Discovering a Leadership Problem in Asian Culture by Using Buddhist Systems Methodology – A Case Study in Vietnam Business Enterprise

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Abstract

In this rapidly growing and changing world, business leaders should have a concept of systems thinking in order to hold the tools to understand and deal with complicated problems, especially the complexity caused by organizational cultures. Vietnam is one of the Asian countries which was influenced by Buddhism culture; therefore, the relevance of systems thinking and Buddhist thinking as a competence was disclosed in the context of leadership in Vietnam. This paper aims to discover the organizational problems from different lenses of various positions in Le Group of Companies, one of the leading organizations in Vietnam about consulting brand strategy and public relations. The research has been initiated based on using Buddhist Systems Methodology (BSM), which is a problem dealing approach combined Eastern Buddhist philosophy with Western Systems Thinking. According to the analysis and synthesis of the systems theory with methods such as observation, in-depth interviews, the authors have found out a leadership problem, which can be improved to boost the organization's development. The paper discloses the benefits of systems thinking, and Buddhist thinking in the organization includes implication for the leadership development of a Vietnam Business Enterprise, and the authors also suggest a recommendation systematically about Asian organizational leadership problems.
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Key Words: Leadership, Buddhist Systems Methodology, Systems Thinking, Vietnam Business, Organizational culture

1. Introduction

In the complexity era, different viewpoints of various staffs in organizations require systems thinking in leadership. Leaders of Asian business enterprises have to deal effectively with the dynamics of their organizational issues relating to cultural and ecological contexts, which was influenced by Buddhism generally. The effects of Buddhism on management have received considerable attention. According to Samuel & Joshua (2019), Buddhism has impacted too many countries, including Thailand, China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka. Vietnam is one of the Asian countries which was influenced by Buddhism culture; therefore, the relevance of systems thinking and Buddhist thinking as a competence was disclosed in the context of leadership in Vietnam. This paper aims to discover Asian organizational leadership problems from different lens of various positions in Le Group of Companies, one of the leading organizations about consulting brand strategy and public relations in Vietnam. The primary purpose of this paper is to explore a leadership problem of a Vietnam Business Enterprise. Thereby, Buddhist systems methodology (BSM), which integrates selected ideas from Buddhist thinking and systems thinking, is chosen for applying into the situation of a Vietnam organization. By first time using Buddhist systems methodology in a Vietnam Business Enterprise, the authors discovered a systemic problem about leadership and also pointed out that leadership plays a vital role in fostering a culture of open communication within the company. Also, throughout in-depth interviews individually, the study has supported leaders in the organization could determine the current problem genuinely and propose some recommendations to achieve the harmony of the organization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Leadership

Many scholars find out the definition of leadership and demonstrate the importance of leadership in the organization. According to Andersen (2017), leaders are people who can foster the motivation of their staff to achieve success and passion in their work. Crawford and Lok (2004) stated that the leadership factor could predict an organization assumed to succeed or fail. Therefore, leadership style can affect the organization in many ways. Understanding leadership style can be useful in the adapt a suitable method to boost the effectiveness of management (Rukmani et al., 2010). Miller (2002) defined leadership styles is a pattern of interaction between leaders and subordinates. There are many styles of leadership, but commonly researchers focus on two typical forms: Transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Transactional and transformation leadership style are the popular styles of organizational leadership, while

the world in globalization no longer accepts using power as a form of leadership (Rees & French, 2013). Transformational leadership refers to the process of the inspiring motivation of leaders' self and their followers (Burns, 1978), and this leadership style has four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1997). Many kinds of research have emphasized the benefits of transformational leadership. Behery (2008) said that in an organization using a transformational leadership style, the mutual understanding among employees is better. In 2011, Chu and Lai reported that leaders who applied transformational techniques in leadership could help their employees more innovative; also, transformational leadership empowers and motivate the subordinates to achieve goals beyond their responsibility (Kark & Israel, 2004).

While transactional leadership has been defined as a leader has much power over their followers and force them to abide by the leader's decision (Lyons & Schneider, 2009). In 2004, Bass and Avolio pointed out that transactional leadership includes three components: passive management by exception, contingent reward, and active management by exception. Transaction or exchange are significant characteristics for this kind of leadership style. In an organization, transactional leadership is a relationship basing on following leaders and exchanging their abilities to rewards (Ali, 2013). Leaders in this style motivate their employees not by inspiration like transformational leadership, but by appropriate rewards (Pearce & Sims, 2002). There have some researches in Asia, which indicates that the leadership concepts from Western can be complex whenever they are applied in Asia countries. In 2012, Jogulu and Ferkins conducted research to understand the extensive application of transformational and transactional leadership in Asian culture. They found that leadership can be affected by cultural factors in the context of an Asian country and suggested that cultural foundations may accordingly determine the choice of leadership style. According to Tran (2016), state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Vietnam need to be adapt their business approaches to a global economy. Thereby, it requires changes in Vietnamese business leaders and leadership thinking to not only improve the professional tools in management and but also base on the Asian cultural foundation.

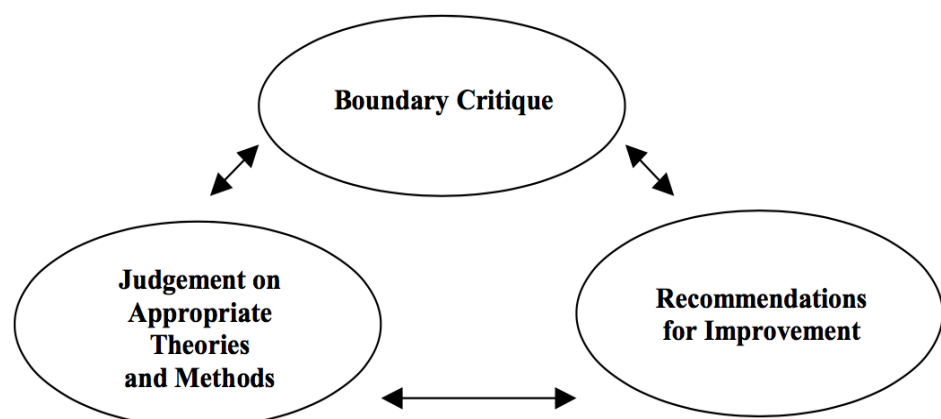## 2.2 The Discussion about Influence of Buddhism in Asian Organizations

Asia is a cultural context that emphasizes power distance, paternalism, collectivism, and social relations (Hofstede, 2004); therefore, some western models could do not apply to leadership in Asian organizations. Shuang (2014) found that the western model of leadership competencies at the various management levels could not match with the needs of managers in China and Vietnam. Besides, a recent study by Speece (2019) discussed that in many countries of Asia, Buddhist economics is part of the debate on

sustainable development, and some states like Thailand are applying Buddhist thinking into solving complex management problems. Many scholars indicate the application of Buddhist concepts. According to Dhiman and Marques (2011), Buddhist thinking helps in cherishing the spirit and having a more holistic view of the world. The 2,500 years old Buddhist tradition has been developed with a sustainable foundation (Johansen & Gopalakrishna, 2006) that may be particularly useful in decision making using that practical wisdom. Buddhist wisdom also contributes to management development in business ethics or improving business performance. Specifically, "Buddhist wisdom emphasises the importance of managers being aware of the processes in their mind, both rational and emotional, of their minds being clear, calm and concentrated and not being influenced by negative emotions such as excessive self-interest, and of being motivated to do their best for the company a whole and all of its stakeholders." (Laurens, 2014). In 2014, Vallabh & Singhal suggested the potential ways of exploring, implementing, and supporting practical wisdom from Buddhist thinking in work environments in Asian countries that have rich eastern traditions.

2.3 Buddhist Systems Methodology (BSM)

Buddhist systems methodology (BSM) is a combined Buddhist concept and systems thinking. Shen (2007) developed the BSM basing on a synthesis of Buddhist concepts and systemic intervention methodology. Therefore, BSM consists of two-component structures: systemic intervention approach (figure 1) adapted from Midgley (2000) and five key concepts in Buddhism including noble eightfold path, middle path, cause–condition–effect, space (context) and time (figure 2).
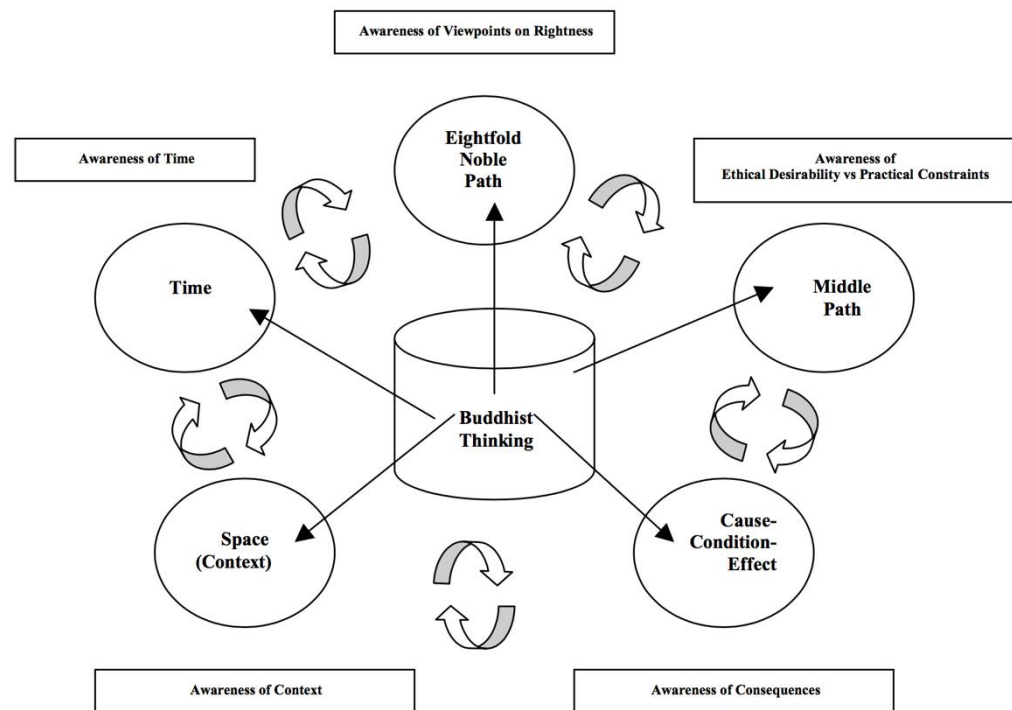
Figure 1: The Essence of Systemic Intervention (adapted from Midgley, 2000)

The essence of systemic intervention has threee main parts:

- Boundary critique which means help people increase the awarness about problematic situations and consider many consiquences in solving the problem.
- Choice between theories and methods
- Recommendations for improvement.

Figure 2: Five Key Buddhist Concepts (adapted from Shen, 2007)

BSM has strongly connected with the five key concepts in Figure 2:

(1) The Eightfold Noble Path focuses on the perception of different aspects and boundaries; and by reflection, the "right" things are encouraged to seek in terms of view, thinking speech, action, living, endeavor, memory, and meditation. According to Shen (2014), exploring the "right" view encourages people to empower the openness to various viewpoints of others, which contributes to solve and prevent the conflict in organizations. The exploration of 'right-thinking' encourages people to avoid harmful thinking such as covetousness, resentment, and malice, while the "right speech" helps people to avoid using the inappropriate language which can strengthen truthfulness in communication. 'Right action' encourages the avoidance of killing, stealing, and other significant misconducts that embolden to build ethical movements. Besides, exploring 'right living' means to do good things for society, the 'right endeavor' encourages the avoidance of idleness and apathy, thereby promoting a constructive relationship. Likewise, considering 'right memory' support every people can have their fair image and

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also enhances trust; 'right meditation' encourages the practice of mindfulness, which "enables appreciation of the relativity of all understandings of self due to interconnections with other people, concepts and things." (Shen, 2014).
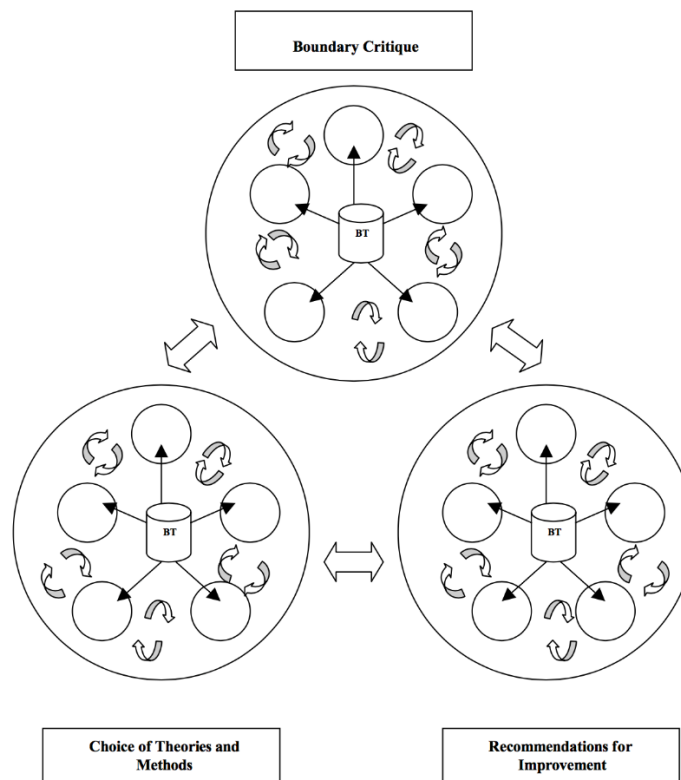
(2) The Middle Path emphasizes the balance between ethical principles and practical compulsion. BSM using the Middle Path concept can reduce extreme views in the general environment, bring mutual benefit to the organization.

(3) Cause-Condition-Effect: These factors are inseparable in Buddhist concepts. The constant causes with different conditions can lead to different effects, which means that "condition" refers to the context that facilities the link between "cause" and "effect." BSM emphasizes this concept to indicate that the problem is complex, and we need to consider carefully about this kind of relationship to make the right decision.

(4) Space (context): The concept of space emphasizes the need to be aware of interrelation in decision-making, especially concerning cultural and ecological context. The BSM asks people to consider those context in decision making, also defining the issues relating to systemic problems.

(5) Time: Basing on Buddhist beliefs about the past, present, and future, the BSM encourages awareness of time issues. The previous actions can influence every movement in any milestone, and it also impacts to the following step. By considering the timeline, we can reduce future problems.

Figure 3: The BSM process of intervention (adapted from Shen, 2007)

The BSM combines systemic intervention and five key Buddhist concepts, which can support organizations to explore boundary in problematic situations; guide the choice of method for intervention; and give the recommendations for advancement.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

We have chosen Le Group of Companies - a Vietnam business enterprise in the creative industry to conduct this research. Le Group of Companies is one of the leading organizations in Vietnam about consulting brand strategy, publishing, public relations, and event management (established in 2002. One of the companies - Le Bros is a member of Worldwide Partners, which is a global network of 80 agencies in 50 countries). Currently, Le Group has about 130 staffs in subsidiaries with a range of businesses in the creative industry: Le Bros, Le Media, Le Digital and Creativa.

Eight individuals, including chairman, directors, and staff in the Le Group were invited as the interviewees, and then we use research questions to ask them about organizational issues. The research was initiated based on using Buddhist Systems Methodology (BSM), which is a problem dealing approach combined Eastern Buddhist philosophy with Western systems thinking. For BSM, there are totally 36 questions, every 12 questions for boundary critique, choice theories and methods, recommendations for actions for improvement (Shen, 2007). To discover the organizational problem of the Le Group, this research used the following 12 questions were developed by Shen's study (2007) for boundary critique:

(1) What currently motivates you and the other to define the issue at hand? What ought to be your/ their motivation?

(2) Is covetousness, resentment or malice influencing you or others in defining the issue? If so, what might the issue look like from your or others point of view if these were removed?

(3) Is lying, deceitfulness, slander or any other "improper" use of language involved being defined by you or others? If so, what might the issue look like from yours or other points of view if these were removed?

(4) Is there any major misconduct (killing, stealing, etc.) linked with the issue? If so, should this be including as an integral part of defining the issue?

(5) Is the issue being defined in a way that privileges your own concerns over wider social concerns? Is there a way to define the issue in a way that included a wider set of concerns, without making the issue impossible to address?

(6) Is there idleness, apathy or avoidance of the issue? Who should be engaged with the issue and how?

(7) Are there any misrepresentations of self, other or the non-human world in the definition of the issue? Have you tested out what you attribute to others by asking them? Should you do so, and if not, why not? If there are misrepresentations what might the issue look like from yours or other points of view if these were corrected?

(8) Has the mental discipline of Buddhist thinking been applied sufficiently in defining the issue? If not, can further Buddhist systemic investigation be undertaken?

(9) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what are the different possibilities for defining 'middle paths' between their ethical and practical concerns? What risks might be associated with different middle paths, and which one should be chosen?

(10) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what cause-condition-effect relationships are important to understanding this issue? What are their potential consequences and the risks of ignoring them? Which should therefore be accounted for, and what conditions make this choice the right one?

(11) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what cultural and ecological contexts are relevant to understanding the issue? What is your view in relation to these other view, and why?

(12) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what time scale for dealing with this issue should be adopted, and why? What is your view in relation to these other view?

3.2 Interview Process

Eight in-depth interviews were conducted, and we did interviews individually. Each interview took about 2 hours and spread a month to complete all the meetings. Before we do those interview, there are several things to decide in the planning section, including preparing questions and considering the number of interviewers in the Le Group, as well as their positions in the organization (chairman, directors, vice presidents, middle managers, staffs). The preparation is necessary due to the following reasons. At the Le Group, their workload is hard; most of them will not have much time for interviewing, so it is crucial not only to define the purpose of the interview.

Regarding choosing the interviewees, we need to select the right people matching with the research purpose, and this helps research have useful outcomes whenever we get information from the interview. A final list of eight interviewees includes various positions within the Le Group, which ensures that the data collected will reflect the different views whenever we use Buddhist systems methodology questions to ask them. This list includes chairman, vice presidents of the Le Group's subsidiaries, middle managers and low staffs:

Table 1: Interview Dates and Duration

Interviewees	Time	Duration
Chairman (L.Q.V)	22 July 2019	2 hours
Vice President of Le Bros (D.T.H.D)	14 July 2019	2 hours 30 minutes
Vice President of Le Media (N.V.T)	13 July 2019	2 hours 10 minutes
C.E.O of Creativa (N.H.H)	12 July 2019	2 hours 20 minutes
Business Development Director (T.T.H.G)	11 July 2019	2 hours 30 minutes
Human Resource Manager (D.T.M.H)	19 July 2019	2 hours
Account Executive (N.H.T)	18 July 2019	1 hour 45 minutes
Public Relations Executive (L.D.T)	07 July 2019	1 hour 30 minutes

We planned to talk to the different positions of the Le Group as the list of interviewees identified aforementioned. The purpose of these interviews is to explore issues related to organizational problems that they have been experiencing while working at the Le Group. After discussing and finding a list of issues, we will choose common issues that most of them have mentioned or the insight as underlying assumptions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Issue Identification

Issue identification is the first step before stage using BSM questions for boundary critique; we need to identify all issues the interviewees mentioned during in-depth interviews. The various answers are collected from interviewees, which showed us some organizational issues. From the interview data, we figured out six particular corporate matters:

 (1) Leaders experienced difficulty in balancing the time between functional work and strategic work. As Ms. D.T.H.D said that: "As a role vice president of Le Bros, it seems to be difficult to balance the time and energy between strategic and operational work, because I am swamped with work and involve in many projects while my position needs more requirements in leadership skills such as time management and strategic thinking".

(2) Some employees have a low motivation, which results that the efficiency of work is not good and also the turnover is quite high. Ms. D.T.M.H (Human Resource Manager) mentioned this issue "Recently, full-time members of staff have quitted the job without rational reasons; maybe they cannot continue because of low motivation or feeling that they are not suitable for organization culture here."

(3) Lack of interaction and cohesion between employees in the organization. There have some significant reasons such as excessive workload, the time for relaxing, and genuinely sharing is a minority of working hours, which has made some employees have lack empathy with others at work. Ms. N.H.T (Account Executive) realized a fact

between lower staffs. In some mutual projects, she saw that some employees argued seriously and even some of those disputations made some people angry, this could stem from a lack of mutual understanding and apathy.

(4) The workflow has been not fluently because of the new process, which makes a new interaction in the whole organization. Ms. T.T.H.G said that after more than one year since the Le Group restructured in 2018, new policies are established, and those processes make previous perceptions of many employees hard to adapt to the new system.

(5) Middle-managers can not have enough time to transfer the culture from chairman to lower staff. Mr. N.V.T mentioned that although the chairman understood the importance of organizational culture, in the point of our view, the chairman is busy with strategy development, so he did not have much time in the workplace to solve these issues frequently. Besides, in this period, middle managers are also overwhelmed with projects and cannot contribute much to transferring the culture of chairman.

(6) A gap in generations results in the hard adaption of some employees. Chairman Mr. L.Q.V said that the Le Group has different ages, which leads to the values, beliefs are also varied, and it is challenging to achieve harmony.

After identifying many issues, the final item we made a choice was "leadership problem." The leadership style has a crucial role in transfer the message in the whole organization, especially in Asian organizations, therefore dealing with the leadership issue can solve the root of the other problems. In our opinion, addressing this issue can be an enormous benefit to both the Le Group and our research. Moreover, many Vietnamese leaders, including leaders in the Le Group, believe partly or absolutely in Buddha; accordingly, this is a good condition for applying the BSM to discover this organizational problem.

4.2 The Summary of BSM (Boundary Critique Questions)

From different perspectives of interviewees, we summarize their answers about leadership problem by asking 12 questions for boundary critique:

(1) What currently motivates you and the other to define the issue at hand? What ought to be your/ their motivation?

Regarding the Le Group's leadership, all senior leaders share a mutual vision when co-operating the company; they have the same purpose that constructing Le Group to become a reliable partner in communication strategy consultancy of businesses in Vietnam. According to chairman L.Q.V: "Le Group's core values are creative-oriented and attach to human values. Established in 2002, Le Group of companies has had many corporations with big businesses and prestigious organizations in Vietnam, such as Viettel, Vingroup, Vietnam Airlines, Davines, VP Bank, Hennessy. In 2013, they were a member of a global network like Worldwide Partners, Inc., which connected with many

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international agencies. Ms. D.T.H.D (Vice president of Le Bros): "The leaders at Le Group have the cohesion and coordination to work evenly. The directors of Le Group companies understand the general development and spirit of chairman in building a corporate culture to become a partner of clients." However, there is a bit of difference from the perspective of the lower level in the company about leadership. Ms. L.D.T (Public Relations Executive) mentioned that "Leadership in the company creates a friendly environment, but in the heavy workload of agency, some positions as middle-managers still have some problems in the transmission of information, and sometimes, this affects employees' work motivation."

(2) Is covetousness, resentment or malice influencing you or others in defining the issue? If so, what might the issue look like from your or others point of view if these were removed?

All interviewees concluded that there is no covetousness, resentment, or malice in the company. Leaders have built the culture basing on human values like sharing and openness, and typically, leaders always are the pioneer implementing this culture. Mr. N.V.T (Vice President of Le Media) said: "Le Group creates a feedback mechanism for everyone can raise their voice. In the process of working, every employee can speak their thought through many channels to leaders. The leadership in corporate culture is conveyed through core values to employees, helping employees understand the company's vision. However, everyone will understand the leaders' thinking in different ways, so there is still a certain gap between people." The Business Development Director said: "Leaders in Le Group are fully in agreement, but whenever conveying to lower levels, sometimes the staffs are not fully aware. For example, leaders think there have some projects in the company contributing to long-term development for Le Group; however, some employees lack a vision and patience as well and cannot see the importance of those projects."

(3) Is lying, deceitfulness, slander or any other "improper" use of language involved being defined by you or others? If so, what might the issue look like from yours or other points of view if these were removed?

Most of the leaders in Le Group use explanation to persuade the lower staffs, therefore in the company, there are no powerful words, or give the orders without feedback. Mr. N.V.T (Vice President of Le Media) said that" "Since I worked at Le Group, I have never heard any shouting in the office; leaders always use the language with the calm and convincing argument." However, sometimes, improper use of language happens between middle-managers and lower staffs. Ms. N.H.T (Account Executive) said that "Some of the middle managers have got their hands full managing projects at the same time, so sometimes they lack empathy to use appropriate words in

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working together. I think if those people can understand the situations of others, they can avoid unnecessary controversy and make the communication more fluently".

(4) Is there any major misconduct (killing, stealing, etc.) linked with the issue? If so, should this be including as an integral part of defining the issue?

None of the interviewees thought there was any major misconduct related to leadership in the Le Group. This agency emphasizes on human ethical value, especially honesty, and any improper actions will be prevented immediately. For example, the vice president D.T.H.D said, "Every people in Le Group were conscious of ethical issues, wrong actions have never happened because those cannot be accepted here. Leaders always deeply understand this principle".

(5) Is the issue being defined in a way that privileges your own concerns over wider social concerns? Is there a way to define the issue in a way that included a wider set of concerns, without making the issue impossible to address?

Regarding defining the issue which was privileging people's own narrow concern, the director in business development said : "Generally, the gap in generations can effect to leadership in business, for example, leaders of Le Group were born from the 1970s to 1980s, while the youngest employee of company was born in 2001, this can lead to the challenge in communication." The way to giving the young generation direction needs to be changed because their education is different from previous generations. Mr. N.V.T (Vice President of Le Media) agreed with this: "The young employees who were born in the 1990s require higher criteria in salary and experience; therefore, leadership must be adjusted to fit with this kind of generation."

(6) Is there idleness, apathy or avoidance of the issue? Who should be engaged with the issue and how?

Regarding the idleness, apathy, or avoidance of the issue, all interviewees said that, although in the Le Group leaders try to create multi-channel to receive the opinions from the staff of departments, however in some common issues of the company, several employees are not active in giving their actual thinking. We saw that this is the norm, which stems from Asian culture wherever most people do not express their true feelings to preserve harmony. Ms. T.T.H.G said that "In the Le Group, we organize the meeting to review the advantages and disadvantages of execution to improve skills for the next projects. However, some of them are shy to talk true opinions, and maybe they are very busy with other projects; therefore, the quality of those review meetings is not like expectation". Besides, the endeavor of leadership can be affected by time management. For example, Ms. D.T.H.D (Vice President of Le Bros) said that: "I aware of the importance of professional management skills, but I do not have enough time to learn and practice frequently."

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(7) Are there any misrepresentations of self, other or the non-human world in the definition of the issue? Have you tested out what you attribute to others by asking them? Should you do so, and if not, why not? If there are misrepresentations what might the issue look like from yours or other points of view if these were corrected?

Regarding misrepresentation, this also happened which is the result of Vietnam culture in the workplace; sometimes they cannot say the genuine opinions because of maintaining the harmony, besides the rush time in business restricts evoking the exact memory. Mr. N.V.T (Vice President of Le Media) said: "Normally, many departments will involve in projects, so a failure of anyone can impact the others. Therefore, I propose that every staff need to review after finishing the project, and each person can share the lesson they learn from this project.

However, everyone usually has been busy with the workload, so this thing cannot make useful. ". Also, sometimes, the information is too much, which results in a misunderstanding between staff, especially whenever team members needs to review their productivity after completing projects. Mr. N.H.H (CEO of Creativa) said: "To make a working process clearly, I am trying to set up a digital tool which could record all interacts in projects, however, this need to take a lot of time and investment."

(8) Has the mental discipline of Buddhist thinking been applied sufficiently in defining the issue? If not, can further Buddhist systemic investigation be undertaken?

Regarding the sufficiency of Buddhist thinking (BT), the interviewees saw some useful applications in leadership issues. The chairman concluded that "The Buddhist thinking is interesting, and we can consider applying this in our business because Le Group is the agency that emphasizes human ethical value and wants to be human partners of clients in strategy."

Vice President Mr. N.V.T also said, "I always remember a piece of advice from Buddha, which means that we need to see everyone fairly. Leaders need to be calm in every decision; this is the condition to observe various views of everyone; therefore, I never make the decision whenever I am angry".

(9) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what are the different possibilities for defining 'middle paths' between their ethical and practical concerns? What risks might be associated with different middle paths, and which one should be chosen?

Leaders in the Le Group usually share their ideas among the board of directors with purpose be choosing a suitable direction, bringing the company's overall benefits. However, it is difficult to harmonize the perspective of everyone in an agency environment with high pressures. For example, when leaders want to inform the company policies to employees, leaders need to combine many different ways according

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to rational and emotional reasons. Also, in a company with different generations, the use of appropriate language is necessary.

Ms. D.T.H.D, as the role of Vice President, said that although there are many people older than her in the company, meanwhile, Asian cultural behaviors often respect older people, but in a workplace, she prioritizes professionalism and willing to express straightforward views. It is difficult to harmonize people in a company, but "the purpose is boosting the growth of the company; therefore, I try to choose the most appropriate path in the way of management."

(10) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what cause-condition-effect relationships are important to understanding this issue? What are their potential consequences and the risks of ignoring them? Which should therefore be accounted for, and what conditions make this choice the right one?

Regarding the cause-condition-effect relationships thought to be vital, the interviewees mentioned some links relating to the event that the Le Group restructured more one year ago. "A cause was that restructuring the whole group and establish new processes, the condition is a decision of chairman basing on the need for transforming the business model from family company to professional company, and the effect is hugely changing in human resources from the leaders, managers to staff." Chairman said that this transformation is an important milestone that helps the Le Group develop a new strategy and expand the potential ability to serve the clients. Therefore, leaders can manage effectively using professional tools and new work processes.

After restructuring, the previous organizational culture has changed a lot. Ms. D.T.M.H (Human Resources Manager) said that some of the critical former leaders and staff left the company, which could affect the culture of the Le Group. Mr. N.H.H (C.E.O of Creativa), who works at Le Group after restructuring, feels that "Although Le Group restructured, leaders in the companies still keep the nice and comfortable atmosphere among staff." The effort of leaders in the present is reducing the gap between staff, managers, and directors, and they hope that these efforts can create proper conditions in work for teams. Ms. T.T.H.G (Business Development director) concluded that "The distance between the chairman and low staff is not so far like some companies, for instance, in some projects, the chairman will discuss with various staff to engage the ideas together."

(11) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what cultural and ecological contexts are relevant to understanding the issue? What is your view in relation to these other view, and why?

Regarding the cultural and ecological contexts relevant to understand the issue, we extend discussion with interviewees about the differences in generations, and the social

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elements affect to the workforce in Hanoi (North area) and Saigon (South area). Firstly, about the young generation in Vietnam, they think they have many job opportunities, so the turnover rate in companies is quite high. Staff in Le Group work in the creative industry; therefore, they change their job quickly. Ms. T.T.H.G said that "Nowadays, the young generation has many choices in career; for example, they can open their new business, start-up or work as a freelancer. Secondly, Le Group's leaders saw a significant difference between branches in Hanoi city (Northern Vietnam) and Ho Chi Minh City (Southern Vietnam). "Southern employees seem to be more practical than northern staffs." Besides, Vietnam's creative industry is dynamic, so young employees have many offers to work; this is a big challenge of recruiting and retaining talent. Mr. N.H.H (CEO of Creativa) has a similar opinion: "The worth asset of an agency like Le Group is the people, so leaders need to focus on maintaining and developing the human capital of the company."

(12) From the various points of view of those involved and (potentially) affected, what time scale for dealing with this issue should be adopted, and why? What is your view in relation to these other view?

Regarding the time scale for solving the issue, most interviewees expressed that leadership improvement depended on many factors. All leaders are aware of the importance of growing professional thinking and skills in leadership. The chairman saw leadership as a process of learning; he said, "I try to learn the new things every day and always treasure human values to create a learning environment in Le Group. We usually organize the workshop once a month and invite experts to train managers and staff about professional skills". Mr. N.V.T (Vice president of Le Media) said, "In Le Group, we accept the diversity and leaders always aware of the importance of learning from others." Besides, two interviewees expressed that their leadership ability needs to be improved. Ms. D.T.H.D (Vice president of Le Bros) thought that "I need to allocate more time to learn about professional models in management, willing to try the new approaches and apply them into work."

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Global business economics requires enterprises in a dynamic economy like Vietnam to transform organizational structure and leadership. In the context of the Vietnam business environment like Le Group of companies, varied viewpoints at different levels in the organization can be influenced by Asian culture with high power distance and Western leadership styles. A case study presented in the paper, which examines eight people of various levels from the chairman, managers, and lower staffs, finds that there is a particular gap in sharing diverse views in the corporation though leaders are well

aware of the organizational culture's importance. Also, a management hierarchy in Asian culture and the difference found between members of different generations influence on the way of leadership, such as determining the right motivation and clarifying their ideas in Le Group. Leaders of Le Group of companies witnessed a hard period since restructuring last year; meanwhile, they established new policies and changed the organizational structure. Also, many new employees of different ages enhanced the Le Group, which are considerable challenges in management.

Regarding academic contribution, the paper showed the applicability of new methodology for researchers to examine organizational problems in Asian culture. By first time using Buddhist systems methodology in a Vietnam Business Enterprise, the authors discovered a systemic problem about leadership and also supported to all interviewees saw that leadership plays a vital role in fostering a culture of open communication within the company. In the future, we proposed the Asian researchers to use this kind of methodology as a useful tool to study organizational problems; primarily, those organizations are influenced by Asian culture and Buddhism.

Regarding practical contribution, the paper provided an initial recommendation to deal with the leadership problem. BSM supported all interviewees in the organization to reflect the issues such as the diversity in generations or numerous demands in agency work, limited time for apathy to others. After finishing BSM in the first stage for discovering the boundary critique of leadership problems, we will continue to use BSM in the next stage for choosing the appropriate methods basing on system theories. Those methods will be proposed to leaders in Le Group to dealing with the problem. We also consider introducing a professional management tool for organizing the structure of the organization, such as a Viable System Model (VSM). VSM can be applied to stimulate the management process in the company, and support the leader can see the holistic picture of the organization internal and external. Besides, Soft Systems Methodologies could be used for solving the problems relating to human resources. However, to practice professional management tools in Le Group, leaders need to allocate resources efficiently in the long-term within the Vietnam business environment, changing constantly. This study has shown that most leaders at Le Group are open-minded; they usually collect feedback from employees and willing to learn new thinking; also, some of them are interested in the application of Buddhist thought in management and believe in the knowledge from Buddha. By proposing the methodology blended Buddhist philosophy with systems thinking approaches, the insights gained from this study may be of assistance to foster leadership improvement in the Le Group of companies. Further investigation and experimentation into Asian leadership and systems thinking is strongly recommended.

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