Motivation in teaching and related activities of lecturers of Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City

Nguyen Thi Thuy Dung [1], *, Nguyen Thi Hao [2]

[1]Faculty of Education, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNUHCM, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
[2]Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNUHCM, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to understand the level of enthusiasm among university lecturers for teaching and associated tasks like creating course materials, evaluating student performance, mentoring, and reviewing academic qualifications. The study used two approaches: a questionnaire survey and detailed interviews with lecturers from six universities within the Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM) network. Findings indicate that lecturers are generally very motivated in their teaching and related duties, with an average score of 4.27 out of 5 on a motivation scale. However, this motivation varied across different activities. Specifically, enthusiasm was highest for teaching (average score of 4.50) and lowest for grading students (average score of 4.14). Statistical analyses, including T-tests and ANOVA, with a significance level below 0.05, revealed differences in teaching motivation based on the length of teaching experience and differences in grading motivation according to lecturers' academic positions, qualifications, and gender. The results offer valuable insights for VNUHCM administrators to formulate strategies aimed at enhancing lecturers' motivation in teaching and related areas.

1. Introduction

Teaching and associated tasks are key responsibilities for university lecturers. These duties are important for lecturers, students, and the university itself. For lecturers, engaging in teaching and related activities helps improve their knowledge and expertise, making them experts in their areas (Wieman, 2019). Being regularly exposed to new ideas and questions from students encourages lecturers to continue their research and keep their information up to date. For students, teaching provides the necessary knowledge and skills, laying the groundwork for their future career success (Manley and Valin, 2017). For universities, the quality of teaching directly influences the institution's reputation and standing. Outstanding lecturers and excellent courses draw students' interest and boost the university's image in the community, supporting its ongoing growth. Graduates from universities with high teaching standards contribute to various sectors, aiding in national development. To excel in teaching and related areas, lecturers need not only professional skills but also a strong drive to succeed (Esteban and del Cerro, 2020).

Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM) stands as one of Vietnam's premier national university systems, playing a pivotal role in the nation's higher education landscape. VNUHCM aspires to be a preeminent institution in Asia, serving as a nexus for science, technology, innovation, and Vietnamese culture. Its mission focuses on leading in the development of highly skilled human resources and nurturing future leaders to fuel socio-economic growth. VNUHCM is dedicated to pioneering science and technology, conducting outstanding research and innovation, and fostering new economic models to substantially contribute to national progress, societal advancement, and human enrichment. Achieving these ambitious goals requires a dedicated faculty who are not only highly qualified and competent in their teaching roles but also deeply motivated and committed to exerting their best efforts in their tasks, thereby helping VNUHCM fulfill its esteemed mission. Many researchers around the world,

including Vietnam, have studied what affects university teachers' motivation at work. However, not many have looked closely at what motivates teachers when it comes to their specific job duties. In Vietnam, some studies have looked into what drives teachers at private universities (Ai et al., 2019), but no study has yet explored this for teachers at leading public universities, such as national universities. This paper aims to organize the different factors that motivate university teachers by reviewing a wide range of previous studies. After that, it will share findings on how motivated teachers are at the six universities that make up the VNUHCM, focusing on teaching and tasks related to teaching.

This study focuses on understanding the factors that motivate lecturers at the NUHCM in their professional activities. These activities include teaching, developing course materials, assessing student performance, and overseeing student graduation projects. The main questions this research seeks to answer are: Firstly, what is the current level of motivation among VNUHCM lecturers in performing their teaching-related tasks? Secondly, does motivation vary among lecturers based on their demographic characteristics?

The findings of this research aim to offer concrete suggestions for improving lecturers' motivation in teaching and related tasks at VNUHCM. By doing so, the study not only contributes to the personal growth of the lecturers but also supports the sustainable development of VNUHCM, reinforcing its standing within the national and regional university networks.

2. Literature review

2.1. The definition of work motivation

The idea of work motivation has been a topic of interest for scholars both globally and in Vietnam for many years. Generally, work motivation is seen as what drives a person to start, continue, or stop an action. It's the reason people choose to act in certain ways at work, including the decision to start an action, the persistence and effort put into it, and when to stop. This concept is understood in various ways:

- As a direction for action, explaining why individuals either persist in or cease their efforts (Williams and Burden, 1997; Elliot and Covington, 2001).
- As a driving force behind decisions to act or refrain from acting (Broussard and Garrison, 2004).
- As an individual's resilience in facing challenges to achieve organizational objectives (Blaskova, 2007).
- As what guides and energizes human behavior towards a specific intensity and direction (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2021).
- As an adjustment and guidance mechanism for actions towards preferred outcomes (Griffin, 2013).

- As an explanation for the initiation, duration, and intensity of actions (Han and Yin, 2016).
- As an effort to stimulate individuals at work towards fulfilling personal and organizational aims (Munyengabe et al., 2017).

Hence, work motivation encompasses the reasons and energies that drive individuals in their work environments, influencing their actions, endurance, and the pursuit of goals.

In Vietnam, researchers have explored work motivation, aligning with global perspectives that motivated employees enhance productivity and contribute significantly to organizational success. For example, Do et al. (2020) highlighted that motivation propels people to exceed their normal efforts, leading to increased organizational output. Similarly, Ai et al. (2019) described work motivation as the drive and readiness of employees to intensify their efforts toward achieving organizational objectives.

These insights collectively underline that work motivation is crucial not only for initiating actions but also for sustaining and intensifying efforts toward achieving desired outcomes. Essentially, work motivation acts as an internal force guiding behavior, enabling individuals to persist in their activities, and driving them to exert maximum effort to fulfill both personal and organizational goals.

Therefore, understanding work motivation involves three key aspects: it acts as an internal force influencing behavior; it supports the continuation of activities; and it encourages maximum effort towards goal attainment. It's important to differentiate between work motivation and work motives, where motives represent the initial driving force behind actions, answering "why" employees work. In contrast, work motivation delves deeper into sustaining activity and maximizing effort, addressing "why" employees strive for high productivity and efficiency within an organization (Dung, 2020).

This nuanced understanding clarifies that while work motive kickstarts behavior, work motivation encompasses the broader spectrum of sustaining effort and achieving optimal productivity and efficiency in the workplace (Colman, 2015).

2.2. The indicators of work motivation

A person's work motivation will be indicated through his or her attitude and behavior while working. The issue of the indicators of work motivation of employees in organizations in general and university lecturers, in particular, has not been directly and deeply studied by many domestic and international authors, almost only mentioned in definitions of work motivation or indirectly mentioned in studies of another related issue to work motivation.

The definition of work motivation itself points out key characteristics such as persistence and effort that individuals display when they are motivated at

work. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) specifically highlighted two critical elements of work motivation: the direction and intensity of behavior. They argue that the intensity of an individual's behavior, which reflects how hard and persistently someone works, is a direct outcome of their motivation levels.

Similarly, in Vietnam, researchers like Nhung (2018) have defined work motivation by including clear indicators such as effort and hard work, showing that these are fundamental signs of motivated behavior in the workplace. Additionally, Ai et al. (2019) have identified desire and willingness as vital components of work motivation, suggesting that a motivated individual not only works hard but also does so voluntarily and with a strong desire to achieve.

In essence, both global and Vietnamese perspectives on work motivation converge on the idea that motivation at work is characterized by how much effort someone is willing to put into their tasks, their persistence in facing challenges, their voluntary desire to work, and the intensity with which they pursue their goals. Collectively, these indicators form a comprehensive understanding of work motivation, emphasizing its role in driving individuals to achieve personal and organizational objectives through sustained and enthusiastic effort.

Mentioning the indicators of work motivation when studying other related issues to work motivation: Some authors worldwide and in Vietnam have addressed the indicators of work motivation in their studies related to work motivation. For example, when studying leadership and organizational management, Grieser (2017) outlined the indicators of a motivated individual, such as "effort and discipline," "passion and enthusiasm," "optimistically pursuing goals," and "voluntarily taking on extra work"; Bush (2007) concluded that a person with great motivation will work hard, but someone who is not motivated to work will not. Therefore, the two authors mentioned above have addressed the manifestations of a motivated individual, which are a passionate and enthusiastic attitude toward work, dedication, hard work, industriousness, effort, and voluntariness.

In another example, when studying the factors influencing work motivation, Andriani et al. (2018) identified ten indicators of a motivated individual, most of which are related to persistence in maintaining activities and perseverance in overcoming difficulties (Andriani et al. (2018)). Other authors, such as Watt and Richardson (2007) and Alam and Farid (2011), have addressed the manifestations of enthusiasm, dedication, and effort in their studies. Some indicators of work motivation were found in surveys by Vietnamese authors on factors affecting university lecturers' work motivation, such as trying their best to complete the work despite difficulties, hard work (willingness to start the working day early or stay late to complete work, work without time management), excitement with work (Thuong, 2020), good mood, enthusiasm,

agreement with the school's encouragement policies, and willingness to sacrifice their benefits for common goals.

While there hasn't been direct and comprehensive research specifically targeting the indicators of work motivation among employees in general or university lecturers in particular, various studies and definitions of work motivation touch upon these indicators. In essence, motivated university lecturers are characterized by several key behaviors and attitudes that significantly contribute to their performance and dedication to their roles. These indicators include:

- Interest in performing tasks: Motivated lecturers show a keen interest in their assigned tasks, engaging with their responsibilities with curiosity and a desire to contribute meaningfully.
- Enthusiasm: They approach their work with enthusiasm, which is evident in their energy and passion for teaching, research, and other academic duties.
- Voluntariness and willingness: Motivated lecturers are eager and willing to take on tasks, often going beyond the call of duty to support their students and contribute to their institution.
- Dedication and hard work: They demonstrate a high level of dedication to their work, putting in the necessary effort and hours to achieve excellence in their teaching and research activities.
- Effort and striving for excellence: Motivated faculty members consistently make an effort and strive to do their best in all aspects of their work, from lesson planning to research and community engagement.
- Persistence: They possess the perseverance to carry out tasks to completion, even in the face of challenges or obstacles, showing resilience in their commitment to their roles.
- Desire for good results/performance: A strong desire to achieve good results or excellent performance is a hallmark of motivated lecturers. They set high standards for themselves and their students, aiming for continuous improvement and positive outcomes in all their endeavors.

These indicators collectively paint a picture of a motivated university lecturer as someone who is not only committed to their professional responsibilities but also actively seeks to make a positive impact through their work. The presence of these behaviors and attitudes significantly enhances the academic environment, contributing to the success of students and the broader educational community.

2.3. Teaching and related tasks of university lecturers

In Vietnam, the responsibilities and tasks of university lecturers are outlined in several governmental and educational documents. These include the Law on Higher Education from 2012 and its amendment in 2018, as well as Circular No.

40/2020/TT-BGDDT, which discusses professional titles, appointments, and salary rankings for teaching staff in public higher education institutions, and Circular No. 20/2020/TT-BGDDT, which details the work regime of higher education lecturers.

Vietnamese university lecturers hold various professional titles, such as senior lecturer (class I), main lecturer (class II), lecturer (class III), and teaching assistant. The core duties for these titles are consistent, yet main and senior lecturers bear greater responsibilities in curriculum development, thesis/dissertation evaluation, and scientific research.

The primary responsibilities of university lecturers, based on the outlined documents, encompass four main areas:

- Teaching: Delivering lectures and facilitating learning experiences.
- Curriculum development: This includes designing, updating, and improving course syllabi to ensure the curriculum remains current and effective.
- Assessment of student learning: Creating and grading exams and assignments to evaluate students' understanding and progress.
- Supervision of graduation projects: Overseeing and assessing theses and dissertations for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students.

Motivated lecturers are those who show a keen interest and proactive involvement in these four areas, demonstrating their commitment to education and student success through active participation and innovation in their teaching and related duties.

3. Research methods

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, in which:

- The quantitative method employed a questionnaire survey as the key research method to collect data on the motivation of lecturers in "teaching and related activities." The questionnaire is built based on literature reviews. The content includes four items (4 tasks belonging to the group of "teaching and related activities") with 28 observed variables (indicators of work motivation). Participants were requested to rate a 5-point Likert scale, whereby 1=Totally disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree (neutral), 4=Somewhat agree, and 5=Totally agree. The questionnaire was conducted online (via Microsoft Forms) from August to October 2022 with 457 participants (Table 1). The results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha showed that the scale met the requirements for reliability. The questionnaire survey design has emphasized anonymity to safeguard the identity of survey participants (participants do not need to provide any information that could disclose their identity, such as their name, email address, etc.). The results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) indicated that the number of factors and observed variables within each factor were appropriate. The scale is well-qualified for use.
- The qualitative method used was in-depth interviews conducted following the questionnaire to clarify the data obtained from the questionnaire. The interview sample consisted of 18 lecturers randomly selected from the lecturer groups (Table 1). For ethical research considerations, prior to the interview, the participating lecturers were required to sign an Interview Participation Agreement, which explicitly stated the purpose of the interview, the method of recording or note-taking, the rights and responsibilities of the interviewees, the research team's commitment to protecting the participants' privacy, and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information. To secure participants' personal information, the lecturers' identities were encrypted from L1 to L18.

3.1. Data analysis techniques

For the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire survey, the SPSS software was used to test the reliability and validity of the measurement scale; descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (ANOVA and T-Test) were employed for the description and analysis of the current situation.

For the qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews, the research team categorized the similar and distinct opinions. Similar opinions are those that have consistent content in their responses (although the wording may vary). These opinions will be summarized into concise statements, capturing the main essence of the opinions. The opinions (both similar and different) are then tallied in terms of quantity and calculated as a percentage. Some opinions will be quoted verbatim to illustrate the explanations.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Synthesized research results on VNUHCM lecturers' motivation in teaching and related activities

The survey results using a questionnaire on the indicators of lecturers' motivation in carrying out teaching and related activities are presented in Table 2. Based on the descriptive statistics in Table 2, it can be observed that the overall motivation in teaching and related activities among lecturers is evaluated at a high level (the overall mean value of 4.27). All of the motivation indicators are self-assessed by lecturers at somewhat agree and totally agree levels. Assessments have high concentration levels across the entire survey sample with low dispersion, and all standard deviations are less than 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of participants' demographics

Lecturer groups		Questionnaire survey		Interviews	
		N	%	N	%
Position	Manager	83	18.2	07	38.9
	Non-managerial lecturer	374	81.8	11	61.1
Academic title, degree	Senior lecturer - Professor, Associate Professor	26	5.7	03	16.7
	Main lecturer - Doctor	31	6.8	02	11.1
	Lecturer - Doctor	106	23.2	06	33.3
	Lecturer - Master	186	40.7	06	33.3
	Teaching assistant	89	19.5	01	5.6
Gender	Male	223	48.8	11	61.1
	Female	234	51.2	7	38.9
Age	Below 30 years old	116	25.4	03	16.7
	30 to below 40 years old	184	40.3	08	44.4
	40 - 50 years old	128	28.0	04	22.2
	Above 50 years old	29	6.3	03	16.7
Experience as a lecturer	Below 5 years	144	31.5	02	11.1
	5 - 10 years	114	24.9	09	50.0
	Above 10 years	199	43.5	07	38.9
Income level at university	Below 10 million VND	180	39.4		
	From 10 to 15 million VND	126	27.6		
	Above 15 million VND	151	33.0		
University	U1	150	32.8	03	16.7
	U2	79	17.3	03	16.7
	U3	56	12.3	03	16.7
	U4	79	17.3	03	16.7
	U5	49	10.7	03	16.7
	U6	44	9.6	03	16.7
Total		457	100	18	100

Table 2: Lecturers' self-assessment on motivation indicators in teaching and related activities

No.	Motivation indicators in teaching and related activities	Agreement level	
		Mean	SD
I	**In teaching (T)**	4.50	0.53
1	I am interested in teaching	4.40	0.68
2	I am enthusiastic about teaching	4.52	0.65
3	I volunteer to teach	4.43	0.68
4	I am dedicated and work hard to teach	4.56	0.59
5	I try my best to teach	4.60	0.59
6	I am persistent in teaching	4.53	0.62
7	I desire to achieve/perform well in teaching	4.48	0.70
II	**In designing, developing curricula, and updating syllabi (referred to as Developing Curricula - DC)**	4.14	0.72
1	I am interested in developing curricula	4.13	0.79
2	I am enthusiastic about developing curricula	4.17	0.77
3	I volunteer to develop curricula	4.11	0.82
4	I am dedicated and work hard to develop curricula	4.13	0.80
5	I try my best to develop curricula	4.17	0.80
6	I am persistent in developing curricula	4.13	0.78
7	I desire to perform well when developing curricula	4.12	0.82
III	**In evaluating students' learning outcomes, such as preparing test/exam papers, grading/evaluating assignments, etc. (referred to as Creating Exams and Grading Papers - CEGP)**	4.09	0.70
1	I am interested in creating exams and grading papers	3.98	0.83
2	I am enthusiastic about creating exams and grading papers	4.00	0.83
3	I volunteer to create exams and grade papers	4.07	0.82
4	I am dedicated and work hard to create exams and grade papers	4.11	0.78
5	I try my best to create exams and grade papers	4.20	0.77
6	I am persistent in creating exams and grading papers	4.16	0.75
7	I desire to perform well when creating exams and grading papers	4.12	0.83
IV	**In supervising and evaluating graduation projects/theses/dissertations for students (including undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students) (referred to as Supervising and Evaluating Graduation for students - SEG)**	4.32	0.67
1	I am interested in supervising and evaluating graduation for students	4.26	0.79
2	I am enthusiastic about supervising and evaluating graduation for students	4.28	0.76
3	I volunteer to supervise and evaluate graduation for students	4.27	0.78
4	I am dedicated and work hard to supervise and evaluate graduation for students	4.37	0.71
5	I try my best to supervise and evaluate graduation for students	4.37	0.71
6	I am persistent in supervising and evaluating graduation for students	4.39	0.69
7	I desire to achieve/perform well in supervising and evaluating graduation for students	4.33	0.74
	Overall	4.27	0.55

If we compare the motivation of lecturers in performing 4 tasks under the category of "teaching and related activities," the two tasks, "teaching" and "supervising graduation," have all indicators of motivation rated at the totally agree level; among them, the motivation in "teaching" is evaluated at the highest level (with a very high overall mean value of 4.50).

The two tasks, "evaluating students' learning outcomes" and "developing curricula," have all indicators of motivation rated at the somewhat agree level; among them, the motivation in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" is evaluated at the lowest level (with an overall mean value of 4.09).

To clarify the above survey results, the research team conducted interviews with 18 lecturers from 6 member universities of VNUHCM, asking them two questions: The first question required the lecturers to list the tasks belonging to the category of "teaching and related activities" assigned to them.

The second question asked the lecturers to "rank the tasks in order of their motivation level (from highest to lowest)" and provide reasons for their ranking. The interview results are as follows.

With the first question, all 18/18 lecturers were assigned teaching tasks, curriculum development, assessment of learners' academic performance, supervision, and evaluation of graduation. With the second question:

- 14 out of 18 interviewed lecturers (78%) ranked motivation in "teaching" at the highest level, with some typical responses as follows:

  ▪ "Teaching is the most motivating aspect of being a lecturer for me because when I teach and interact with students, I feel youthful alongside them. I feel valuable as I impart valuable knowledge to the next generation" (L2 – Female, Lecturer, M.Sc., 30 years old, 6 years of experience as a lecturer).
  ▪ "Teaching is my childhood dream job, so I rank it as my top priority. I have a passion for teaching a passion for imparting knowledge to students. The image of a lecturer within myself is grand and beautiful. Being a lecturer is a noble profession and is highly respected" (L6 - Male, Lecturer, M.Sc., 32 years old, 9 years of experience as a lecturer).
  ▪ "Teaching is a task mandated by the institution and is a central task, so I place it as my top priority" (L7 - Male, Senior Lecturer, 36 years old, 8 years of experience as a lecturer).
  ▪ "Teaching is the core task of lecturers, and other duties only serve to support teaching" (L8 - Male, Manager, Lecturer, Ph.D., 43 years old, 20 years of experience as a lecturer).

  The responses above indicate that the interviewed lecturers, despite having differences in positions, professional titles, gender, age, and years of experience, all share a passion for teaching and consider it the focal point of their profession.

- 4 out of 18 lecturers (22%) ranked motivation in "supervising and evaluating graduation" at the second level, right after teaching. All four of these lecturers provided responses with a strong focus on their passion for research and applying theories into practice. They view guiding graduation projects as a way to guide learners in conducting research and help them apply theories to solve specific real-life problems in certain fields. Therefore, they placed "supervising and evaluating graduation" at the second level immediately after teaching.
- 18/18 lecturers (100%) ranked motivation in "curriculum development" at level 3; 18/18 lecturers (100%) ranked motivation in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" at level 4, with some typical responses as follows:

  ▪ "Although I am well aware that curriculum development is necessary to meet the demands of society and the labor market, I am also very apprehensive about it. This is because curriculum development often involves adjusting the system of courses within the curriculum, and adding or replacing any course is not a simple task. It requires a complex management process involving multiple parties such as lecturers, academic advisers, and learner"(L12 - Male, Manager, Lecturer, Ph.D., 42 years old, 15 years of experience as a lecturer).
  ▪ "To update the course syllabus, lecturers have to make efforts, think, and search for materials because not only the objectives and learning outcomes of the course are adjusted, but it also entails modifying the content, teaching methods, and forms of teaching the course" (L5 - Male, Lecturer, M.Sc., 27 years old, 4 years of experience as a lecturer).
  ▪ "Among the tasks of lecturers, the one I dislike the most is grading papers. This job takes up a lot of time and requires careful, meticulous, and accurate evaluation" (L13 – Female, Lecturer, M.Sc., 39 years old, 9 years of experience as a lecturer).
  ▪ "Grading can be supported by the teaching assistants. However, currently, the faculty does not have any teaching assistants. Therefore, all senior lecturers, main lecturers, and lecturers have to grade papers for their students, which is a time-consuming task. Meanwhile, the responsibilities of senior lecturers in scientific research and publishing research results are prescribed to be higher than those of main lecturers and lecturers" (L3 - Male, Senior Lecturer, Manager, 38 years old, 13 years of experience as a lecturer).

The responses above indicate that the motivation of lecturers in "curriculum development" and in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" is ranked last because these tasks require significant effort, meticulousness, and high accuracy, taking a considerable amount of time to accomplish.

4.2. Comparison of the motivation in teaching and related activities of lecturers by demographics

The results of analyzing the differences by t-test and ANOVA are shown in Table 3.

The results of the t-test and ANOVA in Table 3 show that most of the lecturer groups based on demographics do not have differences in motivation when performing the "teaching and related activities" tasks.

Significant differences (sig<0.05) are only observed in the following lecturer groups, mainly focusing on two tasks: "evaluating students' learning outcomes" and "teaching":

- By academic title and degree: Lecturers with different academic ranks and degrees have different motivations in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" (sig=0.036<0.05). The higher the academic rank and degree of lecturers, the

lower the motivation in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" (setting exams, grading tests, quizzes, etc.)-(Prof./Assoc. Prof.-3.76; Ph.D.-4.08; M.S-4.12). This can be explained by the fact that lecturers with higher academic ranks and degrees need to allocate more time to specific tasks assigned to them (such as leading research projects, publishing research results, mentoring colleagues, etc.); and grading papers is a time-consuming task.

Table 3: Comparing the survey results of motivation in teaching and related activities of lecturers by demographics

Activities	Level of agreement												t-test/ANOVA (<0.05)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Position													
	Manager		Non-managerial Lecturer										t-test
T	4.45	0.60	4.51	0.51									0.343
DC	4.17	0.77	4.12	0.70									0.618
CEGP	4.00	0.75	4.11	0.67									0.189
SEG	4.37	0.64	4.30	0.68									0.376
Professional title													
	Senior lecturer		Main lecturer		Lecturer		Teaching assistant						ANOVA
T	4.41	0.52	4.53	0.48	4.54	0.48	4.34	0.66					0.089
DC	4.19	0.61	4.14	0.61	4.13	0.71	4.12	0.79					0.975
CEGP	3.76	0.77	4.04	0.70	4.13	0.65	4.06	0.74					0.055
SEG	4.49	0.48	4.32	0.57	4.32	0.67	4.22	0.77					0.313
Academic title, degree													
	Prof./ Assoc. Prof.		Ph.D.		M.Sc.								ANOVA
T	4.41	0.52	4.54	0.50	4.49	0.54							0.459
DC	4.19	0.61	4.16	0.65	4.11	0.75							0.753
CEGP	3.76	0.77	4.08	0.67	4.12	0.68							0.036
SEG	4.49	0.48	4.36	0.65	4.27	0.69							0.139
Gender													
	Male		Female										t- test
T	4.47	0.59	4.52	0.45									0.295
DC	4.12	0.74	4.14	0.68									0.772
CEGP	4.02	0.73	4.15	0.63									0.034
SEG	4.33	0.67	4.29	0.67									0.520
Age													
	< 30 years old		30 - 40		40 - 50		> 50 years old						ANOVA
T	4.44	0.46	4.50	0.54	4.54	0.56	4.53	0.50					0.535
DC	4.09	0.74	4.09	0.67	4.19	0.76	4.33	0.63					0.239
CEGP	4.11	0.66	4.09	0.67	4.05	0.72	4.15	0.77					0.843
SEG	4.27	0.68	4.29	0.67	4.34	0.69	4.44	0.54					0.608
University teaching experience													
	< 5 years		5-10 years		> 10 years								ANOVA
T	4.41	0.60	4.55	0.44	4.54	0.51							0.044
DC	4.10	0.75	4.08	0.71	4.19	0.68							0.338
CEGP	4.07	0.70	4.16	0.65	4.06	0.69							0.421
SEG	4.27	0.68	4.29	0.67	4.35	0.67							0.506
Income level at workplace													
	< 10 million		10 - 15		> 15 million								ANOVA
T	4.21	0.57	4.27	0.47	4.28	0.53							0.447
DC	4.09	0.74	4.10	0.70	4.21	0.69							0.254
CEGP	4.12	0.65	4.10	0.66	4.04	0.74							0.585
SEG	4.27	0.63	4.27	0.77	4.39	0.62							0.169
University													
	U1		U2		U3		U4		U5		U6		ANOVA
T	4.55	0.49	4.42	0.56	4.44	0.49	4.55	0.62	4.31	0.46	4.67	0.37	0.009
DC	4.14	0.73	4.17	0.72	4.09	0.75	4.09	0.80	4.06	0.63	4.24	0.50	0.807
CEGP	4.16	0.66	4.12	0.70	4.13	0.56	3.91	0.84	4.03	0.61	4.14	0.61	0.158
SEG	4.25	0.69	4.48	0.57	4.25	0.70	4.31	0.71	4.10	0.70	4.52	0.53	0.006

- By gender: Male and female lecturers have different motivations even in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" (sig=0.034<0.05); females exhibit higher motivation in this task compared to males (males-4.02; females-4.15). Grading papers is a task that demands precision and carefulness. Females tend to be more suitable for tasks of this nature, which may explain why they exhibit higher motivation in grading papers compared to males.
- By university teaching experience: Depending on their teaching experience at the university, lecturers have different motivations in "teaching" (sig=0.044<0.05). Among the three categories of teaching experience, lecturers with mid-level experience (from 5 to 10 years) exhibit the highest motivation in "teaching" (less than 5 years-4.41; from 5 to 10 years-4.55; above 10 years-4.54).

The above results have been confirmed through interviews: Among the 14 lecturers ranked first in motivation for "teaching" (out of a total of 18 lecturers interviewed), 9 out of 14 (64.3%) have mid-level teaching experience. During the process of being a university lecturer, the period of less than 5 years is a time of learning and adaptation; the mid-level period is a time of maturity and stability in the profession; and the period above 10 years, lecturers may experience a decline in motivation for teaching because the job may have become familiar, leading to reduced interest and enthusiasm.

In addition, lecturers' motivation in "teaching" and "supervising and evaluating graduation" also varies by their universities. The factors influencing these differences need to be explored in further in-depth studies.

4.3. Discussion

According to the first research question (What is the current level of motivation in carrying out teaching and related activities of VNUHCM lecturers?), the research results indicate that the overall motivation of lecturers in teaching and related activities is high. However, their motivation in carrying out specific tasks is uneven. The data collected from questionnaires and interviews indicate that the highest level of motivation is in "teaching," followed by sequentially ranked "supervising and evaluating graduation," "curriculum development," and "evaluating students' learning outcomes."

The uneven level of motivation in carrying out different activities is due to:

- Firstly, perceptions and interests of lecturers regarding professional tasks. Lecturers believe that teaching is the central task of their profession. On the other hand, those lecturers who enjoy teaching and research, and prefer to integrate theory with practice, exhibit high motivation in teaching and guiding students in research projects to prepare for graduation.
- Secondly, the different nature of tasks within the "teaching and related activities" group. Among the four tasks within the group, curriculum development and updating course syllabi require careful thinking, a process of searching for materials, and understanding social needs to ensure that the curriculum meets societal demands. On the other hand, "evaluating students' learning outcomes" is a frequent task that demands precision, accuracy, and carefulness. These two tasks not only require professional competence but also qualities such as a thirst for learning, a passion for critical thinking, perseverance, diligence, and diligence from the lecturers.

The level of motivation varies among tasks and can have a detrimental impact on lecturers' engagement in various activities. Lecturers may exert more effort in teaching while avoiding the development of curricula, updating syllabi, and especially evading grading papers. This is not ideal, as all of these activities are indispensable tasks in the university education process.

According to the second research question (Are there differences in in the motivation of lecturers in carrying out teaching and related activities based on demographic characteristics?), the results show that not all tasks within the "teaching and related activities" group have motivational differences based on demographics. The difference in motivation only focuses on two tasks: "evaluating students' learning outcomes" and "teaching." The difference in motivation in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" is observed among lecturer groups based on academic rank, degree, and gender. This result is also reasonable, as analyzed, lecturers with higher academic ranks and degrees have more responsibilities in research and scientific publications, leaving insufficient time to participate in all tasks, and grading papers is a task that requires precision, carefulness, and consumes a lot of time. This demonstrates that, for lecturers to effectively carry out their duties, if there are regulations to increase responsibility for one activity, there needs to be a reduction in responsibility for another activity. Demanding that all lecturers with varying levels of expertise perform all activities at the same level is not feasible. Furthermore, the difference in motivation in "teaching" is observed among lecturer groups based on their teaching experience at the university. Among the three categories of teaching experience, lecturers with mid-level experience (from 10 to 15 years) exhibit the highest motivation in "teaching." This can be explained by the fact that this period represents a stable phase in their profession, unlike the initial years, which involve learning and adaptation, and the later years when teaching tasks may become familiar and less attractive than before.

Recommendations: To enhance motivation within the "teaching and related activities" group, the university leadership, faculties need to: 1/Raise awareness among lecturers about the significance of each task within the group. Teaching is not the only essential professional duty of lecturers, but the other three tasks are also indispensable, as they ensure the entire educational process at the university is carried out comprehensively and completely. 2/Take into account the preferences and capabilities of lecturers to assign the teaching workload and graduation supervision appropriately. 3/Develop a team of teaching assistants (from high-achieving and well-qualified final-year students, recruited graduates, Master's students, or Ph.D. students) to allow lecturers with higher academic ranks and degrees to reduce the time spent on grading papers. 4/ Design regulations for each type of lecturer with corresponding standards for teaching, scientific research, and other specialized tasks. This allows lecturers to register for tasks that align with their capabilities and preferences. For instance, the teaching workload standard per year for "teaching-focused lecturers" will be higher than that for "research-focused lecturers," and conversely, the number of scientific publications per year for "research-focused lecturers" will be higher than that for "teaching-focused lecturers'.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies: The study was conducted on lecturers from public universities who are members of the national university. However, it has not been conducted on lecturers from other types of universities, such as private universities or public universities not affiliated with the national university. In other words, the research exclusively focuses on the motivation levels of lecturers who are members of The Vietnam National University group, managed by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. However, it does not clarify the varying levels of

motivation among lecturers in teaching and related activities between public universities and private universities. This is because both types of institutions are obliged to adhere to the policies established by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam despite having different employment statuses and lecturer career systems. Additionally, the study did not address the factors influencing the motivation of lecturers in teaching and related activities in general, nor did it investigate these factors for specific tasks. Moreover, the study did not explore the factors affecting the motivation in teaching and related activities among different groups of lecturers based on demographics.

The above issues need to be further investigated in future research studies.

5. Conclusions

Teaching and related activities are important professional tasks for university lecturers. According to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, this group of tasks includes four specific activities: Teaching, developing curricula, evaluating students' learning outcomes, and supervising and evaluating graduation. The analysis of data collected from surveys and in-depth interviews with lecturers from 6 member universities of VNUHCM reveals that the motivation of lecturers in teaching and related activities, overall, is at a high level, but it varies in the execution of specific tasks. The study also identified differences in motivation in "teaching" among groups of university lecturers based on their years of teaching experience. At the same time, the research also recorded differences in motivation in "evaluating students' learning outcomes" among groups of lecturers based on their academic ranks and degrees, as well as gender. The research findings presented in the article provide practical grounds for the leaders of VNUHCM to develop policies that enhance the motivation of lecturers in their teaching and related activities.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

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