



Factors Affecting the Perception of Happiness among Teachers in Vietnam

Pham Thi Hong Tham¹

Pham Thi Phuong Thuc²

Nguyen Thi Phuong³

Nguyen Duc Giang⁴



(✉ Corresponding Author)

^{1,2}The Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, Vietnam.

¹Email: thamph@vnies.edu.vn

²Email: thucpt@vnies.edu.vn

^{3,4}University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam.

³Email: Phuongntt.nguyen@vnu.edu.vn

⁴Email: nguyenducgiang@vnu.edu.vn

Abstract

Vietnam is in the process of implementing education reforms in which teachers play a crucial role in determining success. This study aims to identify the main factors influencing the perception of happiness at work of Vietnamese teachers during the period of educational reform. In any period, teachers are always considered as being the force behind the success of education. Therefore, teachers' happiness is the most vital factor to be taken into consideration when educating students. Identifying the factors that affect teachers' happiness at work is the key to improving their teaching quality and quality of life. This study was conducted to investigate the factors affecting the perceived happiness of secondary school teachers in Vietnam today, thereby objectively assessing the emotional status of teachers in Vietnam in relation to the work they are doing. The results are as follows: 1) Teachers face a lot of pressure from many sides; 2) There is still a large percentage of teachers who do not really attach importance to the teaching profession; 3) State policies have not helped teachers feel secure in their professional activities; 4) Teacher capacity still needs to be greatly improved; 5) It is necessary to strengthen the connection between teachers, educational leaders, policy makers, school administrators and colleagues. This study uses descriptive statistics to present the research results. The survey was carried out in September 2021.

Keywords: Career satisfaction, Factors, Happiness, Subjective well-being, Teachers, Vietnamese teachers.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

Vietnam is in the process of reforming the country's education programs; in other words, reforming the education system. The new programs were implemented beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. This change has been a breakthrough in the education system, and it is teachers who have been most profoundly affected. This study identifies a number of factors that affect teachers' perceived happiness. In addition, the study provides data on the current educational reforms.

1. Introduction

For those in the teaching profession, the feeling of professional happiness is extremely important because this feeling not only affects the positive psychological development of teachers but also indirectly affects their attitude towards professional activities. Besides, happiness also affects teachers' initiative and creativity at work. That's why education authorities and school principals need to know how to make teachers feel satisfied with their jobs, love their jobs and stick to them.

Vietnam is in the process of transforming and modernizing the general education system, in line with the development trends globally, whereby the teacher's sense of happiness plays an ever more important role today. However, in Vietnam, research on happiness has so far been almost non-existent (Van, 2019). Furthermore, current research on happiness has not paid much attention to teachers; it can be said that there is a big gap in this area. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying the factors affecting the perceived happiness of secondary school teachers in the present period. This study hopes to obtain valuable scientific results as a basis to propose solutions to improve the feeling of job satisfaction and happiness among teachers.

1.1. Respondents

The subjects in this study were 290 secondary school teachers from 7 different secondary schools in the northern region of Vietnam. Their qualifications are as follows: pre-university 4.1%; Undergraduate 94.8% and graduate (students) 1.0%; Gender: female 87%, male 13%; Age: under 30 years (17.9%), 31-40 years (29.7%), 41 to 50 years (37.2%) and over 50 years (15.2%); Working seniority: less than 10 years (21.7%), 11-20 years (34.5%) and over 20 years (43.8%).

1.2. Methodology and Data

1.2.1. Investigation Method

- The author applied the 'happiness scale at work' (Khanh, 2019) and the research area mainly focuses on identifying the factors affecting the professional happiness of Vietnamese teachers.
- Rating scale: A 5-point Likert scale was used in this research. The average scores obtained in the survey were used to make the final conclusions of the study. The higher the average score, the more positive is the teacher's assessment.
- The survey was conducted in September 2021.

1.2.2. Mathematical Statistical Methods

Mathematical statistics were derived using SPSS22 software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). SPSS is a specialized software used in statistical data analysis and is often used in the field of scientific research to process data, draw tables and analyze mean scores and standard deviations to draw conclusions on research results. SPSS 22 software was also used to determine the reliability and validity of the scales used in the questionnaire. The results of the reliability analysis showed that the scales had a high Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (average at 0.88); The correlation coefficient (r) between each item and the total scale was $0.68 \leq r \leq 0.82$. This value showed that the questions were reliable to measure happiness in the work of teachers and it proved the validity of the contents. The items in the questionnaire were suitable to measure the contents and could thus be used to perform investigations.

1.3. Literature Review

Review of domestic document sources brought to light the limited number of studies on happiness in general and teachers' happiness in particular. In other words, the study of happiness in Vietnam so far hasn't received much attention from researchers (Van, 2019). "In developing countries like Vietnam, the number of studies on teacher's job satisfaction is exiguous" (Quang & Thao, 2018).

Among the few studies on factors of teachers' perception of happiness, the most notable are the studies by Hieu (2013); Kien (2020); Quyen (2016) and Van & Phuong (2018). Their studies have revealed numerous factors that affect teachers' happiness at work, such as personal relationships (with principals and colleagues), job satisfaction (personal ability, job position, promotion, income (salary, social welfare) and state policies (Education law, Teacher law).

Only recently has the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training paid more attention to teachers' happiness. Noticeably, in 2021, the Ministry of Education and Training in collaboration with the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences implemented a number of research projects at all levels on teachers' perception of happiness.

1.4. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

As mentioned in the study overview on teacher's job satisfaction, this is not an emerging topic; there are still several research gaps in this area.

1) In relation to geographical areas, the majority of related studies have been conducted in developed countries while developing countries haven't paid much attention to this topic.

2) In the social recognition of occupations, although education in Vietnam has always been considered the top

national priority, the number of research and studies conducted on teacher-related issues is limited. This inadequacy can be easily observed through the scant documentary sources available in national libraries, school libraries and in both specialized and non-specialized journals.

3) In terms of research objectives, current studies on teachers' perception of happiness primarily focus on university lecturers; most junior high school teachers are not included in the studies.

4) Current studies in Vietnam mainly pay attention to teachers' perceived happiness rather than factors affecting their happiness, while such factors arguably play a very important role in a teacher's perception of happiness.

5) The number of studies on factors influencing teachers' perception of happiness is insignificant in comparison to the total number of studies on teachers' job satisfaction.

From these research gaps, it is apparent that the influencing factors of teachers' job satisfaction in Vietnam currently are still in need of in-depth research. The value and practicality of this study will not only enable teachers, headmasters and education authorities to have a more comprehensive view and better orientation in developing future generations of teachers but also provide a valuable reference for related research.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

Through survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews with Vietnamese teachers, this study aims to reveal the factors affecting the perception of happiness among Vietnamese teachers in the current context.

2. Results

2.1. Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Perception of happiness

Psychologists suggest that feeling happy is a personal perception of life by means of evaluation. Robitschek & Keyes (2009) and Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2010) argue that feeling happy is the frequent experience of positive emotional states (satisfaction, excitement, interest, love etc.) rather than negative emotions (boredom, sadness and anxiety). The research conducted by Huong (2014) defines perceived happiness as people's subjective assessment of satisfaction about their lives. Satisfaction acts as a measure; the most effective indicator of the quality of life and people's satisfaction with their jobs. Based on the opinion of Huong (2014), this study uses satisfaction as a measure to assess the individual's perceived happiness in life.

2.1.2. Perception of Job Satisfaction

From a professional perspective, perceived job satisfaction refers to the employee's perception of his profession (Quang & Thao, 2018). According to Aziri (2008) job satisfaction is a feeling resulting from the perception that the work allows one to achieve the material and spiritual needs one desires. Weiss (2002) argues that job satisfaction can be defined as the positive or negative evaluations that people make about their jobs. However, the concept of perceived happiness at work does not have a standardized and unified definition. In other words, it is an ambiguous term (Evans, 1997). In this study, perceived job satisfaction (as a measure of happiness) is conceptualized as an emotional response to the jobs people are involved in and the factors influencing their work are assessed as the special environment which has a direct impact on the emotional attitude of employees towards their work (Sousa & Porto, 2015).

2.2. Factors Influencing Teachers' Job Satisfaction

2.2.1 Professional Awareness of Teachers

Proper awareness of the importance of the job has a significant influence on job performance. To further understand teachers' attitudes towards the importance of their occupation, the present study performed an assessment of the importance of teaching. The results are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Teachers' attitudes towards their occupation.

	Level of significance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely insignificant	13	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Relatively insignificant	30	10.3	10.3	14.8
	Neutral	35	12.1	12.1	26.9
	Relatively significant	128	44.1	44.1	71.0
	Very significant	84	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	290	100.0	100.0	

The results in Table 1 shows that 29% of teachers believe that teaching is very important, 44.1% of teachers consider teaching as "relatively significant", 12.1% gave a neutral opinion, 10.3% thought that teaching is "relatively insignificant" and 4.5% of teachers considered teaching as "completely insignificant".

It is noticeable that about 14.8% of teachers did not have a high appreciation of this occupation (including the assessment of "completely insignificant" and "relatively insignificant"), and in the context of education, this number is alarming and should not exist. In fact, annually, 1% of Vietnam's teachers resign (approximately 16,000 teachers) (source: Ministry of Education and Training - Conference of reviewing the school year 2021 - 2022 and deploying tasks for the school year 2022 - 2023). To further investigate the gravity of this matter, interviews have been conducted with teachers, with the following responses: "I think teachers nowadays don't take this profession seriously anymore, it's too dangerous and tiring. Many of my colleagues have already quit their jobs. As for me myself, I still want to stick with the profession because at least I have been trained to be a teacher; moreover, it's too tiring to find another job now" (Teacher interview results No.8). "We always feel worried because we spend too much time on this job, and the qualification requirements for the job are too high." Every day it takes us 10 hours to complete our work, and the salary is too little, not even enough to afford a decent living. I have thought to myself many times that I should find myself another job to better secure my

living” (Teacher interview results No.81). It can be inferred that the major reasons for this phenomenon are low salaries and strict job requirements; besides, (managers’ opinion) teachers may not be qualified to meet the requirements of the 2018 universal education program, and several other reasons may be attributed to teachers as well. In conclusion, although more than 2/3 of teachers highly appreciate the significance of the job, there are relatively many teachers who do not find the job important. Regarding this matter, MOET should have favorable policies so that teachers feel more secure with their job, which is essential for the development of Vietnam’s education system.

2.2.2. Policies and Mechanisms of the State in Aid of Protecting Teachers

It is evident that policy plays an integral part in ensuring a profession's correct orientation and accomplishment of goals. Education is no exception, and education policies help make it easier for teachers to pursue their profession. In recent years, the Vietnam government has made many significant moves in enacting policies in aid of protecting teachers, such as basic salary increase (Decree 204/2004/NĐ-CP); education investment increase - accounting for more than 20% of the total national budget (Regulations on spending for national education), Regulations on overtime pay (Joint Circular 07/2013/TTLT-BGDĐT-BNV-BTC), Allowance regime (Decree No.54/2011/ND-CP) and teacher honoring mechanisms (Decree No.27/2015/ ND-CP). These policies are excellent motivation for teachers to engage more enthusiastically in their jobs. Nevertheless, to draw a more reasonable conclusion about the feelings of teachers who are the beneficiary of these policies, the factors shown in Table 2 were studied:

Table 2. Teachers’ assessment of teacher- protection mechanisms

Teacher- protection mechanisms	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Policies to enhance teachers’ expertise	290	2.00	5.00	3.49	0.96
Policies to protect teachers	290	1.00	5.00	3.27	1.12
Rationality in teacher evaluation	290	2.00	5.00	3.97	0.95
Salaries that can support teachers’ standard of living	290	1.00	5.00	3.79	1.14
Suitable regulations for teaching hours	290	2.00	5.00	3.38	0.84
Valid N (listwise)	290				

From Table 2, we can see clearly that teachers currently do not approve of the Vietnamese government's policies to protect teachers. If the average score for these criteria is 2.5, then the teacher evaluation score here is only slightly above average at 3.26/5. The results of the interviews on this issue are as follows: “we feel a lot of pressure when students are bad and rude but cannot give severe punishments as deterrent. For some special students, the more gently we treat them, the more helpless they become, thus making us feel extremely helpless as well. There was a case where a colleague hit the hand of a student who made a mistake, and his whole family dragged him to their house to threaten him and even asked the school to dismiss the teacher. The school leadership finally disciplined her, even though she was not dismissed from her job; it also made us feel insecure in our professional activities” (Teacher interview results No.15). Therefore, choosing to underestimate the policy to protect teachers is also understandable. If the Education sector is to have further developments, it is necessary to have the best policies to protect teachers, to bring a sense of security among them.

In addition, the element of “professional development” for teachers is also not appreciated by teachers. Many teachers believe that the training sessions that the Ministry of Education and Training organizes are “relaxing” sessions for teachers, which do not bring them much value.

“Working time regulations” are also not appreciated because now, although the number of administrative tasks has decreased much, the pressure of changing contents and programs requires teachers to spend more time at preparing lessons before going to class. In addition, with the current practice of employing part-time teachers in many classes, the pressure of grading, correcting, testing and evaluating students also takes up much time.

Thus, it can be seen that currently teachers are not really satisfied with the mechanisms and policies implemented by the Vietnamese government to protect teachers. Therefore, in order for teachers to have peace of mind in their professional activities, the state needs to have more effective mechanisms and policies in place to create a sense of peace of mind among teachers.

2.2.3. Relationship of Teachers with Authorities, Colleagues and Students

Relationship is understood as an interaction between two (or more) objects or two (or more) groups of objects. It forms connections between humans in their life and work. In any society, relationships are always considered to be vital and indispensable. Relationships can be formed from interactions at work, which are mostly not accidental but purposeful. These interactions need to be repeated and stabilized to produce an interaction pattern that operates as a habit with little consciousness involved. Good relationships create better, positive and efficient working environments.

Table 3. Relationships in School.

Relationships	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Good relationships with colleagues	290	1.00	5.00	4.27	.956
Affection of Students	290	2.00	5.00	4.11	1.07
Sympathy and Empathy of School Directors	290	2.00	5.00	3.98	1.01
Valid N (listwise)	290				

Table 3 shows us how engaged teachers are with relationships in their school environment. It can be inferred from Table 3 that teachers have a better relationship with their fellow colleagues than they do with their school directors: the mean rating of teachers’ mutual relationship is 4.27 while the relationship with directors shows a

mean rating of 3.98. Overall, the average ratings indicate that the quality of the relationship between teachers and other school members is relatively good. Although it may not be perfect, it indicates a fairly good relationship between the various units of the educational environment in schools today.

2.2.4. Self-Efficacy

It is widely accepted that self-confidence is one of the best indicators of personal happiness and an important factor influencing an individual's happiness. Happiness in turn lays the foundations for both self-confidence and a meaningful life. Based on the survey, the majority of teachers rated their self-confidence at a relatively high level. Up to 51% of teachers surveyed said that they were “completely confident” in their own abilities before the modified new general education program was introduced. Nevertheless, “neutral” or “unconfident” ratings are still relatively high, accounting for about 35% of the total number of teachers participating in the survey. In the education sector, this figure is still too high for a profession that spreads inspiration through teaching. When teachers do not feel confident in themselves, it is difficult for them to inspire students. To better understand the level of confidence of Vietnamese teachers in the current period, Table 4 presents the statistics.

Table 4. Confidence in self-efficacy

Confidence levels		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely unconfident	2	0.7	0.7	0.7
	Fairly unconfident	16	5.5	5.5	6.2
	Neutral	80	27.6	27.6	33.8
	Fairly confident	44	15.2	15.2	49.0
	Completely confident	148	51.0	51.0	100.0
	Total	290	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the current levels of confidence among teachers; basically they are relatively confident. However, confidence must be associated with labor efficiency to bring about the results expected by the Ministry of Education and as desired by society.

Given such survey results on the level of teachers' confidence, it is integral for the Ministry of Education to devise additional plans to foster capacity and professional skills among teachers, thereby helping them gain more confidence and perform better at their roles.

2.2.5. Work Pressure Confronting Teachers Today

Work pressure has both advantages and disadvantages: On the positive side, pressure generates motivation to develop teaching styles and improve the quality and efficiency of professional activities. On the flip side, being under tremendous pressure without any timely relieving measures would be conducive to overload, negatively affecting both physical and mental health as well as teachers' performance, thereby affecting the quality of education. As a result, educational goals may not be reached.

The Vietnam Peace and Development Fund (Binh, 2012) states that the working time of teachers today extends longer than prescribed. In addition, up to 50% of teachers are paid below the required average salary. Among more than 500 teachers surveyed, about half expressed their desire to quit their job, and middle school teachers made up the highest number, with primary school teachers at 40.9%, secondary school teachers at 59% and high school teachers at 52.4%. In addition, according to a survey conducted by Dung (2016), 100% of the teachers and administrators confirmed that they suffered from stress. Regardless of stress frequency, the symptoms were noticeable in the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of the teachers.

It can be said that, in the past, Vietnamese teachers faced a lot of intense pressure. Today, while Vietnam is undergoing educational reform, pressure from the administration has been dramatically mitigated (on average, there are about three tasks compared to 10 tasks before), and a lot of issues have been resolved to lessen the burden on teachers.

Table 5. Pressure levels of teachers today

Pressure levels		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pressure-free	5	1.7	1.7	1.7
	A little pressure	32	11.0	11.0	12.8
	Medium pressure	52	17.9	17.9	30.7
	Great pressure	93	32.1	32.1	62.8
	Intense pressure	108	37.2	37.2	100.0
	Total	290	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the levels of pressure teachers are currently facing. It can be inferred from the table that the majority of teachers claimed that they are under certain types of pressure. The highest rate is 37.2% which is the level of “intense pressure”, followed by the level of “great pressure” accounting for 32.1%. In the process of implementing a new general education program and many other measures to improve teachers' motivation toward teaching, the Ministry of Education is trying to help reduce stress among teachers. However, the steps taken do not seem to be enough to solve the problem.

2.2.6. Types of Pressure

Teaching is a special profession that faces many challenges and causes stress to the staff. In the process of professional work, teachers often have to face and solve many other related problems in addition to their professional duties. Table 6 below shows the types of pressure that Vietnamese teachers are currently facing.

Table 6. Types of pressure affecting teachers' happiness

Types of pressure	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student pressure	290	1.00	5.00	3.99	1.06
Pressure from authorities	290	1.00	5.00	3.10	1.50
Self-imposed pressure	290	1.00	5.00	3.18	.93
Pressure from students' parents	290	1.00	5.00	3.32	1.21
Social pressure	290	1.00	5.00	3.35	1.17
Pressure from colleagues	290	1.00	5.00	2.20	1.30
Valid N (listwise)	290				

Table 6 shows the factors that contribute to teachers' work pressure today. It can be seen that teachers are under pressure from many sides. The results of this survey were obtained from responses to closed type questions and statements; an open question format might have revealed even more factors that cause pressure to teachers.

Teaching may be considered to be the most challenging occupation in Vietnam today (Van, 2019). Teachers have to face pressure from various sectors every day. The statistics show the daily pressure that teachers have to deal with, most of which stem from students (The highest rating is 3.99/5); the least is pressure from colleagues (the lowest score among the rating points at 2.20/5). Pressure from other areas is also relatively high.

Among the many issues stated here, social issues require more attention. At present, when society and schools join hands to educate students, new problems arise: Traditional education (from the perspective of the Vietnamese people), modern education that promotes individual potential, learner's ability and new student assessment methods can together satisfy certain groups of people in society. However, teachers are usually the ones who have to deal with the problems. These problems result in teachers feeling stressed and exhausted.

2.2.7. Working Hours

Aside from the pressures from people, Vietnamese teachers are also under great pressure from working long hours. From Table 7, we can see that the number of teachers whose work hours exceed the government's regulations accounts for a very large proportion.

Table 7. Teachers' working hours

	Work Time	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 8 hours	4	1.4	1.4	1.4
	8 -10 hours	198	68.3	68.3	69.7
	Over 10 hours	88	30.3	30.3	100.0
	Total	290	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows us the amount of time each Vietnamese teacher needs to complete the daily workload. According to the regulations set by the Ministry of Education, the upper-limit of working hours for teachers is 8 hours a day. However, teachers have to work more than the specified number of hours to complete the daily workload. Only 1.4% of surveyed teachers work less than 8 hours a day.

A typical working day progresses as follows: preparing lesson plans, teaching classes, making notes, grading students' assignments, reading notes and checking students' books. They have to grade students' assignments at an average of 40 students per class which is equivalent to 40 assignments a day. Furthermore, teachers do not just teach one class; many have to teach 2-3 classes simultaneously. Therefore, the amount of work increases. As stated by Binh (2012), each high school teacher has to complete up to 10 tasks with a working time of 60-70 hours per week. At primary level, the teacher's weekly working hours is about 1.5 times more than the number of hours set by the government (40 hours per week); at the secondary level it is 1.7 times more and 1.8 times more for high school.

Thus, it can be seen that the excessive workload that causes teachers to overwork is one of the reasons for the reduced levels of teacher's perception of happiness today.

2.2.8. Salary Compared with Cost of Living

This is a pressing issue in the Education Industry. According to the regulations of the Vietnamese state, a teacher's income is calculated as follows: Salary + allowance = Coefficient * Base salary + allowance, in which, the base salary is 1.49 million Vietnamese dong. The university coefficient is 2.34 and every 3 years the salary increases by 1 level (0.33). If calculated according to this formula, a university graduate teacher fresh out of training is entitled to receive $2.34 * 1.49 = 3,486,600$ Vietnamese dong + allowance; after 3 years it goes up to $2.67 * 1.49 = 3,680,300$ Vietnamese dong + allowance. A person with a PhD degree, holding the position of a researcher with more than 10 years of working experience in the Education Industry receives a monthly salary of 4,000,650 Vietnamese dong which is equivalent to about US\$176.

Based on the research of Trung (2020) who conducted a large-scale study among 1801 teachers, it was seen that 2.9% of secondary school teachers had "very low" levels of living standards, 46.1% had "low" living standards while those with a "high" level only made up 0.2%. At the higher levels of education (grades 10-12), the teachers with "very low" living standards made up 8.4%, those with "low" living standards made up 39.3% and those with "high" living standards made up 0.8%.

The results of the survey are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Sufficiency of Teachers' Salaries

Levels		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally sufficient	11	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Partly sufficient	26	9.0	9.0	12.8
	Normal	81	27.9	27.9	40.7
	Partly insufficient	66	22.8	22.8	63.4
	Totally insufficient	106	36.6	36.6	100.0
	Total	290	100.0	100.0	

From Table 8 we can see that the number of teachers with “totally sufficient” salaries accounts for a slightly higher percentage than that shown in the survey results of Pham, Zhang and Jing (2020); teachers with “totally insufficient” salaries account for a very high rate of 36.6% and 22.8% of teachers live at the “partly sufficient” level. This survey outcome basically aligns with that of Pham et al. (2020) in particular and many other studies in general.

To summarize, teachers, in addition to pressure from people, also face pressure from long working hours and pressure from insufficient income. These problems significantly reduce their perceived happiness in their career. This too causes a lot of unresolved debates between teachers and administrators today.

2.3. Steps to Improve the Feeling of Happiness among Teachers

2.3.1. Improving Policies for Teachers

In the improvement of teacher- well-being in the current context of Vietnamese society, the role of administrators is very important. In order to improve the feeling of happiness among teachers, administrators at all levels first need to develop a positive view of the teaching profession in society. In the current context, a large number of people are not satisfied with the changes in education goals, educational processes and regulations on rewards and discipline etc. In recent years, the Faculty of Education has not been very popular among students, thus affecting the quality of teachers. Therefore, in order to improve this situation, leaders at all levels should take positive action, encourage excellent students to choose the field of education and promote the profession so that people understand the meaning and purpose of pedagogy styles and education today. Second, the state should strengthen the improvement of mechanisms and policies to protect teachers through laws such as laws on education and laws on teachers, etc., giving more rights to teachers in the teaching process; Third, there should be fostering of pedagogical capacity and pedagogical skills among teachers. Fourth, pressure faced by teachers should be reduced by limiting the amount of administrative work and extra classes for teachers so that they can spend more time in fostering professional development and improving teaching quality. At the same time, all these measures will help teachers improve their general well-being.

2.3.2. Improving Working Environments

The working environment here is defined as the physical conditions and harmonious relationships between people. This is considered the best way to run the school. In this environment, in addition to the student factor, the principal always has a significant influence on teachers' daily emotions. In a friendly working environment, teachers feel happy and full of energy. On the contrary, while working in a hostile environment, teachers' moods are negatively affected and they lack the motivation to work. This is likely to have consequences affecting the quality of teaching. Therefore, school authorities should create a happy and united working atmosphere for teachers and staff in the school by making changes to the management to raise efficiency and teaching capacity.

2.3.3. Changes from Within the Teacher

In addition to external factors influencing all levels of management, each teacher should know how to bring about self-improvement, improve skills, develop capacity, change teaching methods and techniques, etc. to meet the educational goals of the new era. The change from within teachers themselves is a prerequisite to help teachers keep pace with new education policies that can help fulfill the desired aspirations and attain their goals. In addition, the positive changes from within the teachers themselves will also help them to increase their sense of professional satisfaction and confidence in carrying out professional activities.

3. Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the study are as follows:

- (1) Teachers have a relatively good sense of professionalism.
- (2) The current policies for Vietnamese teachers have not satisfied the majority of teachers, especially in terms of salary.
- (3) Teachers enjoy good relations with their principals and students.
- (4) Most teachers are very confident in their own abilities; however, about 6.2% of teachers still feel otherwise.
- (5) The current work pressure faced by teachers is still relatively enormous. Most of the pressure is from their students.

This research has basically clarified the factors affecting the perceived job satisfaction of junior high school teachers in the Northern region of Vietnam. The scope and subjects of the survey are highly representative and the conclusions are reliable. The survey has also paid special attention to important factors that directly affect teachers' emotions in professional activities. Although the results have shown noticeable indicators, in order to improve teachers' job satisfaction, ministries, agencies and localities also need to pay more attention to teachers who are responsible for the core values of education.

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