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Article

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Cogent Business & Management

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Suggested Citation: Duong, Trong Nhan; Phan, Trieu Anh (2024) : Personal values and employee engagement: a study in Vietnam, Cogent Business & Management, ISSN 2331-1975, Taylor & Francis, Abingdon, Vol. 11, Iss. 1, pp. 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2297808>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/325962>

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To cite this article: Trong Nhan Duong & Trieu Anh Phan (2024) Personal values and employee engagement: a study in Vietnam, Cogent Business & Management, 11:1, 2297808, DOI: [10.1080/23311975.2023.2297808](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2297808)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2297808>



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Personal values and employee engagement: a study in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is to examine the extent to which specific personal values are used for explaining employee engagement at work. Data was collected by survey questionnaires from 255 respondents working for firms located in Ho Chi Minh City during the covid-19 panamic and processed by Smart PLS. The findings indicate that self-enhancement higher-order value (Power – Stimulation), openness to change higher-order value (Hedonism – Self-direction – Achievement), and conformity basic personal value impact on employee engagement significantly at the 5% and 1% level, respectively. The research findings inferred that employee engagement is influenced by the basic personal values (Conformity) or the convergence of personal values such as Power and Stimulation values, and Hedonism, Self-direction, and Achievement values. Therefore, engaged employees can be detected based on identifying their personal values. These personal values explain 37.7% of the variance of employee engagement at work in the Vietnam context.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 January 2023
Revised 16 December 2023
Accepted 18 December 2023

KEYWORDS

Employee engagement;
personal values; Covid-19;
Ho Chi Minh City;
Vietnam

REVIEWING EDITOR

Pablo Ruiz, Universidad
de Castilla-La Mancha,
Spain

SUBJECTS

Gender Studies - Soc Sci;
Sociology & Social Policy

1. Introduction

A highly engaged workforce is a sign of a healthy organization, whatever its size, geographical location, and economic sector (Saks, 2006). In the context of international integration and fierce competition, employee engagement (EE) has been considered as the critical driver of the organizational effectiveness and competitive advantages of any business organization (Albrecht et al., 2015; Kataria et al., 2014). According to Bedarkar and Pandita (2014), organizations utilize engaged employees as their strategic partners for being competitive in the business world. They confirmed that EE is the most strategic important tool to attain competitive advantages during any adverse and problematic times. Shashi (2011) suggested that organizations should realize the importance of employees as the most powerful contributor to an organization's competitive position. Engaged employees are most likely to make positive contributions to their companies by attracting and retaining new customers, driving innovation, or simply spreading their positivity to co-workers (Crabtree & Robison, 2013). Awan et al. (2020) found the positive impact of EE on employee performance, both contextual performance and task performance. Sibiya et al. (2014) confirmed that EE is significantly negatively related to turnover intention, a predictor of employee turnover intention. In sum, employee engagement strategy generates organizational effectiveness in terms of higher productivity, profits, quality, customer satisfaction, employee retention, and increased adaptability.

Employee engagement topic has attracted the attention of practitioners as well as researchers because of its positive impact on the performance at the organizational level (Karatepe & Demir, 2014), and employee performance (Awan et al., 2020). From business perspectives, human resource managers not only want to recruit engaged employees, but also want to know how to predict the engagement of employee candidates or/and make the engagement of employees happen; however, it is their big

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challenges. The engagement of employees in any organization is also a critical managerial concern of top executives nowadays. From a research perspective, the research direction towards employee engagement tends to explore the antecedents as well as consequences of employee engagement at the level of organization (Kim et al., 2009). There are limited academic studies focusing on employee characteristics. The antecedents of employee engagement identified so far are restricted to task significance, task identity, rewards and recognition, supervisor support, and organizational justice, skill variety, autonomy, and feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Hakanen et al., 2006; Karatepe, 2013; Saks, 2006). Although several studies have recognized the importance of personal values in organizational contexts, the specific link between personal values alignment and employee engagement remains relatively unexplored. Employee engagement, which encompasses an employee's emotional commitment, motivation, and discretionary effort towards their work, is a critical determinant of organizational success and performance. Understanding how personal values alignment relates to employee engagement can provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. By investigating this research gap, organizations can develop strategies to better align individual values with organizational values, fostering a stronger sense of purpose and meaning in employees' work.

Różycka-Tran et al. (2017) studied the structure and the hierarchy of basic human values of Vietnamese and then recommended that the consequences of the personal values should be considered in further research. However, the alignment of personal values and work engagement has been underexplored in Vietnam context. Therefore, to fill the research gap mentioned above, this study conducted aims to find out personal value factors affecting employee engagement in the context of Vietnam. The paper was structured five sections. The following section is literature review. The third section presents data collection methods and processing. The fourth section presents the findings and discussion. The final section is conclusion, recommendation, and limitations.

2. Literature review

2.1. Employee engagement

This section focusses on the discussion of the definitions of employee engagement (EE) and its origin. EE has been defined, modelled, and operationalized already; however, the lack of a universal definition of EE among recent research (Chandel, 2018), and it has become the challenge of studies on EE. Research on engagement has used a range of different terms such as 'work engagement', 'job engagement', 'role engagement', and 'self-engagement', ... with inconsistent construct definitions and operationalizations (Christian et al., 2011). William A. Kahn (1990) is the first person who introduced the concept of engagement and explained how employees engaged and disengaged at work. He defined 'Personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's "preferred self" in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal preference (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performance' (p.700). Kahn (1992) also asserted that engagement is observed through the behavioral investment of personal physical, cognitive, and emotional energy into work roles. However, most publications of EE research in Vietnam have adopted similar concepts such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, rather than employee engagement. Huynh (2012) used the construct termed 'employee engagement' in his research to investigate the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee engagement in private and foreign-owned enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City; however, he measured job satisfaction developed by Becker (1960) and organizational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). Similarly, Khuong and Yen (2014) researched the effect of leadership styles on EE with a mediator of sociability that referred to job engagement, unlike what has been discussed about EE covering both the job aspect and orientation to the organization (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

2.2. Personal values

Personal values refer to what is the most important to people, tend to affect the types of decisions they make, how they perceive their environment, and their actual behaviors. Personal values are established through the accumulation of life experiences and express people's life goals (Lusk & Oliver, 1974; Rokeach,

1973), and defined as a general goal of people lives that are important to them and help to guide their perception, judgments, and behavior (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Schwartz first introduced Value Theory in 1992 with 10 broad values structured in a circle based on their implied inter-relationships (Parks-Leduc et al., 2015). Table 1 presents the structure and definition of 10 basic human values.

Różycka-Tran et al. (2017) conducted the research to assess the structure and hierarchy of values by using the Schwartz theory in Vietnam. They delivered a Vietnamese version of the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ-40) to adult respondents in three big cities, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, and Hanoi, and applied multidimensional scaling and confirmatory factor analysis of the total sample to identify the hierarchies of values of Vietnamese. They found seven differentiated values averaged across the representative Vietnamese sample as presented in Table 2.

Różycka-Tran et al. (2017) found that tradition, security, and conformity are the most important values of Vietnamese followed by benevolence and universalism (Table 2).

Research hypothesis development

Conservation of Resources Theory developed by Hobfoll (1998) posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect their resources, including personal values. When an organization's values align with an employee's personal values, it contributes to resource gain by validating and supporting their personal values. This alignment enhances their psychological well-being, reduces resource depletion, and promotes higher levels of engagement. Meaningful Work Theory developed by Bowie (1998) suggests that employees are motivated and engaged when they perceive their work as meaningful and purposeful. When an organization's values align with an employee's personal values, it enhances their perception of meaningfulness in their work. This alignment connects their work to their core beliefs and values, leading to increased engagement and job satisfaction. This theoretical framework highlights the importance of personal values alignment in employee engagement.

In the workplace, a person is more likely to accept a job that provides opportunities for value attainment. People are also more likely to remain in a job and career that satisfy their values. Duong (2021) identified the two dominant personal values of Vietnamese lectures and medical staffs – self-direction and stimulation based on the 10-basic personal values introduced by Schwartz (1992). A person is more likely to accept a job offer when the company possesses the values he or she cares about (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Value attainment is one reason people stay in a company. When a job does not help them attain their values, they are likely to decide to leave if they are dissatisfied with the job (George & Jones, 1996). Based on the argument, we hypothesized that (H): *Personal values are the antecedents of employee engagement at work.*

Table 1. Schwartz value taxonomy.

VALUES	DESCRIPTION/ITEMS: INDIVIDUALS WHO VALUE THIS BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF...
Power	...being in charge of people and resources and having money (social power, wealth, authority)
Achievement	...socially recognized successes (ambition, competence)
Hedonism	...sensual pleasure (fun, enjoying life)
Stimulation	...having stimulating experiences (daring, exciting life)
Self-direction	... independence of thought and action (creativity, freedom, independent, curious)
Universalism	... promoting the welfare of all people and nature (equality, social justice, protecting the environment)
Benevolence	...promoting the welfare of people, you are close to (helpfulness, loyalty, honesty, forgiving)
Conformity	...controlling impulses to fulfill others' expectations (self-discipline, obedience)
Tradition	... maintaining traditions (moderation, respect for tradition, devout)
SECURITY	...safety and security of self, family, and nation (family, security, social order, clean)

Source: Schwartz (1992).

Table 2. The hierarchy and mean ratings of values in Vietnam.

Scale	Mean ratings (SD)
Security-conformity-tradition	4.33 (0.65)
Benevolence	4.23 (0.78)
Universalism	4.20 (0.80)
Self-direction	3.96 (0.80)
Hedonism	3.49 (0.98)
Power-achievement	3.48 (0.87)
Stimulation	3.22 (0.97)

Source: Różycka-Tran et al. (2017).

3. Data collection and processing

3.1. Data collection

This study adopted the concept of employee engagement introduced by Swanberg et al. (2011) – ‘Work engagement is a positive work-related psychological “state of fulfilment” that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption’ (p. 614). In their research, engagement stated as a composite can be combined into one overall multifactor measurement (Table 1). This research adopted the concept of employee engagement introduced by Swanberg et al. (2011) with the measurement scale presented in Table 3. Our study applied an abbreviated version of the Swartz Value Survey (2003) including 21 items to cover the ten basic value types (Appendix A) due to the finding of Beramendi and Zubieta (2017). They used multidimensional scaling (MDS) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of data from the Portrait Values Questionnaire in Poland to assess a finer partitioning of values and found that PVQ-21 shows better fit indexes in terms of MDS and CFA analyses than PVQ-40. In our survey, respondents were suggested to rate the importance of each value on a 5-point scale from ‘1 – not at all like me’ to ‘5 – very much like me’.

Data was collected by using survey questionnaires through Google Forms combined with direct interview. The survey was carried out from March to July 2022 in Ho Chi Minh City and collected 255 valid questionnaires. Of which, 221 respondents are working for manufacturing and trading firms, account for 86.7%, 11.8% come from educational organization and 1.5% are from health care organization. Respondent’s Age are from 18 to 45; 53.7% is managers; 52.2% is male; 51% has working experience from 5 to 15 years. 55.3% of respondents are working for private enterprises and 44.7% are working for state-owned organizations.

3.2. Data processing – explanatory factor analysis

To conduct EFA, the collected data must satisfy the Bartlett’s test and the KMO test. Bartlett’s test was used to test the hypothesis H0 that the variables are not correlated with each other in the population. The KMO coefficient was used to check if the sample size is appropriate for EFA. According to Hair et al. (2010), the value of Sig. of Bartlett’s test less than 0.05 allows to reject the hypothesis H0 and the value $0.5 < \text{KMO} < 1$ means that factor analysis is appropriate. Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation rotated once for each factor cluster was used due to the correlation between the components is not important. After rotation, measurement items with factor loading less than 0.5 from the model were removed. EFA keeps only those with factor loading greater than 0.5 and arranges them into main groups of factors. The test’s results are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

3.2.1. For employee engagement

The rotation of 5 observation items resulted in one factor, or the concentration of observation items is quite clear (see Table 4).

3.2.2. For personal values

The EFA analysis results (Table 5) show that there are all 16 observations generating 4 groups of values which are eligible to perform in the next analysis. Five items (PV1, PV3, PV5, PV12, and PV14) were removed because of loading factor below 0.5.

The EFA resulted in dropping three basic values – Universalism, Benevolence, and Security – and creating the two combinations of values – (1) stimulation and power, (2) hedonism, self-direction, and achievement (Table 6). The quality of all observation items should be confirmed with their

Table 3. Five-item measure of employee engagement.

Definition	Items
Swanberg et al. (2011): ‘Work engagement is a positive work-related psychological “state of fulfilment” that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (p. 614)	EE1. Get excited as perform well at job EE2. Exert a lot of energy to perform job EE3. Really put heart into job EE4. Feel time passes quickly as perform job EE5. Feelings affected by how well job is performed.

Source: Developed by the authors.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's tests for employee engagement and EFA results.

KMO test (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin of sampling adequacy)		0.806
Bartlett's test (Bartlett's Test of Sphericity)	Approx. Chi-square	310.492
	df	10
	Sig.	0.000
Measurement items	Factor loading	
	1	
EE1	0.803	
EE2	0.772	
EE3	0.756	
EE4	0.662	
EE5	0.623	
Eigenvalues	2.639	
Total variance extracted (%)	52.774	

Note: EE: Employee Engagement.

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's tests for personal values, and EFA results.

KMO test (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin of sampling adequacy)		0.833		
Bartlett's Test (Bartlett's Test of Sphericity)	Approx. Chi-square	1206.743		
	df	120		
	Sig.	0.000		
	Factor loading			
Measurement items	1	2	3	4
PV2	0.762			
PV4	0.696			
PV15	0.585			
PV16	0.575			
PV6	0.541			
PV10	0.517			
PV21		0.743		
PV11		0.685		
PV20		0.606		
PV13		0.509		
PV19			0.759	
PV17			0.748	
PV18			0.661	
PV9				0.785
PV8				0.750
PV7				0.706
Variance explained (%)	30.652	12.193	7.974	7.052
		Total variance extracted: 57.870 %		

Note: PV: Personal value.

Outer Loadings are higher 0.6 and can be used to test the reliability of measurement scales. After running the test, PV10 and PV15 were removed from the model due to their Outer Loadings being less than 0.6. The reliability of each scale was assessed through 3 indicators: composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and the results shown in Table 7.

All scales are considered reliable because their Cronbach's Alpha values are higher than 0.7, CR and AVE values are above 0.5 according to Hair et al. (2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that all factors satisfactory with converged values. To evaluate the discriminant validity of scales with Smart PLS, two criteria can be used: (1) the square root AVE index proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), or (2) the HTMT index proposed by Henseler et al. (2015). They demonstrated that discriminant validity is better evaluated by the HTMT index. In this study we used both ways to test the discriminant validity of latent variables. Table 8 shows the result of the test by using the square root AVE index, and Table 9 shows the result of the test by using HTMT index.

Table 8 shows that the square root value of AVE (0.804, 0.726, 0.731, 0.731, 0.803) is larger than the correlation coefficients between concepts and between that concept and other concepts. Thus, it is concluded that discriminant validity of all latent variables is guaranteed.

With the HTMT index, Garson (2016) suggests that the discriminant validity between two latent variables is guaranteed when the HTMT index is less than 1. Henseler et al. (2015) suggest that if this value is below 0.9, discrimination will be guaranteed. Meanwhile, Clark and Watson (1995) and Kline (2015) use a more stringent threshold of 0.85. Smart PLS prioritizes threshold selection of 0.85 in the evaluation.

Table 6. Schwartz value taxonomy matching with PVQ-21.

Item	Statement	Personal value	Code
PV2	It is important for me to be rich and have a lot of money.	Stimulation	S-P
PV4	It is important for me to show my abilities. I want other people to admire what I do.	Power	S-P
PV15	I want to take up new adventures and live an exciting life.	Stimulation	S-P
PV16	It is important for me to always behave properly and not do anything that people consider wrong.	Power	S-P
PV6	I love surprises and always want to try something new.	Stimulation	S-P
PV10	Having a good time is important to me. I like to 'spoil' myself at times.	Stimulation	S-P
PV21	It is important for me to do things that give me pleasure.	Hedonism	H-SD-A
PV11	I prefer to make my own decisions and do what feels right to me.	Self-direction	H-SD-A
PV20	I strongly believe that we should care about nature	Hedonism	H-SD-A
PV13	Being successful is important to me.	Achievement	H-SD-A
PV19	I try to follow my traditional values and customs that my family and society have endowed on me.	Tradition	T
PV17	It is important for me to earn respect from others.	Tradition	T
PV18	Being loyal to my friends is a priority in my life.	Tradition	T
PV9	I believe in listening to people who are different from me and trying to understand them.	Conformity	C
PV8	It is important for me to stay humble and modest.	Conformity	C
PV7	I believe that I should obey rules even when no one is around.	Conformity	C

Notes: S-P: Stimulation and Power; H-SD-A: Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement; T: Tradition; C: Conformity; EE: Employee Engagement.

Table 7. Reliability of latent variables.

Factors (latent variables)	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
S-P	0.820	0.535	0.712
H-SD-A	0.821	0.535	0.708
C	0.845	0.646	0.723
T	0.845	0.645	0.727
EE	0.847	0.528	0.769

Notes: S-P: Stimulation and Power; H-SD-A: Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement; T: Tradition; C: Conformity; EE: Employee Engagement.

Table 8. The discriminant validity test with the square root AVE index.

	T	EE	S-P	H-SD-A	C
T	0.804				
EE	0.372	0.726			
S-P	0.324	0.420	0.731		
H-SD-A	0.481	0.570	0.460	0.731	
C	0.437	0.398	0.240	0.487	0.803

Notes: S-P: Stimulation and Power; H-SD-A: Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement; T: Tradition; C: Conformity; EE: Employee Engagement.

Table 9. The discriminant validity test with HTMT index.

	T	EE	S-P	H-SD-A	C
T					
EE	0.490				
S-P	0.427	0.541			
H-SD-A	0.663	0.757	0.648		
C	0.609	0.517	0.321	0.648	

Notes: S-P: Stimulation and Power; H-SD-A: Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement; T: Tradition; C: Conformity; EE: Employee Engagement.

The test resulted in the HTMT value between any two latent variables in the model is less than 0.85 (Table 9), so discriminant validity is guaranteed.

In sum, all scales of latent variables satisfy all criteria for reliability testing, so they were used to test the research hypothesis. Before testing the relationship between latent variables in the research model,

Table 10. Testing for multicollinearity.

	T	EE	S-P	H-SD-A	C
T		1.424			
EE		0.000			
S-P		1.291			
H-SD-A		1.693			
C		1.410			

Note: P: Power; S: Stimulation; SD: Self-direction; A: Achievement; H: Hedonism; C: Conformity; S-P: Stimulation and Power; H-SD-A: Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement; T: Tradition; C: Conformity; EE: Employee Engagement.

Table 11. The results of hypothesis testing.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	p Values
T → EE	0.067	0.070	0.062	1.077	0.282
S-P → EE	0.188	0.191	0.054	3.517	0.000
H-SD-A → EE	0.385	0.387	0.082	4.713	0.000
C → EE	0.136	0.139	0.066	2.069	0.039

Notes: S-P: Stimulation and Power; H-SD-A: Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement; T: Tradition; C: Conformity; EE: Employee Engagement.

multicollinearity phenomenon needs to be tested. The test resulted in the VIF coefficients of the variables being less than 2, so there is no multicollinearity in the model (Table 10). The hypothesis test result is presented in Table 11.

4. Findings and discussion

The study found four differentiated values from the research sample: Tradition, Conformity, a combination of stimulation with power, and a combination of Hedonism, Self-Direction, and Achievement. These are somewhat different from what were found by Różycka-Tran et al. (2017) due to using different portrait value questionnaire (PVQ-21). Stimulation values mixed with power values are values that are not adjacent in the theorized motivational circle; however, Hedonism values mixed with Achievement values are values that are adjacent in the theorized motivational circle. The findings support the statement of Ros et al. (1999) that the value types are usually related to one another in the pattern of oppositions and compatibilities. In addition, our study found the three higher-order value types of people in the research sample: Self-Enhancement, Openness to Change, and Conservation.

The hypothesis test confirmed that the combination of two values – power and stimulation – and the combination of three values – Achievement, self-direction, and hedonism – impact positively on employee engagement at the significance level of 1% (p -value = 0.000). Conformity value impacts on employee engagement at the significant level of 5% (p -value = 0.039). Traditional value impacts positively on employee engagement but insignificantly at the level of 5% (p -value = 0.282). The explanation of Power – Stimulation, Hedonism – Self-direction – Achievement, and Conformity values for employee engagement accounts for 37.7% (R-square). So, our study found the six basic personal values – Power, Stimulation, Hedonism, Self-direction, Achievement, and Conformity relate to employee engagement significantly in the Vietnam context. The first five basic personal values are classified as the two adjacent higher-order values – ‘Openness to change’ and ‘self-enhancement’, while Conformity value belongs to conservation higher-order values.

Our findings confirmed that each person holds numerous values with varying degrees of importance, which were found from the study of Schwartz and Sortheix (2018) on the relations of personal values and the similarity between people’s values. The findings also showed that the defining goals of some values are similar and can be pursued at the same time as the confirmation of Schwartz (2012). The Schwartz theory (1992) states that the dynamic relationships between higher-order values reflected in the position of each value type on a two dimensional motivational continuum – ‘personal vs. social’ focus. ‘Openness to change’ and ‘self-enhancement’ belong to personal focused values dimension, and the two other higher-order values – ‘conservation’ and self-transcendence – belong to social focused values dimension.

Sortheix and Lönnqvist (2014) distinguished between openness to change and self-enhancement values. They noted that openness to change values satisfies autonomy needs. An openness to change individual tends to be proactive and forward-thinking. They view change as an opportunity rather than a threat, enabling them to adapt and bounce back from setbacks more effectively. Their ability to embrace change and demonstrate resilience translates into engaged behavior, as they remain motivated and committed during times of organizational transition or uncertainty. Self-enhancement individuals are often driven by personal achievements and success. They tend to set ambitious goals, seek challenging tasks, and actively pursue opportunities for growth and advancement. This achievement orientation can fuel their engagement at work as they channel their energy and efforts into tasks that align with their self-enhancement goals. Engaged behavior is often facilitated when individuals perceive their work as meaningful and when they have a sense of autonomy over their tasks. Self-enhancement individuals who are given responsibilities that align with their self-enhancement goals and provide opportunities for autonomy are more likely to display high levels of engagement.

Conformity value is the component of social-focused values, according to Sortheix and Lönnqvist (2014); therefore, individuals high in conformity value are more likely to align themselves with the established norms and practices of their organization. They conform to the expectations set by their superiors, colleagues, and the organizational culture. Engaged behavior may arise from their desire to adhere to these norms and maintain positive social relationships within the workplace. Conformity value individuals place importance on maintaining harmonious relationships within the workplace. They value group cohesion and may be more motivated to engage in collaborative efforts to maintain social harmony. Engaged behavior can arise from their willingness to work well with others, contribute to team goals, and ensure a positive and cooperative work environment.

5. Conclusion, recommendation, and limitations

This is the first study on the alignment between an employee's personal values and employee engagement at work in Vietnam. The main aim of this research is to examine the extent to which personal values are used for explaining employee engagement at work. Data was collected by survey questionnaires from 255 respondents working for firms located in Ho Chi Minh City and processed by Smart PLS. We found that Power – Stimulation, Hedonism – Self-direction – Achievement, and Conformity values are antecedents of employee engagement in Vietnam context. Our findings imply that engagement behavior of employees can be explained by higher-order value types (Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change), and/or specific value type (Conformity). The results from the study indicated that employees' engagement is aligned closely with their dominant personal values. Therefore, potentially engaged employees can be identified based on their personal values. The findings provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. In Vietnam, persons who possess higher-order value types as Self-Enhancement, or Openness to Change tend to be engaged in work. Thus, organizations can develop strategies to better align individual values with organizational values, fostering a stronger sense of purpose and meaning in employees' work to gain their engagement at work. Different personal values have distinct needs. Employees engage in a different manner based on their personal values, and their different expectations of their leaders and team members. When an individual discovers a meaningful alignment between his or her own personal values with those of his or her employer, manager, and colleague, a powerful connection is created (Dean, 2008). If an organization and team members share the same set of values, they become more flexible and less hierarchical, and engage in collective action. Shared values also establish a lasting relationship based on mutual trust. This implies that managers should develop values-based leadership, which ensures that their organization has an engagement process for people to explore their personal values, as the statement of Steve Jobs, former CEO of Apple Computer, Inc. 'The only thing that works is management by values. Find people who are competent and really bright, but more importantly, people who care exactly about the same thing you care about' (Koteinikov quoting Jobs, 2008). Values-Based Leadership is defined as doing the right thing for the right reasons and not compromising core principles, according to Dean (2008). This leadership can help managers gain the support from their employees and potential strategic partners.

The study was conducted in a single location (Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam) and in the sensitive period – Covid-19 pandemic. The research findings may be influenced by the circumstances at the time of investigation, leading to a reduction in the generalizability of the research findings. Further research may be conducted to answer the research questions: How can organizations effectively assess and measure personal values alignment to tailor employee engagement initiatives? Or the influence of Values-Based Leadership Style on employee engagement with the moderating role of employees' personal values? Further research findings may bring about meaningful implications of managerial practices to foster employee engagement at work.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

About the author



Trong Nhan Duong is a PhD student at International University being university member of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh (VNUHCM). Currently, he is working at the University of Economics and Law – National University of Ho Chi Minh City as a senior lecturer in management accounting. He completed his bachelor's degree at Royal Melbourne Institution Technology Vietnam and master's degree at Berlin School of Economics and Law specialized in Managerial Accounting. The Covid-19 epidemic has greatly affected the labor market of Vietnam, many colleagues could not bear the pressure and quit their jobs. The PhD thesis topic of personal values and employee engagement has been chosen to better understand what kept them staying after the unusual incident.

Trieu Anh Phan is the head of the department of Business Management, International University, Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City. He earned his Ph.D in Management from Brunel University London, UK in 2008. Since then, he has been working at the international University as a lecturer.

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Appendix A

Appendix A1: The 21 personal values Questionnaires.

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- PV1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to me.
- PV2. It is important for me to be rich and have a lot of money.
- PV3. I believe that every person in the world should be treated equally.
- PV4. It is important for me to show my abilities. I want other people to admire what I do.
- PV5. It is important for me to live in safe and secure surroundings.
- PV6. I love surprises and always want to try something new.
- PV7. I believe that I should obey rules even when no one is around.
- PV8. It is important for me to stay humble and modest.
- PV9. I believe in listening to people who are different from me and trying to understand them.
- PV10. Having a good time is important to me. I like to 'spoil' myself at times.
- PV11. I prefer to make my own decisions and do what feels right to me.
- PV12. I like helping people around me.
- PV13. Being successful is important to me.
- PV14. It is important for me to ensure that the government is taking care of my safety concerns.
- PV15. I want to take up new adventures and live an exciting life.
- PV16. It is important for me to always behave properly and not do anything that people consider wrong.
- PV17. It is important for me to earn respect from others.
- PV18. Being loyal to my friends is a priority in my life.
- PV19. I try to follow my traditional values and customs that my family and society have endowed on me.
- PV20. I strongly believe that we should care about nature.
- PV21. It is important for me to do things that give me pleasure.
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Source: Schwartz (2003).