

# THE KEY ANTECEDENTS OF SHARED VISION: A CASE STUDY ON AN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE DEVELOPER IN THAILAND

Srobol Smutkupt

Martin de Tours School of Management and Economics, Assumption University

## Abstract

Vision serves a critical role in today's organizations. A successful shared vision paints a bright picture for the future of the organization. Most organizations have their own corporate vision. However, making a corporate vision become a shared vision is challenging for management. The main objective of this research was to examine the key antecedents of shared vision. Based on literature, there are many factors that contribute to shared vision. However, not many empirical studies have been conducted in this area. The results of the research revealed that three factors including affective commitment, intrinsic motivation and effective communication were identified as the key antecedents of shared vision. The findings provide significant implications for the organization to understand the importance of affective commitment, intrinsic motivation and communication. Management and HRM should focus on positive activities and practices in order to enhance these factors in the organization.

**Keywords:** shared vision, organizational commitment, communication, motivation

## บทคัดย่อ

วิสัยทัศน์นับเป็นสิ่งที่สำคัญสำหรับองค์กรในปัจจุบัน องค์กรที่สามารถบรรลุวิสัยทัศน์สามารถที่จะประสบความสำเร็จในอนาคต องค์กรส่วนใหญ่มีวิสัยทัศน์ แต่การทำให้พนักงานมีวิสัยทัศน์ร่วมกันเป็นสิ่งที่ท้าทายผู้บริหาร วัตถุประสงค์ของบทวิเคราะห์นี้เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่ก่อให้เกิดวิสัยทัศน์ร่วมของพนักงานในองค์กร งานวิจัยในอดีตพบว่า มีปัจจัยหลายหลากที่ส่งผลให้เกิดวิสัยทัศน์ร่วม แต่หลักฐานเชิงประจักษ์ยังมีอยู่น้อยมาก ผลจากงานวิจัยนี้พบว่า ความรู้สึกรักและผูกพันกับองค์กร แรงจูงใจภายในของพนักงาน และ การสื่อสารอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ มีผลต่อการก่อให้เกิดวิสัยทัศน์ร่วมของพนักงานในองค์กร องค์กรควรเน้นกิจกรรมและหาทางสนับสนุนให้เกิดปัจจัยเหล่านี้ขึ้น

**คำสำคัญ:** วิสัยทัศน์ร่วม, ความผูกพันองค์กร, การสื่อสาร, แรงจูงใจ

## INTRODUCTION

Vision is very important not only for the organization, but also for individuals at all levels (Allen, 1995) especially in today's world of flat and decentralized organizations (Lipton, 2004). There are many factors that affect the sharing of a vision throughout an organization. Researchers claimed that employee commitment contributes to a shared vision (Domm, 2001; Lord, 2011). Senge (1990) argued that motivation was one of the key factors to create a shared vision. Kantabutra and Vimolratana (2009) stated that building people's aspirations could enhance a shared vision. Researchers have encouraged management and organizations to communicate the organizational vi-

sion to their staff. Leaders should continually share their visions with their staff (Abrams, Lesser & Levin, 2003; Hodgkinson, 2002). Some empirical studies found positive and negative consequences of transformational leadership behaviors and shared vision. Organizational culture is another factor to support shared vision (Bui & Baruch, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2009). Stata (1998) suggested that organizational culture is an integral part of the corporate vision. Therefore, based on the literature, five key factors were applied as independent variables: employee commitment, employee motivation, effective communication, leadership behaviors and organizational culture. Shared vision was applied as a dependent variable.

The objective of this study was to examine fac-

tors affecting the sharing of a vision by all staff. This study was applied as a case study on one of the industrial estates in Thailand. The core businesses include offering freehold purchase or long lease terms. The current CEO of this organization is the business founder. He is well-known and is recognized as the one of the successful businessmen in Thailand. The organizational vision was derived from his long-term visualization on making the industrial estate become a perfect city for not only people, but also for wild plants and animals.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Shared Vision

Baum (1995) conducted empirical studies which supported the idea that organizations with corporate visions outperformed organizations which had no vision (as cited in Thoms & Greenberger, 1998). Overall, five potential independent factors are claimed to contribute to a shared vision: organizational culture (Chen & Chen, 2009; Lipton, 1996), employee commitment (Domm, 2001; Lord, 2011), employee motivation (Senge, 1990), leaders' behavior (Daft, 1999; Lipton, 1996) and communication (Chen & Chen, 2009; Denton, 1997).

The five potential key antecedents were cat-

egorized into nine independent variables. Commitment was categorized into affective, normative and continuance commitment. Motivation was separated into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Leadership behaviors were classified into transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. Lastly, the organizational culture of employees' perceived culture (Clan) culture was applied. Based on all these variables, the concept of Systems Theory can be applied by integrating all potential factors into the model framework as shown in Figure 1 (The Conceptual Framework).

### Commitment

Commitment is defined as a force or psychological state that binds an individual to a course of action (Herscovitch, 1999; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). When employees have commitment, they have a sense of belonging and try their best to reach the organizational vision (Collins & Porras, 1996; Senge, 1990). The studies of Meyer and Allen developed an integrated model of organizational commitment and categorized commitment into three components: affective, continuance and normative commitment. This concept has captured the multi-dimensional nature of commitment. In this study, the three components of organizational commitment based on Allen and Meyer (1990) are the focal point in structuring an integrative model for further study in the commitment area.

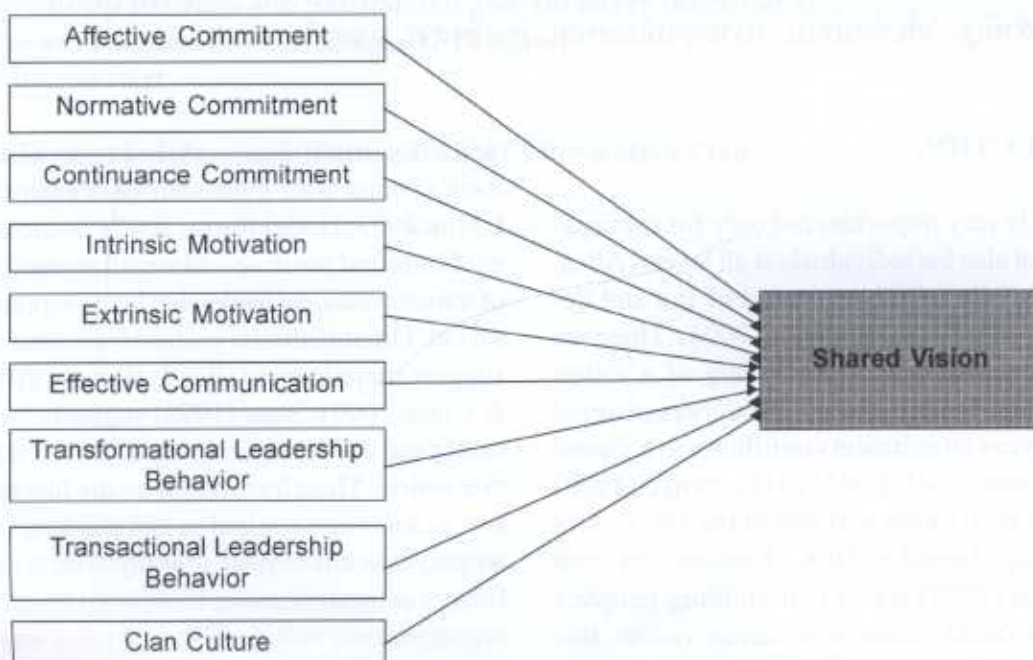


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in of employees towards the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Once employees have affective commitment, they can have a sense of belonging and would do whatever is necessary to reach the organizational vision (Collins & Porras, 1996; Denton, 1997; Senge, 1990). In addition, the greater the degree of the congruence of the individual and organizational values, the higher the degree of affective commitment is generated (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Employee involvement in the organization can create affective commitment. Job involvement refers to a person who is entirely involved in and enthusiastic about his or her work (Baldev & Anupama, 2012).

Normative commitment is defined as the employees' obligation towards the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ugboro, 2006). Employees realize that sharing and following a corporate vision is their obligation towards the organization, and that normative commitment supports a shared vision. In contrast, continuance commitment might not support a shared vision. Employees who have continuance commitment stay in the organization because they need to (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Their costs of leaving would be high. They may focus on what they are asked to do. Therefore, employees may not pay attention to the corporate vision and may not want to share the vision. These concepts lead to the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1A: The affective commitment of employees positively relates to shared vision

Hypothesis 1B: The normative commitment of employees positively relates to shared vision

Hypothesis 1C: The continuance commitment of employees negatively relates to shared vision.

## **Motivation**

Motivation is defined as the set of forces that lead people to act in particular ways (Moorhead & Griffin, 2010). Motivation is used to drive people's behaviors and led to higher performance in organizations (Daft, 1999). Senge (1990) stated that motivation is one of the key factors to create a shared vision. The dual-structure theory is the basic theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and rewards. Motivation or intrinsic factors were found to relate to the work itself and comprised factors such as achievement and recognition of achieve-

ment, interest in the job, work responsibility and advancement (Herzberg, 2003). This includes the feeling of challenge or accomplishment of employees (Campbell III, 2007). Besides Herzberg's theory, Hackman, Oldham, Janson & Purdy (1975) developed a new strategy for job enrichment that enhanced work motivation. This concept was widely used in studies related to the antecedents of intrinsic motivation (Champoux, 1980) and motivation towards performance (Floyd, 2009). The five core job characteristics were said to lead to critical psychological states and finally contribute to the outcomes of intrinsic motivation, a higher quality of work, greater satisfaction and lower turnover (Oldham & Hackman, 2010).

Intrinsic rewards were claimed to be the real motivator (Corbo & Kleiner, 1991), whereas extrinsic rewards have been generally applied in many organizations to make people achieve their goals and objectives (Harris & Kleiner, 1993). Employees who have intrinsic motivation tend to support and share a corporate vision (Lipton, 2004; Senge, 1990). However, some researchers reported a relationship between extrinsic rewards and shared vision (Kantabutra & Avery 2010; Wisdom & Denton, 1980). These studies lead to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2A: Employees' intrinsic motivation positively relates to shared vision

Hypothesis 2B: Employees' extrinsic motivation positively relates to shared vision

## **Effective Communication**

Effective communication is defined as the sender and the recipient understanding the same meaning of a message, and one not getting confused by the others (Quigley, 1993). Effective communication helps leaders to cascade a shared vision throughout the organization (Collins & Porras, 1996) and turns a vision into a shared vision with enhanced positive outcomes (Christenson & Walker, 2008). Communication of vision can be achieved by a direct supervisor because the message is personally crafted and convincing (Stata, 1988). This practice helps leaders to remove barriers by selecting the right words which are not too complicated or too technical (Harcourt, Krizan & Merrier, 1991). In addition, leaders must ensure the consistency between the verbal and non-verbal messages about the corporate vision (Harcourt et

al., 1991). When communication barriers are reduced, the message can be sent out more effectively. Employees understand and remember a corporate vision more easily, which contributes to a shared vision. Communication channels are also important. Leaders should apply an appropriate method or channel to communicate to make employees understand and be able to recognize and remember a shared vision (George, 1997; Snyder, Dowd & Houghton, 1994). These studies and findings lead to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Effective communication is positively related to shared vision

### **Leadership Behaviors**

Leaders should stimulate employees to think about their jobs to forge links with the corporate vision (Domm, 2001). Leaders should have a broad vision to combine their observations and apply them to solve enterprise issues (Edersheim, 2007). The empirical study of Abolghasemi, McCormick & Connors (1999) revealed a relationship between leaders and the corporate vision. When leaders are involved with the corporate vision, the followers provide more support towards the vision. In this study, transformational and transactional leadership behaviors are applied. Under charisma and inspirational leadership, leaders articulate a powerful vision and express confidence (Bass, 1985). In addition, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration are likely to encourage employees to think about the corporate vision and enhance their desire to reach that vision. These behaviors should support the organization to achieve a shared vision. The empirical studies of Berson, Shamir, Avolio & Popper (2001) and James and Lahti (2011) found a positive relationship between transformational behaviors and a shared vision. However, the studies of Bennett and McCormick (2003) and McLaurin and Mitias (2008) found weak support.

Regarding transactional leadership behaviors, employees are offered rewards in exchange of their performance (Bass, 1985). Generally, transactional leaders recognize and reward employees who perform tasks to reach goals and objectives. Therefore, transactional leadership behaviors tend to relate to a shared vision. These comments and findings lead to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4A: Transformational leadership

behaviors positively relate to shared vision.

Hypothesis 4B: Transactional leadership behaviors positively relate to shared vision

### **Organizational Cultures**

Organizational culture was found to be one of the key variables to enhance a shared vision (Chen & Chen, 2009; Lipton, 1996). Leaders should try to build an appropriate culture to enhance an open and cooperative atmosphere to support a shared vision (Chen & Chen, 2009). The organization should create a trusting atmosphere to motivate employees to share and buy into the corporate vision (Pietenpol, 2010). Based on the organizational culture concept of Cameron and Quinn (1999) and the interview data from employees in this organization, the researcher classified the perceived culture in this organization as Clan culture. Clan culture encourages employee collaboration. It focuses on cohesion, participation, communication and empowerment (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). This type of culture should have a positive impact on a shared vision. These comments and findings lead to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Employees' perceived culture (CLAN) positively relates to shared vision

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research applied both quantitative and qualitative methods by conducting a survey and an interview. A questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from all staff. Factor analysis and reliability test were conducted with the returned questionnaires. The multiple regression method was conducted to examine the key antecedents of shared vision. The results from the qualitative study help to analyze the interpretation of data and to better understand the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable (Kangas, 2006).

### **Respondents, Sampling and Data Collection**

Regarding the quantitative study, all staff who worked for the organization at the time of data collection were the respondents. The sample size was calculated based on the sample size determination equation of Yamane (1967). The total num-

ber of employees who worked for this organization was around 160. Therefore, the required sample size was approximately 114. HR distributed 160 questionnaires to all staff and helped to collect the questionnaires. A total of 129 questionnaires or approximately 81% were returned. After cleaning the data by taking out incomplete data and outliers, 114 questionnaires were usable.

### Summary of Findings

The backward stepwise method was employed. The stepwise method is the most popular sequential approach to variable selection. It allows the researcher to inspect the contribution of each independent variable to the regression model (Hair et al., 2006). All the independent variables are entered into the equation at one time. Each variable is then assessed one at a time. Variables which do not contribute significantly are deleted accordingly (Ho, 2006). In each step, the item which was not significant was deleted. Firstly, model #1 integrated all independent variables into the equation. However, not all items were statistically significant. Next, under Model #2, transformational leaders (TFL) was deleted, which meant it was not statistically significant based on the multiple regression model. Finally, all items that were not statistically

significant were removed. The last model (Model #7) was generated by this method. This model included all the variables that were statistically important and was mostly appropriate to be applied in this study. The R square is equal to 0.315. This means that these three variables are able to explain the relationship between independent variables and shared vision at around 32%. Based on ANOVA, model#7 generates  $F(3, 110) = 16.822, p < 0.05$ . The model is statistically significant. Based on the coefficients table (Table 1), affective commitment (Beta = 0.344,  $t = 3.958, P < 0.05$ ) positively relates to shared vision. Intrinsic motivation (Beta = 0.239,  $t = 2.787, P < 0.05$ ) positively relates to shared vision. Effective communication (Beta = 0.221,  $t = 2.756, P < 0.05$ ) has a statistical positive relationship with shared vision. Therefore, three independent variables have a strong relationship with shared vision as shown on Figure 2.

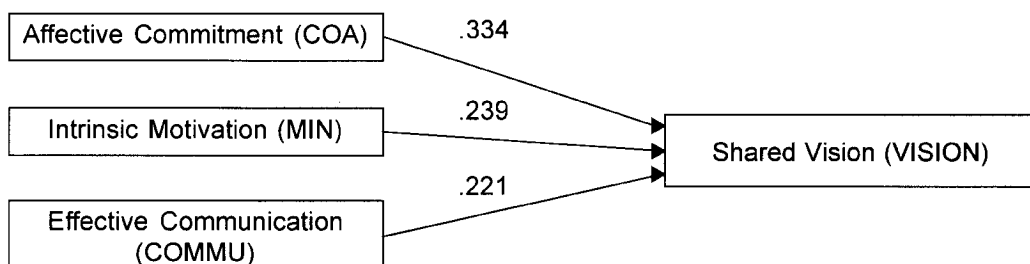
The independent variables which were excluded: normative commitment (CON), continuance commitment (COC), extrinsic motivation (MEX), transformational leadership behaviors (TFL), transactional leadership behaviors (TSL) and perceived organizational culture (CLAN). These six variables have  $P > 0.05$  which means that they could not statistically show a relationship with shared vision.

**Table 1: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> Table**

Model 7	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig	VIF
	$\beta$	Std. Error				
(Constant)	2.071	.275		7.524	0.000	
COA	.181	.046	.344	3.958	0.000	1.211
MIN	.175	.063	.239	2.787	0.006	1.181
COMMU	.120	.044	.221	2.756	0.007	1.028

. Dependent Variable: VISION

**Figure 2: The Results of Standardized Coefficients (Beta) in Relation to Shared Vision**





## DISCUSSION

The empirical result showed that affective commitment was positively related to shared vision. Hypothesis 1A was supported. Staff felt emotionally attached to the organization, felt a strong sense of belonging and felt like part of the family. They loved, and wanted to work for the organization. Vision is the long-term direction of the organization, and staff had a passion towards the vision. They were willing to learn about and follow the organizational vision. They would do whatever it takes to make the organization become successful. This concept is supported by the study of Parish, Cadwallader and Busch (2008) who stated that affective commitment influences employees' perceptions about improved performance and individual learning.

The empirical result did not show that employees who felt normative commitment had a positive relationship with shared vision. Hypothesis 1B was not supported. Although employees felt an obligation and felt that they owed a great deal to the organization, they might pay attention to their direct assignment and try to reach their individual objectives rather than focusing on the organizational vision. The empirical study revealed that continuance commitment had no statistical relationship to shared vision. Hypothesis 1C was not supported. Employees with strong continuance commitment only did their job based on the requirements because they had no emotional bonds and involvement with the jobs (Becker & Kernan, 2003). People who have continuance commitment may perform and complete the job because they need to in order to avoid complaints from their supervisors. They may not want to learn and follow the organizational vision.

The empirical result revealed that intrinsic motivation had a positive relationship with shared vision. Hypothesis 2A was supported. In contrast, extrinsic motivation did not show a positive relationship with shared vision. Hypothesis 2B was not supported. Regarding intrinsic motivation, employees were interested in the job and the job provided an opportunity to do meaningful work, enjoy professional growth and gain positive status in the community. This concept is consistent with the interview results and the intrinsic motivation factors of the dual-structure theory (Herzberg, 2003) and job characteristics (Hackman, Oldham, Janson &

Purdy, 1975). Based on the practice of this organization, employees were assigned challenging tasks which also contained five core job characteristics. Once employees were motivated by intrinsic factors, they performed their jobs by applying skills and experiences. Shared vision is important to the organization through management messages. Employees experience accomplishment when they perform tasks, and focus on and try to achieve the organizational vision. The result of this study is consistent with the studies of Floyd (2009) and Mirza (2005) which supported the idea that intrinsic factors enhance employee outcomes. Regarding extrinsic motivation factors, the empirical result did not reveal a significant relationship between extrinsic factors and shared vision. Although people tend to have extrinsic motivation towards the job and the organization, they are not motivated to agree and follow the organizational vision. This concept is explained by the dual-structure theory of Herzberg. According to Dual-structure theory, extrinsic motivation factors do not create employee satisfaction. They only make employees not feel dissatisfied with the job. Extrinsic motivation factors are necessary but not able to create job satisfaction. When people are not satisfied with the job, they may not devote themselves and put effort into the organizational direction. Therefore, they may not have a shared vision.

The empirical result showed a positive relationship between effective communication and shared vision. Hypothesis 3 was supported. The statistical result of this study was also consistent with the studies of Abrams et al. (2003), George, (1997), Slack, Orife & Anderson (2010) and Snyder et al. (1994). The more effective communication there is, the more the people develop a shared vision. Based on the study of Slack et al. (2010), the consistency of vision communication is important. When there is less communication on the organizational vision, employees might be less focused on the overall corporate vision. Therefore, the corporate vision should be regularly communicated to all persons in the company.

The empirical result did not support that transformation leadership behaviors enhanced shared vision. Hypothesis 4A was not supported. The result of this study was aligned with the study of Dvir, Eden, Avolio and Shamir (2002) in that the impact of transformational leadership could not be confirmed for followers' active engagement and

self-actualization needs. From the interview results, employees explained leadership behaviors such as having consideration, being a coach, building morale and instilling pride in employees by offering opportunities and challenging assignments. However, when asked about leadership behaviors, employees mentioned that those behaviors made them motivated and committed towards the organization and their supervisors. The results of the statistical testing of the relationship between transformational leaders and affective, normative and continuance commitment by applying the regression method revealed that transformational leadership behaviors are statistically and positively related to affective and normative commitment with  $p < 0.05$ . This concept supports the studies of Chen (2004) and Leroy, Palanski & Simons (2012). While testing the relationship between transformational leaders and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the results showed that transformational leader behaviors are statistically related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with  $p < 0.05$ . This result supports the study by Zayani (2008) who found that transformational leaders motivated employees to put in extra effort. Therefore, leadership behaviors might indirectly relate to shared vision through motivation and commitment.

Regarding transactional leadership behaviors, the statistical test did not confirm a positive relationship with shared vision. Hypothesis 4B was not supported. In the interviews, employees did not say much about transactional leadership behaviors. In this organization, leaders displayed more transformational behaviors than transactional behaviors. Furthermore, transactional leaders normally focus on getting things done, paying attention to mistakes and waiting for things to go wrong before taking action (Brower, 2011); therefore, they tend to make employees focus on short-term objectives. Consequently, they may not be able to make staff have a shared vision.

Based on the empirical result, employees' perceived culture (Clan) did not have an influence on shared vision in the organization. Hypothesis 5 was not supported. With the family-type collaboration and cooperation between employees, people had a close relationship with one another. They perceived their manager was like a father, family-member or coach rather than a boss. They had high morale in the organization. However, this type of culture could not support staff to have a shared

vision. People may enjoy working in this organization because they know each other well; they may support co-workers in order to complete the tasks; the organization maintains caring, sharing and trust among employees and employees participate in routine activities. However, they may not be aware of the corporate vision or long-term direction.

In conclusion, based on the empirical data, affective commitment, intrinsic motivation and effective communication contribute to shared vision. Communication is likely to be a basic condition to support the situation. If there is no communication, employees may not be able to perceive the vision content and may not be able to have a shared vision. The researcher found that affective commitment and intrinsic motivation, which are the innate factors of people, can enhance shared vision. In contrast, external factors, which are the leader and the culture, have no influence on shared vision.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

### ***Implications***

Although much research and many scholars have identified factors to create a shared vision, few empirical tests have been conducted in this area or in Asia. In this study, the literature and empirical tests generated three key antecedents of shared vision: affective commitment, intrinsic motivation and effective communication. This study confirms that an organization that supports employees' involvement, emotional attachment and identification enhances their affective commitment. This concept is consistent with the study of Allen and Meyer (1990). Shared vision is perceived as an extra part of the job. Employees who are feel attachment to the organization tend to share the vision. They want to support the organization as much as they can.

The empirical result and interview result of this study are consistent with the intrinsic motivation factors of the dual-structure theory (Herzberg, 2003) and job characteristics (Hackman et al., 1975). People who are intrinsically motivated while working for the organization tend to have a shared vision. In addition, the more effective communication there is, the more the people develop a shared vision. In this organization, the CEO articulated the corporate vision, which made staff

aware of the vision. Once top management communicates the organizational vision, other levels of management deploy the concept and support the management direction by cascading the vision throughout all levels of employees. In conclusion, management and HR departments of other organizations may promote these factors in their organizations.

### **Recommendations**

Regarding the communication in this organization, the top management supported the idea of organizational vision by sharing it with all staff. However, based on the result from the questionnaires, the overall mean score of communication is neutral. Thus, the organization can focus more on direct communication between supervisors and staff. Staff who work in the operational levels and work outside the office may not be able to see posters, memos or receive e-mails about the corporate vision. These staff should receive the message of the vision via their direct supervisors (Kelly, 2000). The organization should train these supervisors to be able to communicate the corporate vision to them and make them understand and be able to follow it. In addition, applying other channels can remind staff of the organizational vision by putting pithy reminders of the corporate vision through coffee mugs, t-shirts, pencils and notepads (Cartwright & Baldwin, 2007).

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Based on the findings of this study, there are some suggestions for carrying out further research on shared vision. Firstly, if there are more samples, applying Structure Equation Model (SEM) is recommended. SEM can be described as a combination of factor analysis and path analysis. It provides a method for dealing with various relationships simultaneously (Ho, 2006). In addition, the multiple regression method was applied with multiple antecedents with 114 usable questionnaires. The statistical results might not be able to detect a true effect. Therefore, bigger sample sizes might reduce this concern. Secondly, applying this proposed model in other industries could be advantageous. This proposed model was adapted from both service organizations and manufacturers. Therefore, these key antecedents should be applicable in

several types of industry and organizations. Lastly, based on the empirical test results of this study, leadership behaviors and organizational culture have no influence on shared vision. However, extant literature reveals that these two variables should be able to contribute to shared vision. Therefore, these two items may be included for further study.

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#### About the Author:

**Srobol Smutkupt** graduated with a doctoral degree in Management from the Martin de Tours School of Management and Economics. Assumption University. She can be reached at [srobol.smutkupt@gmail.com](mailto:srobol.smutkupt@gmail.com)