



## **FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF LAND PLOT SALES STAFFS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to explore the scale and identify factors affecting employee satisfaction in a particular business; namely, land sales staff in Ho Chi Minh City area. To conduct the research, the authors do group discussions and expert discussion and then analyzed 201 observations with six factors: The nature of work, promotion and training, leadership, co-worker, income and working environment. The results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) show that there are five factors: Work nature, promotion and training, co-worker, income and working environment that has a positive impact on employee satisfaction; besides, the interesting result from the research is that the leading factor has no affects the satisfaction of land sales staffs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The contribution of this study is that the authors confirm the theory of Herzberg (1966), Ludy (2005), Nunnally and Bernstein, Spector (1997), Smith et al (1969) and Vroom (1964) in the context of the land plot sales staffs. Also, from qualitative studies and relevant studies, the author has adjusted the scale and analyzed data in a new context. Based on that, the recommendation in this research can support the necessary management solutions to increase employee satisfaction and open a new field for further research.



**Keywords:** Job nature; promotion and training; co-worker; income; working environment

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of Vietnam's integration, the wave of investment by foreign enterprises into our country is increasing, leading to the severe competition of the labor market; as a result, the more difficult the domestic enterprises in recruitment and management of human resources, especially high-quality human resources. However, the screening and selecting of external resources are so tricky, and this one is the war of talent selection.

Therefore, many businesses have chosen some ways aimed at the available resources for future development as well as ensuring current labor productivity. What is more, the understanding of employees' minds and aspirations is considered as a step in the talent management plan as well as creating a working environment along with the business development strategy.

Creating a stable and qualified workforce will help businesses save a lot of costs (recruitment costs, training, ...), reduce errors in work, create a working environment trust and solidarity among members. These things help businesses operate more effectively, making customers trust in the company's products and services, and thereby creating a competitive position in the market.

Looking back at the land plot market in Ho Chi Minh City from 2017 to 2018, land buying and selling transactions were pushed to the highest peak in history. The context originated in the East (District 2, District 9, Thu Duc) and quickly spread to the South of Saigon and continued to move to the West region as well as Can Gio province, and then this phenomenon goes rapidly down.

This one maybe repeats at the end of 2019, because the demand for real estate increases and the land is still the preferred choice. Currently, the situation of land in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, especially in the suburbs, is increasingly attracting investors and home buyers because of developing infrastructure along with investment in utility development such as entertainment and shopping areas. Therefore, to maintain market development, keeping the land sales staffs of enterprises is one of the concerns. So it is the reason that the authors conduct the research "Factors affecting employee satisfaction: The case of land plot sales staffs."

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW



According to Spector (1997), the satisfaction merely is how people feel about their job and their work aspects, because it is a general assessment, so it is a variable which can measure the attitude of the employee. Also, Ellickson and Logsdon (2002) argue that employee satisfaction is generally defined as the levels which employees love their work, which is an attitude based on employee awareness of positive or negative about their job or work environment.

Herzberg (1966) indicated that the factors disgruntled them are often external factors of work, while the factors make them feel happy are often the internal factors of work. He proves to be that the factors affecting human behavior include mainly two types: The first is maintaining factors which include the management of superiors, wages, welfare, supervision, work environment, public policy company, personal life, job stability, relationship with colleagues; and the second is motivating factors which include responsibility, recognition, development opportunities, and other aspects of the job.

Expected theory of Vroom (1964) argued that human behavior and motives are not necessarily decided by reality, but are determined by people's perceptions of their expectations in the future. In addition, to evaluate job satisfaction, Smith et al (1969) use a Job Descriptive Index (JDI) to assess a person's job satisfaction via factors: (1) Nature of work; (2) Wages; (3) Promotion; (4) Colleagues and (5) leader' supervision.

### **3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

According to Smith et al. (1969), the nature of work relates to the challenges of work, or to put it another way, the opportunity to use personal abilities and exciting experience in doing things. According to Luddy (2005), work nature reflects the relevance of nature to the capacity and desires of employees. In his research, Luddy used the JDI (Job Description Index) to understand the job satisfaction of workers at the Public Health Institute in the Western Cape, South Africa, and the result indicates that the work nature affects employee satisfaction and it belongs to the group of organizational factors including the nature of work, wages, superiors and advancement opportunities. What is more, in Boeve's study (2007), work nature is a factor that strongly influences job satisfaction.

- *H1: The nature of work has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.*

Smith et al. (1969) pointed out that promotion and training involve employee awareness of the opportunities to improve skills, qualifications to serve the job and to give the opportunity to get higher positions at work. Besides, Luddy (2005) used JDI to understand the job

satisfaction of workers, but in Luddy's research, the promotion opportunity is one of two factors that workers feel dissatisfied. In Herzberg's theory (1966), promotion – training is an incentive or encouragement factor for employees, and the study of Ellickson & Logsdon (2002), Masood et al. (2014) also supported this view. In research papers in Vietnam, according to Nguyen (2012), promotion training plays an essential role in developing both elements of staff and organizational improvement.

- *H2: Promotion - training has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.*

Leader related to the relationship between employees and direct leaders, the support of superiors; leadership style and leadership's ability to perform the functions of management in the organization, according to Smith et al. (1969). The leader factor is the immediate superior of the employee and leader brings satisfaction to employees by creating fair treatment as well as showing interest in subordinates; besides, the leader has the capacity, vision, executive ability and support personnel staff in work (Robbins et al., 2002). Luddy (2005) argues that leader plays a vital role in employee satisfaction in the work that comes from the way of working, treating and guiding the leaders in terms of employee duties and Luddy's research also shows that leader has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.

- *H3: The leader has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.*

Co-worker factor is the perception related to behaviors, relationships with colleagues at work, and there are the coordination and helping each other in work with colleagues (Smith et al., 1969). Co-workers are people who work in the same organization or work in the same department. Co-workers are friendly and supportive to contribute to increasing satisfaction in their work (Luddy, 2005). Co-worker factors are positive when in an organization people are willing to help each other, work together effectively, and they do not cause stress and have fair competition (Bui, 2011; Le and Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen, 2012; Nguyen 2013). According to the research results of Pham (2013), the co-worker factor has the most potent influence on the satisfaction of employees of Hai Duong Electricity Company.

- *H4: Co-worker has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.*

According to Smith et al. (1969), salary is the satisfaction of wages related to employee perception of fairness in payroll and income is the remuneration paid to employees by the work they do at the company. In Luddy's study (2005), wages are the second factor besides "promotion opportunities" that workers here feel dissatisfied. The income factor is taken into account in terms of the compatibility between wages and employee contributions (Wiley,

1997), and as a result, workers can live with current income, other incomes such as bonuses or allowances. The results of Truong's research (2017) for income factors are the most powerful influencing factor to increase the satisfaction of employees in the seafood packaging industry.

- *H5: Income has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.*

The working environment has some features such as workplace convenience, lighting, and temperature, larger workspace, cleaner and office location. When the company meets these requirements, employee satisfaction will increase. The workplace environment may have a positive or negative impact on employee satisfaction levels depending on the nature of the work environment. According to Herzberg's theory (1966), working environments are an essential factor in the job satisfaction of employees at work. Also, Luddy (2005) examined the positive effects of the working environment on job satisfaction. Tran (2005) using JDI, but developing two more factors are working conditions and welfare, and then the working conditions variable is excluded because of insufficient reliability.

- *H6: The working environment has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.*

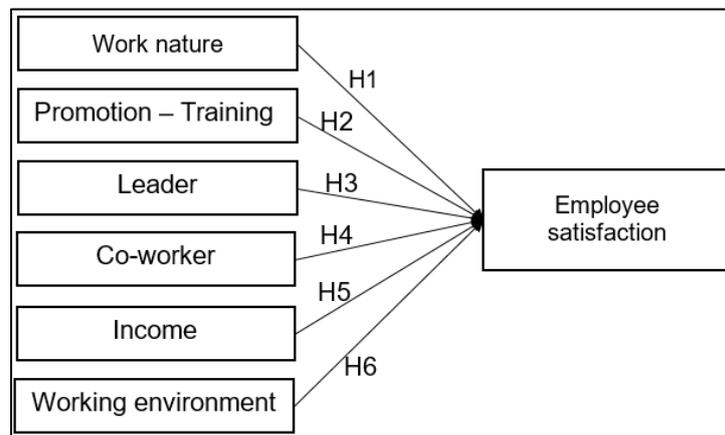


Figure 1: Proposed research model of the authors

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The authors use mix method including qualitative research method to explore the scale and quantitative research methods to analyze the factors affecting employee satisfaction of land sales staffs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

This research uses the qualitative research method via group discussions and expert discussions to build research models, scales, questionnaires, and preliminary surveys to complete research models before issuing the questionnaire. The authors surveyed the chairman

of the Ho Chi Minh city of Real Estate Association (HoREA) and surveyed five members of the Executive Committee of HoREA to complete the group discussion.

Quantitative research method based on information collected from land plot staff of many companies in Ho Chi Minh City. Likert scale with five levels, namely strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree is used to measure the impact of factors affecting employee satisfaction, and this research uses the convenient sampling method. Hair et al. (2014) pointed out that when the study uses Likert scale five levels with the n variables, the study should ensure a minimum sample size of  $5*n=5n$ . To ensure the quality of the sample, the authors decided to distribute a total of 250 questionnaires.

In particular, this research surveyed 10 prestigious and reputable companies which sell land plot in Ho Chi Minh City such as: Southern Green Land Joint Stock Company, Danh Khoi Real Estate Joint Stock Company, Real Estate Company Kim Oanh, Phuc Khang Group, Alibaba Real Estate Joint Stock Company, 21st Century Joint Stock Company, Phu Gia Real Estate Company, Nasaland Real Estate Services Co., Ltd, Doland Vietnam Real Estate Company and Hoang Gia Sai Gon Real Estate Development Company. For each company, the author team directly distributed the survey questionnaires and the number of questionnaires for each company was 25. So after screening data, there were 201 valid questionnaires to be used in the quantitative analysis (accounting for 80.4%). In quantitative research, the authors use descriptive statistical methods, assessed for reliability through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, EFA method and regression to determine factors affecting job satisfaction of land sales staffs.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 5.1. Data description:

After the two months to conduct the survey from January to February in 2019 and do data analysis in the first two weeks of March, the authors gave out 250 surveys and collected 201 responses, accounting for 80.4% and the following table can describe the data:

Table 1: Data description

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	117	58.2%
	Female	84	41.8%
<b>Age</b>	Under 25 years old	67	33.3%
	From 25 to 30 years old	82	40.8%
	From 31 to 40 years old	52	25.9%
	Over 40 years old	0	0%
<b>Education background</b>	Undergraduate high school	11	5.5%
	Graduated high school	45	22.4%
	Technical school. colleges	84	41.8%

	University	61	30.3%
	Postgraduate	0	0%
<b>Working time</b>	Under 3 months	34	16.9%
	From 3 months to 1 year	77	38.3%
	From 1 year to 5 years	67	33.3%
	From 5 years to 10 years	23	11.4%
	Over 10 years	0	0%

Regarding gender: The majority of gender is male, with 117 people accounting for 58.2%, while the number of female participants is 84 people, accounting for 41.8%, and the data show that the gender gap is not high.

Regarding age: 82 people are from 25 to 30 years old, accounting for 40.8% and get the highest rate, the second is 67 people who are under 25 years old, accounting for 33.3%, the third is 52 people who are from 31 to under 40 and accounting for 25.9% and eventually the people who are over 40 years do not participate in the survey. Based on the analysis of age, land plot sales staff in Ho Chi Minh City are mainly between 25 and 40 years old.

Regarding education background: According to the results, the education background has a quite high disproportion. Technical school and colleges have the highest number of respondents which is 84 people, accounting for 41.8%, while the university has 61 people, accounting for 30.3%. Besides, graduated high school has 45 people who join the survey, accounting for 22.4%. Undergraduate high school who answers the survey is 11, accounting for 5.5%. Also, finally, postgraduate has no participants.

Looking into the working time: From 3 months to 1 year, the highest number of participants is 77 people, accounting for 38.3%. Working time from over one year to 5 years has 67 people, accounting for 33.3%. Working time under three months has 34 people, accounting for 16.9%. Working time from 5 years to 10 years has 23 people, accounting for 11.4% and finally, over ten years no one participated in the survey. From the percentage of the working time, the land sales staffs in the Ho Chi Minh city have experience working in the real estate industry.

## 5.2. Reliability test: Cronbach's Alpha

According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the condition to accepting variables is that Corrected Item - Total Correlation is equal or greater than 0.3 and Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted is equal or greater than 0.7. According to Nguyen and Ha (2008), Hoang and Chu (2008), Nguyen (2011), Hair et al. (2014), new studies can accept that Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted is equal or greater than 0.6. Therefore, LD6 (the leader has polite behavior), CW4 (reliable colleagues), IC4 (reasonable subsidies), WE1 (reasonable working hours) are

eliminated, and the remaining items satisfy the condition, so this can be used for analyzing Exploratory Factor.

Table 2: Constructs, corrected item – total correlation and Cronbach Alpha

Items	Constructs	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
<b>Work nature - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.744</b>			
WN1	Work is suitable for professional qualifications	0.455	0.728
WN2	The work allows promoting personal ability	0.564	0.670
WN3	Staff understands the job	0.582	0.661
WN4	Reasonable workload	0.554	0.677
<b>Promotion - Training - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.732</b>			
PT1	Staffs are fully trained	0.463	0.705
PT2	There are many opportunities for advancement in the process of working	0.578	0.640
PT3	Fair promotion policy	0.601	0.623
PT4	Clear promotion policy	0.454	0.711
<b>Leader - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.710</b>			
LD1	The leader treats equally among junior staff	0.409	0.685
LD2	The leader always cares about employees	0.474	0.659
LD3	The leader acknowledges the opinions of employees	0.535	0.635
LD4	Employees receive leadership support when needed	0.488	0.654
LD5	Leadership is a capable, good vision	0.436	0.676
<b>Co-worker - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.741</b>			
CW1	Colleagues willing to help each other	0.551	0.684
CW2	Colleagues work well in work	0.631	0.585
CW3	Friendly team	0.529	0.697
<b>Income - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.625</b>			
IC1	Wages are commensurate with capacity and contribution	0.407	0.564
IC2	Wages are paid fairly among employees	0.453	0.499
IC3	Employees can live solely on current wages	0.442	0.515
<b>Working environment - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.681</b>			
WE2	Safe working environment	0.507	0.570
WE3	Full facilities for work	0.551	0.510
WE4	The working environment is clean and hygienic	0.427	0.672
<b>Employee satisfaction - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.793</b>			
ES1	I feel satisfied with the job.	0.640	0.718
ES2	I will introduce the company as the best place to work.	0.680	0.676
ES3	I will work for long time with company	0.594	0.761

### 5.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is an analytical technique which is aimed to reduce data, so it is beneficial for identifying variables by group. In the exploratory factor analysis, the authors used Principal Component Analysis and Varimax rotation to group the components.

#### 5.3.1. Independent variables

The results show that KMO is 0.697 and can make sure the requirement  $0.5 < KMO < 1$ . Bartlett is 1118.3739 with sig =  $0.00 < 0.05$ , so all of the variables are correlation together in each component. Total variance explained equals 58.233%, and it is greater than 50%; as a result, it can meet the requirement of variance explained. From this one, this research can

conclude that variables can explain 58.233% in changing factors. Also, eigenvalues equal 1.319 >1, and it is the fluctuation that can explain for each factor, so the extracted factors have a significant summarize in the best way. The rotated matrix in EFA show that the loading factor is higher than 0.55 and it can divide into six components by the following table:

Table 3: Rotated matrix

Concepts	Items	Component					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Leader	LD4	0.715					
	LD3	0.714					
	LD5	0.664					
	LD1	0.613					
	LD2	0.589					
Promotion - Training	PT3		0.807				
	PT2		0.776				
	PT1		0.667				
	PT4		0.636				
Work nature	WN4			0.792			
	WN2			0.772			
	WN3			0.743			
	WN1			0.623			
Co-worker	CW2				0.830		
	CW1				0.805		
	CW3				0.735		
Working environment	WE3					0.819	
	WE2					0.782	
	WE4					0.698	
Income	IC3						0.730
	IC2						0.721
	IC1						0.634
<b>KMO</b>		0.697 (sig.=0.000)					
<b>Bartlett's</b>		1118.739					
<b>Eigenvalues</b>		3.948	2.242	2.032	1.718	1.552	1.319
<b>Total Variance Explained</b>		10.898	21.453	31.997	41.167	49.907	58.233

5.3.2. *Dependent variable:*

The results show that KMO is 0.699 and can make sure the requirement  $0.5 < KMO < 1$ . Bartlett is 183.838 with sig = 0.00 < 0.05, so all of the variables are correlation together in each component. Total variance explained equals 70.975%, and it is greater than 50%; as a result, it can meet the requirement of variance explained. Besides, eigenvalues equal 2.129 >1, and it is the fluctuation that can explain for each factor, so the extracted factors have a significant summarize in the best way. Finally, all of the variables have the loading factor that is greater than 0.55 and meet requirement.

Table 4: Dependent variable, and testing

Dependent variable	Component	
	1	
Employee satisfaction	ES2	0.867
	ES1	0.845

	ES3	0.814
<b>KMO</b>		0.699 (sig.=0.000)
<b>Bartlett's</b>		183.838
<b>Eigenvalues</b>		2.129
<b>Total Variance Explained</b>		70.975
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>		0.793

#### 5.4. Regression

Regression analysis finds out what is the factors that affect the satisfaction of land plot sales staffs and measure the affecting levels of these factors. Before doing the regression analysis, the authors do compute the mean value of these factors. Whereas:

- **ES:** Employee satisfaction (ES1, ES2, ES3)
- **WN:** The nature of work (WN1, WN2, WN3, WN4)
- **PT:** Promotion and training (PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4)
- **LD:** Leader (LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, LD5)
- **CW:** Co-worker (CW1, CW2, CW3)
- **IC:** Income (IC1, IC2, IC3)
- **WE:** Working environment (WE2, WE3, WE4)

The following formula can describe regression analysis model in this research:

$$ES = \beta_0 + \beta_1*WN + \beta_2*PT + \beta_3*LD + \beta_4*CW + \beta_5*IC + \beta_6*WE$$

Whereas, ES is dependent variable and it can measure the satisfaction of land plot sales staffs in Ho Chi Minh City, and WN, PT, LD, CW, IC, WE are independent variables which can measure the nature of work, promotion – training, leader, co-worker, income and work environment respectively.

Table 5: Regression results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity	
		Beta	Sd. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-1.024	0.355		-2.886	0.004		
	WN	0.157	0.053	0.149	2.945	0.004	0.908	1.101
	PT	0.208	0.055	0.192	3.782	0.000	0.900	1.111
	LD	0.051	0.055	0.048	0.927	0.355	0.856	1.168
	CW	0.308	0.050	0.314	6.159	0.000	0.891	1.123
	IC	0.369	0.052	0.373	7.047	0.000	0.827	1.209
	WE	0.185	0.053	0.174	3.518	0.001	0.944	1.059
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>				0.550				
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>				0.536				
<b>Sig.</b>				0.000				
<b>Durbin Watson</b>				2.125				

From the results of the regression model show that the sig of LD (=0.355) is greater than 0.05, so it means that leader cannot affect employee satisfaction. The research links to the reality that in the real estate company, the employee whom sale land plot does not need the help of the leader because they can do their job by themselves. While, the five variables such as WN, PT, CW, IC and WE have a significant statistic because the sig of them is less than 0.05. As a result, these variables affect the satisfaction of land plot sales staffs.

Adjusted R2 value is 0.536, and it means that 53.6% of satisfaction of land plot is from 5 factors and 46.4% of that is from the factors which are outside of the model. The sig value is 0.000, and it is less than 0.05, so the research model is fit, and the variables which use in the model have a significant statistic. Besides, Durbin – Watson is 2.125, and as a result, there is no autocorrelation between the residuals in the model. What is more, variance inflation factors (VIF) are too small, and these point out that there is no multicollinearity in this model, so all of the independent variables do not correlate together.

The multiple regression model by standardized coefficients can be identified:

$$ES = 0.149*WN + 0.192*PT + 0.314*CW + 0.373*IC + 0.174*WE$$

**5.5. Hypothesis testing:**

Table 6: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Content	Result
H1	The nature of work has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H2	Promotion - training has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H3	The leader has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.	Rejected
H4	Co-worker has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H5	Income has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H6	The working environment has a positive effect on employee satisfaction.	Accepted

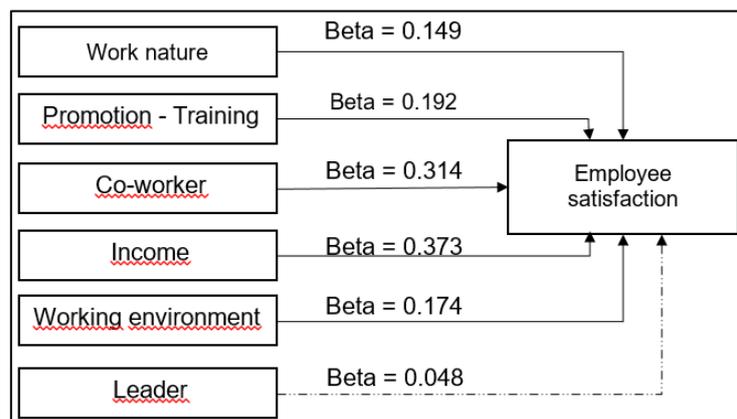


Figure 2: Factors affecting to employee satisfaction

## 6. CONCLUSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND LIMITATIONS

From the result and connecting to reality, this is important to limit the real problem is "no salary but high commission" in the real estate market. Besides, the company needs to pay attention to fairness in wage policies among employees. It is the second most appreciated element of income factor among employees. The companies pay the wages to depend on the ability to work, they have pay on time and create a transparent wage policy, combined with income-raising policies; and these will make the employee of land plot sales staffs feel high satisfaction in jobs. As a result, these can motivate employees and help them work well; also, these create long-term commitment between employees and organizations.

In order to improve employee satisfaction, the real estate companies need to build a corporate culture, and they create the spirit of cooperation in the company's departments. From the result of the survey, the employees highly appreciate the factor such as "co-workers who work well together in work" or "friendly colleagues." Therefore, the enterprises have to create a working environment with cooperation, friendly culture, and willingness to help each other. Also, they need to organize outdoor activities, extracurricular activities to help employees to interact together in the company and the employees do relieve stress as well as improve the satisfaction of employees.

Among the items of promotion and training, most of the employees satisfy the fair promotion policy among employees. When the real estate companies have a vacant or new position in any their workforce, they need to prioritize those who have made efforts to contribute to them, and the real estate companies must be sure that they will compensate to employees' efforts.

From the result of the authors' survey, land plot sales staffs want to work in a well-equipped working environment. A safe workplace can provide the full range of equipment needed for employees to accomplish their assigned tasks in the best way. Besides, the real estate companies are recently opening too much, and they open both big office and small office. So, the office arrangements need to be spacious, comfortable but they must ensure safe working conditions and this is an essential note for real estate companies.

The land plot sales staffs want to work by their capabilities and expertise, or to put it another way, in the work nature, two critical things that employees concern are the suiting of their capabilities and the understanding of the job. Thus, employees can develop their capabilities and creativity to contribute to the company. There should be more focused when



companies want to satisfy employee satisfaction through the nature of the work. It is clear to get the solution that the company needs to assess the knowledge, competence, working spirit of employees to arrange suitable jobs.

This research has brought some results and contributions to the factors affecting the satisfaction of land plot sales staffs in Ho Chi Minh City. However, this study still has two significant limitations. First, many researchers study the research on employee satisfaction, but with a separate research topic about the satisfaction of land sales staff in Ho Chi Minh city is quite a few, not even available in Vietnam.

The topic only surveyed in the crucial southern area, so it does still not reflect the satisfaction of land plot sales staffs in Vietnam. Secondly, the method which implemented in the research is the convenient sampling method, the number of initial survey questionnaires is 250 and when conducting the analysis, this research use only 201 survey questionnaires. In the future, when ensuring the conditions of time and finance, the authors will conduct surveys within each province and city across the country to find out the factors affecting the satisfaction of land plot sales; at the same time, it is possible to compare satisfaction among different regions across the country.

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