  (for lecturers at non-public universities), with statistical significance according to the determined Likert scale (1-5).

However, the observed variables of all three scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO), "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) are shown at low levels for the responses of public university lecturers. This shows that public university lecturers are less satisfied with their income and promotion opportunities at their workplace. Meanwhile, non-public university lecturers have a higher level of satisfaction with their income and promotion opportunities. This is also of great concern to the leaders of public universities to promote lecturer satisfaction, contributing to improving the quality of lecturers and improving the quality of training.

Data Table 2 with the standard scale test value (Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.6$ ) and the standard observed variable test value (Corrected Item-Total Correlation  $> 0.3$ ), the author conducted regression analysis to examine

the relationship between the independent variables "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO) with the dependent variable "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) [Table 3].

**Table 3.** Multivariate Regression Results

Model		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF	
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1. Lecturers of public universities (R <sup>2</sup> = .604)	(Constant)	.879	.355		3.962	.000			
	IN	.564	.281	.393	3.955	.000	.542	1.722	
	PO	.436	.160	.271	2.841	.000	.682	1.722	
2. Lecturers of non-public universities (R <sup>2</sup> = .642)	(Constant)	.895	.388		3.072	.000			
	IN	.496	.166	.276	3.912	.000	.783	1.601	
	PO	.504	.270	.325	3.967	.000	.674	1.601	

a. Dependent Variable: Lecturers' satisfaction (LS)

Source: Authors' survey results

The results of the comparative regression analysis in Table 3 show that in both models (the research model surveying lecturers at public universities and lecturers at non-public universities), there is a correlation and impact of the factors "Income" (IN) and "Promotion opportunities" (PO) on "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS), specifically:

Firstly,  $R^2 > 0$  ( $R^2 = .604$  and  $R^2 = .642$ ), confirming that the scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO), explain 60.4% of the variation in the scale "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) [for the research model surveying lecturers at public universities]; explain 64.2% of the variation in the scale "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS) [for the research model surveying lecturers at non-public universities].\ Second,  $1 < VIF < 2$ , shows that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; affirms that the scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO) are independent and have the same impact on the scale "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS).

Third, the regression coefficients of the independent scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO) are both positive ( $B > 0$ ) and statistically significant with  $Sig. < 0.05$ , confirming the positive relationship between the scales "Income" (IN), "Promotion opportunities" (PO) and the scale "Lecturers' satisfaction" (LS). Hypotheses H1 and H2 are accepted.

However, there are differences in the observations of public university lecturers and non-public university lecturers when assessing the correlation of factors in the two models, which are: Public university lecturers are more satisfied with income [ $B(IN) = .564$ ], less satisfied with promotion opportunities [ $B(PO) = 3.46$ ]; Non-public university lecturers are the opposite, more satisfied with promotion opportunities [ $B(PO) = .504$ ], less satisfied with income [ $B(IN) = 4.96$ ]. This is also of great concern to leaders of public universities to promote lecturer satisfaction, contribute to improving the quality of lecturers and improving the quality of training.

## Conclusion

The research and survey results in Table 2 show that public university lecturers are less satisfied with their income and promotion opportunities at their workplace; meanwhile, non-public university lecturers are more satisfied with their income and promotion opportunities. The research and survey results in Table 3 show that public university lecturers are more satisfied with their income, less satisfied with promotion

opportunities; meanwhile, non-public university lecturers are more satisfied with promotion opportunities, less satisfied with their income.

From the above research conclusions, the author discusses policy issues for leaders of Vietnamese universities. Firstly, public universities need to pay attention to promoting lecturers' satisfaction in both aspects of income and promotion opportunities; that will help public universities develop lecturers in a balanced way when compared with the policies of non-public universities; help public universities avoid the situation of losing high-quality lecturers when lecturers see development opportunities outside - non-public universities. Secondly, public universities and non-public universities need to pay attention to promoting lecturers' satisfaction in a balanced way in both aspects of income (material factors) and aspects of promotion opportunities (psychological factors) so that lecturers are proactive, creative and attached to the university, contributing more to the strategic development of the university.

## References

- Bentley, P. J., Coates, H., Dobson, I. R., Goedegebuure, L., & Meek, V. L. (2013). Introduction: Satisfaction around the world? In *Job Satisfaction around the Academic World* (pp. 1–11). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5434-8\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5434-8_1)
- Cross, D. (1973). The Worker Opinion Survey: A measure of shop-floor satisfaction. *Occupational Psychology*, 47(3–4).
- Gessesse, K. T., & Premanandam, P. (2023). Job satisfaction among academic employees in private and public sector universities at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: A comparative analysis. In *Cogent Social Sciences* (Vol. 9, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2196105>
- GSO - General Statistics Office (2024). Administrative Unit, address <https://www.gso.gov.vn/phuong-phap-thong-ke/danh-muc/don-vi-hanh-chinh/>
- GSO - General Statistics Office (2024). "Press release on population, labor and employment situation in the fourth quarter and 2023". Retrieved from: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/2023/12/thong-cao-bao-chi-ve-tinh-hinh-dan-so-lao-dong-viec-lam-quy-iv-va-nam-2023/#:~:text=Population%20number%20average%20average%20of,%2C%20occupy%2061%2C9%25.>
- Hai, D.H. (2019). *Econometrics*. National Economics University Press.
- VNA - Vietnam National Assembly (2012). Law on Higher Education, Law No. 08/2012/QH13.
- MOET - Ministry of Education and Training (2024). "List of educational institutions", address <https://moet.gov.vn/cos/Giaduc/Pages/list-sach.aspx>
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60(2). <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076546>
- Hoa, V.P. (2023). "The current state of the labor force in Vietnam". *Finance Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://tapchitaichinh.vn/thuc-trang-luc-luong-lao-dong-o-viet-nam-hien-nay.html>, August 19, 2023.
- Kaur, P. (2019). Job satisfaction of employees in public and private sector organizations. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, 10(01), 30683-30687.
- Smith, P. C., Kendall, L. M., & Hulin, C. L. (1969). The Measurement of Satisfaction in Work and Retirement: a Strategy for the Study of Attitudes. In *Rand McNally Psychology Series*.
- Spector, D. P. E. (1997). *Job Satisfaction: Application, Assessment, Causes, and Consequences*. Vol.3, Sage.
- Webber, K. L., & Rogers, S. M. (2018). Gender differences in faculty member job satisfaction: Equity forestalled? *Research in Higher Education*, 59(8), 1105-1132, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-018-9494-2>.