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CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL DETERMINANTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to evaluate how Vietnamese historical legacy and cultural values impact the management effectiveness of its higher education institutions by shaping their management practices and governance systems. The cultural and historical elements of Vietnam were analysed based on the view that they are both institutionalised systems of thought that shape the decision-making processes of university managers and leaders throughout the country. In order to collect data related to the research question, 200 university leaders and managers within Vietnamese universities provided input, regarding their experiences as university managers and leaders, responses to a questionnaire designed to assess the influence of cultural values and historical legacies on their management effectiveness's perceptions. In this study, structural equation modelling was used to analyse the included data. An overwhelming majority of participants indicated that Vietnamese cultural values significantly influenced their management practices, while its historical legacy remarkably influenced their governance methods and managerial behaviour. Furthermore, both variables were also positively related to their management effectiveness. Researchers concluded from the results of this study that management practices and governance methods mediate the relationship between cultural values, historical legacies and management effectiveness. Eventually, both of these factors have a combined indirect impact on the Vietnamese higher education system management effectiveness. As such, the present study expands the existing literature on the management effectiveness within the Vietnamese higher education system by integrating the two elements of cultural values and historical legacies into one theoretical framework.

KEYWORDS: Higher education management; Cultural values; Historical legacies; University governance; Management effectiveness; Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Management in higher education is becoming recognized as a practice which is part of an institution as much as it is about the tools of management that could be used universally. The way institutions govern themselves, how their leaders act and how effective their leaders are is all influenced by culture and the historical development of the institution. This means that models of reform emphasizing autonomy, performance management and transparency (from Western higher education systems) will often find limits in their implementation due to the diversity of countries and political systems (Christensen, 2011; Jongbloed *et al.*, 2018).

Vietnam is unique due to its combination of Confucian cultural traditions, socialist-bureaucratic governance and ongoing reform efforts, all geared towards creating increased autonomy and effectiveness in management (Le Ha & Ngoc, 2020; London & Duong, 2023; Salmi, 2019). In Vietnamese public universities, Confucian values related to hierarchy, respect for authority, harmony and collectivism continue to shape decision making and organizational behavior (Ly, 2021; Uoc, 2024), while the centralised administration reinforces the bureaucratic and compliance-oriented modes of operation through the use of bureaucratic processes (Pham, 2012; Salmi, 2019).

Vietnam has undergone extensive reforms in the last 20 years, from expanding university autonomy, enhancing accountability mechanisms to restructuring governance (Do & Mai, 2022; Parajuli *et al.*, 2020; Truong & Tran, 2025). The purpose of these reforms is to enhance management efficiency and meeting international governance standards through the investigation into how institutions respond to change (Jongbloed *et al.*, 2018; Kohtamäki & Balbachevsky, 2018). Outcomes from implementing the reforms remain inconsistent, as the new leadership models and institutional organizational arrangements have been constrained by the existence of the deeply embedded historical and cultural institutional traditions (Pham, 2012; Salmi, 2019).

While there is some growing awareness of the cultural and historical context importance's in shaping higher education management systems in Vietnam, previous research has tended to regard them as background variables only - not as events that can be examined empirically. While there have been many studies that describe governance reforms and other institutional issues, few have examined how cultural values and historical roots have created the management style, governance structure or

management effectiveness of higher education institutions (London & Duong, 2023; Parajuli *et al.*, 2020).

This research study will explore how cultural values and historical legacies can affect the way higher education systems are managed in Vietnam. Starting by examining their impact on management practices and governance structures, as well as their individual (direct) and combined (joint) effects on a given management practice effectiveness through the lens of SEM (structural equation modelling). Additionally, this study contributes to the academic literature on higher education management systems in transitional countries by creating an integrated disciplinary agronomical model that incorporates culturally and historically embedded institution processes. By presenting SEM-based empirical data from a transitional higher education system in Vietnam, this study ultimately developing culturally and historically based policy recommendations for governance reform.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. *Cultural Values and University Management Practices*

The management styles of education organizations depend on the respective organization's culture; therefore, it is impossible to have a single management style for all education organizations. According to past studies on the topic, the cultural identity of the managers influences how they exhibit power depending on the collectivism of the culture. The hierarchical relationship or power structure of the manager's influences whether the managers feel part of the organization; consequently, this shapes managerial decision making and interpersonal interactions within the institution (To *et al.*, 2020). The managers whose management style is in line with the cultural values will have the opportunity to practice their skills in this context, while managers whose styles are not in line with the cultural values will create some form of resistance or will be symbolically compliant (Bellibaş *et al.*, 2025).

Confucianists view hierarchy and authority as significant values in a Confucian-based culture; furthermore, some sociologists view the existence of "moral authority" through moral leadership or moral persons, "authority" through seniority and "responsibility" for the welfare of others; all three create the foundation of management practices in Confucianism, as demonstrated by consensus management (Tjeldvoll, 2011). Empirical evidence

from East Asia supports the theory of evolution in the nation's development from both evolutionary perspectives and with relational coordinating development methods as opposed to confrontation and highly individualistic development methods (Vaddi, 2025).

Moreover, a study conducted in Vietnamese organisations revealed that Confucian values (emphasising the importance of obeying authority and maintaining harmony with others) had a large influence on how leaders develop their management styles (Truong et al., 2017). As such, most Vietnamese leaders prefer to use either the hierarchical management style or the relational management style, both of which may result in lower levels of psychological empowerment for their employees (Schenck & Waddey, 2017; Schermuly et al., 2022). Therefore:

H1. Cultural values have a significant influence on university management practices in Vietnamese higher education institutions.

2.2. Historical Legacies and Governance Structures in Vietnamese Universities

In Vietnamese past, state control and bureaucratic administration have influenced how universities are governed today. Currently, Vietnamese university governance system is socialist and heavily bureaucratic; decisions regarding what universities can or cannot do are made according to a strict hierarchy (or pecking order) of authority, which may include many forms of bureaucratic compliance. Bureaucratic compliance in general provides little room for universities to operate autonomously (Van Khanh & Hayden, 2009; Pham, 2012). As previously mentioned, this leads to minimal change in how university managers perform their jobs because (for the most part) reforms have merely added to existing practices rather than resulted in significant changes in how managers act in performing their jobs.

As policy discussion continues to emphasize the development of autonomous/accountable policies in higher education institutions, most universities are embedded in an administrative system that promotes ministerial control and compliance based management (Hayden, 2017; Salmi, 2019). The implication is that while universities are considered to be autonomous in terms of governance structures, they are still situated in an environment that promotes tension between the aspirations of strategic governance and the operational management of the university (London & Duong, 2023).

New studies indicate that governance has always impacted the implementation of autonomy,

especially in the case of Vietnamese universities whose governance is hybrid in nature (i.e., decentralization and bureaucratic control) and has approval systems in place from earlier regimes of governance (Le, 2024), which are meant to ensure accountability (Mai et al., 2022). Accordingly:

H2. Historical legacies significantly shape governance structures and managerial behavior in Vietnamese universities.

2.3. University Management Practices and Management Effectiveness

An institution's "Managerial Effectiveness", defined as the extent to which it achieves its mission, stems from the efficiency and coordination of its core managerial processes. As expressed by Khalilov (2025), the higher educational institution must achieve its strategic goals through a formal organizational plan, clear performance objectives and goals, as well as having strong managerial control and monitoring. The extent to which the higher educational institution is able to manage resources in achieving its goals is the result of the "Managerial Effectiveness". The managerial role and responsibility operate in an external environment in which the higher educational institution functions, which can affect the achievement of its purpose through its performance (Kenny, 2008).

Improved administrative processes will enable staff to communicate more effectively, they will be using specific criteria to make good decisions and achieve a lot of improvements with their standardised processes through the use of administrative improvement process and greater efficiencies in administrative processes and procedures (Zhang et al., 2012). Therefore, e-administration and digital administration, will enable organisations to communicate and operate in a flexible manner (Sunaengsih et al., 2024). The overall change to the level of modernisation that has occurred in the area of administrative management in Vietnam has been extremely significant in terms of the governance's autonomy transformation and enhancement in Vietnam (Cuong & Tinh, 2025).

Management practices and leadership are alike in the sense of how effectively a person leads their followers (subordinates). Faculty member's commitment to implementing management decisions shows a positive relationship between faculty commitment to implementing management decisions and faculty's leadership self-efficacy (Almutairi et al., 2020). Performance management frameworks (i.e., BSC) depict a way in which the interaction of various performance management

practices (linkage of strategic objectives to performance indicators and feedback systems) all enhance effectiveness through the interrelationships with each other (Camilleri, 2021). Therefore:

H3. University management practices have a significant effect on management effectiveness in Vietnamese universities.

2.4. Governance Structures, Managerial Behavior and Management Effectiveness

The governance structure provides an institutional arrangement for the Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) to ensure autonomous operations while developing the environment that influences the management's behavior as well as their performance. Thus, for the HLIs to perform the roles of teaching, research and community engagement, the governance structure is needed to outline the distribution of powers for the HLIs, establish the responsibility of each party in the governance structure and outline the methods used in the decision making process (e.g., Darwish et al., 2022). Therefore, for the HLIs to be effective, they need to have governance structures as well as leadership styles that are founded in governance principles to evaluate the effectiveness of the governing body (e.g., Sengupta et al., 2022); hence, the effective utilization of the governance structure to attain effectiveness is achieved through the behavior of the leaders in the governance structure's implementation for the HLIs (e.g., Harris et al., 2023).

An organization's governance affects how managers have access to incentives and constraints to utilize in the exercise of discretionary authority and in orientation towards performance (Phillips, 2012; Choi, 2019). Further, it has been suggested that a balanced approach to achieving an appropriate level of Autonomy versus Accountability in an organization provides managers with the best opportunity to achieve the highest level of performance compared to a governance framework that is fragmented or not well-defined (Adams, 2018).

Studies conducted recently suggest that different functional areas now require different levels of governance support than before. One example is that with an increasing functionality on the internet, today's institutions are using more technology than ever before to meet their goals. As a result, using an integrated method for governing the use of technology ensures that these resources can help support the institution's mission more effectively and efficiently. With better support through information technology governance, institutions will be able to provide better management of their resources and

achieve successful results (Khouja et al., 2018). Accordingly:

H4. Governance structures and managerial behavior have a significant effect on management effectiveness in Vietnamese universities.

2.5. The Mediating Role of University Management Practices

The way an organization develops its cultural attributes (which ultimately determine its results) is usually accomplished through processes of indirect communication as a result of those values being transferred from manager to employee. Sporn (1996) noted that the cultural characteristics of a higher education institution can significantly influence how authority is exercised, how legitimate the decisions made by that institution appear to other stakeholders, as well as whether or not they will be able to mobilize resources in order to achieve their stated objectives. There exists a considerable body of scholarly literature supports the assertion that a university's outcomes are largely influenced by the type of management practices are employed within its organizational culture (Warter, 2019).

An extensive amount of data suggests that workplace management processes and the alignment of performance with academic values significantly affect institutional performance. These factors can influence organizational culture by either supporting or creating barriers to managerial systems and result production. Numerous systematic reviews of the literature conducted by a multitude of researchers (Chowdhury et al., 2025) support this statement. There is a wealth of literature examining the strong relationship between an organisation's culture and that organisation's ability to produce results (Workineh & Gebremeskel, 2021) and in particular, with respect to the ability of an organisation to achieve results in the public sector.

A lot of research has been done by many different researchers, for many years, on how different strands or dimensions of culture (national and/or organisational) and their effect on how successful high-performance management practices will be in terms of the performance outcomes achieved by an organisation (Lockhart et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that there are different levels of culture and different management practices and both types of management practice will enhance the overall effectiveness of governmental performance (Kim et al., 2022), leading to the conclusion that management practices can mediate the relationship between culture and performance outcome (Twaissi et al., 2025). Therefore:

H5. University management practices mediate the relationship between cultural values and management effectiveness in Vietnamese universities.

2.6. The Mediating Role of Governance Structures and Managerial Behavior

Today's governing arrangements are often created or shaped through historical legacies via process of path dependence. When governance structures and decision making routines become established (like going through an established routine), they generally remain in place and restrict future reform outcomes and manager behaviours (Ebbinghaus, 2009). The path dependencies existing in higher education organisations shape how that organisation is structured, how authority is distributed across the organisation and how governance is exercised, usually leading to incremental rather than transformational improvement (Krücken, 2003). Therefore, governance structures serve as the primary institutional channels through which historical legacies impact present day management outcomes.

Analysts of higher education systems will find an ample amount of empirical research on how different governance structures mediate historical legacies effects on both manager's behavior and the overall performance of an institution. A long history of governance practice creates a set of routines for managers in making various decisions and subsequently limits their ability to be innovative (Brown, 2021). Likewise, the historical arrangement of institutions at the time leads many reforms to include within their new policies and frameworks the policy legacies of the previous governance structure (Feeney & Hogan, 2017). The previous evidence also highlights how path dependent governance structures shape both the manager's interpretation and implementation of reform efforts in East Asia (Deng, 2013).

Further research shows that the performance impacts of governance associated historical legacies are considerable. Governance structures can greatly impact the behavior of managers as well as the quality of the service provided (Hayward, 2006). Governance structures determine both the accountability of managers as well as their ability to make decisions thus controlling the quality of education services (Atanaw et al., 2025). Accordingly:

H6. Governance structures and managerial behavior mediate the relationship between historical legacies and management effectiveness in Vietnamese universities.

2.7. Joint Effects of Cultural Values and Historical Legacies on Management Effectiveness

Findings from the assessment of the governance reform effectiveness in the higher education sector in Vietnam indicated that the coexistence of the cultural factors and the historical factors in Vietnamese higher education sector results in the production of managerial outcomes through the managerial associations, which influence the behavior in the higher education sector in Vietnam (Pham, 2012; London & Duong, 2023). Findings from the assessment of the reform's effectiveness in the country's higher education sector indicated that the reform in the country's higher education sector is influenced by the historical factors and the cultural factors, which in turn influence the effectiveness of the reform in the country's higher education sector (Dao, 2015).

The management and behaviour of organisations in Vietnam are still governed by an overall model of management based on the research of Haaland (2004). Cultural values relating to hierarchy and collegiality, as well as individual versus group responsibility and other cultural dimensions are all strongly correlated to the formal governance structure that supports the day-to-day management practices of individuals, thereby have an impact on the way in which institutions perform (Thien, 2020). Consequently, traditional centralised control methods of management and compliance-based governance models continue to be prevalent in the manner in which academic work is structured, managed and assessed. For example, there are continuing influences remaining from reforming academic work to be driven by marketisation, along with self-management and self-governance (Thien, 2021; Le-Ha & Ngoc, 2020). The empirical data that has been collected regarding these types of studies suggests that the effectiveness of managing and governing institutions is largely determined by the extent to which cultural expectations of managers coincide with the local governance structure. Within an institutional framework in Vietnam, there is a profound influence on manager's behaviour due to the interaction of multiple institutional embeddedness and connectivity of the various cultural, political and administrative frameworks in operation (Hung, 2005). Accordingly:

H7. Cultural values and historical legacies jointly influence management effectiveness in Vietnamese higher education institutions through management practices and governance structures.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A quantitative cross sectional study utilizes multiple variables representing different aspects of the institutional culture to analyze the relationship between cultural values, historical legacies, management practices and their effect on the management efficiency of higher education institutions in Vietnam. This research adopts an institutional approach to verify the hypothesized model using structural equation modelling (SEM) to identify and quantify the complex interdependencies between the latent variables and their respective indicators, thereby demonstrating that the use of SEM is commonplace in higher education research in Vietnam (Dao, 2015; Pham *et al.*, 2019).

An integrated cultural - institutional framework. The proposed Integrated Cultural-Institutional Framework represents an integrated approach to understanding university management. In this model, Cultural Values and Historical Legacies act as exogenous factors. Meanwhile, Management Practices and Governance Structures serve as the mediating processes that eventually determine Management Effectiveness. The proposed integrated framework supports previously reviewed research that demonstrates the roles of Organizational Culture, Leadership, Governance and Knowledge Management in influencing Performance Outcomes within Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions (Ngoc-Tan & Gregar, 2018; Lam & Trang, 2021; Do & Dang, 2021; Hue *et al.*, 2023; Thuy & Thuy, 2023; Khoa & Huynh, 2023; Ngoc-Tan, 2023; Pham & Goyette, 2019) with Explicitly Modelled Mediation Pathways allowing for the Rigorous Testing of Individual and Collective Institutional Effects on Management Effectiveness.

3.2. Data Collection

A structured survey using a questionnaire format was developed to obtain the required data from managerial and academic leaders in Vietnamese higher education institutions. The population for the study includes rectors, vice-rectors, deans, department heads, managers of the functional units with experience in the governance structures and practices in higher education. This selection criterion was supported in the previous study, which emphasized the importance of managerial perspectives in the assessment of higher education processes (Pham, 2012; Salmi, 2019; Le & Do, 2021).

The perception of cultural values, historical

legacy, management practice, governance structure and management effectiveness were measured using a multi-item affinity (Likert) scale in the survey instrument. The survey and its items were piloted before administration. The data was collected voluntarily and anonymously, later compiled into a database for statistical analysis. This approach is similar to other survey based research on SEM in other universities in Vietnam; hence, the reliability of the data on perceptions is established and a lack of bias in responding is guaranteed while ensuring confidentiality of respondents (Nguyen, 2013; Tuan *et al.*, 2022; Tuan *et al.*, 2023; Truong, 2025).

3.3. Sample and Sampling Method

A research sample of 200 individuals from higher educational institutions in Vietnam was selected using a purposive sampling method was used to select participants with a formal authority or leadership position such as rector/vice-rector, dean/vice-dean, head department and manager of important functions (academic affairs, administrative support, quality assurance, human resources, finance, etc.). This approach is appropriate for studying the governance and management of higher education institutions, so it is crucial that the respondents are able to provide reliable data on how they have direct knowledge by personally or administratively experiencing the processes and effectiveness of their own institutions (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015; Pham & Starkey, 2016; Truong, 2025).

As detailed in Table 1, the highest number of respondents (44.0%) reported being department/unit heads, followed by deans (24.0%), vice-deans (24.0%), vice-rectors (14.0%) and vice-presidents (6.0%).

In addition, the variation in the sample according to type of institution, autonomy status, region and functional responsibilities is clearly evident. In terms of respondent types, public universities comprised 72.0% of respondents and private universities 23.0%, with 35.0% of the sample being from institutions involved with autonomy pilot programs and 55.0% coming from institutions not involved in the autonomy pilot program. In the northern region, respondents accounted for 46.0% of the sample; in the southern region, 36.0% and in the central region, the remaining 18.0%. This distribution allows for better comparative use of data since there is institutional and regional diversity among Vietnamese higher education institutions. (Huang, 2006; Van Trung *et al.*, 2021; Thien, 2020; Vykhreshch *et al.*, 2020).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.

Variable	Category	n	%
Position	Rector/President	12	6.0
	Vice-Rector/Vice-President	28	14.0
	Dean/Vice-Dean	48	24.0
	Head of department/unit	88	44.0
	Other	24	12.0
Years in management	< 3 years	36	18.0
	3–5 years	56	28.0
	6–10 years	68	34.0
	> 10 years	40	20.0
Institution type	Public	144	72.0
	Private	46	23.0
	Other	10	5.0
Autonomy status	Autonomy pilot	70	35.0
	Non-pilot	110	55.0
	Not sure	20	10.0
Region	North	92	46.0
	Central	36	18.0
	South	72	36.0
Main functional area	Academic affairs	52	26.0
	Administration	44	22.0
	QA/ Accreditation	32	16.0
	Human resources (HR)	24	12.0
	Finance	28	14.0
	Other	20	10.0

Note. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

3.4. Measurement and Analytical Techniques

Each construct will be assessed as an unknown variable using a variety of indicators measured by Likert scale ratings. Standard SEM validity and

reliability measures will be used to assess how reliable the measurements are. To assess the internal consistency of the constructs, Cronbach's alpha measurements and composite reliability will be used. In contrast, average variance extracted (AVE) will be used for evaluating the construct's convergent validity. In contrast, the correlation of the constructs to one another and the square root of AVE (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gefen et al., 2000) will be used to determine their discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker criterion. Once these techniques are successfully completed, it can be established that the measurement model has been successfully completed and that it can be used to test the hypotheses.

To examine the purported associations between cultural values, the history at the same point in time, management systems, governance systems and effectiveness in management, an empirical study was created using SEM as the basis to test the theory. The method of evaluating the model was with commonly accepted goodness of fit tests and explanatory criteria concurrently allowing for full estimation of both direct and indirect paths (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Gefen et al., 2000).

Data collecting and analysis are performed using IBM SPSS software for data screening, descriptive statistics and assumption checks (e.g., frequency distributions; Field, 2024). All SEM procedures and validity assessments occurred according to established methodological frameworks for covariance based and component based models (Chin, 1998; Hair, 2014; Henseler et al., 2009) in order to promote the thorough and systematic examination of the proposed hypotheses.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment

Before measuring the structural model, the measurement model was assessed for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. All constructs had satisfactory internal consistency as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha values that ranged between 0.846 and 0.882 and CR values that ranged between 0.892 and 0.916; both sets of values exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Gefen et al., 2000). Each construct demonstrated support for convergent validity, because the AVE values ranged from 0.622 to 0.684, which exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Factor analysis confirmed data appropriateness through a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of 0.894 and statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2

= 2431.86, $df = 300$, $p < .001$) suggesting excellent sample size (Field, 2024). Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation resulted in a well-defined five-factor solution as hypothesized. All items showed strong factor loading (>0.75) and no significant cross loading, with total explained variance of 60.32%.

We used the Fornell–Larcker criterion to test the discriminant validity of our constructs (see Table 5). Our results show that all constructs had AVE values

that were greater than the correlations of that construct with other constructs, indicating that we had satisfactory discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, 2014). This is consistent with the conclusion of Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Henseler et al. (2009), suggesting that our measurement model has strong psychometric properties, making it a suitable basis for further analysis in SEM and testing of hypotheses.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity of Measurement Constructs.

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Cultural Values (CV)	0.858	0.900	0.641
Historical Legacies (HL)	0.846	0.892	0.622
Management Practices (MP)	0.864	0.905	0.654
Governance Structures & Managerial Behavior (GS)	0.875	0.913	0.674
Management Effectiveness (ME)	0.882	0.916	0.684

Note. Cronbach's α and composite reliability (CR) values above 0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency. Average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 demonstrate adequate convergent validity of the measurement constructs.

Table 3: Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

Test	Value
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.894
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-square	2431.86
Degrees of freedom	300
Sig.	< .001

Note. The KMO value exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.60, indicating excellent sampling adequacy. Bartlett's test of sphericity is statistically significant ($p < .001$), confirming that the correlation matrix is suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix.

Item	Factor 1 (Cultural Values – CV)	Factor 2 (Historical Legacies – HL)	Factor 3 (Management Practices – MP)	Factor 4 (Governance Structures – GS)	Factor 5 (Management Effectiveness – ME)
CV1	0.80				
CV2	0.78				
CV3	0.83				

CV4	0.76				
CV5	0.81				
HL1		0.79			
HL2		0.77			
HL3		0.82			
HL4		0.75			
HL5		0.80			
MP1			0.82		
MP2			0.79		
MP3			0.84		
MP4			0.77		
MP5			0.81		
GS1				0.83	
GS2				0.80	
GS3				0.84	
GS4				0.78	
GS5				0.82	
ME1					0.83
ME2					0.80
ME3					0.82
ME4					0.77
ME5					0.81

Note. Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. Factor loadings below .40 are suppressed for clarity. Initial Eigenvalue = 1.39. Total Variance Explained = 60.32%.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity Assessment.

Construct	Cultural Values (CV)	Historical Legacies (HL)	Management Practices (MP)	Governance Structures (GS)	Management Effectiveness (ME)
Cultural Values (CV)	0.801				
Historical Legacies (HL)	0.347	0.789			
Management Practices (MP)	0.571	0.412	0.809		

Governance Structures (GS)	0.446	0.601	0.542	0.821	
Management Effectiveness (ME)	0.498	0.468	0.623	0.649	0.827

Note. Diagonal elements represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. Off-diagonal elements are inter-construct correlations. Discriminant validity is established when the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs.

4.2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate the overall model fit and test the hypotheses, structural modeling was used. The model provided an acceptable (or good) fit as indicated in Table 6 by the following model fit indices: $\chi^2/\text{df} = 2.03$; CFI = 0.942; TLI = 0.934; IFI = 0.944; RMSEA = 0.058; and SRMR = 0.049; all of which were within the recommended criteria set forth in Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Gefen et al. (2000). The chi-square statistic was significant ($\chi^2 = 631.18$, $\text{df} = 311$, $p < 0.001$), which is a normal occurrence in SEM with moderate sample sizes; therefore, the chi-square statistic does not reduce the overall model's ability to provide an adequate fit (Field, 2024).

The data in Table 7 reveal that there is substantial evidence to validate the hypothesis that the effect of cultural values on the management practices within universities is considerably positive ($\beta = 0.618$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, the evidence supports the second hypothesis which states that there is a substantial effect from historical legacy on both the structure of governance and the behaviour of the manager in those universities ($\beta = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$). There also is a significant positive effect, both on managerial effectiveness at the operational level ($\beta = 0.344$, $p < 0.001$) and on the structure of governance at the institutional level ($\beta = 0.402$, $p < 0.001$) as well. The data therefore confirm that operational management

practices and the governance of the institution together create management effectiveness within Vietnamese universities.

To assess whether mediation exists through the number of management levels in the company (management responsibility) and the overall impact of management practices on management effectiveness, 5,000 bootstrap resamples were run (Table 8). Management practices significantly mediated the relationship between cultural values and management effectiveness ($\beta = 0.213$, 95% CI [0.138, 0.298], $p < 0.001$), thereby providing support for H5. Governance structure and managerial behaviour also mediated the relationship between historical legacies and management effectiveness ($\beta = 0.238$, 95% CI [0.152, 0.334], $p < 0.001$), providing support for H6. Further, the joint indirect effect of cultural values and historical legacies on management effectiveness through management practices and governance structure was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.321$, 95% CI [0.219, 0.441], $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H7. These results provide strong empirical support for the proposed cultural-institutional framework (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, 2014; Henseler et al., 2009) by demonstrating that, as posited, governance structure and management level serve as the gateway to management effectiveness (H7).

Table 6: Overall Model Fit Indices for the SEM Model.

Fit Index	Recommended Threshold	Model Value
χ^2/df (CMIN/df)	< 3.00	2.03
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	≥ 0.90	0.911
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	≥ 0.90	0.886
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.90	0.942
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	≥ 0.90	0.934
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	≥ 0.90	0.944
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	≤ 0.08	0.058

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	≤ 0.08	0.049
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Note. $\chi^2 = 631.18$, $df = 311$, $p < 0.001$. Although the chi-square statistic is statistically significant – as is common in SEM with moderate sample sizes – the remaining absolute and incremental fit indices indicate an acceptable to good overall model fit.

Table 7: Latent Score Path Analysis.

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	S.E.	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Cultural values → Management practices	0.618	0.059	10.47	< .001	Supported
H2	Historical legacies → Governance structures	0.592	0.061	9.70	< .001	Supported
H3	Management practices → Management effectiveness	0.344	0.070	4.91	< .001	Supported
H4	Governance structures → Management effectiveness	0.402	0.068	5.91	< .001	Supported

Note. Coefficients are standardized estimates based on latent scores computed as construct means. Indirect effects (H5 and H6) are formally tested using bootstrapping in Table 8. Significance levels are based on two-tailed tests.

Table 8: Bootstrapped Indirect Effect.

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	Standardized Indirect Effect (β)	Bootstrapped S.E.	95% Bootstrapped CI (LL, UL)	p-value	Result
H5	Cultural values → Management practices → Management effectiveness	0.213	0.041	[0.138, 0.298]	< .001	Supported
H6	Historical legacies → Governance structures → Management effectiveness	0.238	0.046	[0.152, 0.334]	< .001	Supported
H7	Cultural values & historical legacies → Management practices & governance	0.321	0.056	[0.219, 0.441]	< .001	Supported

	structures →					
	Management					
	effectiveness					

Note. Indirect effects were estimated using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. An indirect effect is considered statistically significant when the 95% bootstrapped confidence interval does not include zero.

4.3. Discussion

Studies have provided evidence of the continuing impact of culture and history on Vietnamese higher education institutions managements. Studies indicate that universities are heavily influenced by cultural values (hierarchy, collective interest and respect for authority) that are directly linked to Confucianism. Previous research has demonstrated that managers who come from a culture that is based on Confucian values have a positive impact on group cohesion/harmony; the consideration of member's status; and the pursuit of consensus (Ly, 2021; Tjeldvoll, 2011; Truong et al., 2017). Collectively, these studies support the idea that cultural values are an example of an "active determinant" affecting the management systems and routines used in the coordination of work.

Even though there are large contrasts in terms of development, there are nevertheless institutional path dependencies seen in universities globally. This has implications for the degree to which managerial discretion is used in the delivery of policies and the degree to which managers perceive they are restricted from achieving various administrative accountability requirements related to a defined authority over how resources are allocated in their jurisdiction. Thus, the autonomy issue in terms of the effectiveness of hierarchies (Kohtamäki & Balbachevsky, 2018) and the importance of such structures as a means of managing public funds (Christensen, 2011) remains a primary concern.

This research contributes greatly to understanding the relationship between culture and history by demonstrating how cultural factors have a large indirect impact on management practices institutionally, rather than directly, through the use of daily management practices or how historical factors can have a significant direct impact on management practices because of the governance's historically embedded systems. Together these findings support the advancement of a cultural - institutional approach and also consistent with empirical findings that have demonstrated the co-existence of market-oriented management practices

and socialist-bureaucratic management traditions with respect to the higher education sector in Vietnam (Le Ha & Ngoc, 2020, London & Duong, 2023). The finding concerning joint mediation further expands the theory of institutions by demonstrating that there are different forms of institutional embeddedness and that, in the aggregate, these types of embeddedness are collectively involved in producing different organisational outcomes (Hung, 2005).

This research study is intended to provide greater insight into the type of quantitative research (quantitative) that can be done regarding the impact of cultural and historical factors on higher education systems in non-Western countries (countries that do not consider themselves part of the western World). Previous research studies in this field of research have focused on qualitative research methods (qualitative) such as case studies, policy analysis (Dao, 2015; Hayden, 2017). However, this research study used structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine how theoretical latent variables are related and to address the need for quantitative research studies related to the effectiveness of education system's governance and management that are transitioning from one (1) type to another (Parajuli et al., 2020; Salmi, 2019).

The findings that have been gathered impact on how the policy will be implemented. If there is not consideration given during the reform process, the significant implications to governance reform because the cultural practices and historic methods of governance have greatly impacted how the organization will be established. Thusly, it is necessary to ensure that there are an effective governance reform process and how an organization's governance practices are established to focused on determining whether the actual governance practices correspond to the governance and/or cultural practices of the organization. In conjunction, there will also be an impact on the leadership development process, which is designed to train individuals to become leaders by enhancing their abilities, to ensure that there is a specific focus on using a culturally competent approach to develop adaptive leaders by utilising the development of

professional relationships with employees while enhancing processes and systems without requiring the creation of a new organizational structure.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, the authors use structural equation modelling to assess how cultural values and historical legacies affect management effectiveness in Vietnamese higher education institutions. The results of the study support the conclusion that cultural values are important determinants of management practices, while historical legacies contribute to the development and operation of governance structures and affect managerial behaviours in unique ways. Both cultural values and historical legacies act together through mediating processes to affect management effectiveness. By integrating a cultural institutional perspective with that of a historical institutional perspective into one empirical framework, this study extends current research on higher education management and contributes to a deeper understanding of governance dynamics within transitional systems.

There are a few limitations associated with this study. One limitation relates to the cross-sectional nature of this research, which makes it impossible to determine cause and effect relationships or understand how institutions evolve over time. A

second limitation is using perceptions based measures, even though such measures have been determined to have good reliability and validity; using perceptions based measures increases the possibility of bias. Future studies could utilize longitudinal structural equation modeling designs to examine how ongoing reforms may be influencing changes in cultural values, governance structures, broken down by institution and management practices. Finally, cross-national comparative studies would help answer whether the integrated cultural/institutional framework can be applied to other higher education systems that have similar historical and cultural backgrounds.

To summarize, the findings of this study indicate that in order to gain a true understanding of how well managed higher education is in Vietnam, we must also consider both the cultural and historical influences which jointly shape as well as guide its development. If governance reforms are not built upon these foundational elements of each of our institution they have the real potential of providing only symbolic change versus substantive change. Therefore, creating culturally as well as historically informed governance structures and leadership development will greatly enhance the potential for successful higher education reform within Vietnam through improved management effectiveness and sustainability.

Ethics statement: This study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical standards for social science research. Participation was voluntary and all respondents were informed of the study's purpose with their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. No personally identifiable information was collected and all responses were treated anonymously and confidentially. The data were used solely for research purposes.

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