

**LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY – HO CHI MINH CITY  
VIETNAM**

**NGUYEN VO DAN THANH**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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2010**

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Nguyen Vo Dan Thanh

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was intended to investigate the perceptions of lecturers in the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City – Viet Nam about professional development with regard to teaching, research, and working conditions; and to evaluate their perceptions towards professional development by personal factors (age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, years working, and faculty field) and organizational factor (organizational commitment). Participants in this study were 214 lecturers (133 females and 61 males) in the USSH. A mixed method approach was used. Quantitative measures consisted of demographics, perceptions, and comparisons of differences of perceptions, analyzed by descriptive (frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviation) and inferential (One-way ANOVA and t-tests) statistics. Post-hoc tests were also done to determine significant differences between pairs of values of an independent variable. Qualitative measures included six questions in an interview questionnaire, which were analyzed by content analysis.

Findings reveal that the overall perception level of the lecturers in the USSH regarding the three aspects of professional development (teaching, research, and working conditions) was high. When the perceptions were compared based on personal and organizational factors, there were statistically significant differences found by age, gender, educational level, years working, and organizational commitment.

Although the results of this study indicate that lecturers' perceptions towards professional development were found to be at a high level, it is recommended that the concerned authorities should have more reasonable policies regarding lecturers' salary and fringe benefits to motivate them. Moreover, a survey on lecturers' professional development needs should be conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of their thinking, attitudes, and interests. Further studies should be carried out with the staff's professional development in the USSH.

**KEY WORDS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/LECTURERS/  
PERCEPTIONS/ USSH/ VIETNAM**

102 pages

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – UK
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DOET	Department of Education and Training
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HPPLC	Health Professions and Prelaw Center, Indiana University
HRD	Human Resource Development
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
PD	Professional Development
SWOT	Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities - Threats
USSH	University of Social Sciences and Humanities
VNU	Vietnam National University

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Vietnam is on the way towards global integration with a fast-growing economy. At present, there are many challenges and opportunities for Vietnam integrating to the wide and broad international market. One of the most significant national advancement goals is to gain a high quality of human resources. More and more young, creative intellectual and well-trained talents of high educational standards are in urgent need in Vietnam. Hence, to meet the international standards, the quality of education in a university is very important.

In Vietnam culture, education and teachers are always respected as the most valuable asset of the country. Education is considered as the knowledge, skills, attitudes, qualities, and capacities that facilitate persons to reach their growth and to become active responsible participants in constructing a new world order with a systematic process. Education is a creative and continuous process to develop the hidden capacities and powers within everyone who may contribute their knowledge to the enrichment and development of society.

However, in the report for APEC 2006, Dr. Loc Nguyen from MOET presented that education in Vietnam until early 1990s is still affected by the centrally planned economy. It is very difficult to transit to a market oriented society.

According to Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), besides many achievements Vietnam education attained in the recent years, there are still some weaknesses and shortcomings in quality and in structure such as the education is not connected strongly with practice; the training is not related to employment; the level of education management is slower than the needs of development; infrastructure is poor and insufficient; teaching staff is still weak.

While creating conditions for educational development, society demands from education an active service and timely adjustment of the scope and structure to improve education quality to meet diversified requirements. Education should be relevant to and keep pace with the new changes in mechanism and to be developed one step in front of the social development.

In education, teachers are considered as one of the most important factors played the key role in enhancing awareness for the responsibilities and capability of the present and future generations. Teachers may be seen as an architect and there are persons who are the most knowledgeable and proficient that will be qualified for this profession. In the Educational Technology Journal 1998, Kenzie (1998: 33) provided a list of descriptors of the role of a teacher:

*“...the teacher is circulating, redirecting, disciplining, questioning, assessing, guiding, directing, fascinating, validating, facilitating, moving, monitoring, challenging, motivating, watching, moderating, diagnosing, trouble-shooting, observing, encouraging, suggesting, watching, modeling and clarifying.”*

Because of the importance role of teachers in education, professional development for teachers is very essential to enhance the quality of education, particularly in Vietnam. Professional development can be understood as the development of an individual in his or her professional function. In specific, “teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically” (Glatthorn, 1995: 41). Professional development embraces formal and informal experiences. We have to inspect the content of the experiences, the processes and the contexts in which it will take place (Ganser, 2000). Otherwise, professional development can be considered as “a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession.” (Eleonora, 2003: 12)

Being a high quality training and research center in the southern provinces in Vietnam, the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) with more than 20,000 students ensures that it will maintain the reputation and endeavors to provide a high quality of human resources for society through research programs and innovative

academic. To attain those objectives, the USSH must have enough and high quality workforce in which “lecturer” is the key factor.

Therefore, lecturer professional development is a topic that the USSH needs to concentrate closely and deeply because professional development impacts on the implementation of educational reforms, lecturers’ practices and beliefs, and on students’ learning positively. Gamoran (2006) said that if teachers had a good awareness of professional community their commitment was higher and teachers’ morale was more advanced.

In the USSH’s development strategy from 2007 to 2012, according to the SWOT analysis of the university, there are some weaknesses and shortcomings in management, teaching, research, and community service. In specifically, some lecturers are in low quality, they do not meet the requirements or the standard of a high quality and effectiveness education. Moreover, they rarely have opportunities for approaching new knowledge, teaching and thinking methods, scientific and technological achievements of the world. In addition, equipment and facilities is still backward and poor, they cannot support for teaching and learning activities. This study aims to find out whether the USSH conducts professional development or not and to learn about their perceptions towards professional development.

There are many researches related to professional development have been done in many countries, and they recognize that professional development is very necessary and important for an organization in general and an individual’s career in particular. For that reason, learning and understanding about lecturers’ professional development is essential to the success of an organization and an individual self-direction. The researcher hopes that the finding of this study will help academic staff in the USSH have the overall view of professional development and realize what the most important factor affecting their professional development. Furthermore, the USSH’s School Board of Management can use this research as a reference to create or adapt appropriate professional development programs and implement effectively to raise and improve the quality of academic staff.

## 1.2 Research Objectives:

1.2.1 To study lecturers' perceptions towards professional development in the USSH-VNU-HCMC.

1.2.2 To compare the differences in lecturers' perceptions regarding the factors affected professional development.

## 1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 What were the perceptions of the USSH's lecturers on professional development?

1.3.2 How difference was the professional development in the USSH affected by the factors of age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, year of working, faculty field, and organizational commitment?

## 1.4 Research Hypotheses

This study focused on lecturers' perceptions towards professional development in three aspects of teaching, research, and working conditions in the USSH. The researcher hypothesized that there were significant differences in lecturers' perceptions based on the factors affecting professional development. In particular, the researcher supposed that:

1.4.1 Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development in *teaching* were statistically significant differences by the factors of age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, year of working, faculty field, and organizational commitment.

1.4.2 Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development in *research* were statistically significant differences by the factors of age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, year of working, faculty field, and organizational commitment.

1.4.3 Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development based on their *working conditions* were statistically significant differences by the factors of age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, year of working, faculty field, and organizational commitment.

1.4.4 Professional development in *teaching, research, and working conditions* was affected by the factors of age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, year of working, faculty field, and organizational commitment.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on lecturers' perceptions towards professional development based on three aspects of teaching, research, and working conditions that were depended on the theories, related researches, and the USSH's mission, vision, and development strategy for the university till 2020 in the report to the Ministry of Education and Training. The study was carried out in the University of Social Sciences and Humanities – VNU-HCMC with 214 lecturers.

## **1.6 Research Contributions**

1.6.1 The findings and recommendations of this study would provide valuable information to the USSH's Board of Management in planning human resources development activities and improving lecturers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

1.6.2. The research would provide more information about human resource development in the USSH and in general.

## **1.7 Operational Definitions of the Terms**

**Professional Development** was defined as a way to maintain and improve the knowledge and skills that an employee needed to choose for their job growth and

personal development. It could include training and learning opportunities, such as working observation, outside or on-the-job training.

**Age** was referred to the length of time that an individual lived from the year of birth to the present time.

**Gender** was referred to the denotement of being male or female.

**Marital Status** was described as a person's relationship with a significant other. The status included single, married, separated, divorced, and widowed.

**Educational Level** was referred to the highest academic degree that a person achieved.

**Monthly Income** was defined as the salary and benefits that lecturers received every month.

**Years Working** was defined as the total number of years that a lecturer worked in the USSH.

**Faculty Field** was referred to the current field that a lecturer specializes in the USSH such as social sciences and humanities.

**Organizational Commitment** was referred to the psychological attachment of a lecturer to the USSH. It relates to the lecturers' identification with the goals and the values of the USSH, their desire to belong to and their willingness to display effort on behalf of this university.

**Teaching** was defined as the communication and activities interacted between a lecturer and a student over a subject. Teaching is the most important duty of lecturers in the USSH.

**Research** was defined as searching, discovering, and interpreting facts in systematically for the improvement of lecturers' knowledge, skills beside their teaching work in the USSH.

**Working Conditions** was a term that covered such matters as the organization of work and work activities; training, skills; health, safety and well-being; benefits which encouraged lecturers' professional development.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the researcher will present related concepts, theories, and researches that related to the topic of this study in the following sequence:

2.1 Background of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City

2.1.1 Overview of the Education System in Vietnam

2.1.2 University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC)

2.2 Concepts and definitions of Perception

2.3 Concepts and definitions of Professional Development

2.4 Theories relating to Professional Development

2.4.1 Need-based theories

2.4.1.1 Hierarchy of Needs Theory by Abraham H. Maslow

2.4.1.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

2.4.1.3 McClelland's Theory of Needs

2.4.2 Adult Learning Theory

2.4.3 Continuing Professional Development

2.4.4 Human Resource Development

2.5 Related researches on Professional Development

2.6 Conceptual Framework

## **2.1 Background of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City**

### **2.1.1 Overview of the Education System in Vietnam**

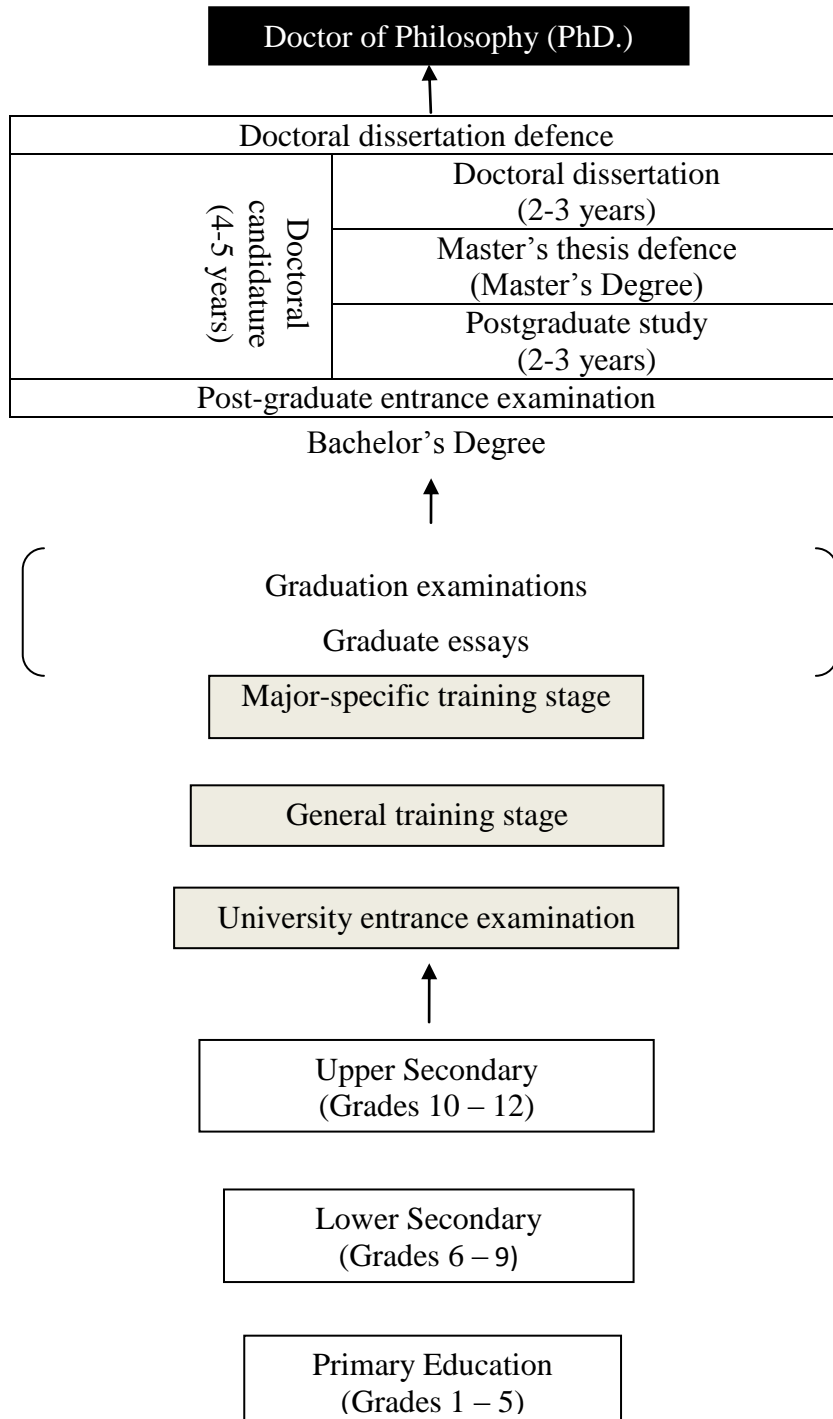
The education system structure in Vietnam is 5-4-3. Children from 6 years old will be admitted to primary education (grades 1- 5), after that they continue to four years of lower secondary (grades 6 – 9), and then they carry on their three years of upper secondary (grades 10 – 12). It takes two or six years to continue their higher education programs. Continuing education will be post-graduate levels. There are Master's programmes (2-3 years) and Doctoral programmes (2-3 years) in this level.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) manages all universities (with the exception of the two national universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) and institutions of higher education in cooperation with other line ministries or provincial governments.

The Departments of Education and Training (DOET) in provincial level administer all school grades, some provincial secondary school, colleges and universities. Under the guidance of DOET, there are District Offices of Education. They supervise all primary and lower secondary schools in the district.

Hereafter is the Chart of Vietnam Education System:

**EDUCATION SYSTEM IN VIETNAM**



**Figure 2.1 Education System in Vietnam**

### **2.1.2 University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC)**

USSH was first known as the Faculty of Letters of Saigon University in 1957. After the reunification of the country, the Faculty of Letters and the Faculty of Sciences in Saigon University were merged in 1977 and become the largest centre of training and research in the South of Vietnam. At that time, it was called Ho Chi Minh City University (HCMU). March 1996, HCMU was separated into its two original component members and they became independent members of VNU-HCMC. The name University of Social Sciences and Humanities has been formally known ever since.

With over 50 years of historical development, USSH is currently one of the two largest education and research institutions in the field of social sciences in Vietnam. At present, the USSH has 23 faculties and departments, over 700 teaching staff and supported staff, of whom more than 400 are professors, associate professors, doctors, and masters from many different countries.

#### **Mission**

As a key centre of Vietnamese education for under and post-graduate training and for scientific research with high quality and multi-disciplines, the USSH assures to provide professional services with high quality for Vietnam's national economy and to contribute to the foundation of an advanced culture profoundly to be one of the leading institutions in training in Vietnam.

#### **Vision**

Besides promoting faculty's knowledge and commitment in the entire operation, the USSH always improve training quality, diversify disciplines, and build up scientific research centers towards a research-based university.

In near future, the USSH will be a significant national training and research institution in the field of social sciences and humanities in which some training and research fields will reach international standards.

#### **Objectives**

The USSH aspires to supply human resources with high qualification and skills to resolve problems and meet the challenges of contemporary matters. To obtain that achievement, the USSH need:

- To enhance the number and the teaching and working quality of staff.
- To build the professional management system.
- To improve and internationalize training programs in the direction of providing modern knowledge which is capable of reaching the standards of accredited universities of South-East Asia and later, of the world.
- To build excellent and prestigious research centres and doing significant scientific projects to create the distinct imprint in research.
- To collaborate with various domestic training and research agencies as well as international institutions and organizations to mobilize maximum human resource for the university development.

#### **Analysis of the USSH's role in the national socio-economic development**

In 2007, Vietnam became the World Trade Organization's 150<sup>th</sup> member. From that, the socio-economic relations were grown and given more opportunities to get into overseas markets. To integrate Vietnam socio-economic into world's markets, human resource plays an important role in this circumstance. They need to be upgraded to professional standards. That resulted in challenges and competences were created for the whole Vietnamese workforce and the labour in universities in particular.

At present, the amount of universities, colleges, vocational secondary schools, and technical training schools grow very fast in Vietnam. The investment in education and training rises and facilities has been enhanced. The USSH is not the exception in consolidating and developing its prestige in the community.

Besides the relations with other in-country education and research institutions, the USSH has set up strong collaboration with nearly 150 universities, institutes and NGOs in many countries. Many lecturers were trained and invited teaching at foreign prestige universities. Every year, the USSH welcomes the numerous of international professors and scholars to present lectures and do research in various academic disciplines. This helps reinforce and develop the training and research services of the USSH. From 2006 to 2008, the USSH has 116 researches in which 30% is academic research used as references in under-graduate and graduate programs. In recent years, the USSH has encouraged lecturers to improve curriculum

and renew teaching methodology by referring international standards and feedbacks from employers and education organizations. Annually, with the framework of student exchange programs, hundreds of foreign students including undergraduate and post-graduate programs come to the USSH to study and research.

Every year, the USSH supplies about 5,000 students including graduate and post graduate programs to society. This is the significant human resource for Ho Chi Minh City, the South and provinces in the Middle of Vietnam. Being aware of the importance of providing students to meet social needs, the USSH always research and renew teaching and training methods to enhance the adaptation of students under the high requirement of labour market with their expertise and professional skills. With those achievements, the USSH affirms that it will become one of the highest quality education and research centres of Vietnam in near future.

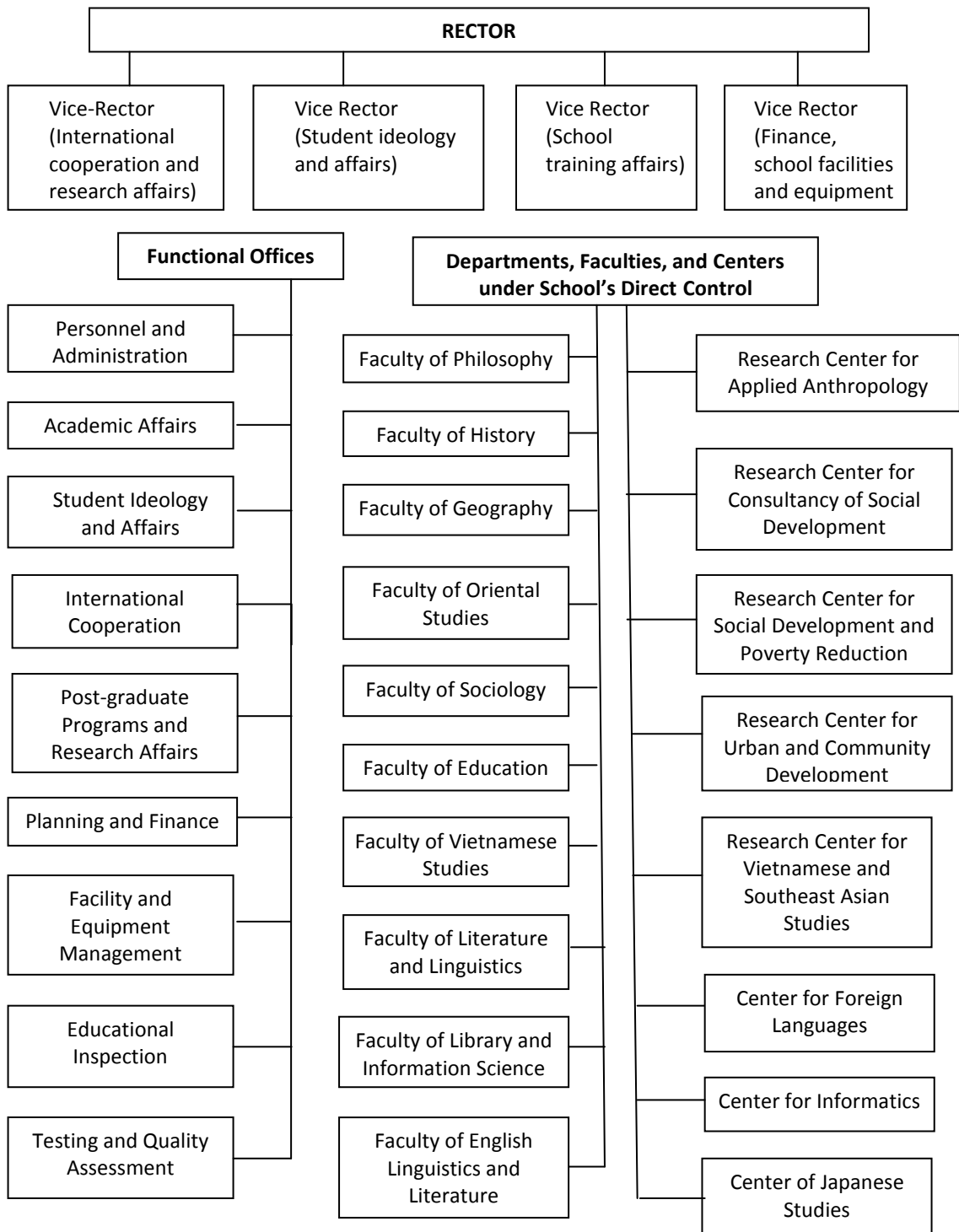
### **The role of academic staff and lecturers professional development in the contribution to the growth of the USSH**

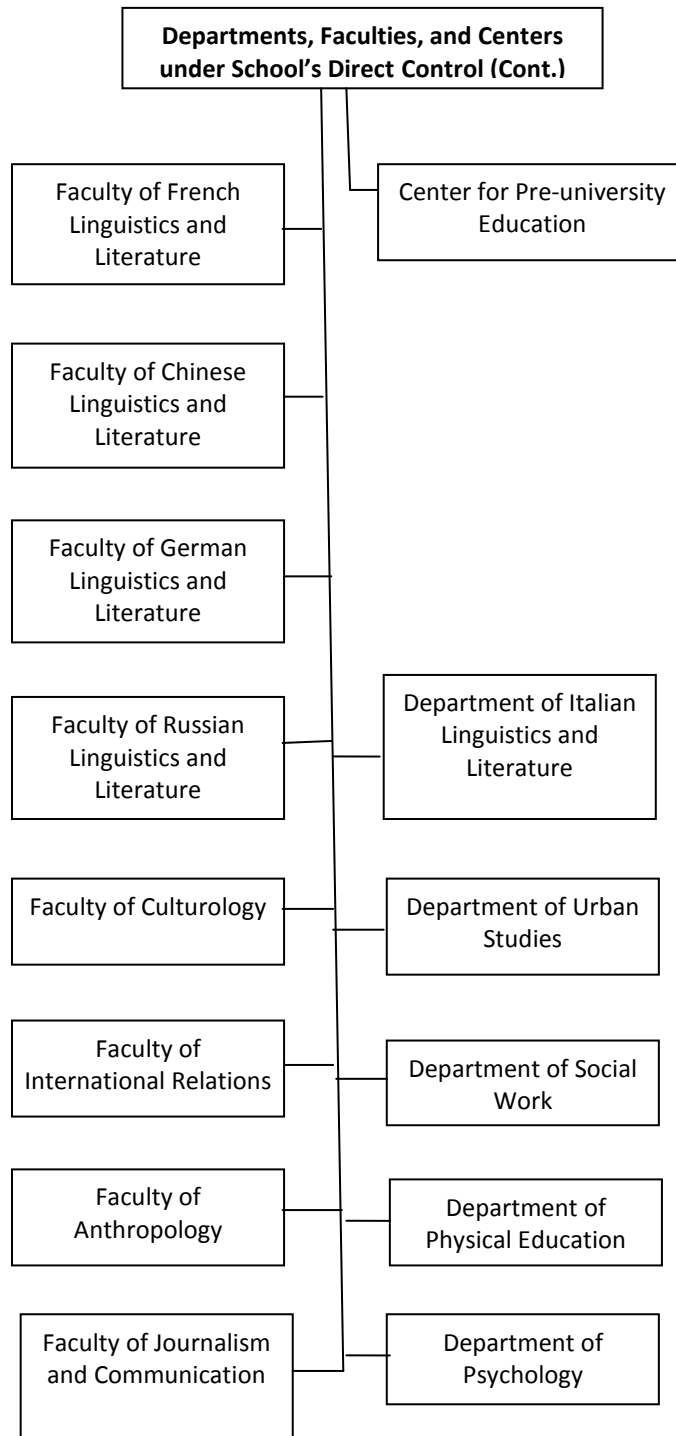
Presently, the most important target of the USSH is to reach international standards and to contribute to the progression of Vietnamese social sciences. To achieve that target, the USSH is building up a strategy with innovative programs and measures in developing professional staff, improving the quality of teaching and service, and expanding infrastructure in the direction of modernization, and specialization.

In the report to MOET in the end of year 2008, the USSH has built the development strategy for the university till 2020 in which there are 38 programs to speed up the growth of the university. One of the most important programs is fostering and retraining civil servant. It shows that workforce in the USSH including academic staff and lecturers must be developed not only the number but also the professional qualifications.

In general, lecturers' responsibility in this status plays a very important role in the contribution to the growth of the USSH. It was proved by their understanding, skills, and behaviours. Step by step, they need to develop and improve the professionalism in their work by studying, self-learning or attending some courses, workshops, and seminars.

Hereafter is the USSH's administrative and educational system:





**Figure 2.2 Administrative and Educational System of the USSH**

## 2.2 Concepts and Definitions of Perception

According to Demir (2009), perceptions were explained as ideas and thoughts while Baron & Byrne (2000, cited in Dhan, 2007) defined perception as “the process through which the people seek to know and understand other persons”.

Adediwura and Bada (2007) explained that “perception is the reaction elicited when an impression is perceived from without after making connection with other materials in the consciousness (memory)”. Perception might be energized by both the present and past experience, individual attitude at a particular moment, the physical state of the sense organ, the interest of the person, the level of attention, and the interpretation given to the perception.

Eggen and Kauchak (2001) gave cognitive dimension of perception; they saw perception as the process by which people attached meaning to experiences. They explained that after people attended to certain stimuli in their sensory memories, processing continued with perception. Perception was critical because it influenced the information that entered working memory. Background knowledge in the form of schemas affected perception and subsequent learning.

Moreover, Wells et al. (1995) indicated that perceptions were formed by three effects. The first were the physical characteristics of the motivation. The second was the relation of the incentive to their situations and surroundings within the individual. The last was a reason that made perception a personal characteristic. In short, these effects included learning experiences, attitude, personality, and self image. From the above definitions of perceptions, teachers’ perceptions could be understood as “representations of their understandings of their own professional identity” (Beijaard et al., 1999). Teachers’ perceptions of their own professional identity influenced their efficacy as well as their aptitude and readiness to deal with educational change and to apply inventions in their own teaching practice. Armor and Bandura defined teacher efficacy perceptions as teachers’ beliefs about their own effects on the achievement and learning of students who were particularly hard to motivate (cited in: Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, 2001). In order to develop teacher efficacy, Bandura (1982) supposed that teachers might have faith in their behaviors which had an effect on the education of their students. They needed to believe that

they had the power and ability to make key decisions which affected their position and students' achievement. There were many researchers and policy analysts asserted that teacher self-efficacy was a critical component in the restructuring of schooling and that there was a lack of clarity regarding role expectations and aspirations of teachers regarding decision making, which resulted in a lack of general and personal self-efficacy in the workplace. Bandura (1977) also defined teacher self-efficacy as a cognitive motivational construct that involved two components, outcome expectancy and self-efficacy. Outcome expectancy involved the belief that an individual held regarding the specific results accruing from a particular action, whereas self-efficacy pertained to beliefs regarding personal competence to affect or execute a given task. Bandura (1982) posited that even when individuals perceived that specific actions would likely bring about the desired behavior, they did not engage in the behavior or persist after initiating the behavior, if they felt that they did not possess the requisite skills. It was a true puzzlement, when, in fact, teachers performed all of these functions and many more prior to the current move toward differentiation of positions resultant from the press for reform and standardization of roles, curriculum and assessment. Besides, research conducted by Ashton and Webb (1986) indicated that the motivation of teachers could be greatly increased by increased emotional rewards that teachers indicated so satisfying yet so infrequent in the current system. At the center of these rewards were shared decision making and the opportunity for a real voice in schooling.

Atkinson et al (1993) also stated that perception was the process of putting sensation together with percept of objects, and using these perceptions to perceive the world.

Similarly, Hubley (1993, cited in Dhan, 2007) explained that as soon as people paid attention to a message, they tried to understand it and the process of understanding was called perception.

In addition, Flora et al. (2003, cited in Hardre et al, 2008) stated that teachers' perceptions of external and systemic factors which were conditions outside of the teacher's control that might influence teachers' practice and students' incentive and attainments could powerfully affect and limit the options they thought they had been available, and the strategies that they used.

## 2.3 Concepts and Definitions of Professional Development

According to Berniz, K (2007), professional development was explained as the requirements of employment, the methods to attain skills, and the skills to accomplish your job. It was also in regard to teacher's self learning through transferring understandings and resources.

Speck, M. & Knipe, C. (2005) mentioned professional development as skills and knowledge achieved for both personal progression and career development. Professional development included all kinds of learning potentials, extending from college degrees to formal coursework, seminars, conferences and informal learning approaches put in practice.

In 2001, the English government issued its strategy for professional development and it was defined as any activity that improved knowledge, understanding, skills, and their effectiveness in schools. (DfEE, 2001, p.3)

Guskey (2000) defined professional development as the processes and activities designed to develop educators' professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills, from that they could enhance student learning. True professional development was a purposeful process, directed by an obvious vision of purpose and planned objectives.

The term "Professional development" from American Federation of Teachers was referred to a permanent process of personal and joint examination and advancement of practice. It should authorize educators to make complex decisions; to detect and resolve problems; and to link up practice, theory, and student outcomes. Lecturers should be facilitated to offer students the learning opportunities that would prepare them to meet world-class standards and to effectively take on adult responsibilities for work and citizenship.

To be effective professional development, American Federation of Teachers (2002) postulated that we needed the chance to be connected with ideas and colleagues as part of the normal workday; clear and reliable supports; chances to share proficiency as counsellors, experts, and teacher leaders; specialized recognition; and financial rewards.

The Department of Education, State of Vermont, Germany noted that if professional development wanted to get high quality, it was necessary to improve

educators’ knowledge, skills, standpoints and beliefs so that they might facilitate all students to learn at high levels. The most effective professional development in expanding educator practice was “results-oriented, data driven, constructivist in nature and job embedded”. The power of quality professional development was improving educators’ knowledge and teaching skills; changing what educators considered student learning and the way they interacted with students.

Professional Development was also clarified by Health Professions and Prelaw Center (HPPLC), Indiana University as the process of developing the skills and characteristics required for success to a qualified program, a career professional, and most significantly, success in your own maturity and experience.

Hereafter are the four dimensions of professional development that HPPLC mentioned:



**Figure 2.3 The Four Dimensions of Professional Development**

Source: <http://www.hpplc.indiana.edu/pd/>, cited May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007

**Activities.** There are some activities concerned in our professionalized self, such as:

- *Internship.* Doing internship early with professional people can help you determine whether a given job is the best choice or whether you need to keep on exploring different fields.

- *Volunteer work.* This is an important professional development plan. It is one of the best ways to upgrade your professional skills.
- *Networking.* Everyone should build up connections with anyone who is professionals.
- *Participating in Events, Clubs, and Organizations.* To become a more qualified, skilful person, we should participate in any activity by which you can get experiences.
- *Keep a Professional Development Journal.* Information from a professional development journal will help us get more knowledge and experiences in your career.

**Skill Development.** Cognitive skills and practical skills are two kinds that employers always need their employees to develop.

Cognitive skills: reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities; creative problem solving, time management skills; leadership skills...

Practical skills: computing skills; communication skills; organizational skills, foreign language skills; leadership development and networking skills...

**Professionalism.** The term “professionalism” is used to represent the attitudes, actions, etiquette, ethical development, civic engagement, and social responsibility that are necessary for you to learn to perform yourself like a professional.

**Personal Development.** To expand our knowledge and help us to become a mature, experienced, moral person, “personal development” need to be carried out by undertaking activities (reading newspaper, magazine, or different news sources; attending academic, cultural events; and so on that makes you a more worldly wise person) and fulfil responsibilities which are considered as accomplishing at least part of our lifelong educational process.

From the above concepts of professional development, it can be concluded that professional development is explained as a process which is continuous during your career. It is the achievement, maintenance, upgrading and expanding of knowledge, understanding, skills, and the improvement of your own qualities needed to fulfil professional tasks through your working life.

## **2.4 Theories relating to Professional Development**

There are many theories which are related to the concept of professional development. The researcher presents some that will be referred to build up the conceptual framework for this study.

### **2.4.1 Need-based theories:**

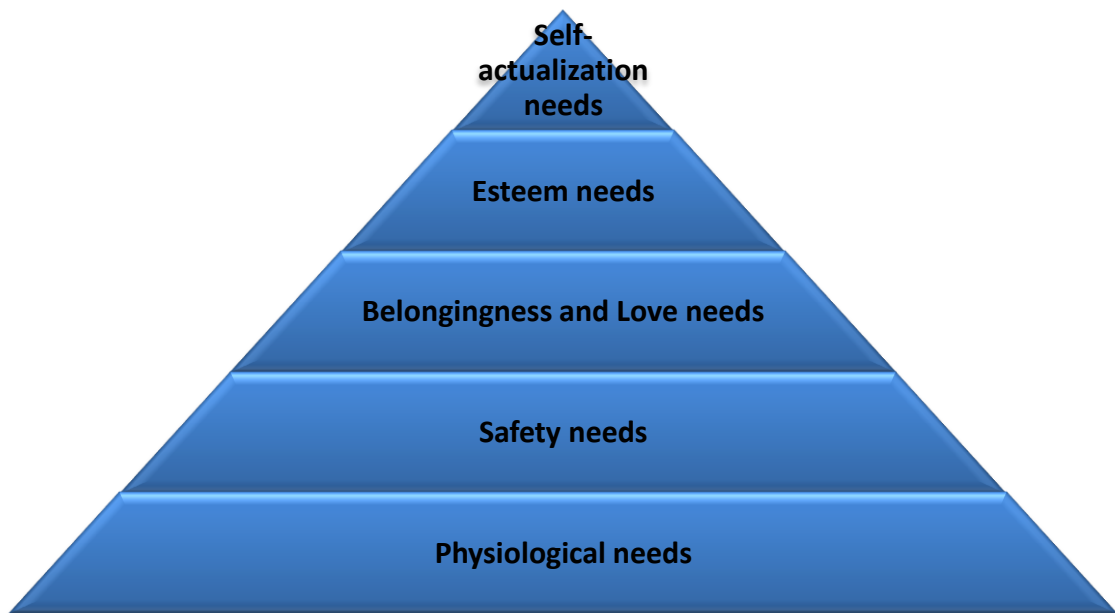
In professional development process, human need is the most important stage. People themselves must be in need of change and have to perceive it positively. The lecturer has to recognize and understand the need to develop professionally. From that, they will realize their motivation to achieve new knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc.

The need-based theories clarify motivation primarily as a intrinsic phenomenon. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor theories, and McClelland's theory of needs are the presentatives of need-based theories that we need to mention in this research.

#### **2.4.1.1 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

The Hierarchy of Needs model was constructed by Abraham Maslow in 1940-50's and it was still valid nowadays for personal development, administration training, and human motivation. This theory was related to the responsibility of employers who offered a place of work and working environment that supported employees to accomplish their own capabilities.

Abraham Maslow's (1954: 80, 82, cited in Le N.V.Y, 2008) need-based theory of motivation mentioned about human needs. Maslow supposed that people always had needs and their behaviours were originated from that. Once human needs were satisfied, it would be no longer their motivation. People were motivated by the needs that were not responded. Human needs were step by step from the lowest level to the higher ones. According to this theory, people had five fundamental needs that were shown as 5 levels below:



**Figure 2.4 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Level 1: The physiological needs refer to the desire for basic necessities of life such as: air, food, drink, shelter, sleep, warmth, sex, etc.

Level 2: The safety needs refer to the desire for protection against threats and unsafe work conditions such as: stability, limits, law, order, security, etc.

Level 3: The belongingness and love needs refer to the desire for to be loved and wanted in group such as: family, affection, relationships, work group, etc.

Level 4: The esteem needs refer to the desire for status, recognition, achievement, and confidence such as: achievement, dominance, self-esteem, mastery, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.

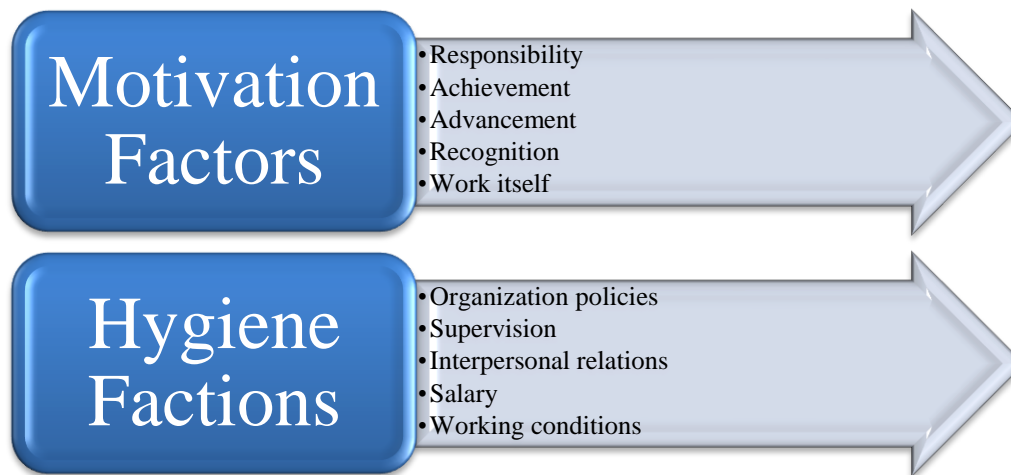
Level 5: The self-actualization needs refer to full potentials, self-development, and the pinnacle of one's calling such as: personal growth, peak experiences, self-fulfilment, realising personal potential.

In short, Maslow's hierarchy of need stated that after the basic needs were satisfied, people would concern with the higher levels of needs. For that reason, leaders who understood and supported their employees' needs would motivate them to work more effectively and efficiently. Conversely, if employees' needs were

not responded, they would no longer concentrate to their work and the efficiency in their work did not exist.

### 2.4.1.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

In 1959, with two colleagues Bernard Mausner and Barbara Bloch Snyderman, Frederick Herzberg established his motivation theory in the workplace. He interviewed 200 employees to find out what the factors made them satisfied and dissatisfied with their job. After collecting and analysing the data, Herzberg developed his theory and supposed that there were two factors related to satisfaction and dissatisfaction as follow:



**Figure 2.5 Herzberg et al., Two-factor Theory**

The motivation factors were considered as a base for possibility of personal growth and motivated the employees to perform their job more efficiently.

**Responsibility.** Employees are given more freedom and authority to carry out their job. They satisfy with their task assignment, responsibility, and their rights without tense control or strict supervision.

**Achievement.** Employers need to set up attainable goals and standards for each position and ensure their employees understand these. From that, individuals can prevent problems, know how to solve problems, have a feeling of success when they fulfil their responsibility.

**Advancement.** Employees should be given a promotion or a new title that indicates the level of work they have completed. Employers should also give opportunities to them for further education to fulfil their tasks more effectively.

**Recognition.** Everyone wants to be recognized for their attainment from supervisors, colleagues or anyone in their workplace. The recognition may be in form of admiration, publicly appreciation, a kind note of praise, or a bonus if it is worthy.

**Work itself.** Helping employees understand and believe their tasks are important and meaningful is an essential way that employers should do. From that, employees will have motivation and be interested in their work with the challenging and innovatory ideas.

The hygiene factors, according to Herzberg, could not satisfy an employee but they could reduce dissatisfaction. They maintained work motivation of an employee all the time and helped the employees work well in an environment of satisfaction.

**Organization policies.** Employers need to ensure their policies are clear and fair to decrease dissatisfaction in an organization.

**Supervision.** The ability and leadership skills of the supervisor are needed in management to treat employees well and fairly.

**Interpersonal relations.** In any relationship, teamwork and good understanding among subordinates, colleagues, and supervisor are an important part of satisfaction in working.

**Salary.** Salaries, bonuses, or promotions need to be clearly and fairly. They will effect on an individual's satisfaction.

**Working conditions.** The environment of the workplace effects on the one's satisfaction in working. Employers should improve tools, facilities, and surroundings in advanced.

In short, basing on this theory, if the employers want to motivate their employees fulfil their tasks, the above factors have to be employed to satisfy the employees' needs in the organization.

### 2.4.1.3 McClelland's Theory of Needs

David McClelland's needs-based motivational model was also approved in many organizations. McClelland mentioned that there were three types of motivational need as follow:

- **Achievement motivation:** People try to search for achievement, accomplishment of realistic through challenges and progression in their job. They need feedbacks to progress and a need for a sense of fulfilment.

- **Authority motivation:** People produce a need to be powerful, efficient and to make an influence. They need a strong requirement to head and for their ideas to succeed. There is also need and stimulus towards enhancing personal standing and esteem.

- **Affiliation motivation:** People have a need for good and open relationships and are encouraged towards communication with others. They need to be similar and believed in widespread affection. They are team workers.

It does not say that one person cannot have all three types of needs. People may have the affiliation need at the same time they have the authority need. Although this seems conflicting, there are illustrations where both needs can be satisfied. As well, timing may signify various strengths of needs at different moments. Thus, while people feel the need to affiliate when they are lonely, they may sense the strong need for authority at another time when commanded to manage an affair. Needs may occur and be adjusted out of a variation of circumstances.

In fact, there was a relationship among three theories mentioned above. David McClelland's needs-based motivational theory was related closely to the theory of Herzberg while the concept of Herzberg's Two-factor theory was similar and had close relation with the concept of Maslow's need-based theory because it was developed from the Maslow's theory for wider application.

**Table 2.1 The relationship among three Need-based theories.**

<b>Need-based theories</b>		
<b>Maslow</b>	<b>Herzberg</b>	<b>McClelland</b>
<p><b>High Level Needs</b>                      - Self-Actualization Needs                      - Esteem Needs</p>	<p><b>Motivation Factor</b>                      - Responsibility                      - Achievement                      - Advancement                      - Recognition                      - Work itself</p>	<p><b>Achievement motivation</b></p>
<p><b>Low Level Needs</b>                      - Belongingness and Love Needs                      - Safety Needs                      - Physiological Needs</p>	<p><b>Hygiene Factor</b>                      - Organization policies                      - Supervision                      - Interpersonal relations                      - Salary                      - Working conditions</p>	<p><b>Authority motivation</b></p> <p><b>Affiliation motivation</b></p>

For the lecturer professional development, through the need-based theories, the motivation of the organization is very necessary to the advancement of lecturers’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes. To encourage lecturers to improve and fulfil their work, leaders have to understand lecturers’ needs and take notice of the development of lecturers by offering the supports such as promotions, fringe benefits, rewards, further study chances, etc.

**2.4.2 Adult Learning Theory**

The definition of learning should be find out first. Conner M.L. (1997) defined learning as the process, or experience of achieving knowledge or skills. Learning helped people progress from trainees to specialists and allows us to obtain new awareness and capabilities. Learning also gave a boost to people’s mind by creating a new way and enlarging relations that everyone could base on when they wanted to learn more.

In the 2008 Midwest Academy of Management Meeting, Mencl presented adult learning theory from Malcolm Knowles. To this theorist, adults had different learning needs and likes compared to a child-based educational methodology. Adults, in particular, they wanted to get knowledge and experiences in some meaningful way, and directly they wanted to apply what they learned to solve problems or address needs.

Gadbow (2003) mentioned about Malcolm Knowles' theory, which was the best known of the adult learning theories, and his "six learner-centered guidelines for the education of adults" as follows:







1. Adults must be aware of the necessary of learning before start learning.
2. Adults identify the responsibility of their decisions and their own lives.
3. Adults go through educational experience with different level from youths.
4. Adults study things easily what they have to know and use in order to handle their real-life situations in effect.
5. Adults are the center in their directions to learning.
6. Adults are quick to respond external motivators (such as: higher position, higher salaries, promotions, etc.) while the most effective motivators are internal demands (such as: quality of life, job satisfaction, self-esteem, etc.).

According to Nicholson (1997), there were five key adult learning principles in general:

1. The trainee admits the information given built on evidence, not blind belief. They need to be ensured that the information they have got is credible and related to the real-life situations.
2. The adult learner is dynamic rather than apathetic. During the learning process, they give ideas, thinking, and their own experiences to the subjects.
3. The trainee's education and experience levels are different, so their needs are not the same but must be responded. Through discussions, the instructor has to provide a helpful learning experience, even for the most experienced individual.
4. The trainees conduct a self-evaluation of their understanding as learning advancement and see how their knowledge relates to the real-world.

5. Effective teaching methodologies must be used to support adult learning. They will give chances to adult learners to cooperate or act together and create a good and effective learning environment.

The chart below adapted from Itner & Douds (1997) would make clear and maximized the impact of training by using adult learning theory and was translated into some practices we could use.

<b>Translating Theory Into Practice</b>		
<b>Theory</b>	<b>Into</b>	<b>Practice</b>
Adults remember 10% of what they hear, 65% of what they hear and see and 80% of what they hear, see and do.		To increase retention, provide both auditory and visual stimulation and allow for practice.
The greater the degree of job relevance to the individual, the greater is the degree of learning.		Provide examples that are directly job related; allow practice in job-like conditions.
Adults need to be able to integrate new ideas into what they already know if they are going to be able to retain the information.		Capitalize on the experiences of the audience to build new concepts; structure lessons to move from the known to the unknown.
Adults prefer self-directed and self-faced instruction to group learning led by an instructor.		If the training is done in a group led by the instructor, build in independent activities; consider trainee-focused approaches to training.
Adults bring a great deal of experience to training.		Capitalize on the experiences by facilitating discussions.
Integration of new knowledge and skills on the job requires application on the job.		Build in follow-up activities or action plans to be used on the job.

**Figure 2.6 Translating Adult Learning Theory into Practice**

Source: [http://www.nomolos.org/trdv500/frame\\_p.html](http://www.nomolos.org/trdv500/frame_p.html), cited 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009

With adult learning theory, Speck (1996) also propounded some significant points to design the professional development activities for educators, as follow:

- It is essential for adult learners to realize that there is a relation between the professional development learning and their daily activities.
- Because adults have the self-esteem, professional development should be constituted to decrease the anxiety of assessment and to provide help from colleagues.
- Adults want to structure their own learning in active and will oppose the activities that they think are a confrontation of their capability. Hence, professional development should offer participants self-controls over “the what, who, how, why, when and where of their learning”.
- When the objectives and the goals of learning are practical and necessary to professional needs and the real-life, adults will be content to learn.
- Specific experiences that adult learner can apply to their real work are very important.
- Adults want to get feedback on what they have tried to do and how they have done. Professional development activities should give chances to the learner to practice what they learn and to collect constructive feedback.
- Adults approach learning with different levels of interests, abilities, knowledge, experiences, and self-direction. This wide range should be considered in the planning of professional development.
- During the learning, small-group activities are needed to enable adult learners to transform their knowledge into synthesis, analysis, evaluation, and application. Small-group activities are also help learners have chances to “share, reflect, and generalize their learning experiences”.
- It is not automatic for the transfer of adult learning but should be eased. Training and continuous supports are necessary for adult learners to move learning to practice, so that it will be maintained.

Here, lecturers were inferred from adults who had the background and the experiences of educational practice. Lecturers were knowledgeable, competent adult

learners, and they contributed their wide range of experiences to the professional development programs that had an effect on how and what they learned.

Good education requires high-quality educators. To construct a better education system, skilful lecturers were very essential to work in that environment. If lecturers were trained with a good pedagogy built on the firm foundation of updated and valuable knowledge, they would be the originators of lasting change organizations. In short, a team of qualified teachers played an important role in constructing the high-quality education system. (“Teacher Education for 21<sup>st</sup>. Century: Problems and Prospects”, 1998, cited by Dorji, 2007).

In sum, adult learning theory was built upon the idea that adults were only learned well when they could use their experiences from their real life for their learning. Learning was considered as a process to upgrade knowledge, skills and aptitude. To attain the effective learning, adults needed to have the required knowledge and capability on which to develop, to recognize the “value added” of new learning, and to have belief in their talent to master new knowledge and skills.

This study was based on the adult learning theories above to find out the needs of professional development in teaching career. Since lecturers were the crucial component in the university, they had to teach and research to achieve new and updated knowledge, skills in order to accomplish their tasks efficiently and effectively.

### **2.4.3 Continuing Professional Development**

Meggison & Whitaker (2003) defined continuous professional development (CPD) as a process that individuals acquired their own knowledge and development by connecting action and reflection. This process was stimulating and empowering and could encourage people to attain their desires and pursue their aspirations.

The core concepts of CPD were also presented by David & Vivien as follow:

1. From the learner’s aspiration, CPD was started but was in control by the learner.
2. CPD was considered as a “holistic process” and could get balance in all aspects of life.

3. CPD was effective when we had the encouragement and financial support from our employers, even though they were apathetic.

4. CPD helped us achieve our goals and orientated in work and learning.

Auldeen (2000) explained that CPD was a term generally used to indicate the process of the continuous education and advancement of professionals. Auldeen summarised the dimensions and expectations of CPD as the following:

- CPD was a process rather than a product.
- It was systematic and lifelong throughout professional life.
- It embraced formal education and informal learning, including on-the-job learning.
- CPD was built upon what is known, in order to:
  - + Assure competence
  - + Develop personal qualities
  - + Enhance professional and technical skills
  - + Maintain, enhance and broaden professional knowledge
  - + Expand and help fulfil potential
  - + Have a positive impact on outcomes
  - + Maintain quality and relevance of professional services
  - + Develop and enhance practice
  - + Prepare for changing roles in service delivery (Auldeen, 2000, p.3)

Therefore, CPD was not only related to the individual, but also to the organization and the quality of present and future professional performance.

Hereafter was the process of CPD that was described by Auldeen:

- Assessing need
- Defining the goals
- Planning to attain the goals
- Implementing the plan
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the process
- Reviewing need and redefining the plan. (Auldeen, 2000, p.7)

According to the latest definition of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – UK (CIPD), continuing professional development (CPD) was the synthesis of ideas, techniques, and approaches that would support people manage their

own learning and growth. The most important thing of CPD was on results which were the benefits that CPD could bring for us in the real life. Whatever we wanted to attain or our position now, CPD was very necessary to our career.

CIPD explained that CPD was not a fixed process although we thought that was the certain basic processes. Primarily, it was an inquiry of determining aims for our development and following our progress to achieve our goals. "Our approach is based on reflection that focuses on outcomes and results, rather than 'time spent' or 'things done'". (Source: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/cpd/aboutcpd/whatiscpd.htm>, cited 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009)

Benefits for individual and organization that were brought from CPD were also noted by CIPD, as follow:

#### **Individual**

- With confidence and reliability, we can realize our development by tracing our learning.
- We can earn more by our achievements. That is the tool to evaluate our success.
- We attain our goals by concentrating on our training and progression.
- We can deal with change positively by continuously updating our knowledge.
- We will be more proficient and productive by manifesting our learning and emphasizing gaps in our experience and knowledge.

#### **Organization**

- CPD helps maximise staff possibility by connecting theory to practice and learning to action.
- It helps to set SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) goals for human resource professionals; to be more strongly connect training activity to business needs.
- It encourages staff improvement, motivates workforce, and raises staff morale to create a good image to organizations.
- CPD helps staff to apply what they learn to their responsibility and the development of the organization.

- Assessment was linked to CPD to create a good tool to help staff focus their accomplishments during their working time.

In general, CPD could be understood and recognized, in relation to education, as the term which describes a devotion to construct skills development and individual or professional capability. It meant that lecturers had to undertake any activity that maintained, expanded, and developed knowledge and skills in their subject speciality to affect students learning positively. CPD helped lecturers bring updated concepts, skills, and methods to the classroom. Lecturers with the enthusiasm for learning would improve student's understanding and impact on their attainments.

#### **2.4.4 Human Resource Development**

Swanson (2009) described human resource development (HRD) as a process of unleashing and upgrading proficiency for the objective of developing organizational system, team, individual, and work process performance. In organization, HRD efforts often accompanied with the activities of training and development, performance improvement, career management, organization development, leadership development, organizational learning, etc. It was useful to consider HRD as "a process open to engaging different people at different times and located in different places inside and outside the host organization." (Swanson, 2009: 5)

To Werner (2009), HRD could be defined as a series of planned and systematic activities. The organization designed those activities to give the opportunities to its members, so that they could learn required skills to meet present and future job needs. When an employee started their work in an organization, HRD activities should be deployed at the beginning and continued during their job, regardless of any position they are.

Following from system theory, Jon M. Werner (2009) developed four-step process to describe HRD efforts, as follows:

**Step 1: Needs assessment.** Identifying needs concerned assessing an organization, its environment, job tasks, and employee performance.

**Step 2: Designing activities,** such as:

- Selecting the specific objectives of the program

- Building up a suitable plan for the program
- Finding the related materials for the trainees
- Selecting the best methods to conduct the program
- Scheduling the program.

**Step 3: Implementation.** Using the most suitable methods to implement effective HRD program, such as: resolving problems; creating good learning environment; and performing the program as planned.

**Step 4: Evaluation.** Giving information on the reaction of participants, how much they learned, whether they applied what they learned to their job or improved the effectiveness of the organization.

From the original human resource wheel of McLagan (1989, cited in Werner, 2009), there were three primary HRD functions:

**1. Training and Development.** This was about amending and developing the individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

**2. Organization Development.** This was defined as a process of improving the organization's effectiveness and the individuals' happiness through planned programs.

**3. Career Development.** This was a continuous process which was related to a series of issues, themes, and tasks for individuals' progression.

Sims (2006) also defined HRD as "strategically-driven activities designed to improve current and future organizational learning, performance and change". (Sims, 2006: 2)

Good (2004) noted that HRD was the term that described a holistic and integrated method to adjust behaviour and knowledge, apply a range of learning skills and approaches. From that, organizations, teams, individuals would realize their full aptitude to develop effectiveness within specific situations.

Moreover, Samaksamosorn (2005) said most organizations believed that the qualified employees were the key to the organization's success so that the goal of HRD was to motivate employees to maximize and improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet the organization's requirements.

Through the concepts of some experts, we can see that HRD is very important in individual development, career development, and organizational

development. In the context of education, HRD can be understood as a process for helping academic staff attain and upgrade their knowledge, skills, and attitudes at all level to increase the effectiveness of the organization. HRD gives proper personality, self-confidence, and good values to lecturers. In any organization, HRD must be conduct constantly to help academic staff accomplish their tasks in effectiveness and make their working behaviour progress for the success of themselves and their organization as well.

## **2.5 Related Researches on Professional Development**

In the study of the needs for professional development of academic staff, Erisen et al. (2008) noted that the universities played the pioneer role in the change and development of countries and their academic staff should accomplish the tasks in effectiveness in order to realize this purpose. The academic staff needed to be trained and improve their professional in such field as: preparing an international project, international communication and cooperation, the skills of research, foreign language, using technology, writing an international article, and the process of quality at education.

Starkey et al. (2008) affirmed that by various ways, teacher professional development strengthened systems change, new knowledge, and ongoing skill development. It was also a function of the specific stage of the reform in education. There was a positive relationship between lecturer professional development and professional satisfaction. Other positives features of lecturer professional development were facilitator expertise, networking, and personalized learning. From that, we could see professional learning was very important to implement the change of an organization.

Besides, Mushayikwa et al. (2008) identified self-direction as a potential key to the process of lecturer professional development. Two major themes of self-directed professional development were professional efficacy and classroom efficacy. Professional efficacy meant the ability to relate efficiently within the teaching profession, and classroom efficacy means the ability to teach effectively. Mushayikwa et al. also identified seven factors affected lecturers in self-directed professional

development, such as: their perceived professional identify, their need to improve subject content knowledge, their need for networking, their need for career development, the need to obtain more skills and practical knowledge for the subject, the need to integrate and adapt materials so as to teach for understanding, and the perceived benefits which they got from satisfying these needs. These factors were grouped in professional efficacy and classroom efficacy. Therefore, it was concluded that lecturer efficacy was the fundamental and essential force that powered self-directed professional development.

Studying the impact of professional development on teacher efficacy practice, Buczynski (2007) revealed that while some lecturers were transferring what they gained in professional development to their classrooms, others met barriers to applying professional development. These barriers were classroom management issues, language learning, authorized curriculum pacing, time constraints, and limited resources. Buczynski stated that a priority in professional development reform was needed in strategies to moderate these barriers in order to enlarge the impact of professional development. This researcher also suggested some various means to verify actual gains of lecturer knowledge that was needed in professional development reform, such as: “some process of determining the lecturers’ ability to translate their own content knowledge into appropriate concept understanding for students, a measure of correct content usage in the classroom, and a waiting period before the post-test assessment of content knowledge”.

In the professional development of lecturers, collaborative and friendly working condition was necessary in which “colleagues” was one of important factors. Parka et al. (2007) represented that lecturers learned more from each other. They tended to care, help, and cooperate with their colleagues. Communication among lecturers was a good way to further lecturer professional development. Through discussion with their colleagues about the interests or teaching difficulties, lecturers’ practices would be reflected and they had various perspectives. Hence, strategies that developed collaborative networks and interactions among lecturers in a good working condition needed to be integrated into lecturer professional development.

While studying the antecedents of lecturer satisfaction with professional development, Nira (2006) found that teachers who had a positive attitude towards their

job were connected with the individual tendency to professionally develop. For many teachers, on-the-job training processes supported them to keep their teaching techniques and professional knowledge updated. Therefore, if lecturers participated in supervisory processes with their willingness and they satisfied with these processes, they would gain new knowledge and skills that would enhance their professional performance and benefit students and the organizations they serve.

Moreover, many researchers found that the factors of age, gender, marital status, and years working were also affected lecturer professional development. Glenn, Taylor & Weaver (1977, cited in Dorji, 2007) explored that age was positively related to career development. Employees became more responsible with their job when they grew older because they were received the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as income, prestige, autonomy and authority on the job. Then, Cook (1979, cited in Dorji 2007) found that gender was also related to lecturers' career development. In his study, female teachers had higher motivation and morale in development than male teachers. Next, it was also found that marital status was related to the motivation of career development. Thao (2006) noted there were differences among single, married, and others. The single one would have more available time than the others for researching. About the years working, Fraser et al. (1998, cited in Dorji, 2007) found that teachers with longer service were less satisfied with working and teaching. People who attained knowledge and more experience because of their long time working would be motivated to develop their career for the higher position.

In the research of the lecturers' opinions on professional development, Yen (2008) found that the higher commitment lecturers had the more differences opinions on professional development in teaching and working environment. Meyer and Allen (1991, cited in Yen, 2008) explained organizational commitment as "the staff's relationship in the organization and intention for the decision to continue membership in the organization". Employees who had positive feeling committed towards the organization would bring beneficial effects to the organization.

In addition, to the study on managing solutions to enhance teaching quality, Hang (2003) mentioned that the different faculty field motivated lecturers improve their teaching quality in different ways because the subjects and the benefit of every faculty were not similar and equal.

Furthermore, Nopparat Arayathanakul (2007, cited in Yen, 2008), who studied the relationship between personal factors, motivation with work satisfaction, also found that personal factors such as age, rank, salary, education, and work experience were positively related to motivation for job development. The motivation that might estimate work satisfaction of employees was motivation in duty assignment, responsibility, further study, getting a respect from colleagues, communication system, welfare, work accomplishment, etc.

In general, quality and professional lecturers made the difference in student achievement. Without “standard-driven professional development” (Gallimore & Stigler, 2002; Hiebert et al.), high quality teaching couldn't be existed and maintained. Consequently, administrators and lecturers should be updated the shape of quality professional development training. They required open conversations, a better understanding of professional development standards and self-assessments among faculty provide that needed for change and improvement (Mathews et al., 2004).

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

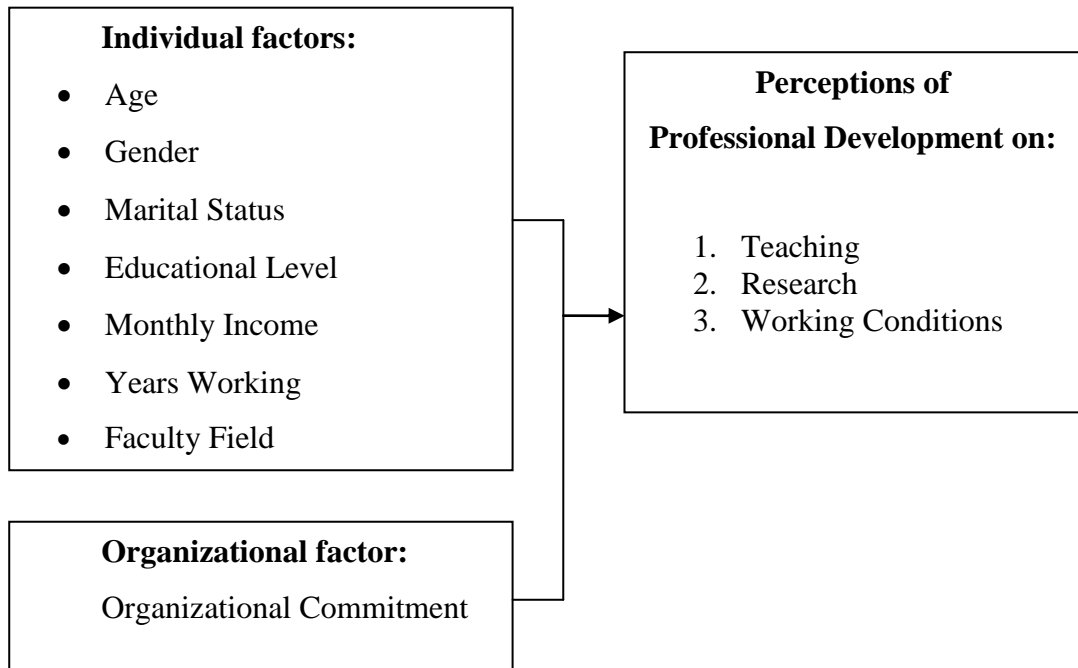
The conceptual framework was built on the research objectives and literature review of the study, especially the actual situation of USSH through the mission, vision, and function. The variables in this framework were from different theories and related researches on professional development.

Since this study focused on lecturers only, the data would be homogeneous in the same background, so that not all factors or variables discussed above were used. The most common and relevant variables from the literature review would be classified as follow:

1. Independent variables are age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, years working, faculty field, and organizational commitment.
2. Dependent variables are the perceptions of professional development on teaching, research and working conditions.

**Independent variables**

**Dependent variables**



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study focused on lecturers' perceptions towards professional development and the differences between their perceptions regarding to age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, years working, faculty field, and commitment in the USSH – Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City. The procedure of this study will be presented as follows:

#### 3.1 Research Design

#### 3.2 Population and Sample

#### 3.3 Research Instruments

##### 3.3.1 Data collection instruments

##### 3.3.2 Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

#### 3.4 Data Collection

#### 3.5 Data Analysis

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study was conducted by using the mixed method. The researcher used a descriptive survey – designed method and interviewed directly some of the Heads of Faculties to gain deeper understanding on the lecturers' perceptions or suggestions towards professional development in the USSH.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

#### 3.2.1 Population

This study was carried out in the USSH – VNU-HCMC. The population of this study was the total number of lecturers in the USSH. According to the report to VNU-HCMC in October 2009, there are 470 lecturers in the USSH.

#### 3.2.2 Sample

Since the total population in this study was less than 500, the researcher determined the random sample size by using the table derived from Krejcie and Morgan (1970). As a result, the amount of sample would be totally 214 lecturers in the USSH.

#### 3.2.3 Sampling method

The researcher used systematic and random sampling to have sample in each of faculties/ departments. The total number of lecturers in the general sample was divided by the desired number of lecturers for the sample population. The result of the division served as the marker for selecting sample lecturers from within the general sample. It was showed as follows:

**Table 3.1 Numbers of Research Population and Sample**

No	Faculties/ Departments	Number of lecturers	Number of sample
1	Faculty of Philosophy	30	14
2	Faculty of History	42	19
3	Faculty of Geography	35	16
4	Faculty of Oriental Studies	31	15
5	Faculty of Sociology	20	9
6	Faculty of Education	17	8
7	Faculty of Vietnamese Studies	22	10
8	Faculty of Literature and Linguistics	40	18
9	Faculty of Library and Information Science	12	5

**Table 3.1 Numbers of Research Population and Sample (Cont.)**

No	Faculties/ Departments	Number of lecturers	Number of Sample
10	Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature	48	22
11	Faculty of French Linguistics and Literature	13	6
12	Faculty of Chinese Linguistics and Literature	20	9
13	Faculty of German Linguistics and Literature	12	5
14	Faculty of Russian Linguistics and Literature	15	7
15	Faculty of Culturology	15	7
16	Faculty of International Relations	18	8
17	Faculty of Anthropology	16	7
18	Faculty of Journalism and Communication	16	7
19	Department of Urban Studies	9	4
20	Department of Social Work	14	6
21	Department of Physical Education	12	6
22	Department of Psychology	10	5
23	Department of Italian Linguistics and Literature	3	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	470	<b>214</b>

### 3.2.4 Selection of interviewees

The interviewees of this study were the Heads of Faculties and Departments who were also lecturers and representatives of lecturers in their faculty. There were 23 persons but only half of them were randomly selected through drawing lots. The researcher collected data from 10 out of 12 persons who were included in the sample.

## 3.3 Research Instruments

### 3.3.1 Data collection instruments

As the researcher mentioned above, this study was divided into two sets, as follows:

**Set I** was a survey questionnaire, consisting of four parts:

**Part 1:** General information, such as: age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, years working, faculty field.

**Part 2:** Organizational commitment.

5-point Likert Scale was used to measure organizational commitment of the lecturers in the USSH. Each item was scored from 1 to 5. The high score signified the high commitment and vice versa. There were 3 negative statements (statement number 4, 5, and 6) in this part and they would be inverted before summing with the positive statements.

**Table 3.2 Measurement Scales of Organizational Commitment level**

Commitment level	Positive score	Negative score
Strongly Disagree	1	5
Disagree	2	4
Undecided	3	3
Agree	4	2
Strongly Agree	5	1

**Part 3:** Perceptions towards three aspects of professional development (teaching, research, and working conditions).

Lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development were also measured by 5-point Likert Scale. Each item was scored from 1 to 5. High scores on the scale represented the high degree of agreement of lecturers’ perceptions. The scores on the negative items were inverted before summing with the positive items.

**Table 3.3 Measurement Scales of Lecturers’ perception level**

Lecturers’ perception level	Positive score	Negative score
Strongly Disagree	1	5
Disagree	2	4
Undecided	3	3
Agree	4	2
Strongly Agree	5	1

In the part of lecturers’ perceptions, there were 4 negative statements (statement number 8, 14, 29, and 42).

There was three-level value of lecturers' perceptions towards three aspects of professional development (teaching, research, and working conditions) and organizational commitment. It was classified from Best criteria (John, W. Best, 1981) as follow:

$$\frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest score}}{\text{Number of levels}} = \frac{5 - 1}{3} = 1.33$$

**Table 3.4 Criteria for understanding the mean of perception level**

Mean Score	Level of Perception towards PD
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.67	Moderate
3.68 – 5.00	High

**Part 4:** Two open-ended questions were designed to gain the respondents' opinions or suggestions towards professional development.

**Set II** was an interview questionnaire, consisting of 6 questions to understand deeply their perceptions towards professional development. Besides, this method provided an opportunity for the researcher to observe the informants more closely and obtained deeper details.

The data collected from the interview questionnaire was analyzed by content analysis. According to Dr. Klaus Krippendorff (1980 and 2004), content analysis was a methodology used in communication content. The contents were categorized and classified for building up deductions. After that, the researcher summarized and interpreted the data.

### **3.3.2 Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire**

#### **Reliability**

The descriptive survey questionnaire was pretested with 30 lecturers in the USSH to determine the reliability. These above lecturers were excluded from the sample group. The researcher analyzed the reliability value by using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients.

$$\alpha = \frac{n}{n-1} \left\{ \frac{1 - \sum s_i^2}{s_t^2} \right\}$$

- Where,  $\alpha$  is coefficient of reliability  
 n is number of questions in the questionnaire  
 $s_i^2$  is the sum of variance of each item  
 $s_t^2$  is variation of the questionnaire

The table below showed the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficients for the questionnaires. It was measured and listed as follows:

**Table 3.5 The value of Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients**

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient
Organizational commitment	0.76
Teaching	0.81
Research	0.78
Working conditions	0.74
Total	0.77

The interview questionnaire was built up from the literature review and documentation. The researcher tested the reliability in various items by interviewing some academic staffs who were not the Heads of Faculties in order to test the interview’s timing, the difficulty of the questionnaire, so that the researcher adjusted the questionnaire in a reasonable order.

**Validity**

The validity of the questionnaire was improved and corrected by consulting with thesis advisors. In addition, the researcher translated the questionnaires into Vietnamese and had the USSH’s Rector check the content before distributing it to the sample group.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

After meeting with the approval of the USSH's Rector, the researcher made appointments with the Heads of each faculty to introduce and explained the objectives of the study. Then, the survey questionnaires were distributed to lecturers and collected after that by the help of secretaries in faculties. The researcher also attached the explanation letter to the questionnaires to give lecturers details of the study's purposes. There was one week for lecturers responding the questionnaires. The researcher got back the filled up questionnaires from the secretaries.

After collecting all of survey questionnaires, the researcher conducted the interviews with 12 random Heads of faculties. While interviewing, the researcher used a notebook and a recorder to collect data in more details. The interview environment was friendly and cooperative.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the survey questionnaires was checked, grouped and analyzed by means of Statistical Software Package under the following methods:

3.5.1 Descriptive statistic that was used to classify and analyze the independent and dependent variables were frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviation.

3.5.2 One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to analyze the data to compare the significant differences among factors affecting professional development. The researcher used the confidence level of 0.05 to test the hypotheses.

3.5.3 Post hoc test with LSD (Least Significant Deviation) was done to find out which variables had the statistical significant difference on teaching, research, working conditions and overall professional development.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

This study aimed to find out the perception levels towards professional development of the lecturers in the USSH and to compare the differences in their perceptions by personal factors and organizational commitment. The researcher collected data by using survey questionnaires and interviewing. A total number of respondents were 214 including 10 interviewees. The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results will be presented as follows:

4.1 Personal and organizational factors of the sample

4.2 Lecturers' perceptions towards three aspects of professional development (teaching, research, and working conditions)

4.3 Comparisons of the lecturers' perception towards professional development based on their personal and organizational factors.

4.4 Opinions and suggestions of the lecturers in the USSH towards professional development.

4.5 Analysis of the interviews

### 4.1 Personal and organizational factors of the sample

Using descriptive statistics to analyze the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, the personal factor of the respondents were shown as follows:

**Table 4.1 Frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by their personal factor**

(n = 214)

General information	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age:</b>		
≤ 30 years	76	35.5
31 – 40 years	74	34.6
Over 40 years	64	29.9
$\bar{X}$ = 36.40, S.D = 10.26, Max = 63, Min = 24		
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	81	37.9
Female	133	62.1
<b>Marital Status:</b>		
Single/ Separated/ Divorced/ Widowed	74	34.6
Married	140	65.4
<b>Educational Level:</b>		
Bachelor’s degree	48	22.4
Master’s degree	123	57.5
Doctoral degree	43	20.1
<b>Monthly Income:</b>		
≤ 200 USD	118	55.1
Over 200 USD	96	44.9

**Table 4.1 Frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by their personal factor (cont.)**

(n = 214)

General information	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Years working:</b>		
1 – 10 years	130	60.8
Over 10 years	84	39.2
$\bar{X} = 11.64$ , S.D= 9.61, Max= 39, Min= 1		
<b>Faculty Field:</b>		
Social Sciences	164	76.6
Humanities	50	23.4

The total number of respondents was 214 persons, the minimum age was 24 and the maximum age was 63 with the mean score of 36.40 and standard deviation of 10.267. The rate of respondents between the age group less than or equal 30 years old and 31 – 40 years old was nearly similar (35.5% and 34.6%, respectively). The rest of the age group which was calculated 29.9% belongs to the group over 40.

The data indicated that the majority of lecturers were females with 62.1% and male respondents were 37.9%. Most of respondents (65.4%) were married, while the other group (single/ separated/ divorced/ widowed) was 34.6%.

The findings showed that 20.1% of lecturers got doctoral degree, 57.5% got master’s degree, and the rest was bachelor’s degree with 22.4%. The table 4.1 also presented that the respondents who had monthly income around 200 USD made up 55.1%, while 44.9% of them got more than 200 USD per month.

Most of them (60.8%) worked in the USSH from 1 to 10 years. The group of 11 – 20 years was 21%, while 18.2% of the respondents worked in the USSH for over 20 years. Besides, the data also specified that most of respondents (76.6%) were working in the field of social sciences, and 23.4% were working in the field of humanities.

**Table 4.2 Frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by their organizational factor in regard to Commitment level**

(n = 214)

Commitment Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	3	1.4
Moderate	75	35.0
High	136	63.6

*Notes: Commitment level score (1.00 – 2.33 = Low; 2.34 – 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 – 5.00 = High)*

Table 4.2 showed that more than half of lecturers had high commitment at 63.6%, while 35% lecturers were shown as moderate commitment. Only 1.4% of them had low commitment.

Table 4.3 below represents 10 statements which were used to determine the level of commitment of lecturers in the USSH.

**Table 4.3 Mean, standard deviation and level of commitment**

(n = 214)

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Commitment
1. The USSH has a standardized contract to commit lecturers teaching here.	3.77	1.08	High
2. Salary and promotion affect lecturers' commitment.	4.11	0.98	High
3. Further learning promotes lecturers to commit working here.	3.93	0.95	High
4. I think my job with the USSH is impermanent. (reversed)	4.04	0.86	High
5. I will change another job after I get Master or Doctoral Degree. (reversed)	4.05	0.85	High
6. I don't feel "responsibility" in my job at the USSH. (reversed)	4.32	0.99	High
7. The USSH deserves my loyalty.	3.31	0.91	Moderate

**Table 4.3 Mean, standard deviation and level of commitment (cont.)**

(n = 214)

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Commitment
8. I am content to work as a lecturer at the USSH.	3.39	0.95	Moderate
9. I am proud to be a lecturer at the USSH.	3.64	0.80	Moderate
10. I am happy to spend the rest of my career with the USSH.	3.74	0.87	High
<b>Overall Commitment</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>High</b>

*Note: Commitment level score (1.00 – 2.33 = Low; 2.34 – 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 – 5.00 = High)*

The findings proved that overall level of commitment was high with the mean score of 3.82 and standard deviation of 0.51. The statement which got the highest level of commitment was the responsibility in working with the mean score of 4.32 and the statement which got the lowest level was the loyalty with the mean score of 3.31.

#### **4.2 Lecturer’s perceptions towards three aspects of Professional Development (teaching, research, and working conditions)**

The table 4.4 summarized the overall perception level towards professional development on three aspects: **Teaching** ( $\bar{X}$  = 4.10), **Research** ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.96), and **Working conditions** ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.94).

**Table 4.4 Overall perception level towards Professional Development (Teaching, Research, and Working conditions)**

(n = 214)

Overall Professional Development	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Perception towards PD
1. Teaching	4.10	0.39	High
2. Research	3.96	0.39	High
3. Working conditions	3.94	0.34	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>High</b>

Note: 1.00 – 2.33 = Low; 2.34 – 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 – 5.00 = High

The results indicated that the overall perception of the respondents was at the **high level** with the average mean score of 4.00 and standard deviation of 0.33. The difference of mean scores among three aspects was very less.

#### 4.2.1 Perception levels towards Professional Development regarding Teaching

Table 4.5 presents the frequency statistics of fifteen statements and the level of perception towards PD on teaching aspect. The result showed that the perception regarding teaching was at high level with the mean score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 0.39. The statement “*Further study is very essential to teaching profession*” is the highest level with the mean score of 4.63, while the statement “*Knowledge gained from seminars is not much applicable to teaching skills (reversed)*” is the lowest level with the mean score of 3.25.

**Table 4.5 Mean, standard deviation and perception levels on teaching**

(n = 214)

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Perception towards PD
1. The USSH encourages lecturers to pursue their higher degree.	4.24	0.71	High
2. The USSH supports lecturers financially to study further in their fields.	4.62	0.57	High
3. Further study is very essential to teaching profession.	4.63	0.53	High

**Table 4.5 Mean, standard deviation and perception levels on teaching (Cont.)**

(n = 214)

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Perception towards PD
4. Self-development is important for teaching.	4.60	0.59	High
5. Seminars/ workshops among lecturers and specialists are regular conducted as a tool to improve teaching quality.	4.24	0.68	High
6. Presentation at conference or seminar will improve teaching skills	4.05	0.84	High
7. Lecturers participate in seminar or observe classes in order to exchange their teaching experiences.	4.15	0.69	High
8. Knowledge gained from seminars is not much applicable to teaching skills. (reversed)	3.25	0.96	Moderate
9. Short courses in pedagogical skills are essential.	3.98	0.72	High
10. Cooperation learning and team culture are needed for teaching skill development	3.92	0.75	High
11. Communication skill is very necessary to teaching profession.	4.29	0.65	High
12. Foreign language proficiency and computer skills are necessary to teaching skill.	4.21	0.68	High
13. Students performance and students result reflect the degree of teaching professional.	3.41	1.03	Moderate
14. Networking is irrelevant to teaching profession. (reversed)	3.56	0.97	Moderate
15. Well equipped facility and technical aids support to teaching job.	4.33	0.60	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>High</b>

*Note: 1.00 – 2.33 = Low; 2.34 – 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 – 5.00 = High*

#### **4.2.2 Perception levels towards Professional Development regarding Research**

Table 4.6 shows the frequency statistics of fourteen statements and the level of perception towards PD on research aspect. The result indicated that the overall level of perception was in high level with the mean score of 4.01. The statement “*Research will enhance lecturers’ knowledge, skills and abilities*” topped the list with the mean score of 4.45, while the statement “*Sometimes, scientific seminars or*

*workshops are not particularly useful for lecturers (reversed)*” bottomed the list with the mean score of 2.64.

**Table 4.6 Mean, standard deviation and perception levels on research**

(n = 214)

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Perception towards PD
16. The USSH provides opportunities for research.	3.52	0.88	Moderate
17. Publishing journals or doing scientific research projects is encouraged periodically.	4.09	0.59	High
18. The USSH supplies budget or funds sufficiently for lecturers to conduct researches.	4.37	0.66	High
19. Individual interest and self-learning motivate lecturers to take on research.	4.29	0.62	High
20. Research will enhance lecturers' knowledge, skills and abilities.	4.45	0.51	High
21. Academic research is obligated to conduct periodically.	3.44	0.99	Moderate
22. The outcome of the research is considered as one of criteria for the process of professional development.	3.88	0.73	High
23. Working on researches with the experienced lecturers or specialists is needed.	4.29	0.53	High
24. Accessing the latest academic journal, researches, articles, and updated documents is essential for conducting researches.	4.33	0.56	High
25. Foreign language proficiency and computer skills are necessary to do research.	4.40	0.54	High
26. Attending meetings of research evaluation is needed to enhance knowledge, skills, and experiences.	3.84	0.68	High
27. Research findings should be presented in a seminar or a conference.	3.95	0.59	High
28. Exchanging experiences in research with other faculty members is needed.	4.05	0.58	High
29. Sometimes, scientific seminars or workshops are not particularly useful for lecturers. (reversed)	2.64	1.00	Moderate
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>High</b>

*Note: 1.00 – 2.33 = Low; 2.34 – 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 – 5.00 = High*

### 4.2.3 Perception levels towards Professional Development regarding Working conditions

The frequency statistics of thirteen statements and the level of perception towards PD on working conditions aspect were shown in the table 4.7. The result presented that the total level of perception of lecturers was at the high level with the mean score of 3.94. Among these statements of Working conditions, the statement “*Modern equipments and updated materials are provided to support teaching and research conducting*” had the highest mean score of 4.51 and the statement “*Lecturers satisfy with the fringe benefits and salary*” had the lowest mean score of 2.21.

**Table 4.7 Mean, standard deviation and perception levels on working conditions (n = 214)**

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Perception towards PD
30. The university’s culture motivates lecturers in teaching and research.	3.65	0.91	Moderate
31. Colleagues need to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences.	4.08	0.58	High
32. Lecturers need to be able to work in groups and be a good team player.	3.92	0.69	High
33. Communication skill is one way to further lecturer professional development.	4.07	0.76	High
34. Modern equipments and updated materials are provided to support teaching and research conducting.	4.51	0.51	High
35. The USSH offers friendly and comfortable condition.	4.43	0.59	High
36. Salary and fringe benefits motivate lecturer professional development.	4.49	0.64	High
37. Lecturers satisfy with the fringe benefits and salary.	2.21	0.91	Low
38. Health examination is held annually in the USSH and is beneficial to lecturers.	4.07	0.72	High
39. Lecturers need a health insurance regime.	4.44	0.55	High
40. Social insurance regime is necessary to lecturers.	4.48	0.52	High
41. An award regarding lecturer professional development should be acknowledged by the USSH.	4.30	0.68	High

**Table 4.7 Mean, standard deviation and perception levels on working conditions (Cont.)**

(n = 214)

Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Level of Perception towards PD
42. Continuing professional development makes lecturers working under pressure and stress. (reversed)	2.60	0.94	Moderate
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>High</b>

*Note: 1.00 – 2.33 = Low; 2.34 – 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 – 5.00 = High*

### **4.3 Comparisons of the lecturers' perception towards professional development based on their personal and organizational factors.**

#### **4.3.1 Difference in age and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development**

The findings proved that the overall professional development shown in the table 4.8 was identified by age group. It demonstrated there were statistically significant difference among the age groups with regard to teaching, research, working conditions and overall professional development. Analyzing the means of age groups with the overall professional development, the group less than or equal 30 years old had the lowest perception level with the mean score of 3.94. Therefore, the hypothesis that “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of age*” was accepted. Then, the post hoc test was done to find out which age group had the statistical significant difference on teaching, research, working conditions, and overall professional development as well. (showed in Table 4.9)

**Table 4.8 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their age group**

(n = 214)

Professional Development (PD)	Age group						F	p-value
	≤ 30		31 – 40		Over 40			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	4.01	0.30	4.08	0.44	4.21	0.41	4.509	0.012*
Research	3.89	0.26	3.90	0.45	4.13	0.39	8.594	<0.001*
Working conditions	3.91	0.30	3.88	0.34	4.04	0.36	4.506	0.012*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>7.220</b>	<b>0.001*</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 4.9 Post hoc test for age group significant differences**

(n = 214)

	$\bar{X}$	≤ 30	31 – 40	Over 40
<b>Teaching</b>				
≤ 30	4.01			*
31 – 40	4.08			
Over 40	4.21	*		
<b>Research</b>				
≤ 30	3.89			*
31 – 40	3.90			*
Over 40	3.88	*	*	
<b>Working conditions</b>				
≤ 30	3.91			*
31 – 40	3.88			*
Over 40	4.04	*	*	
<b>Overall Professional Development</b>				
≤ 30	3.94			*
31 – 40	3.95			*
Over 40	4.13	*	*	

\* Significant at 0.05 level

The post hoc test above showed that:

- In the aspect of teaching, the age group of ≤ 30 years old was different from the group over 40 years old because its perception level was lower.

- In the aspect of research, the age group of  $\leq 30$  with higher perception level was different from the group of over 40 and the age group of 31 – 40 was also different from the group of over 40 because its perception level was higher.

- In the aspect of working conditions, the age group of  $\leq 30$  and 31 – 40 with lower perception levels were different from the group of over 40.

- In the overall professional development, the group of  $\leq 30$  and 31 – 40 years old were different from the group of over 40 years old because of their lower perception levels.

#### 4.3.2 Difference in gender and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development

Table 4.10 also indicated that with the p-value 0.048 ( $p < 0.05$ ) for overall professional development, there was statistically significant difference while comparing the effect of gender on perceptions towards professional development regarding research, and working conditions but not teaching. The result presented that male lecturers had the perception level higher than female in research and working conditions. In overall, male with the mean score of 4.06 had higher level of perceptions than female lecturers with the mean score of 3.96. Hence, the hypothesis that “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of gender*” was accepted.

**Table 4.10 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their gender**

(n =214)

Professional Development	Gender				t	p-value
	Male		Female			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	4.13	0.48	4.07	0.33	1.074	0.284
Research	4.03	0.45	3.92	0.34	1.986	0.048*
Working conditions	4.00	0.36	3.90	0.32	2.217	0.028*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>1.987</b>	<b>0.048*</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

### 4.3.3 Difference in marital status and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development

As presented in the table 4.11, the overall professional development was at high level in both groups, such as the group of single/ separated/ divorced/ widowed with the mean score of 3.98, the group of married with the mean score of 4.01. From the result, the t-value 0.639 for overall professional development showed that there was no statistically significant difference among the marital status groups. Thus, the hypothesis “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of marital status*” was rejected.

**Table 4.11 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their marital status**

(n = 214)

Professional Development	Marital Status				t	p-value
	Single/ Separated/ Divorced/ Widowed		Married			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	4.05	0.46	4.12	0.35	-1.108	0.269
Research	3.93	0.41	3.98	0.37	-1.008	0.314
Working conditions	3.97	0.33	3.92	0.34	1.073	0.285
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>-0.470</b>	<b>0.639</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

### 4.3.4 Difference in education level and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development

There were three groups in the factor of education level, the table 4.12 showed the high level of the overall professional development perceptions of lecturers in the USSH. The lecturers holding bachelor’s degree and master’s degree had the same perception level with the mean score of 3.96. The highest perception level belongs to the lecturers holding doctoral degree with the mean score of 4.15. The finding revealed that there was statistically significant difference among groups of

education level with regard to teaching, research, working conditions, and overall professional development. Hence, the hypothesis “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of education level*” was accepted. In addition, post hoc test was conducted to identify which group had the statistical significant difference. (showed in Table 4.13)

**Table 4.12 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their educational level**

(n = 214)

Professional Development	Educational Level						F	p-value
	Bachelor		Master		Doctor			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	3.99	0.37	4.09	0.41	4.21	0.34	3.443	0.034*
Research	3.95	0.30	3.89	0.41	4.17	0.33	8.725	<0.001*
Working conditions	3.92	0.30	3.89	0.35	4.08	0.32	4.947	0.008*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>6.309</b>	<b>0.002*</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 4.13 Post hoc test for significant differences of education level groups**

(n = 214)

	$\bar{X}$	Bachelor’s Degree	Master’s Degree	Doctoral Degree
<b>Teaching</b>				
Bachelor’s Degree	3.99			*
Master’s Degree	4.09			
Doctoral Degree	4.21	*		
<b>Research</b>				
Bachelor’s Degree	3.95			*
Master’s Degree	3.89			*
Doctoral Degree	4.17	*	*	
<b>Working conditions</b>				
Bachelor’s Degree	3.92			*
Master’s Degree	3.89			*
Doctoral Degree	4.08	*	*	

**Table 4.13 Post hoc test for significant differences of education level groups (Cont.)**

(n = 214)

	$\bar{X}$	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
<b>Overall Professional Development</b>				
Bachelor's Degree	3.96			*
Master's Degree	3.96			*
Doctoral Degree	4.15	*	*	

\* Significant at 0.05 level

The table 4.13 above showed that:

- In the aspect of teaching, the group of bachelor's degree was different from the group of doctoral degree because of its lower perception level.
- In the aspect of research, the group of bachelor and master's degree with lower perception levels were different from the group of doctoral degree.
- In the aspect of working conditions, both of the bachelor's degree group and the master's degree group were different from the group of doctoral degree because of their lower perception level.
- In the overall professional development, the group of doctoral degree with higher perception level was different from the bachelor's and master's degree.

**4.3.5 Difference in monthly income and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development**

Monthly income was classified into two groups of less than or equal 200 USD and over 200 USD. The table 4.14 showed that the overall professional development was at the high level for both groups with the mean scores of 3.97 (group of  $\leq 200$  USD) and 4.04 (group of over 200 USD) respectively. The result indicated that there was only statistically significant difference on research, whereas there was no statistically significant difference on overall professional development by monthly income. Thus, the hypothesis “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of monthly income*” was rejected.

**Table 4.14 Comparison of lecturers' perceptions towards professional development based on their monthly income****(n = 214)**

Professional Development	Monthly Income				t	p-value
	≤ 200 USD		Over 200 USD			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	4.08	0.35	4.12	0.44	-0.667	0.506
Research	3.91	0.35	4.03	0.42	-2.318	0.021*
Working conditions	3.91	0.31	3.97	0.37	-1.111	0.268
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>-1.565</b>	<b>0.119</b>

\* *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

#### **4.3.6 Difference in years working and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development**

The table 4.15 illustrated that the longer lecturers work in the USSH the higher level of the overall professional development perceptions they had. To compare with the lecturers who were in the group of 1 – 10 years, the lecturers in the group of over 10 years had the higher perception level with the mean score of 4.08. The findings proved that there were statistically significant differences on two aspects of research and working conditions, and overall professional development as well. Therefore, the hypothesis “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of years working*” was accepted.

**Table 4.15 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their years working**

(n = 214)

Professional Development	Years working				t	p-value
	1 – 10 years		Over 10 years			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	4.06	0.31	4.15	0.49	-1.671	0.096
Research	3.88	0.31	4.08	0.46	-3.737	<0.001*
Working conditions	3.89	0.30	4.01	0.38	-2.601	0.010*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>-3.051</b>	<b>0.003*</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

**4.3.7 Difference in faculty field and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development**

Table 4.16 presented the overall professional development was at high level in both of groups. The mean score of social sciences group is 4.00 and 3.99 is the mean score of humanities group. Also, from this table, the p-value 0.806 for overall professional development illustrated that there was no statistically significant difference between these two groups. Hence, the hypothesis “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of faculty field*” was rejected.

**Table 4.16 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their faculty field**

(n = 214)

Professional Development	Faculty Field				t	p-value
	Social Sciences		Humanities			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D	$\bar{X}$	S.D		
Teaching	4.11	0.40	4.05	0.38	1.001	0.318
Research	3.96	0.38	3.97	0.42	-0.137	0.891
Working conditions	3.93	0.33	3.95	0.36	-0.291	0.771
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>0.246</b>	<b>0.806</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

### 4.3.8 Difference in organizational commitment and its effects on the level of perceptions towards Professional Development

The table 4.17 below presented that the higher commitment lecturers had the higher perception level towards professional development they obtained. The lecturers who had low commitment in their job got the lowest perception level with the mean score of 3.76. The highest mean score 4.07 belongs to the group had the high commitment. From the result, the p-value <0.001 verified that there was statistically significant difference on the overall professional development perception of lecturers in the USSH by their commitment level. Consequently, the hypothesis “*Professional development in teaching, research, and working conditions was affected by the factor of organizational commitment*” was accepted. Subsequently, post hoc test was used to identify which pairs of commitment level had the statistical significant difference. The data in the table 4.18 explained that the group of moderate commitment was different from the group of high commitment in all of three aspects (teaching, research, and working conditions). It also concluded that there was a significant difference between the group of moderate commitment and the group of high commitment in the overall professional development.

**Table 4.17 Comparison of lecturers’ perceptions towards professional development based on their organizational commitment**

(n = 214)

Professional Development	Commitment						F	p-value
	Low		Moderate		High			
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
Teaching	4.00	0.23	3.99	0.40	4.15	0.38	4.050	0.019*
Research	3.64	0.00	3.83	0.39	4.04	0.37	9.117	<0.001*
Working conditions	3.66	0.48	3.80	0.35	4.02	0.30	11.704	<0.001*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>10.235</b>	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 4.18 Post hoc test for commitment significant differences**

(n = 214)

	$\bar{X}$	Low commitment	Moderate commitment	High commitment
<b>Teaching</b>				
Low commitment	4.00			
Moderate commitment	3.99			*
High commitment	4.15		*	
<b>Research</b>				
Low commitment	3.64			
Moderate commitment	3.83			*
High commitment	4.04		*	
<b>Working conditions</b>				
Low commitment	3.66			
Moderate commitment	3.80			*
High commitment	4.02		*	
<b>Overall Professional Development</b>				
Low commitment	3.76			
Moderate commitment	3.87			*
High commitment	4.07		*	

\* Significant at 0.05 level

### 4.3.9 Summary of the research results

In summary, from the above results, table 4.19 presented that there were statistically significant differences with the perception levels towards professional development among the lecturers who were different age, gender, education level, years working, and commitment level; while marital status, monthly income, and faculty field were not found to be statistically significant on the level of perceptions towards professional development.

**Table 4.19 Summary of the research results**

No	Hypotheses	Result
1	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their age.	<b>Accept</b>
2	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their gender.	<b>Accept</b>

**Table 4.19 Summary of the research results (Cont.)**

<b>No</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Result</b>
3	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their marital status.	Reject
4	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their educational level.	<b>Accept</b>
5	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their monthly income.	Reject
6	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their years working.	<b>Accept</b>
7	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their faculty field.	Reject
8	Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development have statistically significant differences by their commitment.	<b>Accept</b>

#### **4.4 Opinions and suggestions of the lecturers in the USSH towards professional development**

There were 87 respondents out of 214 respondents (40.6%) answered two open-ended questions.

**Question 1: In your opinion, which aspect of professional development (teaching, research, working conditions) is the most important? Why?**

To the respondents, the most important aspect in professional development was Research (38 respondents), the second was Working conditions (29 respondents), and the last one was Teaching (20 respondents).

Research was the most choice because the USSH was known as one of the two largest education and research institutions in the field of social sciences in Vietnam. The respondents explained that doing significant scientific projects, they would have chances to enhance their knowledge, develop their skills and update the

latest information. From research findings, lecturers would get experiences, scientific theories and the realities of awareness to instruct and orient their students in studying and doing research with high quality.

The next choice was working conditions. The lecturers agreed that their profession would be developed if they worked in the professional environment. With the good condition, it would bring changes to all aspects in professional development. If the USSH's Board of Management were good at their administration, established sound policies (especially salary and fringe benefits), and created advantageous, friendly working conditions, lecturers would pay all attention to their work. In addition, considerations and encouragements from the USSH's Board of Management (giving scholarship, chances for further study) would highly motivate lecturers in teaching and research conducting.

Some respondents selected Teaching as the most important aspect because of their love and interest in teaching profession. The fundamental function of the university is teaching, imparting knowledge to students. Good skills in teaching would motivate students' performance and their higher quality.

**Question 2: What should the USSH do to develop lecturers' professional regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes?**

These were some suggestions that the researcher summarized:

1. The USSH should construct more reasonable strategies and policies. The regulation should be democratic and explicit. The functions and the tasks of each faculty and office should be instructed clearly and done in process. Rewards and penalties need to be specified in teaching and research.

2. Salary, fringe benefits, and expenses for research or a business trip (at home or abroad) should be considered and increased reasonably. Lecturers will concentrate on their job and professional development with the sufficient living expenses.

3. The USSH should create specialist groups, good conditions, and give more time for research. It will be easier for lecturers to study and exchange experiences together.

4. Long-term or short-term professional training courses should be organized periodically. The USSH should invite foreign experts from many countries

to present in conferences or seminars. Lecturers will enhance and exchange knowledge together.

5. Library in the USSH should update the newest books and latest international journal to diversify information for lecturers in research. Internet quality needs to be improved. Classrooms have to be equipped with all modern conveniences.

6. The USSH should finance and give more chances to lecturers attending training courses and field trips (local or overseas).

7. International cooperation should be strengthened. The exchanged programs of teaching and research must be motivated. The USSH need to create good conditions for foreign specialist coming and working at faculties in a certain time (3 or 6 months).

8. The USSH's Board of Management shouldn't pressure lecturers to develop their profession. It will discomfort lecturers' psychology and result in failure of their continuing professional development.

## **4.5 Analysis of the interviews**

There were 10 interviewees out of 12 interviewees (83.3%), which less than expected, joined the interviews.

### **4.5.1 Professional development program in the USSH**

According to the interview with lecturers, the majority of them agreed that the USSH had the professional development (PD) programs. Some of them even thought that there were many programs which were professional development, such as: English proficiency programs, Computer skills, Pedagogical skills, Graduate programs, and scholarship. However, the majority of them could not remember how often the professional development programs were organized or how long they will be held. Three of them believed that the most important activity in a PD program is training and knowledge exchange in abroad. Nevertheless, the rest of them supposed diversified knowledge, seminars, awareness of the responsibility with PD is the most important.

Conversely, there were some lecturers thought the USSH had no PD program. All of them came to the agreement that it was very necessary to organize PD programs for lecturers in the USSH. To build an effective PD program, these interviewees assumed that the USSH should:

- have an annual specific plan.
- stipulate clearly the PD regulations for lecturers.
- create good conditions for the lecturers to attend the training course in abroad, especially foreign language or English courses.
- conduct and base on the survey questionnaires for lecturers' opinions and the result of educational testing and training quality assessment at the USSH.

The interviewees responded to professional development aspects that lecturers need to be developed in their profession, they were divided as follows:

1. **Research** and **working conditions** were chosen as the most importance. Through researching, lecturers would apply the latest knowledge into their lesson plan. The USSH is one of two largest research institutes in the field of social sciences and humanities in Vietnam but the quality of the researches is not high and uniform. With working conditions, lecturers believed that modern equipments and updated materials would support them in teaching and doing research. Besides, lecturers' awareness and method of working affected all activities in the university. Moreover, to help lecturers concentrate on their PD, monthly income and fringe benefit should be improved.

2. **Teaching** was selected because interviewees thought that the main function of a university was teaching. In addition, teaching was also considered as an activity of doing research.

#### **4.5.2 The support and encouragement of the faculties and USSH for lecturers in their PD.**

Half of the Heads of faculties supposed that a clear regulation of rewards and penalties was very essential to lecturers. Besides giving more time and encouraging lecturers to develop their professional, the USSH and faculties should force young lecturers have to enhance their knowledge in a definite time.

Three interviewees thought that salary, fringe benefit, and promotion were very necessary to make a motivation for lecturers' professional development. With a good enough living, lecturers would be able to concentrate on their work to develop their careers.

The rest of them believed that decreasing some missions and organizing free courses or supporting finance for training courses would create a good condition for lecturers in professional development.

#### **4.5.3 Training programs should be provided for lecturers**

Most of interviewees (8 interviewees) suggested that the USSH should provide training programs in accordance with field of interests. Training programs provided in the USSH must be varied. Short courses, seminars (with foreign professors), and scholarships for further study abroad were necessary for young lecturers. Internal and external conferences would be suitable for experienced lecturers. Moreover, in accordance with some of faculties, field trips were required for lecturers to update information or new events.

According to other interviewees (2 interviewees), workshops were required for all of lecturers. Workshops could be organized in short time. It was convenient for lecturers who had limited time. From those workshops, lecturers could learn, practice, and exchange their experiences with their colleagues and foreign professors. Moreover, professional groups were very useful for lecturers. All of them could learn, update information, and enhance knowledge in their own field group. Furthermore, they would exchange their experiences and expand the relationships from the different groups.

In addition, all of interviewees thought that training was accredited or not, it was not important. The most importance was the content of the training. It must be practical and realistic.

#### **4.5.4 The benefit of a local network**

All Heads of faculties affirmed the benefit of a local network. Most of interviewees realized a local network would diversify professional knowledge and

helped lecturers exchange understandings together. Besides, doing scientific research would be more advanced and relationships would be expanded.

Moreover, some interviews thought of funds from organizations or associations through teaching or research should encourage lecturers in focusing on their professional development. Moreover, a local network brought the most profits on the domain of learning for students. They would have more chances to connect with knowledge from different professors.

#### **4.5.5 Working conditions**

Half of the interviewees unanimously asserted that lecturers nowadays held many responsibilities concurrently while their major tasks were teaching and doing research. The USSH and the faculties should rearrange and assign the necessary work to lecturers. Moreover, professional officers would support lecturers more in their job. There were three out of five interviewees also talked about the benefits of modern facilities and new academic materials which support teaching and research conducting.

The salary and fringe benefits were also mentioned by some interviewees. It was a motivation for lecturers' professional development. When lecturers satisfied with their living, they will focus more on their job. In addition, communication skills and working time also affected the university's culture. The USSH must help lecturers and officers to be aware of the professional level in their work.

#### **4.5.6 Professional development evaluation**

Most of Heads (9 interviewees) stated that there were many methods to evaluate lecturers' professional development in the USSH. The Board of Management promulgated the regulation about the degrees that young lecturers must get and about the number of journals and researches that all lecturers have to write in a certain time. Additionally, the questionnaires of Subject Evaluation and Course Evaluation distributed to students were also considered as one of reference channels for the Board of Management. Lecturers were obliged to attend their colleagues' classes as observers to evaluate the quality of these classes, and make a report to their Heads. The Heads had rights to assess lecturers' knowledge and skills, and gave their comments to the

Board of Management. In general, the evaluation methods mentioned above were just references for the Board of Management. The USSH did not stipulate clearly about evaluation criteria, strategies, rewards and penalties yet for professional development. Therefore, it was very difficult to follow up lecturers' professional development from the beginning.

#### **4.5.7 Recommendations for lecturer professional development programs**

Recommendations for the School Board of Management to organize effective professional development programs was summarised and listed as follows:

1. The USSH should find out lecturers' needs. Identifying which shortcomings they have to overcome or what aspect lecturers want to develop.
2. It is necessary to make a specific plan for professional development programs. These programs should be scheduled in a certain time and informed to lecturers before some time.
3. The USSH should give rights to faculties to organize professional development programs in activeness. Then, the School Board of Management supports and inspects these activities.
4. Lecturers should be given more time for learning and doing research. Moreover, free courses and financial aid from the USSH will encourage lecturers more in their professional development.
5. The methods and the content of professional development programs must be the best quality, practical, and realistic.
6. The USSH needs to highlighten lecturers' awareness of professional development; therefore remunerative sanction should be clearly.
7. After training, evaluation should be carried out closely. Presentation in front of the academic council was considered as a good way to evaluate lecturers' knowledge and skills.
8. Priority should be given to scholarships for studying abroad or external training.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The objectives of this research were to identify lecturers' perceptions towards professional development in the University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City and to compare the differences in lecturers' perceptions regarding the factors affected professional development. The data were collected from 214 respondents in the USSH.

The findings of this research could be discussed and presented as follows:

5.1 The level of lecturers' perception towards three aspects of professional development (teaching, research, and working conditions)

5.2 Comparisons of the lecturers' perception towards professional development based on their personal and organizational factors.

#### **5.1 Lecturers' perceptions towards professional development**

After analyzing the means of three aspects of professional development, the findings showed that all aspects were at the high level with a little difference in their mean scores. Therefore, the overall professional development perceptions of lecturers were also at the high level with the mean score at 4.00.

Comparing those aspects together, teaching was at the highest level with the mean score at 4.10. The next one was research and the last was working conditions. All of them would be separately discussed as follows:

##### **5.1.1 Teaching**

Among fifteen items, "*Further study is very essential to teaching profession*" was the item topped the list with the mean score at 4.62. This proved that knowledge advancement or continuing professional development was very important in teaching. According to Abraham Maslow's need-based theory of motivation (1954:

80, 82, cited in Le N.V.Y, 2008), further study was considered as self-actualization needs which were referred to self-development. In Herzberg et al (1959), further study named advancement was a motivation factor which would stimulate lecturers by giving chances to them for further education to fulfill their duties more efficiently. This was also mentioned as achievement motivation in McClelland's theory of needs. Further study aimed to progress and lecturers would gain achievements by a need for progression in their job. The finding was consistent with the study of Erisen et al. (2008) about the needs for professional development of academic staff. To Erisen et al. (2008), the academic staff needed to be trained and improve their professional. Mushayikwa et al. (2008) also identified the need to improve subject content knowledge which was one of seven factors affected lecturer efficacy. Generally, further study was the best way to enhance and progress in teaching profession.

However, the item "*Knowledge gained from seminars is not much applicable to teaching skills*" was at the moderate level with the lowest mean score at 3.25. In the interviews with Heads of Faculties, most of them suggested that training programs should be diversified and categorized in accordance with lecturers' fields of interests. Also, according to one of five key adult learning principles of Nicholson (1997), the trainee's education and experience levels were different; their needs were not the same but must be responded. To the interviewees, there were many kinds of training program, not only seminars. That might be the reason why seminars were not considered as an effective kind of training.

### **5.1.2 Research**

In this aspect, the item "*Research will enhance lecturers' knowledge, skills and abilities*" was at the highest level. Here, research could be considered as personalized learning of lecturers. Starkey et al. (2008) affirmed that personalized learning was one of positive features of lecturer professional development. In adult learning theory, Malcolm Knowles (1990) found "six learner-centered guidelines for the education of adults" and one of them pointed to the center position of adults in their directions to learning. They wanted to apply what they learned to solve problems or address needs. Lecturers were active in their learning. They would know what they should do to enhance knowledge, skills and abilities. Besides teaching, research was

one of lecturers' duties in the university. In the first open-ended question of the survey questionnaire, many lecturers in the USSH also regarded research as a channel to enhance their knowledge, develop their skills and update the latest information.

Nevertheless, the item "*Sometimes, scientific seminars or workshops are not particularly useful for lecturers*" was at the moderate level with the lowest mean score at 2.64. With adult learning theory, Speck (1996) said that adults approached learning with different levels of interests, experiences, knowledge, abilities and self-direction. This indication should be considered in the planning of professional development. Moreover, in the open-ended questions and interviews, lecturers and Head of faculties often mentioned about foreign experts, field trips and going abroad. They might be not really satisfied with the content or impartation methods in scientific seminars or workshops. They suggested that the USSH should invite more experts from many foreign countries or finance lecturers for their field trips and training courses. Obviously, lecturers needed more kinds of training which were useful with their fields and needs.

### **5.1.3 Working conditions**

With regard to the working condition aspect, the item "*Modern equipments and updated materials are provided to support teaching and research conducting*" topped the list with the mean score at 4.51. Currently, facilities in Vietnam public universities were still limited and the USSH is in the similar status. Therefore, the lecturers in the USSH thought that it was very essential to invest modern facilities and updated materials in doing research and teaching. Mushayikwa et al. (2008) mentioned about the need to integrate and adapt materials so as to teach for understanding as one of seven factors affected lecturer efficacy. From the open-ended questions, it was found that the library in the USSH should be updated the newest books and latest international journal to diversify information for lecturers in research. Also from the interviews, some Heads pointed out the benefits of modern equipments and updated materials which support teaching and research conducting. Moreover, teaching and doing research were the most important missions, thus the USSH was required to create good working conditions for the lecturers.

Though lecturers' perceptions towards professional development regarding working condition aspect were at the high level, there was still one item at the low level. The lecturers in the USSH did not satisfy with the fringe benefits and salary. According to Herzberg et al (1959), salary and fringe benefits were hygiene factors which would affect on an individual's satisfaction. If lecturers did not satisfy they might feel uncomfortable in their lives. From uncomfortableness, they wouldn't have willingness in their job. In the open-ended questions, lecturers stated that they would pay all attention to their work if the USSH's Board of Management established sound policies, especially salary and fringe benefits. Additionally, in the interviews, some Heads believed that monthly income and fringe benefits improvement would help lecturers concentrate on their professional development. Nira (2006) found that lecturers who have a positive attitude towards their job are connected with the individual tendency to professionally develop. For this reason, whenever salary and fringe benefits were improved, lecturers would feel secure and have a positive attitude towards their professional development.

## **5.2 Comparisons of the lecturers' perception towards professional development based on their personal and organizational factors.**

### **5.2.1 Age**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their age.**

The results showed that the overall professional development of all age groups ( $\leq 30$  years; 31 – 40 years; over 40 years) was found to be at the high level. The findings also confirmed that lecturers' perceptions towards professional development regarding difference in age were statistically significant. After comparing each age group with others, it was seen that the respondents over 40 years old had higher perception level than those between  $\leq 30$  and 40 years old. In other words, the younger lecturers had lower perception level than the older ones. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

The finding was against the research of Schambach (2001) with the reversed result: The oldest the staffs were, the more decline of motivation and

participation they were in professional development activities. On the other hand, the finding supported the preceding research of Yen (2008) and Glenn et al. (1977, cited in Dorji, 2007) on professional development. They found that age was related to career development. Glenn et al. (1977, cited in Dorji, 2007) explained that employees became more responsible with their career when they were older. Yen (2008) thought that through professional development, the older group would get promotion or more income while the younger group just wanted to contribute in the beginning of their profession. In fact, people will get more experiences, skills and knowledge with their growth of age. After working for a long time, old people may be aware of professional development more clearly and deeply. In contrast, younger ones have less experience; they may want to prove their abilities by serving well or being enthusiastic in their work. Thus, the older lecturers in the USSH have the higher perception level than the younger ones.

### **5.2.2 Gender**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their gender.**

The outcome from the analysis for both male and female groups proved that the overall professional development of the male and female lecturers in the USSH was at the high level and there were statistically significant differences on professional development identified by gender. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted.

Although the result was dissimilar to the findings of Cook (1979, cited in Dorji, 2007) who found that females had higher motivation and morale in development than males, it supported the research of Gumus et al. (2009) who explained that women were less likely to perceive and follow professional development activities than men. Actually, both male and female lecturers in the USSH were probable to have equal chances and positions in educational settings. From the opinions of the open-ended questions and interviews, the lecturers in the USSH did not distinguish males from females on professional development. Thus, there was no different perception towards the teaching aspect based on gender. Nevertheless, the significant differences of the rest two aspects might be due to the

fact that women had more work and responsibilities with their family to compare with men. It would affect to their research and working attitudes.

### **5.2.3 Marital status**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their marital status.**

The findings showed that the overall professional development of the lecturers in the USSH was at the high level for both of single/ separated/ divorced/ widowed and married groups. This result revealed that there were no statistically significant differences on professional development based on the lecturers' marital status. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected.

The result was inconsistent with Thao (2006) and Yen (2008) who found the differences between marital status and the level of professional development perception towards teaching. However, it supported their researches about the perceptions towards professional development on research and working conditions with no difference. In the research about job strain development of Vanagas et al. (2004), it was found that the rate of job strain development depended on marital status and married females were most vulnerable to job strain development. Nevertheless, the findings of this research did not support Vanagas et al. findings (2004). The reason could be the fact that all lecturers in the USSH were behaved, encouraged and given benefits fairly, so they had same rights and duties at their work place.

### **5.2.4 Educational level**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their educational level.**

The results affirmed that the overall professional development compared by educational level was at the high level. The findings illustrated there was statistically significant differences on professional development regarding educational level. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

The findings supported the previous researches of Wipawachat (2002) and Dejnozka (1963, cited in Yen, 2008). They found that the higher educational level the higher positive perceptions towards career development motivation. In Herzberg's

Two-Factor theory, higher education level could be considered as the achievement which was a motivation factor. That was a base for personal growth and motivates lecturers to perform their job more effectively. From the finding, the perception level of the lecturers with Doctoral degree was higher than Bachelor's degree and Master's degree. The reason might be due to the lecturers obtaining Doctoral degree were now in the high positions in the university; they had more experiences and were aware that with the professional development in their career they could get more salary, benefits and promotion. In the interview with the Heads of some faculties in the USSH, their suggestion about the appropriate professional development programs for lecturers depending on their ranks also proved that perceptions towards professional development were influenced by education level.

### **5.2.5 Monthly income**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their monthly income.**

The outcome of this study confirmed that the overall professional development identified by their monthly income was at the high level. Though the lecturers with the monthly income less than or equal 200 USD had a bit lower perception level than others who got more than 200 USD, there was still no significant difference on the professional development of the lecturers in the USSH. Thus, the hypothesis regarding monthly income was rejected.

The finding did not support the study of Nopparat (2007, cited in Yen, 2008) who found the positive relationship between salary and motivation for job development. However, it was consistent with Yen (2008) who determined that there was no significant difference monthly income and professional development, except for the research aspect. This might be the same situation and same country. Actually, most of the lecturers in the USSH did not satisfy with their salary and fringe benefits. From the open-ended questions and the interview, lecturers always mentioned about salary and financial support. They believed that lecturers would focus on their career development if they earned their living sufficiently. That was the reason why monthly income of the lecturers in the USSH did not affected their professional development perceptions. However, lecturers would get more income by doing research. It helped

raising their living standards, so there were differences on lecturers' perception towards the research aspect in professional development.

The research finding, in general, was also inconsistent with Maslow's need theory. The researcher had the assumption that the esteem needs of lecturers would be fulfilled when they got higher monthly income. So they would have different perception level about professional development. Nevertheless, monthly income of the lecturers in the USSH was not high enough to affect their perceptions towards professional development.

### **5.2.6 Years working**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their years working.**

The research finding showed that the overall professional development perception of the lecturers in the USSH was at the high level for both groups of 1-10 years and over 10 years. Besides, the results demonstrated there were statistically significant differences on overall professional development perception with regard to research, working conditions. Consequently, the hypothesis was accepted.

This finding confirmed the research of Mekchaidee (2005) that working experience had influence on self-development. This was also consistent with the research of Fraser et al. (1998, cited in Dorji, 2007) who found that people with more experiences because of their long time working would be motivated to enhance their job for the higher position. However, it was in contrast to Yen (2008) who affirmed the difference between years working and the teaching aspect whereas there was no difference between them in this research.

The result indicated that the longer working time the higher perception level lecturers identified. The reason might be due to lecturers gained more experiences with long time working, they would understand which knowledge and skills they must improve to fulfill their job.

### **5.2.7 Faculty field**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their faculty field.**

The result concluded that the overall professional development perception of the lecturers in the USSH was at the high level for all faculty fields. The mean scores of both faculty fields were just a little bit different from each other. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference on professional development perceptions by faculty field. Accordingly, the hypothesis was rejected.

The findings did not support the research of Hang (2003) who mentioned that lecturers would be motivated to enhance their teaching quality when they were in different faculty fields. However, this was consistent with Yen (2008) about the professional development perceptions regarding teaching and research aspects. Although every faculty had different benefits by their popularities, the USSH's lecturers couldn't distinguish which group they belonged to in their faculty. Actually, through the survey questionnaire the researcher realized that some lecturers thought they were in the social science group but some were in the humanity group although they worked in the same faculty. Anyhow, there was no difference in the USSH's policy applied for each faculty field. All of lecturers in the USSH had equal rights and obligations; they understood how much professional development was needed for them. This might be the reason why there was no significant difference on professional development perceptions based on faculty fields.

### **5.2.8 Organizational commitment**

**Hypothesis: Lecturers' perception towards professional development has statistically significant differences based on their commitment.**

The overall professional development perception of the USSH's lecturers was confirmed at the high level after examined by their commitment. It indicated that the higher commitment the lecturers had the higher perception level they obtained in their professional development. Therefore, it was found that there were statistically significant differences on professional development perception regarding commitment. So the hypothesis was accepted.

The outcome of this research was in line with the researcher's assumption that lecturers' perceptions towards professional development were affected by their commitment. It kept up the research's findings of Nira (2006) who found that teachers with a positive attitude towards their career were connected with the individual tendency to professionally develop. Moreover, in the research of Yen (2008), she believed that there was a positive relationship existing between organizational commitment and professional development perceptions regarding teaching and working environment.

In reality, from the observation of data collection process, the researcher realized that lecturers' commitment could be seen as their attitude and behavior in their professional life. Through the open-ended questions and interviews, lecturers with positive attitude always contributed as many useful ideas of professional development as possible. It could be concluded that the higher level of commitment the lecturers in the USSH were the higher level of interest and responsibility in professional development they were aware.

In summary, the hypotheses about the statistically significant differences on the lecturers' perceptions towards professional development based on their age, gender, educational level, years working, and organizational commitment were accepted with p-value  $<0.05$ ; while those identified by the lecturers' marital status, monthly income, and faculty field were rejected.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, the research findings were summarized and organized as follows:

6.1 Conclusions

6.2 Recommendations

#### **6.1 Conclusions**

This research aimed to determine the level of lecturers' perception towards professional development in the USSH and to compare the differences in their perceptions by personal and organizational factors. The researcher meant to find out the statistically significant differences on professional development perceptions regarding personal and organizational factors such as: age, gender, marital status, educational level, monthly income, years working, faculty field, and organizational commitment. The finding of this research was showed in recommendations to provide valuable information to the USSH's Board of Management in planning human resource development activities.

The sample of this research was 214 lecturers. The mixed method was used to collect data. A survey questionnaire and interviews were amended from related researches and documents. Data analysis was conducted by using both descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test and One-way ANOVA) to explore the significant differences on professional development perceptions of the lecturers in the USSH.

The research's findings were presented as follows:

### **6.1.1 Personal and organizational factors of the respondents**

Most of the respondents were between the ages of 24 – 30 years (35.5%) and more than a half were females (62.1%). The majority of them were married lecturers with 65.4%. There were 123 lecturers who got the qualification of Master's degree (57.5%) out of 214 respondents. The lecturers who got monthly income less than or equal 200 USD (55.1%) were more than the ones who got over 200 USD (44.9%). Besides, most of them worked in the USSH from 1 to 10 years (60.8%) and were in the field of social sciences (76.6%). Moreover, the finding showed that more than half of lecturers worked with high commitment level in the USSH (63.6%).

### **6.1.2 Overall perception level towards professional development (Teaching, Research, and Working conditions) in the USSH**

The results indicated that the overall perception towards professional development in the USSH was at the high level. Regarding three aspects of professional development in the research, the results could be showed as follows:

1. Teaching aspect had the highest level of the perception towards professional development with  $\bar{X} = 4.10$
2. Research aspect was the next one at the high level with  $\bar{X} = 3.96$
3. Working condition aspect was also at the high level with  $\bar{X} = 3.94$ , which is the lowest one compared with teaching and research aspects.

### **6.1.3 Comparisons of the lecturers' perception towards professional development based on their personal and organizational factors**

The findings of this research proved that overall professional development perception of the lecturers in the USSH was statistically significant difference regarding their age. In other words, lecturers' perception towards professional development was affected by the age factor.

About gender, this research showed that both female and male lecturers had the same perception level of professional development (at the high level). However, it was indicated that there were statistically significant differences in lecturers' perception towards professional development with regard to research and working conditions based on gender.

In term of marital status, the results indicated that the overall professional development perceptions of the lecturers in the USSH was at the high level and there was no statistically significant difference on professional development perceptions regarding marital status. It was found that there was only a little bit difference among single, married, and separated/ divorced/ widowed group.

The research finding showed that overall professional development perceptions with regard to educational level were at the high level. Although bachelor's degree and master's degree had the same perception level of overall professional development with  $\bar{X} = 3.96$ , there were statistically significant differences found between the groups of doctoral degree and bachelor's degree or master's degree.

With regard to monthly income, the result revealed that overall professional development perception was at the high level. There was no statistically significant difference in the lecturers' perception towards professional development regarding monthly income. However, it was proved that there was statistically significant difference in the lecturers' perception relating to research aspect.

Regarding to years working, the findings showed that overall professional development was also at the high level. It was demonstrated that there were statistically significant differences in the lecturers' perception identified by their years working.

Analyzing the effect of faculty field on lecturers' perception towards professional development, it was found that overall professional development perceptions were at the high level. And there was no statistically significant difference in the lecturers' perception distinguished by their faculty fields.

The results of this research pointed out that organizational commitment was considered as a factor which affected overall professional development perceptions of the lecturers in the USSH. There were statistically significant differences in the lecturers' perception with regard to their commitment level. The higher level of commitment they had with the USSH, the higher level of perception towards professional development they were.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

### **6.2.1 Recommendations from the research findings**

The research findings presented that perceptions towards professional development of the USSH's lecturers was at the high level for all aspects (teaching, research, and working conditions). However, through the open-ended questions and interviews, it was found that professional development in the USSH was not explained as a process and not directed by planned objectives. Consequently, the following suggestions were found to foster professional development tasks in the USSH:

#### **Teaching**

- It was proved that teaching aspect was affected by age, educational level, and organizational commitment; the USSH should pay more attention and maintain a fair policy to administer professional teaching activities.
- A local network and international cooperation should be strengthened to conduct many exchanged programs. It will diversify professional knowledge and the relationships will be expanded. Lecturers will have more chances for studying abroad as well as updating their teaching methods and quality to international standards.

#### **Research**

- Training programs should be diversified and designed practically and suitably for lecturers' fields of interests.
- Rewards and penalties should be defined specifically by the Board of Management to encourage and foster lecturers in research.
- The USSH's library should update the latest books and international journals to diversify information for lecturers in research; create specialist groups; give more time for research. It will help lecturers exchange their research experiences together.

#### **Working conditions**

- The Board of Management was strongly recommended to promulgate more reasonable policies regarding lecturers' salary and fringe benefits to motivate them in professional development

- The USSH should help lecturers understand how the university's working culture affected their working style and professional development. Moreover, remunerative sanction should be clearly to heighten lecturers' awareness of professional development.

Furthermore, through the questionnaires and interviews, it was found that professional development in the USSH was not implemented as a process and not directed by established objectives. Therefore, the Board of Management, firstly, should conduct surveys on lecturers' professional development needs to obtain deeper understandings of their interests and attitudes. Secondly, training programs should be diversified and designed practically and suitably for lecturers' fields of interests. Lastly, criteria and professional standards need to be identified clearly to evaluate lecturers' accomplishment of professional development. In addition, because the USSH's achievements are primarily based on lecturers, they need to be aware of the importance of professional development in their career and their own lives besides earning their living.

### **6.2.2 Recommendations for further studies**

- Although this research was carried out by using the mixed method to collect and analyze data, a qualitative research with in-depth interviews should be conducted to obtain more opinions and understand deeply about professional development in the university.

- There should have a study about the effect of the lecturers' professional development on the students' achievement.

- Professional development was not only for lecturers but also for all staff. The population of this research only focused on lecturers, so it was necessary to have a study about the staff's professional development.

- A research about the relationship between professional development and job satisfaction should be conducted in the future.

- From the research findings, organizational commitment was one of the factors that affected professional development. So as to find out how organizational commitment impacts on professional development, there should have a study on this topic.

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## **APPENDIX**

## **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **PART 1: General information**

*Please fill in the blank and check the box that is the most relevant to you.*

1. Age ..... years

2. Gender:

Male                       Female

3. Marital Status:

single       married       separated/divorced       Widowed

4. Educational Level:

Bachelor's degree       Master's degree       Doctoral degree

5. Monthly income from USSH (salary + fringe benefits + teaching expenses):

≤ 200 USD       > 200 USD

6. Years working experience ----- years

7. Faculty Field:

Social Sciences Field       Humanities Field

**PART 2: Organizational Commitment**

*Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by ticking a number from 1 to 5 using the scale below:*

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Undecided

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The USSH has a standardized contract to commit lecturers teaching here.					
2	Salary and promotion affect lecturers' commitment.					
3	Further learning promotes lecturers to commit working here.					
4	I think my job with the USSH is impermanent.					
5	I will change another job after I get Master or Doctoral Degree.					
6	I don't feel "responsibility" in my job at the USSH					
7	The USSH deserves my loyalty.					
8	I am content to work as a lecturer at the USSH.					
9	I am proud to be a lecturer at the USSH.					
10	I am happy to spend the rest of my career with the USSH.					

**PART3: Perceptions towards three aspects of Professional Development:  
Teaching, Research, and Working conditions.**

*Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by ticking a number from 1 to 5 using the scale below:*

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Undecided

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

**TEACHING**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The USSH encourages lecturers to pursue their higher degree.					
2	The USSH supports lecturers financially to study further in their fields.					
3	Further study is very essential to teaching profession.					
4	Self-development is important for teaching.					
5	Seminars/ workshops among lecturers and specialists are regular conducted as a tool to improve teaching quality.					
6	Presentation at conference or seminar will improve teaching skills					
7	Lecturers participate in seminar or observe classes in order to exchange their teaching experiences.					

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
8	Knowledge gained from seminars is not much applicable to teaching skills.					
9	Short courses in pedagogical skills are essential.					
10	Cooperation learning and team culture are needed for teaching skill development					
11	Communication skill is very necessary to teaching profession.					
12	Foreign language proficiency and computer skills are necessary to teaching skill.					
13	Students performance and students result reflect the degree of teaching professional.					
14	Networking is irrelevant to teaching profession.					
15	Well equipped facility and technical aids support to teaching job.					

**RESEARCH**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
16	The USSH provides opportunities for research.					
17	Publishing journals or doing scientific research projects is encouraged periodically.					
18	The USSH supplies budget or funds sufficiently for lecturers to conduct researches.					

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
19	Individual interest and self-learning motivate lecturers to take on research.					
20	Research will enhance lecturers' knowledge, skills and abilities.					
21	Academic research is obligated to conduct periodically.					
22	The outcome of the research is considered as one of criteria for the process of professional development.					
23	Working on researches with the experienced lecturers or specialists is needed.					
24	Accessing the latest academic journal, researches, articles, and updated documents is essential for conducting researches.					
25	Foreign language proficiency and computer skills are necessary to do research.					
26	Attending meetings of research evaluation is needed to enhance knowledge, skills, and experiences.					
27	Research findings should be presented in a seminar or a conference.					
28	Exchanging experiences in research with other faculty members is needed.					
29	Sometimes, scientific seminars or workshops are not particularly useful for lecturers.					

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
30	The university's culture motivates lecturers in teaching and research.					
31	Colleagues need to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences.					
32	Lecturers need to be able to work in groups and be a good team player.					
33	Communication skill is one way to further lecturer professional development.					
34	Modern equipments and updated materials are provided to support teaching and research conducting.					
35	The USSH offers friendly and comfortable environment.					
36	Salary and fringe benefits motivate lecturer professional development.					
37	Lecturers satisfy with the fringe benefits and salary.					
38	Health examination is held annually in the USSH and is beneficial to lecturers.					
39	Lecturers need a health insurance regime.					
40	Social insurance regime is necessary to lecturers.					
41	An award regarding lecturer professional development should be acknowledged by the USSH.					
42	Continuing professional development makes lecturers working under pressure and stress.					

**PART 4: Opinions and Suggestions**

1. In your opinion, which aspect of professional development (teaching, research, working conditions) is the most important? Why?

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2. What should the USSH do to develop lecturers' professional regarding knowledge, skills, and attitudes?

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## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE ON LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Does the USSH have any professional development program?

If NO, do you think PD programs are needed for our lecturers? And what is the most important aspect we should focus on development (teaching, research, working conditions)? Why? What is your suggestion to build an effective professional development program in the USSH?

If YES, how often does the USSH hold the programs? What is the most important activity in the PD program? In your opinion, what is the most important aspect that lecturers need to develop in their profession? Why?

2. How does the university and faculty support and encourage lecturers to develop their professional?
3. What kind of training program do you think that the faculty should provide for lecturers in order to fulfill their career goals? Why do you think this training might be important? Should training be accredited?
4. How useful do you think a local network of lecturers in specific subject areas might be to the lecturers in the USSH? Please specify in what ways?
5. How professional do you think that working conditions should be? Please specify in what way?
6. How does the USSH evaluate lecturers' professional development? What criteria is the most important? Why?
7. As a Head of Faculty, what is your perception of teacher professional development? What would you recommend to the School Board of Management if they decide to have teacher professional development programs?

## BIOGRAPHY

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