

# Leadership and Communication in HCMC, Vietnam

Adrian Wee Tiong Weng<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> RMIT University Vietnam, Vietnam

Correspondence: Adrian Wee Tiong Weng, RMIT University Vietnam, Vietnam. E-mail: adrian.wee@rmit.edu.vn

Received: December 20, 2016

Accepted: April 14, 2017

Online Published: May 17, 2017

doi:10.5539/ijbm.v12n6p111

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v12n6p111>

## Abstract

Vietnam remains an exciting investment destination. Long term success in this East Asian country, however, requires effective management of resources including employees. This paper examines the literature and interviews with local employees in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to identify cross-cultural communication and leadership issues at the international workplaces.

**Keywords:** culture, communication, leadership, exploratory, qualitative, Vietnam.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The Economist recently declared Vietnam as Asia's next tiger economy. The reasons expressed include rapid economic growth, burgeoning foreign direct investments and a young and educated populace. From 1995 to 2011, Vietnam's economic growth averaged more than 7% per annum helping the country achieve middle income status in a short space of time (World Bank 2013).

Spurring its economic growth is the influx of foreign direct investments or FDI to the country. In 2000, FDI to Vietnam totalled less than USD 1.3 billion. By 2015, notwithstanding the volatility in the global economic and financial markets, FDI to Vietnam hit a peak of USD 11.8 billion (World Bank Group, n.d.). Samsung led a shift into technology investments in Vietnam in 2014 with more than a billion dollars disbursed to set up a smartphone phone factory in the capital city of Hanoi.

Adding to Vietnam's attraction is its young, hardworking and educated populace. The median age of Vietnam's population is a youthful 30.7 years old. In comparison China's median age is more than 36 years old. Further, Vietnam's adult literacy rate of 94% is comparable to China's 95% (World Bank Group, n.d.) Just as importantly, the quality of education in Vietnam is fast improving.

Vietnam surprised everyone in 2015, when its students came out 12 in the global rankings for PISA or Programme for International Student Assessments. Contrary to expectations, Vietnam's students did better in reading, maths and science than many developed countries such as Australia, Britain and the United States (Schleicher 2015).

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

Following closely behind the growth in economy and investments are the influx of foreign companies to Vietnam. These companies not only brought in much needed foreign capital and technical knowhow but also skilled foreign managers. Facing a shortage of trained and qualified personnel in the domestic front, many of these companies turn to expatriate managers to fill the gap.

The introduction of the expatriate managers has helped allay the labour deficit issue to some extent but they do raise other pertinent issues, namely the management of the local workforce. Invariably, the foreign companies long term success in Vietnam depend on their ability to manage the local employees effectively. Questions, however, have been raised on the foreign managers' ability to do so. Several researchers have noted the local employee's inability to communicate and interact with their foreign managers as a key issue (Scott & Banon 2008, Trung & Swierczek, 2009).

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore the local employees experiences working with their foreign managers at

the international workplaces in HCMC. Issues raised are explored from the perspective of communication, culture and leadership. Exploring the issues raised from the three disciplines are important as they are intricately linked. Additionally, incorporating the 3 disciplines will provide this study a more comprehensive and holistic picture of what is going on at the workplace. Previous studies on the subject matter have mainly focused on the managers' perspectives. In comparison, the employees' insights are relatively under researched. This study aims to address this deficit. The plan of this paper is as follows.

This paper begins by reviewing the literature on communication, leadership and culture. Next, the sample employees interviewed and the qualitative methodology used will be explained. The results of the study are meticulously shown in the following section. Finally, the results and the actions that the foreign managers and local employees can take to improve communication and leadership at work are discussed.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Leadership and Communication*

Communication and leadership are closely linked. The many theories developed on leadership in the recent past only reflect the intricate link between the two disciplines. Leadership have been studied at length by various academics and researchers. One of the earliest theories on leadership is trait theory. The trait theory postulates that good leaders have traits that distinguished them from other leaders. Subsequent studies on leadership traits, however, failed to conclusively ascertain this traits set.

This led to the development of the behavioural leadership theories, that is, effective leaders have very distinct behavioural patterns. The theory attracted many followers as it was rather intuitive. Nonetheless, like traits theory, subsequent studies failed to ascertain behaviours which are most effective for leaders. This led to the rise of leadership contingency theories.

Fiedler was one of the first few researchers who promulgated contingent leadership in the early 1950s. He observe that leaders can be task or relationship focused. Whilst the task-oriented leader centers focuses on task completion by articulating clear goals and expectations, the relationship-oriented leader focuses on close relations by regular communication and close support.

Just as important, Fiedler notes that leadership effectiveness depends very much on context. Reinforcing Fiedler's argument, several studies suggest that employee performance do increase when the leader focuses on task (Bass & Bass 2009). The idea is the employees would naturally work harder and faster when their managers' constantly press them on deadlines.

At the same time, other studies point to increased employee satisfaction when the leader focuses on good relations (Bass & Bass 2009). The idea is employees would be more satisfied with managers who cares and supports them at work. As a result, there have been increasing calls for managers to combine the two styles at the workplace.

Tannenbaum and Schmidt followed up on Fiedler's study. They observe that leaders can also be directive or participative. Like the task-oriented leader, the directive leader focuses on task. Nonetheless, the directive leader, focuses on directing the supervising the employee to ensure task completion (Lussier & Achua 2009). And like the relationship-oriented leader, the participative leader focuses on good relations.

The participative leader however emphasises on employee contribution and involvement to boost good relations. Similar to Fiedler, they assert that leadership effectiveness depends on the situation including managers and subordinates. Various studies indicate that directive leadership is more appropriate when employees are unskilled or when when the task is complex. Participative leadership, on the other hand, is more appropriate when the task is organized or when the employee is competent (Yukl 2013).

Based on the works of Fiedler, Tannenbaum and Schmidt, House (1971) formulated the popular path goal theory of leadership. According to the theory, there are four leadership styles that managers tend to take on including supportive, directive, participative and achievement oriented. Like Fiedler, House agreed that the best leadership styles remains contextual. Nonetheless, he disagreed on its application. Whilst Fiedler proposes changing the situation to suit the leadership style, House emphasises changing leadership styles to match the situation. This of course places more pressure on managers to adapt.

### *2.2 Leadership and Culture*

Leadership and culture is similarly linked. Culture naturally influences leadership styles. Different cultures would have different ideas on what makes a good leader. Numerous studies have been made that demonstrated the influence of culture on leadership. Culture refers to the set values and norms of a people group (Triandis

1995). Hofstede (1980) surveyed IBM employees from all over the world and identified four value dimensions that differentiated cultures including individualism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity.

Generally, individualism refers to the importance the cultural group places on the individual as opposed to the group (Hofstede 1980, 2001). Various studies including the GLOBE project indicate that individualism and its opposite number, collectivism has a considerable influence on leadership styles. Researchers from the GLOBE project, a comprehensive study on the preferred leadership styles of countries around the world, found that individualistic cultures favoured leaders who were different, independent and self-governing. Collectivistic cultures on the other hand preferred leaders who were more team oriented (Den Hartog et al. 1999).

Uncertainty avoidance, in turn, relates to the cultural groups' tolerance to uncertainty and ambiguity (Hofstede 1980, 2001). The GLOBE project found high uncertainty avoidance cultures favored leaders who were careful, formal and organized more than in low uncertainty avoidance cultures (Den Hartog et al. 1999). This reinforces an earlier study made by Offermann and Hellmann (1997) that found managers from high uncertainty avoidance countries, tend to be more controlling and less delegating.

Power distance, on the other hand, generally refers to the distribution of power in a cultural group (Hofstede 1980, 2001). High power distance cultures are more likely to tolerate differential power and inequality than low power distance cultures. Various studies indicate that power distance have a strong impact on leadership styles. Dorfman et al. (1997), for instance, made a study on the preferred leadership styles in 5 countries. Whilst they found that the employees surveyed were all in favour of the supportive leadership styles, they were more careful of the alternatives.

Employees from high power distance cultures such as Taiwan and Mexico were more satisfied with the directive leadership style. In contrast, employees from low power distance cultures such as the US preferred the participative leadership style. Dorfman et al. (1997) findings ties in with other research studies done on East Asian leadership. Whilst leadership has been studied at length in the West, comparatively very little has been written about what leadership is like in other cultures such as Confucian East Asia.

The few studies made however do indicate that the paternalistic leadership style remains relevant (Aycan 2004, Pellegrini & Scandura 2008). Paternalism comes from the age old East Asian Confucian heritage (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel 2009). Close relations and hierarchy remain central to the leadership style. Like the paternal fathers, superiors in a company are obliged to supervise and provide for their subordinates. In return, subordinates like dutiful sons, are obliged to defer to their superiors and remain loyal (Aycan 2004).

Aycan (2004) and Dickson et al. (2003) opines that paternal leadership is actually a mix of the directive and supportive leader. Sinha (1990) opines that this particular combination of leadership styles reflects the traditional perception of the leader as a head, namely nurturing on the one hand and authoritative on the other.

### 3. Method

The qualitative research method was employed in this study to explore the employees' experiences working with their foreign managers at the international workplaces. Sample employee participants were selected from 7 organizations in HCMC that have its headquarters in the United States, England or Australia.

The participants included more than 20 male and female employees with experiences working in foreign companies. Most of the employees were young and in their mid 20's. The employees were recommended to the study by trade groups and business associates. The recommendations were particularly helpful as it help bridged the distance between the researcher and study participants.

The employee participants were asked on the concerns they have working and communicating with their managers. They were also asked on how and why they were a concern. Demographic details of the sample participants are outlined in table 1 of the appendix. To ensure privacy, all the names of the participants were replaced with numbers. Field interviews were conducted from 2011 to 2013.

All the interviews were carefully conducted by the author personally. The interviews were also tape recorded. Additionally notes were taken rigorously to help the researcher better analyse the data later. More than half of the recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher personally. An assistant researcher helped with the rest. The researcher, however, checked on all the transcripts for accuracy.

Once transcribed, the interviews were quickly analysed using the grounded theory, constant comparative method advanced by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The researcher methodically read each sentence and paragraph in the transcripts to identify emerging categories or themes. The themes uncovered were subsequently colour coded for referencing.

Finally, the researcher persuaded a colleague to read and analyse several of the interview transcripts. To ensure accuracy and reliability, any differences in findings were carefully investigated. The themes are described in the next few sections.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1 Close Relations

One concern that the employees had was close relations. Discussions with the employees point to the importance of close manager-employee relations. One employee noted,

*'you know in other countries, they try to keep work and relationships separate. Like I'm your manager so I'm not really your friend. But you know in Vietnam, it's a little bit different, it always requires relationships.'*

Close ties are important to the employees as it encourages work communication. Several of the employees noted that they would be more likely to contribute ideas and share work issues if there were close relations with their managers. Younger employees, in turn, pointed out that they would be more inclined to ask their managers for feedback or help when there are close ties.

What is heartening, however, is close relations are not difficult to achieve. Some of the employees suggested the occasional casual meeting after work for dinner or drinks. They noted that these meetings can be very important because it not only facilitates close rapport between manager and employee, but it also provides a forum for them to discuss work issues in an informal manner. One employee explained it this way,

*'like the Western people don't like to share work at dinner, right? But the Vietnamese people when we have the issues of work, we bring it to dinner and we share with others.'*

##### 4.2 Support

The other concern that the employees had was support. Support or rather the lack of support was regularly mentioned. The employees noted that the foreign managers liked them to be able to work alone or work independently.

Several of the employees were all for work independence as they liked the idea of being able to think about how to do their job better. One employee described it this way,

*'I like him (manager) because I have the right to do what I want, to manage my own work. If I need his help, he will jump in to help.'*

One employee relished the opportunity to make mistakes and learn on the job that work independence affords. Another employee appreciated the trust and responsibility that comes with work independence.

Other employees, however, were less amenable to work independence. The feeling is their managers should provide more support. A number of the employees griped about their managers being very proficient at giving vague directions but less conversant when it comes to providing help.

Several of the employees grumbled that their managers focused too much on tasks and deadlines and too little on the people performing the tasks. One employee put it this way, *'my manager is very good at pressuring you, like telling you what you have to do ... but about help and support, not so much.'*

Younger employees, especially, preferred their managers to be more hands on. They wanted their managers to know what is going on and provide them detailed instructions when needed. Older employees, in turn, wanted more guidance when making important decisions.

##### 4.3 Listening

The employees were similarly concerned with their managers' ability to listen. The employees, in particular, wanted their managers to listen to their work concerns or work problems.

In the interviews, the employees related many problems at work including uncertainty over work requirements, demanding pace of work and the complexity of reporting to multiple supervisors. And they wanted their managers to support them better by attending to their work concerns.

From the employees' perspective, however, the managers were not up to the tasks. Several employees observed that their managers' would only give out short instructions. What is worse, little opportunity were given to employees to ask questions or to clarify matters.

Other employees noted that their managers would often dismiss their problems and concerns as trivial. Trivial or not, listening to the employees' concerns remains pertinent. One employee's comment aptly described the prevailing sentiment,

*'when giving out difficult tasks to employees, the managers must make sure staffs understand all the requirements. The managers should also care enough to listen carefully what problems they have.'*

Likewise, the employees wanted the managers to listen to their opinions. Several employees griped that their managers would often dismiss their opinions as irrelevant. A couple of the employees remarked that when they voice different opinions, their managers would get all upset and scowl them. One employee added that her manager would politely listen to her ideas but would never follow them through.

Nonetheless, listening to opinions is most important. Employees would naturally feel appreciated when they are listened to. And when the employees feel appreciated, they would in turn be encouraged to engage and commit themselves at work. One employee explained it this way,

*'the Vietnamese people they like to have their own opinion. And if they can have their opinion, they want to do more.'*

#### 4.4 Respect

Respect or the lack of it was the other concern that emerged from the interviews. Several of the employees were frustrated that their managers were always asking if they were able to do the job. They acknowledged that their managers may mean well, nonetheless, they were offended that their managers do not trust them.

A couple of the employees were dismayed by their managers' inclination to scowl and shout at them when they made a mistake or when they failed to meet a deadline. They remarked that the constant yelling was not only disrespectful but it also undermines their feelings of self-worth.

One employee was upset, because her manager adopted a *'superior than thou'* attitude. Another employee felt slighted because her manager did not pay paying attention to her suggestions. A remark made by one employee sums up their sentiments about respect,

*'some managers thinks they know everything about how to do. They do not give the Vietnamese people's opinions respect because they have local business understanding ... they don't value the Vietnamese people opinions.'*

Respect is most important as it affects work communication. The employees are more likely to talk when they are shown appropriate respect. Conversely they are more likely to remain silent if they are offended. Respect is also important because it is reciprocal. One employee described it this way,

*'if you respect them (the employees), they will respect to you. I think everyone has to do this, if they don't do this they will receive bad behaviour.'*

## 5. Discussions

The central theme coming from interviews with the employees is that of close relations and support. The employees emphasis on close ties, in particular, are typified in the following statement,

*'I don't know about the other countries but the foreign managers should understand that in Vietnam relationships go a long way.'*

The employees focus on close relations and support ties in with the literature about paternalistic leadership in collective East Asia. Aycan (2004) talks about how leaders in collectivistic cultures emphasise close relations. The manager is not only seen as a superior but also a close friend or a close relation to the employees. To remain successful managers must manage the employees' expectations for both.

As a close friend or relation, managers must also provide comprehensive support to employees. Dickson et al. (2003) note that in collectivist cultures such as Vietnam there is an expectation for close support. Aycan (2004) observes that this expectation for support can be quite extensive, from providing professional and personal guidance to giving financial and material help.

Yum (1988) notes that relationships in Confucian East Asian cultures including the manager-employee relationships, are not only close but also obligatory. That is, both managers and employees have roles or duties that they are obliged to attend to. The role of the employees is to work hard and remain loyal to their managers, whilst the duty of the managers is to closely support their employees.

Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) note that for goodwill and harmony to remain at the workplace, both managers and employees must adhere to their assigned roles. When one party neglect their duties, however, disaffection and discouragement may ensue. This idea remains applicable in Vietnam. One employee put it this way,

*'the Vietnamese people, like if you listen and build good relationship with them, they're going to be very supportive to you. But if they don't know you, they will like, 'ok, I just do my job but I will not try to help you*

*more'*

For the employees, support includes listening. The interviews revealed the importance of listening to the employees concerns at work. Various studies observe that employees would be more satisfied if their managers showed interest in them (Dickson et al. 2003). And listening to the employees concerns and attending to them would go a considerable way to demonstrate the managers' interest.

The employees also wanted support in terms of listening to their ideas and suggestions. In Vietnam, listening to opinions takes on particular importance as it is equated with respect. Borton (2000) notes that in Vietnamese culture, respect is imperative and not being shown proper respect is akin to having a fate worse than death. When respect is shown to the Vietnamese employees, they will undoubtedly respond in kind and more. Unfortunately the same is true for offenses.

This study highlights listening to better support employees. Listening has been rather overlooked as a managerial trait. Recent studies, however, do refer to the managers' disinclination to listen to their employees. Further, this disinclination tends to increase when the manager holds more power at work.

Nonetheless, Tost (2012) opines that managers will listen when they think that it is in their best interest to do so or when they think that the employees have something to say. The results of these studies have tremendous implications in collective East Asia where managers hold sway.

Together with listening, this study highlights the relevance of paternalistic leadership in Vietnam. It reinforces similar study findings that paternalism can be an effective leadership approach in collective East Asia. Tsui et al. (1997), in particular, observe that the paternalistic approach to leadership, if provided the opportunity, can often produce the most productive, loyal, and committed employees.

Unfortunately paternalism has been seen in rather bad light by Westerners (Aycan 2004). One reason is the belief that paternalism encourages favouritism and nepotism. That is, managers may favour selected employees because of close relations, relegating the principle of merit. The other reason is paternalism may encourage dependent relationship between managers and employees. This, however, compromises the Western idea that employees should always be given power to make decisions and to work alone to motivate them.

Nevertheless, the right level of supervision and direction ultimately depends on the maturity and experience of the employees. The contingency theory of leadership which focuses on different leadership approaches for different people applies here. Closer supervision and support may be needed for newer recruits. On the other hand autonomy and discretion should be given to the more experienced employees.

Recent studies show the local employees' increasing openness and expectations for work autonomy and participation (Vo & Hannif 2013). Several of the employees expressed the same sentiment. One employee remarked, *'what you want is you want the foreign manager to be more open with you, to discuss things with you and to communicate with you ... especially with regards to job, you don't want them just telling you what to do.'*

In short adopting the right leadership style remains most important. One employee remarked that the foreign manager will know if he or she is successful in management, from their employees' behaviour. If employees, *'show their friendliness, if they show they are comfortable working with you, it means you are a successful manager. But if they stay far away from you or don't want to tell you things, it means you should look at your managing performance.'*

## **6. Recommendation for Managers**

The hands off, delegate and forget style of management may not work in Vietnam. Employees here may feel abandoned with the practise. Employees in Vietnam may prefer more direction and support.

A paternalistic leadership style or a variation of it maybe the better approach. To better gain employee support and engagement managers need to build close relations, provide adequate support and show proper respect.

### *6.1 Build Close Relationships*

The employees in Vietnam do think and behave a little differently. They are just as motivated with close relations as with work achievements or material success. Close relations can be encouraged by showing interest in the employees. Managers, in turn, can show interest by going out and asking employees how they are doing.

Close relations can also be facilitated by the managers being approachable. Managers can be approachable by embracing the open door policy. That is, managers should always be accessible so employees can give feedback or ask questions. Managers can also be approachable by going out with their employees for the occasional dinner and drinks after work. Any inclination on the managers' part to keep to themselves and only step out of the office

to issue instructions are unlikely to gain approval from their employees.

### *6.2 Provide Adequate Support*

Support is about helping the employees to do their jobs. The employees were often at a loss on what was expected of them. The managers, in turn offered little help. They often assumed, incorrectly, that the employees knew what to do. To support the employees' better, managers should clearly articulate what they want from them, right from the start.

For example, what do they want from the employees? What and how do they want the employees to do a job? What if the employees are not sure? What if there are issues or problems? Can employees ask questions? What questions can be asked? Can they provide suggestions? When and how can they provide suggestions?

Supporting the employees should also include listening to the employees' concerns. Listening to the employees, what did they say and just as important what they did not say is most important. New employees, especially, may not be ready to share their work difficulties or work issues due to their fears for job security. To ensure employee engagement, managers should follow up listening with a firm plan of action to help them.

### *6.3 Show Respect*

To show respect managers should avoid instructions all the time. The employees indicated that they preferred 'sharing' over 'lecturing' and 'showing' over 'telling' when giving work directions. Telling and lecturing will not only isolate the manager from their employees but it may also cause the employees to feel disrespect.

Employees may feel disrespect because lecturing and telling can make them feel inadequate or incompetent. As such, managers should turn to the more agreeable form of communication of sharing and showing. Likewise, the managers should listen to the employees' opinions and suggestions. Listening indicates to the employees that their suggestions are valuable and appreciated. This affords employees the feelings of respect and prestige.

Nonetheless, it is not enough to just listen. True listening requires the managers to follow up on employees' suggestions. The employees revealed that they are always looking at how receptive the managers are to feedback and suggestions. If their managers remained closed and unresponsive, however, the employees may decide to alienate and disengage themselves from work.

## **7. Recommendation for Employees**

By most accounts managers are hired to finish a job. As such, managers may be less motivated by good relations than with goal achievement. To succeed at work employees may have to better adapt to the demands of the modern workplace and be cognizant of the organizational culture in place.

### *7.1 Adapt to the New Demands*

Greater demands are being placed on employees today. Managers often expect their employees to be able to work on their own and be resourceful. Employees are also often expected to take initiatives to achieve planned goals.

Nonetheless, if employees are not up to the tasks, they should inform their managers. Like their managers, the employees should clearly articulate what they want right at the start. What do they want the managers to do? How much and what kind of support do they need? Generally the employees should ask if they desired more help and support. Keeping quiet will only lead to costly mistakes and misunderstanding.

### *7.2 Be aware of organisational culture*

Employees should also be aware of the organisational culture in place. They are the norms or rules, written or otherwise, of an organisation. Each organisation would have its own rules on how to behave at work. One of the key functions of the manager is to encourage the employees to subscribe to the rules.

Organisations today often require employees to work independently and to be participative. That is employees are not only expected to be able to work alone with little supervision, they are also expected to assist management in making decisions and problem solving. In turn, employees who actively contribute will be seen as committed and engaged, whilst employees who neglect to do so will be seen as indifferent or worse.

To ensure success at the workplace, employees should embrace these rules. Rather than fighting them, employees should consider how best to work with the rules. One manager warned about organizational culture as a natural selection process. That is, if employees do not or cannot fit in with their organization's culture, they will leave the company, willingly or not.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper emphasises the need for foreign managers in East Asia like Vietnam to work more closely with local employees. Close supportive relations including mindful listening will only spur the employees to strive harder to achieve goals set. Understanding the importance of close supportive relations will not only improve good relations with local employees but also ensure long terms organizational success here. One employee notes the importance of understanding the local beliefs and customs,

*'Because they are doing business in Vietnam they have to understand Vietnam and its people. And because I am working with foreigner people I have to understand them as well. So we have to meet in the middle in order to be successful'*

This research study suggests a number of directions for further research. This study notes the managers' apparent disinclination to listen to their employees. Several studies have been made in the United States and they suggest a negative relationship between power distance and listening. That is, the more power the managers wield, the more unlikely they are to listen to their employees. More studies, however, should be made in the Asian context. The studies should examine if the high power distance culture in Asia have a similar effect on the managers listening ability in the region.

Finally studies should also be made on the efficacy of paternalism in Confucian East Asia. Previous studies note the relevance of paternalism in the region. More updated studies need to be made in light of the rapid changes occurring at the workplace due to new technology. Studies need to be made and hard questions need to be asked as to how the close and supportive manager can be more relevant in an age where new technologies require workers to be able to work independently and be resourceful.

## References

- Aycan, Z. (2004). Leadership and teamwork in the developing country context. In H. W. Lane, M. Maznevski, M. E. Mendenhall & J. McNett (Eds.), *The Blackwell handbook of global management: a guide to managing complexity*. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 406-422.
- Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2009). *The Bass handbook of leadership: theory, research, and managerial applications*. New York: Free Press.
- Borton, L. (2000). Working in a Vietnamese voice. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 14(4), 20-29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AME.2000.3979813>
- Den Hartog, D. N., House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. A., Dorfman, P. W., & GLOBE Associates (1999). Culture specific and cross-culturally generalizable implicit leadership theories: Are attributes of charismatic/transformational leadership universally endorsed? *Leadership Quarterly (Special Issue: Charismatic and Transformational Leadership: Taking Stock of the Present and Future (Part I))*, 10(2), 219-256. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(99\)00018-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00018-1)
- Den Hartog, D. N. (2004). 'Leading in a global context: vision in complexity. In H. W. Lane, M. Maznevski, M.E. Mendenhall & J. McNett (Eds.), *The Blackwell handbook of global management: a guide to managing complexity*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 3-26.
- Dickson, M. W., Den Hartog, D. N., & Mitchelson, J. K. (2003). Research on leadership in a cross-cultural context: Making progress, and raising new questions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 729-768. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.002>
- Dorfman, P. W., Howell, J. P., Hibino, S., Lee, J. K., Tate, U., & Bautista, A. (1997). Leadership in Western and Asian countries: Commonalities and differences in effective leadership processes across cultures. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 8(3), 233-274. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(97\)90003-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(97)90003-5)
- Duoc, T. Q., & Metzger, C. (2007). Quality of business graduates in Vietnamese institutions: multiple perspectives. *Journal of Management Development*, 26(7), 629-643. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02621710710761261>
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hofstede, G. H. (1980). *Culture's consequences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. H. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- House, R. J. (1971). A path goal theory of leader effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 16(3), 321-339. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2391905>



- Kamoche, K. (2001). Human resources in Vietnam: The global challenge. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 43(5), 625-650. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tie.1019>
- Kluckhohn, F. R., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in value orientations*. Greenwood Press.
- Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2009). *Leadership: Theory, application, & skill development* (4th ed). South-Western Publishing, Mason, OH.
- Montague, A. (2013). Vocational and skill shortages in Vietnamese manufacturing and service sectors, and some plausible solutions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 51(2), 208-227. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-7941.2012.00060.x>
- Milliken, F. J., Morrison, E. W., & Hewlin, P. F. (2003). An Exploratory Study of Employee Silence: Issues that Employees Don't Communicate Upward and Why, *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1453-1476. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00387>
- Offermann, L. R., & Hellmann, P. S. (1997). Culture's consequences for leadership behavior: National values in action. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 28(3), 342-351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022197283008>
- Pellegrini, E. K., & Scandura, T. A. (2008). Paternalistic leadership: A review and agenda for future research, *Journal of Management*, 34(3), 566-593. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022197283008>
- Quang, T., & Vuong, N. T. (2002). Management styles and organisational effectiveness in Vietnam. *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management*, 10(2), 36-55. <http://rphrm.curtin.edu.au/2002/issue2/vietnam.html>
- Rowley, C., & Truong, Q. (2009). *The changing face of Vietnamese management*. London:Routledge.
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2009). *Communication between cultures* (7th ed.). Cengage Learning, Boston, MA.
- Schleicher, A. (2015). *Vietnam's stunning rise in school standards*. London: BBC. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-33047924>
- Scott, P., & Bannon, W. (2008). *Managing for Success in Vietnam*. HCMC, Vn: Nhà xuất bản Trẻ.
- Sinha, J. B. P. (1990). *Work culture in the Indian context*. Sage, New Delhi.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Thang, L. C., Rowley, C., Quang, T., & Warner, M. (2007). To what extent can management practices be transferred between countries? The case of human resource management in Vietnam. *Journal of World Business*, 42(1), 113-127. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2006.11.005>
- Tost, L. P., Gino, F., & Larrick, R. P. (2012). Power, competitiveness, and advice taking: Why the powerful don't listen. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 117(1), 53-65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.10.001>
- Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Westview Press, Boulder, CO.
- Trung, T. Q., & Swierczek, F. W. (2009). Skills development in higher education in Vietnam. *Asia Pacific business review*, 15(4), 565-586. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602380802364175>
- Tsui, A. S., Pearce, J. L., Porter, L. W., & Tripoli, A. M. (1997). Alternative approaches to the employee-organization relationship: does investment in employees pay off? *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(5), 1089-1121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256928>
- Tuan, V. V., & Napier, N. K. (2000). Paradoxes in Vietnam and America: lessons learned, *Human resource planning*, 23(1), 7-8. <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-65354209.html>
- Vo, A., & Hannif, Z. N. (2013). The reception of Anglo leadership styles in a transforming society: The case of American companies in Vietnam. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(18), 3534-3551. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.616526>
- World Bank. (2012). *Putting Higher Education to Work: Skills and Research for Growth in East Asia*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2013). *Skilling up Vietnam: Preparing the workforce for a modern market economy*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank Group. (n.d.). *Vietnam [Data]*. Retrieved October 28, 2016, from World Development Indicators

(WDI) database.

Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, Pearson Education, England.

Yum, J. O. (1988). The impact of Confucianism on interpersonal relationships and communication patterns in East Asia, *Communications Monographs*, 55(4), 374-388. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637758809376178>

Zhu, Y. (2003). Culture and management in Vietnam. *Culture and Management in Asia*, 249. London: Routledge.

### Appendix 1. Managers demographic

| Code | Organisation type | Years in Vietnam | Gender | Age Range | Nationality |
|------|-------------------|------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| LE1  | Banking           | 3                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE2  | Banking           | 3                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE3  | Accounting        | 2                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE4  | Consulting        | 7                | F      | 31 – 40   | Vietnamese  |
| LE5  | Advertising       | 3                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE6  | Accounting        | 3                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE7  | Advertising       | 2                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE8  | Accounting        | 2                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE9  | Consulting        | 2                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE10 | Accounting        | 3                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE11 | Banking           | 3                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE12 | Consulting        | 5                | F      | 31 – 40   | Vietnamese  |
| LE13 | Consulting        | 2                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE14 | Accounting        | 2                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE15 | Banking           | 3                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE16 | Accounting        | 3                | F      | 31 – 40   | Vietnamese  |
| LE17 | Banking           | 4                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE18 | Banking           | 4                | M      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |
| LE19 | Accounting        | 2                | F      | 21 – 30   | Vietnamese  |

### Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).