



## Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of White-collar Officers in the Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam

Tuan Van Pham<sup>1</sup>, Sy Van Pham<sup>2</sup>, Quy Van Le<sup>3</sup>, Yen-Thuc Tran-Thai<sup>4</sup>,  
My-Tien Nguyen-Thi<sup>5</sup>, Vinh-Long Tran-Chi<sup>5\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Social Work University of Labor and Social Affairs, VIETNAM.

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, HUTECH University of Technology, VIETNAM.

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Business Management, University of Finance - Marketing, VIETNAM.

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, AUSTRALIA.

<sup>5</sup> Faculty of Psychology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, VIETNAM.

\*Corresponding Author (Tel: +84 935 176 278, Email: [longtvcv@hcmue.edu.vn](mailto:longtvcv@hcmue.edu.vn)).

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### Abstract

To maintain and develop in the fast-growing world nowadays, the roles of white-collar officers are crucially significant as well as the necessity of properly understanding their job motivations – which could beneficially influence the economic growth of one's company, or nation. Thus, this study examined elements that could affect employees' motivation in working, and whether those factors would have any significant impacts on the overall job satisfaction levels of work. The convenience sampling was used to collect data from 2409 white-collar officers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (including 1159 males and 1250 females). In this study, descriptive statistics, reliability statistics, factor analysis, and multiple regression are exercised as statistical tools. The results indicated that the working environment, job characteristics, promotion opportunities, salary, co-workers, and supervisors are positively associated with the white-collar officers' job satisfaction. Especially, the collected findings suggested that white-collar officers, in the Ho Chi Minh City context, were mostly determined by supervisory factors in work satisfaction. Therefore, the management of corporations should focus on these factors to enhance higher job satisfaction, organizational efficiency, and employee retention. The results could be a useful suggestion for implication in developing management strategies, especially for Vietnamese corporations.

**Disciplinary:** Management Sciences, Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

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## 1 Introduction

In the recent report published by Vietnam's human resources recruiter, it was suggested that the voluntary employee turnover rates for multinationals and local businesses in 2016 were 17.8 percent and 14.2 percent, respectively (Talentnet and Mercer, 2017). This has also been an unsolvable problem for numerous businesses in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, when enterprises confront with challenging situations in their daily operation along with the recruitment and training expenses – which have affected the company's operation and finance (Hedge & Borman, 2012). Terminologically, employment satisfaction could influence organizational behaviour's critical aspects: absenteeism, withdrawal, and voluntary turnover (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Many researchers claimed that in companies with a reportedly high level of job satisfaction, employee turnover would be considerably lower (Droussiotis & Austin, 2007; Hulin, 1968; Lambert et al., 2001; Mobley, 1977; Salazar et al., 2006; Tian-Foreman, 2009).

Supported by prior studies, employment satisfaction in employee and organizational studies is among the most explored concepts (Bartlett & McKinney, 2004). As a clarification, the definition of "work satisfaction" includes factors that could be divided into four areas: interpersonal relationships, working conditions, activities and tasks, and economic aspects of work (Herzberg, 1966; P.C. Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969; Zalewska, 2001). Job satisfaction is shaped by many factors related to procedures and organizational policies, particularly aspects of employment and work setting as well as employee personal characteristics (Greenberg & Baron, 2003) – to which workplace environment and culture could have a direct effect on job satisfaction. In line with the former perspective, poor working conditions limit workers' capability to portray their talents and attain full potential (Locke, 1973; Marin-García., 2011; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015) together with job characteristics (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Loher et al., 1985; Neumann, 2014).

Additionally, a similar quasi-experiment conducted by Griffin (1991) indicated that an improved level of core characteristics resulted in increased work fulfilment. Comparatively, an observation made by Holman, Axtell, Sprigg, Totterdell, and Wall (2010) revealed that job satisfaction had increased over 9 months for individuals whose jobs had core characteristics. However, by the time of a 2-year follow-up, job satisfaction returned to the level that had been found before the shift in employment (Griffin, 1991). Hence, the view by which job satisfaction is highly associated with opportunities for promotion was strongly acknowledged by numerous researchers. Particularly, there was a direct and positive correlation between the two variables (Clark, 1997; McCausland et al., 2005), and job satisfaction usually linked with paid income (Saeed et al., 2013) – the higher the payment, the higher the employment satisfaction would be found in workers (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Nevertheless, this influence was proposed to not have a long-lasting effect when the former association would eventually fade out two years after the shift in salary (Diriwächter & Shvartsman, 2018).

## 2 Literature Review

In Vietnam, several studies on job satisfaction have been conducted so far, such as (Tri et al., 2020; Tung et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2014). Tri et al. (2020) examined 202 workers at Euro window Vietnam have shown that the payment factor is one of the most important and motivating factors determining job satisfaction of the workers at the Euro window. The findings of Loan & Linh (2016) indicated that co-worker was strongly correlated with job satisfaction and the highest factor affecting job satisfaction on workers at Cam Binh Shoes Company. Despite having been assessed in various regions, including Asia countries (Hu et al., 2010; Kwok et al., 2015; Noordin & Jusoff, 2010; Ting, 1996), study design and generality of former studies have yet to be adequate and accurate in measuring and assessing data. Therefore, this paper was conducted with the expectation of exploring and identifying the main factors influencing job satisfaction and their possible impacts on Vietnamese white-collar officers of companies. Appropriate policy responses from company leaders' levels will be initiated by knowing the influential factors. From the outcomes of our research, strategies for improving white-collar officers' satisfaction practices in companies would be proposed, and guidelines for company management in providing sufficient job satisfaction and worker retention policy would be provided.

Whilst satisfaction with colleagues' behavior was shown to have a significant impact on job satisfaction (Smith et al., 1969; Spector, 1985; Weiss et al., 1967a) as members of the workgroup could be socially supportive and competent in their duties (Babin & Boles, 1996; Clark et al., 2009; Oshagbemi, 2000), the connection between supervisors and subordinates also determined one's job satisfaction levels (Smith et al., 1969; Spector, 1985; Weiss et al., 1967a). Collectively argued, work-value systems or job satisfaction of white-collar workers were found to be intrinsically oriented (Pennings, 1970). Hence, it is reasonable to claim that only when the immediate supervisor understood, provided praise for good work, showed personal interest, and listened to their employee opinions that the workers' job satisfaction levels would increase. (Babin & Boles, 1996; Singh & Pestonjee, 1974; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Tsitmideli et al., 2016).

The research model was built based on a combination of factors that measure job satisfaction of white-collar officers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, by inheriting and choosing a variety of theoretical bases and scales of factors in prior research, modifying to meet the research objectives, as: (1) Supervisors; (2) Salary and income; (3) Job characteristics; (4) Co-workers; (5) Promotion opportunities; (6) Working environment; at the same time, personal characteristics were included within the measure of employees' job satisfaction. In this self-report study, six core dimensions would be used to evaluate the job satisfaction of white-collar officers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Measure

The questionnaire was designed to survey the main factors influencing white-collar officers' job satisfaction in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Table 1, a total of 39 questions was used to assess

the job satisfaction of the White-collar officers. This questionnaire has seven subscales, including working environment; job characteristics; promotion opportunities; salary and income; co-workers, and supervisors.

**Table 1:** Factors of job satisfaction and survey items

Factor	Scale items	Source
<i>Working environment</i>	Ensuring safety at the workplace	Durst and DeSantis (1997), Bellingham (2004), Tran (2005), Skalli et al. (2008)
	Comfortable workplaces such as light, temperature, and noise	
	Providing the right equipment for the job	
<i>Job characteristics</i>	The jobs require skills	Weiss et al. (1967), Hackman and Oldham (1980), Bellingham (2004)
	Working in accordance with the capacities	
	Interesting and challenging work	
	Employees understand the job they do	
	The job plays a certain role in the company	
	Receiving feedback and reviewing the job	
	Employees have the opportunity to develop their own capabilities	
	Suitable working hours	
<i>Promotion opportunities</i>	Employees are educated and fostered at the company with the requisite skills.	Weiss et al. (1967), Patricia Cain Smith (1969), Spector (1997), Schmidt (2007)
	The company encourages learning, knowledge development, and skills outside the company	
	Employees have the opportunity to promote their jobs	
	Recognizing accurate, timely, and full job accomplishments	
	Salaries are in accordance with their capabilities	
<i>Salary and income</i>	Employees have a fair opportunity to learn and promote	Weiss et al. (1967), Patricia Cain Smith (1969), Spector (1997), Tran (2005), Artz (2010)
	The current salaries guarantee the needs of life	
	The salaries are on par with other companies in the same field	
	The salaries are paid equally among employees	
	Reasonable guaranteed allowances	
	The rewards have an encouraging and mobilizing effect	
	The rewards are commensurate with the outcomes of the job	
<i>Co-workers</i>	Co-workers are ready to assist when needed	Chami and Fullenkamp (2002), Bellingham (2004)
	Working well together with co-workers	
	Co-workers are very relaxed and friendly	
	Co-workers are willing to share knowledge and skills at work	
	Trustworthy co-workers	
<i>Supervisors</i>	Comments by employees are respected by supervisors	Weiss et al. (1967), Dionne (2000), Ehlers (2003), Bellingham (2004), Wesley and Muthuswamy (2008); Smith (1969); Spector (1997); Tran (2005); Giau (2015)
	The supervisors evaluate the fair performance among employees	
	The supervisors are friendly and open to all employees.	
	Supervisors' assist and support employees in the settlement of work	
	The supervisors trust in the abilities of employees	
	Supervisors share and support employees with life issues	
	Recognizing fairness accomplishment among employees	
	The recognition criteria are reasonable and clear	
	The outcomes of the assessment are the basis for commendations and rewards.	
	Getting constructive critique	
	Getting valuable feedback on strengths and weaknesses at work	
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	Satisfied with the present job	Authors
	Proud to work for the company	
	Wishes to stay with the company for a long time	
	Introduce everyone that this is a good company to partner with	

### 3.2 Analysis

After receiving an explanatory letter stating the intent of the study, informed consent was provided to all participants. The ethics committee of the University of Finance and Marketing, Vietnam approved the research. The coding procedure was performed as follows: 1 = Strongly

disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. To transform the discrete values into ranks, distance value was calculated as  $(\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum})/n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8$  (Malhotra & Birks, 2007) and the rankings as in Table 2.

**Table 2: Hypothetical mean range**

Range	Scale
4.21 – 5.00	Very problematic/Totally necessary/ Strong agree
3.41 – 4.20	Rather problematic/Necessary/Agree
2.61 – 3.40	Average/Optional (Necessity is optional)/Undecided
1.81 – 2.60	Unnecessary/Disagree
1.00 – 1.80	Totally unnecessary

### 3.3 Procedure

Multi-regression analysis was performed in this research. Subsequently, the six dimensions of job satisfaction were regressed to stay mean scores to identify which one accounted for the most variance. The model was applied to the working environment, job characteristics, promotion opportunities, salary, co-workers, and supervisors.

$$Y = b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + \text{Constant} \quad (1).$$

Y = Job satisfaction (dependent variable),

X1 = Supervisors,

X2 = Salary and income,

X3 = Job characteristics,

X4 = Co-workers,

X5 = Promotion opportunities,

X6 = Working environment.

The symbols  $b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4, b_5,$  and  $b_6$  are the respective regression coefficients (*beta*).

## 4 Results

The survey instrument was distributed to 2500 White-collar officers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, with 2409 questionnaires returned including females accounted for 51.9% ( $n = 1250$ ) and males accounted for 48.1% ( $n = 1159$ ) (see Table 3). Having the collected data, the highest age range was between 25-35 years (50.5%), followed by age between 35-45 years (23.3%), and age under 25 years (19.9%). Referring to working years, under one year (14.2%), between 1-3 years (38.0%), between 3-5 years (28.3%), and above 5 years (19.6%). Regarding the level of education, vocational school (7.1%), college (25.8%), university (60.3%), and postgraduate (7.1%). Relating to salary, under three mil. VND (2.3%), between 3-5 mil. VND (21.3%), between 5-10 mil. VND (49.1%), and above ten mil. VND (27.3%). Finally, for marital status, single (50.2%) and married (19.8%).

Participants' responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale at five different levels (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test indicates that all coefficients are greater than 0.7 (Table 4), and the correlation coefficient with the total variable of the observed variables is greater than 0.3 (Nunnally, 1978) demonstrating that the findings are suitable and reliable.

**Table 3: An overview of respondents**

Socio-demographic variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	1159	48.1
	Female	1250	51.9
Age	Under 25 years	479	19.9
	25 - 35 years	1217	50.5
	35 - 45 years	561	23.3
	Above 45 years	152	6.3
Working years	Under one year	342	14.2
	1 - 3 years	915	38.0
	3 - 5 years	681	28.3
	Above five years	471	19.6
Education	Vocational school	170	7.1
	College	622	25.8
	University	1452	60.3
	Postgraduate	170	7.1
Salary and income	Under three mil. VND	56	2.3
	3-5 mil. VND	513	21.3
	5-10 mil. VND	1183	49.1
	Above ten mils. VND	657	27.3
Marital status	Single	1209	50.2
	Married	1200	49.8

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics and reliability statistics**

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
Working environment	0.730
Job characteristics	0.807
Promotion opportunities	0.790
Salary and income	0.844
Co-workers	0.799
Supervisors	0.893
Job satisfaction	0.834

The results in Table 5 found that the corrected coefficient Adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.476 indicating almost 47.6 percent variation in the dependent variable (job satisfaction) due to a one-unit change in independent variables. The Durbin–Watson value was 1.666 indicating that was significant. This implied that the regression model did not breach the assumption that the independence of the error.

**Table 5: Model Summary**

Model	R	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	SE of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.691	0.477	0.476	0.526	1.666

The results in Table 6 showed that the Sig value of the F-test was 0.001 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the linear regression model was suitable for the whole. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(6, 2402) = 365.616, p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 6: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	
1	Regression	606.474	6	101.079	365.616	0.001
	Residual	664.062	2402	0.276		
	Total	1270.537	2408			

Note:  $p < 0.05$

**Table 7: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.058	0.083		0.699	.484	
	Supervisors	0.424	0.031	0.353	13.815	.001	0.334
	Salary and income	0.137	0.027	0.124	5.137	.001	0.373
	Job characteristics	0.141	0.029	0.109	4.783	.001	0.423
	Co-workers	0.061	0.023	0.053	2.690	.007	0.558
	Promotion opportunities	0.113	0.027	0.100	4.206	.001	0.382
	Working environment	0.080	0.019	0.078	4.288	.001	0.651

In Table 7, p-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. The analysis of the Beta standard regression coefficients in Table 7 indicated that the degree of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable were as below: “Supervisors” ( $\beta = 0.353$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “Salary and income” ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “Job characteristics” ( $\beta = 0.109$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “Promotion opportunities” ( $\beta = 0.100$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “Working environment” ( $\beta = 0.078$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); “Co-workers” ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The findings of the research revealed that the Supervisors factor had the strongest impact on job satisfaction and while the co-workers’ factor had the weak impact on job satisfaction. Thus X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6 are accepted. Besides, VIF coefficients in Table 7 of the variables were less than 3, so there was no multi-line phenomenon occurs. So, the official regression equation is

$$Y = 0.353*\text{Supervisors} + 0.124*\text{Salary and income} + 0.109*\text{Job characteristics} + 0.053*\text{Co-workers} + 0.100*\text{Promotion opportunities} + 0.078*\text{Working environment} \quad (2).$$

## 5 Discussion

This study explores the key factors that affect the job satisfaction of white-collar officers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Apparently, there was a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and working environment, job characteristics, promotion opportunities, salary, co-workers, and supervisors. According to the results, the supervisor factor had the biggest effect on workers' job satisfaction (Beta = 0.353) - in which, the indicator of supervisors assists and support employees in the settlement of work was assessed with the highest average score ( $M = 3.820$ ,  $SD = 0.865$ ). Consequently, to improve employee's job satisfaction, supervisors should concentrate more on this aspect. This result ties well with previous studies about the job satisfaction for the worker (Babin & Boles, 1996; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Singh & Pestonjee, 1974; Patricia Cain Smith, 1969; Spector, 1985; Tsitmideli et al., 2016; Weiss et al., 1967). However, the results of this study are not consistent with Saeed et al. (2013) suggesting that supervisors have a weak impact on the job satisfaction of the employees.

Our findings found that the co-worker factor had a weak impact on job satisfaction, similar to Saeed et al. (2013) and Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2015) that the co-workers had no effect on employee’s satisfaction at work. Nevertheless, our findings are not compatible with previous research suggesting that the greatest determinant of work satisfaction is the relationship within co-workers that the co-workers factor has the greatest impact on their job satisfaction (Loan & Linh,

2016). In this study, the income level of white-collar officers did not affect job satisfaction. A similar result is also achieved by Aytekin and Kurt (2014) that that income does not contribute to levels of job satisfaction.

## 6 Conclusion

Job satisfaction has been considered as the most factor affecting organizational efficiency and employee retention. This job satisfaction was examined in other white-collar officers in Ho Chi Minh City. Importantly, our results provide additional information about the relationship between the factors and job satisfaction and identify those factors that influence the job satisfaction of white-color officers. In addition, our findings provide opportunities for organizational leadership to improve the level of job satisfaction of white-color officers. As a recommendation, this provides a good starting point for further discussion and further research. Future research should consider more potential factors that influence white-color officers' job satisfaction and explore new facets of job satisfaction on workers. Besides, future research could aim to replicate results in larger sample sizes or in other regions in Vietnam to examine the methods to improve the job satisfaction of workers and conducting a longitudinal study to shed more light on these associations.

## 7 Availability of Data and Material

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

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**Dr. Tuan Van Pham** is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Social Work University of Labor and Social Affairs, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He got a Ph.D. degree in Psychology from the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences. Hanoi, Vietnam. His interests are Educational Psychology, IO Psychology and Social Work.



**Sy Van Pham** is a Lecturer at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, HUTECH University of Technology, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He got a MA degree in Psychology from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. His interests are Educational Psychology and IO Psychology.



**Quy Van Le** was a former Lecturer at the Faculty of Business Management, University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He got a MA degree in Business Management from the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. His interests are Business Management and IO Psychology.



**Yen-Thuc Tran-Thi** is a Student at the Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Australia. Her interests are Educational Psychology and IO Psychology.



**My-Tien Nguyen-Thi** is a Student at the Faculty of Psychology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Her interests are Counselling Psychology and Clinical Psychology.



**Vinh-Long Tran-Chi** is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Psychology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He also was a former lecturer at the Faculty of Business Management, University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He got a MA degree in Psychology from Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He was a former PhD Candidate at the Center for Research in Cognitive Science, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan. His interests are Clinical Psychology and IO Psychology.