

Management, Leadership and Change: Views from Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Academic Staff in Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Recent changes in the Vietnamese Higher Education system have mandated more autonomy for institutions, thereby highlighting the importance of leaders and managers with suitable experience and expertise. Rectors/Vice-Rectors and Academic staff in Vietnamese Higher Education institutions were surveyed to determine their satisfaction with leadership and management. Academic staff reported significantly lower mean ratings of satisfaction than Rectors/Vice-Rectors. Academic staff were also questioned about the value they place on autonomy and control over their working life. A large majority of Academic staff supported more autonomy and control over their working life. Results suggest a pressing need to augment leadership and managerial expertise at the institutional level in Vietnam, to develop skills in decision making and to move from reactive to proactive leadership. Change from an authoritarian hierarchical culture focused on management to a reciprocal culture focused on distributed leadership requires a cultural change in the way Higher Education institutions are managed and led in Vietnam.

Keywords: higher education, academic staff, management, leadership, reform, Vietnam

1 Leadership and Management in General and in the Higher Education Context in Particular

Over recent decades, leadership definitions and theories have become rather sophisticated. Some different researchers' conceptions of leadership and leaders include the following: the "centralization of effort in one person as an expression of the power of all" (Blackmar, 1911); "any person who is more than ordinarily efficient in carrying psychosocial stimuli to others and is thus effective in conditioning collective responses may be called a leader"

(Bernard, 1928); "leadership is the imposition, maintenance, and direction of moral unity to our ends" (Phillips, 1939); "leadership implies influencing change in the conduct of people" (Nash, 1929); "leadership may be defined as the behaviour of an individual while Higher Education is involved in directing group activities" (Hemphill, 1949); "leadership is the management of men by persuasion and inspiration rather than by the direct or implied threat of coercion. It involves immediate concrete problems by applying knowledge of and sympathy with human factors" (Schenk, 1928); "leadership is the art of dealing with human nature" (Copeland, 1944). To synthesise, in the *Handbook of Leadership*, Stogdill (1974) categorised the definitions of leadership into eleven groups. The great variety of the above definitions confirms that leadership is not simple to define. Researchers use each definition to serve a purpose, providing critical insight into the nature of leadership or the process and structures in leadership maintenance.

Leadership theories can be divided into two general groups: Traits theory and behaviour theory. Traits theory focuses on a leader's attributes or traits, such as skills, personality, values while behaviour theory focuses on a leader's behaviours. Behaviours can be taught while traits cannot. Kouzes and Posner (2007) have conducted a survey over 25 years about what people look for and admire in leaders (updated in 2007). This research, carried out in eleven countries (Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, Denmark and US), documents cultures, gender, age group, ethnicities, organisational functions and hierarchies for over 75,000 people. They found the characteristics of admired leaders in order of priority as follows: Honest, forward-looking, inspiring, competent, intelligent, fair-minded, straightforward, broad-minded, supportive, dependable, cooperative, courageous, determined, caring, imaginative, mature, ambitious, loyal, self-controlled and independent. These characteristics include both traits (e.g., honest) and behaviours (e.g., competent), though the distinction is not always clear (e.g., cooperative).

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In a book that has sold over 15 million copies, Covey (2004, pp. 91-92) introduced seven habits of highly effective people as powerful lessons in personal change. He emphasised that “at the very heart of our circle of influence is our ability to make and keep commitments and promises. The commitment we make to ourselves and to others, and our integrity to those commitments is the essence and clearest manifestation of our proactivity.” The idea of four keys of effective leadership from Bennis and Nanus (1985) has also attracted much attention. They consider four strategies for taking charge: Attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning and the development of self. They believe that “effective leadership can move organizations from current states, create visions of potential opportunities for organizations, instil within employees commitment to change and instil new cultures and strategies in organizations that mobilize and focus energy and resources” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 17).

Nevertheless, there is a continuing argument about the difference between management and leadership. Yukl (2006, p. 5) thinks that “it is obvious that a person can be a leader without being a manager, and a person can be a manager without leading.” Many others also see leadership differing from management, such as “managers do things right. Leaders do the right thing” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) or “leadership is about effectiveness. How well we do things. Management is about efficiency -- Making the best use of resources, least cost for best result” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

While arguments about leadership and the differences between leadership and management continue, Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 5) make a very interesting comparison, that “Like love, leadership continued to be something everyone knew existed but nobody could define.”

Each of the above approaches has its own interest and it seems that all of the characteristics are very important. However, the much more difficult task is how to integrate them in a way appropriate to leadership and management in a certain context, especially the Higher Education context. This integration of characteristics plays out in different styles of leadership and management. Of relevance to the higher education context is the “new architecture” (Gronn, 2002) of distributed leadership “in which activity bridges agency (the traits/behaviours of individual leaders) and structure (the systemic properties and role structures) in concertive action” (Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012, p. 70), and where academic staff take on leadership and managerial roles in “a form of shared leadership that is underpinned by a more collective and inclusive philosophy than traditional leadership theory that focuses on skills, traits and behaviours of individual leaders” (Jones, Harvey, Lefoe, Ryland, & Schneider as cited in Jones et al., 2012). In the context of this study, this shared leadership

is between academic staff and Rectors/Vice-Rectors in Vietnamese higher education institutions.

Exploration of the concept of “distributed leadership” has played out differently in different countries. In the US, it has been studied in the school sector (primary and secondary schooling); in the UK, the tertiary sector has been included; and in Australia the focus has been on secondary and tertiary education (Jones et al., 2012, p. 70). In Europe, “autonomization”, that is, giving higher education institutions more autonomy, has been “part and parcel of the wider debates about shifts from government control” and “the question of the autonomy and control of the university is of significant scholarly and policy interest” (Enders, de Boer, & Weyer, 2013, p. 6). Globally, then, higher education institutions have been subject to change and development in terms of autonomy in leadership and management.

The Higher Education context is rather complicated and differs from other contexts by its academia culture and academic freedom. As a result, the academic leader as well as manager needs specific capacities to maintain quality, to respond to the range of expectations and needs of students as well as the institution. There is an added challenge for academic leaders and managers because all academics are considered to be academic leaders as they are assumed to be at the forefront of their discipline, and active in the definition of future directions and strategies within their academic programs and research as suggested by Trowler (1998) and Taylor (1999). As an academic leader and manager, they lead and manage the institution along with protecting academic freedom and academic autonomy. However, when “universities have also become increasingly business and customer-oriented,” there is a corresponding “transition from collegial decision-making to a kind of corporate management” (Denman, 2005), a structure that conflicts with “a deep-seated desire” by academic staff for “collegiality, consultation and academic freedom” (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2009, p. 257).

2 Leadership and Management in Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions at a Glance

The current Vietnamese schooling system has four levels: pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. After primary or lower secondary, students can move to technical-vocational education and training. Students who pass a secondary school leaving exam can take part in another entrance exam to colleges and university. Both provincial governments and the Ministry of Education and Training have established colleges. These colleges have an average size of 1,500 students and

tend to be specialised training institutions or provincial teacher training colleges. Universities are larger than colleges in scale and have a multi-disciplinary focus. The Prime Minister, Dung (2013), reserves the right to sign in decisions to establish all universities. The number of universities and colleges is 376 including both public and non-public types with 70,558 academic staff (MOET, 2011a). These Higher Education institutions are allocated from the North to the Middle and the South of Vietnam. Particular ministry or provincial governments are in charge of managing public universities. The Ministry of Education and Training is in charge of controlling almost every aspect of a higher education institution including content of curriculum, enrolment, finance as well as appointing senior university personnel. This rigidity of management makes it difficult for institutions to react to the needs of the society. Hence, a major concern of higher education institutions is legal autonomy in operations. While the office of the Rectors is respected and identified as a strong power, Rectors actually do not have a significant effect on decision making about academic standards and curriculum.

Responding in 2005 to the urgent need for radical reform of leadership and management of higher education institutions, the Government promulgated the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) which it is expected will “carry out fundamental change and comprehensive reform of HE; undertake a process of profound renewal in the area of the quantity, quality and effectiveness in order to meet all the demands of industrialization, modernization, global economic integration and society’s demand for learning opportunities” (Higher Education Reform Agenda [HERA], 2005). One of the main elements of HERA is to have “the comprehensive reform of governance and managements, with line-ministry control of public higher education institutions to be replaced by a system of governance within these institutions having legal autonomy and greater rights in relation to their training programmes, research agendas, human resource management practices and budget plans” (HERA, 2005). The reform is another step in moving from a centralised to decentralised framework in the higher education system. Within the process, there is a need for clarification of what authority and decision-making processes belong to higher education institutions and what will be carried out by Ministry of Education and Training. This reform is expected to bring more autonomy for higher education institutions so that they can operate more responsibly and effectively.

There was little change in the leadership and management of higher education institutions after the HERA. More recently, the Higher Education Law (MOET, 2011b) was posted on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Training on 18 March 2011 to ask for

comments and contributions from people. The Higher Education Law is expected to bring more autonomy for universities.

3 Aim of the Study

In the context of reforming leadership and management in Vietnamese Higher Education, it is very important to understand the current level of satisfaction in these institutions. Do Rectors and Vice-Rectors already feel they are able to exercise leadership rather than merely act in a managerial role? In other words, are the Rectors and Vice-Rectors satisfied with the leadership and management of higher education institutions? Are their views supported by the Academic staff who work in their institutions? What conceptions of leadership and management are most appropriate for Vietnamese leaders and managers of Higher Education institutions?

The aim of this study was to assess the current levels of satisfaction with leadership and management in Vietnamese higher education institutions. Accordingly, the following two questions were investigated:

- (1) To what extent are Rectors and Vice-Rectors satisfied with leadership and management in higher education institutions?
- (2) To what extent are Academic staff satisfied with leadership and management in higher education institutions?

Perceptions of “autonomy” are likely to be related to assessments of satisfaction with leadership and management. Rectors and Vice-Rectors are likely to consider autonomy from centralised control as an important factor in their levels of satisfaction, while Academic staff are likely to also consider autonomy in relation to their daily working lives. The following question was therefore also asked in an attempt to ascertain the importance to Academic staff of such autonomy:

- (3) How much do Academic staff value autonomy and control over their working life?

When levels of satisfaction current at the time of the Higher Education Law are established, as well as the views of Academic staff about autonomy and control being devolved, then future research can propose a framework for training courses to enhance the leadership and management capacity for Rectors and Vice-Rectors of Vietnamese Higher Institutions so that they can meet the requirements of the reform agenda. A fourth question, then, which was not investigated but which will be discussed as a result of the findings, is:

- (4) What are the implications for reform of leadership and management in Vietnamese higher education institutions?

4 Methods and Data Collection

Two surveys containing multiple items were carried out in Vietnamese Higher Education institutions to investigate how satisfied Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Academic staff are with leadership and management in their institutions. Questionnaires were used to obtain the responses of a purposive sample of this population. Items were labelled with a five-point Likert scale, from 1, “not satisfied” or “don’t value at all” to 5 “very satisfied” or “value highly.”

The two main methods of sampling are probability and non-probability sampling (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling (also known as a non-probability sample) was chosen for this study since it was suitable with the time scales and constraints on the research. As mentioned above, by the time the survey was carried out in Vietnam, there were 376 universities and colleges (both public and non-public types) with 70,558 Academic staff (MOET, 2011a), spreading out from the North, the Middle to the South of Vietnam. It was impossible to employ a probability sampling strategy that would have resulted in a very big sample size out of the large population of universities and colleges as well as Academic staff in Vietnam in 2010. Hence, three universities and three colleges were chosen with the agreement and support of relevant Rectors. These universities and colleges are located in the North, the Middle and the South of Vietnam. Questionnaires were distributed to 240 Academic staff of these six Higher Education institutions. The response rate for this survey was very high: 98% ($N = 235$).

In addition, two hundred Rectors and Vice-Rectors throughout Vietnam (and including the institutions mentioned above) were sent a questionnaire to canvas their satisfaction with management and leadership in their institution. The response rate for this survey was also high: 82% ($N = 164$).

The findings are reported with a 95 per cent confidence interval.

5 Analyses and Findings

Data were entered into SPSS v17.0 and descriptive analyses were carried out with two data sets from (1) Academic staff and (2) Rectors and Vice-Rectors, to explore to what extent Academic staff and Rectors and Vice-Rectors are satisfied with leadership and management in their Higher Education Institutions. Most of the Rectors/Vice-Rectors were male (76.7%), with only 23.3% being female. More than three quarters of Rectors and Vice-Rectors (81%) worked in public HE institutions and the rest worked in non-public institutions. The majority of them

(78.2%) had more than 10 years of experience working in the HE sector. The experience of Rectors and Vice-Rectors in their current position was: More than 5 years, 43.8%; from 2 years to 5 years, 34.6%; and less than two years, 21.6%.

Almost three fifths (57.7%) of the 240 academic staff targeted for the survey were male and 42.3% were female. The majority of these academic staff (81.4%) were lecturers, with 9.3% assistant lecturers, 8.4% senior lecturers, and 0.9% professors. The survey identified academic staff with varied teaching experience in HE, from less than 1 year (15.9%), 1 to 3 years (30.3%), between 3 and 6 years (27.3%), between 6 and 10 years (15%), and more than 10 years (11.5%). Thus about half the academic staff (53.8%) had more than 3 years’ experience in their academic roles.

More than half of the respondents (54.8%) held a bachelor’s degree, 41.2% held a master’s degree and 0.9% of academic staff held some other degree. A very small percentage held a PhD qualification (3.1%). The majority of academic staff (87.9%) was trained in Vietnamese universities. Only 12.1% of academic staff had taken at least one qualification overseas.

The percentages of Academic staff who were *not satisfied* with leadership and management of the institution (responding at the two lowest levels, 1 and 2) were 4.8 and 10.9, that is, a total of 15.7% indicated they were not satisfied with leadership and management. In comparison, responses at these levels by Rectors and Vice-Rectors were around half the size (2.5% and 3.7%, that is, a total of 6.2%). A similar pattern of difference was found for *satisfaction* with leadership and management, with Rectors/Vice-rectors almost three times as likely as Academic staff to be very satisfied (23.9% compared with 8.7%). These comparisons are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

A merge file was created from two data sets from the two surveys. Then, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted with Academic staff and Rectors and Vice-Rectors as the independent variables and satisfaction with leadership and management of the institution as the dependent variable. The output tables from SPSS are reproduced as Tables 1, 2 and 3. Table 2 shows that Levene’s test was not significant, $F(1, 391) = 3.1, p = .08$, so the homogeneity of variances was judged not to have been violated. Thus the analysis was able to proceed with confidence. The results are shown in Table 3, where it can be seen that the between-groups analysis of variance was significant. Table 1 also displays the significant difference between the results for Academic staff and Rectors/Vice-Rectors, with Academic staff ($M = 3.37, SD = .96$) displaying significantly lower mean ratings of satisfaction with leadership and management in the institution than

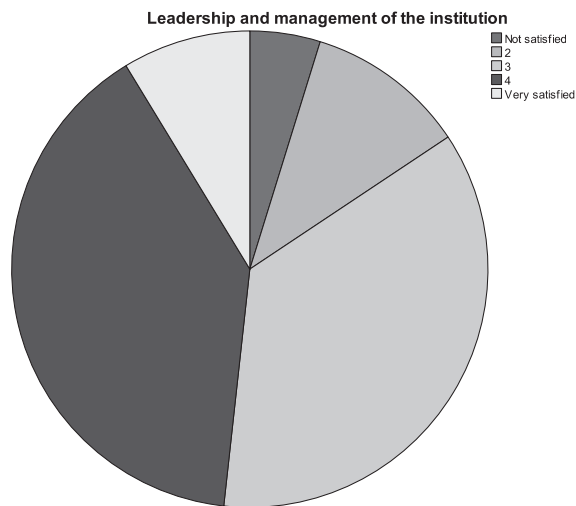


Figure 1 Leadership and Management of the Institution from the View of Academic Staff

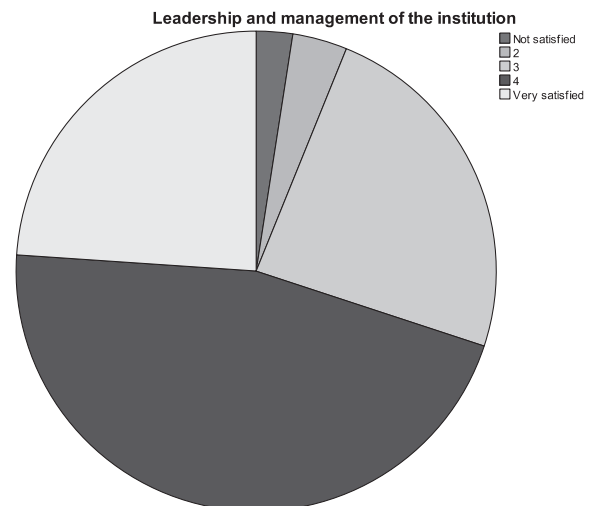


Figure 2 Leadership and Management of the Institution from the View of Rectors and Vice-Rectors

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis of Satisfaction with Leadership and Management

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Academic staff	230	3.3652	.95607	.06304	3.2410	3.4894	1.00	5.00
Rector/Vice-rector	163	3.8528	.91106	.07136	3.7118	3.9937	1.00	5.00
Total	393	3.5674	.96688	.04877	3.4715	3.6633	1.00	5.00

Table 2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Significance
3.110	1	391	.079

Table 3 Analysis of Variance between Academic Staff and Rectors/Vice-rectors

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	22.675	1	22.675	25.789	.000
Within Groups	343.788	391	.879		
Total	366.463	392			

Rectors and Vice-Rectors ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .91$, $F = 25.79$, $p < .05$).

Academic staff were also asked how they value autonomy and control over their working life. It can be seen in Figure 3 that “autonomy and control over working life” was highly valued by Academic staff with 30.6 per cent responding with a score of 5 and 51.3 per cent with 4. In other words, 81.9% valued autonomy and control over working life either highly or very highly.

6 Discussion

The results from these surveys suggest that there is a big difference in satisfaction with leadership and management in Higher Education institutions between Academic staff on the one hand and Rectors/Vice-Rectors on the other. Perhaps it is not surprising that Rectors/Vice-Rectors and Academic staff might have different perceptions -- Or be prepared to admit to different perceptions -- About leadership and management in Vietnamese higher education institutions. Dissatisfaction amongst academics and resentment related to lack of

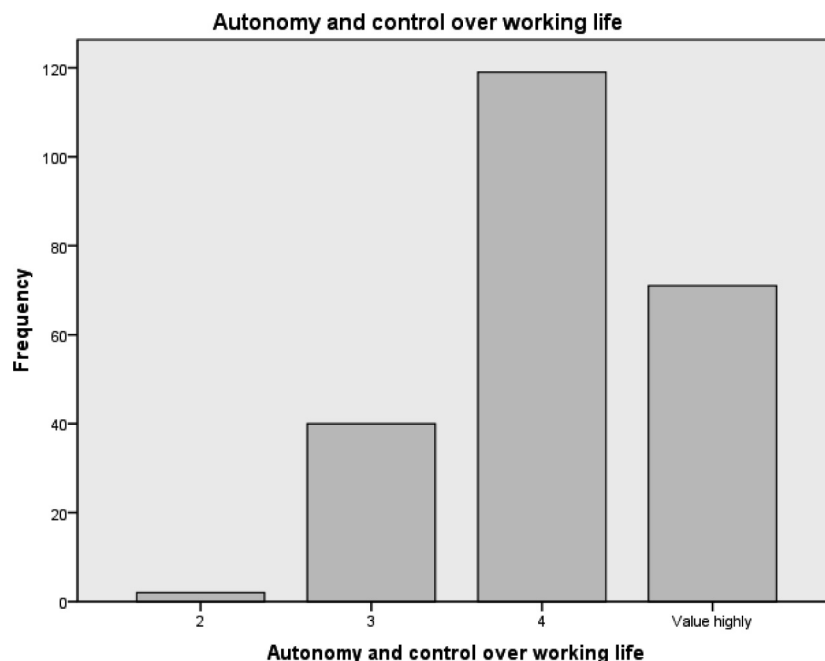


Figure 3 Academic Staff Value Autonomy and Control over Working Life

autonomy is, after all, not confined to Vietnam (Jones et al., 2012) but reasons for such dissatisfaction will reflect the contextual details of a country and its higher education institutions. The more interesting question in Vietnam, therefore, is what might explain this big difference between the two groups.

Leadership and management in Vietnamese Higher Education are characterised by high levels of centralisation with significant power from the Ministries wielded over the whole sector. Many important factors such as curriculum, enrolment, staff recruitment and assessment, budget decisions, infrastructure and facility maintenance are determined by the Ministries (Hayden, 2005; Ngo, 2006). When the autonomy in decision making of Rectors/Vice-Rectors in these Higher Institutions is relatively limited, it is hard for them to satisfy Academic staff as leaders and managers.

While Rectors and Vice-Rectors were more satisfied than the Academic staff with this situation of relatively little autonomy in their roles of leadership and management, it should be remembered that only 23.9% of them were “very satisfied.” This finding does indicate some willingness to be critical of their roles and/or their abilities as leaders and managers. If they are truly concerned with the views of the staff they lead and manage, and if three quarters of them are not prepared to endorse their leadership and management at the highest level, then a responsibility to update and change their leadership and management styles is indicated.

There is also an urgent requirement for change from higher levels of management, that is, the government and Ministry of Education and Training. The Vietnamese

Higher Education system is currently experiencing major reforms and developments in term of curricula, physical infrastructure, teaching methods, academic staff qualifications and quality of governance. The Directive on innovating higher education management (Dung, 2010, p. 1) also emphasises that the “State management mechanism towards higher educational system and the management of universities and colleges remains persistently inadequate, impossible to create sufficient driving force to bring into full play creativity and self-responsibility of the lecturers, managers and students to renovate higher education strongly and basically.” Though the Higher Education sector has changed rapidly in the last few decades, it is still under the shadow of the Soviet model since “the Socialist Republic of Vietnam enshrines in its constitution the supremacy of the Communist Party and the ideals of Marxism-Leninism, as well as the thoughts of Ho Chi Minh” (Hayden & Thiep, 2007, p. 73).

Hence the change, at all institutional, ministerial and governmental levels, will take time and require the brave to accept the new challenges and to give up the old comforts. As reported in the early part of this paper, “effective leadership can move organizations from current states, create visions of potential opportunities for organizations, instil within employees commitment to change and instil new cultures and strategies in organizations that mobilize and focus energy and resources” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 17). This type of leadership is necessary if higher education institutions in Vietnam are to be reformed. The need for new approaches to leadership in higher education is not confined, of course, to Vietnam. Universities everywhere

“face the dual challenges of competing in a globally competitive world while at the same time designing opportunities to build and develop sustainable leadership” (Jones et al., 2012, p. 67).

Academic staff in this study responded that they highly valued autonomy and control over their working life. Autonomy “refers to both the actor’s self (having ability or capacity) and the actor’s relationship to its environment (independence or freedom from external control” (Enders et al., 2013, p. 7), that is, the concept consists of a dualism of agency and structure (Woods & Gronn, 2009). The finding that academic staff value autonomy supports the direction that policy makers are following now with the Higher Education Reform Agenda. Among the many objectives of this agenda, of interest are objectives related to renewal of management. If the objectives of conferring legal autonomy on the Higher Education System are successful, “giving them the right to decide and be responsible for training, research, human resource management and budget planning” and “eliminate line-ministry control to develop a mechanism for having state ownership represented within public Higher Education Institutions,” then the Higher Education institutions will have more autonomy in leading and managing themselves. The institutional autonomy can vary in form but it is manifested substantively by “the power of the university or college in its corporate form to determine its own goals and programs” as well as “the power of the university or college in its corporate form to determine the means by which its own goals and programs will be pursued” (Berdahl, 1990, p. 172).

If the Government and Ministry of Education and Training are successful in transferring autonomy to Higher Education institutions, it will be necessary to develop leadership and managerial expertise at the institutional level. Development of such expertise is another challenge for the Higher Education sector in Vietnam since many Rectors and Vice-Rectors were promoted from the ranks of lecturers. However, good lecturers do not always mean good leaders, and good leaders and managers are one of the conditions for achieving institutional autonomy. In the UK, higher education leadership emerged as a discipline in its own right in the 1960s and 1970s, with the development of national programs and degrees. There was a recognition that leaders of higher education institutions had to be given in-service training to become efficient and effective as professional leaders as well as institutional managers (Brundrett & Crawford, 2008). The same training will be required in Vietnam. Hence, building capacity for leaders and managers as decision makers is another urgent need for a sector with decentralised autonomy.

Such development of leadership capacity implies a move from reactive to proactive leadership. Regardless of

the theory and terminology used to explain it, leadership has always been intimately linked to the effective functioning of complex organisations (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In terms of the definitions of leaders and managers discussed earlier, reactive leadership can be seen as management -- Efficient implementation of the systems and products of the governing authorities. Proactive leadership, on the other hand, suggests a change from management to genuine leadership in developing autonomous and effective systems and products suitable for and acceptable to the particular institution.

Another way of looking at such a change is as a move from a hierarchical culture to a reciprocal one (Lambert, 2003), which fits within notions of “distributed leadership” as “a process dispersed across the organization (within systems, activities, practices and relationships” (Bolden et al., 2009, p. 258). Introducing “relationships” into the examination of leadership style adds another element to the list of traits required by effective leaders, that of “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1995). Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) claim that relationship skills have nearly three times the impact on organisational performance as analytical skills do.

Reciprocal leadership also suggests a role for the Academic staff in decision making in their institutions. Such a move to include Academics in the move towards a more autonomous institution would certainly support the desires of the Academic staff in this study. The high response rate to the surveys, the low satisfaction (8.7%) with current leadership and management, and the high support (81.9%) for autonomy and control over their working lives suggest that changes to leadership style to include the wishes of Academic staff are certainly needed in Vietnamese higher education institutions.

Working out and implementing such changes will require much time, effort, and evolution, as well as adaptation in individual circumstances to suit the context of a particular higher education institution. There is unlikely to be a “one size fits all” solution to change. In the UK, “effective leadership for higher education has been unable to identify a single successful approach” (Jones et al., 2012, p. 68). In general, however, the five dimensions of successful distributed leadership confirmed by UK research -- Context, culture, change, relationships, and activity (Jones et al., 2012, p. 71) -- Need to be incorporated in the approach. Instructional leaders (Smith & Andrews, 1989) need to be resource providers (materials, infrastructure, budget) as well as good communicators who are visible and accessible. The goals of the institution need to be clearly articulated and mutually acceptable to everyone in the institution. Even this one aim requires much discussion and the involvement of both Academic staff and Rectors/

Vice-Rectors as the translation occurs from “autonomy” as a concept into reality in the working life of the institution and its members. How far and how quickly the concept of leadership can progress from authoritarian to “distributed” (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001) and shared and, more specifically, how “distributed leadership” can progress from rhetoric to genuine shaping of perceptions of identity, participation and influence (Bolden et al., 2009) are questions for the future.

7 Conclusion

Management and leadership in Vietnamese higher education institutions are in a state of flux. The change from management institutions implementing centralised government control of the content of curriculum, enrolment, finance and appointment of senior university personnel to more autonomous leadership institutions with localised control over such decisions will take time, training and adaptation to cultural change. The Higher Education Reform Agenda of 2005 set the scene for comprehensive reform in the leadership and management of institutions. In turn, the Higher Education Law 2011 has mandated more autonomy for universities. The necessity to develop leadership and managerial expertise at the institutional level is therefore paramount if such changes are to be successful.

It is very hard to find in Vietnamese literature surveys with Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Academic staff about their attitudes towards management and leadership. Therefore this study serves as an effort to generate better understanding of the attitudes of Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Academic staff in relation to management and leadership in Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions.

This area will need future research to investigate the leadership and management style that Academic staff expect to have in their institutions. Research carried out in Australia among school leaders (Mulford et al., 2008, p. 63) identified four “TESS” factors to be necessary for change from a hierarchical, authoritarian culture to a reciprocal culture: Trust and respect, Empowerment, Shared and monitored vision, and Supported experimentation. Questions for the future thus include: What will the TESS factors look like in Vietnamese higher education institutions? To what extent will different models be appropriate for different institutions, which have their own “contexts, situations, environments and contingencies” (Jones et al., 2012, p. 68)? What models of leadership and management will most inspire Academic staff in Vietnam and promote their capacities?

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