Assessment of the Impact of Salary Policy on the Quality of Administrative Staff in Higher Education Institutions

Le Manh Hung[1], Vu Dinh Hieu[2]*, Ngo Van Hung[3]
[1]Associate Professor, Ph.D., Rector, Trade Union University, Hanoi, Vietnam.
[2]Master of Education, Ph.D. Candidate, Officer at the Department of Administration and Organization, Hanoi Metropolitan University, Hanoi, Vietnam.
[3]Senior Lecturer, Ph.D., Faculty of Education, Hanoi Metropolitan University, Hanoi, Vietnam.
*Corresponding Author contact: vdhieu@daihocthudo.edu.vn

Abstract
Salary policy plays a central role in improving the quality of administrative staff in higher education. This study investigates how existing pay structures affect motivation, performance, and organizational commitment among administrative personnel in public universities located in Hanoi, Vietnam. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study proposes practical policy reforms to enhance compensation systems, especially in the context of increasing demands for institutional autonomy and ongoing educational reform.
Keywords: Salary policy, administrative personnel, higher education institutions, workforce quality, job motivation, organizational commitment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Administrative staff at higher education institutions play a key role in organizing, coordinating and supporting teaching, research and management activities. However, the current salary policy is still inadequate and not commensurate with the workload and practical role of this team, directly affecting work motivation, work performance and organizational commitment.

In the context of universities implementing autonomy, combined with the impact of the labor market and increasing living costs, reforming salary policies has become an urgent requirement. The article focuses on analyzing the relationship between salary regimes and the quality of administrative staff, thereby proposing solutions to improve policies to improve the effectiveness of administrative activities in higher education.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Concept of administrative staff in higher education

Under Vietnamese law, public employees (viên chức) are defined as professionals hired under labor contracts for specific positions within public service units. Unlike civil servants, their salaries are funded by institutional revenue rather than the state budget, as outlined in the Law on Public Employees (No. 58/2010/QH12) and its amendment (No. 52/2019/QH14) (Government, 2020). This distinction reflects their role in financially autonomous institutions, where compensation is tied to organizational performance rather than centralized payrolls.

In the context of higher education, administrative staff refers to personnel who do not engage in teaching or research but instead provide institutional support and administrative services. They work in functional units such as Human Resources, Academic Affairs, Planning and Finance, and Student

Services, contributing to institutional operations, policy implementation, and internal coordination (Center for Lexicography, 1994).

Administrative staff act as a bridge between academic departments and university leadership, ensuring operations align with institutional goals and legal requirements, unlike faculty members who produce research and teaching outputs, administrative personnel form the "operating infrastructure" of an institution. Their effectiveness determines the consistency and sustainability of institutional operations. Therefore, improving administrative staff quality is essential for modern university governance, particularly in the context of financial autonomy, governance reform, and international integration.

2.2. Principles of building salary policy

Salary policy is a key component of human resource management, directly influencing the attraction, retention, and development of high-quality personnel. For administrative staff in higher education institutions, the design of salary systems should adhere to the following principles:

First, salary must correspond to job position, responsibilities, and workload. Given the diversity of administrative roles and their differing competency requirements, salary should reflect the actual nature of the job and should not be determined solely by tenure or seniority [7].

Second, salary policy must ensure a livable wage and aim toward an income level commensurate with societal standards. In the context of rising living expenses and increased professional expectations, insufficient wages can diminish motivation, lead to higher resignation rates, and ultimately impair institutional performance [10].

Third, fairness and transparency are essential, requiring evidence-based evaluations and participatory processes for promotions and rewards. Transparency should be ensured through clear and evidence-based processes for evaluation, classification, salary advancement, and rewards, with collective participation and oversight [1,2].

Fourth, salary policy should be adaptable and responsive to institutional contexts. As higher education institutions increasingly exercise financial autonomy, they should be empowered to design internal compensation frameworks and legally compliant supplemental income schemes based on their unique financial conditions and sector-specific characteristics [7].

Fifth, salaries must be aligned with work performance and individual capacity. A results-based salary system encourages effort, innovation, and creativity in administrative work, fosters healthy internal competition, and enhances institutional effectiveness [12].

2.3. Concept and criteria for evaluating the quality of administrative officials

The concept of administrative staff quality in higher education goes beyond academic qualifications to include professional ethics, task execution capacity, adaptability to institutional dynamics, and demonstrable contributions to performance outcomes [8].

To ensure comprehensive and objective evaluation, institutions should establish a set of criteria for assessing administrative staff quality, such as:

Professional and technical competency: including the ability to apply professional knowledge, utilize administrative and digital tools, and respond effectively to real-world work challenges.

Work efficiency: measured by task completion volume, accuracy, timeliness, and creativity in fulfilling assigned responsibilities.

Sense of responsibility and public ethics: level of compliance with school rules and regulations; service attitude and spirit of cooperation with other departments.

Ability to learn and develop: progressive spirit, ability to self-study, participate in advanced training courses, and be ready to adapt to new job requirements.

Level of satisfaction and commitment to the organization: expressed through positive working attitude, level of satisfaction with the working environment, as well as desire to stay with the school long term.

The above criteria need to be specifically quantified and linked to the periodic personnel evaluation system, thereby serving as a basis for considering salary increases, rewards, job reassignment or retraining when necessary [1,2]. A scientific evaluation system will help discover, nurture and maximize the potential of administrative staff, while contributing to improving the quality of governance in higher education institutions.

2.4. Overview of related research

Salary policy in the public sector in general and in higher education in particular has been studied by many domestic and foreign scholars in recent years. International works such as Perry and Hondeghem (2008), Wright (2001) or OECD (2021) have emphasized that the attractiveness of salary has a clear impact on public service motivation, organizational commitment and work performance of public sector employees. Prior research (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008; Wright, 2001) emphasized the role of salary as an external motivator and its effect on organizational commitment and ethics in the public sector. Wright (2001) developed a theoretical model on the relationship between public service motivation and performance, in which salary is considered an important external motivator.

In Vietnam, studies such as those by Nguyen Dang Thanh (2012), Chan Phuc (2024)[3], and the report of the Department of Wages - Ministry of Home Affairs (2020) have also reflected the current inadequacies of the public sector salary system, especially for civil servants in public service units. The authors emphasize that the current salary system is still average, does not properly reflect capacity and work efficiency, leading to brain drain and reducing the attractiveness of the public sector [8, 10].

However, most of the above studies only focus on describing policies or surveying the general feelings of civil servants, without going into depth to analyze the specific impact of salary policies on each component of human resource quality (such as motivation, performance, organizational commitment). In addition, there are not many works using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to test the hypothesis and the relationship between salary and work factors in the context of Vietnamese public higher education moving towards an autonomous mechanism.

Therefore, this study inherits the approach from previous studies, and at the same time makes new contributions by implementing mixed methods, analyzing real data with specific sample sizes, and applying modern statistical tools to provide clearer evidence for the relationship between salary policy and the quality of administrative staff in higher education institutions [11, 12, 14].

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the effects of salary policy on administrative staff in public universities.

Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey involving 152 administrative staff members across eight public higher education institutions in Hanoi. The questionnaire included grouped items that assessed perceptions of salary satisfaction, job motivation, individual performance, and organizational commitment. Qualitative data were obtained through ten semi-structured interviews with department heads and human resource officers. These interviews aimed to explore in depth the underlying causes, contextual dynamics, and challenges related to the implementation of salary policies in higher education institutions.

The combined dataset was analyzed using SPSS 26.0, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Specifically: Descriptive statistics were used to determine the average turnover rate over the past three years, levels of satisfaction with salary policy, and self-reported income levels. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between salary and key variables including self-rated job performance, organizational commitment, and overall job satisfaction. Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to test the influence of independent variables-namely salary level, allowances, and perceived recognition-on the dependent variable of job performance. One-way ANOVA was used to compare satisfaction levels among groups of administrative staff based on years of service (<5 years, 5–10 years, and >10 years), identifying statistically significant differences across cohorts.

Research hypotheses were formulated and tested with a confidence level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$), ensuring statistical reliability and validity in interpreting the findings.

4. CURRENT SITUATION AND ANALYSIS OF WAGE POLICY

4.1. Current status of salary policy for administrative staff in higher education institutions

The existing salary policy for administrative staff in many Vietnamese public universities remains egalitarian, rigid, and insufficiently aligned with actual workloads, competencies, and contributions. Most administrative personnel are paid based on fixed salary coefficients, with base salaries ranging from 5 to 6 million VND per month. This system does not adequately reflect the rising demands associated with public administration reform, digital transformation, and institutional autonomy. Furthermore, it lacks professional allowances, performance-based bonuses, or flexible support mechanisms, thereby undermining the attractiveness of administrative careers.

In addition, the absence of clear and transparent performance appraisal tools tied to compensation reinforces income uniformity and demotivates employees. This, in turn, promotes workforce turnover and leads to inefficiencies in internal human resource development.

A comparative analysis between administrative staff and similar job groups in both the public and private sectors indicates that administrative personnel in universities remain at the lowest tier in terms of income. More critically, there is no functional mechanism for income adjustment based on performance outputs (see Table 1) [3].

Table 1. Comparison of salary policies for administrative staff and equivalent job positions

Object	Salary coefficient	Currency value (VND)	Salary allowance	Average Gross Income	Salary increase mechanism
Business Area	Not applicable	Minimum salary ~5,300,000	By agreement with the business	About 8 - 10 million VND	According to work performance and internal regulations of the enterprise
Professional staff (public career)	2.34	5,475,600	30% – 40%	Average 7 - 7.7 million VND	According to regulations of competent authority; salary increase periodically after 3 years, there is a mechanism to consider salary increase before term if achieving good results.
Administrative Officer in Higher Education	2.34 – 2.40	~5,475,600	No or very limited allowance	About 5.5 million VND	Similar to career civil servants, but less opportunity for early salary increase due to lack of performance evaluation mechanism and no flexible financial resources.

(Source: Authors, adapted from Chan Phuc, 2024[3])

Analysis of Table 1 reveals that the average income of administrative staff in public universities is not only lower than that of the private sector but also lower than that of other professional roles within the public system [3]. This group typically receives neither professional allowances nor targeted financial incentives, despite increasing job demands and managerial responsibilities [1,2]. Salary progression remains primarily time-based, lacking flexibility and performance linkage-resulting in reduced motivation and weakened long-term organizational commitment [10].

4.2. Impact of salary policy on the quality of administrative staff

Salary policy is not only a means to secure the material well-being of employees but also an instrumental tool in human resource management—directly shaping work motivation, productivity, and organizational attachment [12,14]. In the context of higher education reform and increased institutional autonomy, a thorough understanding of how salary policy affects administrative staff is critically important.

4.2.1. Impact on work motivation

Salary plays a decisive role in fostering and sustaining employee motivation. As noted by one HR officer: "Some of our young staff lose motivation after just one or two years because they feel their income does not reflect the responsibilities they carry." This disconnects between effort and

remuneration leads to disengagement and turnover, particularly in roles with increasing digital and procedural complexity. Department heads echoed similar concerns, with one remarking: "The workload has doubled with digital transformation, but salaries have remained stagnant for years." These insights align with the survey data showing that salary dissatisfaction is highest among early-career staff.

4.2.2. Impact on work performance and turnover rate

An unattractive salary regime not only dampens individual performance but also increases turnover. One HR director stated: "We invest in training, but without competitive pay, we become a springboard for other employers." This sentiment was especially common in IT and financial roles, which are more market-sensitive. These observations support the regression results showing salary and recognition as strong predictors of job performance.

4.2.3. Impact on the level of commitment to the organization

Organizational commitment reflects the emotional and professional bonds between employees and their institutions, expressed through dedication, loyalty, and willingness to engage long-term. Unjust or opaque salary policies, along with limited professional development prospects, tend to erode such commitment-especially amid an increasingly competitive talent landscape [12,14].

In contrast, when staff feel acknowledged and supported through transparent compensation schemes and inclusive welfare benefits (e.g., extended insurance, housing subsidies, children's education support, advanced training), they are more likely to invest time, effort, and intellectual capital in the institution [11]. Such conditions foster a positive working environment and reinforce the long-term affiliation of administrative staff with the university's development goals.
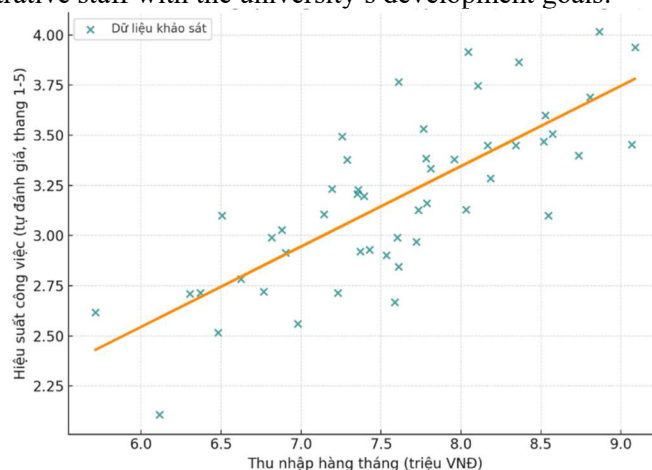

Figure 1. Correlation between income and job performance

Figure 1. Scatterplot illustrating the positive linear relationship between self-reported income and job performance among administrative staff ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$). Each dot represents an individual response, and the fitted regression line indicates that higher income levels are moderately associated with increased perceived performance. One-way ANOVA results also showed significant differences in satisfaction levels among administrative staff based on years of service ($F = 5.02$, $p < 0.01$). These

findings reinforce the strategic importance of salary policy in sustaining high-quality human capital and successful institutional autonomy implementation in Vietnamese higher education [7,11].
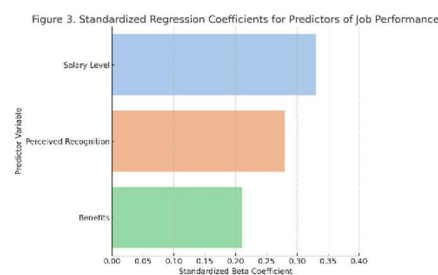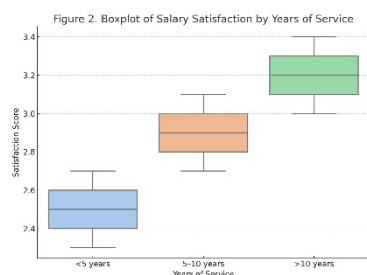
This chart shows a noticeable disparity in satisfaction across groups (Figure 2). Staff with over 10 years of experience report higher satisfaction scores, while early-career employees (<5 years) express significantly lower satisfaction levels (F = 5.02, p < 0.01), underscoring a potential generational equity issue. Figure 3. Standardized regression coefficients for predictors of job performance. This bar chart illustrates the relative strength of three predictors: salary level ($\beta = 0.33$), perceived recognition ($\beta = 0.28$), and benefits ($\beta = 0.21$), each statistically significant (p < 0.05). Salary level exerts the strongest influence on performance, emphasizing its primary role in motivation. $R^2 = 0.38$ indicates moderate explanatory power. Future research should examine leadership culture and institutional support systems.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SALARY POLICY

5.1. Increase work motivation

Work motivation is a critical factor influencing effort, creativity, and responsibility among administrative staff [12,14]. In the context of growing institutional autonomy and administrative modernization, enhancing motivation through appropriate salary mechanisms is an urgent requirement.

First, the legal framework should be amended to allow higher education institutions to introduce flexible and differentiated income structures for administrative staff. Existing regulations often prevent the application of allowances, bonuses, and income supplements beyond the basic salary. Authorities such as the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Education and Training should revise legal documents to empower universities to tailor salary schemes based on work efficiency and financial capacity [1,2,7].

Second, institutions should develop internal salary structures linked to KPIs and staff contributions, replacing the traditional seniority-based framework. This system should use transparent, objective metrics aligned with strategic goals and updated periodically to promote fairness and healthy internal competition [12].

Third, performance- and innovation-based incentives should be implemented. These may include project-based bonuses, quarterly awards, or rewards for process improvement, cost-saving, and service quality enhancement. Clear, measurable outcomes and transparent criteria should be used to ensure fairness and encourage innovation [11].

Fourth, compensation policies should be integrated with improvements in working conditions and non-monetary benefits. Factors such as workspace, access to training, flexibility in scheduling, health care, and housing or transportation support significantly influence employee morale and should be considered part of a holistic human resources approach [13].

Fifth, mechanisms to regularly recognize and reward outstanding contributions should be established. Beyond financial rewards, symbolic forms of recognition—such as public commendation, awards ceremonies, or leadership acknowledgments—are effective in reinforcing intrinsic motivation [12].

In short, improving motivation involves more than pay raises. It requires a comprehensive HR strategy, with salary policy serving as a key link between institutional goals and personal growth[11,12].

5.2. Improve efficiency and reduce staff turnover

Work efficiency and personnel stability are key indicators of administrative capacity. However, signs of disengagement, lack of institutional loyalty, and migration toward private-sector jobs are increasingly common. To mitigate these challenges, salary policies should be redesigned as follows:

First, salary should be based on job competency and actual performance. Institutions are encouraged to adopt the Pay for Position, Person, and Performance model, which allows for income differentiation and promotes upskilling, accountability, and productivity [12].

Second, employment contracts should be flexible and accompanied by transparent performance evaluations and career development pathways. Regular performance reviews and clear promotion criteria will encourage long-term commitment and create growth opportunities [5,6].

Third, talent retention policies should be adopted. Specialized roles such as system administrators, financial controllers, and academic database managers should receive appropriate allowances or be supported with career development plans. Regular surveys on employee satisfaction and aspirations should inform timely policy adjustments [11].

Fourth, individual assessments should be complemented by evaluations of team or departmental effectiveness. This dual-KPI approach encourages collaboration, collective responsibility, and improved organizational performance [12].

In general, a salary system that prioritizes fairness, competitiveness, and flexibility will enhance work quality while minimizing undesirable staff turnover in higher education institutions [11,12].

5.3. Promote organizational commitment

Organizational commitment reflects a positive workplace culture and is essential for cultivating a stable and dedicated administrative workforce. Salary policy plays a vital role in fostering this commitment [12,14].

First, compensation systems should be integrated with career development and formal recognition mechanisms. When staff feel their contributions are valued and long-term development is supported,

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they are more likely to remain committed. Job rotation, training, and structured career paths can promote this alignment [11].

Second, salary structures should account for the diverse responsibilities of different personnel groups. Rather than a one-size-fits-all system, allowance coefficients should be tailored to roles such as document management, finance, student services, and facility administration—ensuring alignment with job complexity and responsibility [7].

Third, collective welfare benefits should be linked to institutional performance. These may include retreats, health insurance, tuition support for children, hardship assistance, and group awards. Though not directly monetary, these elements significantly influence emotional attachment and trust in the institution [13].

Fourth, salary policy formulation should be transparent and participatory. Involving staff in the development of evaluation and reward criteria increases organizational trust and fosters a sense of ownership [12].

In short, promoting organizational commitment through salary policy is not only a strategic HRM measure but also a foundation for building a professional, long-term administrative workforce aligned with institutional development [11,12].

5.4. Proposing innovative salary models and applying technology in evaluation

The 3P salary model (Pay for Position, Person, and Performance) offers a strategic approach to structuring compensation based on job value, individual qualifications, and demonstrated outcomes. Rather than a one-size-fits-all system, it promotes differentiation and meritocracy aligned with institutional priorities.

In addition to innovating the salary model, applying artificial intelligence (AI) in managing and evaluating human resource performance is also considered a strategic solution in the era of digital transformation of education [13]. Some AI-integrated HRM systems such as Workday, SAP SuccessFactors, Zoho People or OrangeHRM can be deployed depending on the scale and financial conditions of each university. These systems can track work behaviors such as document processing time, internal request response speed, task completion level; at the same time, analyze performance trends over time and suggest training needs and job transfers. The cost of deploying these systems is relatively flexible, from 1-3 million VND/officer/year (SaaS service rental model), along with initial training costs of 100-300 million VND. The implementation roadmap can be divided into three phases: needs assessment and tool pilot (3 months), staff training and application by each department, and finally, school-wide application with adjustment of KPI system based on real data. The application of technology not only enhances objectivity and transparency in assessment but also helps optimize decision making related to income and work assignment [13].

In addition, to promote creativity and innovation among administrative staff, higher education institutions should establish a reward fund for creativity and administrative innovation. This fund can be formed from many sources such as: 3-5% of profits from revenue-generating services (short-term training, technology transfer), savings from improving internal processes, or socialized funds from businesses and alumni. The review of initiatives should be based on specific criteria: innovation, practical applicability, cost-saving efficiency, time or improving internal satisfaction. The

school-level innovation council should be responsible for appraisal and classification. The reward mechanism should also be clear and fair, with a maximum of about 10 million VND for collective initiatives and 3-5 million VND for individual initiatives, accompanied by certification, priority for salary increase and training. The bonus fund not only has material significance but also contributes to creating endogenous motivation and a culture of innovation among administrative staff [11].

First, apply the 3P salary model - Pay for Position, Person, Performance. This is a modern salary model that has been successfully applied by many organizations, in which: **Position:** The basic salary is determined based on the work value of each position in the organizational structure; **Person (personal capacity):** Additional allowances based on the qualifications, skills and experience of the individual; **Performance (work efficiency):** Bonuses or salary adjustments are calculated based on work performance measured by a periodic evaluation system. Applying the 3P salary model not only contributes to ensuring internal and market fairness but also motivates individual capacity development and long-term dedication.

Second, applying artificial intelligence (AI) and digital platforms in performance evaluation. Higher education institutions can develop a performance evaluation system based on digital data, integrating artificial intelligence to ensure objectivity, transparency and continuous updates. For example: monitoring the progress of file processing, job response time, satisfaction of related units... Digitizing the evaluation process will help reduce sentimentality, increase reliability and support decision making in income distribution.

Third, establish a "reward fund for administrative innovation and improvement". Encourage administrative officials to propose initiatives to improve administrative processes, optimize resources, improve internal public services, etc. Effective initiatives can be evaluated according to specific criteria and publicly rewarded. This creates motivation for innovation from the grassroots, instead of relying solely on top-down administrative orders.

Fourth, piloting "administrative product contracting" by group/unit. Based on clearly defined tasks, time, output quality and corresponding support levels, departments can register their workload by quarter or year. If they exceed the plan, they will be rewarded according to their contribution rate. This approach is suitable for the context of universities shifting to a flexible and effective management model in the direction of enterprise-service [7].

5.5. Discussion of risks and conditions for successful implementation

Although the above proposed solutions to improve wage policy are feasible and in line with modern trends, their implementation in practice is not without barriers and challenges. To ensure effectiveness and sustainability, it is necessary to clearly identify the following risks and prerequisites:

First, limited financial resources. Adjusting salaries, adding allowances or implementing the 3P salary model requires universities to have sufficient financial capacity, while many units still depend on the State budget or unstable tuition revenue [10]. Lack of budget will make the policy remain at a conceptual stage without practical enforcement in practice. Solution: Schools need to develop long-term financial plans associated with autonomy strategies, expand legal sources of income (services, training linkages, technology transfer research), and propose budgets from public administration reform programs.

Second, resistance from some officials or middle managers. Changing the way performance is evaluated and income is adjusted may encounter concerns, comparison psychology or fear of losing benefits in the initial stage. Some individuals who are familiar with the model of equal pay may not be ready to adapt to the new mechanism [12]. *Solution:* Organize clear and transparent internal communication about the goals, benefits, and change process; ensure a step-by-step transition roadmap. In addition, it is necessary to pilot in some departments before expanding the entire system.

Third, lack of data systems and operational capacity. Implementing KPI-based performance evaluation or applying AI to human resource management requires an information system, data, and a qualified management team to operate accurately, transparently, and effectively [13]. *Solution:* Increase investment in IT infrastructure, build a centralized human resource database, and train and develop specialized staff in human resource management and data analysis in higher education.

Fourth, lack of commitment from school leaders and governing bodies. Any reform in salary policy requires strong support, direction and commitment from leaders, both politically and financially [7]. *Solution:* Propose to issue regulations at the Ministry/University Director level to allow institutions to flexibly build income frameworks and be autonomous in distributing income according to output results.

Case studies from comparable education systems highlight potential pitfalls when salary reforms are not accompanied by structural and cultural readiness. In Thailand, for instance, the introduction of performance-based pay in some autonomous universities led to internal tension due to the absence of a reliable performance evaluation system. Employees perceived the process as opaque and unfair, which paradoxically decreased motivation and increased dissatisfaction (Sawangchit & Jermsittiparsert, 2019).

Similarly, in India, attempts to decentralize compensation in certain public universities met resistance from faculty and staff unions. Reforms were seen as undermining job security, resulting in prolonged protests and legal disputes that stalled further implementation (The Hindu, 2018). Even in South Africa, where universities were encouraged to adopt flexible incentive models, the absence of centralized guidelines led to discrepancies across institutions. This created income disparities and raised concerns about equity and institutional fragmentation (OECD, 2021). These experiences underscore that salary reform, while necessary, must be embedded within a transparent governance structure, supported by legal frameworks, stakeholder communication, and capacity-building at the institutional level.

5.6. International Comparison: Lessons from Comparable Contexts

In broadening the perspective beyond Vietnam, experiences from other Southeast Asian and developing countries undergoing higher education reforms offer valuable insights. For example, Thailand has implemented partial university autonomy since the early 2000s, allowing public universities to independently manage personnel and finances. However, studies show that limitations in flexible salary schemes have similarly led to administrative workforce stagnation and high turnover among young professionals—challenges akin to those observed in Vietnam (Sawangchit & Jermsittiparsert, 2019).

In Indonesia, the "Legal Entity State Universities" (Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Badan Hukum – PTN BH) model has granted full autonomy to a few public universities. These institutions have introduced

performance-based pay and internal salary supplements. However, such systems are often inconsistently implemented across departments due to financial constraints and lack of evaluation capacity (World Bank, 2020).

Malaysia provides a contrasting model where the introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in both academic and administrative roles has been tied to financial bonuses. This has contributed to stronger institutional accountability but has also raised concerns about excessive quantification and limited adaptability to local contexts (OECD, 2021). Under Malaysia's Higher Education Blueprint, KPI-linked bonuses improved benchmarking but caused stress and required extensive institutional training.

These cases underline that while autonomy can enhance flexibility and responsiveness, its effectiveness hinges on aligning salary reforms with internal governance capacity, legal frameworks, and sustainable funding. Vietnam's path forward may benefit from adopting hybrid practices, such as phased implementation of the 3P salary model, supported by piloting in financially capable institutions.

6. CONCLUSION

Salary policy plays a key role in ensuring the quality and stability of administrative staff at higher education institutions [11,12]. In the context of the entire education sector promoting university autonomy, governance innovation and international integration, the requirements for capacity, efficiency and professional commitment of administrative staff are increasingly high [7]. However, the current situation shows that the salary policy for administrative staff still has many shortcomings: low salary, lack of flexible allowance mechanism, not linked to work efficiency and not reflecting the actual contribution value of employees [4,10]. The above quantitative results contribute to consolidating the conclusion about the essential role of salary policy in improving the quality, retaining and motivating the work of administrative staff at higher education institutions.

From the research and analysis results, the article has pointed out the close relationship between salary policy and factors that make up the quality of the team such as: work motivation, labor productivity, turnover rate and organizational commitment level [12,14]. The shortcomings in current policies not only negatively affect work efficiency but also hinder the process of building a professional, stable and sustainable working environment in higher education [8,10].

On that basis, the article proposes groups of solutions to improve salary policy in the direction of: (i) increasing work motivation through a flexible and transparent salary and bonus mechanism; (ii) improving labor productivity and reducing the rate of absenteeism by linking salary to capacity and work results; (iii) promoting organizational commitment through a comprehensive compensation policy, integrating both financial and non-financial factors [11,12]. At the same time, it is necessary to recommend completing the legal corridor for autonomous higher education institutions in building and adjusting salary policies in accordance with practical conditions and human resource development strategies of each unit [7].

The innovation of salary reform constitutes not merely a technical HR requirement but a strategic lever for institutional performance of human resource management, but also an important lever to improve the operational efficiency, service quality and competitiveness of Vietnamese higher education institutions in the new period [11].

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