

Impact of Public Service Motivation on Job Satisfaction and Performance of University Lecturers in Vietnam



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ABSTRACT: While the number of universities in Vietnam has increased dramatically over the past decade, the country's poor quality of higher education has received much attention in recent times. The increasing number of university graduates without jobs and the number of university lecturers switching to other jobs is attracting many studies to find the causes, including public service motivation, job satisfaction, and teaching performance of university lecturers. This study aims to enrich the research literature and examine the role of service motivation as a moderator variable in the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness of Vietnamese university lecturers. This study was conducted through a cross-sectional survey using a purposive sampling technique (n=200). Multivariable linear regression analysis and moderator regression were applied to test the proposed research hypotheses. Research results show a positive and significant relationship between satisfaction at work, motivation to serve the public, and teaching effectiveness of Vietnamese university teaching. In particular, public service motivation moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and the teaching performance of university lecturers in this country.

KEYWORDS: Public service motivation, work enjoyment, teaching performance, biến điều tiết, giảng viên đại học, Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

The lecturer has the most important position and role in determining the development of the training institution. Since the Vietnamese government accepted the private university system in 1988 until now, many universities have been growing. Vietnam currently has 237 universities, including 172 public universities, 60 private universities, and 4 universities with 100% foreign-owned. The competition for high-quality human resources between public and private universities is fierce in response to the current need to improve the quality of higher education in Vietnam (Hung & Dung, 2020; Luan & Thanh, 2022). In response to the requirements of existence and development, universities in Vietnam are applying many strategic policies to attract highly qualified lecturers with extensive experience in research and teaching, creating motivation to work and letting them dedicate themselves to the school's development (Tan & Hoa, 2018).

The fact that lecturers in Vietnam are losing motivation to work, causing them to switch to work for private universities, has been discovered by some studies (Hung & Dung, 2020; Tan & Hoa, 2018; Giao & Tuyen, 2021). To help universities, the Vietnamese government has also recently developed many policies to improve the quality and attract good lecturers to work in universities, sponsoring tuition fees up to 25,000 USD/year for lecturers going to study for a doctorate abroad (Vietnamese Government, 2019). In 2000, the Government of Vietnam approved Project 322, "Training scientific and technical staff at foreign institutions with the state budget," for 5 years (2000 - 2005), but lasted for 10 years with total funding of 110,000,000 USD. Project 911, "Training lecturers with doctoral qualifications for universities and colleges in the period 2010-2020," was approved with a budget of 617,000,000 USD (Hung & Dung, 2020; Tan & Hoa, 2018; Giao & Tuyen, 2021). However, despite such policies, brain drain in universities is still widespread. This fact requires studies to discover the causes, in which it is necessary to study the work motivation of lecturers, their job satisfaction, and performance.

Human resource development in motivation is a fascinating topic from which organizations can explore the factors related to the inspiration and job satisfaction of lecturers (Munyengabe et al., 2017). The first studies to analyze faculty motivation looked for why the teaching profession was chosen (Hăn & Yin, 2016; Viseu et al., 2016). Universities have paid a lot of attention to work results but less attention to research on all the different angles related to factors that can cause a decrease in motivation and satisfaction levels lecturer's job satisfaction (Viseu et al., 2016). In addition, the researchers try to demonstrate solutions to

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increase the motivation of lecturers through good salary, service conditions, quick and regular promotion, recognition, and feedback, strengthening the need of teachers. However, job security, career development and empowerment programs, a good working environment, challenging and diverse work, participation in decision-making, and research funding are said to have significantly affected the level of motivation and job satisfaction with little regard to public service motivation (Munyengabe et al., 2017; Osakwe, 2014; Hill & Power, 2013; Munyengabe et al., 2016).

This growing scientific interest in faculty motivation has been addressed from various theoretical frameworks, such as achievement goal theory (Watt & Richardson, 2015). However, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) is most commonly used to analyze faculty motivational processes (Cheon et al., 2014; Roth et al., 2007; Thoonen et al. , 2011). Besides, studies on public service motivation of lecturers have found it meaningful to society and considered a valuable resource to improve teaching performance and job placement satisfaction (Perry & Wise, 1990; Brewer, 2008). Lecturers with a high public service motivation are expected to do well in teaching and research because they identify the values and purposes of their work and, therefore, work harder, put in more effort and provide better performance (Brewer, 2008; Vandenabeele, 2009). Socially meaningful work motivation is considered a valuable resource that public organizations can improve job satisfaction and performance (Perry & Wise, 1990; Brewer, 2008). Teaching is a demanding profession, with instructors showing higher levels of stress and burnout than in other occupations (Kinman, Wray, & Strange, 2011, Anaya & López, 2014). There is still a lack of research on the public service motivation of lecturers in the relationship between their job satisfaction and performance. This study aims to fill this theoretical gap and, at the same time, explore the evidence on the effectiveness of public service motivation of lecturers regarding job satisfaction and performance of current lecturers in universities in Vietnam in the recent fierce competition and brain drain.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Service Motivation

Individuals motivated to serve public service exhibit compassion, which refers to an emotional response and identification with others as self-sacrifice that reflects a shared motivation to put social interests over personal interests (Perry, 1996), is the highest form of self-determination motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), a tendency of workers to contribute to society (Perry & Wise, 1990), beliefs, values, and attitudes that extend beyond individual interests and organizational interests (Vandenabeele, 2007), relating obligations, commitments, or identities to the importance of public service (Vandenabeele, 2013), expressed in an individual's desire to participate in and work to improve public services (Perry, 1996), a sense of duty and commitment that an individual may feel towards social (Perry, 1996), involves a variety of modifications and directs human behavior to desired patterns of work (Griffin, 2013), which can change over time (Jacobsen et al., 2013; Kjeldsen, 2013; Oberfield, 2014), which varies between types of public service providers and levels of professionalism (Kjeldsen, 2012). For example, the public service motivation of lecturers is the way lecturers behave with their teaching work, motivated by internal causes, so it directly interferes with the teaching-learning process and can then affect their performance and outcome (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007; Viseu, de Jesus, Rus, & Canavarro, 2016).

Relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction of university lecturers

Job satisfaction is a happy or positive emotional state resulting from job evaluation or work experience (Locke, 1976), a condition related to complete dedication. It is inspiration, talent, all characteristics that constitute the work environment and the work itself (Churchil et al., 1974) about individuals' evaluations of their duties concerning problems essential topics for them (Sempañe et al., 2002). In addition, many studies have also found that employees with high public service motivation scores make more efforts and bring better job performance and satisfaction (Brewer, 2008; Vandenabeele, 2009; Munyengabe et al., 2016). Lecturer satisfaction can be viewed as a state related to satisfaction with emotional dedication, giving, all the characteristic features constituting the work environment and the work itself. (Churchil et al., 1974), a happy or positive emotional state resulting from job evaluation or work experience (Locke, 1976).

The job satisfaction of lectures is related to the ability of the teaching job to meet the expectations of the lecturers and increase their performance in teaching (Ololube, 2006). Individual lecturers with high public service motivation scored higher on their job performance and satisfaction with their job placement and organization (Andersen et al., 2014; Bellé, 2013; Brewer & Selden, 2000; Bright, 2007; Kim, 2005 & 2006; Leisink & Steijn, 2009; Naff & Crum, 1999; Vandenabeele, 2009; Bright, 2008; Kjeldsen & Andersen, 2012, Taylor, 2008; Gould -Williams et al., 2013; Naff & Crum, 1999). Job satisfaction is a more progressive and flexible view of changes in the education system (Han & Yin, 2016). It refers to engaging in behavior that inherently drives workers to a gratifying or enjoyable activities (Legault, 2016) as associated with autonomy, personal competence, and social relevance lead to feelings of personal happiness (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

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Relationship between public service motivation and teaching performance

Public service motivation is considered an employee's tendency to contribute to society (Perry & Wise, 1990). Vandenberg (2007) defines public service motivation as beliefs, values, and attitudes that extend beyond faculty and organizational interests, involve the interests of a larger political entity, and promote instructors to act appropriately whenever appropriate. As a result, faculty in public schools often report higher levels of public service motivation than those working elsewhere (Houston, 2011). In addition, motivated people do not hesitate to put more effort and work more deeply into their activities to achieve their plans (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Piche, 2003).

Lecturer's public service motivation is intrinsic, but it does not necessarily derive from pleasure in performing job duties (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Job performance itself is a function of four variables: ability, task knowledge, environment, and motivation (Schraw, 2006), which relates to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. (Bright, 2008; Kjeldsen & Andersen, 2012, Taylor, 2008; Vandenberg, 2009; Bellé, 2013; Gould -Williams et al., 2013; Kim, 2006; Naff & Crum, 1999; Graham, 1982), In addition, individuals' evaluations of their duties on essential matters (Sempene et al., 2002) positively affect their behavior in the workplace (Beck, 1983; Buitendach, 2005). The relationship between public service motivation and teaching performance depends on the specific nature of the public service, with its multiple goals and stakeholders, teaching and research performance, and faculty satisfaction. The employment position of public service providers can be considered inherently multidimensional (Boyne, 2002; Brewer, 2006; Walker et al., 2011). There is a relationship between motivation to serve the public and job performance and job and organizational satisfaction (Boyne, 2002; Brewer, 2006; Walker et al., 2011; Legault, 2016; Chien & Thanh, 2022).

Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviews, the following hypotheses have been formed:

- H1. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between public service motivation and teaching performance.
- H2. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between work_enjoyment and teaching performance.
- H3. Public service motivation is the moderating variable for the relationship between work_enjoyment and teaching performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

Surveyed Area

We conducted this research in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in September 2021. The headquarters of most universities in Vietnam are there. The survey participants were full-time university faculty members. We conducted in-depth interviews with psychologists and administrators to adjust the scale to suit the characteristics of the survey area. The questionnaire was built based on literature reviews and expert advice and consisted of two parts. Part 1 collects information about the research participants' demographics, such as age, gender, education level, and occupation. Part 2 collects information about teaching performance, work_enjoyment, and public service motivation. We used partially edited Brief Self-report Scales built by Ramos, Pedro, Juan Ramón, Elena, & Linda (2019) to collect data on teaching performance, consisting of 5 items. In addition, we use a modified portion of the scale developed by Johri, Misra, & Bhattacharjee (2016) to collect the work_enjoyment data, consisting of 5 items. Finally, we partially edited Perry's Public Service Motivation Scale and reference (Kim, 2009) to gather data on public service motivation, consisting of 4 items.

The English questionnaire version was translated into Vietnamese by two professional interpreters. The translation process is carried out according to the rules to adapt to Vietnamese cultures. After the final discussion between the translators and the investigator, we create a final Vietnamese version. This final version was pre-tested on 40 participants selected to represent age, sex, education, and occupation demographically. Minor tweaks followed this to improve the question structure to make it easier to understand and apply the formal survey. The questionnaire was sent directly to the respondents by the purposeful sampling method. The results obtained were 200 valid, reaching a 100% response rate—demographic information of study participants (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey participants

	Occupation												
	Economics lecturer		Jurisprudence teacher		Linguistics lecturer		Math lecturer		Philosophy lecturer		Sociology lecturer		
	Count	Row %	NCount	Row %	NCount	Row %	NCount	Row %	NCount	Row %	NCount	Row %	N
Gender female	10	11.9%	7	8.3%	23	27.4%	20	23.8%	12	14.3%	12	14.3%	

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	male	25	21.6%	21	18.1%	9	7.8%	20	17.2%	19	16.4%	22	19.0%
Age	25-30 years	9	29.0%	3	9.7%	4	12.9%	6	19.4%	4	12.9%	5	16.1%
	31-35 years	3	10.3%	4	13.8%	6	20.7%	6	20.7%	6	20.7%	4	13.8%
	36-40 years	3	8.3%	6	16.7%	6	16.7%	9	25.0%	5	13.9%	7	19.4%
	41-45 years	6	16.2%	7	18.9%	3	8.1%	8	21.6%	6	16.2%	7	18.9%
	46-50 years	6	20.7%	4	13.8%	4	13.8%	4	13.8%	2	6.9%	9	31.0%
	above 50 years	8	21.1%	4	10.5%	9	23.7%	7	18.4%	8	21.1%	2	5.3%
	Education	BA	11	19.6%	7	12.5%	6	10.7%	13	23.2%	8	14.3%	11
MA		13	15.9%	12	14.6%	16	19.5%	12	14.6%	13	15.9%	16	19.5%
PhD		11	17.7%	9	14.5%	10	16.1%	15	24.2%	10	16.1%	7	11.3%

RESEARCH RESULTS

Analyzing the Reliability of the Scales

Testing the scales through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to identify and eliminate junk variables avoids creating misleading factors when analyzing exploratory factor analysis. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient has a variable value in the interval [0,1]. If a measurement variable has a total correlation coefficient of Corrected Item - Total Correlation ≥ 0.3 , that variable meets the requirements (Cronbach, 1951; Taber, 2018). The verification criterion is that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient must be greater than 0.6, and the correlation coefficient of the sum variable in each scale must be greater than 0.3 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Table 2 shows that the scales of the factors all meet the standards. Therefore, all the rankings of the elements are reliable and used for subsequent factor analysis.

Table 2. Summary of Reliability and Relative Minimum Variables of Scales

Scales	Number of variables observed	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
Task_performance	5	0.793	0.524
Work_enjoyment	5	0.819	0.569
Public service motivation (PSM)	4	0.781	0.572

After testing Cronbach's Alpha, we use exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate the factor's unidirectional, simultaneous, and discriminant values. EFA was used by extracting the Principal Components Analysis and Varimax rotation to group the factors. With a sample size of 200, the factor loading of the observed variables must be greater than 0.5 for the variables to converge on the same factor and be distinguished from other factors. In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient, which is an index used to consider the adequacy of factor analysis, must be in the range of $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$ (Cerny & Kaiser, 1977; Kaiser, 1974; Snedecor, George, Cochran & William, 1989). Table 3 shows that all factor loading coefficients of the observed variables are greater than 0.5; Bartlett test with Sig. = 0.000 with KMO coefficient = 0.912. EFA extracted 14 items into 3 factors with Eigen Value > 1 and cumulative percentage variance = 58.261%. Thus, the research model consisting of 2 independent variables and 1 dependent variable is used for multivariable linear regression analysis and detailed regression analysis to test the proposed hypothesis.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis

Rotated Component Matrix ^a			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Work_enjoyment4	.781		
Work_enjoyment3	.752		
Work_enjoyment1	.727		

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Work_enjoyment2	.713		
Work_enjoyment5	.622		
Task_performance1		.756	
Task_performance5		.741	
Task_performance3		.709	
Task_performance2		.679	
Task_performance4		.658	
PSM1			.769
PSM4			.749
PSM2			.722
PSM3			.670

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The author uses Pearson correlation analysis to analyze the correlation between quantitative variables. Figure 2 shows, with the 95% significance level, that the correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable is statistically significant (Sig. < 0.05). The magnitude of the correlation coefficients ensures that the multiple linear regression and the moderator regression model are valid in the next step.

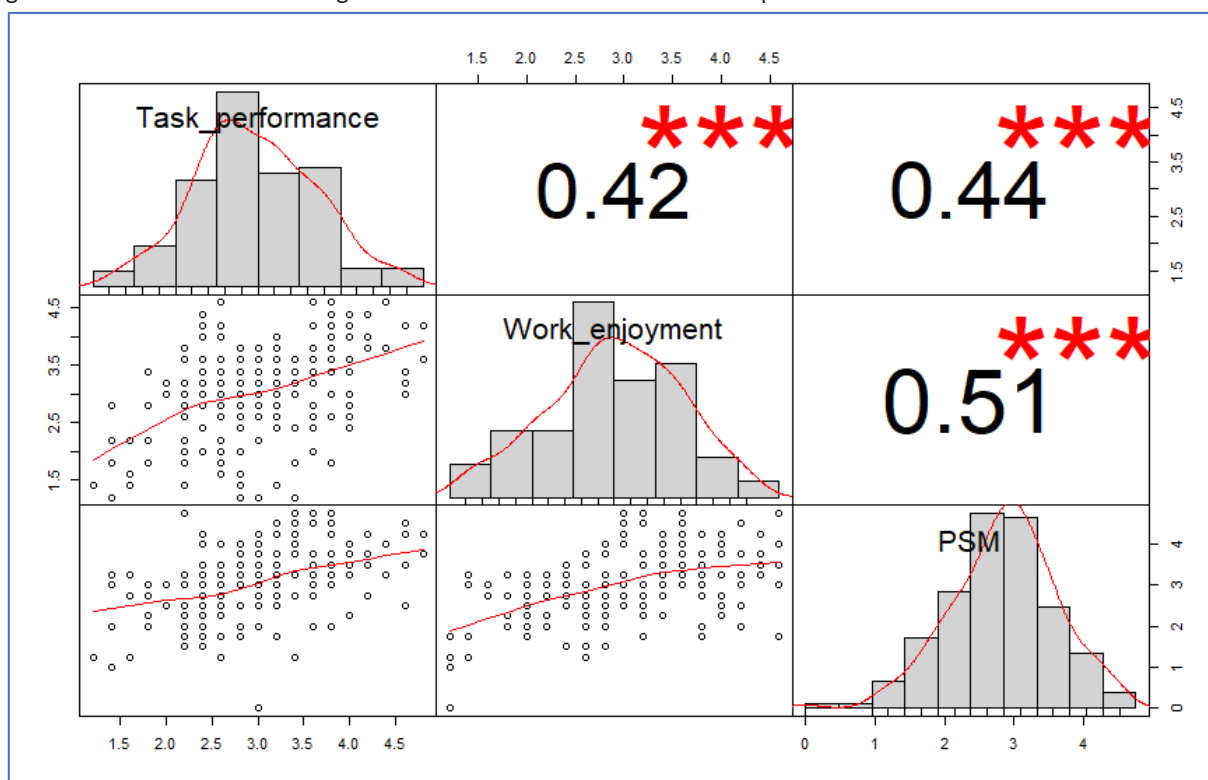


Figure 2. Pearson correlation analysis results

Linear regression analysis and Moderation regression

The multivariable linear regression analysis determines the relationship between 2 independent variables, Work_enjoyment, PSM, and the dependent variable, Task_performance (model1). The moderation regression analysis determines the PSM variable that moderates the relationship between the variable Work_enjoyment and Task_performance (model2). The center data procedure transformed the independent variable data before moderator regression analysis. Table 4 shows that all the proposed hypotheses are accepted. Both the independent variables have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. Model1 has a coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.247$ and model2 has $R^2 = 0.243$. This result proves that both the multivariable linear regression and the moderation regression fit the data set (model 1 = 0.247 % and model 2 = 0.243%). Model2 shows that the PSM variable

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moderates the relationship between the variable Work_enjoyment and Task_performance positively. The increase or decrease of the variable PSM makes the relationship between the variable Work_enjoyment and Task_performance also increase or decrease.

Table 4. The results of regression analysis

		Dependent variable:	
		Task_performance	
		(Model1)	(Model2)
Work_enjoyment	0.239*** (0.066)		
PSM	0.283*** (0.065)		
PSM		0.276*** (0.060)	
Work_enjoyment		0.244*** (0.060)	
PSM:Work_enjoyment		0.126** (0.053)	
Constant	1.400*** (0.201)	2.953***	0.049)
Observations	200	200	
R2	0.247	0.243	
Adjusted R2	0.24	0.232	
Residual Std. Error	0.641 (df = 197)	0.644 (df = 196)	
F Statistic	32.379*** (df = 2; 197)	21.008*** (df = 3; 196)	
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Table 4 shows that, with 95% confidence, all hypotheses proposed are accepted. Firstly, there is a positive and meaningful relationship between public service motivation and teaching performance. Secondly, there is a positive and meaningful relationship between work_enjoyment and teaching performance. Finally, public service motivation is the moderating variable for the relationship between work_enjoyment and teaching performance. Model1 shows that PSM has the strongest effect on Task_performance variable ($\beta = 0.283$) and 95% confidence (p.value = 0.000). Next is the variable Work_enjoyment ($\beta = 0.239$) with 95% confidence (p.value = 0.000). Model2 shows that the variable E_leadership moderates the relationship between Work_enjoyment and Task_performance ($\beta = 0.126$) and 95% confidence (p.value = 0.001). The rise or fall of ethical leadership leads to a corresponding increase or decrease in the relationship between work enjoyment and teaching performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Firstly, the research results show that the public service motivation factor positively and significantly relates to teaching performance in Vietnam. This result is similar to previous findings in other countries (Naff & Crum, 1999; Steijn, 2008). Lecturers who reported high scores of public service motivation were more involved in their work (Cheon, Reeve, Yu, & Jang, 2014) and more dedicated to their work (Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma & Geijsel, 2011), obligation, commitment (Vandenabeele, 2013). This result demonstrates that public service motivation focuses on the public good in general (Perry & Wise, 1990) and motivates individuals to promote their role in public service (Perry & Wise, 1990) the personal development (Piche, 2003).

Secondly, work enjoyment has a positive and meaningful relationship to teaching performance in the Vietnamese context. This result is similar to the findings of Kjeldsen & Jacobsen (2012) and Christensen & Wright (2011). Instructors with high work_enjoyment scores tend to be more effective in teaching and less likely to burn out (van den Berghe et al., 2014). Factors affecting job satisfaction are related to improving the happiness of many people (Oshagbemi, 1999; Garcia et al., 2005; Deci & Ryan, 1985 & 1991). This finding further demonstrates that the relationship between public service motivation and performance can be determined (Brewer, 2008).

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Thirdly, public service motivation moderates the relationship between work_enjoyment and teaching performance in the Vietnam context. This result shows that the increase or decrease in the public service motivation score of the lecturers will make the relationship between their work_enjoyment and teaching performance increase or decrease similarly. This result further shows that lecturers with high public service motivation score higher in terms of teaching performance, research, and job satisfaction (Andersen et al., 2014; Bellé, 2013; Brewer & Selden, 2000; Bright, 2007; Kim, 2005; Leisink & Steijn, 2009; Naff & Crum, 1999; Vandenabeele, 2009).

Finally, the above results imply that universities in Vietnam need to pay attention to the public service motivation of their lecturers regarding their job satisfaction and job performance (Garcia et al. al., 2005). Universities cannot achieve a competitive level of performance, either at the product level or the customer service level, if their employees are unhappy or disagree with the organization (Garcia et al., 2005). Universities need to build an organizational culture that motivates public service as it is formed through socialization and social learning. Individuals acquire new social identities by working alongside others. Employees share a standard orientation to public service and to whom they feel they belong (Brewer, 2008; Vandenabeele, 2007; Herzberget al., 1959).

Universities need to be careful in recruiting faculty. Although public service motivations attract faculty to public service providers, organizations do not necessarily select faculty based on their public service motivations (Kjeldsen & Jacobsen, 2012; Christensen & Wright; Thanh, Trung, Chien, Ha, Hien, & Thuy., 2021). Building a work environment to motivate public service is essential because public service motivations can change over time (Jacobsen et al., 2013; Kjeldsen, 2013; Kjeldsen, 2012; Nelson & Guick, 2013).

LIMITATIONS

As with other pilot studies, this study has limitations that should be considered when discussing the results. First, our survey method reflects respondents' subjective perceptions of the investigated questions. The subjectivity of data has some inherent disadvantages that are unavoidable in surveys (Pakpour, Gellert, Asefzadeh, Updegraff, Molloy, & Sniehotta, 2016; Nguyen, Tran, & Tran, 2022). We collected data over a single period, so there are certain limitations in analyzing and evaluating the results (Xin & Zhanyou, 2019). Future research should combine cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. The purposive Sampling method has certain limitations, not fully reflecting population characteristics (Lin et al., 2016; Strong et al., 2018). We carried out this research in the context of Vietnamese culture. Therefore, asking for more general statements by applying development research models and research conclusions to other countries, regions, and cultures (Sun et al., 2012). Future research should combine cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. The purposive Sampling method has certain limitations, not fully reflecting population characteristics (Lin et al., 2016; Strong et al., 2018). We carried out this research in the context of Vietnamese culture. Therefore, asking for more general statements by applying development research models and research conclusions to other countries, regions, and cultures (Sun et al., 2012). Further research should consider demographic factors such as age, gender, and occupation to understand better the public service motivation of civil servants in Vietnam. In addition, further research should examine public service motivation concerning organizational identity (Naff & Crum, 1999) and organizational citizenship behavior (Koumenta, 2015; Steijn, 2008). Furthermore, Table 4 shows that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of model 1 and model 2 has a low rate (<0.5) that affects research reliability. Therefore, the following study will increase the sample size so that R^2 has an appropriate ratio.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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