

## Understanding the Vietnam University Teachers' Work Motivation: The Importance of Perceived Justice in the Workplace

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**Abstract:** Teachers are pivotal in nurturing students into responsible citizens, yet perceptions of organizational injustice among academic staff remain widespread. Although organizational justice has long been studied in management research, its specific dimensions in higher education and their effects on teachers' motivation and satisfaction lack an integrated framework. This study therefore delineates eight facets of justice—Justice in income level, distributive procedures, recognition, promotion opportunities, collegial treatment, leadership support, student evaluations, and societal valuation of teaching—and examines their influence on work motivation. Employing a mixed-methods design, we surveyed 416 faculty across 13 universities in Hanoi (eight public, five private) with a 59-item questionnaire and conducted in-depth interviews. Quantitative analysis (KMO, Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , descriptive statistics, correlation, hierarchical regression) revealed that all justice dimensions correlated positively with motivation, with procedural justice (promotion opportunities) and Justice in income level (income) exerting the strongest effects. Qualitative findings corroborated these results, highlighting justice perceptions as critical drivers of educators' commitment, performance, and retention. Demographic variables (gender, rank, university type) also moderated motivation and justice perceptions, suggesting that tailored HR policies could optimize faculty engagement. These insights inform university leaders and policymakers in designing equitable practices to bolster teacher motivation and educational quality.

**Keywords:** Organizational Justice, Work Motivation, Vietnam Higher Education, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal Justice

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### I. Background of the Study

Education underpins a nation's economic, social, and cultural development (UNESCO, 2017), and its advancement relies fundamentally on the sustained leadership of highly qualified teachers (UNESCO, 2015). As the primary architects of student learning, teachers not only transmit subject knowledge and academic skills but also foster attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that extend well beyond the classroom (Van Nguyen, 2021; Tadesse, 2020). In higher education and research institutions, effective instructors shape learners' ambitions and open pathways to diverse careers, thereby earning the trust of students, families, and society (Farooq et al., 2011; Wallis et al., 2008). Conversely, ineffective teaching undermines students' confidence and diminishes their willingness to learn (Kodero et al., 2011; Stipek, 1988).

Given teachers' central role, their work motivation is critical to lecture quality and, by extension, to overall school effectiveness. Motivation—an enduring drive that directs and sustains effort—is shaped by both intrinsic factors and external conditions (Murphy & Alexander, 2000; Pintrich, 2003; Pinder, 1998). Decades of theoretical work (e.g., Maslow, 1954; Herzberg, 1959; Vroom, 1964; McClelland, 1985) converge on the idea that satisfying individuals' needs and expectations is essential for sustained performance (Steers & Porter, 1983; Mitchell, 1997; Wright, 2004).

Among organizational factors, perceived fairness—conceptualized as organizational justice—emerges as a powerful determinant of motivation and job satisfaction (Greenberg, 1987; Adams, 1963). Organizational justice comprises three dimensions: procedural justice (the fairness of decision-making processes), distributive justice (the equity of outcome allocations), and interactional justice (the respect and dignity accorded during interpersonal exchanges) (Leventhal, 1980; Bies & Moag, 1986; Cropanzano, Rupp, & Schminke, 2001). Empirical studies in education confirm that teachers' perceptions of these justice dimensions significantly correlate with their work motivation and satisfaction, and—in turn—with their performance (Nojani et al., 2012; Poole, 2007; Sultan et al., 2016; Akman, 2018). Furthermore, evidence suggests that enhancing school managers'

leadership competencies can strengthen organizational justice, thereby boosting teacher motivation and effectiveness.

## II. Context of the Study

Every nation regards education as a cornerstone of national policy (UNESCO, 2017), and teaching remains one of society's most esteemed professions. In higher education, instructors shoulder a critical responsibility: to equip students with deep disciplinary knowledge, a grasp of social and natural principles, practical skills, and the capacity for independent, creative problem-solving (Law on Vietnamese Higher Education, 2012). Consequently, teachers are indispensable architects of a country's future human capital (Tadesse, 2020; Van Nguyen, 2021).

To meet these demands, educators must adopt learner-centered strategies and remain professionally proactive. This entails continuous engagement with emerging knowledge and pedagogical methods, as well as a genuine passion for teaching and dedication to students' long-term development (Dung, 2014; Tadesse, 2020; Van Nguyen, 2021). Therefore, when appointing university faculty, institutions should prioritize candidates' commitment to ongoing growth and willingness to invest time and effort in their teaching practice.

The calibre of faculty not only shapes individual student outcomes but also influences the broader cohort's intellectual growth, professional conduct, and work ethic. Research shows that students guided by highly skilled instructors consistently achieve superior learning gains compared to those taught by less experienced teachers (Lee & Lee, 2020; Nguyen, 2018; Strong, 2011). However, effective teaching requires more than initial qualifications: it depends on sustained professional development, hands-on experience, and reflective practice.

Without rigorous oversight and incentives for continuous knowledge updating, research engagement, and pedagogical innovation, instruction risks stagnation. Lectures may become formulaic over a semester or academic year, undermining training quality and, ultimately, jeopardizing the institution's academic mission. Maintaining excellence in higher education thus demands both individual teacher commitment and institutional structures that foster ongoing professional growth.

### Vietnam Higher Education system (VHEs):

Vietnam's higher education system is built upon a socialist, people-centered framework grounded in Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Ho Chi Minh. Its overarching mission is to cultivate well-rounded individuals endowed with ethical integrity, professional expertise, cultural literacy, health, and aesthetic sensibilities. Organized across multi-disciplinary universities, academy systems, and specialized institutes, the sector comprises 237 institutions as of the 2023–2024 academic year: 172 public and 65 private. Public institutions, which account for over 72 % of the total, play the principal role in national higher education.

Governance combines strong state oversight with a growing autonomy agenda. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) exercises regulatory authority over admissions, quality assurance, accreditation, and curriculum frameworks, while also formulating sectoral policy. Public universities may manage personnel, academic programs, research activities, and finances within this framework. Private institutions, permitted since 1988 under Vietnam's education-socialization policy, operate as education service enterprises; however, since 2009 they have been barred from offering programs in education, law, politics, journalism, police, and military studies.

Vietnam's universities cover fields from economics, technology, and social sciences to health and the arts. Many—such as Hanoi Medical University (est. 1902), the Vietnam University of Fine Arts (1924), and Vietnam National University (1945)—feature long histories, while non-public universities are largely recent. By 2024, the system enrolled 447 483 students (78.3 % in public and 21.7 % in private institutions) and employed 74 987 teaching staff (59 259 in public universities). Degree offerings span four levels—bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional diplomas (e.g., medicine, pharmacy, architecture)—with a typical duration of 4 + 2 + 3–4 years. To enhance global engagement and program quality, many institutions now pursue joint ventures with foreign partners and implement advanced curricula.

### Teachers Pay Policies:

Public university faculty in Vietnam are remunerated according to government scales, with contracts classified as either salaried (fixed monthly compensation) or hourly (paid by the teaching hour). Total compensation comprises a base salary plus statutory allowances for transport, housing, and other benefits. As of 2021, the average monthly income for a public university lecturer is approximately 12.9 million VND ( $\approx$  560 USD), ranging from 6.72 million VND ( $\approx$  290 USD) at the entry level to 19.8 million VND ( $\approx$  860 USD) at the senior level. Although this exceeds Vietnam's per-capita GDP by a factor of 1.7, it falls well short of the Fast-

Track Initiative benchmark of 3.5 times GDP per capita and the Asian regional average of 2.4 times GDP per capita (OECD, 2010; Hamano, 2008).

Compensation also varies with academic credentials: bachelor's-degree holders typically earn around 6.7 million VND per month, whereas master's and doctoral degree holders command between 12 million and 15 million VND monthly. In contrast, private university educators generally receive higher base salaries and superior allowances, as well as elevated hourly rates, reflecting greater institutional flexibility in pay policies (Van Nguyen, 2021).

#### **Teachers' Emulation and Reward Policies:**

Most universities implement formal emulation and reward policies to align faculty performance with institutional goals and enhance student learning. Although teaching typically generates limited direct revenue (Van Nguyen, 2021), annual evaluations—usually overseen by university leadership—assess each instructor's teaching effectiveness, research output, and service contributions against established criteria. These criteria often include classroom performance, lesson implementation, publication record, and student achievement, supplemented by periodic student course evaluations. However, recent studies highlight persistent flaws in these systems: decision-making can be biased or emotionally driven, and many educators perceive current incentives as disproportionate and ineffective at motivating higher performance (Dung, 2014). To maximize impact, institutions must refine their assessment frameworks to ensure objectivity, equity, and clear linkage between rewards and demonstrable teaching and research excellence.

#### **Academic Staff Appointments Policy:**

Most Vietnamese universities maintain formalized appointment procedures for academic staff, with public institutions typically following more elaborate guidelines. Non-professorial roles are bifurcated into teaching (Teacher, Senior Teacher) and research tracks (Research Associate, Senior Research Engineer/Scientist, Senior Research Scholar). Appointment to these positions requires demonstrable subject-matter expertise or experience, while professorial hires, reappointments, and promotions are governed by institution-specific criteria that often emphasize tenure security—generally spanning five to seven years or the duration of service at assistant, associate, or full professor rank—unless otherwise stipulated in writing. In public universities, tenure-line appointments confer retention until mandatory retirement, whereas private institutions feature leaner administrative hierarchies: their boards of directors make most hiring decisions and favor younger managers with strong leadership competencies (Nguyễn Thị Thu Thủy, 2011). However, surveys and external reviews reveal that ethical considerations and merit-based incentives remain underemphasized—promotions and salary increases frequently hinge on seniority and teaching load rather than teaching quality, curriculum innovation, or research productivity (Vietnam Education Foundation, 2006)—a practice that Provost Thomas J. Vally of Harvard's Vietnam Program argues must shift toward rigorous talent evaluation, development, and retention systems to elevate national educational standards (November 2008).

### **III. Statement of the Problem**

Teachers in higher education frequently exhibit low motivation, leading to job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and diminished teaching quality (Esteve, 1992; Le, 2018; Yean, 2016). In Vietnam, despite steady growth in faculty numbers—74,987 lecturers by 2024 (a 3 % increase over 2019) and 28.8 % holding doctorates—higher education institutions remain understaffed and struggle to retain PhD graduates, 32.3 % of whom work outside academia (MOET, 2020). Moreover, limited research experience and a scarcity of publications in international journals reflect lingering weaknesses in scholarly output compared to regional peers such as Thailand and Malaysia (World Bank, 2008; Scimago, 2017).

One potential driver of these challenges is perceived injustice in university policies governing pay, recognition, and personnel procedures. Subjective decision-making in these areas undermines teachers' trust, motivation, and satisfaction, prompting occupational turnover and undermining research quality (Hamano, 2008). Organizational justice theory suggests that fair treatment enhances dedication and confidence in leadership, whereas injustice fosters absenteeism and counterproductive behaviours (Adams, 1965; Folger & Skarlicki, 1999; Greenberg, 1993). Although numerous studies link workplace justice to employee motivation (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Shah et al., 2012), empirical evidence from Vietnamese universities remains scarce. Therefore, this study examines how distributive, procedural, and interactional justice influence university teachers' work motivation in Hanoi, Vietnam.

#### **IV. Literature Review**

##### **Justice in organizations**

Organizational justice (OJ)—the study of employees’ perceptions of fairness at work—originated in the 1960s with seminal equity-theory experiments by Adams (1963, 1965) and Adams and Freedman (1976). Since then, researchers such as Greenberg (1993, 2011), Konovsky and colleagues (1991, 1994, 1996), Brief et al. (1995), and Tyler et al. (1992, 1996, 1997, 1998) have elaborated its dimensions and consequences. Today, OJ encompasses distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, all of which influence outcomes like commitment, satisfaction, and performance (Greenberg, 2011). Vermeulen and Coetzee (2004) coined the term “organizational equity” to highlight how fair treatment by managers—through transparent, consistent decision-making—shapes employees’ experiences, while Ouyang et al. (2015) and Memarzadeh and Mahmoudi (2010) emphasize its role in social and economic exchanges among employers, subordinates, and peers.

Initially, research focused narrowly on fairness in wage and bonus allocation; more recent studies show that employees also value equitable promotion practices, safe working conditions, and respectful interpersonal treatment (Greenberg, 2005; Lee, 2020). In this paper, we adopt Greenberg’s (1996) multidimensional framework of organizational justice to examine how perceptions of fairness affect both individual attitudes and broader organizational outcomes.

##### **Work Motivation**

Enhancing workplace motivation remains a cornerstone of organizational research due to its decisive role in shaping employee performance, satisfaction, and overall effectiveness. Foundational theories (Maslow’s need hierarchy, Herzberg’s two-factor model, McClelland’s needs theory, Vroom’s expectancy framework, and Locke’s goal-setting approach) collectively define motivation as the direction, intensity, and persistence of effort toward clear objectives. Building on this, Pinder synthesizes internal drives (needs, self-efficacy, values) and external conditions (task design, rewards, leadership support) as joint determinants of work behavior. In education, Han and Yin (2016) highlight that teachers’ intrinsic values and sustained perseverance underpin not only instructional quality but also the ethical climate of schools. Across professions, Ifinedo demonstrates that highly motivated employees display greater dedication and alignment with organizational goals, while Muhammad et al. link motivation directly to institutional prosperity. Moreover, intrinsic motivation, fueling creativity and innovation when tasks resonate with personal interests, has been shown by Amabile and others to enhance idea generation and problem solving. Psychological models further portray motivation as a dynamic process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-directed actions, enabling individuals to overcome obstacles and adapt to change. This dual nature—extrinsic incentives such as compensation and recognition alongside intrinsic rewards like mastery, autonomy, and purpose—forms the basis of Leonard and Lin’s (1999) integrative perspective. Recognizing that motivation fluctuates with shifts in personal values, job characteristics, and environmental factors, our study adopts Steers and Porter’s definition of motivation as an individual’s willingness to exert effort toward organizational objectives. This robust framework has been validated in diverse contexts and offers a comprehensive lens through which to examine how internal dispositions and external stimuli converge to foster sustained, goal-oriented behaviors in today’s dynamic workplaces.

##### **Justice in Income Results, Income Distribution Process and Teachers’ Work Motivation**

Teachers’ remuneration comprises base salaries defined by official pay scales and supplementary benefits—transportation and meal allowances, seniority increments, bonuses, and the like. “Justice in income results” reflects educators’ perceptions of equitable compensation for comparable roles and the alignment of rewards with individual contributions. Equally important is the fairness, consistency and transparency of the pay-distribution process. Prior research underscores its significance: Zoghi (2003) identified distributive justice as a primary driver of work motivation, while Stringer and Didham (2011) demonstrated that perceived inequities elicit dissatisfaction and erode intrinsic motivation. Empirical studies further substantiate these claims. Alam and Farid (2011) surveyed 80 secondary-school teachers in Rawalpindi, finding that proportional salaries incentivize skill development and performance improvements. Nguyễn Thị Thu Thủy (2011) similarly reported that teachers demand income commensurate with effort and preferential treatment relative to other professions; disparities influence their commitment and turnover intentions (Hassan & Chandaran, 2005; George & Sabapathy, 2011).

##### **Justice in Recognition and Teachers’ Work Motivation**

“Justice in recognition” refers to the procedures and criteria by which universities acknowledge and reward faculty members’ contributions beyond routine responsibilities. Fair recognition demands transparent, consistently applied guidelines for non-monetary rewards—such as titles conferred by election, commemorative awards, and symbolic bonuses—and an accurate appraisal of teaching performance. Recognition fosters both

individual engagement and organizational vitality. Alam and Farid (2011) argue that meaningful acknowledgment attracts and retains high-caliber educators by signaling institutional investment in their professional growth. Conversely, Andrews (2011) reports that dissatisfaction with opaque evaluation processes undermines instructional quality in US and UK schools, while systematic recognition programs enhance teacher motivation and classroom performance. Iliya and Ifeoma (2015) further identify supportive recognition as a cornerstone of sustained professional development, and Shah et al. (2012) emphasize that rewarding employee contributions is critical to organizational success. However, to maintain its motivational power, recognition must be proportional to demonstrable achievements (Fletcher & Weinstein, 2002).

### **Justice in Opportunities for Promotion and Teachers' Work Motivation**

Promotion—the elevation of an individual to higher rank, responsibility and remuneration—is a pivotal career milestone that sustains employee motivation and job satisfaction (Sinclair, 2008). In this study, justice in promotion encompasses equitable access to higher positions, status and benefits for teachers with comparable qualifications, tenure, performance and seniority, as well as a transparent, ethically grounded decision-making process (Garcia-Izquierdo, 2012; Becton et al., 2014). Empirical evidence underscores its motivational impact: young teachers' drive is strongly shaped by perceived promotion prospects, which afford professional development and enhanced status (Sinclair, 2008; Sharma & Jyoti, 2010). When promotion policies are viewed as objective and fair, educators exhibit greater engagement and organizational commitment (George & Sabapathy, 2011). Furthermore, teachers who derive intrinsic satisfaction from teaching respond positively to opportunities for career advancement (Lohman, 2006). Classical organizational justice theory likewise identifies promotion procedures as central to perceived process fairness (Greenberg, 1987; Folger & Konovsky, 1989).

### **Justice in the Attitudes and Treatments of Colleagues and Teachers' Work Motivation**

In the context of teachers' work motivation, peer justice—defined here as the fair recognition and acknowledgment of colleagues' contributions, and the equitable distribution of support and collaboration—addresses fundamental social needs and underpins a fulfilling work environment. According to Maslow's hierarchy, "love and belonging" needs are met through positive interpersonal interactions (Maslow, 1954), and, given that teachers typically spend more time with colleagues than with family over a standard forty-hour workweek, the quality of these relationships is crucial. Deci and Ryan (2002) have shown that workplace relationships serve both instrumental goals (e.g., knowledge exchange) and psychological needs (e.g., friendship), and positive peer relationships have been linked to greater job satisfaction and well-being (Forrest & Love, 2007). Empirical studies in educational settings confirm that collegial support motivates teachers and enhances performance: having close friendships at work correlates with higher intrinsic motivation and work quality (Akman, 2018), and a collegial climate strongly predicts teachers' commitment and intent to remain in their positions (Akhtar et al., 2010; Fernet et al., 2010; Basford & Offermann, 2012). Conversely, strained or unjust peer interactions are associated with reduced engagement and counterproductive behaviors (Hung et al., 2009; Al-Salameh, 2014; Eskildsen et al., 2004). Thus, fostering justice in attitudes and treatment among colleagues emerges as a key lever for enhancing teachers' motivation and organizational retention.

### **Justice in the Attitudes and Treatments of Direct Leadership and Teachers' Work Motivation**

In educational settings, the fairness of leadership—defined as principals' and managers' equitable attitudes, transparent decision-making, and unbiased recognition of teachers' contributions—plays a pivotal role in shaping teachers' motivation. School leaders' core responsibilities include designing effective programs and fostering instructional improvement (Arar, 2013). When principals enact procedural justice (e.g., involving teachers in evaluations), distributive justice (e.g., fair allocation of tasks and rewards), and interactional justice (e.g., respectful, honest communication), they cultivate trust and commitment among staff (Colquitt, 2005; Cropanzano, 2002). Empirical evidence demonstrates that perceived leadership justice boosts job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation: Justice in leadership treatment predicts heightened teacher engagement and intent to remain, both directly and indirectly (Eyal & Roth, 2011; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Oren et al., 2013; Peters et al., 2010). Studies by Bernanthos (2018) and Wayan et al. (2019) confirm a positive, significant impact of just leadership on teacher motivation, while Tung (2018) highlights the critical link between leaders' treatment and teachers' intrinsic drive. Moreover, teachers' perceptions of justice in their relationships with leaders influence their performance and organizational commitment, affecting choices to stay, contribute, or depart (Ahuja, 1976; Akman, 2018; Hassan & Chandran, 2005). Hence, fostering justice in leadership attitudes and practices is essential for sustaining motivated, high-performing teaching staff.

### **Justice in the Students' Evaluation of Teachers and Teachers' Work Motivation**

In teaching, students' fair evaluation—encompassing respectful, honest, and sincere feedback—serves as a critical form of interactional and distributive justice that directly influences teachers' work motivation. Many educators enter the profession driven by their enthusiasm for engaging with eager learners (Sinclair, 2008), and positive student–teacher rapport not only promotes active learning but also reinforces teachers' professional satisfaction (Atma et al., 2021). When students demonstrate constructive attitudes toward learning and provide balanced assessments of instructional quality—acknowledging teachers' subject mastery, commitment, and availability—it fosters teachers' sense of efficacy and fuels intrinsic motivation (Lee et al., 1991; Gan et al., 2021; Jena et al., 2013). Nojani (2012) found that working with high-achieving students significantly elevates teachers' drive, whereas challenging classroom dynamics can undermine it. Furthermore, procedural fairness in evaluation—such as transparent grading practices and consistent criteria—reinforces teachers' trust in the appraisal process and bolsters their long-term commitment to the profession (Tung, 2018). Thus, ensuring justice in students' evaluations emerges as a pivotal lever for sustaining teacher motivation, performance, and retention.

### **Justice in the Attitudes and Evaluation of Society and Teachers' Work Motivation**

In educational ecosystems, societal justice—manifested as public respect, recognition of teachers' contributions, and supportive policy frameworks—constitutes a vital external resource shaping teachers' motivation. As architects of future generations, educators depend not only on institutional support but also on the broader community's appraisal of their work (Jena et al., 2013). When society undervalues teaching—through meager status, insufficient incentives, or dismissive attitudes—teachers experience heightened stress and diminished professional commitment, increasing turnover intentions (Lobosco & Newman, 1992; Nojani, 2012). Conversely, societal endorsement—reflected in respectful behavior from families, media acknowledgement, and government incentive policies—bolsters teachers' sense of worth, intrinsic motivation, and career attachment (Alam & Faid, 2011; Din et al., 2012). Indeed, teachers who perceive equitable societal evaluation report greater job satisfaction and sustained engagement, underscoring the need for communities and policymakers to affirm the teaching profession through tangible recognition and support (Dung, 2014).

## **V. Research Questions and Hypothesis Development**

### **1. Research Questions:**

This study addresses two overarching objectives:

- Examine university teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and its impact on work motivation at selected public and private universities in Hanoi, Vietnam, by asking:
  - ① What are the current levels of work motivation and perceived justice among these teachers?
  - ② How do motivation and justice perceptions vary according to age, qualification, position, tenure, and university type?
  - ③ What is the nature and strength of the relationship between distinct justice dimensions (Justice in income level, income distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, interpersonal treatment by leaders/colleagues/students, and societal evaluation of teaching) and work motivation?
  - ④ Which justice dimension(s) most strongly predict teachers' motivation?
  - ⑤ How do qualitative interviews deepen our understanding of how these justice perceptions shape motivation?
- Identify strategies for enhancing work motivation through the creation of a fair working environment—specifically fair compensation, equitable promotion and selection processes, meaningful recognition, and respectful treatment, by asking:
  - ① What practical recommendations emerge from our findings to strengthen motivational outcomes via improved organizational justice practices?

### **2. Hypothesis Development:**

The following hypotheses were formulated to address the research questions:

- H0 (Overall Justice): Teachers' overall perception of organizational justice is positively related to their work motivation.
- H1 (Justice in income level): Perceived fairness of income outcomes is positively related to work motivation.
- H2 (Justice in income distribution): Perceived fairness of income distribution is positively related to work motivation.
- H3 (Justice in Promotion Opportunities): Perceived fairness of opportunities for promotion is positively related to work motivation.

- H4 (Justice in Recognition): Perceived fairness of recognition practices is positively related to work motivation.
- H5 (Justice in leadership treatment): Perceived fairness in leaders' attitudes and treatment is positively related to work motivation.
- H6 (Justice in colleague treatment): Perceived fairness in colleagues' attitudes and treatment is positively related to work motivation.
- H7 (Justice in student evaluations of Teachers): Perceived fairness in students' evaluations of teaching is positively related to work motivation.
- H8 (Justice in societal evaluation of the teaching profession.): Perceived fairness in society's evaluation of the teaching profession is positively related to work motivation.

Together, these hypotheses allow us to assess both the global effect of justice perceptions on motivation and the unique contributions of each justice dimension.

## VI. Methodology

### 1. Logic of the Study

Over the past decades, organizational justice has emerged as a critical concern in Vietnam's higher-education sector. University leaders and policymakers recognize that fair treatment—including equitable pay, transparent promotion processes, meaningful recognition, and respectful interpersonal relations—is essential both for retaining faculty and for maximizing their contribution to student learning and institutional success. This study therefore set out to (1) assess teachers' perceptions of justice across eight dimensions—income outcomes, income distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, leadership behavior, collegial behavior, student evaluations, and societal valuation of the profession—and their association with work motivation; and (2) derive evidence-based recommendations for fostering a fair work environment that enhances motivation and job satisfaction.

Guided by an adaptation of the Theory of Planned Behavior, our conceptual framework treats teachers' motivational attitudes and behaviors as the dependent variable, with the eight justice dimensions as predictors, while controlling for age, qualifications, position, tenure, and university type. This model enables us to identify which aspects of perceived fairness most powerfully drive motivation and to explore, via qualitative inquiry, the lived experiences behind the survey data.

We employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. In Phase 1 (QUAN), an online questionnaire measuring perceptions of each justice dimension and work-motivation indicators was distributed to faculty at selected public and private universities in Hanoi. Statistical analyses determined the predictive strength of each justice component and identified outliers for follow-up. In Phase 2 (qual), semi-structured interviews (20–40 minutes, conducted in person or via phone/social media) probed the experiences of teachers with the most extreme or unexpected survey scores. Interview questions focused on how specific fairness practices shaped their motivation, allowing us to contextualize and deepen quantitative findings.

Finally, by integrating quantitative trends with qualitative insights, we distilled practical strategies and policy recommendations—targeting pay structures, promotion criteria, recognition systems, and everyday interactions—to help university administrators and policymakers cultivate a work environment that is both just and highly motivating for teachers. A summary of the methods used in this study is presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Overview of Sequential Explanatory Mixed methods (QUAN-qual) used in this Study

|   | Quantitative Method           | Qualitative Method |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Research Questions  | Detailed Statistical Analysis | In-dept Interview  |
| 1. What are the current levels of work motivation and perceived justice among these teachers?   | X                             |                    |
| 2. How do motivation and justice perceptions vary according to age, qualification, position, tenure, and university type?   | X                             |                    |
| 3. What is the nature and strength of the relationship between distinct justice dimensions (Justice in income level, income distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, interpersonal treatment by leaders/colleagues/students, and societal evaluation of teaching) and work motivation? | X                             |                    |
| 4. Which justice dimension(s) most strongly predict teachers'   | X                             |                    |

motivation?

5. How do qualitative interviews deepen our understanding of how these justice perceptions shape motivation? X

6. What practical recommendations emerge from our findings to strengthen motivational outcomes via improved organizational justice practices? X

All questionnaire and interview items were grounded in established theories and prior research. Once the required data were collected, the researcher cleaned and coded the responses and conducted statistical analyses using SPSS 25.

## 2. Data Sampling

This study examined the impact of perceived organizational justice on faculty work motivation at public and private universities in Hanoi, Vietnam. Drawing on Ministry of Education and Training data for 2020, there are 74 public and 14 non-public universities in the city. Our target population comprised teaching staff (lecturers, associate professors, professors, and deans/vice-deans) across both sectors.

### 1. Quantitative Phase (QUAN):

We employed a two-stage cluster and simple random sampling procedure. First, 13 universities (8 public, 5 private) were randomly selected from the full list of 88 institutions in Hanoi. Within those universities, we used Slovin's formula, with a 5% (0.05) marginal error, to calculate a required sample of 400 faculty members from an estimated pool of 10,000. From an initial distribution of 500 questionnaires (paper and online), we received 416 valid responses (83% response rate), of which 107 (25.7%) were paper-based and 309 (74.3%) were web-based. All responses were cleaned, coded, and analyzed in SPSS 25.

### 2. Qualitative Phase (qual):

Building on quantitative results, we conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 14 participants: two lecturers from Vietnam National University, two department leaders (National Economics University and University of Labour and Social Affairs), and eight faculty members from five additional institutions (three public—specializing in social affairs, agriculture, economics, and technology—and two private—specializing in economics, business administration, and technology). An additional six interviews were held with faculty from four public and two private universities to enrich and triangulate the emerging themes. Interviews (20–40 minutes) were conducted face-to-face or remotely (phone/social apps) as needed.

This sequential explanatory design allowed us first to quantify relationships between justice perceptions and motivation, then to explore participants' lived experiences in depth.

## 3. Data Collection

### 3.1 Quantitative Instruments

#### - Quantitative Instruments:

All survey items and scales are detailed in Appendix I (instruments) and Appendix II (item listings). The questionnaire comprised two parts: (1) demographic characteristics and (2) multi-item scales measuring work motivation and various dimensions of perceived organizational justice. Respondents indicated their agreement on 5-point Likert scales (1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree").

**Demographic Characteristics.** Participants reported their gender, age, job title, years of teaching experience, highest educational qualification, and type of employing institution.

**Work Motivation.** We employed Steers and Porter's (1983) six-item scale to assess teachers' desire, consistency, and persistence in completing work tasks. A sample item is: "I make a sustained effort to finish my work in any situation."

**Perceived Justice.** Following Colquitt (2001), Leventhal (1980), Niehoff and Moorman (1993), Tyler (1989), and Tyler and Lind (1992), we measured seven facets of fairness:

- ① **Distributive Justice (Income Results).** Six items evaluated satisfaction with the school's compensation system.
- ② **Procedural Justice (Income Distribution Process).** Four items assessed perceptions of fairness in salary-allocation procedures.
- ③ **Recognition Justice.** Seven items captured fairness in acknowledging teachers' achievements.
- ④ **Promotional Justice.** Seven items evaluated the equity of promotion-decision processes.
- ⑤ **Leadership Justice.** Twelve items addressed fair treatment and decision-making by school leaders and managers.



- ⑥ Collegial Justice. Seven items measured peers' fairness in attitudes and behaviors toward respondents' performance.
- ⑦ Student Justice. Five items assessed perceived fairness in students' treatment of teachers.
- ⑧ Societal Justice. Five items (Tyler & Lind, 1992) gauged respondents' perceptions of society's evaluation of the teaching profession over time.

Each justice dimension was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree"). Continuous reliability and validity analyses are reported in Section 4.2.

#### - Pilot test of Quantitative Survey Questionnaire:

A pilot study of the survey was conducted with 45 university instructors drawn from four Hanoi institutions (two public and two private) selected for their accessibility and similarity to the study's target schools. Following data collection, we assessed internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha for each scale and for the instrument as a whole. The resulting reliability coefficients for all item sets are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Test Results for the Pilot Study.

| Scales   | <i>n</i> Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Teachers' Work Motivation                                  | 6              | .796             |
| Justice In Income Level                                    | 6              | .841             |
| Justice In Income Distribution                             | 4              | .839             |
| Justice In Promotion Opportunities                         | 7              | .859             |
| Justice In Recognition                                     | 7              | .821             |
| Justice In Leadership Treatment                            | 7              | .865             |
| Justice In Colleague Treatment                             | 12             | .942             |
| Justice In Student Evaluations Of Teachers                 | 5              | .845             |
| Justice In Societal Evaluation Of The Teaching Profession. | 5              | .888             |

### 3.2 Qualitative

#### - Qualitative Instruments:

To deepen our understanding of the quantitative results, we implemented a qualitative follow-up phase consistent with Creswell's (2018) sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Key quantitative findings—such as outliers, significant predictors and outcomes, nonsignificant results, and noteworthy demographic patterns—informed the development of our semi-structured interview protocol. We invited a subset of survey respondents to participate in telephone or social-media interviews, using open-ended questions aligned with our conceptual framework. All conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and synthesized for thematic analysis.

#### - Qualitative Data–Collection Procedures:

Upon completing the quantitative analyses and coding of open-ended survey responses, we initiated the qualitative phase to enrich and clarify our findings regarding how distinct dimensions of organizational justice influence teachers' work motivation, and to elicit practical strategies for enhancement. Using purposeful sampling, we invited 20 survey respondents—comprising lecturers, associate professors, and professors—to participate in one-on-one interviews; 16 agreed. Interviews lasted 20–40 minutes and were conducted either in person at locations chosen by participants (when feasible) or remotely via telephone and social-media platforms. All sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to thematic analysis.

### 3.3 Validity and Reliability

Test validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures the construct it purports to assess (Taherdoost, 2016), was first confirmed through expert review of the questionnaire items (Steers & Porter, 1983; Colquitt, 2001; Leventhal et al., 1980; Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). To establish factorial validity, we then performed exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation. Sampling adequacy was supported by a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of 0.862, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant

( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that the data matrix was appropriate for factor extraction. Table 3 presents the KMO and Bartlett's test results for the items measuring university teachers' perceptions of justice and their impact on work motivation.

Table 3: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test for Teachers' work motivation

|   |                    |             |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy</b> |                    | <b>.862</b> |
| <b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>    | Approx. Chi-Square | 601.050     |
|   | df                 | 15          |
|   | Sig.               | <b>.000</b> |

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) employed orthogonal (Varimax) rotation with Kaiser normalization to enhance interpretability. Loadings below 0.30 were suppressed, and only coefficients  $\geq 0.40$  were retained for factor interpretation, consistent with Morgan et al. (2020). As shown in Table 4, the single motivation factor which measured by six survey items, explained 49.7 % of the total variance, supporting its construct validity.

Table 4: Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization for Teachers' Work Motivation

| Items  | Factor:<br>Teachers'<br>Motivation | Work | ESSL % of<br>Variance |
|--|------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| I make a sustained effort to finish off the work in any situation  | .706                               |      |                       |
| I always try to avoid the mistakes while I am doing my job         | .748                               |      |                       |
| I make a sustained effort to finish off the work for the school    | .724                               |      |                       |
| I am fine with the school's schedule, even I have to work overtime | .670                               |      | 49.7                  |
| I am so excited about my current job                               | .685                               |      |                       |
| I always think about my job even when I am home                    | .693                               |      |                       |

\*Note: ESSL refers to Extraction Sums of Squared Loading

Similarly, for the justice-related questionnaire items, we performed exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation, alongside the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO values  $\geq 0.60$  are considered acceptable for factor analysis. As displayed in Table 5, the KMO indices for each of the eight justice dimensions were: Justice in income level (F1): 0.771; Justice in Income Distribution (F2): 0.755; Justice in Recognition (F3): 0.737; Justice in Promotion Opportunities (F4): 0.779; Justice in colleague treatment (F5): 0.837; Justice in leadership treatment (F6): 0.713; Justice in student evaluations of Teachers (F7): 0.825; Justice in societal evaluation of the teaching profession. (F8): 0.676.

Bartlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the inter-item correlations were sufficient for factor extraction. Together, these results confirm that the survey items are both adequate and appropriate for the identified justice factors.

Table 5: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test for Each Aspects of Justice

|                                  | <b>Factors</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                  | F1             | F2          | F3          | F4          | F5          | F6          | F7          | F8          |
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | <b>.771</b>    | <b>.755</b> | <b>.737</b> | <b>.779</b> | <b>.837</b> | <b>.713</b> | <b>.825</b> | <b>.676</b> |
| Approx. Chi-Square               | 626.780        | 411.244     | 1390.505    | 1275.582    | 994.855     | 7359.225    | 612.708     | 1957.235    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity    |                |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| df                               | 15             | 6           | 21          | 21          | 21          | 66          | 10          | 10          |
| Sig.                             | <b>.000</b>    | <b>.000</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.000</b> | <b>.000</b> |

Varimax rotation identified eight distinct justice dimensions, each explaining a meaningful proportion of variance: Justice in income level (F1) accounted for 47.5 %, Justice in Income Distribution (F2) 58.7 %, Justice in Recognition (F3) 16.3 %, Justice in Promotion Opportunities (F4) 14.8 %, Justice in colleague treatment (F5) 50.5 %, Justice in leadership treatment (F6) 8.6 %, Justice in student evaluations of Teachers (F7) 56.6 %, and

Justice in societal evaluation of the teaching profession. (F8) 65.1 %. Table 6 summarizes these exploratory factor analysis results, using Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. Together, the eight factors—measured by 53 items—demonstrate robust construct validity for teachers’ perceptions of organizational justice.

Table 6: Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization for Teachers’ Perception of Justice Aspects

| Items/ Variables   | Factor |      |      |      |    |    |    |    | ESSL<br>of %<br>Variance |
|--|--------|------|------|------|----|----|----|----|--------------------------|
|  | F1     | F2   | F3   | F4   | F5 | F6 | F7 | F8 |                          |
| My income is commensurate with the work I completed  | .645   |      |      |      |    |    |    |    | 47.5                     |
| My income reflects what I have contributed to the school   | .810   |      |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| My income level is fair compared to the administrative division of the school  | .620   |      |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| My income level is fair compared to other professions  | .713   |      |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| My income level is fair compared to other school teachers  | .656   |      |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| My income level is fair compared to other people in the same position in the school  | .675   |      |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| I can recommend to the school about my income level  |        | .728 |      |      |    |    |    |    | 58.7                     |
| The process of paying salaries is consistent with everyone   |        | .728 |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The process of paying salaries is objective  |        | .813 |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The pay grade in the school is clearly explained   |        | .791 |      |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| I and my colleagues are received the appreciation for our extra efforts and contributions                                  |        |      | .827 |      |    |    |    |    | 16.3                     |
| I and my colleagues are received the appreciation for our hard work  |        |      | .932 |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| I and my colleagues are received the praises for our good work   |        |      | .605 |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| I and my colleagues are received the notices when we do the best job possible  |        |      | .875 |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| I and my colleagues are clearly explained about the criteria for recognition of achievements                               |        |      | .582 |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The process of evaluating and recording the achievements of teachers in my school is consistent with the ethical standards |        |      | .938 |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| Overall, the recognition of my achievements at my school is fair   |        |      | .478 |      |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The promotion decisions at my school are for the school's common goals   |        |      |      | .536 |    |    |    |    | 14.8                     |
| The opportunity to be promoted at my school is the same for everyone who with similar qualifications                       |        |      |      | .947 |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The promotion decisions of academic staffs at my school are based on competence, not on seniority or relationship          |        |      |      | .600 |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The process of promotion is explained clearly and transparently  |        |      |      | .776 |    |    |    |    |                          |
| The promotion decisions at my school are   |        |      |      | .697 |    |    |    |    |                          |

|   |      |      |
|---|------|------|
| based on accurate information   |      |      |
| The process of promotion at my school is consistent with ethical standards                              | .731 |      |
| Overall, the process of promotion at my school are fair   | .922 |      |
| My colleagues often recognize my successes at the work  | .827 |      |
| I was always considered a team member when we have a project  | .650 |      |
| When deciding issues related to my work, colleagues often care and treat them with kindness             | .648 | 50.5 |
| Colleagues respect my unique characteristics  | .660 |      |
| I am always treated friendly by colleagues  | .795 |      |
| I always receive suggestions from colleagues openly and sincerely                                       | .731 |      |
| In general, my colleagues treated me fairly   | .636 |      |
| My school leaders and principals always make decisions objectively                                      | .449 |      |
| My school leaders and principals always care about the opinions of subordinates before making decisions | .811 |      |
| My school leaders and principals often make decisions based on accurate and complete information        | .864 |      |
| All decision is made by the school leaders and principals consistently for everyone in the faculty      | .600 |      |
| All decision is made by the school leaders and principals in accordance with ethical standards          | .899 |      |
| My school leaders and principals always treat respectfully and friendly with subordinates               | .938 | 8.6  |
| My leadership always discusses with the faculty about the decisions related to their work               | .808 |      |
| I am satisfied with the leadership's explanations on the issues that teachers care about                | .867 |      |
| My leadership always assigns work according to the capacity and ability of lectures                     | .897 |      |
| The tasks that were assigned to the lectures by the school leaders and principals are fair              | .940 |      |
| I get job opportunities like other colleagues   | .721 |      |
| Overall, my direct leadership is always fair to my subordinates   | .866 |      |
| Students always respect me  | .793 |      |
| I always receive the respect and gratitude from students  | .728 |      |
| Students always treat me with a proper and sincere attitude   | .695 | 56.6 |
| The results of the evaluation process are explained clearly to teachers                                 | .760 |      |

|  |      |      |
|--|------|------|
| The process of students evaluating of teacher is objective   | .781 |      |
| Teachers always receive the respect of society for my teaching careers                                 | .659 |      |
| Remuneration policies of the state for teachers show a true appreciation of the importance of teaching | .831 |      |
| I always receive respect from my friends and relatives for my career                                   | .831 | 65.1 |
| Parents of students always treat me with respect   | .859 |      |
| In general, I always receive fair treatment from relatives and the community for my career             | .836 |      |

### 3.4 Reliability of the Study

Following data collection, scale reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha using IBM SPSS v25. The study comprised nine constructs: one dependent variable—teachers' work motivation (six items)—and eight justice-related dimensions (53 items) covering income justice, income distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, leadership attitudes, colleague treatment, student evaluations, and societal evaluations of the teaching profession. As shown in Table 7, all nine Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceed the 0.70 threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2018), confirming the internal consistency of the measures and the appropriateness of the instrument for hypothesis testing.

Table 7: Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis (n = 416).

| Factors                                | Items   | Cronbach's Alpha if item Deleted | Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items |
|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| The level of Teachers' Work Motivation | I make a sustained effort to finish the work in any situation                             | .766                             | .797   |
|  | I always try to avoid the mistakes while I am doing my job                                | .754                             |  |
|  | I make a sustained effort to finish the work on time                                      | .761                             |  |
|  | I am fine with the school's schedule, even I have to work overtime                        | .775                             |  |
|  | I am so excited about my current job  | .771                             |  |
|  | I always think about my job even when I am home   | .769                             |  |
| Justice in income level)               | My income is commensurate with the work I completed                                       | .750                             | .776   |
|  | My income reflects what I have contributed to the school                                  | .702                             |  |
|  | My income level is fair compared to the administrative division of the school             | .760                             |  |
|  | My income level is fair compared to other professions                                     | .736                             |  |
|  | My income level is fair compared to other school teachers                                 | .745                             |  |
|  | My income level is fair compared to other people in the same position in the school       | .740                             |  |
| Justice in Income Distribution         | I can recommend to the school about my income level                                       | .731                             | .765   |
|  | The process of paying salaries is consistent with everyone                                | .730                             |  |
|  | The process of paying salaries is objective   | .677                             |  |
|  | The pay grade in the school is clearly explained  | .694                             |  |
| Justice in Recognition                 | I and my colleagues are received the appreciation for our extra efforts and contributions | .796                             | .827   |
|  | I and my colleagues are received the appreciation for our hard work                       | .791                             |  |
|  | I and my colleagues are received the praises for our good work                            | .808                             |  |
|  | I and my colleagues are received the notices when we do the best job possible             | .802                             |  |
|  | I and my colleagues are clearly explained about the criteria for                          | .814                             |  |

|  |  |      |      |
|--|--|------|------|
|  | recognition of achievements  |      |      |
|  | The process of evaluating and recording the achievements of teachers in my school is consistent with the ethical standards | .793 |      |
|  | Overall, the recognition of my achievements at my school is fair   | .818 |      |
| Justice in Promotion Opportunities         | The promotion decisions at my school are for the school's common goals   | .806 |      |
|  | The opportunity to be promoted at my school is the same for everyone who with similar qualifications                       | .796 |      |
|  | The promotion decisions of academic staffs at my school are based on competence, not on seniority or relationship          | .814 |      |
|  | The process of promotion is explained clearly and transparently  | .813 | .830 |
|  | The promotion decisions at my school are based on accurate information   | .817 |      |
|  | The process of promotion at my school is consistent with ethical standards   | .812 |      |
|  | Overall, the process of promotion at my school are fair  | .789 |      |
| Justice in colleague treatment             | My colleagues often recognize my successes at the work   | .789 |      |
|  | I was always considered a team member when we have a project   | .820 |      |
|  | When deciding issues related to my work, colleagues often care and treat them with kindness                                | .816 |      |
|  | Colleagues respect my unique characteristics   | .823 | .834 |
|  | I am always treated friendly by colleagues   | .797 |      |
|  | I always receive suggestions from colleagues openly and sincerely  | .807 |      |
|  | In general, my colleagues treated me fairly  | .823 |      |
| Justice in leadership treatment            | My school leaders and principals always make decisions objectively   | .889 |      |
|  | My school leaders and principals always care about the opinions of subordinates before making decisions                    | .879 |      |
|  | My school leaders and principals often make decisions based on accurate and complete information                           | .880 |      |
|  | All decision is made by the school leaders and principals consistently for everyone in the faculty                         | .892 |      |
|  | All decision is made by the school leaders and principals in accordance with ethical standards                             | .882 |      |
|  | My school leaders and principals always treat respectfully and friendly with subordinates                                  | .886 | .894 |
|  | My leadership always discusses with the faculty about the decisions related to their work                                  | .879 |      |
|  | I am satisfied with the leadership's explanations on the issues that teachers care about                                   | .880 |      |
|  | My leadership always assigns work according to the capacity and ability of lectures  | .881 |      |
|  | The tasks that were assigned to the lectures by the school leaders and principals are fair                                 | .887 |      |
|  | I get job opportunities like other colleagues  | .885 |      |
|  | Overall, my direct leadership is always fair to my subordinates  | .894 |      |
| Justice in student evaluations of Teachers | Students always respect me   | .755 |      |
|  | I always receive the respect and gratitude from students   | .780 |      |
|  | Students always treat me with a proper and sincere attitude  | .789 | .808 |
|  | The results of the evaluation process are explained clearly to teachers  | .768 |      |
|  | The process of students evaluating of teacher is objective   | .760 |      |
| Justice in societal                        | Teachers always receive the respect of society for my teaching careers   | .874 | .863 |

|  |  |      |
|--|--|------|
| evaluation of the teaching profession. | Remuneration policies of the state for teachers show a true appreciation of the importance of teaching | .830 |
|  | I always receive respect from my friends and relatives for my career                                   | .830 |
|  | Parents of students always treat me with respect   | .816 |
|  | In general, I always receive fair treatment from relatives and the community for my career             | .826 |

### 3.5 Multicollinearity analysis

To ensure that the independent variables retained distinct contributions to teachers' work motivation, we assessed multicollinearity using IBM SPSS v25. Table 8 reports tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values for all justice dimensions. Following Hair et al. (2011), tolerance values below 0.20 or VIFs above 5 signal potential collinearity issues. In our data, every tolerance exceeded 0.20 and all VIFs fell between 1 and 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in this model.

Table 8: Multicollinear Test on Independent Variables.

| No. | Independent Variables                                      | Collinearity Statistic |       |
|-----|--|------------------------|-------|
|     |  | Tolerance              | VIF   |
| 1   | Justice in income level                                    | .347                   | 2.882 |
| 2   | Justice in Income Distribution                             | .245                   | 4.086 |
| 3   | Justice in Recognition                                     | .239                   | 4.191 |
| 4   | Justice in Promotion Opportunities                         | .359                   | 2.783 |
| 5   | Justice in colleague treatment                             | .202                   | 4.963 |
| 6   | Justice in leadership treatment                            | .236                   | 4.237 |
| 7   | Justice in student evaluations of Teachers                 | .399                   | 2.504 |
| 8   | Justice in societal evaluation of the teaching profession. | .257                   | 3.894 |

### 3.6 Ethical Consideration

Participants in this study comprised teachers, managers, and leaders from selected public and non-public universities in Hanoi, Vietnam. All participants are experienced professionals capable of making informed decisions and mentoring others. Participation was entirely voluntary, without coercion from principals, supervisors, colleagues, or the researcher. To protect confidentiality, questionnaires were completed anonymously in secure settings, and neither participants' names nor their institutions will be disclosed. Access to raw data is restricted solely to the researcher, and no identifying information will be released without explicit participant consent.

## VII. Data Analysis

### 1. Results of Quantitative Research

#### 1.1. Descriptive Statistic on the level of University Teachers' Perceptions of Justice in the workplace

Table 9 summarizes the means and standard deviations for university teachers' overall perceptions of workplace justice. Scores above the scale midpoint of 3.0 indicate a positive, high level of perceived fairness, whereas scores at or below 3.0 reflect a negative, low level of perceived justice.

Table 9: The level of Teachers' Perception toward Implementing Justice or Fairness in the Workplace

| Scale   | N   | Mean | SD   |
|---|-----|------|------|
| The level of Teachers' Perception of Justice in the Workplace | 416 | 3.92 | .414 |

Table 9 shows that university teachers in Hanoi reported a mean perception of workplace justice of 3.92 (SD = 0.41) on a 5-point scale, indicating generally high levels of perceived fairness. This finding suggests that these teachers place considerable importance on fair remuneration, equitable promotion opportunities, recognition, and consistent treatment.

#### 1.2. Effect of Demographic Characteristics on Teachers' Perception of Workplace Justice

This study also examined whether demographic factors—namely gender, age, work experience, qualification level, job title, and university type—influence university teachers’ perceptions of justice in the workplace. The findings are summarized in Table

Table 10: Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher’s Perception of Justice in the Workplace

| Model                 | R                 | R <sup>2</sup> | ΔR <sup>2</sup> | Std. E | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|--------|------|
| 1                     | .616 <sup>a</sup> | .379           | .370            | .32848 | 4.495       | 41.659 | .000 |
| Independent Variables |                   |                | B               | S.E.   | Beta (β)    | t      | Sig. |
| Constant              |                   |                | 3.322           | .151   |             | 21.976 | .000 |
| Gender                |                   |                | .344*           | .036   | .415        | 9.510  | .000 |
| Age                   |                   |                | .043            | .024   | .163        | 1.781  | .076 |
| Work Experience       |                   |                | -.041           | .032   | -.119       | -1.284 | .200 |
| Qualification Level   |                   |                | .060            | .044   | .069        | 1.364  | .173 |
| Job Title             |                   |                | .045            | .043   | .059        | 1.034  | .302 |
| Type of University    |                   |                | -.192*          | .036   | -.230       | -5.363 | .000 |

a. Predictors: Gender, Age, Work Experience, Qualification Level, Job Title, Type of university

b. Dependent Variable: Teachers’ Perception of Justice

\*p< 0.001

The results presented in Table 10 indicate that several demographic factors are significantly associated with university teachers’ perceptions of workplace justice. Specifically, gender was positively correlated with justice perceptions ( $r = .344$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and university type exhibited a negative association ( $r = -.192$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with teachers at non-public institutions reporting lower perceptions of fairness than those at public institutions.

### 1.3. Descriptive Statistic on the level of University Teachers’ Work Motivation

Table 11 presents the mean and standard deviation for teachers’ overall work motivation. A mean score above 3.0 denotes a high level of motivation, whereas a score of 3.0 or below denotes a low level.

Table 11: Overall level of Teachers’ Work Motivation at universities in Hanoi

| Scale                     | N   | Mean | SD  |
|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|
| Teachers’ Work Motivation | 416 | 3.87 | .47 |

Table 11 reports a mean work-motivation score of 3.87 (SD = 0.47) on a five-point scale, indicating that university teachers in Hanoi exhibit a generally positive, moderately high level of motivation.

### 1.4. The Influencing of Demographic on the Level of Teachers’ Work Motivation

Table 12: Teacher’s Work Motivation Related to Demographic Aspects (n= 416).

| Zero – Order r                    |                    |               |                     |                 |       |        |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------|--------|--------------------------|
| Variables                         | Type of University | Work Position | Qualification Level | Work Experience | Age   | Gender | Level of Work Motivation |
| Level of Work Motivation          |                    |               |                     |                 |       |        | 1                        |
| Gender<br>(Male:0; Female: 1)     |                    |               |                     |                 |       | 1      | .644*                    |
| Age                               |                    |               |                     |                 | 1     | .327   | .370*                    |
| Work Experience                   |                    |               |                     | 1               | .894  | .357   | .393*                    |
| Qualification Level               |                    |               | 1                   | .540            | .591  | .334   | .408*                    |
| Job Title                         |                    | 1             | .513                | .709            | .684  | .345   | .477*                    |
| Type of University<br>(Public: 0; | 1                  | -.272         | -.318               | -.315           | -.265 | -.326  | -.526*                   |



|             |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Mean</b> | 1.44 | 1.22 | 3.34 | 2.24 | 4.13 | 1.54 | 3.86 |
| <b>SD</b>   | .50  | .54  | .50  | 1.19 | 1.56 | .50  | .47  |

\*p < .01

We conducted a multiple linear regression to predict university teachers' work motivation from six demographic variables (gender, age, work experience, qualification level, job title, and type of university). Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations appear in Table 12. Although all predictors correlated significantly with motivation at  $p < .01$ , only gender ( $\beta = 0.44$ ,  $t = 12.84$ ,  $p < .05$ ), job title ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $t = 5.59$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and type of university ( $\beta = -0.29$ ,  $t = -8.76$ ,  $p < .05$ ) retained independent significance in the full model (Table 13). Together, these six predictors explained 57.8 percent of the variance in work motivation,  $F(6, 409) = 93.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .578$ . Thus, among Hanoi's university faculty, gender, academic rank, and institutional type emerge as the strongest demographic determinants of work motivation.

Table 13: Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher's Work Motivation

| Model                 | R                 | R <sup>2</sup> | $\Delta R^2$ | Std. E           | Mean Square | F      | Sig.              |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| <b>1</b>              | .761 <sup>a</sup> | .578           | .572         | .30806           | 8.874       | 93.504 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
| Independent Variables |                   | B              | S.E.         | Beta ( $\beta$ ) |             | t      | Sig.              |
| Constant              |                   | 3.190          | .142         |                  |             | 22.504 | .000              |
| Gender                |                   | .436           | .034         | .462             |             | 12.843 | .000              |
| Age                   |                   | -.002          | .023         | -.008            |             | -.106  | .916              |
| Work Experience       |                   | -.35           | .030         | -.088            |             | -1.151 | .251              |
| Qualification Level   |                   | .071           | .041         | .072             |             | 1.719  | .086              |
| Job Title             |                   | .227           | .041         | .264             |             | 5.594  | .000              |
| Type of University    |                   | -.294          | .034         | -.310            |             | -8.763 | .000              |

a. Predictors: Gender, Age, Work Experience, Qualification Level, Job Title, Type of university

b. Dependent Variable: Work motivation

### 1.5.Descriptive Statistic on the level of University Teachers' Work Motivation

Table 14:Summarizes the means and standard deviations for each justice dimension and for work motivation.

|  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std.<br>Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|-------------------|
| Level of Work Motivation                                   | 2.33    | 4.83    | 3.86 | .471              |
| Justice in income level                                    | 2.00    | 4.83    | 3.84 | .456              |
| Justice in Income Distribution                             | 1.75    | 5.00    | 3.95 | .530              |
| Justice in Recognition                                     | 2.14    | 4.86    | 3.93 | .472              |
| Justice in Promotion Opportunities                         | 2.14    | 5.00    | 4.00 | .495              |
| Justice in colleague treatment                             | 2.00    | 4.86    | 3.92 | .496              |
| Justice in leadership treatment                            | 2.08    | 4.92    | 3.86 | .398              |
| Justice in student evaluations of Teachers                 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 3.90 | .510              |
| Justice in societal evaluation of the teaching profession. | 1.80    | 5.00    | 3.92 | .565              |
| Valid N (listwise)   |         |         |      |                   |

Table 14 summarizes the descriptive statistics for all study variables. On a five-point scale, perceived justice dimensions yielded the following means (SD): Justice in income level,  $M = 3.84$  (0.46); income-distribution procedures,  $M = 3.95$  (0.53); recognition,  $M = 3.93$  (0.47); promotion opportunities,  $M = 4.00$  (0.50); leadership treatment,  $M = 3.86$  (0.40); colleague treatment,  $M = 3.92$  (0.50); student evaluations,  $M = 3.90$  (0.51); and societal evaluations of teaching,  $M = 3.92$  (0.57). The overall work-motivation score was  $M = 3.86$  (0.47). These results indicate that university teachers in Hanoi generally report high levels of perceived fairness across all justice dimensions as well as strong work motivation. In particular, promotion opportunities and income-distribution procedures scored highest, suggesting robust confidence in these areas. Although

teachers demonstrate clear understanding of institutional policies, the slightly lower mean for income outcomes and leadership treatment points to lingering concerns about equitable pay and consistent leadership practices.

### 1.6.The Relationship Between Teachers’ Work Motivation and the Independent Variables

Table 15: Pearson Correlation Analysis between the level of work motivation and forms of justice

| Constructs  | Mean | S. D | 1             | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10 |
|---|------|------|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----|
| 1.Working Motivation  | 3.86 | .471 | 1             |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 2. Justice in the Workplace                                     | 3.91 | .414 | <b>.729**</b> | 1    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 3. Justice in Income Result                                     | 3.84 | .456 | <b>.712**</b> | .703 | 1    |      |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 4. Justice in Income Distribution                               | 3.95 | .530 | <b>.619**</b> | .826 | .614 | 1    |      |      |      |      |      |    |
| 5. Justice in Recognition                                       | 3.93 | .472 | <b>.616**</b> | .845 | .527 | .695 | 1    |      |      |      |      |    |
| 6. Justice in Promotion   | 3.99 | .496 | <b>.726**</b> | .697 | .543 | .526 | .596 | 1    |      |      |      |    |
| 7. Justice in the attitudes and treatments Colleagues           | 3.92 | .496 | <b>.471**</b> | .836 | .396 | .595 | .700 | .508 | 1    |      |      |    |
| 8. Justice in the attitudes and treatments Direct Leadership    | 3.86 | .398 | <b>.635**</b> | .843 | .631 | .732 | .635 | .523 | .599 | 1    |      |    |
| 9. Justice in the Students’ Evaluation of Teachers              | 3.91 | .510 | <b>.515**</b> | .746 | .458 | .535 | .541 | .408 | .541 | .672 | 1    |    |
| 10. Justice in the Evaluation of Society toward Teaching Career | 3.92 | .565 | <b>.401**</b> | .799 | .377 | .537 | .638 | .397 | .828 | .584 | .521 | 1  |

\*\*Significant at 1 percent level

Dependent Variable: Teachers’ Work motivation

Independent Variable: Justice in the Workplace, Justice in income level; Justice in Income Distribution; Justice in Recognition; Justice in Promotion Opportunities; Justice in colleague treatment; Justice in leadership treatment; Justice in student evaluations of Teachers; Justice in societal evaluation of the teaching profession.

Partial Pearson correlations assessed the strength and direction of associations between university teachers’ work motivation and eight dimensions of perceived organizational justice: income level, income distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, leadership treatment, colleague treatment, student evaluations, and societal evaluation of the teaching profession. Correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) range from  $-1$  to  $+1$ , with positive values indicating direct relationships. As shown in Table 15, overall perceived justice was strongly and positively related to work motivation ( $r = 0.73$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Individually, perceived justice in promotion opportunities exhibited the highest correlation with motivation ( $r = 0.73$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by income level ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), leadership treatment ( $r = 0.64$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), income distribution ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), recognition ( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), student evaluations ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), colleague treatment ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and societal evaluation of teaching ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings indicate that higher perceptions of fairness across all justice dimensions are proportionally associated with greater work motivation among university faculty.

### 1.7. Identifying the Most Powerful Predictors of Perceived Justice toward Improving Teachers' Work Motivation

We conducted separate linear regressions—each controlling for gender, job title, and university type—to examine how eight facets of organizational justice predict work motivation (Table 16). All justice perceptions showed significant, positive associations with motivation (all  $p < .001$ ): income outcomes ( $\beta = .56$ ,  $t(411) = 20.33$ ), promotion opportunities ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $t(411) = 19.69$ ), income-distribution process ( $\beta = .49$ ,  $t(411) = 15.86$ ), recognition ( $\beta = .48$ ,  $t(411) = 15.55$ ), leadership behavior ( $\beta = .48$ ,  $t(411) = 16.55$ ), student feedback ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $t(411) = 11.95$ ), colleague attitudes ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $t(411) = 10.85$ ), and societal evaluation ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $t(411) = 9.02$ ). Explained variance ( $R^2$ ) ranged from 64.3 percent for societal evaluation to 78.7 percent for income outcomes, with promotion opportunities accounting for 78.0 percent, leadership behavior 74.4 percent, the distribution process 73.5 percent, recognition 73.1 percent, student feedback 68.3 percent, and colleague attitudes 66.8 percent of the variance in work motivation.

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics and Linear Regression Predicting the Work Motivation of Teacher

| Variables  | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 | Model 9 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Control Variables  |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Gender   | .242*   | .242*   | .255*   | .176*   | .324*   | .287*   | .325*   | .367*   | 1.97    |
| Work Position  | .134*   | .173*   | .161*   | .117*   | .204    | .141*   | .139*   | .193*   | 1.41    |
| Type of university   | -.164*  | -.193*  | -.194*  | -.170*  | .232*   | -.200*  | -.240*  | .254*   | -1.61   |
| R <sup>2</sup>   | .573    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Independent Variables  |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 1. Justice in Income Result                                    | .563*   |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 2. Justice in Income Distribution                              |         | .488*   |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 3. Justice in Recognition                                      |         |         | .480*   |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| 4. Justice in Opportunities for Promotion                      |         |         |         | .600*   |         |         |         |         |         |
| 5. Justice in the Attitude & Treatment of colleagues           |         |         |         |         | .345*   |         |         |         |         |
| 6. Justice in the Attitude & Treatment of leadership           |         |         |         |         |         | .482*   |         |         |         |
| 7. Justice in the Students' Evaluation of teachers             |         |         |         |         |         |         | .381*   |         |         |
| 8. Justice in the Evaluation of Society toward Teaching Career |         |         |         |         |         |         |         | .284*   |         |
| 9. Justice in the Workplace                                    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         | .676*   |
| Results  |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| R <sup>2</sup>   | .787    | .735    | .731    | .780    | .668    | .744    | .683    | .643    | .796    |
| ΔR <sup>2</sup>  | .214*   | .162*   | .158*   | .207*   | .095*   | .171*   | .110*   | .071*   | .794*   |
| F  | 413.308 | 251.589 | 241.902 | 387.518 | 117.787 | 274.913 | 142.688 | 81.302  | 400.386 |
| t  | 20.330  | 15.862  | 15.553  | 19.685  | 10.853  | 16.550  | 11.945  | 9.017   | 21.191  |
| Std. E   | .029    | .027    | .031    | .029    | .030    | .034    | .029    | .026    | .032    |

\*Significant at 1 percent level

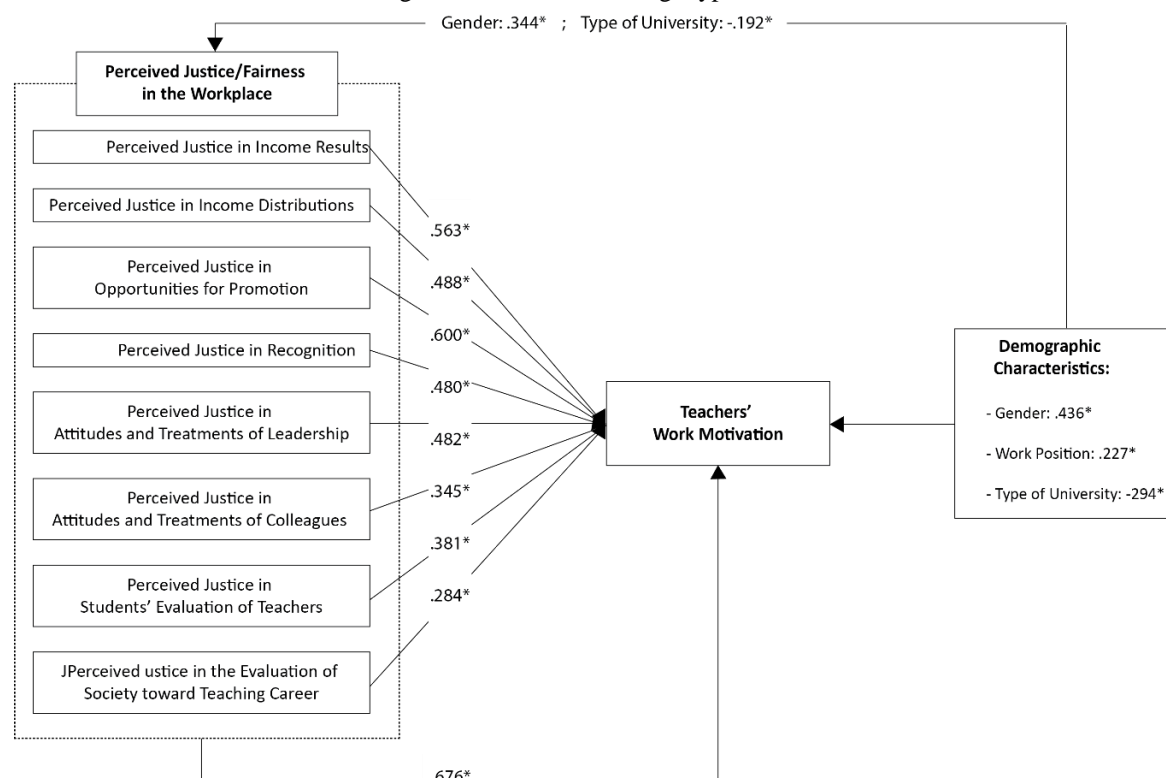
a. Dependent Variable: Work motivation

b. Control Variables: (Constant), Teacher Position, Gender, Type of University, Work Experience, Qualification Level, Age

c. Predictors: Justice in Income Result, Justice in Income Distribution, Justice in Opportunities for Promotion, Justice in Recognition, Justice in Attitudes and Treatment of Leadership, Colleagues, Justice in Students' Evaluation of Teachers, and Justice in the Evaluation of Society toward Teaching Career.

Hence, based on the nine-regression model, the results of the study are provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Results of Testing Hypotheses



## 2. Results of Qualitative Research

### 2.1 Teachers' Perceived Justice in Societal Attitudes Toward the Teaching Profession

Quantitative data reveal that a clear majority of teachers regard societal attitudes and assessments of the teaching career as inequitable: 65 percent of respondents believe that current state remuneration policies systematically undervalue their profession. This finding is corroborated by our qualitative interviews.

One 35-year-old lecturer at a public university explained that *"the state salary scale and its supplementary pay structure fail to motivate because they are tied solely to pay grades rather than to individual contributions or performance."* As a result, especially younger faculty struggle to balance heavy workloads with family responsibilities, exacerbated by salaries that remain low and out of step with stipulations in the Law on Higher Education (Dung, 2014).

A 38-year-old public-university instructor further noted that *"because of inadequate pay, many teachers take on multiple jobs, which sometimes leads to breaches of professional ethics and tarnishes the image of educators in students' and society's eyes. Injustice within the school system also saps our motivation to improve and contribute to institutional success."* Similarly, a public-school teacher lamented that deteriorating societal evaluations of the profession undermine students' confidence in their instructors—undermining the very example teachers strive to set for future generations.

Together, these accounts demonstrate that perceived injustices in state policy and social appraisal significantly dampen teachers' work motivation—and, as previously reported by Din et al. (2012), are closely linked to declines in professional commitment and ethical conduct.

## 2.2 Teachers' Perceived Justice in Collegial Attitudes and Treatment

Qualitative interviews revealed mixed perceptions of workplace justice among colleagues. While many teachers described their interactions as "simple" and largely independent—"since we don't share the same rewards, everyone just does their own work"—others reported tensions arising from perceived income or workload imbalances: "...relationships become strained when one person earns more but contributes less."

In contrast, our quantitative survey (Appendix 4.2) indicates that over 70 percent of respondents experience positive collegial treatment: they feel motivated when respected by peers, included in team activities, supported in their daily tasks, and acknowledged for professional achievements. As one 36-year-old public-school teacher noted, *"it is vital that coworkers appreciate each other's performance and accomplishments; meaningful connections sustain morale and encourage active participation."*

Because qualitative accounts diverge—some emphasizing autonomy and amicability, others highlighting conflict—and quantitative data points overwhelmingly to positive relations, we will rely primarily on the survey results to assess the impact of collegial justice on teachers' work motivation.

## 2.3 Teachers' Perceived Justice in Societal Attitudes Toward the Teaching Profession

Quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of Justice in leadership treatment—specifically in attitudes and evaluations—and their work motivation. While respondents rated leadership attitudes and performance assessments as relatively fair, they rated decision-making procedures and the allocation of tasks and benefits only at a moderate level. This suggests persistent inequities in workload distribution, compensation, and participatory decision-making that undermine teacher motivation.

Qualitative interviews corroborated these findings. A 36-year-old public university lecturer observed that *"Leaders assign extra income-generating duties to a small circle of staff, leaving others feeling forgotten and excluded."*

Similarly, a 41-year-old teacher at a private school reported

*"Only select teachers are informed about—and reap the benefits of—additional training classes (in-service, second-degree, etc.), while most remain unaware of these opportunities."*

Such opaque workload distribution fosters resentment and discourages collaboration.

Interviewees also highlighted limited involvement in policy formation:

*"Regulations are crafted to benefit leadership; regular teachers have no say."*

*"Faculty meetings allow only the dean or vice-dean to speak—the rest of us never get a chance."*

Moreover, many felt that leadership appointments overlooked essential criteria such as professional competence and ethical integrity, exacerbating management weaknesses. As one female public-university lecturer (age 41) remarked:

*"Our dean is professionally talented but avoids difficult decisions for fear of displeasure. He fulfills his basic duties but does nothing to develop our teaching skills, so we all fend for ourselves—especially junior staff, who receive no training or feedback."*

Thus, qualitative findings underscore the pivotal role of perceived fairness in leadership evaluations and assessments in shaping teachers' work motivation. In the large, multidisciplinary universities examined—where each faculty operates as an autonomous unit—direct leaders therefore exert substantial influence. Both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that fair leadership behaviors significantly enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, whereas perceptions of unfair decision-making foster apathy, reduced accountability, and widespread dissatisfaction. Such negative outcomes inevitably compromise instructional performance, professional growth, and overall teaching quality. These results echo Eyal and Roth (2011), who found that supportive, collaborative leadership boosts intrinsic motivation and mitigates work-related stress and fatigue, and are consistent with earlier studies demonstrating that organizational fairness profoundly shapes employee attitudes and behaviors (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Oren et al., 2013).

## 2.4 Teachers' Perceived Justice in Recognition

Overall, teachers rated the fairness of recognition for professional achievements as only moderate. Just over half (52 %) agreed that awards were granted to the appropriate individuals and positions, and 64 % judged the selection process to be objective; similarly, more than 60 % felt that criteria were applied consistently across all faculty.

Nevertheless, many educators described the emulation and commendation system as largely ceremonial. One mid-career faculty member observed that *"titles are indiscriminately conferred, so awards no longer reflect actual effort or contribution."* Others echoed this sentiment, noting that limited annual workload quotas reduce recognition to a predetermined "allocation" of honours rather than a merit-based process. In practice, faculty vote to distribute awards in rotation, diluting both the prestige and motivational value of each distinction.

Conversely, several teachers argued that student appraisal of instructional quality constitutes the most meaningful form of recognition. As one respondent remarked, *“Even if peers and administrators applaud one’s lectures, indifferent student evaluations or low enrolment signal that true professional success has not been achieved.”*

These findings suggest considerable variability in how justice in recognition is perceived. Although formal policies for emulation and reward are in place, their impact is undermined by constrained award quotas and procedural uniformity, leading many teachers to question the system’s validity and motivational efficacy.

## 2.5 Teachers’ Perceived Justice in Student Evaluations

Quantitative results indicate that students’ evaluations exert a strong, positive influence on teachers’ work motivation. An over 70 % of respondents feel respected by their students, and 75 % report that students treat them with sincerity—perceptions that significantly bolster their enthusiasm for teaching.

Qualitative interviews reinforce this finding. One instructor reflected:

*“I enjoy working with students. Their engagement motivates me, giving me the opportunity to put my ideas into practice and share them meaningfully.”*

Another recounted the enduring warmth of former students:

*“Although I no longer teach certain cohorts, my past students still reach out every November 20th—Vietnamese Teachers’ Day—to send flowers and congratulations. Their genuine appreciation deeply moves me.”*

While direct investigations of justice in student evaluations are scarce, earlier scholarship confirms that students’ attitudes shape teacher motivation. For instance, Tyler et al. (1991), and Lee et al. (1991) each demonstrate that positive student learning behaviors and attitudes correlate with higher levels of teacher satisfaction and drive.

Together, these findings suggest that when teachers perceive student evaluations as fair and heartfelt, their professional motivation and commitment are substantially enhanced.

## 2.6 Teachers’ Perceptions of Fairness in Income Distribution

Teachers’ perceptions of fairness in how salaries are allocated directly influence their work motivation. An over 55.3 percent of respondents believe salary payments are administered equitably, 53 percent report that pay scales are clearly communicated, and 50 percent regard the procedures as objective.

Qualitative interviews echoed these findings and revealed important nuances. In public universities, where salaries adhere strictly to government-prescribed scales, most teachers noted transparency in the formal pay process. A 41-year-old female lecturer observed that, although official salaries follow standardized coefficients, they often fail to reflect individual performance. As a result, many faculty members supplement their income through external teaching engagements and research grants.

In private institutions, salary structures are likewise published, yet few teachers feel empowered to evaluate pay decisions. While standard three-year increments are intended to bolster motivation, ambiguity in early-promotion criteria undermines their effectiveness. A 41-year-old male instructor explained that although accelerated raises may occur after two years of service, the evaluation framework remains opaque and is managed exclusively by human resources.

These insights extend the quantitative scales by identifying perceived unfairness in the criteria for early salary increments—an issue not captured in the original survey. Taken together, the data confirm that transparent, well-defined income distribution procedures enhance teachers’ motivation, whereas opaque evaluation mechanisms erode their sense of justice.

## 2.7 Teachers’ Perceptions of Fairness in Income Outcomes

Perceived fairness in actual income outcomes substantially influences teachers’ work motivation. A roughly half of respondents agree that (1) their pay does not reflect the work they perform, (2) salary fails to capture their contributions to the institution, and (3) income levels are unfair relative to comparable professions and peers at other schools.

Qualitative interviews reinforced these concerns. A 36-year-old lecturer at a public university lamented that *“the official salary is insufficient to offset the pressures and preparation time required—what I earn resembles a helper’s wage, not that of a qualified professional. Every minute in front of students demands intense mental effort to deliver clear, engaging lectures, yet compensation remains disproportionately low.”*

Historical data from the Vietnam Education Fund (VEF 2014) corroborates this sentiment, noting that *“while budgets are tight, the average salary for university teachers in Vietnam remains well below national cost-of-living benchmarks,”* prompting many to maximize teaching hours or seek additional roles at other institutions. Although extra-institutional income opportunities can partially alleviate financial strain, they do little to address the underlying sense of unfairness.

Taken together, these findings indicate that when income outcomes are perceived as inequitable—whether in absolute terms or relative to effort and external benchmarks—teachers’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivation suffer. Nonetheless, individual responses vary: some teachers mitigate dissatisfaction by pursuing supplementary income, while others become demotivated by systemic budgetary constraints and opaque salary structures.

## **2.8 Teachers’ Perceptions of Fairness in Income Outcomes**

Perceptions of fairness in promotion procedures are mixed but generally positive. An approximately 40 percent of respondents disagree that appointments are based solely on competence rather than seniority or personal relationships, and a similar proportion contest the notion that promotion opportunities are equal for all holders of comparable qualifications. Conversely, over 55 percent affirm that the university’s appointment process is open, transparent, and underpinned by accurate information.

Qualitative data reveal two distinct perspectives. Many faculty—particularly at public institutions—express frustration with opaque, politically influenced promotion decisions. One 41-year-old lecturer remarked that advancement often depends on “relationships and politics” rather than merit, a practice she attributed to longstanding cultural norms. Non-public university staff similarly criticize unclear voting procedures and entrenched leadership interests that inhibit fair competition.

In contrast, a subset of teachers deprioritize formal promotion in favor of professional development opportunities. These educators cite freedom to innovate, access to diverse teaching fields, and institutional support for research as more salient motivators than hierarchical advancement.

Together, these findings underscore that while transparent, competence-based promotion systems enhance motivation, perceptions of nepotism and procedural opacity diminish trust—and that, for some teachers, growth in skills and responsibilities may outweigh traditional notions of career progression.

## **VIII. Findings And Discussion**

### **1. Demographic Predictors of Work Motivation**

University instructors in this study reported a moderate level of work motivation—an observation consistent with Al-Salameh (2014), Akman (2018) and Tadesse (2020)—while other scholars have found comparatively high motivational perceptions (Nojani, 2012; Iliya & Ifeoma, 2015; Tung, 2018). Regression analyses examining six demographic variables (age, gender, educational qualification, work experience, job title, and university type) identified three significant predictors of motivation—gender, job title and institution type—mirroring findings by Collins (2004), Colquitt et al. (2006) and Rush and Milkovich (1980).

- Gender. Female faculty exhibited significantly higher motivation than their male counterparts (Al-Salameh, 2014; Eskildsen et al., 2004; Štefko et al., 2017), a pattern attributed to heightened concerns over job security and sensitivity to supervisory fairness (Štefko et al., 2017).

- University type. Public-sector instructors were more motivated than private-sector peers (Munaf, 2009), likely reflecting more generous benefits and stronger recognition from superiors in public institutions (Peters et al., 2010; Akman, 2018).
- Job title. Professors reported greater motivation than associate professors and lecturers, diverging from Dung (2014), who observed no positional differences in motivation.
- Although age, educational qualification and work experience did not emerge as significant in the full model, bivariate analyses revealed:
- Age. A positive correlation between age and motivation, aligning with Akman (2018), Hertel et al. (2013) and Ilke et al. (2012), suggests that older instructors draw more on intrinsic rewards (e.g., autonomy, personal principles) than on extrinsic incentives.
- Qualification. Doctoral-degree holders exhibited higher motivation than those with bachelor’s or master’s degrees, contradicting Al-Salameh (2014).
- Experience. Instructors with more than 16 years of service were more motivated than those with 1–5 years of experience, in contrast to Urošević and Milijić (2012).

Together, these findings underscore the nuanced role of demographic factors in shaping university teachers’ motivational profiles.

### **2. Demographic Characteristics and Perceptions of Organizational Justice**

Regression analyses revealed that gender and institution type are the only demographic predictors that exert a significant direct influence on university teachers’ perceptions of justice at work. Specifically, male and female instructors evaluate fairness through different comparison standards—women generally report higher

levels of perceived justice than men, who tend to judge workplace treatments more critically (Pelham & Hetts, 2001; Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007; Pfeifer & Stephan, 2018). This gender gap may reflect women's greater acceptance of existing conditions—despite objectively fewer resources or opportunities—due to a preference for conflict avoidance and work–family balance (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000).

Contrary to Shrivastava and Purang (2012), age did not predict justice perceptions in the multivariate model. However, in bivariate comparisons, older faculty reported feeling treated more fairly than their younger colleagues. This pattern aligns with Greenhaus (2000), who found that early-career employees prioritize meaningful work and decision-making involvement, whereas senior staff value stability and tradition, leading them to perceive established procedures as more just.

Finally, public-sector instructors perceived greater justice than those in private institutions. In Vietnam's higher-education context, public universities operate under standardized, transparent regulations set by the Ministry of Education and Training, whereas non-public universities often follow varied, less-accessible policies—heightening concerns about fairness among private-sector faculty.

Taken together, these findings underscore that while multiple demographic factors may correlate with justice perceptions, only gender and university type emerge as robust, independent predictors once all covariates are considered.

### **3. Teachers' Perception of Justice in the Workplace**

Teachers in this study reported a moderate level of perceived organizational justice, mirroring the results of Akman (2018), Chandio (2020), and Mirkamali and Zeinalipour (2010). Such a finding suggests that educators generally view key justice dimensions—fair compensation, equitable promotion opportunities, transparent personnel selection, appropriate recognition, and consistent treatment—in a positive light. Given that perceptions of fairness engender stronger emotional commitment and enhance motivational outcomes, these moderate justice appraisals likely contribute to teachers' work motivation and job satisfaction. This interpretation aligns with earlier evidence demonstrating that fair and respectful treatment boosts employees' motivational states (Akman, 2018; Basford & Offermann, 2012; Hassan & Chandaran, 2005). Therefore, promoting robust organizational justice practices appears vital for fostering teacher engagement and performance.

#### **- Perceived Justice in Opportunities for Promotion**

This study examined how transparent promotion procedures and clearly articulated criteria influence teachers' perceptions of justice and, in turn, their work motivation. Consistent with Truxillo et al. (2004), fair promotion opportunities constitute a critical, yet under-researched, facet of academic personnel management.

Among the dimensions of organizational justice assessed, perceived fairness in promotion emerged as the strongest predictor of teachers' work motivation. When school leaders visibly incorporate performance data into promotion decisions—and communicate criteria openly—teachers report greater confidence in their prospects for advancement, salary increases, and enhanced responsibilities. Sinclair (2008) similarly demonstrated that young educators' motivation correlates positively with the belief that promotion processes afford genuine opportunities for career growth (e.g., higher rank, professional development).

Our findings reveal a robust, positive relationship between perceived promotion justice and motivational outcomes: teachers who regard promotion systems as equitable exhibit higher morale, productivity, and commitment. These results reinforce prior studies linking fair selection and advancement processes to favorable organizational outcomes (e.g., Garcia-Izquierdo, 2012; Becton et al., 2014; Sharma & Jyoti, 2010) and echo George and Sabapathy's (2011) observation that perceived unfairness in promotion evaluations precipitates dissatisfaction and turnover intentions. Moreover, consistent assessment methods—those that teachers view as directly tied to their actual performance—further bolster perceptions of procedural justice and motivation (Greenberg, 1987; Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Sinclair, 2008).

In sum, ensuring transparent, merit-based promotion practices is essential for sustaining teacher engagement, reducing attrition, and ultimately enhancing institutional success.

#### **- Perceived Justice in Income Results and Distribution**

Perceived distributive justice—teachers' appraisal of both the fairness of salary levels and the equity of pay-allocation procedures—closely aligns with equity theory (Adams, 1960) and organizational justice frameworks (Greenberg, 1987). In this study, "income results" refers to teachers' judgments that their total compensation reflects their individual effort, expertise, and contribution ("My income is commensurate with the work I completed"), whereas "income distribution" denotes the perceived transparency, consistency, and objectivity of the pay-setting process ("My income level is fair compared to other teachers in the school").



Analyses revealed a moderate, positive association between both dimensions of pay justice and work motivation. When teachers believe that their remuneration is proportionate to their inputs and that distribution procedures are transparent, they report higher productivity, commitment, and willingness to remain at the institution. These findings corroborate earlier evidence linking fair compensation systems to enhanced motivation and job satisfaction among educators (Hassan & Chandaran, 2005; Zoghi, 2003). Moreover, robust assessment methods that tie salary adjustments to demonstrated skills and performance further reinforce teachers' perceptions of procedural justice and strengthen their intrinsic motivation (Greenberg, 1987).

Ensuring equitable pay levels and transparent distribution mechanisms is therefore critical for fostering teacher engagement, reducing turnover intentions, and promoting overall institutional effectiveness.

#### **- Perceived Justice in Recognition**

Perceived fairness in recognition—the degree to which school leaders and colleagues visibly acknowledge teachers' efforts and achievements—emerged as a significant predictor of work motivation. Informal expressions of appreciation (e.g., verbal praise, public acknowledgement) and formal performance appraisals both bolster teachers' self-worth and encourage sustained high-quality performance, though they operate through distinct channels: daily affirmations convey interpersonal support, whereas appraisals communicate evaluative judgments of competence (Leventhal et al., 1980; Bies & Moag, 1986; Colquitt, 2001).

Our regression results revealed a moderate, positive association between recognition justice and teachers' motivation: educators who perceive that their contributions are appropriately recognized report higher engagement, productivity, and intentions to remain at their institution. This finding aligns with prior research demonstrating that a fair recognition climate enhances employee–organization relationships (Andrew, 2011; Iliya & Ifeoma, 2015) and that well-designed recognition programs can significantly uplift motivation, whereas flawed systems risk de-motivation (Fletcher & Weinstein, 2002; Shah, 2012).

In sum, both formal and informal recognition practices that teachers regard as transparent, consistent, and merit-based are essential for fostering teacher morale, performance, and retention. Institutions seeking to maximize academic staff motivation should therefore invest in structured, equitable recognition mechanisms alongside routine expressions of appreciation.

#### **- Perceived Justice in the Attitude and Treatment of Leadership, Colleagues, and Students**

Perceived justice in leadership, peer, and student interactions closely parallels Bies and Moag's (1986) concept of interactional justice, which many scholars now subsume under procedural justice (Greenberg, 2011). Criteria such as honesty, politeness, and respect serve as benchmarks for fair treatment in educational settings (Bies, 1987; Bies & Moag, 1986) and underpin effective support behaviors by deans, vice-deans, colleagues, and students alike (Heaney & Israel, 1997; House & Kahn, 1985).

This study examined whether teachers' perceptions of fairness in their interactions with students, peers, and leadership predict work motivation. Results indicate a significant positive mediation effect: higher perceived justice in all three domains corresponds with increased teacher motivation. These findings echo previous research linking student attitudes to teacher motivation and performance (Atma et al., 2021; Gan et al., 2021; Jena et al., 2013; Soares, 2015) and corroborate studies showing that unfair leadership behavior undermines teacher satisfaction and retention (Akman, 2018; Bernanthos, 2018).

Long before organizational justice gained prominence in the 1980s, Likert (1961) noted that supportive leadership relationships bolster teachers' sense of personal worth. Our empirical results reaffirm that leadership support constitutes a critical facet of perceived fairness. Similarly, fair treatment by colleagues correlates with enhanced teacher motivation and career satisfaction (Akman, 2018; Basford & Offermann, 2012; Fernet et al., 2010).

Although the observed correlations between perceived justice and motivation were moderate, they underscore the fundamental role of fairness in improving teacher performance—a key driver of school effectiveness and success.

#### **- Perceived Justice in the Evaluation of Society toward Teaching career**

According to our path-analysis results, perceived justice in society's evaluation of the teaching profession exerts both a direct and an indirect influence on teachers' work motivation. Specifically, societal attitudes—expressed through respect, institutional support mechanisms, and equitable remuneration—mediate the relationship between justice perceptions and motivational outcomes. When teachers perceive that society fairly acknowledges the importance of their role, their intrinsic work motivation and job performance increase (Din, 2012; Dung, 2014). Conversely, unfair societal treatment undermines their professional engagement, dampening motivation and performance (Alam & Faid, 2011; Lobosco & Newman, 1992; Nojani, 2012). These findings

suggest that fostering a just societal evaluation—through positive attitudes, supportive structures, and transparent reward policies—can strengthen teachers’ commitment and enhance educational outcomes.

## IX. Conclusion

### 1. Summary:

The present study examined Vietnamese university teachers’ perceptions of procedural and distributive justice in decision-making and policy implementation across public and private institutions in Hanoi. This concluding section (1) synthesizes the core findings, (2) discusses their theoretical and practical implications, and (3) outlines study limitations and directions for future research.

Our results confirm that organizational justice remains a critical driver of teacher motivation and behaviour in higher education. Consistent with prior work on fair pay, equitable promotion opportunities, and transparent personnel procedures (Alam & Farid, 2011; Gan et al., 2021; Stringer & Didham, 2011), we found that eight discrete justice dimensions—income outcomes, income distribution, promotion, recognition, leadership treatment, peer treatment, student treatment, and societal evaluation of the teaching profession—differentially shape teachers’ motivational profiles. Notably, fairness in leadership treatment and recognition emerged as the strongest predictors of intrinsic motivation, while justice in income outcomes most strongly influenced extrinsic motivation. These findings extend the global literature by pinpointing which facets of justice contribute most powerfully to educators’ engagement and satisfaction.

Theoretically, our study refines organizational-justice models by demonstrating that distinct justice components exert unique effects on motivational subtypes. Practically, university administrators should prioritize transparent recognition systems and equitable leadership practices to bolster teacher engagement. Finally, we acknowledge that our cross-sectional design and reliance on self-report measures limit causal inference and may introduce response bias. Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches, expand to other regions, and explore interventions that target the most influential justice dimensions identified herein.

Six research questions were presented in Research Questions and Hypothesis Development Section. Each research question was also discussed in detail in Part VII above. Based on the summaries of the findings from this study, a brief answer to each research question is presented as follows:

#### - What are the current levels of work motivation and perceived justice among these teachers?

To address our research questions, we examined university teachers’ work motivation using descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. Overall motivation was high, with a mean score exceeding 3.5: 95.7% of respondents reported positive attitudes and behaviours toward completing their work, 4.1% exhibited low motivation, and only 0.2% remained neutral. Three-quarters (76.5%) expressed a sustained willingness to exert effort under any circumstances, while merely 1.2% reported negative attitudes. A small minority acknowledged occasional mistakes (1.9%) or difficulty meeting deadlines (2.1%). Nevertheless, 75.3% accepted the institution’s schedule even when it entailed overtime, and 77.4% found their teaching career stimulating, compared with 1.2% who did not. Approximately 75% of teachers also thought about their work outside official hours. Finally, with respect to perceived organizational justice, around 90% of Hanoi-based university teachers held positive perceptions, anticipating fair pay, equal promotion opportunities, recognition, and consistent treatment.

#### - How do motivation and justice perceptions vary according to age, qualification, position, tenure, and university type?

The influence of situational variables on university teachers’ work motivation was examined across gender, age, qualification, rank, experience, and institution type. Female faculty reported higher motivation than males, and public-sector instructors outperformed their non-public counterparts. Motivation also increased with age and peaked among those holding doctoral degrees versus bachelor’s or master’s credentials. Professors exhibited greater drive than associate professors and lecturers, and individuals with over 16 years’ service were more motivated than those with 1–5 years. In a multiple-regression model, however, only gender, academic rank, and university type emerged as significant predictors of work motivation ( $p < .01$ ).

Demographic factors similarly shaped perceptions of organizational justice. Male teachers expressed stronger concerns about fairness than females, while older and more experienced staff perceived workplace treatments as more equitable. Higher qualifications and senior rank were both associated with greater satisfaction regarding pay, promotion, recognition, and consistent treatment. Finally, public-university faculty reported fairer conditions than their non-public peers. These findings underscore the multifaceted role of personal and institutional characteristics in shaping both motivation and justice perceptions among university educators.

**- What is the nature and strength of the relationship between distinct justice dimensions (Justice in income level, income distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, interpersonal treatment by leaders/colleagues/students, and societal evaluation of teaching) and work motivation?**

To examine how perceptions of justice relate to work motivation, we conducted Pearson correlation analyses across six justice dimensions. All dimensions correlated significantly with motivation, but their strengths varied. Fairness in promotion opportunities, income outcomes, income distribution, recognition, and treatment by leadership each showed strong, positive associations with teachers' motivation. Perceived justice in student evaluations exhibited a moderate positive relationship, while fairness in colleague treatment and societal evaluation of the teaching profession demonstrated weaker—but still significant—correlations. In sum, university teachers in Hanoi who perceive higher levels of organizational justice tend to report greater work motivation, whereas perceptions of injustice correspond with diminished motivational drive.

**- Which justice dimension(s) most strongly predict teachers' motivation?**

To identify which aspects of justice perceptions most strongly predict university teachers' work motivation, we conducted multiple regression analyses—controlling for demographic variables to strengthen internal validity. Distributive justice in income outcomes ( $R^2 = 0.787$ ) and income distribution ( $R^2 = 0.735$ ) together explained the largest share of variance in motivation, followed by procedural dimensions of recognition ( $R^2 = 0.731$ ) and promotion opportunities ( $R^2 = 0.780$ ). Interpersonal justice—fair treatment by leadership ( $R^2 = 0.668$ ), colleagues ( $R^2 = 0.744$ ), and students ( $R^2 = 0.683$ )—and external justice (societal valuation of the teaching profession,  $R^2 = 0.643$ ) also made significant contributions. Justice in Promotion Opportunities and perceived equity of income outcomes emerged as the strongest predictors of work motivation among university faculty in Hanoi, Vietnam. These results underscore the pivotal role of transparent promotion processes and equitable remuneration in fostering motivation and job satisfaction in higher education.

**- How do qualitative interviews deepen our understanding of how these justice perceptions shape motivation?**

To deepen our understanding of how justice perceptions shape work motivation, we analyzed in-depth interviews with selected faculty. Regarding distributive justice (income outcomes and distribution), all participants perceived their salaries as misaligned with their contributions. Only half regarded the payroll process as uniform and objective; most acknowledged budgetary constraints that preclude government pay-grade increases and compel them to seek supplementary income elsewhere.

On procedural justice—recognition and promotion—faculty consensus underscored deficiencies in performance-recording systems and promotion criteria at Hanoi universities. Likewise, while interpersonal justice from leadership was generally high, issues in decision-making transparency, task allocation, and compensation fairness persisted and dampened motivation. Peer relations were characterized by mutual respect and collegial support, which participants cited as a key motivational resource when they felt valued as team members and recognized for their achievements.

Student interactions emerged as another pivotal influence: teachers derive substantial motivation from respectful, appreciative student feedback. Finally, in terms of external justice—or societal evaluation—participants criticized state remuneration policies for undervaluing academic work, especially given heavy workloads and familial pressures. Nevertheless, personal networks of friends and family often provided emotional support that helped sustain their commitment to teaching.

Overall, these qualitative insights confirm that equitable income practices, transparent recognition and promotion processes, and affirming social interactions—both within the university and beyond—are essential to enhancing faculty motivation.

**- What practical recommendations emerge from our findings to strengthen motivational outcomes via improved organizational justice practices?**

Synthesizing the quantitative results with in-depth interview insights generated a focused set of recommendations to bolster university teachers' motivation. First, institutions should adopt clear, transparent policies for compensation, promotion, recruitment, and performance evaluation. Second, decision-making and salary-allocation procedures must be standardized and openly communicated. Third, fostering a collegial culture—one that values mutual respect among leadership, peers, and students—will further enhance motivation.

A standout finding is that distributive and procedural justice—especially equitable income outcomes and fair promotion opportunities—exert the greatest influence on faculty motivation. This pattern was consistently echoed in interview narratives. Accordingly, universities in Hanoi (and similar contexts) should prioritize (1)

transparent promotion criteria and mechanisms and (2) a commitment to fair, needs-aligned pay structures as central pillars of any motivation-enhancing strategy.

## 2. Conclusion

The descriptive analysis reveals that male and female university teachers in Vietnam are represented almost equally, with approximately 70% of the workforce under the age of 45 by the 2023–2024 academic year (MOET, 2024). This predominantly young cohort demonstrates high levels of passion, enthusiasm, and openness to innovative pedagogical approaches, suggesting a promising trajectory for the higher-education sector. Their fresh perspectives, student rapport, and adoption of new teaching techniques underpin their effectiveness in the classroom.

However, experience also plays a critical role: senior faculty, despite being fewer in number, exhibit greater overall work motivation than their younger counterparts. Age-related differences emerge in perceptions of organizational justice, with younger teachers reporting lower levels of fairness in workplace treatment compared to older colleagues. As discussed, this disparity may reflect older instructors' reliance on intrinsic motivators—such as autonomy and personal values—rather than external rewards like career advancement or material incentives (Ilke et al., 2012). These findings prompt an important consideration for policymakers and administrators: to what extent should institutions prioritize educator enthusiasm versus accumulated skill and experience when shaping faculty development strategies?

A gendered analysis of our data reveals that female teachers report higher levels of motivation than their male counterparts. This disparity may stem in part from women's heightened concern over job security and experiences of unfair treatment by supervisors—concerns that persist in the context of Vietnam's entrenched gender norms. Indeed, the 2022 Human Development Perspectives report notes that nearly 94% of Vietnamese still hold prejudicial views about gender equality, and roughly 65% endorse biased assumptions regarding men's and women's political roles. Interestingly, female teachers in our study also rated their own working conditions as more equitable than did male respondents, suggesting that expectations of fairness may differ by gender. Unpacking these perceptual differences will require further investigation into how social norms and gender identities shape individual expectations. Although shifting deeply rooted norms is a complex undertaking, Vietnam's recent enactment of gender-protective legislation—such as expanded women's suffrage, anti-discrimination statutes, and public-sector initiatives promoting equal pay—demonstrates that progress is possible through sustained legal and policy reforms.

The descriptive analysis shows that every public and private university sampled in Hanoi employs academic staff whose minimum qualification is a bachelor's degree; many, however, hold master's or doctoral credentials. According to MOET (2023), staff with only a bachelor's degree constitute under 10 percent of all university lecturers, the majority being at the assistant-professor level. Although Vietnam's higher-education system has established formal recruitment and selection procedures, scholars have criticized these policies for failing to attract, develop, and retain high-caliber talent. Rather than offering competitive remuneration or career-development incentives, MOET and regional education authorities continue to prioritize candidates with advanced degrees.

Our findings further reveal that perceptions of organizational justice vary significantly with teachers' qualifications, experience, and rank. Faculty members with more years of service, higher degrees, and senior positions report greater fairness in workplace treatment than their less-experienced, lower-ranked colleagues. Moreover, university type also shapes these perceptions: instructors at public institutions perceive procedural and distributive justice more positively than those at non-public universities. This disparity likely reflects differences in governance structures, regulations, and management transparency, with public universities generally operating under clearer, more standardized policies than their private counterparts.

Teachers are widely recognized as the backbone of society (Tadesse, 2020), and, like professionals in any field, they anticipate adequate support, treatment, and resources to foster their development and advance institutional goals. Examining teacher work motivation is therefore essential, as it underpins educators' willingness to invest their skills and energy in both classroom excellence and broader school improvement. Our study in Hanoi, Vietnam, underscores the centrality of workplace justice to university instructors' motivation. Specifically, each of the eight justice dimensions we assessed—fairness in income outcomes and distribution, equitable promotion opportunities, recognition, respectful treatment by leadership, peers, and students, and societal evaluation of teaching—correlates positively with teacher motivation. Moreover, most respondents endorsed the importance of fair compensation and treatment, transparent promotion pathways, and merit-based personnel procedures, viewing these elements as fundamental to an effective academic environment.

Most participants emphasized the need for robust institutional policies and mechanisms that guarantee fairness, transparency, and openness in all key decisions. Moreover, our results underscore that perceptions of justice are inherently subjective: educators driven by intrinsic motivations—passion, enthusiasm, and genuine

commitment to student welfare—tend to appraise fairness through a different lens, placing less emphasis on comparative rewards or external validation.

Findings indicate that perceptions of procedural justice in promotion opportunities explain 78% of the variance in teacher motivation, even under heavy workloads. Respondents ranked advancement prospects as more influential than financial incentives. Although most Vietnamese universities have formal mechanisms for evaluating faculty productivity and performance, teachers reported that these systems often suffer from inaccuracy, emotional bias, and inconsistent application. Overall, fairness in promotion emerged as the strongest predictor of enhanced teaching effort.

Fair remuneration exhibited a moderate yet statistically significant correlation with teacher motivation, although it ranked below equitable promotion prospects in overall impact. Survey respondents uniformly reported that current salary scales fail to reflect their professional contributions: at roughly 1.7 times GDP per capita, Vietnamese university salaries fall well short of the Fast-Track Initiative's 3.5 times GDP per capita benchmark (OECD, 2010) and the regional Asian average of 2.4 times GDP per capita (Hamano, 2008). Domestic studies have likewise criticized pay policies for their lack of distributive justice, especially given that faculty routinely invest personal time in lesson planning, research, and administrative duties. Aligning salaries more closely with actual effort and responsibility is therefore likely to bolster intrinsic motivation and enhance teaching commitment. We recommend that the Ministry of Education and Training and regional education authorities revise compensation frameworks to ensure fairness, thereby empowering teachers to fully deploy their knowledge, skills, and abilities—ultimately improving student learning outcomes and institutional performance.

A moderate positive relationship emerged between fair recognition and teachers' work motivation. Most respondents reported that acknowledgment of their achievements spurs career advancement, whereas lack of recognition or reliance on misleading performance metrics undermines instructional quality and job satisfaction. To address this, institutions should implement regular, transparent appraisal processes that accurately reflect individual accomplishments and provide timely, genuine praise. The data suggest that when teachers perceive recognition and rewards as equitable, they are more likely to sustain high-quality instructional practices.

A moderate-to-weak positive correlation emerged between teachers' perceptions of fair treatment by university leadership, colleagues, and students and their work motivation. While some respondents reported clear motivational gains when treated equitably, others described these relationships as complex and context-dependent. Although our regression analysis suggests only a modest effect, prior studies have documented stronger links between collegial support, Justice in leadership treatment, and teacher engagement (Akman, 2018; Bernanthos, 2018; Wayan et al., 2019). Consistent with these findings, participants emphasized that nurturing respectful interactions and a supportive working environment enhances their effectiveness. Thus, perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment remains a meaningful predictor of teachers' willingness to sustain high-quality instruction.

Teachers' motivation is also shaped indirectly by societal valuation of the teaching profession. Given their central role in imparting knowledge, fostering technological literacy, and cultivating responsible citizenship (Wallis et al., 2008), teaching should be accorded high status among career choices. When society publicly recognizes the importance of teaching, educators feel validated in their work, which in turn strengthens their commitment to remain—and excel—in the profession. Thus, accurate and positive societal appraisal of teaching careers serves as a powerful motivational lever for both recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers.

Overall, this study demonstrates that all eight dimensions of organizational justice—fairness in salary outcomes and distribution, promotion opportunities, recognition, treatment by leadership, colleagues, students, and societal valuation—exert a significant, positive influence on university teachers' work motivation. Positive perceptions of these justice components can therefore strengthen commitment, performance, and retention. For institutional leaders and policymakers, the findings underscore the importance of transparent evaluation and selection procedures, equitable reward systems, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work climate. Where budgetary constraints preclude substantial salary increases, universities can still foster motivation by enhancing procedural transparency, expanding non-monetary benefits, and cultivating a culture of respect and recognition.

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