Human Resources Management and Educational Innovation: Understanding Lecturer Engagement in Vietnamese Private Higher Education

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Abstract. This study investigates how human resource management (HRM) and educational innovation influence organizational engagement for lecturers at private universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. As Vietnam's higher education landscape transitions to privatization, maintaining lecturer commitment is critical. However, research on drivers of engagement in Vietnamese higher education is lacking. This study involves surveys and interviews with lecturers to test a conceptual model incorporating HRM, innovation, satisfaction, and engagement. Quantitative analysis will examine hypothesized relationships among these factors. Results are expected to reveal how recruitment, training, decentralization, and integration dynamics shape lecturers' organizational commitment through engagement and satisfaction. These findings will offer insights into strategies for leveraging human capital and innovation to support educational quality amidst reform. This timely study contributes empirical evidence tailored to Vietnam's changing academic context. Limitations related to the localized scope provide opportunities for further cross-institutional research.

Keywords*:* Human Resource Management, Educational Innovation, Employee Organizational engagement, Private Universities, Ho Chi Minh City.

1. Introduction

High-quality human resources constitute the bedrock of organizational development and competitiveness, playing a pivotal role in determining an organization's trajectory. Their importance lies not only in their competencies and skills but also in their long-term dedication and commitment to the organization. This dedication profoundly impacts an organization's competitive edge and the quality of the products or services it offers. It is within this context that the dynamics of employee engagement become a critical focal point, as it is this engagement that underpins the seamless integration and utilization of high-quality human resources. From 2016 to 2020, higher education in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam underwent a major transformation. The number of private universities saw a substantial rise, accompanied by an influx of new students. Concurrently, public universities experienced a decline in their training capacities. This shift indicated a discernible transition within the education market, as it moved from being predominantly publicly driven to a landscape dominated by private universities, a transformation particularly pronounced in Ho Chi Minh City. In light of this shift, the necessity of educational innovation is heightened, calling for a careful examination of the psychological factors and aspirations of lecturers. These factors have a direct bearing on their engagement and commitment to maintaining and elevating the quality of the human resource pool.

There have been many studies on employee engagement and the importance of employee engagement such as Daniels (2016), Juan and Yao (2017), Jiang (2016). And in Vietnam, employee engagement in general has become an important topic for many experts' discussions and research in recent years. While studies on engagement in the corporate environment are very popular such as: Do Phu Tran Tinh and Nguyen Van Kien (2013), Pham The Anh and Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013), Nguyen Thi Phuong Dung and Huynh Thi Cam Ly (2014), Ho Huy Tuu and Pham Hong Liem (2019), research on this topic in higher education environments is difficult to be found, especially in the context of university autonomy, which is a trend that requires universities to increasingly emphasize efficiency, economic and financial factors. These gaps should be the reason why the author carried out this study to determine the factors and research models of factors affecting the organizational commitment of employees. The article satisfies the following objectives: (1) Reviewing the theoretical basis and research papers related to the relationship between human resource management, education innovation and organizational engagement of employees, in the context of higher education. (2) Proposing hypotheses and research models on the influence of human resource management and education innovation on employee organizational engagement in the context of private universities in Ho Chi Minh City. (3) Presenting of research methods and procedures used. This paper has the following main contents: (1) A brief review of the theoretical basis and research related to the research problem. (2) Determine the relationship between the factors of human resource management and educational innovation on employee's organizational engagement; and (3) Design the research process.

2. Theoretical Basis

The theoretical basis of the article is related to topics: human resource management, education innovation, employee's organization satisfaction and employee's organizational commitment. According to the authors Nguyen Ngoc Quan (2012) and Alshurideh (2022) human resource management is the maintenance, development, coordination and rational and effective use of an organization's human resources to accomplish its objectives. The human resource management factors include: (1) Attracting human resources, (2) Training and developing, (3) Maintaining human resources.

Education innovation is the intentional introduction and application within a university of ideas, processes, procedures, products, or new educational services that the organization is capable of applying in the relevant activities, manipulated to provide substantial benefits to aspects of the organization or society more broadly; and based on the views of Resolutions TW29 (2013), OECD (2016) and Findikoglu (2016).

For employee satisfaction, the author uses background theory including Maslow's need theory

(1943). Similar is the two-factor theory of Herzberg (1959). Herzberg concludes that factors such as corporate policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions and wages are factors that are perpetuating rather than motivating. Besides, motivation is the factors that enrich one's work. Finally, there is Victor Vroom's expectation theory. This author assumes that an individual will act in a certain way based on expectations of a certain outcome or the attractiveness of that outcome. The model of expectation theory is the integration of attraction, expectation, and motivational means.

The employee's engagement to the organization is demonstrated by understanding the organization, committed to devoting capacity to successfully implement business strategies; and vice versa, they also want to know the organization's expectations for their role so that they can meet and improve themselves in a sustainable way in the future. The background theory related to employee engagement refers to X Theory (which promotes employee recognition) and Y Theory to motivate workers through awakening their potential..

3. Literature Review

3.1. Research on human resource management factors

Research by Demo et al (2012) has built a model of 6 factors determining the scale and policies of human resource management including: Recruitment and Selection, Joining, Training, development and education, Working conditions, Competency-based performance evaluation, Compensation and Rewards. Research by Pham The Anh and Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013) has built and tested the model of practical human resource management factors including: Recruitment, Working Environment, Training, Employee Evaluation, Compensation and benefits, Promotion opportunities and Participation in activities. Do Phu Tran Tinh and Nguyen Van Kien (2013) analyzed the factors affecting human resource management in enterprises of young workers, the factors were identified as income, career goals, working conditions, relations with colleagues, relations with leaders, levels of empowerment, rewards, benefits and opportunities for promotion. Research by Mura et al (2017) highlights current trends in human resource management and development in small and medium-sized enterprises in the countries of Visegrad Group, the authors present the Micro-factors have an impact on the decision-making of human resource managers such as: human resource planning, recruitment, mentoring, company culture and labor relations. Kavyashree et al (2022) consider the factors affecting the organization's human resource management strategy, The results of the multiple regression method show that employee training, performance evaluation and rewards, as well as recognition are all important elements of human resource management practices.

3.2. Research on the relationship between human resource management and engagement

Research by Pham The Anh and Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013) shows that career development opportunities, remuneration and working environment are important factors having a positive effect on employee engagement. Do Phu Tran Tinh and Nguyen Van Kien (2013) have analyzed the factors affecting the long-term commitment to the enterprise of young workers, giving the factors affecting the long-term commitment to the enterprise of the young workers including income, career goals, working conditions, relationships with colleagues, relationships with leaders, levels of empowerment, rewards, benefits, and opportunities for promotion. Phuong Dung (2014) has proposed a model to evaluate human resource management and engagement including: leadership, employee relations, task orientation, compensation - encouragement, training - development, knowledge sharing, personal characteristics, job opportunities, organizational structure, working environment and organizational culture. Presbitero (2017) has argued that improvements in human resource management practices, especially in the areas of reward management and training and development, will bring about a positive and significant change in the level of employees' engagement. Alima (2017) has proposed that human resource management methods should be selected as Career advancement, Reward - Recognition as well as Training - Development. Research by Oluwatayo and Adetoro (2020) have showed that the

degree of engagement is mainly predicted by human resource management activities and employees' personal attributes.

3.3. Research on education innovation factors

Willingham (2010) has affirmed that the most important goal is not to study STEM too much, but to focus on learners and their attitudes. Amos and Okemakinde (2010) have identified limitations that will affect the education innovation process including: inconsistent educational philosophy, accurate statistical data lacking, economic limitations, poor planning techniques, as well as sustainable education reform implementation failure. Brunner (1996) and Sahlberg (2011) have shared the view that the best way to achieve superior education is to shape an innovative, highly social educational culture. Tran Van Chuong (2012) has argued that leadership style, experience from management practices and education innovation requirements have had an impact on education innovation activities in an educational institution. The author also proposes that the leadership style of educational administrators has a dominant impact. Csikszentmihalyi (2013) has emphasized the importance of creating a macro environment that integrates culture - institutions with policy, with the microenvironment as well as the immediate context of employees to promote education innovation. Both Polka - Kardash (2013) and De León (2013) have refered to technological innovations in higher education as well as its strong impact on innovation in education. Brighouse (2014) has argued that educational philosophy is the main point of view, the main idea, the core of educational activities that the subject sets out to guide educational improvement activities. Zhu's research (2015) has identified seven aspects of organizational culture that affect education innovation including: goal orientation, participatory decision making, innovation orientation, and effective structured leadership, supportive leadership, shared vision. Research results of Asiedu (2020) has shown that transformational leadership capable of managing organizational learning and knowledge will positively impact performance due to education innovation.

3.4. Research on the relationship between education innovation and engagement

Bozic and Dunlap (2013) have proposed methods by which faculty and students have the opportunity to promote economic development through: basic research, applied research, workforce education, training, technology transfering and technical support. Louis et al. (2015) has suggested that teachers adopting education innovation are related to taking risks and being visionary about trying something new. Crichton (2015) has stated that "We need to change the role of teachers. How do we view teachers as people? How do we elevate teachers in society? How do we stimulate education innovation among faculty?". Visvizi et al. (2018) have argued that the degree of decentralization and universities' activities is the main contributing factor to the innovation in the educational environment of workers. Innovation through a decentralized, decentralized structure is a factor that significantly promotes employee engagement. Crichton's research (2016) has discovered that: working process, ability to socialize, system - thinking model, decentralizing ability and decentralize innovation activities having an influence on engagement of the lecturer. Rao (2016) has argued that the cooperative relationship between workers, the model of educational socialization, and regional and international integration both accelerate the education innovation process and increase the engagement of employees. Similarly, in his research results, John (2021) proposed factors affecting education innovation including: (1) educational philosophy, (2) academic freedom, (3) hierarchy optimization, (4) innovation and (5) technology-integrated practice platform building. Tran Van Thuy (2021) gives the main and core views and ideas that reflect in general the purpose of education in order to meet the requirements of society in a specific historical period having action-oriented effects on people in innovation.

3.5. Research on employee satisfaction factors

Jiang (2016) has identified different variables of organization satisfaction as factors related to organizational development, job guarantee, salary and benefits policy, promotion and career development. Research by Margaretha et al (2021) has shown that organization satisfaction aspects of

employees include: job, salary, colleagues, recruitment and promotion. Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy (2020) assessed that satisfaction affects all aspects of the unit's operations and affects the most 6 main factors, including: relationship with superiors, training and promotion, job characteristics, relations with colleagues, benefits - working conditions and salary/income. Ha Nam Khanh Giao (2020) has identified 5 factors affecting employee satisfaction with work, sorted by level of impact in descending order: leaders, training, promotion, income, working conditions and benefits.

3.6. Research on the relationship between satisfaction and engagement

Jensen (2019) raises a different view that satisfaction can not always create attachment. The organization will gain employee engagement by making them satisfied. Margaretha (2021) argues that the three components of organizational commitment (pride, effort and loyalty) are influenced by the employee's organization satisfaction aspects. Tran Kim Dung (2018) concluded that organizations will gain employee engagement by making them satisfied in various aspects including work-related needs such as: recruitment , promotion, leadership, colleagues, salary, benefits and working conditions. Ho Huy Tuu and Pham Hong Liem (2019) show that the components of engagement are influenced by the factor of more effort when they are satisfied with their work, work in accordance with their abilities, and feel their goals consistent with the overall goals of the organization, pride of employees, the brand of the organization and ultimately employees will be more loyal when receiving the support of the organization. Table 1 below summarizes the studies related to the factors of the research topic.

Table 1. Document review of human resource management factors, education innovation and employee's organization satisfaction

Authors	Human resource management factors			Education innovation factors									Employees satisfaction factors		
	Recruitment	*Training and developing*	*Maintain*	*Educational philosophy*	*Decentralization*	*Socialization*	*Integration*	*Organizational culture*	*Leadership style*	*Creative innovation*	*Academic*	*Technology integration*	*Remuneration policy*	*Leader*	*Working environment*
Pham The Anh and Nguyen Thi Hong Dao (2013)	x	x											x		
Do Phu Tran Tinh and Nguyen Van Kien (2013)		x			x				x				x		x
Nguyen Thi Phuong Dung (2014)		x						x	x						x
Kavyashree et al (2022)		x											x		
Presbitero (2017)		x											x		
Alima (2017)		x	x										x		
Oluwatayo and Adetoro (2020)	x	x	x												
Willingham (2010)										x	x				
Amos and Okemakinde (2010)				x											
Brunner (1996)						x									
Sahlberg (2011)						x									
Tran Van Chuong (2012)									x						
Bozic and Dunlap (2013)										x		x			
Csikszentmihalyi (2013)						x	x								
Polka and Kardash						x						x			

Authors	Human resource management factors			Education innovation factors									Employees satisfaction factors		
	Recruitment	*Training and developing*	*Maintain*	*Educational philosophy*	*Decentralization*	*Socialization*	*Integration*	*Organizational culture*	*Leadership style*	*Creative innovation*	*Academic*	*Technology integration*	*Remuneration policy*	*Leader*	*Working environment*
(2013)															
De Len (2013)				x											
Brighouse (2014)									x						
Louis et al (2015)					x				x						
Crichton (2015)									x						
Zhu (2015)					x										
Visvizi et al (2018)					x	x		x							
Crichton (2016)						x		x							
Rao (2016)															
Asiedu et al (2020)				x	x					x	x	x			
John (2021)				x											
Tran Van Thuy (2021)							x								
Nguyen Thi Lan Phuong (2022)													x		x
Jiang (2016)													x		x
Tran Kim Dung (2018)								x					x		x
Ho Huy Tuu and Pham Hong Liem (2019)													x	x	x
Dinh Kiem and Duong Le Cam Thuy (2020)								x					x	x	x
Ha Nam Khanh Giao (2020)	x	x											x		x

(Source: Author's compilation, 2023)

After reviewing the literature related to the research problem, a number of factors gradually emerged as an indispensable component besides the binding relationships to reflect the influence of human resource management and education innovation on employee's organizational engagement. Human resource management factors: (1) Attracting talents including recruitment and working environment, (2) Training and developing existing human resources, (3) Maintaining human resources through remuneration policies, training policies and promotion capabilities, and conduct fair employee evaluation. Education innovation factors: (1) Educational philosophy, (2) Decentralization (or empowerment), (3) Organizational culture and (4) Integration in the context of university autonomy.

The impact of Human Resource Management, Educational Innovation on Organizational Satisfaction and Attachment is shown through the following point of view. The first is the important role of satisfaction leads to organizational commitment. By making employees satisfied through the human resource management activities analyzed above, it will lead to organizational commitment; Human resource management also has a positive impact on education innovation. Similar is the impact of education innovation; Education innovation also has an impact on employees' organization satisfaction. Satisfaction acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between human resource management, education innovation and organizational commitment. It makes sense that employees who are satisfied with the organization will be more likely to stay with the organization for a long time.

4. Research Gap

Regarding the component factors, through the process of reviewing related studies, the author found that there is widespread recognition of the positive impact of the factors of human resource management,

organization satisfaction and innovation on employee engagement. However, in the environment of higher education institutions, some authors such as Abdullahia (2021), Sulistiowati (2018), Juan and Yao (2017) and Heick (2016) only confirm the role of satisfaction factor. In fact, in the private higher education environment in Vietnam today, innovation is one of the causes leading to the layoff of workers in general and lecturers in particular. Therefore, education innovation will be considered in this study to assess its influence on employee engagement.

Also through the review of the literature, the author concludes that there is currently no research by the previous authors that comprehensively examines the role of human resource management such as the ability to attract talent, train, develop and maintain human resources who are lecturers working in the environment of private universities in Ho Chi Minh City. In addition, through the literature review, the author confirms that no previous studies have evaluated the simultaneous impact of human resource management and education innovation on outcomes on employee engagement (Van Van, 2021; Resolution 29-NQ/TW). Finally, identifying the components of education innovation is also very important in ensuring the quality of teaching, integration, and development of schools in Vietnam but has not been done by previous researchers. This study considers this as a research gap as well as proposes the components of education innovation factors including educational philosophy, decentralization, organizational culture as well as proactive and effective international integration in education - training.

5. Research Hypothesis And Model

Hypothetical factors of human resource management; Based on the research gap and the background theory, the author proposes the following research hypotheses. The first group is hypothesized about the factors of human resource management. Storey (2016), Nankervis and Stanton (2010), Khan and Sheikh (2012) have argued that the role of talent attraction with activities of analyzing and describing job positions, recruitment, selection, and arrangement of task is very important; Hence, the author proposes the following hypothesis.

> ➢ *Hypothesis H1a: Attracting talent has a positive effect on human resource management at private universities.*

Similarly, Storey (2016) concludes that human resource development strategy is the identification and management of employee learning and development combined with the development of business and corporate strategies for the future. From there, the author proposes the following hypothesis related to training and development factors.

> ➢ *Hypothesis H1b: Training and development have a positive influence on human resource management at private universities.*

According to Teir and Zhang (2016), Allui and Sahni (2016), Steven (2019) as well as Fuad (2020), retention plans become even more important because turnover of key employees can affect adversely affect the organization; The hypothesis for this relationship is as follows.

> ➢ *Hypothesis H1c: Retention of human resources has a positive effect on human resource management at private universities.*

Human resource management factors hypotheses have been summarized and shown in Figure 1 as follows.
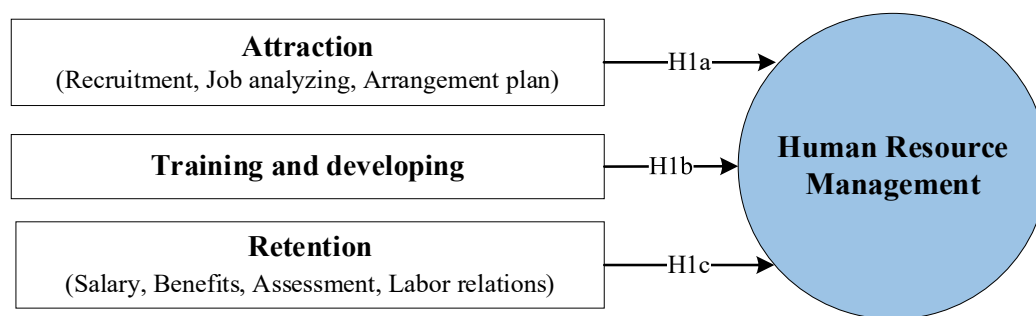
(Source: Author compilation, 2023)

Fig.1: Human resource management factors hypotheses

The effect of satisfaction on employee's organizational engagement hypothesis was formed based on the statement of Alshurideh (2022). This author has argued that only when employees are satisfied can they become a committed employee. A satisfied, loyal employee will create high added value for the organization, the hypothesis is as follows.

➢ *Hypothesis H3: Satisfaction has a positive effect on employee engagement at private universities.*

The influence of human resource management on employee satisfaction and organizational engagement hypothesis. Author Gatenby et al. (2008) believe that human resource management activities positively affect employee satisfaction and engagement, the research hypothesis is as follows.

➢ *Hypothesis H1: Human resource management has a positive effect on employee satisfaction at private universities.*
➢ *Hypothesis H2: Human resource management has a positive effect on employee engagement at private universities.*

Factors of education innovation hypothesis; Aldridge (2013) and Minh Tuyet (2022) have argued that educational philosophy is a guideline of values for education innovation towards; besides, Groves and Quintanilla (2015) have concluded that the fast or slow decentralization of power will also affect the speed of education innovation; Martins (2002), Chavda, (2004), Balsano et al. (2015) have proposed that educational socialization has a positive impact and stimulates education innovation; Finally, educational integration gives organizations quick and easy access to core technologies (Barber et al., 2013; Haug, 2016); Based on the research gap and the background theory, the author proposes the following research hypotheses:

➢ *Hypothesis H4a: Educational philosophy has a positive influence on education innovation at private universities.*
➢ *Hypothesis H4b: Decentralization have a positive influence on education innovation at private universities.*
➢ *Hypothesis H4c: Educational socialization has a positive influence on education innovation at private universities.*
➢ *Hypothesis H4d: Education integration has a positive effect on education innovation at private universities.*

The hypotheses group of factors of educational innovation is shown in Figure 2 as follows.
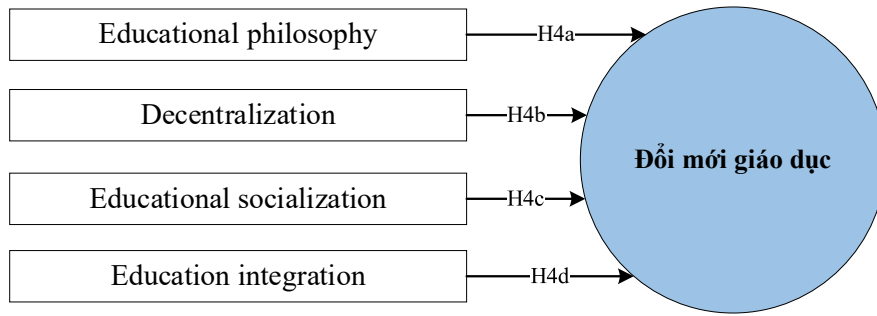
(Source: Author compilation, 2023)
Fig.2: Factors of education innovation hypotheses

The influence of education innovation on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment hypotheses; Margaretha et al (2021) have suggested that the innovative behavior of employees enhances employee satisfaction. Similarly, Crichton (2016) has concluded that organizational innovation plays an important role in employee engagement. Based on the review of the literature and the background theory, the author proposes the following research hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis H4: Education innovation has a positive effect on employee satisfaction at private universities.*
> *Hypothesis H5: Education innovation has a positive effect on employee engagement at private universities.*

The correlation of education innovation and human resource management hypothesis; Vanhala and Ritala (2016) have also confirmed the ambiguous relationship between human resource management and education innovation; Based on the research gap and the background theory, the author proposes a hypothesis about this relationship as follows:

> *Hypothesis H6: Human resource management is correlated with education innovation at private universities.*

Based on the above hypotheses and the presented analysis, the proposed research model is shown in Figure 3 as follows.
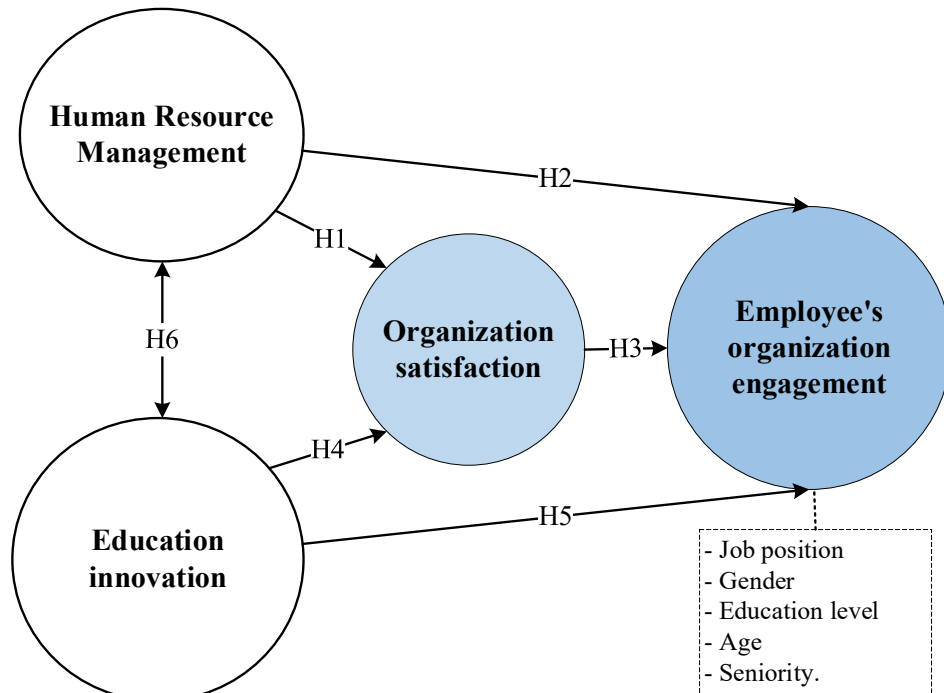

Fig.3: Proposed Research Model (Source: Proposed Author, 2023)

6. Research Methodology

We have designed the research process through three phases and 12 steps, as summarized in Figure 4.
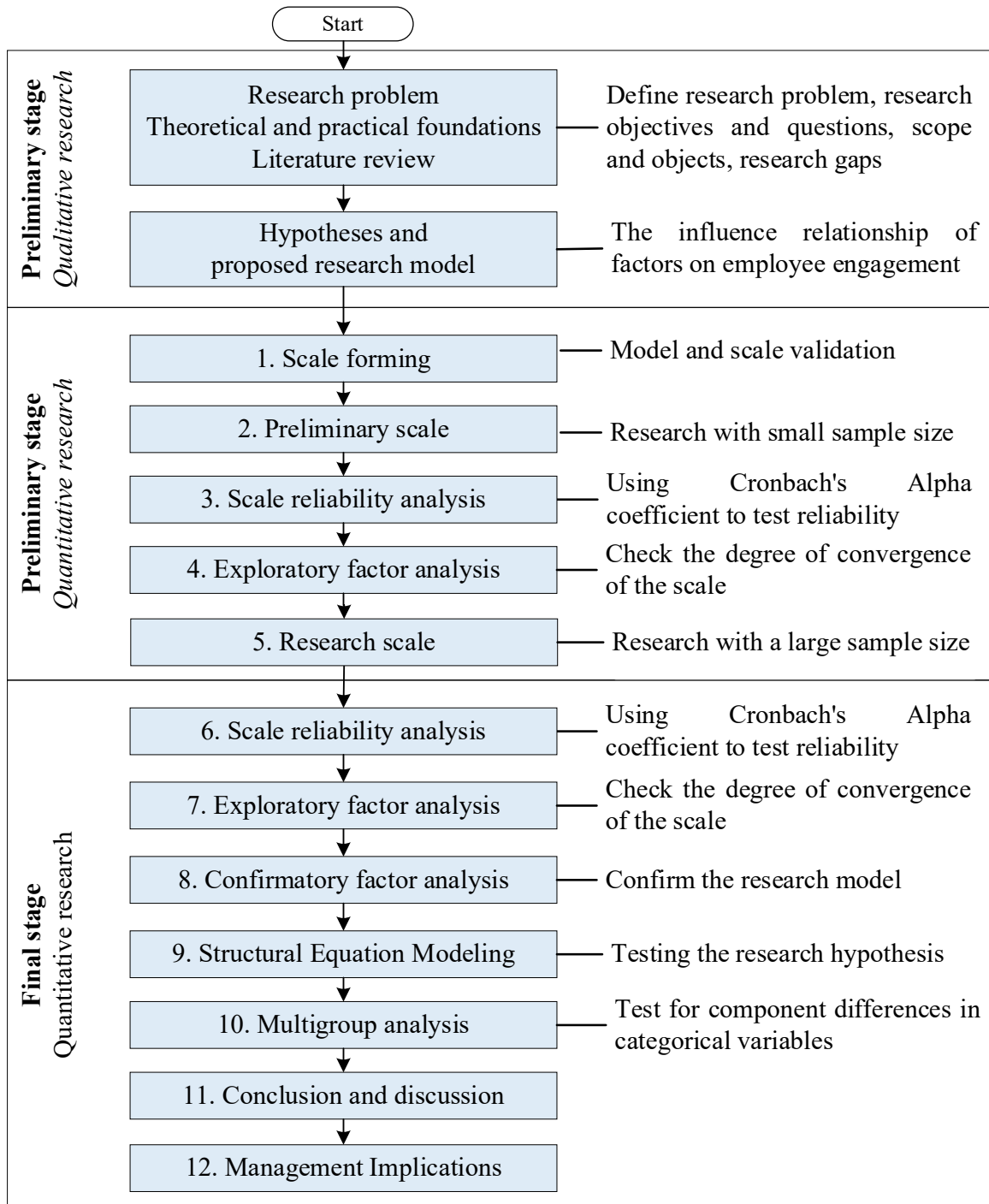

Fig.4: Research process (Source: Author's compilation, 2023)

The first step, the research problem of the article is determined as "The influence of Human Resource Management and Educational Innovation on Employee's Organizational Engagement research model: The case of Private universities in Ho Chi Minh City". This issue is presented through the process of analyzing the need for research in addition to the following contents: research objectives, research questions, research object and scope, research methods, research contribution and research outline.

The content of this step also includes a review of the background theories, related theories, practices

and previous studies on the topic of human resource management, educational innovation, organizational commitment. The results of this step will identify gaps that need to be improved along with the research model.

The fourth step describes the process of factor analysis to discover EFA to reconstruct the preliminary scale and form the official scale. The fifth step, of the preliminary research phase (with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods), in which the main technique is to interview experts. These experts are defined as those who have experience in management, have in-depth knowledge of the research problem, understand the research model proposed in the third step, and know how to build scale construction.

The formal research phase consisting of steps 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 is planned to carry out formal research using quantitative methods. Along with that, the data was analyzed using techniques such as Cronbach's Alpha analysis, EFA analysis, CFA analysis, SEM analysis, Bootstrap test and multigroup analysis. Finally, there are conclusions about the research problem as a basis for proposing managerial implications.

7. Conclusions

This study offered an in-depth literature review and formulated a research model to empirically examine drivers of organizational engagement for lecturers in Vietnam's dynamic private higher education sector. The conceptual model incorporated key factors suggested by the literature, including human resource management activities, educational innovation, satisfaction, and engagement. The proposed methodology aims to validate this model through surveys and interviews with lecturers, providing data for quantitative analysis. The anticipated findings will reveal significant relationships among these factors, offering practical implications for how universities can leverage human capital and innovation. This research provides a framework tailored to the Vietnamese context to understand how human resource practices and educational innovation dynamics shape lecturers' organizational commitment. Limitations related to the localized scope of this study provide opportunities for further research across diverse institutional and cultural settings. Extending this research program can help produce more generalized models to cultivate lecturer engagement for sustaining educational quality.

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