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## Assessing the mediating influence of job satisfaction in the relationship between human resource management, educational innovation and lecturer's organizational commitment: A case study of private universities in Ho Chi Minh City

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### Abstract

Job satisfaction acts as a crucial mediating variable linking human resource management (HRM) and educational innovation to organizational commitment in private universities. This study aims to examine the indirect effects of HRM and educational innovation on organizational commitment through job satisfaction among lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City's private higher education institutions. Using a quantitative approach, data from 487 valid responses were analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM) and the bootstrap method with 2,000 resamples. The results show that satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between HRM and organizational commitment ( $VAF = 42.2\%$ ) and between educational innovation and organizational commitment ( $VAF = 25.3\%$ ). In contrast, the mediating role of educational innovation in the relationship between HRM and satisfaction is not supported ( $VAF = 17.0\%$ ). These findings confirm that job satisfaction is both a result and a transmission channel of HRM effectiveness and innovation activities. Theoretically, the study enriches the social exchange and expectancy frameworks by emphasizing satisfaction as an affective mechanism driving lecturers' organizational attachment. Practically, it highlights the need for universities to improve both maintenance (income, welfare, stable working environment) and motivation (opportunities for professional development, career promotion, and performance recognition) factors to strengthen satisfaction and long-term engagement

**Keywords:** Human resource management, educational innovation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, mediation analysis, private higher education

### Introduction

Job satisfaction is widely recognized as a vital mediating factor linking human resource management (HRM) to employees' organizational commitment. Previous studies have shown that HRM policies such as compensation, career development, and positive working environments enhance job satisfaction, which subsequently promotes stronger organizational attachment. Jiang (2016) <sup>[8]</sup> emphasized that satisfaction arises directly from reward systems and development opportunities, acting as a mediating mechanism between HRM and job performance. Similarly, Margaretha *et al.* (2021) <sup>[9]</sup> found that satisfaction bridges HRM and organizational commitment among university lecturers, reinforcing the role of satisfaction as a behavioral and emotional connector. Recent research by Wojtczuk-Turek (2024) <sup>[17]</sup> and Piwowski-Sulej & Podolska (2022) <sup>[11]</sup> further validated that sustainable HRM focusing on employee well-being strengthen satisfaction, which in turn enhances commitment and performance. These empirical insights collectively affirm that satisfaction is a key psychological channel transforming HRM initiatives into organizational outcomes.

In the education sector, particularly higher education, job satisfaction especially among lecturers has been identified as a central mediator connecting educational innovation to organizational commitment. Innovative initiatives such as active learning, technology-integrated teaching, and organizational learning systems foster lecturer satisfaction by creating dynamic and supportive professional environments. Research by Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy (2020) <sup>[5]</sup> highlighted that satisfaction is influenced by leadership support, collegial collaboration, and working conditions, all of which strengthen

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organizational cohesion. Similarly, Ha Nam Khanh Giao (2020) <sup>[6]</sup> demonstrated that satisfaction converts factors such as training and creative leadership into tangible work outcomes. Bombiak and Marciniuk-Kluska (2023) <sup>[2]</sup> confirmed that satisfaction mediates the relationship between learning-oriented organizations and lecturers' commitment, while Wang *et al.* (2022) <sup>[16]</sup> showed that transformational leadership, an aspect of educational innovation, enhances satisfaction and consequently organizational attachment.

From a theoretical perspective, Vroom's (1964) <sup>[14]</sup> expectancy theory provides an explanatory foundation for the mediating role of satisfaction between HRM, educational innovation, and organizational commitment. When employees perceive their efforts as valued and rewarded in line with their expectations, intrinsic satisfaction emerges, fostering stronger affective bonds with their organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1991) <sup>[10]</sup>. Satisfaction also promotes positive emotions that stimulate cooperation and openness to educational innovation (Dewey, 1938; Schein, 1985) <sup>[13, 4]</sup>. Thus, satisfaction serves as a psychological mechanism transforming management resources into motivation, innovation, and long-term organizational commitment.

Despite extensive research on HRM and satisfaction, few studies have simultaneously explored how satisfaction mediates the combined effects of HRM and educational innovation on lecturers' commitment in private higher education institutions. Most existing works treat HRM and educational innovation as separate predictors rather than interrelated mechanisms within a unified structural framework. Additionally, the contextual characteristics of Vietnam's private universities marked by financial constraints, competitive pressures, and diverse management models require an empirical examination of how satisfaction functions as a transmission channel connecting managerial and educational factors. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between HRM, educational innovation, and organizational commitment among lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City's private universities, offering both theoretical and managerial insights for sustainable academic development.

## 2. Literature review and research gap

Job satisfaction has long been recognized as a pivotal factor connecting HRM and organizational outcomes. According to Jiang (2016) <sup>[8]</sup>, satisfaction originates not only from tangible aspects such as compensation, safety, and job security but also from intangible ones such as career development and recognition. These factors nurture intrinsic motivation and shape employees' perceptions of organizational fairness and support. Margaretha *et al.* (2021) <sup>[9]</sup> further demonstrated that satisfaction functions as a mediating variable between HRM policies and organizational commitment among lecturers, confirming its critical role in transforming HRM inputs into positive behavioral responses. Complementary evidence from Wojtczuk-Turek (2024) <sup>[17]</sup> and Piwowar-Sulej and Podolska (2022) <sup>[11]</sup> indicates that sustainable HRM emphasizing employee well-being and inclusion foster

higher satisfaction, which subsequently enhances long-term commitment and retention.

To provide a clearer overview of the mediating role of satisfaction across different contexts, previous empirical studies are summarized in Table 1. These studies highlight the consistent evidence supporting satisfaction as a psychological mechanism linking HRM and educational innovation with organizational outcomes.

**Table 1:** Summary of previous studies on the mediating role of satisfaction

Author(s)	Research Context	Findings related to mediating role of satisfaction
Jiang (2016) <sup>[8]</sup>	Organizational environment	Satisfaction results from opportunities and rewards; mediates between policies and job performance.
Margaretha <i>et al.</i> (2021) <sup>[9]</sup>	Universities in Indonesia	Satisfaction mediates HRM policies and organizational commitment.
Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy (2020) <sup>[5]</sup>	Vietnamese education sector	Satisfaction affects organizational functioning, influenced by six main factors.
Ha Nam Khanh Giao (2020) <sup>[6]</sup>	Higher education institutions in Vietnam	Quantitative analysis confirms satisfaction mediates leadership and training effects on work outcomes.

(Source: Author's compilation, 2025)

As shown in Table 1, satisfaction consistently emerges as a mediating variable across both international and Vietnamese studies. However, the existing works have mainly examined HRM or educational innovation in isolation rather than within an integrated framework. This limitation underscores the necessity for a comprehensive model capturing the joint mediating mechanism of satisfaction in the interplay between HRM, educational innovation, and organizational commitment.

In the context of education, satisfaction also bridges the relationship between educational innovation and lecturers' engagement. Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy (2020) <sup>[5]</sup> identified that satisfaction among academic staff depends strongly on working conditions, leadership support, and collaboration, which in turn strengthen institutional cohesion. Similarly, Ha Nam Khanh Giao (2020) <sup>[6]</sup> confirmed through quantitative analysis that satisfaction serves as an intermediary transforming leadership and training efforts into job performance. Bombiak and Marciniuk-Kluska (2023) <sup>[2]</sup> highlighted that satisfaction mediates the relationship between organizational learning and lecturers' commitment in higher education institutions, while Wang *et al.* (2022) <sup>[16]</sup> revealed that transformational leadership enhances satisfaction and strengthens attachment to educational organizations. Theoretically, this mediating role aligns with both Vroom's (1964) <sup>[14]</sup> expectancy theory and the social exchange theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) <sup>[10]</sup>. When employees perceive that their efforts are appreciated and appropriately rewarded, they experience intrinsic satisfaction that reinforces affective and normative commitment. Satisfaction thus serves as an emotional and motivational bridge connecting HRM and educational innovation to organizational outcomes. From this

perspective, it becomes not merely an end result of management efforts but a strategic lever for transforming managerial and innovative initiatives into engagement and performance (Schein, 1985; Dewey, 1938) <sup>[13, 4]</sup>. Although the mediating role of satisfaction has been widely discussed in HRM and education literature, existing studies often treat HRM and educational innovation as independent domains. Few have empirically analyzed how satisfaction jointly mediates their combined influence on lecturers' organizational commitment, especially in emerging economies. Research in Vietnam has primarily focused on public universities or generalized contexts, leaving private higher education institutions underexplored (Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy, 2020; Ha Nam Khanh Giao, 2020) <sup>[5, 6]</sup>. Moreover, the specific managerial challenges of private universities such as financial limitations, resource constraints, and high staff turnover require context-sensitive investigation.

Furthermore, while most international studies (Margaretha *et al.*, 2021; Piwowar-Sulej & Podolska, 2022; Wojtczuk-Turek, 2024) <sup>[9, 11, 17]</sup> confirm satisfaction's mediating role, they rarely integrate both HRM and educational innovation into a serial mediation model. The structural relationships among HRM, educational innovation, satisfaction, and organizational commitment remain theoretically fragmented and empirically unverified in Vietnam's private education system. Addressing these shortcomings, the present research constructs a serial mediation model that simultaneously examines HRM and educational innovation as interdependent antecedents of satisfaction and organizational commitment. This approach aims to enrich the theoretical understanding of how management practices and innovation jointly enhance lecturer engagement, while providing evidence-based recommendations for sustainable human resource strategies in Vietnam's private universities.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design using the survey method to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction (JS) in the relationship between human resource management (HRM), educational innovation (EI) and organizational commitment (OC) among lecturers in private universities. The model was empirically tested through structural equation modeling (SEM), following the recommendations of Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> for analyzing mediation effects in behavioral sciences.

Data was collected from lecturers at five private universities in Ho Chi Minh City: Saigon International University (SIU), Van Hien University (VHU), Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Hong Bang International University (HIU), and Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology (HUFLIT). Using a stratified sampling approach based on specialization, gender, academic level, age, and seniority, an online survey was distributed via Google Forms. A total of 500 responses were received, yielding 487 valid questionnaires after data screening.

#### 3.2 Measurement and Data Collection

All constructs were measured using multi-item Likert scales adapted from prior validated studies. The HRM construct

covered aspects such as compensation, development, and participation (Jiang, 2016; Margaretha *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[8, 9]</sup>. Educational innovation (EI) was measured through items reflecting innovative teaching, leadership, and organizational learning (Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska, 2023) <sup>[12]</sup>. Satisfaction (JS) captured emotional and evaluative responses toward workplace support and recognition (Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy, 2020; Ha Nam Khanh Giao, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>, while organizational commitment (OC) followed the conceptualization by Meyer and Allen (1991) <sup>[10]</sup>.

The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese using the back-translation method to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data screening confirmed the absence of missing values and multicollinearity. The reliability and validity of all constructs were assessed through Cronbach's Alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), meeting the acceptable thresholds ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ; factor loadings  $> 0.5$ ; AVE  $> 0.5$ ) as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2014) <sup>[7]</sup>.

#### 3.3 Analytical Procedure

The study followed the mediation testing procedure proposed by Rungtusanatham, Miller, and Boyer (2014) <sup>[12]</sup> using bootstrapping with 2,000 resamples to estimate the indirect effects. The four-step procedure is summarized as follows:

Generate k bootstrap samples with replacement from the original dataset.

For each resample, estimate coefficients a (effect of X on M) and b (effect of M on Y), then compute the indirect effect  $a \times b$ .

Analyze the distribution of the indirect effects across all bootstrap samples.

Test statistical significance using the 95% bootstrap confidence interval.

Following Carrión *et al.* (2017) <sup>[3]</sup>, the mediation effect was classified into three categories: full mediation, partial mediation (complementary or competitive), and no mediation. The strength of mediation was evaluated using the Variance Accounted For (VAF) index:

$$\text{VAF (\%)} = \frac{\text{Indirect Effect}}{\text{Total Effect}} \times 100\%$$

According to Hair *et al.* (2014) <sup>[7]</sup>, a VAF value below 20% indicates no mediation, 20 - 80% represents partial mediation and above 80% indicates full mediation.

#### 3.4 Research model

Following Vu Huu Thanh and Nguyen Minh Ha, mediation models are categorized into simple and multiple mediation types. The present study adopts a serial mediation model, where both educational innovation (EI) and satisfaction (JS) sequentially mediate the relationship between HRM and organizational commitment (OC). The hypothesized relationships were tested using SEM, and the computation of direct, indirect, and total effects is summarized in Table 2.

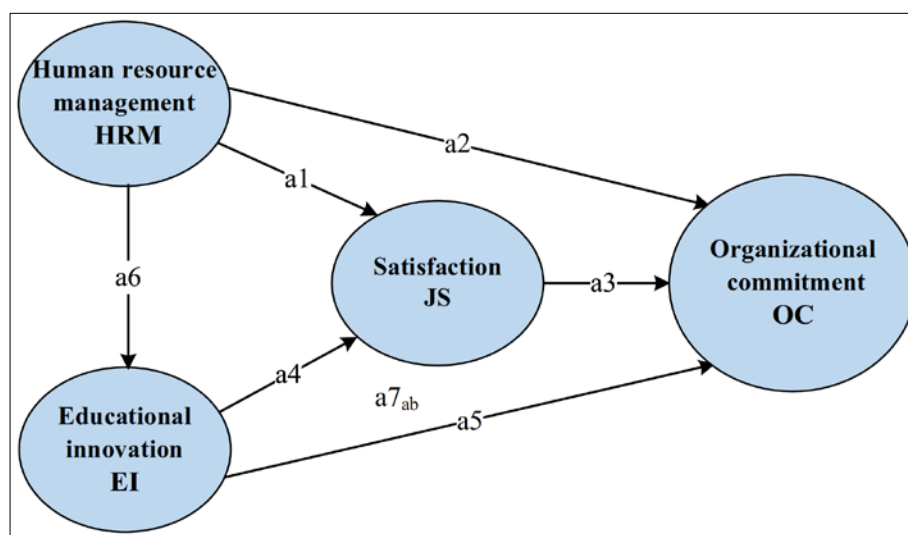
**Table 2:** Determination of Effect Types in the Serial Mediation Model

Type of Effect	Calculation Method
Short indirect specific effect from HRM to Organizational Commitment (OC) through Satisfaction (JS)	$(a1 \times a3)$
Long indirect specific effect from HRM to Organizational Commitment (OC) through Educational Innovation (EI) and Satisfaction (JS)	$(a6 \times a4 \times a3)$
Short indirect specific effect from HRM to Organizational Commitment (OC) through Educational Innovation (EI)	$(a6 \times a5)$
Total indirect effect from HRM to Organizational Commitment (OC)	$(a1 \times a3) + (a6 \times a4 \times a3) + (a6 \times a5)$
Total effect from HRM to Organizational Commitment (OC)	$(a1 \times a3) + (a6 \times a4 \times a3) + (a6 \times a5) + a2$
Indirect specific effect from Educational Innovation (EI) to Organizational Commitment (OC) through Satisfaction (JS)	$(a4 \times a3)$
Total effect from Educational Innovation (EI) to Organizational Commitment (OC)	$(a4 \times a3) + a5$

(Source: Data analysis results, 2025)

Based on the theoretical framework and mediation testing procedure described above, the present study proposes a serial mediation model that links human resource management (HRM), educational innovation (EI), Job satisfaction (JS), and organizational commitment (OC). The model assumes that HRM directly influences satisfaction and innovation, while innovation and satisfaction sequentially mediate the relationship between HRM and organizational commitment. This structure allows testing of both short and long indirect effects, reflecting how HRM

and educational innovation jointly shape lecturers' commitment. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model, showing the direct and indirect paths among the four constructs, where coefficients  $a_1$  to  $a_7$  represent the hypothesized causal links. Specifically, HRM affects satisfaction (JS) and innovation (EI), which in turn impact organizational commitment (OC). The mediating mechanisms are further clarified in Table 2, which presents the calculation formulas for direct, indirect, and total effects used in the subsequent SEM and bootstrap analyses.



(Source: Author's compilation, 2025)

**Fig 1:** Theoretical Model of the Serial Mediation Structure

## 4. Research results

### 4.1 Direct Effects

Table 3 presents the results of the direct paths among the constructs in the proposed model. All standardized coefficients were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that each hypothesized direct relationship was supported. Specifically, HRM exerted a significant positive influence on educational innovation (EI) ( $\beta = 0.197$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and on satisfaction (JS) ( $\beta = 0.272$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Likewise, both HRM and educational innovation (EI) significantly affected organizational commitment (OC) ( $\beta = 0.237$  and  $\beta = 0.283$ , respectively, both  $p < 0.001$ ). These results imply that effective HRM directly enhance lecturers' satisfaction and stimulate innovative educational activities, which in turn foster stronger organizational commitment. This finding aligns with Jiang (2016)<sup>[8]</sup> and Margaretha *et al.* (2021)<sup>[9]</sup>, who emphasized that HRM policies, through recognition and career opportunities, directly strengthen both job satisfaction and their affective attachment to the institution.

**Table 3:** Direct Effects

	Standardized Coefficients			Sig. (2-tailed)		
	HRM	EI	JS	HRM	EI	JS
EI	0.197			0.001		
JS	0.272	0.286		0.001	0.001	
OC	0.237	0.283	0.336	0.001	0.001	0.001

(Source: Official data analysis results, 2025)

As shown in Table 3, HRM exerts the strongest direct influence on satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.272$ ) and educational innovation ( $\beta = 0.197$ ), while both HRM and innovation show significant positive effects on organizational commitment, confirming that the direct pathways in the hypothesized model are well supported.

### 4.2 Indirect and Total Effects

The indirect and total effects were analyzed using the bootstrap method with 2,000 resamples to ensure robust estimates. As shown in Table 4, all indirect effects were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming the mediating



role of satisfaction in multiple pathways. The total effects summarized in Table 5 indicate the combined impact of direct and indirect relationships.

The indirect effect of HRM on satisfaction through educational innovation was  $\beta = 0.056$  ( $= 0.197 \times 0.286$ ), while the direct effect of HRM on satisfaction was  $\beta = 0.272$ . The total effect ( $\beta = 0.329$ ) yielded a VAF of 17.0%, below the 20% threshold, indicating that educational innovation did not significantly mediate this relationship (Hair *et al.*, 2014) [7].

The indirect effect of HRM on organizational commitment through satisfaction and educational innovation was  $\beta = 0.166$ , while the direct effect was  $\beta = 0.237$ . The total effect ( $\beta = 0.403$ ) resulted in a VAF of 42.2%, signifying a substantial partial complementary mediation. This indicates that nearly 42% of the total influence of HRM on commitment is channeled through the critical affective experience of job satisfaction.

The indirect effect of educational innovation on organizational commitment through satisfaction was  $\beta = 0.096$ , with a direct effect of  $\beta = 0.283$ . The total effect ( $\beta = 0.379$ ) produced a VAF of 25.3%, also indicating partial complementary mediation.

**Table 4:** Indirect Effects

	Standardized Coefficients			Sig. (2-tailed)		
	HRM	EI	JS	HRM	EI	JS
EI						
JS	0.056			0.000		
OC	0.166	0.096		0.001	0.001	

(Source: Official data analysis results, 2025)

As table 4 indicates that HRM indirectly affects satisfaction through educational innovation ( $\beta = 0.056$ ), and both HRM and innovation influence organizational commitment through satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.166$  and  $\beta = 0.096$ , respectively). All indirect effects are statistically significant, supporting the mediating role of satisfaction in the proposed model.

**Table 5:** Total Effects

	Standardized Coefficients			Sig. (2-tailed)		
	HRM	EI	JS	HRM	EI	JS
EI	0.197			0.001		
JS	0.329	0.286		0.001	0.001	
OC	0.403	0.379	0.336	0.001	0.001	0.001

(Source: Official data analysis results, 2025)

Table 5 summarizes the total effects of all variables. HRM shows the highest overall impact on organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.403$ ), followed by educational innovation ( $\beta = 0.379$ ) and satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.336$ ). These results confirm that both HRM and innovation influence lecturers' commitment directly and indirectly through satisfaction.

### 4.3 Interpretation of Mediation Effects

The above results confirm that job satisfaction acts as a partial mediator in the relationships between HRM, educational innovation, and organizational commitment. This means HRM and innovation influence organizational commitment both directly and indirectly through satisfaction. In practical terms, when lecturers perceive fair HRM policies and supportive innovation activities, their

satisfaction increases, leading to stronger affective and normative commitment to their institutions.

The non-significant mediation of educational innovation between HRM and satisfaction (VAF = 17%) suggests that innovation activities alone are insufficient to transmit HRM effects to satisfaction unless supported by effective HRM practices. This finding is consistent with Bombiak and Marciniuk-Kluska (2023) [2], who observed that HRM policies must actively facilitate in novation culture to achieve higher satisfaction among academic staff.

The partial complementary mediation between HRM and organizational commitment (VAF = 42.2%) indicates that HRM not only has direct behavioral effects but also indirect emotional effects through satisfaction. This dual pathway supports both expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) [14] and social exchange theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) [10], emphasizing that satisfaction serves as a psychological mechanism linking managerial practices to organizational outcomes.

Similarly, the partial mediation between educational innovation and organizational commitment (VAF = 25.3%) highlights that innovation improves lecturers' commitment both directly through engagement in creative activities and indirectly by enhancing satisfaction. This supports the view of Wang *et al.* (2022) [16], who demonstrated that innovative and transformational leadership behaviors strengthen job satisfaction, which subsequently increases organizational attachment.

Overall, the findings affirm the conceptual model that positions satisfaction as a central mediating factor connecting HRM and educational innovation to organizational commitment. The presence of complementary mediation effects implies a synergistic mechanism, where both managerial and innovative practices jointly elevate lecturer satisfaction and long-term organizational commitment.

## 5. Discussion and Implications

### 5.1 Key Findings

The findings of this study empirically confirm that job satisfaction (JS) functions as a partial complementary mediator linking human resource management (HRM) and educational innovation (EI) to organizational commitment (OC) among lecturers in private universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The analysis shows that HRM has both direct and indirect effects on organizational commitment (VAF = 42.2%), while educational innovation influences commitment partly through satisfaction (VAF = 25.3%). Conversely, the mediating role of educational innovation between HRM and satisfaction was not supported (VAF = 17%).

These results are consistent with previous findings by Jiang (2016) [8] and Margaretha *et al.* (2021) [9], who demonstrated that HRM such as recognition, fair compensation, and career advancement enhance job satisfaction and organizational attachment. In the Vietnamese context, the results align with Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy, 2020; Ha Nam Khanh Giao, 2020 [5, 6] confirming that satisfaction is shaped by supportive leadership, workplace conditions, and participative culture. Furthermore, the finding that satisfaction mediates the relationship between educational innovation and commitment resonates with Bombiak and Marciniuk-Kluska (2023) [2] and Wang *et al.* (2022), [16]

emphasizing that innovation-oriented teaching environments improve lecturers' emotional connection to their institutions. Overall, satisfaction serves as both a psychological outcome and a behavioral mechanism that transforms HRM and innovation into long-term commitment. In line with Vroom's (1964) <sup>[14]</sup> expectancy theory and the social exchange model of Meyer and Allen (1991) <sup>[10]</sup>, satisfaction captures the reciprocal exchange between organizational support and employees' willingness to contribute. When lecturers perceive fairness, respect, and recognition, they are more motivated to engage in innovative teaching and to maintain organizational loyalty.

## 5.2 Theoretical Insights

This study adds several points to current academic discussions. It confirms that satisfaction operates as a dual pathway, linking HRM and educational innovation to commitment both directly and indirectly. This pattern strengthens existing theory about how human and organizational factors interact to build commitment. It also extends the use of expectancy and social exchange theories in the context of higher education in developing economies. The study provides evidence that satisfaction is the emotional bridge that turns fairness, recognition, and support into stronger organizational attachment.

Beside, the research expands limited empirical knowledge about private higher education in Vietnam. By demonstrating that satisfaction mediates both HRM and innovation effects, it highlights the psychological connection between management systems and innovation-driven performance in a sector facing unique financial and motivational challenges.

## 5.3 Managerial Implications

From a managerial standpoint, the results indicate that offer several actionable insights for enhancing lecturers' satisfaction and organizational commitment in private universities.

First, improving the basics of HRM should be a top priority. Transparent pay structures, fair evaluation systems, and equal access to promotion can help strengthen satisfaction and reduce turnover. Previous research consistently shows that fair rewards and development opportunities are the strongest predictors of commitment (Jiang, 2016; Margaretha *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[8, 9]</sup>. For example, this includes establishing clear, attainable pathways for promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer, and ensuring that performance evaluation systems are perceived as transparent and fair by all academic staff.

Second, universities need to create an environment that values participation and innovation. Allowing lecturers to join decision-making, recognizing their achievements, and maintaining open communication channels make them feel trusted and respected, leading to higher motivation (Ha Nam Khanh Giao, 2020) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Third, HRM and educational innovation should not be managed separately. HRM policies need to encourage innovation by rewarding creative teaching, providing research incentives, and supporting digital learning initiatives. When HRM and innovation reinforce each other, universities can build a culture of continuous improvement (Bombiak & Marciniuk-Kluska, 2023) <sup>[2]</sup>. A practical step could be to implement an 'innovation bonus' or formally include contributions to pedagogical development in annual

performance reviews. This directly links innovative efforts to the HRM reward system, creating a powerful synergy. Finally, satisfaction should be regularly monitored. Conducting surveys or feedback sessions helps detect problems early and allows management to adjust policies quickly (Hair *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[7]</sup>. A responsive system that listens to lecturers' needs will keep morale high and commitment stable.

## 5.4 Future Research Directions

Future studies could expand the scope of this work in several ways. Comparative analyses using multi-group SEM can explore whether the satisfaction mechanism differs between public and private universities or among regions. Longitudinal designs can track how HRM, innovation, and satisfaction interact over time to influence commitment. Qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus groups could also provide deeper insights into how cultural and institutional conditions shape the satisfaction-commitment relationship (Wang *et al.*, 2022; Piwowar-Sulej & Podolska, 2022) <sup>[16, 11]</sup>.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined the mediating role of Job satisfaction in the relationships between human resource management and educational innovation with organizational commitment among lecturers in private universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Using structural equation modeling with bootstrap validation on 487 valid observations, the results confirmed that satisfaction partially mediates the effects of both HRM and educational innovation on organizational commitment, while educational innovation does not mediate the relationship between HRM and satisfaction.

The findings contribute to theory by validating satisfaction as an essential psychological mechanism that transforms HRM and innovation inputs into organizational outcomes, extending both expectancy and social exchange theories in the context of higher education in emerging economies. Practically, the study emphasizes the necessity for universities to balance maintenance factors (income, welfare, stable working environment) and motivation factors (opportunities for professional development, career promotion, and performance recognition) to strengthen satisfaction and sustain long-term lecturer commitment.

While this research provides robust evidence from private universities, it is limited by its cross-sectional design and regional scope. Future research could expand the sample across different provinces or adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches to better capture the dynamic interplay between HRM, innovation, and satisfaction in diverse educational settings.

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