

Cultural Distance in the Workplace: Differences in Work-Related Attitudes between Vietnamese Employees and Western Employers

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Abstract

In this globalized and internationalized world, intercultural communication at workplaces is a topic often examined. This study aimed to shed light on the cultural differences in work-related values between Western and Vietnamese employers in Vietnam. In total, 94 Western and Vietnamese companies in two areas in the South of Vietnam participated. Questionnaires were completed by 763 Vietnamese employees, 43 Vietnamese employers/managers and 33 Western employers/managers. The findings from the questionnaire data indicate that there are substantial differences in work-related attitudes between Western employers and Vietnamese employees that are related to both cultural differences and position in a company. *Sense of time* and *face-concern* are the two prominent differences between Western and Vietnamese professionals. Implications are discussed for further training of Vietnamese prospective graduates so that they can work effectively with Western employers/managers in the future.

Keywords: work-related values, Western employers/managers, Vietnamese employees

1. Introduction

As a result of globalization, many foreign subsidiaries and joint-ventures are mushrooming in East Asia, where expatriates from Western nations and local staff work and interact together on a daily basis (Brew & Cairns, 2004). Since the two parties are from two divergent cultures, conflicts and misunderstandings at the workplace are inevitable. This can make it difficult for both parties to complete their tasks and work productively. In such a setting, cultural distance has been understood to be the key reason for conflicts and misunderstandings (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Froese & Peltokorpi, 2011; Hofstede, 2001; Peltokorpi, 2008; Redmond, 2000).

Cultural distance can be defined as the degree of dissimilarity between two cultures. The more dissimilar the cultures are, the harder it is for interlocutors to adjust. Peltokorpi (2008) argued that living in a culturally similar country is less stressful than living in a culturally distant country since similarities help to predict and explain host national behavior. She also discussed the negative influence of cultural distance on interaction in work settings. Cultural distance creates challenges and communication barriers for both employees and employers. In addition, cultural distance in communication and management style can negatively affect the organization's workforce productivity. Therefore, understanding culture is crucial to multinational companies and managers to be prepared to compete with other firms (Dong & Liu, 2010).

Higher education programs could prepare Vietnamese students to work in this international work situation and these programs could also be linked to multinational companies and the higher management in those enterprises. However, we do not know much about cultural distance and its effects in the Vietnamese setting. The current study was aimed at providing greater insight into differences between employers and employees from different cultural backgrounds in organizations in Vietnam in order to assist higher education institutions in designing further cross-cultural training curriculum.

1.1 The Vietnamese Workplace Context

The economies in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam have recently witnessed a transitional development. After the economic reform "Doi Moi" was implemented in 1986, the Vietnamese government activated the country's economic activities by reorganizing state-owned enterprises, encouraging private businesses, and attracting foreign direct investment (Weng, 2015). Because of the need to transform but still dominated by Confucian ideology, the Vietnamese economy has been in a mixed landscape, undergoing dramatic changes and struggling

within the old and novel typologies simultaneously. This transformation brought in international managers, since the current personnel were not adequately qualified to keep pace with the new trend (Weng, 2015). Local managers lacked the management knowledge to cope with the human-related issues arising in a market economy (Le, Rowley, Truong, & Warner, 2007). McDaniel, Schermerhorn and Huynh (1999) suggested that the managerial competencies of those local managers must be upgraded to align with world levels of Human Resource Management in order to survive fierce economic competition. Moreover, following the influx of foreign companies into the country, the call for more industry-ready graduates has been taken into account by many policy makers. Still, “many of the companies apparently found it difficult to find local employees that match their needs” (Weng, 2015, 82). Graduate employability has become a topic of both concern and debate among higher education institutions, employers, enterprises, students and their families (Tran, 2012).

The main mission of higher education institutions is training and producing an educated labor force for the industry. However, in Vietnamese universities, this mission is difficult to reach because of the lack of connections among university, research institutions and the internal industry. This absence of collaboration hinders preparing students with the necessary skills and knowledge required by the contemporary labor market. Moreover, Vietnamese culture bears similar traits to China in many aspects such as high collectivism, large power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and long-term orientation (Truong & Nguyen, 2002). Although recently there have been studies indicating that Vietnamese professionals have shown their attitudes towards individualism which means that employees direct more to individual achievement and the high power distance dimension is not as high as it was 10 years ago thanks to the trend that the younger generations are becoming more individualistic and independent, lots of studies noted certain attributes of Vietnamese workers such as indirectness in their communication with others, respect for hierarchy, lack of work orientation and adherence to timeline and lack of language ability to communicate effectively with foreign workers (Le, Rowley, Truong & Warner, 2007; Tran, 2012; Pham, 2014, Weng, 2015). Accordingly, the educational system have difficulties to address Western norms on, for example, trainees’ communication skills, teamwork skills and other interpersonal skills. To prepare future workers better, teaching and learning about interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills should be done in both enterprises and higher education institutions.

1.2 Cultural Distance in Work-Related Values between Western and Vietnamese Culture

In general, belief systems are crucial to the study of intercultural communication because they entail the core of our thoughts and actions (Qingxue, 2003). We extracted six work-related values from the international research on cultural distance in the workplace (references included below): 1) *sense of time*, 2) *participation in higher managers’ decision-making*, 3) *open relationship with employers*, 4) *face-concern*, 5) *accountability* and 6) *autocratic versus work-performance orientation*

Sense of time

“*Sense of time*” is the way people feel, experience and evaluate time (Venter, 2006). Different culture has different perspective towards time, punctuality and pace of life and those concepts are manifested in their manners and attitudes. Many researchers have conceptualized the distance in time perception between Western and Eastern culture which affects professionals’ manners, decisions and expectations in a cross cultural workplace. Wang, Wang, Ruona & Rojewski (2007) and Brew & Cairns (2004) contended that time orientation in Confucian cultures like Chinese and other Eastern countries tends to be more past-oriented than present and future-oriented. This means that people in those cultures are inclined towards tradition and time is considered to be flexible and repeatable and is used to achieve ultimate human reward. This perspective notifies a sharp contrast with Western culture, which focuses on efficiency and, thus, time is carefully designated in order to achieve personal and organizational goals (Arman & Adair, 2012; Kathryn, 2006; Kawar, 2012; Kvasov, 2003; Smith, 1996).

Participation in higher managers’ decision-making

Employee involvement in work-related decisions has been proved to be positively associated with labor productivity. However, cultural values might highly influence the degree of employee involvement in work-related decisions (Le, Rowley, Truong & Warner, 2007). Accordingly, this might complicate the direct feedback between Western higher managers and Eastern subordinates as they own two opposite views on decision-making process (Bjorkman & Lu, 1999). In Vietnamese culture, most people highlight a “we” identity and employees might rarely speak out their own voice in the process of higher management’ decision-making even if they are requested to do so (Le, Rowley, Truong & Warner, 2007; Wang, Wang, Ruona & Rojewski, 2007; Qingxue, 2013). In contrast, Western individualistic culture accentuates an individual’s thoughts and opinions, initiative and achievement and individual decision-making (Wang, Wang, Ruona & Rojewski, 2007).

Open relationship with higher managers

This value is directed by the degree of power distance the employees perceive towards their higher managers. The more power from the employers the subordinates discern, the more distance they make. According to Diem (2013), Hieu (2013), He & Liu (2010) and Wang (2009), in low power distance countries, the distribution of authority is exercised and the emotional distance between employers and employees is quite small. However, in high power distance country like Vietnam, a great distance in relationship between superiors and subordinates is frequently acknowledged. Accordingly, countries with higher power distance scores would demonstrate more formal superior-subordinate relationships than compared to lower power distance countries (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994; Sagie & Aycan, 2003).

Face-concern

Jariya (2012) and Nhung (2014) defined “face-saving” as people’s realization of face protection to prevent social disapproval or criticism not only on themselves but also the community they belong to. Scholars have consistently pointed out that concern for face is of utmost importance in most Eastern cultures (Kim & Nam, 1998). This means that great emphasis is placed on reaching a consensus within organizations in order to save mutual face and maintain harmony. Because of this, the Eastern Vietnamese employees tend to beat around the bush when it comes to negative issues. The listeners always have to read between the lines what the real meaning is (Bjorkman & Lu, 1999). In contrast, face concern in Western culture implies the individual’s want to be approved of and the individual’s want to be free from imposition (Pham, 2014). In fact, in Vietnamese culture, face is determined by hierarchical social status and harmonious relationship with other people whereas in Western culture, face is determined by the individual’s internal attributes such as competence. Accordingly, the Vietnamese employees tend to use more indirect communication in social context for the sake of face concern which might cause a lot of ambiguity and misunderstandings to Western superiors.

Accountability

Gelfand, Lim & Raver (2004) defined accountability as “the perception of being answerable for actions or decisions, in accordance with interpersonal, social, and structural contingencies, all of which are embedded in particular sociocultural contexts” (Gelfand, Lim & Raver, 2004, p. 137). This concept emphasized the characteristic of cultural specificity in which individuals in different cultures are educated to understand the unique expectations of accountability. In individualistic culture, accountability normally rests with specific individuals, both for individual and organizational successes or failures, whereas in collectivistic culture, individuals are usually not hold accountable for the group’s successes or failures. The Vietnamese culture bears this specific trait of collective responsibility in which people identifying themselves as part of a specific group, team or unit and individual accountability is not clearly defined (Le, Rowley, Truong & Warner, 2007; Bjorkman & Lu, 1999).

Autocratic versus work-performance orientation

Being influenced by Confucianism, autocratic leadership is commonly seen in Vietnamese organizational culture (Le, Rowley, Truong & Warner, 2007; Mai & Dang, 2015). In this kind of leadership, the management usually generates strong dominance over their subordinates and govern all the actions and decisions in their offices. In addition, communication with employees is formal and written forms are fundamentally prioritized.

In contrast, work-performance orientation leadership facilitates employees’ advancement, idea generation, creativity and innovativeness. Work-performance orientation can be defined as “the degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence” (House, 2001). In Western culture as in individualistic culture, autonomy and individual initiative are encouraged and the employees have greater chances to take their own actions in their workplace context (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994; Le, Rowley, Truong & Warner, 2007; Weng, 2015).

1.3 Aim of the Current Study

The current study aimed at providing insights into differences between employers and employees from different cultural backgrounds. More specifically, differences between employees and employers of Vietnamese and Western companies were examined in terms of their work-related values. We aimed to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do Vietnamese employees and Western employers differ with respect to their work-related values?

We also generated the following three research questions to investigate how the other groups differed from the

first two groups in order to grasp the complete picture of the divergence between the two cultures in the Vietnamese workplace context.

- To what extent do Vietnamese and Western employers differ with respect to their work-related values?
- To what extent do Vietnamese employers and employees differ with respect to attitudes towards work-related values?
- To what extent do Vietnamese employees working in Western companies and in Vietnamese companies differ with respect to attitudes towards work-related values?

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

In total, 94 Western and Vietnamese companies in two areas in the South of Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta) participated. We searched for the companies' information on the Internet, using reports on the Global Trade in Customer Language website (<http://eu.ecizi.com>). We also searched for companies using the researchers' networks. We collected the companies' information; then we sent emails, phoned or visited the companies in person to ask for their permission to carry out our research at those companies. We visited 128 companies, and 94 of them agreed to participate. Of these 94 companies, 47 were foreign subsidiaries and joint-ventures and 47 were Vietnamese private and state companies. In the 47 foreign companies, 33 higher managers (all Westerners including Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, and Europeans) and 360 Vietnamese employees participated. In the 47 Vietnamese companies, 43 Vietnamese higher managers and 403 Vietnamese employees participated. We provide background information on the participants in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants

| Background Information | Vietnamese companies | | Western companies | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| | Employees | Employers | Employees | Employers |
| 1. Age | | | | |
| <18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18-29 | 158 | 8 | 125 | 3 |
| 30-39 | 127 | 25 | 119 | 17 |
| 40-49 | 22 | 8 | 17 | 13 |
| 50 or older | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2. Sex | | | | |
| Male | 95 | 19 | 77 | 30 |
| Female | 216 | 23 | 183 | 3 |
| 3. Job status | | | | |
| CEO | | 3 | | 9 |
| Deputy CEO | | 0 | | 4 |
| Senior manager | | 6 | | 4 |
| Middle manager | | 3 | | 8 |
| First-line manager | | 17 | | 6 |
| Supervisor | | 14 | | 1 |
| 4. Years of working in Vietnam | | | | |
| 1-2 years | 35 | 1 | 23 | 4 |
| 3-5 years | 91 | 0 | 73 | 13 |
| More than 5 years | 71 | 11 | 55 | 10 |
| 10 years | 28 | 4 | 46 | 2 |
| More than 10 years | 69 | 21 | 61 | 4 |
| More than 20 years | 17 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| 5. Years of working with Non-Vietnamese | | | | |
| 1-2 years | 88 | | 86 | |
| 3-5 years | 64 | | 80 | |
| More than 5 years | 28 | | 71 | |
| 10 years | 2 | | 8 | |
| More than 10 years | 9 | | 9 | |
| More than 20 years | 2 | | 1 | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|----|
| 6. Highest degree | | | | |
| Elementary | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Secondary | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| High school | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vocational | 10 | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| College/University | 273 | 35 | 228 | 26 |
| Other | 22 | 8 | 15 | 7 |
| 7. How large is the organization? | | | | |
| Micro (<10 employees) | | 5 | | 1 |
| Small (<50 employees) | | 9 | | 14 |
| Medium-sized (<250 employees) | | 13 | | 11 |
| Large (>250 employees) | | 11 | | 6 |

2.2 Data Collection

Development of the questionnaire

Data were collected using a questionnaire with separate versions for the employers and the employees. The items of the questionnaires were based on the literature on cultural distance between Western and Vietnamese culture and aimed at measuring professionals' attitudes towards work-related values. Both questionnaires were divided into two parts: the "preference" part and the "importance" part. The "preference" part asked the participants to indicate their preferences regarding the items while the "importance" part asked the participants to indicate how important the items were. We had the Preference and Importance part because we would like to make a distinction between (1) what the employers expect from their employees and vice versa and (2) how important the issues (policies in the company) are for both the employers and employees. By doing this way, we can examine whether there are clashes in their ideas in certain values in both their expectations from the counterpart's actions (preference) and their thoughts about some policies in the companies (importance). The five-point Slider scale was used in both parts of the questionnaire. Both questionnaires were designed in English and then translated into Vietnamese. We employed a back translation to ensure the validity of the translation. The questionnaire was piloted with one foreign and one Vietnamese company. During the piloting phase, the questionnaires' scales were modified from Slider scales to Likert scales because the Vietnamese participants were hesitant to answer using scale points without wording. The employees' questionnaire had 59 items and the employers' 61 items. All items were scored on five-point Likert-type scales with the equivalent to "1 = not at all", "2 = not really", "3 = somewhat", "4 = quite a lot", "5 = very much".

Procedure

One of the researchers visited each company in person to deliver the paper questionnaires and elaborate on the instructions for the questionnaires. Some companies completed the questionnaires with the researcher's instructions; others, due to time constraints, used an instructional guideline distributed to the companies' secretaries, receptionists, or personnel department's secretaries to do the questionnaires. However, all those agents received careful instructions for questionnaire response from the visiting researcher. Statements of participants' implied consent were included in the instrument. Vietnamese employers and employees received a Vietnamese version of the questionnaire, whereas Western employers were administered with an English version.

Professionals' work-related values

The questionnaire items meant to measure the employers' and employees' work-related values. In order to explore underlying dimensions, we performed an exploratory factor analysis on the employees' questionnaire data (using Principle component analysis and Varimax rotation) separately on the Preference and Importance part of the questionnaire. We decided for four factors, based on the elbow criterion, explaining 48% of the variance between employees. Items with factor loadings $>.4$ on one factor and $<.4$ on the other factors were included; all other items were excluded.

We repeated this analysis procedure for the items of the Importance part of the questionnaire, which resulted in one underlying factor, explaining 52, 3% of the total variance.

We then performed reliability analyses on these five factors and subdivided the "sense of time" factor into two sub-factors named "being on time in a direct way" and "being on time with a condition". Similarly, the "power distance" factor was split into two sub-factors labelled "taking part in decision-making" and "open relationship with higher managers". This procedure resulted in seven factors (in Table 2, we included two example items for

each factor).

Table 2. Two example items for seven factors

| <i>Measures</i> | <i>Example items</i> | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <i>Employees' questionnaire</i> | <i>Employers' questionnaire</i> |
| 1. <i>Being on time in a direct way</i> | 32. Being late for meetings at work. | 1. I expect that my employees keep a deadline to finish their assigned work. |
| 2. <i>Being on time with a condition</i> | 40. Asking for a deadline extension if I have good reasons | 4. I allow my employees to leave the office earlier than the appointed time if they have good reasons. |
| 3. <i>Taking part in decision-making</i> | 4. Being consulted before the employers/higher managers' decisions are made. | 12. I expect of employees that they take part in the decision-making process of higher management |
| 4. <i>Open relationship with employers</i> | 13. Talking freely to higher managers | 9. I expect that my employees talk freely to employers/higher managers |
| 5. <i>Accountability</i> | 31. Being kept responsible for the quality of the work that I produce | 8. I expect that my employees do assigned tasks out of their job functions if necessary. |
| 6. <i>Face concern</i> | 23. Withdrawing my point of view instead of encountering my employers/higher managers. | 35. I expect that my employees withdraw their point of view instead of encountering with their employers/higher managers. |
| 7. <i>Work performance versus autocratic orientation</i> | Promotion on the basis of my actual contribution (item 51 for employees' questionnaire and 53 for employers' questionnaire) Adequate time to explore and develop new ideas (item 55 for employees' questionnaire and 57 for employers' questionnaire) (The items for this dimension are the same for the employees' and employers' questionnaire) | |

1) *Being on time in a direct way* refers to the extent to which employers and employees evaluate the degree of punctuality in daily work situations.

2) *Being on time with a condition* also denotes the extent of punctuality the employers and employees evaluate in daily work situations, but with a condition added.

3) *Taking part in decision-making* refers to the extent to which decision-making between higher managers and employees in daily work situations is shared.

4) *Open relationship with higher managers* refers to the degree of intimacy or closeness in daily communication in the workplace between employers and employees.

5) *Face concern* refers to the extent to which employees save their face in order to keep their own and others' prestige in daily work situations.

6) *Accountability* refers to the extent to which self-accountability in their daily work situations is performed by the employees and employers evaluate and control their employees' accountability in these situations.

7) *Autocratic versus work-performance orientation* refers to the extent to which how employees' work-performance is controlled and evaluated by their higher managers.

After establishing the seven factors of work-related values for Vietnamese employees, we employed this structure on the employers' data. In Table 3, we included for each factor the number of items and the reliability in terms of Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3. Summary of the questionnaire

| Measures | Number of Items | | Cronbach Alpha | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Employees' questionnaire | Employers' questionnaire | Vietnamese employees | Western employers | Vietnamese employers |
| 1. <i>Being on time in a direct way</i> | 4 | 4 | .68 | .65 | .83 |
| 2. <i>Being on time with a condition</i> | 3 | 3 | .79 | .81 | .80 |
| 3. <i>Taking part in decision-making</i> | 3 | 5 | .86 | .63 | .74 |
| 4. <i>Open relationship with employers</i> | 9 | 8 | .85 | .60 | .834 |
| 5. <i>Accountability</i> | 4 | 4 | .69 | .61 | .80 |
| 6. <i>Face concern</i> | 4 | 3 | .75 | .77 | .86 |
| 7. <i>Work performance versus autocratic orientation</i> | 9 | 9 | .85 | .67 | .848 |

3. Analysis

In order to answer the research questions, independent sample T-tests were used to test the differences between two groups of participants on their scores on the seven cultural dimensions. To determine the strength of the differences, effect size Cohen's d was calculated.

4. Results

In Table 4, the means and standard deviations are presented for each of the four groups of participants on the seven cultural dimensions.

Table 4. The means and standard deviations on the seven cultural factors

| Measures | Western companies | | Vietnamese companies | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Western employers (n = 47) | Vietnamese employees (n = 47) | Vietnamese employers (n = 38) | Vietnamese employees (n = 32) |
| | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) |
| 1. <i>Being on time in a direct way</i> | 4.59 (0.31) | 3.50 (0.28) | 4.30 (0.36) | 3.55 (0.26) |
| 2. <i>Being on time with a condition</i> | 3.48 (0.54) | 2.96 (0.28) | 2.93 (0.47) | 1.99 (0.40) |
| 3. <i>Taking part in decision-making</i> | 4.06 (0.28) | 3.40 (0.46) | 3.93 (0.36) | 3.25 (0.46) |
| 4. <i>Open relationship with employers/manager</i> | 4.20 (0.21) | 3.74 (0.27) | 4.12 (0.29) | 3.71 (0.29) |
| 5. <i>Accountability</i> | 4.11 (0.43) | 3.35 (0.30) | 4.04 (0.47) | 3.37 (0.35) |
| 6. <i>Face concern</i> | 3.91 (0.49) | 2.99 (0.35) | 3.15 (0.49) | 2.88 (0.22) |
| 7. <i>Work-performance orientation versus Autocratic orientation</i> | 4.22 (0.29) | 3.87 (0.32) | 4.19 (0.35) | 3.76 (0.37) |

4.1 Western Employers and Vietnamese Employees

As shown in Table 4, the Western sample displayed significantly higher mean scores on all seven factors: *taking part in decision-making* ($t(df)=31$; $p<.001$; $d=1.70$); *open relationship with employers/managers* ($t(df)=31$; $p<.001$; $d=1.86$); *being on time in a direct way* ($t(df)=31$; $p<.001$; $d=3.7$); *being on time with a condition* ($t(df)=31$; $p<.001$; $d=1.16$); *accountability* ($t(df)=31$; $p<.001$; $d=2.16$); *face-concern* ($t(df)=31$; $p<.001$; $d=2.15$); *work-performance orientation versus autocratic orientation* ($t(df) = 31$; $p < .001$; $d=1.35$). All differences can be seen as large differences with a Cohen's d larger than 0.8 (cf. Cohen, 1988)

4.2 Western and Vietnamese Employers

To put the differences found between Western employers and Vietnamese employees into perspective, t-tests were performed on the mean scores of Western and Vietnamese employers. The findings from an independent sample t-test showed three significant differences between the Western and Vietnamese employers: *being on time*

in a direct way ($t(df)=68$; $p<.001$; $d=0.86$); being on time with a condition ($t(df)=68$, $p<.001$; $d=1.08$); and face-concern ($t(df)=68$; $p<.001$; $d=1.55$), with higher scores for Western employers. The mean scores on face-concern showed the largest difference (Cohen's $d=1.55$)

4.3 Vietnamese Employers and Vietnamese Employees

To further interpret the differences found between Western employers and Vietnamese employees into perspective, t-tests were performed on the mean scores of Vietnamese employers and Vietnamese employees. These analyses showed that Vietnamese employers displayed higher mean scores than their Vietnamese subordinates in six factors: *taking part in decision-making* ($t(df)=37$; $p<.001$; $d=1.84$); *open relationship with employers/managers* ($t(df)=37$; $p<.001$; $d=1.42$); *being on time in a direct way* ($t(df)=37$; $p<.001$; $d=2.44$); *accountability* ($t(df)=37$; $p<.001$; $d=1.77$), *face-concern* ($t(df)=37$; $p<.001$; $d=0.70$); *work-performance orientation versus autocratic orientation* ($t(df)=37$; $p<.001$; $d=1.31$). These significant differences can be understood as larger differences (with a Cohen's d of 0.8 or higher, see Cohen, 1988) for five dimensions. No significant difference was found for *Being on time with a condition* ($t(df)=37$; $p>.05$; $d=-0.13$)

4.4 Vietnamese Employees from Western Companies and Vietnamese Companies

No significant differences were found between Vietnamese employees working in Western companies and Vietnamese employees working in Vietnamese companies

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, cultural differences were examined between employees and employers in Western and Vietnamese companies in Vietnam. The findings showed that Western employers exhibited higher mean scores than Vietnamese employees in all work-related values. Significant differences were also found between Vietnamese employers and Vietnamese employees, except for being on time with a condition, with higher scores for Vietnamese employers. However, these differences between Vietnamese employers and Vietnamese employees were smaller compared with the differences between Western employers and Vietnamese employees. Additionally, we found three significant differences between Western and Vietnamese employers, with higher scores for Western employers. We did not find any significant differences between the Vietnamese employees working in the two types of companies. In conclusion, the differences between Western employers and Vietnamese employees seem to be caused partly by cultural aspects and partly by status differences between employers and employees. We go into more detail below on two cultural dimensions: *sense of time* (including *being on time in a direct way* and *being on time with a condition*) and *face-concern*, since the largest differences between Western employers and Vietnamese employees and between Western and Vietnamese employers were found in these dimensions, which indicates that these are two significant differences between Western and Vietnamese professionals.

5.1 Sense of time

Consistent with pertinent literature, this cultural dimension showed the largest difference between Western employers and Vietnamese employees and employers. The findings could be explained in part by *time perception* theory (Arman & Adair, 2012; Kathryn, 2006; Kawar, 2012; Kvassov, 2003; Smith, 1996; Venter, 2006) in which the Westerners are always skillful in time management and hold an exact time clock. Their plans and schedules are clearly set to ensure that they never fall behind on their deadlines. By contrast, Vietnamese professionals following Confucianism are not always on time and do not stick to exact deadlines. Time extension at workplaces is quite common in Vietnam and people in organizations understand the situation and feel at ease with the stretching of time. This explains why they scored quite low in the questionnaire, and it is the reason for *sense of time* being the most significant distinction between Western and Vietnamese professionals.

5.2 Face Concern

Face concern was found to be significantly different in the two groups too (Western employers versus Vietnamese employees and Western versus Vietnamese employers). Among three groups, Western employers, Vietnamese employers and Vietnamese employees, the Western employers scored the highest, the Vietnamese employees the lowest, and the Vietnamese employers in the middle (the higher the score, the less the participants' concern about face). However, the Vietnamese employers' scores were closer to those of the Vietnamese employees' than those of the Western employers', which indicated that the Vietnamese employers scored much lower than the Western employers. There might be two reasons for the differences in these groups. Firstly, title, status, and formality are very important in Vietnamese society as indicated in its high power distance score (Hofstede, 1984, 2001). In organizations, there is a clear subordinate-superior relationship (Truong & Nguyen, 2002). When Westerners hold the position of superiors and Vietnamese professionals, the post of subordinates,

the latter would suppress their points of view in order to behave ethically to senior people. Secondly, in accordance with previous findings (Pham, 2012, 2014; Merkin, 2006), Vietnamese professionals who are interdependent people and depend on public recognition might withdraw their egos and benefits in order to save their own as well as others' face. Strictly speaking, in Vietnamese culture, face maintenance for both sides is more important than achievements (Pham, 2014). The conclusion can be drawn that saving face is significant for Vietnamese employers and employees.

5.3 Limitations

The first limitation is that the Western employers who participated in the current study had various cultural backgrounds and various nationalities. They were grouped to make a comparison with Vietnamese employers and employees possible. Different categories of employers might score differently on the seven factors of work-related values. However, the standard deviations of the scores of the Western participants were similar to the standard deviations of the scores of the Vietnamese groups of participants.

The second limitation of this study is the lack of a Western employee sample working in the same companies as the Vietnamese employees. As the Western employers both represent people from different cultures and hold the position of management, the results might be affected by two conditions. Consequently, it is difficult to determine whether the differences were due to cultural distance or position distance. Therefore, we tested differences for all pairs of participants. However, in the future, when there are more Westerners working as employees in Vietnam, this research can be validated by comparing employees from these two cultures in the same companies.

5.4 Implications

Based on the findings, we formulate four implications for work-related interaction between Western employers and Vietnamese employees.

First, in Vietnamese culture, face loss is considered a vulnerable situation which might cause an emotional barrier between two parties, Western employers and Vietnamese employees. Accordingly, it is suggested that both direct and indirect facework strategies should be exercised simultaneously in order "to lessen the blow of the direct communication that needs to be used to get points across" (Merkin, 2006, 155). This means that in order to coax the employees' appreciation, the Western employers might play the role of both a quietly powerful but considerate boss. Then, the Vietnamese subordinates might feel at ease to reduce the distance, talk openly and voice their opinions to the superiors.

Second, since the concept of time is quite stretched in Vietnam, the Westerners must understand that the Vietnamese employees take time to do their work because they desire to do it in a rigorous and effective way. Hence, strict measures to discipline employees' time and deadlines at workplaces such as finger sensor scanning for timework or salary reduction might lead to adverse effects. The employees might be on time and stick to the deadlines. Yet, they might be annoyed and try to avoid the punishment by completing the tasks without fully devoting their energy to the company's benefits, with as a result that the quality of their work might be affected. Thus, both sides should moderate their time management in order to accomplish a deal satisfying the company's needs.

Third, the condition provided in "being on time with a condition" factor might shorten both the cultural and position distance. It might be advisable that employers examine the reasons for lateness of their employees in order to improve mutual understanding. Additionally, the employees might be more explicit about why tardiness occurs so that the seniors discern their subordinates' difficulties in order to draw out effective solutions. In many cases, the communication might be much improved when the reasons are worked out.

Fourth, for a better workplace environment, training should be given to both expatriates and locals so that cultural distance can be understood and appreciated (Fabian, 2012). Consequently, both parties might be more sympathetic and tolerant to cultural differences to interact effectively in a multicultural workplace.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the current study was carried out for the purpose of designing training courses for future graduates in Vietnam who are prospective employees in those foreign subsidiaries and have interactions on a daily basis with Western employers. Therefore, it is implied that solely teaching the language is not sufficient for effective communication. The current findings provide insight into what differences are the greatest between the two cultures so that intercultural communication training can be centralized and conceptualized within those scopes.

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Appendix 1

Employees' Questionnaire

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Instructions: Please use black or blue pen or use pencil (do not use fluorescent pen). Mark clearly the bubble of your choice. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Correction: cross out the wrong answer, fill in the right bubble, and place an arrow to indicate the correct answer. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

This questionnaire aims at clarifying your **PREFERENCES** of the organization's and your employers' policies. The purpose of the

questionnaire is to shed light on the cultural distance in terms of sense of time, low and high-context cultural orientation, power distance and value orientations between Western and Vietnamese culture in work places. The outcomes of the study will be beneficial to new graduate educators since they can employ the knowledge to produce culturally well-equipped workforce to meet the needs of the Western employers in foreign subsidiaries and joint-ventures in Vietnam. The information will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL** and will be used for **RESEARCH PURPOSES** only. There is no right or wrong answer. Please read and consider the following statements carefully before answering.

A. Think of real situations in your company. Indicate your PREFERENCES for the following statements. Fill in the bullet that is most appropriate to your case.

| | Not at all | Not really | Somewhat | Quite a lot | Very much |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Being part of the decision-making process of my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Completing my assignments on schedule. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Attending the meetings on time | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. being consulted before the employers/higher managers' decisions are made | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. being well-informed about the organization's strategies that affect management decisions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. being in time for work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. getting the opportunity to express disagreements with my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. getting the opportunity to express my viewpoints to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. keeping certain distance from my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. getting instructions to do my work from my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. being consulted by my employers/higher managers in all work aspects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. being ordered by my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. talking freely to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. expressing significant respect to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. asking my employers'/higher managers' for their opinions in all work aspects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. that I am kept clearly informed by my employers/higher managers on what's going on in the company | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. keeping flexible deadlines to finish my assigned work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. asking my employers/higher managers for help when solving a problem | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. having the possibility to ask for clarifications from my higher managers/employers if needed. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. expressing my viewpoints freely to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. expressing my feelings in a straightforward manner with my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. avoiding disagreements with my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. withdrawing my point of view instead of encountering my | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| employers/higher managers | | | | | |
| 24. explaining my opinions to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. sticking to my opinions when I disagree with my employers/ higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. agreeing with my employers/higher managers in case of a conflict. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. receiving feedback on my personal performance from my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. having the opportunity to get training and professional development. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29. asking for an extension of a deadline. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. criticizing my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. being kept responsible for the quality of the work that I produce | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 32. being late for meetings at work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. encountering my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 34. leaving the office earlier than the appointed time | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. that my work is controlled. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 36. being assigned tasks out of my job functions when it is necessary | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. apologizing to my employers/higher managers after a conflict | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 38. being late for work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. receiving direct criticism from my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 40. asking for a deadline extension if I have good reasons. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 41. proposing different ideas to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 42. Opposing with my employers/higher managers when discussing an issue. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 43. explaining my opinions to my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 44. being assigned a huge amount of work when it is necessary | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 45. Renewing the deadline after the first extension . | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 46. leaving the office earlier than the appointed time when I have good reasons. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 47. that my work is controlled for accuracy and quality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 48. communicating directly to their employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

B. Think of real situations in your company. Indicate how important you think the following statements are by filling in the bullet that is most appropriate to your case.

| | Not important at all | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 49. My ideas for changes are taken into consideration by my employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 50. Sound policies for people who are not contributing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 51. Promotion on the basis of my actual contribution | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 52. Small distance of wages between me and my employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 53. Higher management showing their favoritism for some specific people in the organization. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 54. Funds available for trying out new ideas. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 55. Adequate time to explore and develop new ideas. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 56. My new ideas are given a try. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 57. My innovative ideas are given support by employers and higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 58. Fair policies for promotion and advancement in my organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 59. I am supported by my employers/higher managers to explore alternative approaches to problems. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please fill in the following part about yourself

1. **How old are you?:** less than 18 18-29
 30-39 40-49
 50 or older
2. **Sex:** Male Female
3.
 - a. **Where were you born?** Vietnam
 Other Asian countries
 Western countries (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, European countries)
 Other
 - b. **Where was your mother born?** Vietnam
 Other Asian countries
 Western countries (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, European countries)
 Other
 - c. **Where was your father born?** Vietnam
 Other Asian countries
 Western countries (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, European countries)
 Other
4. **Years of working in Vietnam:**

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 5 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 20 years |
5. **Years of working with non-Vietnamese employers:**

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 5 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 20 years |
6. **How large is your organization?**

| |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Micro (< 10 employees) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small (< 50 employees) |

needs of the Western employers in foreign subsidiaries and joint-ventures in Vietnam. The information will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL** (all the information you provided will not be revealed to anyone outside the research group) and will be used for **RESEARCH PURPOSES** only. There is no right or wrong answer. Please read and consider the following statements carefully before answering.

A. Think of real situations in your company. Indicate your EXPECTATION from your employees about the following (possible) activities. Fill in the bullet that is most appropriate to your case.

| | Not at all | Not really | Somewhat | Quite a lot | Very much |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I expect that my employees keep a deadline to finish their assigned work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. I allow my employees to be late for meetings at work with a good reason. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. I expect that my employees can handle direct criticism from employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I allow my employees to leave the office earlier than the appointed time if they have good reasons. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I allow my employees to renew the deadline after their first extension. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. I expect my employees to attend the meetings on time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I allow my employees to express their disagreements with their employers/higher managers in making important decisions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I expect that my employees do assigned tasks out of their job functions if necessary. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I expect that my employees talk freely to employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I expect that my employees stay in the office until the appointed time. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. I allow my employees to ask for a deadline extension if they have good reasons. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I expect of my employees that they take part in the decision-making process of higher management. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I allow my employees to be late for work with a good reason. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I allow my employees to know about the organization's strategies that affect management decisions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. I expect that my employees give advice to the employers'/higher managers before decisions are made. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. I expect my employees to complete their assignments on schedule. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 17. I expect my employees to express their viewpoints to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. I expect my employees to keep certain distance towards their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. I expect that my employees are satisfied with getting instructions to do their work from their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. I allow my employees to take part in the decision-making process of higher management. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. I expect that my employees are satisfied with being ordered by their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. I expect that my employees are in time for work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. I expect that my employees express significant respect to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. I expect that my employees ask for opinions in all work aspects from employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. I allow my employees to be clearly informed by their employers/higher managers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| about what is going on in the company. | | | | | |
| 26. I expect that my employees are satisfied with being consulted in all work aspects by their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. I expect that my employees are willing to handle a huge amount of work if necessary. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. I expect my employees to communicate directly to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29. I expect that my employees ask their employers/higher managers for help when solving a problem. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. I expect that my employees are willing to offer advice to higher management. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. I expect that my employees ask for clarifications from higher management if needed. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 32. I expect that my employees express their viewpoints freely to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. I expect that my employees express their feelings in a straightforward manner to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 34. I expect my employees to show their agreement with higher management. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. I expect that my employees withdraw their point of view instead of encountering with their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 36. I expect my employees to explain their opinions to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. I allow that my employees stick to their opinions when their employers/higher managers have different opinions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 38. I expect that my employees agree with their employers/higher managers in case of a conflict. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. I expect that my employees are open to communicate with employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 40. I allow my employees to ask for an extension of a deadline. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 41. I expect that my employees' work is controlled for accuracy and quality. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 42. I allow my employees to propose different ideas to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 43. I allow my employees to oppose their employers/higher managers when discussing an issue. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 44. I allow my employees to explain their opinions to their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 45. I expect that my employees apologize to their employers/higher managers after a conflict. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 46. I expect that my employees are open for feedback from employers/higher managers on their work performance. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 47. I expect my employees to have a positive attitude towards training and professional development in their field. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 48. I expect that my employees feel responsible for the quality of their work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 49. I expect that employees' work is controlled in accordance with the organization's policies. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 50. I allow my employees to criticize their employers/higher managers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>B. Think of real situations in your company. Indicate how IMPORTANT you think the following items are by filling in the bullet that is most appropriate to your case.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | Not important at all | Slightly important | Moderately important | Very important | Extremely important |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 51. Employees' ideas for changes are taken into consideration. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 52. Sound policies for people who are not contributing in the organization. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 53. Promotion on the basis of employees' actual contribution. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 54. Small distance of wages between employees and higher management. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 55. Higher management showing their favoritism for some specific people in the organization. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 56. Funds available for trying out new ideas. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 57. Adequate time to explore and develop new ideas. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 58. Employees' new ideas are given a try. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 59. Fair policies for promotion and advancement for all employees. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 60. Employees with innovative ideas are given support. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 61. Employees are supported to explore alternative approaches to problems. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please fill in the following part about yourself

1. **How old are you?:** less than 18 18-29
 30-39 40-49
 50 or older
2. **Sex:** Male Female
3. **Job status:** CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Middle manager
 Deputy CEO First-line manager
 Senior manager Supervisor
4. **Years of working in Vietnam:**
 1-2 years 5 years more than 5 years
 10 years more than 10 years more than 20 years
5. **How large is your organization?**
 Micro (< 10 employees)
 Small (< 50 employees)
 Medium-sized (< 250 employees)

Large (> 250 employees)

6. Highest degree:

Elementary

Secondary

Vocational

College/University

Other (please specify) _____

7. Are you a native speaker of English? Yes No

(If the answer is “Yes”, please skip number 9)

8. The following four items ask you about your ability to:

| | Not at all | Not good | so | Average | good | Very good |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Understand English | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Speak English | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Read English | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Write English | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. The following four items ask you about your ability to:

| | Not at all | Not good | so | Average | good | Very good |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Understand Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Speak Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Read Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Write Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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