

EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP, COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIP AND LECTURER TRUST IN UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT:

THE TRUST OF AN INDIVIDUAL IS INFLUENCED BY MANY FACTORS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP, COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIP AND LECTURER TRUST IN UNIVERSITIES IN HO MINH CHI CITY VIETNAM. THE STUDY USED CONVENIENCE SAMPLING METHOD TO COLLECT DATA FROM 800 LECTURERS. STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING TECHNIQUES WAS USED TO ANALYSE THE RESULTANT DATA. THE RESULT SUGGESTS THAT LEADERSHIP SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT ON LECTURER TRUST IN THEIR UNIVERSITIES. SIMILARLY, COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIP HAVE POSITIVE AND SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON LECTURER TRUST IN THEIR UNIVERSITIES. THE STUDY CONCLUDES THAT UNIVERSITY MANAGERS NEED TO GIVE ATTENTION TO LEADERSHIP AND COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIP TO FOSTER LECTURER TRUST.

KEYWORDS: LEADERSHIP, TRUST, COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIP, VIETNAM

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and intense competition, universities are faced with the challenge of maintaining good facilities, quality faculty, curriculum, academic activities, and scientific research. To build lecturer trust and provide quality education, universities must build organizational capability. In this context, leadership and colleague relationship are such capabilities. Investing in people, building and maintaining an enthusiastic workforce have long-term effects on organisations, universities in particular. Leadership play an important role in the attitudes of workers in the workplace. Workers feel more connected to their work when their leader is knowledgeable, friendly, give compliments when workers do well and listen to the opinions of the workers. However, lack of leadership can lead to frustration of workers. Studies have shown that the relationship between workers and managers have a positive impact

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on employee engagement (Martensen & Gronholdt², Abdullah et al.³, Amir Sadeghi et al.⁴, Hieu⁵, Zafarullah Sahito & Perti Vaisanen⁶). Colleagues are people who work in the organization and often share and talk about work. Similar to the relationship with the leader, employees also need the support of colleagues to perform organizational (Hill⁷, Hieu⁸). Trust is described as a complex definition and is considered as a centre of the relationship among the individuals, which characterizes the organization (Tschannen-Moran et al.⁹). The trust of an individual is influenced by many factors, ranging from perception, emotion to action at different levels. However, most studies in educational institutions have focused mainly on evaluating student satisfaction and the quality of the school's services while often ignoring lecturers. Yet, lecturers are an important element that contributes to the core values of universities. More so, lecturers are responsible for imparting knowledge and professional skills to students. They are considered as an important learning resource and most valuable for students; the quality of the school/department is not only based on training programs but also rely on the quality of teachers. In light of the above, this study attempt to fill a gap in the literature by clarifying the impact of leadership and colleague relationship on lecturer trust in universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. This study provides insights to universities on the importance of leadership and colleague relationship in enhancing lecturers trust.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Trust is considered one of the most important elements in every organization's activity. Trust is the people characteristic in interacting with their environment, which indicates what they do or say. According to Colquitt et al.¹⁰ "Trust is the perception that an authority adheres to a set of acceptable values and principles. assert that trust connotes being ethical, honest and having strong moral principles (Christopher¹¹, Killinger¹²). Steven & Dan Von Glinow¹³ posits that "trust involves truthfulness and consistency of words and actions as

² Anne Martensen and Lars Gronholdt, "Internal Marketing: A study of employee loyalty, its determinants and consequences", *Innovative Marketing* 2 (2006): 92-116.

³ Abdullah, N.H., Shamsuddin, A. and Wahab, E., "The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Product Innovations among Small Business" (paper presented at the International Conference on Technology Management, Business and Entrepreneurship (ICTMBE), Melaka, Malaysia, 18-19 December 2012)

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⁵ Hieu Tran Minh, "Teacher satisfaction in teaching and research at An Giang University (in Vietnamese)." *Scientific journal of An Giang University* 1 (2013): 91-100

⁶ ZAFARULLAH SAHITO AND PERTTI VAISANEN, "EFFECT OF TIME MANAGEMENT ON THE JOB SATISFACTION AND MOTIVATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS.", *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION* 6 (2017): 213-224.

⁷ Hill, Annette. "Documentary Modes of Engagement". In *Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives* edited by Thomas Austen ; Wilma De Jong, 217-231. Open University Press, 2008.

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¹² Killinger Barbara, *Trust Doing to the right thing for the right reason*. McGill- Queen's University, Canada, 2010.

¹³ Steven McShane and Mary Von Glinow, *Organization Behavior*. Mc- Graw-Hill, United States, 8th edition, (2018).

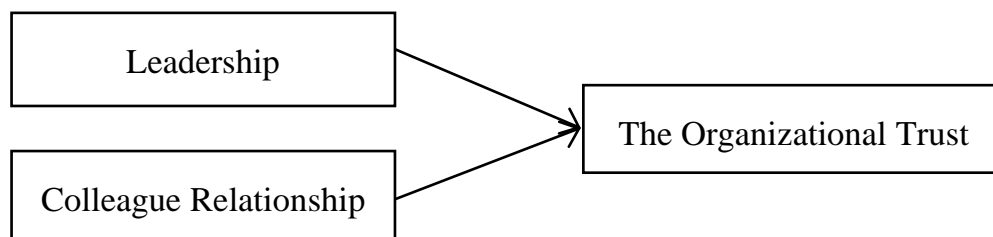
well as qualities that are related to honesty and ethics.” Den Hartog et al.¹⁴ submitted that transformational leadership dimension was positively associated with trust in management and colleagues and these relationships were less strong for transactional leadership.

Individuals are expected to create and sustain positive relationships with others in the workplace (Baumeister & Leary¹⁵). Ferris et al.¹⁶ noted that workplace relationship facilitates the exchange of information between individuals and groups who want to complete their goals. The literature suggests that the quality of employees’ workplace relationships have a significant impact on supervisors, peers and organizations (Khoa et al.¹⁷). Indeed, the amount of information and resources received by employees may enhance the quality of their relationships with their supervisors and coworkers (Khoa¹⁸).

Although there have been no formal studies on the factors affecting organisational trust of the employees in general and the lecturers in particular, there are some views of organisational trust factor, for instance, Mirza & Redzuan¹⁹ reported that leadership style, managerial style of management are the basic factors that enhance employee's confidence in the organization, Fahed-Sreih & Abdul-Nasser²⁰, submitted that colleague relationship and trust among the employees in the organization will create the trust of employees with the organization, Dung²¹, opine that spirituality of employees will create organizational trust, spirit of the employees are directly affected by leadership manner and colleague relationship. Thus, based on above views of organizational trust, the author proposes two independent variables that affect the organizational trust of the lecturers including leadership and colleague relationship.

- H1. Leadership has a positive impact on the lecturer's trust in the organization.
- H2. Colleague relationship has a positive impact on a lecturer's trust in the organization.

Figure 1. Conceptual model.



Source: Own (2019)

¹⁴ Den Hartog Deanne N., Michaela C Shippers and Paul L Koopman, “The impact of leader behaviour on trust in management and co-workers.” *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 28 (2002): 29-34.

¹⁵ Baumeister Roy and Leary Mark, "The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation". *Psychol. Bull*, 117 (1995): 497–529.

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²⁰ Josiane Fahed-Sreih & Abdul-Nasser El-Kassar, “Strategic Planning, Performance And Innovative Capabilities Of Non-Family Members In Family Businesses.” *International Journal of Innovation Management* 21(2017): 1-24.

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METHODOLOGY

The methods used in the study are the qualitative method and quantitative method. The population includes all permanent lecturers who are teaching at universities in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. There are presently about 50 universities in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 3500 permanent lecturers. This sample of 800 participants was selected based on convenience non-probability sampling method. The questionnaires were delivered in May 2018 to lecturers working in universities in Ho Chi Minh City through two forms, including direct and email sending. Scales are built and developed from theoretical foundations and research models. Before formulating the official scale for research objectives, in-depth interviews were conducted to understand the content of concepts and the meaning of words. The observation variables in the questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale with number selection (1) which means "Strongly disagree", number (2) means "Disagree", number (3) means "No opinion", number (4) means "Agree", number (5) means "Strongly agree". In this study, the authors used Smith's JDI work descriptor scale, Patricia et al.²² and Hieu (2013)²³. The Cronbach alpha result for each variable; trust had $\alpha = 0.878$, colleague relationship had $\alpha = 0.899$ and leadership had $\alpha = 0.902$. The Cronbach alpha results that are more than $\alpha = 0.70$ implies good internal consistency among the items. The analysis results for the independent variable group (colleague relationship and leadership) show that the KMO coefficient is 0.831, Bartlett verification for Sig coefficient = 0.000 shows that the statistical significance level of the analytical results is guaranteed and conclusion of factor analysis is to ensure reliability. The variance is 73.025, indicating that the variation of factors given by factor analysis will explain 73% of the variation of the original survey data. This ratio is very high, suggesting that the given factors have a good representation of the original data, which increases the representative significance of the factors for this data. The factor load factor of each observed variable represents each factor is greater than 0.5, which indicates that the EFA analysis is guaranteed, and has the effect of each variable observed on the factor that the variable that shows. Analysis results for lecturer trust (dependent variable) show that KMO coefficients of 0.843, is higher than 0.5, indicating that the factor analysis results are to ensure accuracy. Bartlett test for Sig. coefficient = 0.000 shows that the variables are correlated in the overall. The variance extract is equal to 58.883, indicating that the variation of factors given by factor analysis will explain greater than 50% of the variation of the original survey data. This is are the accepted ratio. The research use SPSS and AMOS statistical analysis software to analyze the data. SPSS 22.0 software was used for preliminary evaluation of the scale through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient assay, EFA and sampling descriptive statistics analysis. AMOS 22.0 software was used to analyze CFA. Model and hypothesis were implemented with SEM, model estimation was implemented with bootstrap.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistical analysis

Characteristics of the customers participating in the survey

800 respondents participated in the survey. 772 responses were valid and used for the analyses conducted. Table 1 shows the results of descriptive statistical analysis of the characteristics of 772 participants.

²² Patricia Cain Smith, Lorne M Kendall and Charles L Hulin, *The measurement of satisfaction in work and retirement; a strategy for the study of attitudes*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally, 1969.

²³ Hieu Tran Minh, "Teacher satisfaction in teaching and research at An Giang University (in Vietnamese)." *Scientific journal of An Giang University* 1 (2013): 91-100

Table 1: Statistics of surveyed subjects

Gender			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Male	401	51.9
	Female	371	48.1
	Total	772	100
Marital status			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Single	272	35.2
	Married	500	64.8
	Total	772	100
Age			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	22 – 29	186	24.1
	30 – 37	264	34.2
	38 – 45	206	26.7
	> 45	116	15
	Total	772	100
Education			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Bachelor	0	0
	Master	576	74.6
	PhD.	135	17.5
	Professor.	61	7.9
	Total	772	100
Experience			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	1 – 3	203	26.3
	4 – 6	246	31.9
	7 – 9	170	22.0
	> 10	153	19.8
	Total	772	100
Organization			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Private	410	53.1
	Non-private	362	46.9
	Total	772	100
Field			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Economics	427	55.3
	Technology	345	44.7
	Total	772	100
Title			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Department Head	74	9.6
	Manager	130	16.8
	Lecturer	568	73.6
	Total	772	100
Income			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	5 – 8 mil	133	17.2
	9 – 12 mil	285	36.9
	13 – 15 mil	199	25.8
	> 15 mil	155	20.1

Total		772	100
Where did you study your finishing education?			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Local	608	78.8
	Overseas	164	21.2
	Total	772	100
Hometown			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Urban	265	34.3
	Village	507	65.7
	Total	772	100

Source: Own (2019)

The survey of respondents showed that the proportion of men accounted for more percentage than women but the difference was not much. Among 772 researched samples, 51.9% were male and 48.1% were female. The research results show that the rate of married teachers is quite high, accounting for 64.8%, reflecting the point that once the lecturers have got a stable career, they tend to pay attention to getting married then. Survey results show that there were 186 lecturers aged from 22 to 29, accounting for 24.1%; 264 lecturers aged from 30 to 37, accounting for 34.2%; 206 lecturers in aged from 38 to 45, accounting for 26.7% of the respondents. In the survey sample, only 15% of the lecturers were over 45 years old. Thus, almost university lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City are in middle age. They are dynamic people with the ability to study and approach new things well and are also mature enough to give reliable answers. Due to the psychological characteristics of middle-aged people, it is easy for the universities to take appropriate measures to improve the level of attachment to the organization. Through the research results, master degree in the education level of the lecturers take the majority rate of 74.6%, followed by the number of lecturers with doctoral degree is also quite large, accounting for 17.5%. Besides, the number of Associate Professors and Professors participating in teaching, manager at universities in Ho Chi Minh City is only 7.9%, equivalent to 61 people. However, this rate is also quite high compared to the number of Associate Professors and Professors teaching and manager currently. The results showed that there were 203 participants having working time from 1 to 3 years, accounting for 26.3%, 246 lecturers were having 4-6 working year experience, accounting for 31.9%, 170 people with working time from 7-9 years, accounting for 22%. Also, in the survey sample, there were 153 lecturers with more than 10 years of working experience. It can be seen that the number of teaching year experience of the lecturers at universities in Ho Chi Minh City is quite high while the number of new lecturers participating in teaching from 1-3 years only accounts for about ¼. In particular, the number of lecturers with more than 10 years of service is quite large, accounting for nearly 20%. Therefore, it can be seen that the teaching experience of the lecturers is quite rich, creating more favourable conditions in teaching. Particularly, the lecturers have been applying practical experience into developing advanced training programs, teaching and learning methods as well as creative thinking methods. Among 772 lecturers, 410 lecturers are working in private universities, accounting for 53.1% and 46.9% of lecturers working in public schools. Thus, there is not much difference in the number of lecturers in public and non-public educational institutions. Thus, the survey results have high accuracy. The surveyed lecturers are currently teaching and learning in two fields which are economics and technology. In which, 427 lecturers were working in the economic sector, accounting for 55.3% and 44.7% of the lecturers work in the engineering sector with 345 lecturers. The survey sample included lecturers working in various positions. Accordingly, 74 lecturers are holding the positions as heads of faculties and departments, accounting for 9.6%; there were 130

lecturers in management positions and 568 lecturers teaching, accounting for 73.6% of the total number of surveyors. It can be seen that the group with income from 9-12 million VND/month take the majority with 34.6%, the group with income from 5-8 million / month accounted for 17.2%, the group with income from 13-15 million. VND/month accounted for 22.8% and the group with an income of over 15 million VND/month accounted for 20.1%. These income levels show that the lecturers teaching at the universities in Ho Chi Minh City have a high-income level. However, the number of the lecturers with average income from 5-8 million VND/month is still quite a lot since most of them are young lecturers and the universities have not paid much attention to paying worthy salary to the lecturers, too. The domestic trained lecturers take the majority percentage with 78.8%, the percentage of foreign-trained lecturers is 21.2%. This shows that the number of lecturers who graduated from foreign training programs also accounts for an increasing proportion of the faculty structure of universities in the city area. This is a clear difference compared to the first years of international integration. The number of lecturers from rural areas takes the majority percentage with 65.7% while the number of lecturers living in the city only accounted for 34.3%.

Table 2: Summary of impact coefficient of factors in an unstandardized model

Dependent variable	Impact direction	Independent variables	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
T_O	<---	L_D	0.476	0.026	18.376	***
T_O	<---	C_R	0.314	0.017	17.934	***

Table 3: Synthesis of the impact coefficient of the factors in the standardized model

Dependent variable	Impact direction	Independent variables	Estimate
T_O	<---	L_D	0.713
T_O	<---	C_R	0.539

Source: Own (2019)

Test bootstrap

With the survey sample size of 772 people, the bootstrap verification was with a sample size of 1000. The test results are as follows.

Table 4: Estimated results of model coefficient with a sample size of 1000

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
T_O	<---	L_D	0.476	0.026	18.376	***
T_O	<---	C_R	0.314	0.017	17.934	***

Source: Own (2019)

Table 5: Deviation of the coefficients of the model with a sample size of 1000

Parameter	SE	SE-SE	Mean	Bias	SE-Bias	
T_O <---	L_D	0.037	0.001	0.477	0.001	0.001
T_O <---	C_R	0.021	0.000	0.313	-0.001	0.001

Source: Own (2019)

The results show that the coefficients in the model are not significantly different from the model determined with a sample size of 772. This suggests that the model is still true with the sample size of 1000 and the estimates in the model can be trusted.

Summary of hypothesis testing

The hypotheses in the original research model are synthesized after testing as follows:

Table 6: Hypothesis test

Hypothesis	Standardized coefficient	P-values	Conclusion
Leadership has a positive impact on the lecturer's trust in the organization.	0.713	0.000	Supported
Colleague relationship has a positive impact on a lecturer's trust in the organization.	0.539	0.000	Supported

Source: Own (2019)

Thus, the hypotheses from the theory are supported. For trust in the organization, the influence of the leadership factor is highest with a coefficient of 0.713, and colleague relationship shows a coefficient of 0.539. Leadership and colleagues relationship has a strong positive impact on lecturer trust in their organization. From testing hypotheses, the author gives a model of synthesizing research results as follows.

Current situation of university leaders

Leadership is an important factor that creates the job satisfaction of employees in the organization. As for the teaching staff of universities in Ho Chi Minh City, the author obtained the following results when analyzing the influence of this factor:

Table 7: Evaluation of the lecturers on the university leaders

LD	II. Leadership	Mean
LD1	I always believe in the ability of the university's leaders.	3.65
LD2	I am always happy to receive support from my superiors when necessary.	3.33
LD3	I feel safer when my superiors always carry out what he/she says.	3.48
LD4	I feel more satisfied when being treated fairly, unbiased.	3.4
LD6	Superiors always consult my ideas when there is something related to my works.	3.26
LD7	I feel satisfied and appreciate the way of management and supervision of the superiors.	3.45

Source: Own (2019)

The survey results show that the university lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City are satisfied and believe in the ability of the School Board. This is evident when the contents of the survey "I always believe in the ability of the university's leaders" reached 3.65 points.

Status of colleague relationship

Conducting assessments and surveys on co-operative relationships, trust, solidarity and mutual assistance among university lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City, the author obtained the following results:

Table 8: Assessments of lecturers on colleague relationships

CR	V. Colleague Relationship	Mean
CR1	My colleagues are easy-going and friendly.	3.63
CR2	Everyone works in the spirit of teamwork.	3.35
CR3	My colleagues always trust each other.	3.67
CR4	My colleagues are always ready to help each other.	3.6

Source: Own (2019)

The survey results show that the colleague relationship between university lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City is quite good. This is clearly reflected when most of the survey contents of the author give the consensus of the contingent of lecturers. Accordingly, the colleague relationship at universities is always comfortable and friendly, they always trust and help each other in the work of creating the attachment of the faculty to the organization. However, the

spirit of teamwork of faculty members is not highly appreciated, the survey content only reached 3.35 points. From here, the work efficiency is not high, affecting the work motivation and attachment of the teaching staff of the school.

The reality of trust in an organisation

Trust with the organization, with the working unit also helps teachers stick more to the workplace. At present, the teaching staff underestimates the "trust in organisation" factor for leadership, with work, and colleagues. Specific results are as follows (Table 9).

The survey results show that most of the contingent of lecturers are always respected in their work (survey content reaches 3.52 points). However, most respondents did not feel treated fairly and did not trust their relationship with colleagues. Also, lecturers responded that the comments they gave were not listened to and respected and they were not able to express themselves in the process of carrying out their work. This restriction comes from the teaching staff of universities or young people who have no working experience or experienced instructors who have reached retirement age. Old and experienced teachers often do not contribute ideas because they are influenced by the old regime "on the listener". In contrast, the comments and suggestions of young lecturers are not appreciated by leaders because they do not have practical experience. From here, the lecturers' opinions are not respected and teachers do not have the opportunity to express themselves at work. This affects the trust of the faculty with the working unit and affects the commitment to stick with the organization.

Table 9: Evaluation of the lecturers on trust in organizations

TO	IX. Trust in Organization	Mean
TO1	I am fairly treated.	3.47
TO2	I believe that co-workers are nice.	3.46
TO4	I am respected at work.	3.52
TO5	My ideas are listened to.	3.48
TO6	I can express yourself at school.	3.48

Source: Own (2019)

CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between leadership, colleague relationship and lecturer trust in universities in Vietnam. It was observed that both leadership and colleague relationship exert a positive influence on lecturer trust in their universities. This implies that quality leadership and good colleague relationship can foster trust in universities in Vietnam. The result of this study will benefit both university managers and policymakers by providing enhancing the understanding of the role of leadership and colleague relationship in building lecturer trust in universities. Also, this study shed light on the importance of leadership and colleague relationship and the way it affects lecturer trust in the universities. Additionally, this study enriches existing knowledge in the field of management education research, by examining the subject in the emerging market context. The study recommends that universities that want to foster lecturer trust should have strong leadership and encourage cordial colleague relationship. This study used samples from universities in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. This may limit the generalisation of the study. Future research should extend the study to cover other cities and industry in Vietnam. Despite the limitation described above, the applicability of this study makes both theoretical and practical contribution to the literature.

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