

# A Study on Generation Y and Job Satisfaction in Vietnam

Le Thanh Truc, Navaz Naghavi, Benjamin Chan Yin Fah

*Faculty of Business and Management, Asia Pacific University Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation and relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam. The motivational factors are Rewards, Leadership styles and Organizational commitment factor. The study uses survey strategy to collect the data from 245 Vietnamese SMEs employees and uses quantitative method to test the correlation and relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam. Results study indicate that there is a correlation between each motivational factor with job satisfaction. Moreover, there are two factors have a relationship with job satisfaction, that are rewards and leaderships, whereas organizational commitment didn't have a relationship with job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam.

**Keywords:** *Job satisfaction, Gen Y, Vietnam, motivational factors*

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## **Introduction**

In the Globalization era, young people are the important human resources of any country. They are realized as the future of their country. Recent years, the young people can be considered as generation Y. Generation Y are people who were born between 1977 and 1994. They are from 23 years old to 40 years old (H.kavitha, et al., 2011). Job satisfaction can be defined as individuals' appreciation of aspects of their job. Employees will be satisfied since they work with happy feelings (Locke, E.A., 1976). Motivational factors can be separated into two groups: intrinsic and extrinsic. On the other word, motivational factors are an internal and external factor to an individual Ryan & Deci (2000). Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are organizations that have less than 200 employees. Small sized enterprise has from 5 to 49 employees. From 50 to 200 employees is the medium sized enterprise. SMEs are very important to most developed and developing economies. Furthermore, Vietnam is a one-party Communist state. It is the fastest growing economies country in South-East Asia area. Vietnam expects that in 2020, it will become a developed country (BBC NEWS, 2017). Ho Chi Minh City is the biggest economic city in Vietnam.

According to BBC news (2017), Vietnamese government target is to be a developed country by 2020. GDP is the one indicator that can be used to evaluate if the country is a developing or a developed country. GDP of Vietnam has been increasing since 2012; however it is not enough to be a developed country in 2020. Compared with Singapore, Vietnam has to grow 46.56% that means Vietnam need to grow its GDP more than 10% every year since 2016. The main generator of economic activity and the largest private sector employer groups is SMEs. According to Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, in 2016 Vietnamese SMEs are about 97% of the total number of business and contributed 41% of GDP. To increase GDP, Vietnam should focus on SMEs. Therefore, the job satisfaction of

employees of SMEs is an important factor. Based on the previous researches, increasing job satisfaction can increase job performance of employees. Moreover, it also can increase the organization performance. The result is the GDP of Vietnam can be increased and Vietnam will achieve the target in 2020. Therefore, to examine correlation and relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction of generation Y employees in HCM city, Vietnam is necessary in current time.

## **Literature review**

### ***Job satisfaction***

According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction refers to the pleasurable or positive emotional state of an individual, which results from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, E.A., 1976, p. 1300). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Statt (2004) indicated that job satisfaction is the level that employee is satisfied with the rewards he/she gain from their jobs (Statt, D., 2004, p. 78). George and Jones (2008) indicated that job satisfaction is the feeling and beliefs of employees about their jobs (George, J.M. & Jones, G.R., 2008). Overall, job satisfaction can be considered as the feeling of the employee about their jobs. It can be recognised as the main factor that influences the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

According to Worrell (2004), demographic factors will influence job satisfaction, such as gender, age and education level (Worrell, 2004). Moreover, Maryam Al-Sada, et al. (2017) indicated that the level of education has negative relationship with job satisfaction (Maryam Al-Sada, et al., 2017). That can be understood since the people have high education, they will have more expectation. Therefore, they will be not satisfied with their job at the normal level. Their level will be higher than the people, who has lower education. Not only gender, age and education level effect on job satisfaction, the researchers showed that work experience year, organizational position and marital status also influence job satisfaction (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

### ***Rewards***

According to Sejjaaka (2010), rewards can be divided into two parts, such as rewards inwards and rewards outwards. The people who have the goal about rewards inwards are more likely to be professionally oriented. Whereas the people who are more bureaucratically oriented will have the goal about rewards outwards (Sejjaaka, 2010).

The relationship between rewards and job satisfaction has been tested by various researchers in the different sectors and countries. The researchers found out that there is the relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction. Moreover, reward significantly influences relationship and the motivation of the employees (Rizwan Qaiser Danish & Ali Usman, 2010). In TSC Headquarters in Kenya, Chepkwony (2014) indicated that to increase the job satisfaction of employees, the organization need to have a good reward system (Chepkwony, 2014). In 2016, Bayraktar, et al. found out the relationship between reward and job satisfaction is a positive relationship in the financial sector in six Turkish commercial banks (Bayraktar, et al., 2017). Researchers tested the relationship between rewards and job satisfaction, with two dimensions of rewards being intrinsic (Inwards) and extrinsic (Outwards). The results were Intrinsic positively related to job satisfaction and extrinsic also have a positive relationship (Riasat, et al., 2016). The hypothesis of this study is as follows:

***H1: There is a relationship between rewards inwards, rewards outwards and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM City, Vietnam.***

### ***Leadership styles***

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yuki, G, 2010). This study will cover 3 types of leadership: participative, supportive, instrumental leadership.

Chang and Lee (2007) also indicated how leadership and culture effect job satisfaction (Chang, S.C & Lee, M.S., 2007). In 2016, the researcher indicated that the relationship between transactional leadership and job satisfaction is negative, while the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction is positive (Hijazi, et al., 2016). However, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) surveyed 72 lecturers and 10 supervisors in public and private university in Lithuania and indicated the **positive** relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction. The results of research of Maryam, et al. is that participative-supportive leadership styles had significant positive relations with job satisfaction in the educational sector (Maryam Al-Sada, et al., 2017). The hypothesis is as follows:

***H2: There is a relationship between participative leadership, supportive leadership, instrumental leadership and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM City, Vietnam.***

### ***Organizational commitment***

According to Meyer and Allen (1984; 1997), organizational commitment consists of three constructs:

*Affective commitment is “positive feelings of identification with, attachment to and involvement in the work of the organization”. Normative commitment is the commitment based on “a sense of obligation to the organization” while Continuance commitment is “the extent to which employees feel commitment to their organizations when they consider the cost of leaving the organization”.*

The relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction has been tested by various researchers, and they indicated the different results. Lee and Kamarul (2009) also found the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. This relationship is **negative** (Lee & Kamarul, 2009). Whereas, according to Anari (2012), the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction is a significant **positive** moderate relationship at Kerman high schools (Anari, 2012). Besides that, Maryam Al-Sada, et al. (2017) considered that there was a **significant positive** relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Their respondents were 364 employees in the education sector in Qatar (Maryam Al-Sada, et al., 2017). Moreover, Leong et al. (1994) and Lee & Mowday (1989) considered as a **weak** relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Leong, S.M., et al., 1994) (Lee, T.W. & Mowday, R.T., 1989).

***H3: There is a relationship between Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment and Job Satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM City, Vietnam.***

### ***Research Methodology***

This study uses qualitative method to test the correlation and relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction. Questionnaire is used to survey and collect the data from the respondents and the data will be collected one time (cross sectional). The respondents of this study are the employees of Vietnamese SMEs in HCM city, who are from 23 to 40 years old. Based on the youth population in HCM city is 4.870 million. Therefore, using Raosoft to calculate the sample size is 385 samples, however the researcher was able to collect 245 questionnaires. The questionnaire of this study will cover five measures:

### ***Demographic***

This part will ask about the personal information of respondents, such as gender, age, level of study, the size of their organization and so on.

### ***Job satisfaction***

Job satisfaction will be measured by three items of the questionnaire that was developed by Cammann et al. (1979). This instrument was used by Shuang Ren and Doren Chadee (2017) to measure job satisfaction in China. The research got the reliability values (Cronbach Alpha) is 0.856 (Chadee & Ren, 2017). Respondents will give responses about their feeling in their work based on the scale from 1- “strongly dissatisfied” to 5- “strongly satisfied”. For example, “*All in all, I am satisfied with my job*”.

### ***Rewards***

The rewards scale was adopted from Bartol (1979), in accordance with Hampton and Hampton’s model (2004). This instrument consists of 2 parts (rewards inwards (intrinsic) and rewards outwards(extrinsic)) with 9 items. However, the questionnaire has a question is repetitive. Therefore, Sajama and Kaawaase reduced to eight items and the Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.872 (Sejjaaka & Kaawaase, 2014). The original reliability values of this measurement is 0.875. For examples: “*Performing work of high quality.*”, “*The ability to work independently.*”.

### ***Leadership styles***

This study will cover three types of leadership styles. These types will be measured by using Harris and Ogbonna (2001) questionnaire. This instrument was established by Fleishman (1957) and Stogdill (1963). It was used by House (1971) and House & Dessler (1974) (Maryam Al-Sada, et al., 2017). This questionnaire has 13-item range of leadership behaviour:

- 5 items to measure Participative leadership, “*Before making decisions, he/she considers what his/her subordinates have to say.*”
- 4 items to measure supportive leadership, “*He/she does little things to make things pleasant.*”
- 4 items to measure instrumental leadership, “*He/she explains the way tasks should be carried out.*”

Respondents will give responses about their direct manager behaviour based on the scale from 1- “strongly disagree” to 5- “strongly agree”. The reliability values (Cronbach’s Alpha) for the original questionnaire are: 0.93 for Participative leadership, 0.77 for Supportive leadership and 0.67 for instrumental leadership.

### ***Organizational commitment***

This study will be used the questionnaire of Meyer et al. (1993) to measure organizational commitment. This questionnaire was established by Meyer and Allen in 1990 (Meyer, et al., 1990), and it measured 3 components of organizational commitment, such as: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The reliability values (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) of this questionnaire was 0.80 (Meyer, et al., 1990). After that, in1993 it was modified by Meyer et al. (1993). Wasti (2003), Ayşe Kuruüzüm, et al (2009) used this measurement and had the reliability value for each component (Wasti, 2003) (Ayşe Kuruüzüm, et al., 2009):

- Affective commitment: 0.70 with 7 items, “*I would be very happy to spend the rest of my life with this organization.*”
- Continuance commitment: 0.76 with 8 items, “*It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted.*”
- Normative commitment: 0.78 with 5 items, “*I owe too much to this organization.*”

### **Research finding**

The data of this study is contributed by 245 respondents, they are from different company with different sector. They include 118 males (48.2%) and 127 females (51.8%). The survey on age group shows that 134 respondents (54.7%) are in the age group of 23 to 29 years old, 73 respondents (29.8%) are in the age group of 30 to 35 years old, 38 respondents (15.5%) are in the group of 36 to 40 years old. In terms of level of study, there were around 45 respondents (18.4%) that have completed some

colleges, moreover 165 respondents (67.3%) have completed bachelor degree, and furthermore 32 respondents had their level of study up to Masters (13.1%) but however only 3 respondents (1.2%) were having their level of study until PhD and above. Furthermore, in terms of duration in the company the study found that there were 72 respondents (29.4%) that have worked less than 1 year in their company, plus around 75 respondents (30.6%) worked from 1 year to 2 years, whereas 40 respondents (16.3%) worked from 2 years to 3 years and lastly 58 respondents (23.7%) worked more than 3 years. In term of the size of organization, as seen the chart 4-5, the study found that 125 respondents (51.0%) worked in the small enterprise and 120 respondents (49%) worked in the medium enterprise. In term of location of organization, 110 respondents (44.9%) worked at centre of HCM city, 129 respondents (52.7%) worked at suburb of HCM city and 6 respondents (3.0%) miss this question.

The first finding of this study is that gender of respondent impacted on the level of job satisfaction and motivational factors. Special, Female had higher level of job satisfaction and among motivational factor than male. This finding was supported by the previous researchers that indicated the gender impact on job satisfaction (Worrell, 2004), (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006) and (Maryam Al-Sada, et al., 2017). Moreover, this finding was similar to the finding of the researchers that considered the gender impact on motivational factors, such as rewards (Snelgar, et al., 2013) and (Nienaber, et al., 2011), Organizational commitment (Osei, et al., 2015). However, for the other demographic, such as the age group, the level of study, the size and the location of organization and duration in the company did not impact on the level of job satisfaction and motivational factors.

**Table 1. Job satisfaction and motivational factors between male and female**

	Mean	t	p – value
Job satisfaction		-2.657	<b>0.008</b>
Male	3.6977		
Female	4.0315		
Rewards		-2.819	<b>0.005</b>
Male	5.0625		
Female	5.5167		
Leadership styles		-3.067	<b>0.002</b>
Male	3.6310		
Female	3.9643		
Organizational commitment		-1.969	<b>0.050</b>
Male	3.3983		
Female	3.6146		

**Table 2. Correlations**

		Rewards Inwards	Rewards Outwards	Participative leadership	Supportive leadership	Instrumental leadership	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Job Satisfaction
Rewards Inwards	Pearson Correlation	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)									
	N	245								
Rewards Outwards	Pearson Correlation	.824**	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000								
	N	245	245							
Participative leadership	Pearson Correlation	.806**	.789**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000							
	N	245	245	245						
Supportive leadership	Pearson Correlation	.836**	.795**	.853**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000						
	N	245	245	245	245					
Instrumental leadership	Pearson Correlation	.805**	.761**	.794**	.810**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000					
	N	245	245	245	245	245				
Affective commitment	Pearson Correlation	.677**	.676**	.766**	.711**	.707**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000				
	N	245	245	245	245	245	245			
Continuance commitment	Pearson Correlation	.725**	.738**	.812**	.729**	.725**	.864**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			
	N	245	245	245	245	245	245	245		
Normative commitment	Pearson Correlation	.682**	.703**	.738**	.702**	.638**	.792**	.827**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	<b>.874**</b>	<b>.796**</b>	<b>.835**</b>	<b>.809**</b>	<b>.781**</b>	<b>.729**</b>	<b>.774**</b>	<b>.723**</b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245	245

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second finding of this study is there was a correlation between job satisfaction and each motivational factors and its dimensions (Table 2). All the correlations were very significant and very strong correlation (p-value <0.01 and r-value>0.7). The strongest correlation was correlation between rewards and job satisfaction, whereas the weakest correlation was correlation between organizational commitments. This is the condition for multiple regression test to test the relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction.

The third finding of this study is there were relationships between Reward and job satisfaction as well as between Leadership styles and job satisfaction.

In the first level of motivational factors (construct), the first regression model showed that there was a relationship between job satisfaction and each motivational factor with R-Square was 0.815, that means 81.5% of Job satisfaction can be predicted from Rewards, Leadership styles and Organizational commitment. However, in the second level of motivational (dimensions), the second regression model showed that 82.6% of Job Satisfaction can be predicted from Rewards Inwards and Participative leadership, while other factors cannot be used to predict job satisfaction. On the other hand, there was a relationship between Rewards inwards, participative leadership and job satisfaction. As a results, this study accepted **H1** and **H2**, while this study rejected H3.

**Table 3. Multiple Regression test**

	R Square	Model	$\beta$	Sig
The first level (construct)	.815	Rewards	.394	<b>.000</b>
		Leadership Style	.307	<b>.000</b>
		Organizational commitment	.200	<b>.001</b>
The second level (dimension)	.826	Rewards Inwards	.370	<b>.000</b>
		Rewards Outwards	.041	.279
		Participative leadership	.223	<b>.001</b>
		Supportive leadership	.016	.814
		Instrumental leadership	.048	.440
		Affective commitment	.051	.416
		Continuance commitment	.090	.213
		Normative commitment	.059	.300

### Conclusion

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam. The results of this study show that for the first level of motivational factors (construct), there is a relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction. In contrast, for the second level of motivational factors (dimension), just rewards inwards and participative leadership related to job satisfaction, while all the dimension if organizational commitment factor did not have a relationship with job satisfaction. Therefore, Rewards and Leadership styles have relationship with Job satisfaction, however organizational commitment does not have relationship with Job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam.

### Implications

The finding of this study contributes knowledge to Business implications, especially in the human resource management field in SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam through examining factors effecting job satisfaction of generation Y employees. There are two motivational factors that can improve the level of job satisfaction if the leader/manager manage the right way. From the finding of this study, rewards and leadership styles have positive relationship with job

satisfaction. The finding of this study can be applied in the real life to improve the level of job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam. Therefore, the organizational performance of SMEs can be increased. This can lead the productivity of Vietnamese SMEs rising. Vietnam government can reach the target of the plan increasing GDP, which is to grow GDP more than 10% every year. As a result, Vietnam government can achieve the goal to be a developed country in 2020.

For rewards factor, the study indicates that improving the level of job satisfaction through the rising the level of rewards inwards, such as working independently. That means the respondent believed that work independently is the most important reward for them. This also can explain why instrumental leadership did not have a relationship with job satisfaction. For generation Y, employees do not want to be controlled by their leader/manager about how to do their work. In order to improve the level of job satisfaction, leader/manager should make the independent work environment. Moreover, the employees will have enough freedom to create the way to work and they will be more motivated. Therefore, they will feel satisfied with their job. Besides that, generation Y employees refer to professional behaviour rewards. They are willing to work in the organization that they have change to improve their skills. Thus, leader/manager should make the chance for their employees to improve their professional.

For leadership styles factor, the study shows that participative leadership can increase the level of job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam. This finding also is supported by Stewart (1994), that indicates generation Y want to participate more at work and they do not want to be controlled by their leader/manager (Stewart, D.M., 1994). The survey of this study showed that the employees will be more satisfied with their job since their leader/manager considers their ideas before making decisions. Moreover, when the organization has problem, the leader/manager will discuss with their employees. This will make the employees to feel they are the one part of the organization. That is related to one item in the job satisfaction scale that is what happens in their workplaces in really important to them. As a results, leader/manager should choose participative leadership to be their leadership styles in order to increase the level of job satisfaction of their employees. They should encourage their employees to give the ideas to solve the problem. Moreover, listening their employees is also important due to their employees will feel the respect. Therefore, they will be more motivate to work in the organization. This will lead the high level of job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam.

The finding of this study that is rewards inwards and participative leadership will influence job satisfaction can be explained by the Maslow theory. Due to generation Y employees needs the rewards and contribution to the work, all these are in the same level of need, which is esteem level (respect level). On the other hand, since the quality of the life increase, the level of need also increases. The other motivation factors excluding organizational commitment are in the lower level of need than rewards inwards and participative leadership as well. That's why there is no relationship between other motivational factors, such as rewards outwards, supportive leadership as well as instrumental leadership, and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam. Moreover, organizational commitment, that is the one field of morality, that is about the relationship between employees and their organization. This is the one of the factors in the self-actualization level that is the higher level than respect level. Therefore, before filling up the respect level, the generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam cannot jump to the next level. That is the reason why there is no relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction of generation Y employees of SMEs in HCM city, Vietnam.

### **Recommendation for future research**

There are various limitations of this study, such as reliability, the number of independent variables, the sample size, time and cost. Moreover, the other limitation of this study is that almost the respondents are in the age group of 23 to 29 years old. This is more than 50% of the total respondents, so the data of this study couldn't be represented for whole the generation Y employees. Based on it, the researcher suggests some recommendations for the future research.

Firstly, the future researches can be more significant since the researcher distributed fairly the questionnaire to the different age groups. Therefore, the data of those researches can be represented for whole generation Y employees.

Secondly, the data of this study was contributed by 245 respondents. This cannot reach the target of the sample size that was calculated by Raosoft. Therefore, the currently sample size is not enough to reflect the population mean. As a result, the future research can be done through increasing the sample size of the research.

Thirdly, the future research can be done through expanding the scope of the research and focus on individual industries. Moreover, the future research can be done in the different cities in Vietnam. Also, the future research can choose the respondents, who are in other generation. Therefore, the results of those researches can be used to compare with the finding of the currently research to find out the differences.

Fourthly, the future research can choose the other independent variables, such as payment, recognition, job security, job embeddedness and so on. In addition, the future research can learn deeply into the dimension of job satisfaction.

Finally, the future research can be done by using longitudinal time. Thus, the data will be collected in the different period. Therefore, the results of those researches will be more in-depth finding of the job satisfaction topic and it will be more applied for Vietnam's government and Human resource manager.

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