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University's shared vision for research and teaching: an international comparative study

Hong T. M. Bui[1,2] · Shandana Shoaib[3] · Ly Thi Tran[4] · Viet Ha Tran Vu[5] · Yehuda Baruch[6]

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Abstract
How do universities encourage academics to buy into a shared vision while often setting punitive targets in teaching and research? This article explores possible antecedents of a university's shared vision and its relationships with academics' research and teaching performance in the era of managerialism. This cross-country study of two large universities in the UK and Vietnam draws on data from multiple sources to uncover the key components of a university's shared vision. A survey strategy was adopted. Data were collected from different sources, using a stratified random sampling technique from academics of different schools at those universities. A total of 431 survey responses from academics at these universities were included for analysis, employing structure equation modelling. It provides fresh insights into whether having a shared vision can benefit academics' research and teaching performance. The findings of this study show that while achieving a high degree of shared vision may enhance research performance, it may do little to improve teaching performance. The study provides empirical evidence indicating that a shared vision emerges as strongly rooted within individual employees rather than managers, challenging the common belief that a shared vision emanates primarily from the top down. This article advances social exchange theory (SET) by showing the interdependence of workplace antecedents, personal attributes, interpersonal connections, and performance. It introduces a framework for the relationship between universities' shared vision with its possible antecedents and with academics' teaching performance and research performance. The article also discusses useful implications for higher education leaders, based on the findings of the study.

Keywords University's shared vision · Research performance · Teaching performance · University leadership · Vietnam · UK

Introduction

The role and importance of shared vision have attracted significant interest in the higher education (HE) sector due to its ability to foster cooperation, agreement, and progress (Martin et al., 2014). Shared vision represents a collective aspiration that unites individuals

Extended author information available on the last page of the article

within academic institutions toward common goals and values. Shared vision thus transcends disciplinary boundaries, administrative hierarchies, and cultural differences, driving innovation and research, improving teaching and learning quality, and guiding the entire academic community toward a cohesive purpose (Bartell, 2003; Wald & Castleberry, 2000). In the dynamic landscape of HE, where diverse stakeholders converge with distinct objectives, a shared vision becomes a unifying force (Wald & Castleberry, 2000).

Scholars have responded to the challenges by setting and developing a framework for understanding shared vision in HE (Vogel, 2022; Efe & Ozer, 2015). A shared vision has become an issue of growing attention within universities' agendas across different parts of the world. Senge (2006, p. 141) defines a shared vision as 'a vision that people throughout an organisation are truly committed to'. A shared vision is thus linked to the manner in which a university shares an image of its future with its employees that they aim to realise together. A vision of a university could be shared in three dimensions: top down, bottom up, and cross-schools/departments (Bui & Baruch, 2012), and every member should see themselves as a part of the university's vision. However, while the role of shared vision in improving performance has been covered in the general management literature (e.g. Eldor, 2020), there is a paucity of research within the HE sector about what may help to create a shared vision and how a shared vision may affect academic performance—research and teaching. Moreover, the lack of detailed examination of shared vision's complex function and effects within various institutional contexts accounts for the gap in the literature on HE. Even though shared vision is important, there are not many thorough studies that explore it in depth, covering its antecedents, outcomes, and mediating factors, particularly from a cross-cultural perspective. This study aims to understand how shared vision functions as a facilitator for cooperation, superior research, and effective teaching in HE. Given the growing complexity and global challenges that HE institutions are facing, it is imperative that this gap in the literature be filled. This study contributes to a better understanding of how shared vision functions within different cultural, organisational, and academic landscapes by examining the specific interactions of shared vision with various antecedents and outcomes. As a result, this study offers insights into the complex role that shared vision plays in HE, fostering more successful institutional strategies and improving overall academic outcomes.

The new public management has changed the HE sector irrevocably (Donina & Paleari, 2019). It compels universities to become more 'business-like', focusing on managing performance and building accountability, often founded on imposed quantitative performance targets (Huang & Xu, 2020). Despite its critics, this new public management is likely to apply for some considerable time until it is eventually superseded by a new doctrine or philosophy to resolve its resultant issues and adjust circumstances accordingly. Until then, universities are expected to struggle with the substantial pressures and challenges instigated by intensified managerialism and marketisation. Some work has been conducted in the HE, though limited to specific aspects, such as working toward inclusive empowerment (Doten-Snitker et al., 2021) or innovation policy (Harper & Georghiou, 2005). A more general key question remains: how do universities seek to share their vision with their employees to cope with the pressures of managerialism while achieving the targets that universities set in a febrile battle for reputation and income?

In response to the above question, this study seeks to develop a framework that depicts the relationship between possible antecedents (independent variables) of universities' shared vision and its role as a mediating variable to performance outcomes, in this case, academics' teaching and research performance. The framework is anchored in social exchange theory (SET) to reflect the tension between an ideal shared vision as an image of

the future and the pressures of managerialism. The framework is tested with 431 academics from two large universities in Vietnam and the UK. The study makes several important contributions to the literature and theory. First, it offers new insights into whether a university's shared vision can positively impact academics' teaching performance and research performance and why this may be so. This is critical because most universities' primary concerns are research and teaching (Cenamor, 2021). Second, the study shows how components of a shared vision may differ across international contexts because context matters (Schull et al., 2021). Third, shared vision's mediating role in the relationships between antecedents and teaching and research performance in different settings highlights how crucial achieving a shared vision is. Finally, our study advances SET in the critical area of shared vision in the context of international HE, while this theory is often used to study psychological contracts in HE (O'Toole & Prince, 2015).

Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (SET) explains 'actions contingent on the rewarding reactions of others, which over time provide for mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships' (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 890). It denotes three fundamental explanatory powers. The first concerns reciprocity rules and norms of exchange (Emerson, 1976); the second pertains to resources of exchange (Mauss, 1967); and the last focuses on social exchange relationships (Cropanzano et al., 2001). There are three types of reciprocity rules: reciprocity as a transactional pattern of interdependent exchanges, reciprocity as a folk belief, and reciprocity as a moral norm (Gouldner, 1960). SET is regarded as one of the most powerful theoretical stands for studying workplace behaviour (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). SET proposes that interactions between parties are involved with reciprocal interdependence (Blau, 1964). Within the educational systems, the role of leaders in shaping a vision that relates to their personal values and vision is vital (Yoeli & Berkovich, 2010).

Our understanding of shared vision dynamics is greatly improved by including the SET. This theory emphasises the idea of reciprocal interactions and the idea that people enter relationships with the expectation of gaining something from them (Cropanzano et al., 2017). SET sheds light on how individuals' adherence to a shared vision can be affected by the perception of reciprocity (Cook et al., 2013) in terms of support, acknowledgment, and rewards within an academic institution. It explores how a shared vision fosters a sense of shared values and mutual goals, laying the groundwork for fruitful interactions between stakeholders. This theory offers insights into the mechanisms underlying the commitment and engagement necessary for a collective vision to flourish by examining the interaction between shared vision and social exchanges. In essence, SET deepens our comprehension of a shared vision by illuminating the dynamic interactions that promote its emergence, upkeep, and influence in the context of HE.

Informed by a social exchange perspective stipulating that certain workplace antecedents foster interpersonal connections (Cropanzano et al., 2017), this study empirically investigates a range of antecedents. They are personal vision, personal values, supportive leadership, organisational commitment, and workplace climate, which have been

conceptually developed in the literature on building an organisational shared vision (Senge, 2006). It explores how these antecedents may contribute toward realising a shared vision in HE.

Shared vision

We propose shared vision to be a collective and unified outlook that is created and adopted by a group or organisation. It embodies a shared understanding of long-term objectives, principles, and aspirations, fostering a sense of mission and cooperation among parties involved in achieving a common goal. A shared vision used to be erroneously understood as the vision shared among the top management team of an organisation (Preston & Karahanna, 2009); i.e. once the organisational vision and mission are published on the organisational website, they are shared and seen as a 'shared vision'. Universities should not presume that vision is shared automatically (Bui & Baruch, 2012). Mastering the discipline of a shared vision implies that the idea that visions emanate from top management, or an institutionalised planning process, should be abandoned; rather, a shared vision is likely to grow as organisational members interact with their own visions—in other words, as they express their own ideas and learn to listen to those of others (Qadach et al., 2020).

A shared vision is seen as a driver for change toward inclusive empowerment in HE (Doten-Snitker et al., 2021), enhancing performance (Mohmmad Adnan & Valliappan, 2019). According to Senge (2006), a shared vision comprises the primary step in enabling individuals to begin to work together, even if they have little trust in one another. Literature seems to have overlooked how universities share their vision and the complexities of developing a shared vision in often diverse and loosely coupled organisations like universities. Doten-Snitker et al.'s (2021) study is an exception. It unpacks the complexity of sharing a vision for academic change projects when many stakeholders are involved and delineates practices for developing it and demonstrating inclusive stakeholder empowerment benefits. It emphasises that shared vision entails more than just goal alignment, but complex interactions of personal goals, organisational ideals, and teamwork among numerous stakeholders in HE institutions.

Personal values

We define personal values as those positive values that are deeply ingrained beliefs, ideals, and principles that inform a person's choices, attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions and influence their sense of self, priorities, and interactions with others. The concept of personal values has become fundamental in HE (Perrin et al., 2021) and has been considered a building block for the social responsibility of HE institutions (Nedelko et al., 2017). Personal values in the literature are often understood as positive, while they can be both positive and negative, but we only focus on positive values. Kahle (1983) proposes a list of positive personal values, including internal values (e.g. self-respect and self-fulfilment), external values (e.g. security and a sense of belonging), and internal interpersonal values (e.g. warm relations with others and fun and enjoyment of life). Certain personal values, such as self-enhancement, can be associated with innovative behaviour (Purc & Lagun, 2019). Drawing on SET, positive personal values seem to play a key role as resources of exchange (Mauss, 1967) for a university's shared vision; people that see their values can contribute to fulfilling the university's vision. Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H1: Personal (positive) values will have a positive effect on a university's shared vision.

Personal vision

A personal vision is rooted in an individual's set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations (Schwarz et al., 2006). It is seen as a source for evolving organisational vision (Crossan et al., 2008). The literature seems to focus on leaders' personal vision, arguing that it is important in forming organisational vision (Mombourquette, 2017). In contrast, shared vision does not require eliminating or excluding personal visions; rather, leadership should show respect to their personal visions and help them achieve a shared vision (Ghadermarzi et al., 2020).

Personal vision derives its power and impetus from individuals' caring deeply for their vision, while a shared vision derives its strength from a common caring (Senge, 2006). Informed by SET, personal vision can be viewed as reciprocal when part-and-parcel of a transactional pattern of interdependent exchanges (Gouldner, 1960) in the relationship with a shared vision. Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H2: A personal vision will have a positive effect on a shared vision.

Organisational commitment

This study refers to organisational commitment as an individual's emotional attachment, loyalty, and dedication to their employing organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It displays their willingness to put time, effort, and energy into furthering the objectives, principles, and success of the company, which frequently results in increased job satisfaction, productivity, and a sense of community. Organisational commitment concerns the attitudes of employees toward their organisation and the extent to which an employee is involved with his or her organisation or willing to leave it (Cohen, 1993). Research on organisational commitment in HE has been labelled as 'immature' (Bui & Baruch, 2012) until recently. Research by Romi and Ahman (2020) highlights that work ethic-based organisational citizenship behaviour can improve organisational commitment in HE, while Ahuja and Gupta (2019) show that organisational commitment can act as a facilitator for sustaining HE professionals.

Committed academics display high performance (Vogel & Human-Vogel, 2018). Thus, HE may seriously take into account academics' organisational commitment. Committed, knowledgeable staff are in general willing to learn new skills and implement institutional innovation. According to SET, the relationship between organisational commitment and organisational shared vision is seen as a social exchange relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Since academics are committed to their university, they are more likely to engage in its shared vision. Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H3: Organisational commitment will have a positive effect on a shared vision.

Workplace climate

Workplace climate may be defined as an individual employee's interpretation of the organisational culture (Li et al., 2011). Workplace climate is especially important in universities

where academics are largely self-motivated (McMurray & Scott, 2013). Despite its importance, the workplace climate in HE seems to be under-researched. Al-Kurdi et al. (2020) are of few scholars investigating the role of workplace climate in managing knowledge sharing among academics.

This current study examines two different case studies in two divergent contexts. Therefore, it is based on a global workplace climate assumption, i.e. a positive and negative workplace climate. A positive workplace climate is referred to a friendly, accommodating, group-oriented, and interactive workplace to which individuals feel happy to belong, while a negative workplace climate shows the opposite (Bui & Baruch, 2012). When academics perceive a positive workplace climate, they tend to be more willing to engage in the organisation's shared vision than when they discern a negative workplace climate. This is based on the notion of reciprocity as a transactional pattern of interdependent exchanges in SET (Gouldner, 1960). By extension, a positive workplace climate is likely to engender a shared vision, while a negative workplace climate is not. It is hypothesised:

H4: A positive workplace climate will have a positive effect on a shared vision.

Supportive leadership

Supportive leadership is defined as 'occurring when leaders express concern for and take account of followers' needs and preferences when making decisions' (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006, p. 39). Leaders are meant to be responsible for creating a learning environment in which individuals can continually expand their capacity to understand the complexity and clarify vision (Akaman & Keenan, 2022). However, the above statement has been more commonly discussed than implemented in HE. This may be because leaders in HE tend to be good teachers and researchers, but sometimes ineffective as leaders/managers (Parvin, 2019) or there is a lack of sustainable professional learning for leaders (Tran & Nghia, 2020). According to the norm of reciprocity within SET (Gouldner, 1960), when subordinates receive supportive leadership, they form a perceived obligation to the leader and reciprocate by sharing their vision with the university's vision. Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H5: Supportive leadership will have a positive effect on a shared vision.

Shared vision and academics' performance

A shared vision can yield benefits for both academics and universities. When people share their personal vision with the university, it can enhance organisational performance (Mohmmad Adnan & Valliappan, 2019). When academics share their personal vision with the university, they know what lies ahead for their personal and professional development. For example, suppose an academic has the vision to become a renowned researcher. In that case, s/he is very likely to seek a position in a research-led university. Above all, universities expect academics to develop new knowledge, share it with the broader community, and deliver excellent teaching (Kenny, 2018). Depending on each university's priority in each stage of its development, research, teaching, or both are central to its vision. The reciprocity as a transactional pattern of interdependent exchanges in SET (Gouldner, 1960) argues that universities' shared vision can enhance individual research performance and teaching performance. This is also supported by

the theory of personal-organisational fit (Kristof, 1996) in terms of better outputs and performance anticipated when there is a high fit between the person (in this case—values) and the organisation (in this case—vision). Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H6: A shared vision will have a positive effect on both research performance and teaching performance.

Mediating role of shared vision

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) stated that the social exchange relationship could serve as a mediator of a relationship that produces effective work behaviour. The social exchange relationship may also mediate a relationship that generates high levels of individual performance. Hence, this study conceptualises the notion of shared vision as a mediator in the framework. Thus, a shared vision is likely to function as a critical intermediate mechanism that connects the antecedents with individual and organisational performance. This reinforces the earlier discussions in H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 (namely, personal values, personal vision, organisational commitment, positive workplace climate, and supportive leadership are likely to contribute to a high level of shared vision) as well as H6 (a shared vision is likely to foster a high level of research performance and teaching performance). Both these activities are considered crucial to the productivity of a university (Kenny & Fluck, 2014). Therefore, it is hypothesised:

H7: A shared vision mediates the relationships between the above antecedents and outcomes.

Figure 1 presents the research model based on the set of hypotheses at both individual and organisational levels. It depicts the anticipated relationships among the study's variables.

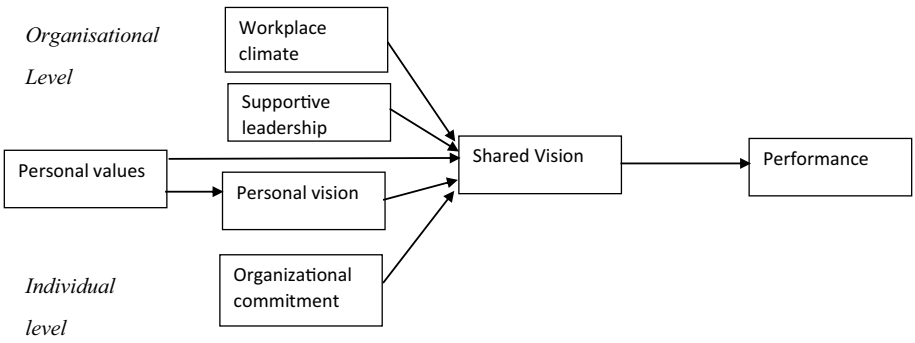

Fig. 1 Antecedents and outcomes of shared vision: a dual-level perspective

Methodology

Research context

This study involves two universities: one is in the UK, and the other is in Vietnam. Its aim is to test the above-hypothesised framework in two different contexts to investigate if there is a universal framework for building shared visions in HE.

In a wider context, UK HE enjoys a worldwide reputation for high-quality research and education, with a long list of British universities regularly featuring among the top 100 global universities. In contrast, the Vietnamese HE system does not boast a good reputation in either research or education. Vietnamese HE seems to be subject to a crisis of direction (Pham & Ho, 2020). The implementation of reform in Vietnamese HE remains a slow and protracted process (Võ & Laking, 2020). The two contexts are embedded in two varying societal cultures. The UK is highly scored as individualistic (Hofstede, 2001), which often means more emphasis on individual performance (Bui & Baruch, 2012). Conversely, Vietnam is perceived as a collectivist culture (Tran, 2013) in which there is a large power distance (i.e. the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally) (Hofstede, 2023). Such a large power distance may impact sharing or developing a shared vision in organisations.

We carefully selected two universities that exhibited the representative features of the chosen contexts. In detail, the UK university participating in this study prioritised research in its vision to reflect the mainstream of middle group and Russell Group universities in the UK (Chapleo, 2004). In contrast, its Vietnamese counterpart was in a transitional stage from teaching-focused to research-focused (Nguyễn, 2014; Pham & Ho, 2020). Both universities were well-established universities in their own country and had a similar size of employees (approximately 3000) and students (approximately 25,000).

Data and sample

Data were collected from two different sources: a staff survey and other performance data published on the universities' websites. Data were collected using a stratified random sampling technique from academics of different schools at the UK and Vietnam universities. A survey strategy was adopted. A total of 431 questionnaires from academics at these universities were included for analysis. Of these, 194 from the British university and 237 from its Vietnamese counterpart were usable after removing systematic missing values.

A descriptive statistics was run to find out the total percentage of missing data in the observed data set. The percentage of missing data was less than 10%. Further visual inspection of the data set revealed that the data were missing at random, and no specific pattern was observed. Following Hair et al. (2010), if the pattern of missing data is random and each variable has less than 10% missing data, then no corrective action is required, or listwise deletion is applied. Imputation technique was applied to address the issue of the missing values in the data set. The missing values were estimated using the observed data and *mean imputation* was applied. Thus, the missing values were replaced by a mean value of the observed data set. This ensured retaining a larger sample size.

The average time respondents spent working for the Vietnam university was 9.1 years, against 7.7 years for the UK university. The number of doctorate holders was greater in the UK than in Vietnam (85.1% vis-à-vis 50.6%). Similarly, the number of professors was considerably greater in the UK sample when compared to the Vietnamese sample (18% compared to 2.1%).

Measures

Five items measuring shared vision were developed by Bui and Baruch (2012). Six items to measure supportive leadership were adapted from Marsick and Watkins (2003). Five out of nine items measuring personal values were taken from Kahle (1983), as they obtained a higher response rate than the remaining four items. Four items to measure personal vision were adopted from Bui and Baruch (2012). Six items of workplace climate to measure employees' perception of their organisational culture, from 'negative extreme' at one end of the spectrum to 'positive extreme' at the other, were also adopted from Bui and Baruch (2012). Following Meyer and Allen (1991), four of the eight items of affective organisational commitment were taken to fit the construct of the research (see all items in Appendix). All these variables were adopted or adapted from existing studies and measured using a multi-item, Likert-type scale ranging from (1) to (7). The initial version of the questionnaire was in English and was used to collect data in the UK. It was subsequently translated into Vietnamese to collect data in Vietnam. To this end, we employed the committee approach, back-translation, and pre-test procedure advocated by Sperber et al. (1994).

A two-item scale of academic performance was adapted from Baruch (1996). One item relates to research performance, while the other addresses teaching performance. The measure of research performance was selected because both universities considered research to be their key performance indicator, and additionally, research performance can be standardised easily and represents an objective measure. Research performance was calibrated and ranked into seven performance scores based on the UK system of research evaluation output. The use of a framework for rating and categorising research performance was influenced by the Research Excellence Framework. This process involved categorising research performance into seven distinct categories that each represented a different level of research quality, impact, and productivity. The questionnaire responses were highly correlated with the actual research performance recorded by the university in question ($r = .53$, $p <. 05$). These statistics suggest that the two have high reliability and validity for evaluating self-performance. Both universities were utilised in our analysis to control and minimise any possibility of research bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Teaching performance was a single-item measure that relied upon a personal rating. This information was personal to the individual and kept confidential in both universities. It was stated in the survey: 'In terms of teaching, your students' evaluations were (1) unacceptable; (2) much below average; (3) below average; (4) average; (5) above average; (5) much above average; and (7) outstanding'.

The validity and composite reliability results are provided in Table 1. These results reveal that common method bias is unlikely to be a concern for this study, suggesting that multicollinearity does not pose any serious problem for our analysis (Hair et al., 2010).

Analysis and findings

Structure equation modelling (SEM) is used to validate the proposed framework. It consists of (a) the measurement model, which specifies the number of factors, how the various indicators are related to the factors, and the relationships among indicator errors, i.e. a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model (Fig. 2), and (b) the structural model, which specifies how the various factors are related to one another (e.g. direct or indirect

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

	SL	PV	OC	WC	V	SV	RP	TP	Mean	Std. dev	CR	AVE
Supportive leadership (SL)	(.79)								4.95	1.32	.89	.62
Personal vision (PV)	.28	(.76)							5.90	.97	.80	.57
Org. commitment (OC)	.28	.44	(.77)						5.12	1.35	.85	.60
Workplace climate (WC)	.43	.23	.49	(.78)					4.40	1.24	.88	.61
Personal values (V)	.05	.28	.15	.12	(.75)				6.15	.79	.79	.57
Shared vision (SV)	.28	.43	.59	.49	.23	(.83)			4.62	1.39	.89	.68
Research performance (RP)	−.04	.15	.07	−.05	.09	.08	(--)		3.78	1.85	--	--
Teaching performance (TP)	−. 01	.18	.10	.02	.15	.12	.13	(--)	5.42	.67	--	--

$n = 431$. In brackets: Cronbach alpha values

CR composite reliability, *AVE* average variance extracted

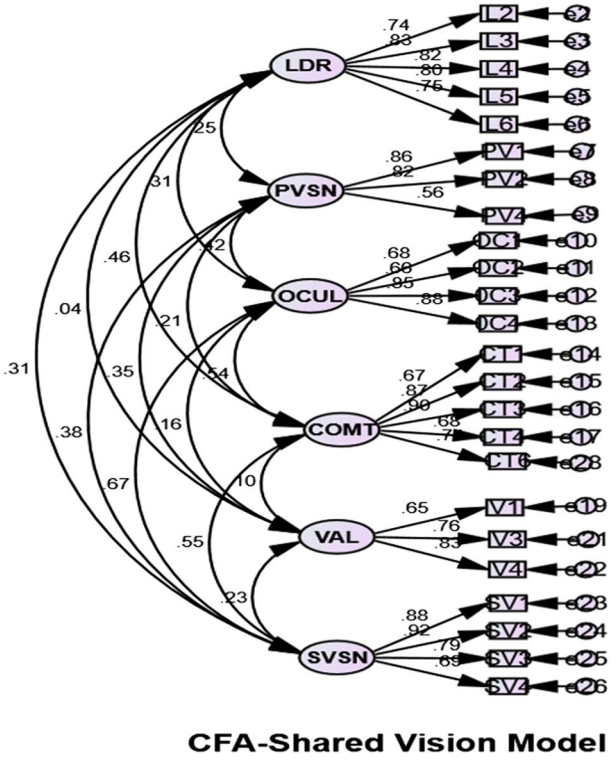

Fig. 2 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

effects and no relationship) (Brown & Moore, 2012). We tested the goodness of fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999) to ensure that our data fit the model well.

For the given model, CFA test revealed that χ^2 =592.332 and df=237. Thus, the CMIN (chi-square statistics) (χ^2/df=.2.49) in this case was within the acceptable limit of 5 and below. The value of RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) = .059 was within the acceptable limit of .05 or below (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and PCLOSE=.007. Using the rule of thumb, cutoff criteria for RMSEA=.08 (Wu et al., 2009). The RMSEA value of .059 is deemed acceptable when evaluating the model's fit to observed data. A model's fit to the data is measured by RMSEA, with lower values indicating better fit. The proposed model and the data are reasonably fit in this instance because the RMSEA value is below the. 08 cutoff. However, for a thorough assessment of the model's quality, additional fit indices and theoretical factors should also be taken into account. The CFI (comparative fit index) = .939 and GFI (goodness of fit index) = .899 were also acceptable as the threshold value for both indices was close to .90. Anything close to 1 represents a good fit (Tabachnick et al., 2007). For our data, the model fits nicely, and all the factor loadings were shown to be significant (ranging from .67 to .92), demonstrating a good fit for the six-factor solution. Taken collectively, the goodness of fit indices exhibit a good fit for the given data. To follow Hurlbert et al.'s (2019) suggestion, we report accurate *p*-values but remove the term 'statistically significant' and its cognates and symbolic adjuncts completely.

H1 proposes that personal vision is positively associated with the promotion of a shared vision. The results show a significant relationship in both the UK (β = .50, p =

.00) and the Vietnam sample ($\beta = .47$, $p = .00$). This result confirms personal vision to be an important condition for building university's shared vision.

H2 proposes that personal values are positively associated with university's shared vision. The results reveal a significant relationship in the UK sample ($\beta = .24$, $p = .00$) and the Vietnam sample ($\beta = .65$, $p = .00$), thus supporting H2. It means personal values can significantly predict employees' shared vision.

H3 proposes that supportive leadership is positively associated with a shared vision. The results demonstrate a significant relationship in both the UK ($\beta = .21$, $p = .00$) and the Vietnamese sample ($\beta = .28$, $p = .00$). This implies that supportive leadership is a good predictor for shaping a shared vision in an organisation.

H4 asserts that organisational commitment is positively associated with a shared vision. The results indicate a significant relationship in both samples. The effect in the UK sample was ($\beta = .47$, $p = .00$) and in the Vietnam sample ($\beta = .53$, $p = .00$). It means if employees are committed to their organisation, they are very likely to share its vision.

H5 infers that a positive workplace climate is predictive of university's shared vision. Positive workplace climate can university's shared vision only in the UK university with ($\beta = .48$, p=.00), but conversely, a non-significant relationship was observed in the Vietnam sample. We can thus partially claim a positive workplace climate to predict university's shared vision.

H6 proposes that a shared vision will have a positive effect on both research performance and teaching performance. H6 has been partially supported as shared vision shows to predict research performance in both the UK and Vietnam contexts with ($\beta = .17$, $p = .01$) and ($\beta = .25$, $p = .01$), respectively. However, in the case of an association of shared vision with teaching performance, the results are meaningful only with the Vietnamese sample ($\beta = .09$, $p = .01$). It means a shared vision can only predict teaching performance in the Vietnam sample but not in the UK counterpart. The statistics for testing H1 to H6 are presented in Table 2. Tables 3 and 4

H7 comprises a series of sub-hypothesis as it suggests a set of mediation effects of shared vision between the above antecedents (i.e. personal vision, personal values, supportive leadership, organisational commitment, and positive workplace climate) and dual outcomes (research performance and teaching performance). H7a to H7e in Table 5 specify the indirect paths between the antecedents and research performance. The role of a shared vision as a mediator in the UK sample (Table 3) has been supported in the given paths of personal values→shared vision→research performance ($\beta = .04$, $p = .01$), supportive leadership→shared vision→research performance ($\beta = .07$, $p = .02$), organisational commitment→shared vision→research performance ($\beta = .08$, $p = .01$), and positive workplace climate→shared vision→research performance ($\beta = .12$, $p = .01$). The results reveal

Table 2 Causal effect between antecedents and shared vision

Direct effects of Vietnam sample	*β*	***p***	*Direct effects of UK sample*	*β*	***p***
Personal vision → SV	.47	.00	Personal vision → SV	.50	.00
Personal values → SV	.65	.00	Personal values → SV	.24	.00
Supportive leadership → SV	.28	.00	Supportive leadership → SV	.21	.00
Organisational commitment → SV	.53	.00	Organisational commitment → SV	.47	.00
Workplace climate → SV	−.06	.10	Workplace climate → SV	.48	.00
SV → research performance	.25	.01	SV → Research performance	.17	.01
SV → teaching performance	.09	.01	SV → Teaching performance	.02	.10

Table 3 Direct and indirect effects for UK sample

Direct effect	*β*	*p*	*Indirect effect*	*β*	BootLLCI	BootULCI	*p*
Personal vision → research performance	.33	.00	Personal vision → SV → research performance	.10	−.04	.27	.11
Personal values → research performance	−.03	.97	Personal values → SV → research performance	.04	.00	.12	.01
Supportive leadership → research performance	−.89	.60	Supportive leadership → SV → research performance	.07	.02	.18	.02
Organisational commitment → research performance	.01	.09	Organisational commitment → SV → research performance	.08	.02	.16	.01
Workplace climate	−.23	.01	Workplace climate → SV → research performance	.12	.05	.19	.01
Personal vision → teaching performance	.02	.16	Personal vision → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.08	.03	.13
Personal values → teaching performance	.04	.22	Personal values → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.04	.12	.19
Supportive leadership → teaching performance	.01	.56	Supportive leadership → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.01	.02	.44
Organisational commitment → teaching performance	.00	.62	Organisational commitment → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.02	.03	.53
Workplace climate → teaching performance	.01	.68	Workplace climate → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.02	.03	.60

Table 4 Direct and indirect effects for Vietnam sample

Direct effect	*β*	*p*	*Indirect effect*	*β*	BootLLCI	BootULCI	*p*
Personal vision → research performance	.11	.26	Personal vision → SV → research performance	.10	.10	.03	.19
Personal values → research performance	−.01	.90	Personal values → SV → research performance	.04	.16	.06	.30
Supportive leadership → research performance	−.15	.04	Supportive leadership → SV → research performance	.07	.09	.05	.15
Organisational commitment → research performance	.10	.25	Organisational commitment → SV → research performance	.08	.10	.02	.19
Workplace climate	−.06	.06	Workplace climate → SV → Research performance	.12	.11	.04	.19
Personal vision → teaching performance	.01	.01	Personal vision → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.01	.07	.35
Personal values → teaching performance	.14	.00	Personal values → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.02	.08	.20
Supportive leadership → teaching performance	−.04	.58	Supportive leadership → SV → teaching performance	.00	.01	.06	.04
Organisational commitment → teaching performance	.03	.80	Organisational commitment → SV → teaching performance	.00	−.00	.08	.20
Workplace climate → teaching performance	−.02	.85	Workplace climate → SV → teaching performance	.00	.01	.08	.02

Table 5 Results for hypothesis testing

Hypothesis		UK	Vietnam
H1	Personal vision →shared vision	Supported	Supported
H2	Personal values→shared vision	Supported	Supported
H3	Organisational commitment→shared vision	Supported	Supported
H4	Positive workplace climate→shared vision	Supported	NS
H5	Supportive leadership→shared vision	Supported	Supported
H6a	Shared vision→research performance	Supported	Supported
H6b	Shared vision→teaching performance	NS	Supported
Research performance			
H7a	Personal vision→shared vision→research performance	NS	NS
H7b	Personal values→shared vision→research performance	Supported	NS
H7c	Supportive leadership→shared vision→research performance	Supported	NS
H7d	Organisational commitment→shared vision→research performance	Supported	NS
H7e	Positive workplace climate → shared vision→research performance	Supported	NS
Teaching performance			
H7f	Personal vision→ shared vision→teaching performance	NS	NS
H7g	Personal values→shared vision→teaching performance	NS	NS
H7h	Supportive leadership→shared vision→teaching performance	NS	Supported
H7i	Organisational commitment→shared vision→teaching performance	NS	NS
H7j	Positive workplace climate→shared vision →teaching performance	NS	Supported

that a shared vision does indeed mediate the relationships between all antecedents and research performance in the UK sample, except for personal vision. However, all indirect paths between the antecedents and research performance are minor in the Vietnam sample (cf. Table 4).

H7f to H7j in Table 5 specify the indirect paths between the antecedents and the second outcome variable, which is teaching performance. The results do not support mediation in any of the given paths between the antecedents and teaching performance in the UK sample. However, out of the given indirect paths from H7f to H7j, only two are supported in the Vietnamese context. This confirmed the role of shared vision as a mediator between supportive leadership→shared vision→ teaching performance (β =.00, p = .04) and workplace climate→ shared vision→teaching performance (β = .00, p = .02) (Table 4).

All the indirect effects for both UK and Vietnam samples are provided in Table 3 and Table 4. Table 5 summarises the results of hypothesis testing of all hypotheses.

Discussion and conclusion

Underpinned by SET, the framework of antecedents and outcomes of a shared vision in HE is largely supported by data derived from two university contexts. This study advances SET by showing the interdependence of workplace antecedents (e.g. workplace climate and supportive leadership), personal attributes (e.g. personal vision, personal values, and organisational commitment), interpersonal connections (i.e. shared vision), and performance (teaching and research).

A framework of how a university's shared vision can also help advance research and teaching targets has been developed and tested. To a certain extent, this study confirms that the era of new public management has radically altered HE (Donina & Paleari, 2019; Ferlie et al., 2008). Regardless of this impetus toward performativity, research and teaching consistently comprise the core functions of HE. At this juncture, parallel with the target-setting ethos instilled by new public management, 'targets' and 'terrors' are labelled (Bevan & Hood, 2006). 'Targets' in our study refer to what are expected to see in the context of research and teaching performance management shown through our cases. By contrast, by 'terrors', we refer to what are not expected to be seen, i.e. the unintended consequences of performance management. The 'terrors' in this current study also bring unexpected surprises, sparking provocative discussions.

Below are discussions of how SET is shown in these two labels of new public management doctrine.

Targets—what are expected

First, the results show that personal vision, personal values, organisational commitment, and supportive leadership play an important role in forging a university's shared vision in the UK and Vietnam contexts, as hypothesised. On the one hand, according to Mauss's (1967) SET, personal vision, personal values, and organisational commitment can be seen as exchange resources for a shared vision because they are from each individual to an organisation. On the other hand, supportive leadership can be seen as a social exchange relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2001) between managers and employees in sharing a vision.

However, a positive workplace climate is positively associated with a shared vision in the UK case but not in the Vietnamese counterpart. This may be due to the cultural and system differences between the two countries. For example, power distance is much higher in Vietnam (grade of 70) compared with the UK (grade of 35) (Hofstede, 2023). Power distance can be important, for example, when academics need to apply discretion in their activity (O'Meara, 2021). Another possible explanation may lie within the societal culture. In an individualistic culture like the UK, a positive workplace climate is more likely to stimulate members to develop a shared vision because people tend to focus more on their personal vision than on organisational vision (Bui & Baruch, 2012). It is different in a collective culture influenced by the communist ideology like Vietnam (ibid), where members value harmony at work and tend to take their organisational vision personally. This finding challenges the longstanding traditional practice of sharing a vision that emanates from HE's top management team (Qadach et al., 2020). Emerson's (1976) SET tends to explain this finding as a reciprocity norm of exchange. It means a positive workplace climate can be considered a norm for employees to share a vision with their organisation in the UK. Still, it has not become a reciprocity norm in Vietnam, or at least in this anticipated university.

Second, SET explains that shared vision can be seen as an exchange resource (Mauss, 1967) for enhancing academic performance. Findings from this study show that a university's shared vision can exercise a positive resource to exchange higher academics' research performance. This finding confirms the role of an organisational shared vision (Mohmmad Adnan & Valliappan, 2019). It also holds vital significance for HE managers in more detail in 'Managerial implications'.

However, there appears to be a distinct decoupling between a university's shared vision and its teaching performance, particularly in the UK university case. The findings reveal that the UK university in this study, and possibly many other similar universities in the UK and elsewhere, emphasises research over teaching. As a result, teaching excellence may not have been encompassed within either their personal vision or their university's shared vision, despite the UK's stipulation that it wishes to avoid an artificial divide between teaching and research (Mathieson, 2019). It should be noted as a caveat that the data for this study were collected before the arrival of TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework—a UK national exercise to assess excellence in teaching at universities and colleges). Before TEF, many academics in the UK, especially those employed at older, Russell Group, and research-intensive universities, would argue that their primary interest was research (Schulz, 2013). This decoupling shows that some UK universities may not see themselves in a vision of teaching quality; therefore, their shared vision (without focus on teaching) is not an exchange resource (Mauss, 1967) for their academics' teaching performance.

Terrors—what are not expected

First, instead of being mediated by a shared vision, personal vision directly impacts research performance as a norm of social exchange (Emerson, 1976). This seems to apply to research-oriented universities in the UK; as explained by Schulz (2013), research is of many UK academics' interest and hence consonant with their personal vision. This research discovers that *personal vision plays a more pivotal role than a university's share vision* in its effect on individual performance.

Second, a positive workplace climate can have a detrimental impact on research performance if a shared vision does not exist to mediate this relationship. It means without a shared vision, a positive workplace climate might spoil individual research performance because there is no motivation for social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) for academics to work hard on research. This surprisingly negative relationship seriously challenges traditional assumptions concerning a positive workplace climate, namely, that it will always be beneficial in its effects (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020). Still, it makes sense with SET as a shared vision is critical to mediate between a supportive workplace climate and individual research performance, or as guidance for academics to work on research, which is not always an easy and pleasant path. This negative relationship can also be explained by the importance of the REF (Research Excellence Framework) in UK HE. According to REF rules, only one author from an institution can claim a REF publication if more than one author originates from the same institution. This effectively discourages many academics from collaborating in research with their work colleagues (Watermeyer, 2016), generating a hostile environment in HE.

Third, for the Vietnamese university, supportive leadership is shown to have a negative relationship with Vietnamese academics' research performance if a shared vision is not in place to mediate this relationship. In other words, *supportive leadership HE does not seem to sustain research performance in the Vietnamese context if the university does not possess a shared vision.* SET from Cropanzano and Mitchell's (2005) perspective lends a similar explanation as above. It means positive leadership can also spoil individual research performance because there is no motivation for social exchange for academics to work hard on research when it is not led by a shared vision. To a certain extent, this finding confounds existing assumptions concerning supportive leadership (Evans, 2014). It can be explainable in the context of a university visioning to transform from teaching to research in Vietnam.

If leaders are overly supportive, they are not likely to draw academics out of their comfort zone of teaching to invest in research. Therefore, paradoxically, the more supportive such leaders are, the lower Vietnamese academics' research performance seems to be.

Fourth, a shared vision does not mediate the relationship between antecedents and teaching performance in the UK sample and between antecedents and research performance in the Vietnamese counterpart at all. This finding is not a surprise for the UK anticipated university where academics value and focus on research (Schulz, 2013). Similarly, it is in the case of the Vietnamese university regarding research as research has not been culturally embedded in that context yet.

However, it is challenging to explain the no-mediation effect in the Vietnamese university case between antecedents of personal values, vision and organisational commitment, and the outcome of teaching performance while there are regarding predictors of supportive leadership and positive workplace climate. It means shared vision mediates the relationships between organisational predictors (supportive leadership and positive workplace climate) and teaching performance, but it does not with personal predictors (personal values, vision, and organisational commitment). A possible explanation might be teaching has been culturally embedded in the 'university's DNA' (Christensen & Eyring, 2011) for so long that teaching is naturally the only important personal call of Vietnamese academics. They may not need a shared vision to enhance their teaching. However, a shared vision seems to be in place to mediate the relationships between organisational predictors, such as supportive leadership and positive workplace climate and teaching performance, because those predictors may negatively impact performance, as mentioned previously. These findings call for SET to be further studied to explain why it can explain mediating relationships with some organisational predictors but no other personal ones.

Managerial implications

All three fundamental explanatory powers of SET are used to explain this study's findings regarding a shared vision for a university under the managerialism doctrine. This study shows that if social exchanges (e.g. reciprocity rules, norms, resources and relationships) are used properly, they can support and motivate the growth and development of an organisation and its people. If they are misused, they can harm the organisation more than individuals.

Our findings can also be useful for HE practitioners and managers, in particular, for cases where cultural backgrounds may be similar, like Anglo-Saxon and Far-Eastern countries. For example, a shared vision is shown to be an effective mechanism for universities to achieve their targets when personal vision, personal values, organisational commitment, supportive leadership, and a positive workplace climate are adequately taken into consideration. The research-teaching nexus is crucial to student learning (Evans, 2014), especially in the context of the commercialisation of higher education, in which universities are increasingly reliant on students' tuition fees as their primary source of revenue. Universities should invest in sharing a vision that more effectively sells the importance of teaching, research, or social transformation via research and teaching.

Counterintuitively, this study suggests that supportive leadership does not always benefit academics' performance as it is often assumed. For example, in the event of a major transformation, leaders and managers that are excessively supportive might discourage

employees from altering their behaviours and actions in a manner conducive to achieving the university's specified targets.

Last but not least, academics are generally highly individualistic in their work (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020). This study furnishes additional evidence that a positive workplace climate may have an adverse, unfavourable impact on research performance in highly competitive research environments like UK HE. Therefore, a positive workplace climate may not help advance research targets until the REF alters its rules.

Research limitations

Although the data were collected from different sources to reduce research bias, this study cannot avoid certain limitations, which, in turn, point to new avenues for research. First, readers should be cautious with the generalisability of this study, depending on particular contexts. Second, the intercultural explanations offered are noteworthy and informative yet speculative. Qualitative data can explain the reasons for these results more accurately. However, complex model testing is only possible using a quantitative approach (Tabachnick et al., 2007), which was the intent of the current study. Third, the use of the Likert scale on the questionnaire may be a limiting factor when seeking information about respondents' attitudes or behaviours. People tend to avoid the extreme end and prefer choosing middle measures, which may conceal the intensity of the actual attitudes and behaviours of the respondents (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). However, this study did not encounter that issue.

Appendix. Measurements

Shared vision: *Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)*

1. I understand our university's vision.
2. I understand how our university's mission is to be achieved.
3. Our university's mission statement identifies values to which I, as an employee, am expected to conform.
4. I am an important part of our university's vision.
5. Overall, I accept and support our university's mission.

Supportive leadership: *Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)*

1. In our organisation, leaders/managers continually look for opportunities to learn for their professional development.
2. In our organisation, leaders/managers generally support requests for training and development opportunities.
3. In our organisation, leaders/managers empower others to help carry out the organisation's vision.
4. In our organisation, leaders/managers coach those they lead.
5. In our organisation, leaders/managers ensure that the organisation's actions are consistent with its values.

6. In our organisation, leaders/managers share up-to-date information with employees about the university's directions.

Personal values: *Rate each item on how important it is in your life, from 1= unimportant to 7 = very important*

1. Warm relationships with others
2. Security
3. Self-fulfilment
4. Self-respect
5. A sense of accomplishment

Personal vision: *Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)*

1. I set up career goals of my own.
2. I have my personal vision for my career.
3. Part of my personal vision is to make my organisation more successful.
4. I understand how the work I do helps my organisation achieve its vision.

Work climate: *Circle the most appropriate answer to reflect your workplace*

Stable	◄ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ►	Dynamic
Closed/bureaucratic	◄ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ►	Open/interactive
Reactive	◄ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ►	Proactive
Individual oriented	◄ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ►	Group-oriented
Aggressive	◄ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ►	Accommodating
Reserved	◄ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ►	Friendly

Organisational commitment: *Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)*
1.I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this university.
2I enjoy discussing this university with people outside it.
3.I really feel as if this university's problems are my own.
4.This university has a great deal of personal meaning to me.

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Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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Authors and Affiliations

Hong T. M. Bui[1,2] · Shandana Shoaib[3] · Ly Thi Tran[4] · Viet Ha Tran Vu[5] · Yehuda Baruch[6]

✉ Ly Thi Tran
ly.tran@deakin.edu.au

Hong T. M. Bui
Hong.Bui@bcu.ac.uk

Shandana Shoaib
shandanashoaib@gmail.com

Viet Ha Tran Vu
Aurelie.tran@lecnam.net

Yehuda Baruch
Yehuda.Baruch@soton.ac.uk

1 Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK

2 IPAG Business School, Paris, France

3 Institute of Management Sciences, 1-A, Sector E-5, Phase VII, Peshawar, Pakistan

4 School of Education, Deakin University, Burwood, Australia

5 LIRSA-EPN 10-CNAM, Paris, France

6 Southampton Business School, Southampton, UK