

**ENHANCING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN MULTINATIONAL  
COMPANIES IN THE CONTEXT OF VIETNAM**

By

LE Thi Thanh Phuong

52116602

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## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I, LE Thi Thanh Phuong (Student ID: 52116602), hereby declare that the content of this report is my own original work, and it has neither submitted for diploma at any other university and education institute nor used for any courses. All the information derived from other authors' researches has been cited and acknowledged in references.

LE Thi Thanh Phuong

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, an increasing number of corporations spread out their business world-wide and become multinational companies thanks to the opportunities from the development of globalization. Nonetheless, while employee motivation is very important for the success and the growth of an organization, many multinational companies have not succeeded in satisfying their employee's demands of working motivation and failed to manage the local workforce effectively.

This study provides a general view of employee motivation in multinational companies in Vietnam. The study is carried out by conducting a survey to 308 employees of two multinational companies operating in Vietnam, Yusen Logistics (Vietnam) Co., Ltd and Taihan Cable Vina Co., Ltd. The survey aims to focus on the employee's satisfaction evaluations of (1) salary and compensation, (2) supervisors, communication and relationships, and (3) achievement, recognition and advancement. Based on gathered information from respondents, the results illustrate that in general, the level of employee's satisfaction of motivation in multinational companies in Vietnam at the moment is relatively high. However, it is also shown that some factors can be improved, especially rewards systems for achievements, recognition treatments, and advancements since the majority of the respondents valued the recognition treatments and advancements as the most motivating factors at work. Furthermore, with the intention of boosting up the employee's motivation at work, it is illustrated that having a reasonable salary, welfare and compensation strategy as well as building up a friendly and supportive working environment can enhance working motivation of employees. Based on these results, the author propose some implications to enhance employee's motivation of multinational companies in the context of Vietnamese market.

**Keywords:** HR management, motivation, job satisfaction, multinational companies, Vietnam.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

HR: Human Resources

HRM: Human Resources Management

APAC: Asia Pacific

YLVN: Yusen Logistics (Vietnam) Co., Ltd.

TCV: Taihan Cable Vina Co., Ltd.

BOD/BOM: Board of Directors / Board of Managers

CS: Customer Service

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Globalization today has been increasingly affecting on economics world-wide. It is thought to have particular impacts on the HR management of the organization (Friedman, 2007). Under the development of globalization, a large number of corporations have opportunities to expand their market share to all over the world and become multinational companies. Unfortunately, despite having successful management experiences in their home countries, many multinational companies have failed to utilize full advantages of resources on hand as well as to manage the local workforce efficiently when investing in another foreign country because they cannot fulfill employee's satisfaction at work. Multinational companies are diversified in regions and have multi-cultural working environment, thus it is easy to get failure in business administration due to lack of understanding of the differences in cultural and socio-economic factors, especially the employee's motivation and working behaviors.

The goal of this paper is to study the current situation of employee motivation in multinational companies operating in Vietnam through analyzing the data to be collected by the questionnaire survey from two multinational companies currently working in Vietnam. From those findings, this research proposes some implications to enhance employee motivation for multinational companies in the context of Vietnamese market.

### **1.1. Background of the research**

Employee motivation always plays an important role for the success of an organization. It is vital in working environment and influences directly on employee's performance and on the growth of the company as well (Vosloban, 2012). Thus, employee motivation should be regarded as one of the top priorities of any organization. However, many companies have not realized that and employee motivation is not considered as a part of overall strategic plan of the organization.

In today's globalization, Vietnam is like a magnetic market since the country has been attracting more and more investments from foreign companies not only in the region but also internationally. According to FDI Intelligence, Vietnam ranks in the top of 14 countries that attract foreign direct investment (Nguyen, 2016). Many multinational corporations now have their branches and offices in Vietnam. Nevertheless, like many other developing countries, Vietnam is now undergoing significant changes in several aspects in order to utilize and develop human resources

because of globalization. It leads to various challenges to multinational companies when joining to the Vietnamese market.

With the above reasons, this research will study on the importance of employee motivation as well as focus on how to motivate employees in multinational companies in Vietnam. The result can be valuable in assisting the companies to ameliorate their human resource management in the Vietnamese context.

## **1.2. Main theories of the research**

The effects of motivation factors on the working behavior of employees have initiated several researches and studies, and there are many theories of employee motivation have been developed. This research mainly focuses on the assumption that employees are motivated by job satisfaction. Hence, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) and Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1959) will be applied as the theoretical foundations for this research in order to identify the criteria that can influence the satisfaction as well as the motivation of employees at work.

## **1.3. Research questions**

In order to make good and suitable decisions and strategies to enhance employee motivation, first and foremost it is crucial to have a thorough grasp of the employee's satisfaction to their contemporary working environment and policies. Since the working environment of multinational companies is diversified, the differences in cultural and socio-economic factors could lead the companies to have inapposite human resources management strategies for their employees. As a result, the employees will not sense to be motivated and become discouraged. Therefore, the first question asked should be whether the employees of multinational companies feel satisfied and be motivated with current working conditions or not. To have solutions, the companies then need to comprehend working factors which can be the causes of employees' dissatisfaction. There are many factors that have effects to the employee's satisfaction at work, either positive or negative. To realize what factors can motivate employees to work for this reason is really important. Likewise, among motivating factors, the companies need to pick out the most motivating factor at work towards the employees to give priority to improving it first, and then the others. By understanding the current situations along with recognizing the employee's demands on work, multinational companies can find out what they need to do to enhance their employee's motivation in the context of Vietnam market.

Thus, with the main research purposes mentioned above, this research mainly concentrates on solving the questions as following:

1. Do the employees of multinational companies feel satisfied and be motivated with current working conditions?
2. What factors can motivate employees to work? Which one is the most motivating factor at work?
3. What can multinational companies do to enhance employee motivation in the context of Vietnam market?

#### **1.4. The structure of the research**

To demonstrate all of the above arguments, this report is divided into five main parts containing this Introduction in which the research objectives, theoretical background, research method as well as research questions are presented.

Section 2 is Literature review, which provides different definitions and theories of motivation and employee motivation. An overview of Vietnam and characteristics of employee motivation in Vietnamese market are reviewed as well so as to point out the hypothesis for this research.

The third section focuses on describing research method, research design, data collection methods together with data analysis methods that are used in this report.

In section 4, the findings of this research are illustrated.

Section 5 of this report describes the gaps between the findings and literature review, implications, and limitations of this research.

The final section is the conclusion for this research.

With reference to the above structure, the next section will demonstrate definitions and theories of employee motivation, along with an overview of Vietnam market as well as the situation of employee motivation in Vietnam.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section illustrates definitions of motivation as well as selected motivation theories and employee motivation approaches in various working environments. Besides, along with an overview of Vietnam market and some features of employee motivation in Vietnam, the hypothesis of this research are also proposed.

### **2.1. Definitions of employee motivation**

#### **2.1.1. Motivation**

Nevid (2013, p. 288) defines motivation as factors that “activate, direct, and sustain goal-directed behaviors”. As he mentions, motivation is the thing that puts us into actions in order to achieve the result. Also, according to Business Edge (2005), motivation is the set of processes including conscious or unconscious actions that take and move a person towards expected goals. Thus, improving motivation can push the performance up, and employees will work more efficiently. From the author’s point of view, as these two definitions, motivation can be defined briefly as a process of stimulation that making people implement and complete their task to reach the goals. It encapsulates the essence of motivation, but it is not enough. These arguments have not pointed up all of employees’ willingness in doing their tasks if they receive motivation.

Getz (2012) provides another definition of motivation as employees’ individual desirability and volunteering to improve forces to obtain organization objectives. The importance for managers is how to motivate their employees as every individual has different personality (Getz, 2012). It means that managers must have different factors to keep employees motivated. This definition and the two above, in the author’s opinion, complement each other and then bring forth a relatively complete description of motivation. Then, it can be said that motivation has an important role in affecting individually working implementation, and it is the reason why anybody does anything.

Individuals generally work harder and maintain better attitudes if they feel motivated. Without motivation, employees’ working results are lower than expected ones although they are working in big and high quality organizations. Thus, motivation allied to the workplace, particularly employee motivation, is essential to be paid attention to. Hereafter, the following section will bring out definitions of employee motivation, one of the most important respects for the success of every organization, and thence will clarify the reason why it is necessary to enhance employee motivation as well as how it affects to the working environment of organizations.

### **2.1.2. Employee motivation**

Susan (2016) determines the employee motivation as a process in which factors that empower or restrict employee's satisfaction at work and the employee's needs and expectations from their work are fulfilled. Grimsley (2014) also delineates that under the influence of employee motivation, workers will feel more encourage to pursue their work tasks or goals. As reported by him, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation are fundamental theories of motivation being used by a large amount of managers. Extrinsic motivation contains factors come from external efforts, while factors that come from inside employees are called intrinsic motivation. Therefore, it can be said that intrinsic motivation is often more effective than extrinsic motivation (Grimsley, 2014). Generally speaking, employee motivation may be simple as presents, awards or encouraging words that make the employee solve their contradiction for themselves and help them take action to implement their tasks to gratify their unsatisfied needs.

Rothberg (2005) claims that employee motivation impulse workers' accomplishments, and by making full use of employee motivation, human resources can be utilized since it improves level of efficiency of employees (Adi, 2000). Anka (1988) also argues that motivation of employees plays a part in building friendly relationship. Moreover, employee motivation leads to stability of the work force as well as a great and attractive public image in the market for the organization to exert a pull on competent and qualified people (Rothberg, 2005). Employee motivation is considering as a good method for manager to manage their employees. Strong leadership, incentive programs, and fair policies are actual important practices with the intention of improving motivation in organizational behavior. In fact, managers understand the problems of creating motivation. Unfortunately, it is really difficult to "turn on" motivations in people.

Being argued as part in building friendly relationship (Anka, 1988) as well as a factor that improves level of employees' efficiency (Adi, 2000) and leads the organization to a good public image in the market (Rothberg, 2005), it is necessary to enhance employee motivation. However, dealing with employee motivation is really complicated for managers. Thus, many studies and theories that researched into employee motivation have been established with the intention of clarifying the main factors of employee motivation and trying to adapt them to practices. The next section will discuss some theories of motivation, and what are advantages as well as disadvantages of those.

## 2.2. Theories of employee motivation

The effects of motivation factors on the working behavior of employees have initiated several researches and studies, hence many theories of employee motivation have been developed with the aim of supporting to managers seeking to become effective leaders (Schmid & Adams, 2008). In the book Human Resource Management (2006 edition), Corpuz (2003) states that work motivation is affected by individual differences, job characteristics, and organizational practices. As said by him, *individual differences* consist of employees' personal demands, mental outlook, awareness, and proficiency; *job characteristics* are features and aspects, both advantages and disadvantages, of the position, while policies, managerial practices, and rewards systems are taken in *organizational practices* (Corpuz, 2003).

### 2.2.1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is proposed in 1943 by a psychologist named Abraham H. Maslow (McLeod, n.d.). Being parallel with many other theories, Maslow (1943) specifies the stages of growth in humans developmental psychology by using the terms of Physiological needs, Safety needs, Belongingness and Love needs, Esteem needs, and Self-actualization needs.

*Physiological needs:* things that human requires individually for survival.

*Safety needs:* demands for safeguarding and stability.

*Belongingness and Love needs:* requirements of human for receiving and giving fondness, being part of a group (e.g. family, group work, friends), and belief.

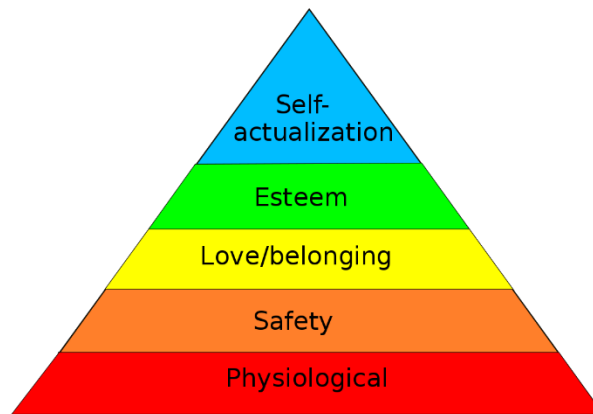
*Esteem needs:* self-esteem and the needs of admiration from others.

*Self-actualization needs:* people's desires for personal growth and development to become actualized in their capability.

(Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1987; McLeod, n.d.)

A pyramid is often used in order to depict Maslow's hierarchy of needs with the base comprising physiological demands that is vital for survival of people, and proceeding upwards through safety, social, and esteem before topping out with self-actualization (Gibney, 2017).





*Figure 2.1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs*

*(Source: Freed, 2017)*

There is a huge amount of researches and theories being authorized subsequently depending on Maslow's theory due to its usefulness, and further supporting his idea. Nevertheless, the theory also has some limitations. For instance, it is mentioned that people cannot go on to achieve a higher stage of needs unless lower stages are satisfied (Maslow, 1943). However, it is inaccurate in some cases. Despite of facing difficulties of physiological needs, people can still reach to belongingness and love needs. Tay and Diener (2011) claim that getting in touch with friends can make people happy even when they are feeling hungry. Another inadequacy is since the population segments that Maslow chose for his research is so slender (Kunchala, 2017), the theory is lack of evidences, and thus its hierarchical phase is not fully supported.

The author's quite convinced that the strengths of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is providing useful identification of human motivations, and is easily to understand as well as to apply. Unfortunately, it could be seen that in this theory, the characteristics of specific situations are not evaluated, and that everyone will have similar needs. Maslow (1987) illustrates self-esteem and self-actualization as attractive targets to attempt. Nevertheless, by virtue of today's globalization along with the dynamic growth and the emerging power of many developing countries such as Vietnam, Maslow's theory does not perfectly correspond with actual situations while people have higher demand on social recognition as well as achievement and advancement in work.

## 2.2.2. Herzberg's two-factor theory

Frederick Herzberg, a psychologist, proposed his two-factor theory in 1959. In this theory, Herzberg describes people's needs in the forms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Hyun, 2009). Herzberg (1966) states that factors causing employees' dissatisfaction belong to the group of hygiene factors (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2010). Conversely, job satisfaction in the workplace can be caused by motivator factors (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg et al., 2010).

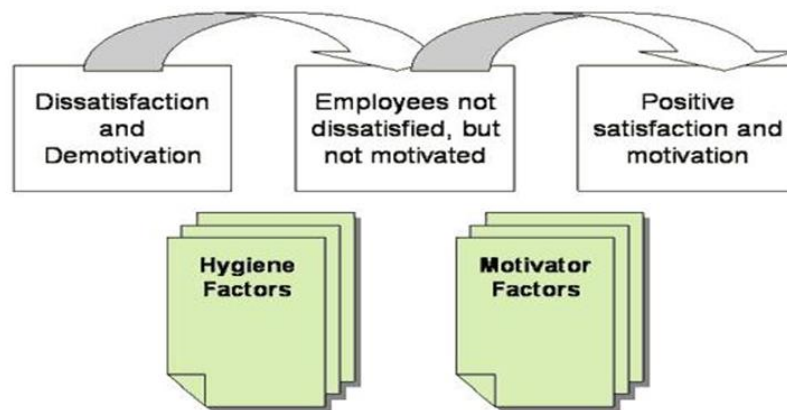


Figure 2.2. Herzberg's two-factor theory

(Source: Carlsson & Duraku, 2012)

### Hygiene factors

*Working conditions:* the facilities of the workplace that can be used for doing tasks, and the workload.

*Salary:* the factors involve in current salary, payment salary and salary increment policy. It should be appropriate and reasonable.

*Company policy:* including HR policy, financial policy, and administrative procedure. Employee's agreement or disagreement with policies of the company can affect their attitude of work.

*Relationships:* the dignity and concurrence between employees and co-workers as well as supervisors.

*Supervisor*: the impartiality of supervisors in evaluating employees' performance as well as their willingness to delegate responsibility to employees.

(Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg et al., 2010; Strong, 2015)

### **Motivator factors**

*Recognition*: acts of appreciation to the employee from supervisors, co-workers, clients, or even from general public.

*Work itself*: the employee's sensations of work (e.g. overly easy or difficult).

*Responsibility*: the employee's state of having duty to deal with their own work or the other's job tasks.

*Achievement*: the successful accomplishment of work, good problem solving, and making profits for the company.

*Growth*: circumstances that bring opportunities to the employee in order to advance personal skills together with their expertise.

*Advancement*: actual status or position changes in the company.

(Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg et al., 2010; Strong, 2015)

The pros of this theory is regardless of rather corresponding to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, it is a two-factor model of motivation wherein satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent phenomena (Wang & Zhang, 2009; Strong, 2015). It means dissatisfaction of employees does not decrease even if there is an increase in satisfaction (Herzberg 1966; Herzberg et al., 2010; Strong, 2015). Hence, paying attention and recognition to both hygiene factors and motivator factors is a must in order to ameliorate working attitudes and behaviors of employees. Comparing with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests management solutions which are more feasible for any levels of an organization (Souza, 2014) as it identifies the criteria in Maslow's hierarchy of needs into two groups of hygiene factors and motivator factors. "It is easy to understand and seems to be based on 'real life' rather than academic abstraction [...]" (Armstrong, 2003, p. 263). On the other hand, Herzberg's theory also has some weaknesses. Lew and Manap (2012) argues some job factors are not purely hygiene or motivator factors, such as salary. According to Herzberg, salary is a hygiene factor. However, it is, in fact, a motivator factor for a lot of employees to work harder

with the aim of getting a higher salary. Besides, no comprehensive measure of satisfaction that can be appropriated to all employees is also a disadvantage of Herzberg's two-factor theory (Lew & Manap, 2012). For instance, fulltime employees can be motivated by open communication in workplace and work enlargement, whereas part-time employees may not be interested in and feel more motivated by flexible work arrangements and an increased salary. Thus, instead of being motivated, employees will feel overwhelmed by the work content if managers fail to identify factors that can make their employees have a sense of achievement and encourage them in work (Lew & Manap, 2012). It is crucial for managers to deliberate on interactions of those factors with employees' job performance.

Therefore, to the author's way of thinking, Herzberg's theory has a strong relation to satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work. Comparing with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it has a more advanced reality value. Nonetheless, as Herzberg's theory, salary is a hygiene factor while in the case of Vietnam as well as many other developing countries, having a good relationship with co-workers and getting a higher salary and are motivations for employees to work harder. Likewise, since the satisfaction factors and dissatisfaction factors are independent (Wang & Zhang, 2009; Strong, 2015), even if all the hygiene factors are eliminated, employees' satisfaction still cannot be improved. Application of Herzberg's theory only, as a result, will cause various difficulties for managers to satisfy their employees in such the case of Vietnam.

### **2.2.3. The association of Maslow's and Herzberg's theory**

This section demonstrates the connection between the motivation theory of Maslow and Herzberg, how they are similar to as well as different from each other. Regardless of being supposed to be an extension of Maslow's theory that suggests a more general model of motivation factors and suggests more flexible solutions for managers, Herzberg's theory is mostly applied to researching on developed countries only, where money is appraised as a less important motivator factor (Akrani, 2011). In contrast, researchers usually apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs to poor and developing countries since people there still regard money as an essential motivator factor (Akrani, 2011). This research focuses on employee motivation of multinational companies operating in Vietnam, which is a developing country with a transitional economics. Applying either Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Herzberg's two-factor theory discretely for the study of employee's motivation in multinational companies in the context of a transitional economics like Vietnam could lead to a misunderstanding about how satisfied the employees actually feel and what they really want to be motivated at work, from that will have incompatible strategies to enhance employee's motivation.

Therefore, in this research the author will use the combination of Herzberg’s two-factor theory and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

*Table 2.1. Comparison of Maslow’s and Herzberg’s theory of motivation*

<b>Maslow’s theory</b>	<b>Herzberg’s theory</b>
Physiological needs	Hygiene factors
Safety needs	
Social needs	
Esteem needs	Motivator factors
Self-actualization	

(Gordon, 1987, p. 92; Mirka, 2011, p. 18)

The table 2.1 illuminates the links among different needs and factors of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s two-factor theory. In general, with reference to Maslow’s hierarchical order of the human’s five needs, Herzberg (1966) advises dividing those into groups of hygiene factors which parallel three most basic needs (i.e. physiological, safety, and social needs), and motivator factors that correspond the upper levels of needs (i.e. esteem and self-actualization) (Gordon, 1987). It can be said that Herzberg’s theory is not only based on the motivation theory of Maslow, but also a supplement for that theory. Moreover, Herzberg’s theory relies on how to make employees have the sense of recognition and achievement as well as feel satisfied at the workplace, while Maslow’s motivation theory aims at satisfying needs of the human’s daily life. Hence, by combining these two theories, they can accomplish each other to bring out a more complete understanding of the employee motivation (Mirka, 2011) in multinational companies in the context of Vietnam.

## **2.3. Vietnam market and employee motivation management**

### **2.3.1. General information of Vietnam**

Socialist Republic of Vietnam (hereafter Vietnam) is a one-party Communist Southeast Asian country. The population of Vietnam is approximately 92.7 million people throughout the area of 331,231 square kilometers (The World Bank, 2016).

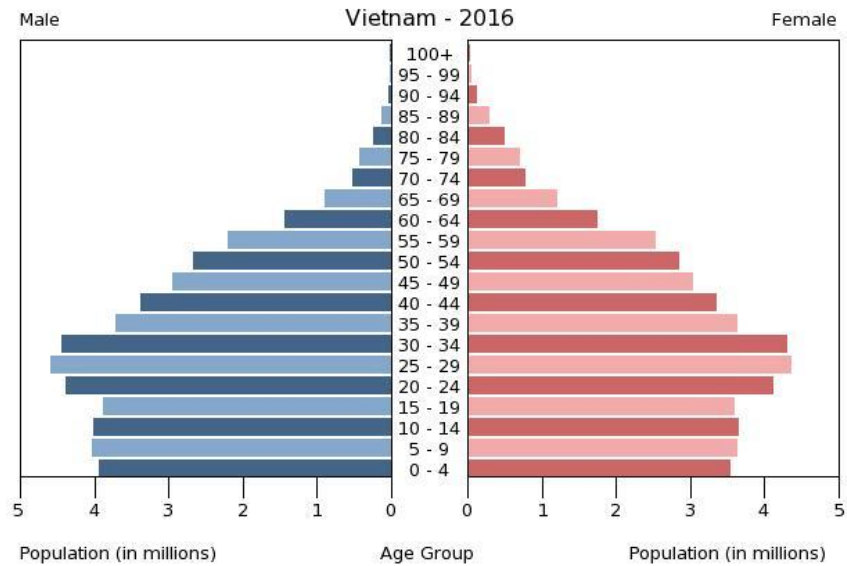


Figure 2.3. Population pyramid of Vietnam

(Source: The World Factbook – CIA, 2016)

Vietnam has a golden population structure with more than 60% of the population is in working age (15 – 64 years old) and the literacy rate is more than 95% (The World Factbook – CIA, 2016). According to BBC News (2017), the economy of Vietnam is in the top rank of fast growing economies in Southeast Asia. It can be said that Vietnam is a developing country with a transitional economics under the pressure of globalization (Yeung, Warner, & Rowley, 2008).



Figure 2.4. The average monthly wage (USD/person/month) of Vietnam, Asia Pacific (APAC) region and the world.

(Source: ManpowerGroup Solutions, 2017)

The figure 2.5 illustrates that Vietnam has a plentiful but low-wage labor force compared to other countries in the APAC region and over the world, accounting for 220 USD per month only (ManpowerGroup Solutions, 2017). It is one core competence to attract investments from foreign companies into Vietnamese market. Moreover, despite the fact that only about 40% of the labor force working in big cities and other urban areas along with under-average productivity (BBC News, 2016), the labor market efficiency of Vietnam is not too low, specifically 4.33% in comparison with 4.38% of APAC region according to the Total Workforce Index from ManpowerGroup Solutions (2017). In consequence, it can still be said that Vietnam has an enormous potential to develop in the future with the above advantages (Lam, 2016).

### **2.3.2. Employee motivation in Vietnam**

In general, human resource management, especially employee motivation management, plays a very important role in enhancing the performance of employees in addition to the overall business of an organization. Under the pressure of the globalization, Vietnam's economy has recently developed rapidly (Nguyen, 2016). It makes the problems that the multinational companies, and even local companies in Vietnam have been facing with become more and more challenging. Many companies cannot catch up with quickly changes from the environment. They have not had any improvements in human resource management methods, and then fail to enhance motivation of employees.

In addition, Nguyen (2016) argues that in Vietnam now many managers are lack of trust, care and help their employees, while these criteria can make employees feel respected and valued, and from that they may produce a high sense of responsibility and mission as well as have positive attitudes at work. The reason is most managers in multinational companies are Vietnamese, and just a small part of senior managers are foreigners from the home countries (usually are developed countries). These Vietnamese managers in reality still apply old management methods in order to boost productivity such as increasing the workload without giving care to employees' satisfaction. It leads to the fact that despite having an abundant and cheap cost labor force, the productivity of Vietnam has been still low, under the average of the world (BBC News, 2016).

Briefly, motivating activities for employees of multinational companies in Vietnam at the moment are not really effective due to swiftly changes in economics and environment in conjunction with the lack of understanding about working manners of Vietnamese employees. Therefore, it is absolutely needed to enhance the employee motivation in multinational companies in Vietnam so as to contribute to improve the

productivity of all the country. Heretofore, Japanese multinational companies, whose the motto states that the success of a business depends on the director's trust in the employees' ability (Nguyen, 2016), are seen as the most successful companies in Vietnam that have good motivation activities and gain high satisfaction of managers' attitudes as well as managers' encouragements from employees.

### **2.3.3. Discussion on other researches about employee motivation in multinational companies in Vietnam**

Previously, there are various studies about employee motivation in Vietnam, but researches conducting within multinational companies occupy a very small number. Thus, it leads to some limitations when describing the gaps between the findings of this research with literature reviews.

Most of previous studies use quantitative research method to gather data, mainly by questionnaire surveys (Trifunovska & Trifunovski, 2010). Despite the fact that qualitative method is essential as it helps the researcher approach the problem from many different aspects, the number of researches applying qualitative method is rather limited since it takes time and is under the influence of social norms more than the quantitative research method. In addition, while almost respondents from quantitative researches appreciate salary and compensation as an importance working motivator factor, interviewees from qualitative researches declare that they feel more motivated with intrinsic factors at work such as relationships, advancement, or responsibility (White & Mackenzie, 2003; Trifunovska & Trifunovski, 2010). However, the reason for those differences is rather difficult to be answered as it depends on many elements such as the working industry of respondents and interviewees.

Because of its popularity, Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been used as basis background to conduct the study of employee motivation in many countries all over the world. A study of employee motivation in Ericsson Vietnam Co., Ltd – a Sweden multinational company in Vietnam, applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs is conducted by Truong (2011). Truong (2011) gives the hypothesis of there are five factors influence the work motivation of employees that follow Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and according to that, physiological needs such as salary and compensation is the most motivating factor, following in succession by safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and the least motivating factor to the employees will be self-actualization. However, in connection with the results of his research, (i) salary and other incomes from work, relationships within the organization, and working position; (ii) demand for personal growth and development; and (iii) working conditions and supervisors' attention to



physical lives of employees are most interesting factors to the employees in an order from the highest to the lowest. Even though the result still includes the factors in Maslow's theory, it can be seen that the hypothesis to be stated by Truong (2011) is not strictly supported by the results.

Nguyen (2016) claims in her paper about motivating the employees in Taiwanese multinational companies in Vietnam market that it is really crucial to set up reasonable policies of salary and welfare as well as advancements together with establishing a trustworthy relationship and a friendly two-way communication in order to satisfy and motivate the employees to work effectively. The study is conducted by doing the survey with the sample of 210 employees from seven different Taiwanese companies operating in Vietnam. According to Nguyen's paper, it is seen that the payment system and interpersonal relationships among employees and between supervisors and employees are valued the most motivating factors at work towards the employees (Nguyen, 2016).

These results of previous studies together with theories being mentioned above will be used as a base to pick up concerned factors and likewise to infer the hypotheses for this research.

## **2.4. Hypothesis**

As mentioned before, the first research question requires a grasp of how satisfied the employees feel with current working conditions of their companies. Thus, the author set up the hypothesis for this question as:

H<sub>0</sub>: Multinational companies operating in Vietnam have a high level of employees' job satisfaction.

By clearing the question 1 up, this hypothesis can be proven.

In reality, there are many criteria impact to the satisfaction and the motivation of employees. In here, based on the reality of Vietnam market, along with discussions from researches before, the author choose some factors that, in the author's deliberation, are important to be concerned with the purpose of improving employee motivation within multinational companies in the context of Vietnam, thence infer the hypotheses for the second research question. Those factors are grouped together as the following.

## **Salary, welfare and compensation**

Absolutely, the relationship between salary, welfare and compensation and the employee's satisfaction is tight. The higher the salary, the more satisfaction is evoked in employees (Pham, 2016). As said by Mullins (2002), a company with a feasible salary and compensation will have a higher competitiveness against rivals (Ghazanfar, Chuanmin, Khan, & Bashir, 2011). Thus, it is required to have more investment in salary and compensation policy so as to attract and to encourage employees.

## **Supervisor and relationships**

An organization can be successful or fail depending on management skills and behavior. It is clear that supervisors involve in the level of employees' satisfaction through the way they use to communicate with and support to employees. Longenecker and Nykodym (1996) advice that supervisors should give clear expectations and more contributed feedback to employees in addition to avoiding negative attitudes to obtain the satisfaction of employees.

Besides, interpersonal relations among co-workers also affect to employees' motivation either positively or negatively. Friendly and supportive relationships can bring about optimistic senses of belongingness and then encourage the creativeness and enthusiasm of employees at work (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). Hence, it is necessary for the organization to establish an inspiring and amiable working environment as well.

## **Achievement, recognition and advancement**

Achievement is an opportunity for employees to present their competence and to develop through rewards systems. Employees always expects to receive a fair treatment which is equivalent with their contribution and other added value activities for the company. However, it is mentioned that in fact, the whole process of rewards systems is generally appreciated to be transparent (Armstrong, 2003; Pham, 2016).

Along with the help and care from supervisors, recognition and being appreciated is also a strong motivation factor for employees. Recognition is necessary for improving the relationships between employees and managers as well as among co-workers (Pham, 2016). Under the clear expectations and instructions with a fair treatment from supervisors, employees can gain their excitement to work harder and more effective.

Nowadays, the majority of employees try to seek a job in which they could have personal development and promotion opportunities, especially young and fresh workers. If the company is fail to meet their expectation of advancement, it could cause frustration and employees will try to find a new job that is more attractive; otherwise they would tend to commit to the company (Pham, 2016). So it is important to create and provide advancement chances for employees with the purpose of increasing the level of job satisfaction in the company.

In accordance with the above reasons, the author set up the hypotheses for the second research question as the following.

H<sub>1</sub>: Having a reasonable salary, welfare and compensation strategy will enhance employee motivation.

H<sub>2</sub>: Having good supervisor skills and behavior in addition to a friendly and supportive working atmosphere between employees and supervisors as well as among employees will enhance employee motivation.

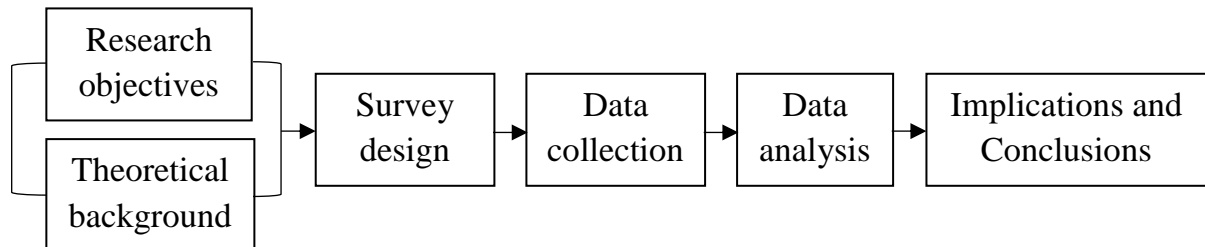
H<sub>3</sub>: Having good rewards systems, recognition treatments and development opportunities for employees will enhance employee motivation.

By gathering and analyzing results from the survey, the author can answer the research questions, whereby these hypotheses will be proven. The next section will describe how the data using for this research is collected.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section will demonstrate the methodology being used to collect and analyze data from sample companies of this research.

#### 3.1. Research method



*Figure 3.1.* Research process

The goal of this report is to evaluate and to determine factors of multinational companies in Vietnam that can motivate employees through the levels of job satisfaction. Thus, the author decide to use quantitative method for this research. Based on theoretical background, the questionnaire is designed to collect the primary data for this research. The survey is conducted among employees from two multinational companies operating in Vietnam. On the basis of data gathered from the survey, the current situation is analyzed, and then implications and conclusions are also given. The author choose quantitative research since this method can present current situations and thence will accommodate feasible implications by means of numerical data.

#### 3.2. Survey design

The survey is used as the major tool to gather data for this report because of its popularity, convenience and efficiency (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The survey using for this research is self-designed by the author based on the research questions. The contents of the survey are in English since all employees of YLVN and TCV can read and understand English. Respondents are asked to read and fill the survey on their own. The structure of the survey is designed with two main parts: the first one is intended to get general information of respondents (e.g. age, gender, level of hierarchy, etc.), and the other is questions concentrating on hypotheses that are grouped as salary, welfare and compensation; supervisors, communication and relationships; and achievement, recognition and advancement. The survey will consist of both multiple choice questions with the dimension from 1 to 4 corresponding to (1) very satisfied, (2)

satisfied, (3) dissatisfied, and (4) very dissatisfied, and opened-ended questions for employees to contribute their private opinions. The questionnaire survey is indicated in APPENDIX 1. The dimension of 4 is picked instead of the dimension of 5 with a point of “Normal” because the author want to avoid neutral answers which are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied since HRM is quite sensitive in every company, leading to a situation that employees will likely to choose “Normal” for most questions as if managers are informed about their answers and have some negative impacts upon their job, thus the result will not reflect actual satisfaction and thoughts of respondents.

The author decided to distribute the survey both by email with a link to an online version and by hand. Using an online survey may take longer period for data collection and poorer response rates due to a lower level of control although it takes less costs and is able to cover a large group of people. Hence, it is still needed to hand a paper-based version which is exactly the same content with the online survey. With the intention of avoiding double responses, employees who did the paper-based survey would not receive email including the link of the online survey.

### **3.3. Data sample**

The survey was applied to two groups of employees for this research. The first group consists of 270 employees from Yusen Logistics (Vietnam) Co., Ltd. (hereafter YLVN). It is a multinational logistics company with 100% invested capital from Japan that has headquarters in Hanoi and other 25 offices/sites throughout the country. Another group consists of 50 employees from Taihan Cable Vina Co., Ltd. (hereafter TCV), formally known as Taihan-Sacom Cable Co., Ltd. – a cable joint venture company of Korea and Vietnam. In 2016, Taihan (Korea) acquired all of the remaining shares in Vietnam Corporation and relaunched as a sole investment company. At the moment, TCV is a multinational company with 100% capital invested by Korea.

It can be said that YLVN and TCV are now big multinational companies which have moderately equivalent working environment with, as far as the author know, good working conditions and above-average monthly wage rates in Vietnam (YLVN: approx. 350 USD/month; TCV: approx. 327 USD/month). Nonetheless, it has seemed to be the fact that the performance of employees of these multinational companies are not really effective in recent years. Truthfully, many employees go to the company in time just for keeping up with the fingerprinted timekeeper, then they go out for breakfast or coffee immediately. The situation becomes more alarming as the number of resigned employees has been higher in recent years. Consequently, it is imperative for these multinational companies to maintain an efficient working operation, as such to

understand and manage their employee's motivation. In this manner, the author decide to choose YLVN and TCV to research on employee's motivation. Besides, the author worked at those multinational companies before, so it will be easier for the author with the aim of getting approval to collect the data of the companies together with doing the survey among their employees.

### **3.4. Data analysis**

With the aim of fulfilling the goal of this research, the survey is distributed randomly without restrictions about divisions, levels of hierarchy or the age of employees. The two selected companies are also different from each other in terms of company size, number of employees, and even major industry so that the wide range of respondents' background as well as their position lines at work can be ensured to get a more comprehensive view for the research. Thanks to the support and cooperation from managers and employees of those two companies, the author successfully collected the results from 308 respondents in total, consisting of 263 employees currently working for YLVN and 45 employees currently working for TCV.

Based on all collected data, the proportion of same answers for each multiple choice question was employed and illustrated by charts and/or tables. The author used MS Excel for data collation. For open-end questions, the answers in addition to frequency of similar ones if any are recorded into MS Excel likewise. The result is thoroughly analyzed so that a general view of current situations at YLVN and TCV can be acquired, then possible implications and conclusions also can be given.

### **3.5. Ethical issues of research methodology**

Ethical issues are very important for the conduct of research. Ethics help not only to stimulate the aims of research, but also to ensure essential values to collaborators and respondents along with other moral and social values (David & Resnik, 2015). Therefore, the author always try to adhere ethical principles throughout all stages of the research.

With the wholehearted supports of Mr. Kondo Takeshi, former General Director of YLVN, together with the respect and encouragement from managers of HR department and all other employees working at YLVN and TCV, the survey was done and collected successfully. The employees participated in the survey entirely on a voluntary basis without inhibition and totally for free. So as to protect the security for the respondents as well as internal data of the two multinational companies, all information and answers from the employees for the survey are kept confidential and

used for study purposes of this research only. This notice was noted in the introduction of the survey that was given to each respondent as indicated in APPENDIX 1. Additionally, the HR Managers of YLVN and TCV had a public announcement about it to all employees in their companies once again before the author distribute the survey.

Besides, the author do not have any ties of working contracts with YLVN and TCV as well, but a commitment to YLVN to keep every information private that could be checked in APPENDIX 2 (Vietnamese version) and APPENDIX 3 (English translated version).

In the next section, the author will propose and analyze the gathered data about 308 respondents from YLVN and TCV relied on the research method as presented above.

## 4. FINDINGS

This section clarifies the results and the analyzing of the survey carried out with YLVN and TCV. The findings are separated into three parts based on the content of the survey: General information, Satisfaction evaluation, and Recommendations of respondents.

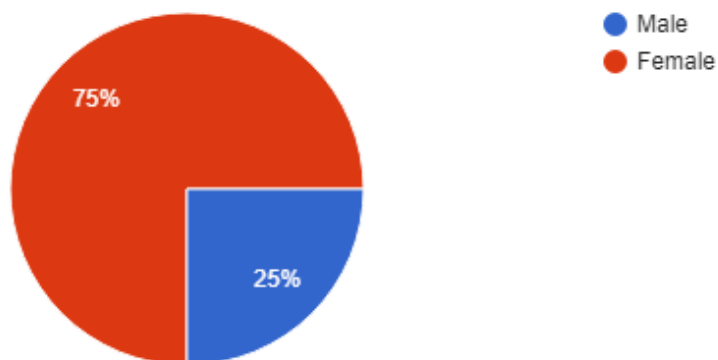
### 4.1. Survey results

#### 4.1.1. General information

This part consists of general information of 308 respondents from YLVN and TCV including: gender, age, educational level, current position, type of working contract, actual years working in the company, and wage rate. Since the demands for motivation are different among genders, ages and other basis elements, the general information will contribute the companies to advance their level of employee's motivation.

#### Gender

The first question goes through the gender of employees joined the survey.



*Figure 4.1.* Gender frequency of respondents

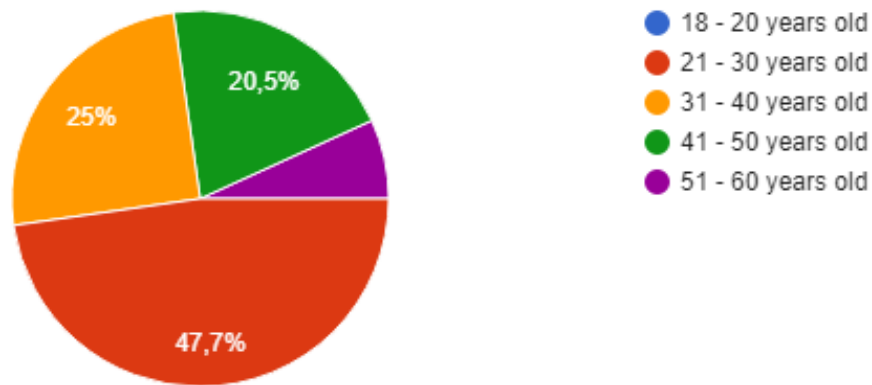
The figure 4.1 presents the frequency distribution in gender of respondents from YLVN and TCV. The number of female employees participated is 231 people while only 77 respondents are male. Truthfully, the majority of employees currently working



for YLVN and TCV are female since main duties are related to customer services and documentation tasks, and almost companies prefer to hire female for such kinds of job.

### Age

The next question is about the age ranges distribution of respondents. It is illustrated in figure 4.2 as the following.



*Figure 4.2. Age frequency of respondents*

It can be seen that the number of respondents in the group of 21 – 30 years old makes up the highest proportion with 147 out of 308 people (namely 47.7%), followed by the group of 31 – 40 year-olds with 25%. The lowest rate belongs to the group of over 50-year-old employees, accounting for 6.8% only. This is the popular reality in almost company. The age of 21 to 40 seems to be the best of careers because employees in this age range usually have high enthusiasm for their jobs with good educational background. Contrariwise, older employees often have better actual knowledge with higher working seniority. It is an advantage to deal with job duties, but also a limit when they approach to high technology since this group of employees normally have less breakthroughs.

## Educational level

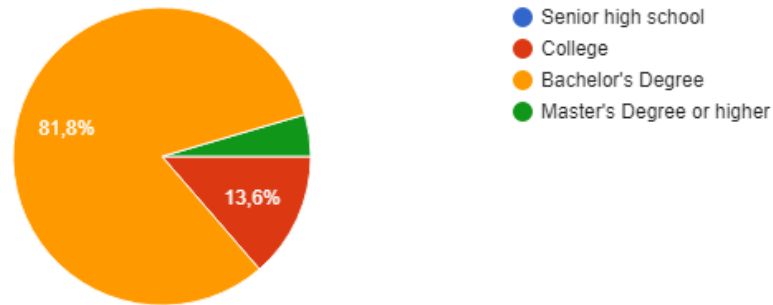


Figure 4.3. Frequency of respondents' educational background

Figure 4.3 shows the educational qualification of respondents. It is clear that the highest proportion belongs to the group of employees graduated from universities with Bachelor's degree. In other words, the main labor force working for YLVN and TCV are intellectuals, thus the companies should pay attention to satisfy not only employee's physical needs, but also their moral values.

## Position

The next question is designed in order to get the information of respondents' current working positions/departments.

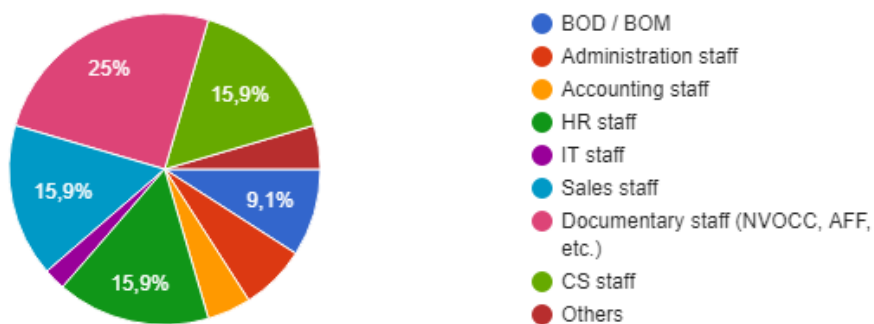


Figure 4.4. Frequency of respondents' current working positions

From figure 4.4 we can see that the distribution of working position of respondents is diversified that ensures the comprehensiveness of this research.

## Type of working contract

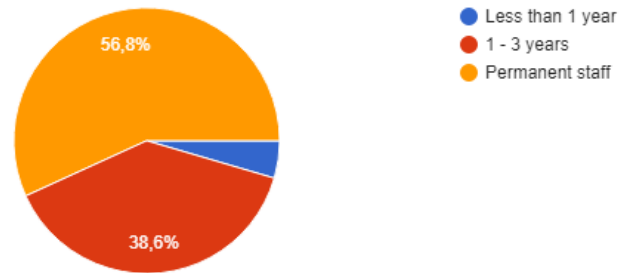


Figure 4.5. Frequency of working contract terms of respondents

According to figure 4.5, most of respondents have signed the permanent working contract with YLVN and TCV, accounting for 175 out of 308 employees (56.8%). Only 14 respondents are now working for the companies under a less than 1 year contract, and due to the short term of the contract, employees in this group usually have higher demands on motivation factors and will easily leave the job if the company is unable to meet their expectations.

## Actual years working for the company

This part answers for the question of how many years the respondents have been actually working at YLVN and TCV.

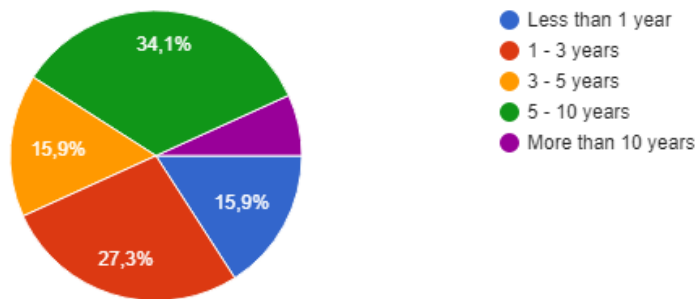


Figure 4.6. Number of actual working years of respondents

It can be seen from figure 4.6 that the highest proportion resides in the 5 – 10 working-year employee group with 34.1%, followed by the group of respondents, who

have 1 – 3 working years (27.3%). Only 21 in 308 respondents have been working at those multinational companies for more than 10 years, accounting for 6.8%. In some way, it exposes that employees are quite loyal with their current company.

### Monthly wage rate

The result of respondents' monthly wage rate is shown by figure 4.7 as below.

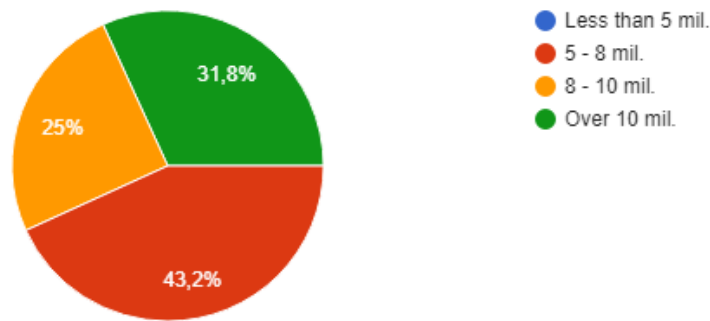


Figure 4.7. The salary level of respondents (unit: VND/month)

In accordance with figure 4.7 we can see that the salary level of YLVN and TCV are quite good when 43.2% of respondents have the monthly wage rate of 5 – 8 million VND (approx. 220 – 355 USD/month), and at least no one among respondents has the salary level being less than 5 million VND per month.

#### 4.1.2. Satisfaction evaluations

This part contains employees' satisfaction evaluations of (1) salary and compensation, (2) supervisors, communication and relationships, and (3) achievement, recognition and advancement.

#### Salary, welfare and compensation

The collected results of how satisfied the respondents feel about the payment system of their company are shown in the following table.

*Table 4.1. Satisfaction evaluation of respondents of salary, welfare and compensation policies*

	<b>Level of satisfaction (%)</b>			
	Very satisfied (1)	Satisfied (2)	Dissatisfied (3)	Very dissatisfied (4)
a. The level of payment (considering with productivity at work)	13.6	54.5	29.6	2.3
b. The fairness of the payment system	15.9	59.1	22.7	2.3

Both the level and the fairness of the payment system make more than half of respondents feel satisfied according to the index illustrated in table 4.1. Nonetheless, nearby one-fourth of them are dissatisfied, particularly 29.6% for the level of payment and 22.7% for the fairness of the payment system. Fortunately, the percentage of intense negative sensations is just a nominal number (only 2.3% from very dissatisfied respondents) while 13.6% of respondents are very satisfied with current wage rates and 15.9% feel that their companies have a very reasonable payment system. On the word of this result, all respects of the payment system at YLVN and TCV are under control generally.

### **Supervisors, communication and relationships**

This criterion reflects the overall working atmospheres of YLVN and TCV comprising the internal relationships accompanied by communication and encouragement of supervisors to employees as well as supports to each other among co-workers.

*Table 4.2. Satisfaction evaluation of respondents of supervisors, communication and relationships*

	<b>Level of satisfaction (%)</b>			
	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>
a. Communication skills of supervisors	31.8	59.1	6.8	2.3
b. The expertise and supports from supervisors	27.3	56.8	13.6	2.3
c. HR allocation of supervisors	13.6	77.3	9.1	0.0
d. The feedbacks from supervisors	20.5	59.1	18.2	2.3
e. The communication among co-workers	18.2	68.2	13.6	0.0
f. The supports from co-workers	13.6	75.0	11.4	0.0
g. The feedbacks from co-workers	6.8	72.7	20.5	0.0

With reference to table 4.2, it is a very positive result since the very dissatisfaction does not appear in almost elements except evaluations for communication skills of supervisors, the expertise and supports from supervisors, and the feedbacks from supervisors, but just a really small number (only 2.3%). In contrast, the index of respondents' satisfaction is extremely high when all the elements are appraised to be satisfying from much greater than half of the respondents, especially for HR allocation of supervisors with 77.3% from satisfied respondents, only 28 employees are dissatisfied, and none of them have extremely bad feeling. It means almost employees are pleased with their contemporary duties and position at the company. On the whole, figures in table 4.2 stand for the fact that both supervisors and employees of the two multinational companies have been making all efforts to communicate and to encourage each other with the intention of establishing a friendly and supportive working environment.

### **Achievement, recognition and advancement**

Table 4.3 as below demonstrated the fulfillment of achievement, recognition and advancement at job of respondents who have been working for YLVN and TCV.

*Table 4.3. Respondents' satisfaction evaluation of achievement, recognition and advancement*

	<b>Level of satisfaction (%)</b>			
	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>
a. Rewards for achievements	11.4	56.8	31.8	0.0
b. Opportunities to obtain achievements	11.4	50.0	38.6	0.0
c. Opportunities to be recognized	11.4	54.5	34.1	0.0
d. Opportunities to be promoted at work	13.6	45.5	38.6	2.3
e. The interesting level of job tasks	4.5	68.2	27.3	0.0
f. Opportunities to improve and develop expert skills and personal skills	15.9	56.8	27.3	0.0

Generally speaking, above results represent a bright picture of employee's satisfaction from remuneration policies of the two multinational companies when every criteria receives positive evaluations. Specifically, there are 68.2% of respondents being satisfied with the stimulation in their job tasks. But then again, each criterion yet gets rather high ratio of dissatisfaction with nearly one-third of the respondents. It exemplifies that a part of employees is still displeased with the treatments for their efforts at work, and they aspire more precise acts of appreciation from others as well as opportunities to challenge and advance themselves. Furthermore, although it is just a minor number, the promotion opportunities at work still makes 2.3% of respondents feel very dissatisfied. Therefore, it is essential for the multinational companies to consider their advancement and promotion strategies to improve employee's satisfaction.

#### **4.1.3. Recommendations from respondents**

This part illustrates the most motivating factors to respondents in their opinions accompanied by the respondents' recommendations for the company to enhance employee's motivation.

## The most motivating factors at work

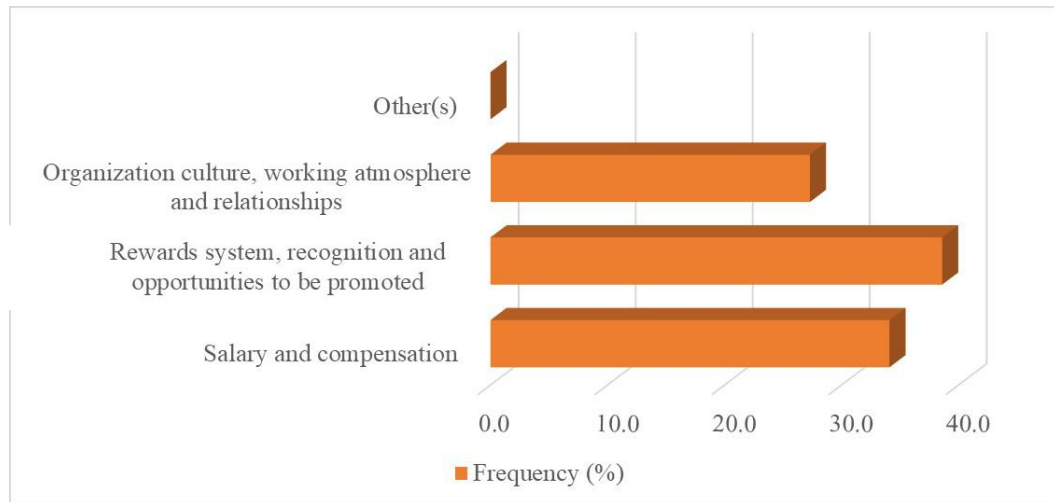


Figure 4.8. Frequency of the most motivating factors at work in respondents' opinion

From figure 4.8, we can see that the element of reward systems, recognition and opportunities to be promoted at work occupies the highest proportion since 119 in 308 respondents (viz. 38.6%) choose it as the factor that can motivate them the most at work. It is pursued closely by the element of attractive payment systems with 33.8%, and the remaining 27.3% of respondents have their main concern about organization culture, working atmosphere and interpersonal relationships among employees as well as between supervisors and employees.

## Recommendations of respondents

Table 4.4. Recommendations of respondents to improve employee motivation

	Number of being-mentioned times
Higher and more attractive salary level and bonus	126
Friendly relations and more supports from supervisors	35
Co-workers should help each other more	56
Improve recognition and promotion strategies	78
Diversify job tasks	3



As stated by table 4.4, there are 126 respondents want to have a higher payment level with more attractive salary and bonus. The demand for opportunities to be recognized and promoted at work occupies the second place since 78 out of 308 respondents mentioned it in their recommendations. In addition, 56 respondents suggest that the encouragement among co-workers should be improved, 35 others hope to build up a more friendly relationship and to receive more supports from their supervisors, and there are three in 308 respondents advise that the company should have more rotations as well as diversification in employees' job tasks.

#### **4.2. Findings conclusion**

In accordance with above results, it can be seen clearly that multinational companies in Vietnam, particularly here YLVN and TCV, have a comparatively high level of job satisfaction of employees, especially for the organization culture, working atmosphere and interpersonal relationships among co-workers as well as between supervisors and employees. It is valued not the best but still one of the most motivating factors at work. Hence, the employee motivation can be boosted up by good supervisor skills and behavior in addition to friendly and supportive working atmospheres between employees and supervisors as well as among peers.

The collected results also show that having good rewards systems, recognition treatments and development opportunities is really necessary for improving employee motivation since the majority of respondents appraises recognition treatments and advancements as the most motivating factor at work. In addition, reasonable salary, welfare and compensation compared with other competitors in the market should be considered as part of enhancing employee motivation strategies of the companies likewise when most of the respondents have demand for higher level and more attractive salary payment systems.

The next section of this paper will illustrate the gaps between these findings and literature reviews as well as the implications of this research to literatures and to practitioners, which will respond to the final research question.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

This section aims to demonstrate the relation between the findings and the hypotheses along with the author's assessment of the trustworthiness of this research, and finally some implications in order to improve current situations of employee's motivation at multinational companies in Vietnam.

### **5.1. The interactions between key findings and hypotheses**

As indicated in previous section, the first research question is related to employees' satisfaction level to contemporary working environment and policies of their companies. The findings of this research illustrate a good sign for multinational companies operating in Vietnam when the level of job satisfaction of employees in the two companies is relatively high at present. With regard to this result, the hypothesis  $H_0$  - multinational companies operating in Vietnam have a high level of employees' job satisfaction – is proven to be true.

By the way, it is essential to prioritize building up an attractive rewards system for achievements, recognition treatments and advancements since it is appraised to be the most motivating working factor by the respondents. This finding supports as a proof for hypothesis  $H_3$ : Having good rewards systems, recognition treatments and development opportunities for employees will enhance employee motivation. Likewise, relied on the findings, establishing an attractive payment system and strategy for salary, welfare and compensation ( $H_1$ ), together with developing a friendly and supportive working environment ( $H_2$ ) can boost up the employee's motivation in multinational companies operating in Vietnam. In other words, the findings clearly respond to the second research question of "What factors can motivate employees to work? Which one is the most motivating factor?". These findings also support to all three hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ , and so far prove these hypotheses to be true.

### **5.2. The gaps between key findings and literature reviews**

Like many preceding studies in the same field, this paper is applied quantitative research method via a questionnaire survey to approach the problem. Nonetheless, the outcome of this research is a bit different from previous ones. The biggest dissimilarity here is the findings of this research clarify that having good recognition treatments and advancements is valued as the most motivating factor at work, while it is salary and compensation that usually ranks the first place among motivator factors in almost previous studies of employee's motivation using the same research method. It might be

because job duty is one aspect that affects the demand on motivation factors. Since almost respondents from YLVN and TCV have job duties that require much of interpersonal communication and encouragement among co-workers and between supervisors and employees as well, the respondents tend to have higher demands for acts of appreciation from others together with opportunities to challenge and advance themselves. Anyhow, this difference raises a requirement for considering every aspect of the employee's demand on motivation factors at work as it will change incessantly as the time flies.

Furthermore, based on the findings of this research, although the majority of respondents recommended the companies to have a higher and more attractive payment level in order to enhance the employee motivation, the extrinsic factors in terms of rewards system for achievements, recognition treatments and advancements are considered to be more important in motivating employees to work effectively. It means that whereas salary and other extrinsic factors related to money are still regarded as one of the most motivating criteria, intrinsic factors including recognition treatments, achievements and advancements are appraised as more important factors that can motivate the employees to work creatively and effectively. The reason may be there is a disparity between what people choose and what they really want due to influences of social norms as Vietnam has a collectivism culture. Since salary as well as other physical extrinsic factors are no longer regarded as a precondition but still one of the most attractive working motivator factors towards the employees in the context of Vietnamese market, the findings of this research will be not totally true if regarding to either Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Herzberg's two-factor theory separately. One evidence for this issue is the research conducted by Truong (2011), which is discussed in section 2.3.3. Thus, it can be said that the combination of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory is entirely suitable to be applied as theoretical background for doing the research of improving employee's motivation at work in multinational companies operating in a developing country which has a transitional economics under the impacts of globalization like Vietnam.

### **5.3. Implications to literatures**

This research aims to show a general view about realistic situation of employee motivation in multinational companies in Vietnam market as well as to explore what can motivate the employees to work more effectively and can detain them in leaving the companies. Since there has been hitherto almost no previous researches about employee motivation within multinational companies operating in Vietnam as being mentioned before, the findings from this research contribute a theoretical basis to future studies of

the same topic. With regard to this report, future researchers can create further studies to approach and analyze other aspects that can be adapted to multinational companies in Vietnam in order to improve their employee motivation.

#### **5.4. Implications to practitioners**

It is crucial for multinational companies to understand and practice employee motivation effectively on their business performance as well as to regard employee motivation as one of the top priorities of management.

This research contributes to evaluating factors that can be applied in order not only to motivate the employees at work, but also to keep them stay with the companies. In conjunction with having a reasonable and attractive payment system, it requires the companies to set up an adequate system of achievement, recognition treatment and advancement which can satisfy the employees by giving them opportunities to be appreciated and to be promoted at work. Moreover, it is necessary to establish trustworthy and supportive relationships between supervisors and employees and among co-workers as well.

The following are some recommendations that, in the author's judgement, can be applied for multinational companies so as to improve employee's motivation in the context of Vietnam.

#### **Adjusting performance appraisal system**

To make an appropriate system of achievement, recognition treatment and advancement as well as a stimulating wage payment system, the performance appraisal method of multinational companies should be well designed and be accommodated to the context of the host countries. As the assessed criteria are the key function in a performance process, they should be adequate, obvious and in comprehensively.

In reality, after the annual performance appraisal, employees in both YLVN and TCV at the moment receive the final results with only the evaluation grade for their performance but no feedbacks or comments. The author recommend that the performance feedbacks should be precise and privately given back to each employee along with the evaluation results. This aims to avoid subjective and inaccurate performance from supervisors, which can affect to the recognition and achievement of the employees, and then can lead to employee's demotivation. Additionally, it could help the employees understand exactly how supervisors appreciated their performance,

what they need to do to attain their goals. From that, the employees can adjust their working behavior to perform better.

### **Accommodating the interest and challenges at work**

Not too many but some respondents stated in their answer for the survey that the companies should diversify the job tasks for their employees. In other words, they are now seeking for something really interesting and challenging them at work. Thus, in the author's opinion, the companies should have more rotations and diversification in employees' job duties. It is also needed to give the employees more opportunities to take the autonomy in their work. By raising the autonomy in dealing with job tasks, they could take full of responsibilities.

### **5.5. Limitations**

With reference to the findings, this research yet has several limitations.

First of all, owing to restrictions of time, finance and manpower, the population of the research and the number of conducted surveys are still small. Since only two companies are selected to do the survey while multinational companies in Vietnam are plentiful at the moment, the result of this research cannot cover situations of the whole region of Vietnam. Researchers in the future should gather data in a larger scope so as to access the issues in a more comprehensive way.

In addition, since this research is lack of consent forms being completed and signed by the respondents, it seems that the ethical issues of this research were not stated clearly enough. This shortcoming should be improved in the future researches.

Besides, researches on employee motivation in multinational companies in the context of Vietnam market are not very many. Most of researches before focus on HRM in domestic corporations of Vietnam normally. Therefore, the source of reference is also limited. Future researchers can use the results of this paper as a reference to combine with their findings.

### **5.6. Next steps for further research in the future**

This research mainly concentrates on analyzing the impact on employee motivation of the factors that are related to internal strategies and policies of the companies. In fact, general personal factors such as gender, age, marriage status, or culture also have certain effects to the motivation at work of the employee. Thus, it is

recommended to investigate how those factors influence employee motivation in the further research.

In addition, the data using for this research is gathered by the questionnaire survey which includes mostly multiple choice questions, and no specific case for respondents to discuss on. Therefore, responses may not be really trustworthy since respondents are not willing to answer based on their true feelings. In-depth interview can be a better method for further research in the future to approach these issues.

The last section will illustrate the author's contribution to the purposes of this research, which is concluded from the findings.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This research purposes to investigate the factors that can be used to motivate employees in multinational companies to work efficiently in the context of the present economics of Vietnam. Through the findings, it can be said that even though the level of job satisfaction of employees in multinational companies in Vietnam at the moment is relatively high, there are some factors should be improved, especially rewards systems for achievements, recognition treatments, and advancements, so the companies can boost their employee motivation. Furthermore, the results of this research shows that the majority of the respondents value the recognition treatments and advancements as the most motivating factor at work, while in almost previous studies applied the same quantitative research method, salary and compensation usually ranks the first place among motivator factors. It can be said that employee motivation is an inconsistent process depending on the context of the companies and of the host country.

In conclusion, employee motivation is considered as a good method in order to encourage employees to work creatively and efficiently. It should be regarded as one of the top priorities of any organization, especially for multinational companies since they have diversifications in region and culture of employees within the companies. The results of this research contribute to effectively motivate the employees to work and are valuable for multinational companies operating in Vietnam to set up further employee motivation strategies.

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## APPENDIX 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for spending your time in this survey. My name is LE Phuong, an MBA student of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU), Japan. Now I'm doing a research about employee motivation in Multinational companies in Vietnam. All your answers for this survey will be kept confidential and used for study purposes only.

*From Q1 to Q7, please put a  in the box next to the answers that you choose.*

#### Q1: Gender

Female

Male

#### Q2: Age

18 – 20 years old

21 – 30 years old

31 – 40 years old

41 – 50 years old

51 – 60 years old

#### Q3: Educational level

Senior high school

College

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree or higher

#### Q4: Position

BOD/BOM

Administration staff

Accounting staff

IT staff

HR staff

Sales staff

Documentary staff

CS staff

Other

**Q5: Type of working contract**

- Less than 1 year       1 – 3 years       Permanent staff

**Q6: Actually years working at the company**

- Less than 1 year       1 – 3 years       3 – 5 years  
 5 – 10 years       More than 10 years

**Q7: Wage rate (VND/month)**

- Less than 5 million       5 – 8 million  
 8 – 10 million       Over 10 million

*For the next question, please circle the answers that you choose. The scale is as the following:*

- 1 – Very satisfied  
2 – Satisfied  
3 – Dissatisfied  
4 – Very dissatisfied

**Q8: How satisfied are you?**

<b>Salary, Welfare and Compensation</b>				
a. The level of payment (considering with productivity at work)	1	2	3	4
b. The fairness of the payment system	1	2	3	4
<b>Supervisor, Communication and Recognition</b>				
a. Communication skills of supervisors	1	2	3	4
b. The expertise and supports from supervisors	1	2	3	4
c. HR allocation of supervisors	1	2	3	4

d. The feedbacks from supervisors	1	2	3	4
e. The communication among co-workers	1	2	3	4
f. The supports from co-workers	1	2	3	4
g. The feedbacks from co-workers	1	2	3	4
<b>Achievement and Advancement</b>				
a. Rewards for achievements	1	2	3	4
b. Opportunities to obtain achievements	1	2	3	4
c. Opportunities to be recognized	1	2	3	4
d. Opportunities to improve and develop expert skills and personal skills	1	2	3	4
e. The interesting level of job tasks	1	2	3	4
f. Opportunities to be promoted at work	1	2	3	4

*For Q9 and Q10, please write your answer in the space provided.*

**Q9: Factors motivate you the most at work**

- Attractive salary, welfare and compensation
- Organization culture, working atmosphere and relationships
- Rewards systems, recognition and opportunities to be promoted
- Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Q10: Recommendations for improving employees' satisfaction for the company**

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## APPENDIX 2

### COMMITMENT TO INFORMATION SECURITY WITH YLVN (VIETNAMESE VERSION)

Ngày ..06..tháng ..03..năm 2018

#### CAM KẾT BẢO MẬT THÔNG TIN

Tên tôi là : Lê Thị Thanh Phương

Ngày tháng năm sinh: 25/11/1992

Số CMND: 163130043

Nay tôi làm bản cam kết này xin cam đoan không được thảo luận hoặc tiết lộ bất kỳ thông tin hoặc tài liệu nào có chứa Thông tin bảo mật của Công ty TNHH Yusen Logistics (Việt Nam)

Có trụ sở tại: Phòng 805, Tòa nhà HITC, 239 Xuân Thủy, Cầu Giấy Hà Nội như sau:

##### I. Nội dung cam kết.

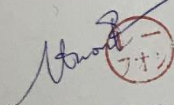
1. Không được tiết lộ thông tin bảo mật cho bất cứ ai, bao gồm cả các thành viên trong gia đình, nếu không có sự cho phép bằng văn bản của Công ty
2. Không được sao chép bất cứ thông tin nào kể cả tài liệu văn phòng dưới bất kỳ hình thức nào không nhằm mục đích phục vụ công việc được giao.
3. Hủy bằng máy hủy giấy hoặc bằng một cách thức an toàn khác các tài liệu in ấn hoặc viết tay chứa thông tin mật nếu không dùng đến.
4. Bảo vệ quyền sở hữu trí tuệ đối với tài sản trí tuệ hữu hình và vô hình của Công ty. Khi trích dẫn tên và thương hiệu của Công ty khác trong các ấn phẩm của Công ty phải được sự chấp thuận của Công ty
5. Không sử dụng những thông tin bảo mật ngoài mục đích phục vụ cho việc làm đề án tốt nghiệp. Không tiết lộ dưới bất kỳ hình thức nào, thành văn hoặc bất thành văn như: (i) Công bố về bất cứ vấn đề nào liên quan đến công tác kinh doanh, chính sách, kế hoạch hoặc các quyết định của Công ty về bất cứ vấn đề gì; (ii) Phát hành hoặc cho lưu hành bất cứ văn bản, hồ sơ, sách báo, tranh ảnh hoặc thư từ có liên quan đến Công ty.
6. Không tham gia bất kỳ cuộc nói chuyện, phỏng vấn hoặc phát hình nào về bất cứ vấn đề gì có liên quan đến Công ty nếu chưa được sự phê duyệt bằng văn bản của công ty trước khi thực hiện.
7. Không công bố bất kỳ tuyên bố, thông tin, hoặc sự giải thích nào có liên quan đến Công ty do chính Người lao động hoặc người khác tạo ra nếu chưa có sự phê duyệt bằng văn bản của Công ty
8. Không công bố, phát tán, đăng tải dưới mọi hình thức (bao gồm nhưng không giới hạn ở các phương tiện truyền thông, các diễn đàn, các trang mạng xã hội như Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blog cá nhân,...), các thông tin, hình ảnh (i) liên quan đến hoạt động nghiệp vụ của Công ty hoặc của khách hàng khi chưa được sự phê duyệt bằng văn bản của Công ty; (ii) gây ảnh hưởng xấu đến hình ảnh, uy tín của Công ty hoặc cuộc sống các nhân, danh dự và nhân phẩm của người lao động trong công ty.

##### II. Hiệu lực và cam kết chung:



1. Tôi cam kết hiểu rõ và thực hiện đúng các nội dung của Bản Cam kết này. Mọi sự thay đổi, bổ sung hay chỉnh sửa chỉ có giá trị khi được sự chấp thuận của Công ty hoặc người được ủy quyền bằng văn bản.
2. Bất kỳ sự vi phạm nào sẽ bị áp dụng các hình thức xử lý theo quy định của Pháp Luật
3. Bản Cam kết này có hiệu lực thực hiện kể từ ngày ký.

Ký và ghi rõ họ tên

A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by a red circular stamp containing the characters "Lê Thị Thanh Phương".

Lê Thị Thanh Phương  
06/03/2018

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **COMMITMENT TO INFORMATION SECURITY WITH YLVN (ENGLISH TRANSLATED VERSION)**

*Hanoi, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018*

#### **COMMITMENT TO INFORMATION SECURITY**

Full name of Recipient: **LE Thi Thanh Phuong**

Date of birth: November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1992

ID no.: 163130043

Disclosing Party: **Yusen Logistics (Vietnam) Co., Ltd.** (hereafter YLVN)

Head office: R805, HITC Building, 239 Xuan Thuy, Cau Giay District, Hanoi, Vietnam.

I, LE Thi Thanh Phuong, hereby undertake not to reveal any records and/or materials consist of confidential information of YLVN.

#### **I. Contents of the commitment**

1. Do not reveal any confidential information of YLVN to anybody, even family's members, without permission of the company.
2. Do not copy any materials and/or information in any form that is not aimed to solve job tasks.

3. Annul all printed and/or written documents consist of confidential information of the company if do not use.
4. Protect the intellectual property rights of the company. Do not quote name and/or logo of other companies in YLVN's printed matters without permission of the company.
5. All the confidential information of the company will be used solely for study purposes and for no other purpose whatsoever. Do not reveal any information in any form, such as (i) promulgating the business activities, policies, plans, and/or decisions of the company; (ii) releasing or circulating documents, images, books and papers, letters, etc. related to the company.
6. Do not participate in any talks, interviews and/or recordings related to YLVN without permission of the company.
7. Do not release any proclamations, information, and/or explanations related to YLVN from the employees without permission of the company.
8. Do not reveal, promulgate, and/or upload (on Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, etc.) the information and/or images that (i) are related to business activities of YLVN and/or the company's customers without the company's permission, or (ii) can cause bad image and/or lead to lose prestige for the company and/or the employees of the company.

## **II. The validity of the commitment**

1. I undertake to understand and to perform my responsibility in accordance with the above contents. This commitment may not be amended except in writing signed by the company or a person in charge.
2. Any breaches of the commitment will be tried according to the law in force.
3. This commitment will be valid as of the date first above written.

Signature of Recipient: LE Thi Thanh Phuong

Date: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**--- END ---**