



# Temporal Synchronization in Multinational Corporations

Hoang Mai Huong

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Doctoral Dissertation

Temporal Synchronization in  
Multinational Corporations

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Graduate School of Business Administration, Kobe University

Supervisor: Professor RYUTA SUZUKI

Business Administration

HOANG MAI HUONG

148B127B

## **DEDICATION**

To my father, Van Bieu Hoang, a veteran who sacrificed his youth to fight for our beloved country. Your brave heart has been my greatest source of inspiration, encouraging me to accept and conquer all the hardships and challenges in my life.

To my mother, Thi Bach Mai Nguyen, a passionate and devoted educator. Your commitment to teaching has helped me realize how learning can turn a person's life into a constantly joyous and meaningful journey.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **I.1 Background of the study**

Since the beginning of business management history, both practitioners and scholars have regarded time as one of the most powerful resources that contributes to the formation of a firm's competitive advantages (Bower & Hout, 1988; Stalk, 1988; Stalk & Webber, 1993). "The principles of Scientific Management" by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911) first documented the contributions of time management methods to the success of a firm. In this article, the author, with his background in engineering, presented the time-motion study, which consisted of systematic observation, analysis, and the measurement of separate steps in the performance of a specific job in an effort to establish a standard time for each performance and increased productivity.

Since then, over the last 100 years, scholars have taken the concept of time management into consideration in various fields within and outside business management (Hackman, 1987; Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist, 1999; Levine and Norenzayan, 1999; Macan, 1994; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011; Schriber & Gutek, 1987; Standifer et al., 2015). In the field of business management, the question of how to best use time has constantly triggered the invention of new strategies that enable firms to enhance their competitive ability. Time-based competition, first introduced by Stalk (1988) as a business tactic that emphasizes the importance of speed as a competitive factor, is still widely applicable to firms that are ambitious in the global market. Furthermore, the vast majority of business executives and managers have approved Stalk's theory. Today, cutting-edge companies are those that are capable of beating their competitors in speeding up innovation and production time, shortening lead time, abbreviating the product delivery cycle, and increasing customer response time (Blackburn, 1991; Stalk & Hout, 1990). In light of this, since the 1980s, the need to compete against time has generated new management methods that still function as guidelines for firms to advance their product manufacturing and distributing process, such as Six Sigma or just-in-time. In every aspect of business management, time exists not only as a resource but also as a motivation for firms to advance their business processes and thus further enhance sustainable competitive advantages.

On the other hand, time, as an aspect of culture, is perceived differently across the world. A culture's shared perception about the meaning of time passing, their inherent time orientation, and time use preference are distinct from other cultures (Graham, 1981; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2001; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). The adage "Time is equivalent to money," the spirit of all practical and academic views of time to date, is true only in cultures that feature specific norms and values that make their people respect time. It might be inapplicable to other cultures with dissimilar normative temporal attributions and characteristics. Researchers have found that patterns of

cognition and behavior towards time change according to variation in geographical, regional, climatic, societal cultural, religious, historical, and economical conditions (Bluedorn, 2000; Levin & Norenzayan, 1999; Hall, 1989; Trompenaar & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The differences in the way each culture perceives time have raised the question about whether temporal distance-induced tensions exist among people who possess different cultural backgrounds but work together for the same organizational goals. If this is the case, how can organizations solve this problem to prevent intra-organizational conflicts induced by heterogeneous temporal cognitions?

Among all business entities, multinational corporations (MNCs) are the most vulnerable to the phenomenon of temporal distance across cultures. Due to their unique structure, the organization of each MNC is a composition of several subsidiaries located in different parts of the world, where the norms of time may be substantially different from those in the parent company. When operating in countries where time and work productivity are not the society's norms, MNCs risk losing organizational efficiency because the low work pace and disrespect for deadlines in the subsidiary eventually increase costs for their international resource management. At the same time, differences in temporal cognition and behavior, if not subtly solved, can lead to intra-organizational conflicts, which are detrimental to the commitment of both parties (De Dreu & Weingard, 2003; Standifer et al., 2015).

## **I.2 Statement of the problem**

At the group level, it is suggested that, when working in a team with diverse team members' temporal perceptions, it is crucial for the team to synchronize its members' temporal cognitions so that they can coordinate to execute the task in an effective manner (Ancona & Chong, 1996; Bartel and Milliken, 2004; Blount & Janicik, 2002) and reduce temporal conflict-induced stress (Berrell et al, 1999). Similarly, at an organizational level, it is critical for the headquarters and subsidiaries of an MNC to develop a condition in which both parties agree on the pace of the shared tasks, work together towards the shared goals, and maintain trust in and commitment to each other. Synchronization means that the headquarters transfers its advanced time management practice (i.e., fast work pace, strict deadlines, stringent requirement for punctuality) to the subsidiary and negotiates the extent to which the practice should be modified to obtain local employees' agreement.

However, in general, the transfer of best practices in between an MNC's headquarters and subsidiary can be difficult (Bjerregaard, Linnenberg, & Luring, 2016; Jansen & Szulanski, 2004; Kostova, 1999). When an MNC builds a subsidiary in another country, it faces serial challenges regarding how to match its own approach to the host country's way of operating. Unlike operating in a well-known environment, overseas ventures are usually characterized by many cultural and

institutional differences that, if not wisely controlled, can become barriers that impede the transfer of practices from the headquarters (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). Simultaneously, the issue of adapting practices to achieve legitimacy with local shareholders also confounds MNCs' local managers. The pressure between choosing a globalization strategy to spread the "best practices" and a localization strategy in order to be consistent with domestic praxis often makes it difficult for managers to make a decision regarding which direction to take (Clack and Legnic-Hall, 2012; Prahalad & Doz, 1987; Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991).

Cognitions of time are difficult to influence because time is one of the most fundamental concepts that a human being starts to perceive at the beginning of his life, and temporal perception can be considered a stable, personal dispositional trait. In addition, the norms about time in any country are highly culturally dependent and are hard to change (Dickson, Besmears, & Gupta, 2004). Local employees' inherent cognitions about time create a great barrier to the transfer and implementation of the headquarters' time management practice in the subsidiary. At the same time, MNCs are under the pressure of spreading this best practice to create competitive advantages for subsidiaries and obtain inter-unit practice synergy as a whole (Dunning, 1988; Foss, 1997; Goold & Campell, 1998). How to balance the pressure from both sides and guarantee organizational effectiveness through the transfer of time management is a difficult issue for MNCs.

This study investigates the phenomenon of temporal synchronization between an MNC's headquarters and subsidiary. More specifically, it examines how the transfer and adaptation of time management practices are conducted at the subsidiary organization and how subsidiary management actors contribute to the process of synchronization. The time management practice is crucial to the creation of a firm's competitive advantages. Thus, unlike other organizational practices (i.e., human resource management (HRM) practices or staffing policies) that allow a wide range of discretion in adaptation to achieve legitimacy in the host country, time management practice should not be skewed towards the subsidiary's local customs. This characteristic triggers the interest in investigating how this practice can be transferred, to what extent it is implemented, and how difficult it is for the local subsidiary to institutionalize and internalize.

Despite its vital role in the sustainable development of a multinational business, the investigation of temporal synchronization has not received adequate attention from scholars in the field of international management. Two main reasons explain this ignorance. First, the topic of time itself has not yet received sufficient attention from scholars in the field of international business generally. It is surprising that little has been documented about the issue of how temporal distance can cause managerial problems in a cross-cultural work context, with the exception of the studies by Ayoun and Moreo (2009) and Berrell et al. (1999). Scholars may have underestimated how severely

temporal distance affects transnational businesses and thus paid no attention to analyzing the causes of and solutions to the problem. Second, scholars may have classified time management practice as a nonspecific, general organizational practice and assumed that the transfer is similar to any other transfer between the headquarters and the subsidiary. They have ignored the difficulties caused by a subsidiary's resistance that arises due to the substantial gap in temporal cognition with the headquarters.

Unlike the phenomenon of temporal synchronization at the group level, at the organizational level, the issue is much more sensitive and contains high levels of cross-cultural managerial complexity that requires highly sophisticated and intricate leadership to handle. Hence, it is impossible to unilaterally apply the solution proposed at the group level to the international level. The answer to how temporal synchronization at this level can be conducted demands a different approach and a careful consideration of the headquarters' and subsidiary's national cultural differences.

### **1.3 Purposes of the study**

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it identifies the managerial challenges that face MNCs headquarters when they operate in host countries with distant temporal cognition. Berrell and his colleagues (1999) have devoted one section of their research to delineating some of the managerial conflicts induced by the distance in temporal cognition and the behavior of foreign managers and local employees. However, the work by these researchers is not comprehensive due to the limited attention paid to addressing the temporal issue. Furthermore, their research approach was design to illustrate organizational conflicts rather than to investigate the managerial problems caused by temporal distance. This current study elaborates on the work of Berrell et al. (1999) by specifically focusing on the managerial aspect of temporal distance-induced issues. It seeks to uncover the challenges that headquarters management confronts when working with subsidiary employees who are different in temporal cognition and possess dissimilar way of acting towards time (i.e., the way they perceive punctuality, deadlines, and the way they work to meet deadlines).

Second, this study focuses on examining the role of leadership in the process of temporal synchronization. The transfer and adaptation of best practices in general are difficult and time-consuming processes. In the case of transnational transfer, the complexity of the processes is elevated due to the sensitive issue of home and host countries' cultural disparities (Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). The success of international practice transfers and adaptations require the efforts of various actors, such as the MNC's parent company management (Barlett & Ghoshlar, 1989; Birkinshaw et al, 2005; Edwards & Ferner, 2004), managers in subsidiaries (Gupta &

Govindarajan, 2000; Harzing, 2002; Harzing, Pudelko & Reiche, 2016; Song et al, 2013), and local employees (Kostova, 1999). Despite the traditional viewpoint that emphasizes the contributions of headquarters management in the success of the processes, recent research has shifted the perspective and explored in depth the key role of expatriate managers sent from the headquarters to address institutional and cultural gaps (Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Kostova, 1999) and to transfer knowledge related to transferring practices (Harzing, Pudelco, & Reiche, 2015; Riusala & Smale, 2007). Nevertheless, research on how these actors contribute to and facilitate the transfer and adaptation of practice in the subsidiary organization is still limited in terms of both study volume and scope. In particular, given that the attention paid to time management practice is extremely limited, research on the functions and behaviors of expatriate managers in temporal synchronization process is close to non-existent.

This study attempts to address the above limitation by investigating the leadership styles that are effective in solving the managerial issues induced by temporal distance. Based on the managerial challenges identified, it examines whether existing leadership styles (i.e., task-oriented leadership, leader member exchange [LMX], and role-modeling leadership) are effective in changing the attitude and behavior of local employees towards time as a method to cope with the time management situation within the subsidiary organization. In order to provide a comprehensive solution of how to synchronize temporal cognition and behavior between the units of MNCs, the study aims to specifically illustrate the challenges that expatriate managers face during the implementation and adaptation of time management practices in subsidiary organizations. Based on these findings, it proposes a theory of leadership styles that is applicable to the specific case of international temporal synchronization.

Since temporal synchronization in cross-cultural settings is a new concept, existing concepts and literature in the field of international business transfer are borrowed to explain and build up theories for the study. The concept of temporal synchronization is explored through the process of transferring the headquarters' time management practice to a subsidiary, modifying and adapting it in the subsidiary, and institutionalizing and internalizing the transferred practice by local employees. The study raises three research sub-questions to explore the issue of interest thoroughly, given the demonstrated gaps in the current stage of knowledge in temporal research in the cross-cultural business context.

RQ1: In the context of cross-cultural business, what are the managerial issues caused by temporal distance between the headquarters and the subsidiary?

RQ2: Which challenges do MNCs face when attempting to synchronize the local temporal cognition and behavior with those of the headquarters?

RQ3: Which leadership styles are required of expatriate managers to enable temporal synchronization in subsidiary organizations?

#### **I.V Proposed methods to analyze the research problems**

This study selected Japanese MNCs operating in Vietnam as the objects of research. Japan and Vietnam are geographically close to each other, and the two countries share various cultural patterns, as both have been exposed to and influenced by Chinese Confucian culture (Huang & Chang, 2017). With this research object selection, the study minimizes the cultural distance between the selected home and host countries in an effort to mitigate the cultural bias of the results. However, the two countries differ in many institutional aspects, as well as in their current state of economical development. The combination of cultural similarities and institutional dissimilarities offers an interesting research setting for the phenomenon of temporal synchronization.

As the first study to investigate the issue of temporal synchronization in an international business context, this study takes an exploratory approach to preliminarily capture the essence of the research problem and determine the subsequent research methods to gain deeper knowledge of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006; Kvale, 1996). Exploratory mixed methods followed by a case study were employed to answer the three research questions. Phase one of the mixed methods starts with a qualitative study to address the managerial problems induced by the temporal distance between the headquarters and the subsidiary employees. Based on the findings, phase two quantitatively examines how extant leadership styles can solve the issues identified in phase one. However, this study does not stop at finding a solution for managers to passively cope with the situation temporal distance causes; it goes further to analyze how expatriate managers can proactively synchronize the cognition and behavior of subsidiary employees with those of the headquarters. A case study research with a qualitative approach is presented to delineate the dynamics within the process of temporal synchronization in an MNC that has actually succeeded in implementing and internalizing headquarters time management practices in the subsidiary organization. It offers readers a real view of the challenges that expatriate management faces when attempting to transfer, execute, and familiarize local employees with the practice. The study also thoroughly illustrates the leadership styles necessary to achieve a successful temporal synchronization in the scope of the case study.

#### **I.4 Significance of the study**

The findings from the research are beneficial to practitioners, such as international companies' headquarters managers, human resource managers, and expatriate managers, to resolve the problem of business efficiency and prevent conflict while working with subsidiaries with distant

temporal cognition. Furthermore, the framework of temporal synchronization leadership this study develops can be a guideline for managers to cope with the managerial difficulties induced by temporal distance and to develop a shared temporal cognition with the subsidiary's employees.

Researchers and scholars can also benefit from the findings of the research because it theoretically proposes that time cognition distance can be used as a tool to predict managerial difficulties in the context of cross-border business. Researchers can use this finding as a suggestion to develop a robust scale to enable temporal cognition's distance to become an empirical construct. Furthermore, the study also contributes to the scarce literature on the role of leaders, especially those who play the key role in facilitating transnational practice transfer on the subsidiary side. The leadership framework this study establishes can serve as a fundamental reference for future research to develop more fully elaborated leadership styles specific to the case of time management practice transfer.

## **1.5 Organization of the study**

The first chapter of this dissertation asserts the necessity of research on temporal synchronization in MNCs and why it is important to pay attention to the synchronization of temporal cognition and behavior between the headquarters and subsidiaries. Chapter two summarizes the literature to date about the diversity in temporal cognition and behavior of individuals across cultures. Chapter three provides readers with an overview of how temporal synchronization is conducted in the context of transnational business. The pressures on an MNC to transfer the time-related practices of the headquarters to the subsidiaries are also illustrated in this chapter. Chapter four demonstrates the gaps in the extant research on temporal synchronization, proposes the research questions, and introduces the method used to answer them. Chapter five reports on the qualitative and quantitative phases of mixed methods research. A case study is introduced and investigated in chapter six. Finally, chapter seven includes the discussion of the results, managerial implications, and research limitations.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW ON TEMPORAL COGNITION AND BEHAVIOR

### II.1 Inconsistency of temporal cognition and behavior across individuals and cultures

In an attempt to explain why MNCs should pay attention to temporality-induced differences between the headquarters and subsidiaries, it is indispensable to first comprehend the reasons these differences exist. It is noteworthy that temporal cognition and behavior are both individual- and cultural-dependent. Temporal cognition, such as time orientation, can be considered a personal trait that varies across individuals who belong to the same cultural group. At the same time, it can be treated as a culturally dependent variable. This is because norms about time can be considered characteristics of culture (Schriber, 1985), and the people in different cultures have different cognitions towards time. The following section summarizes the current state of knowledge about cognition and behavior towards time at both individual and cultural levels. It provides synthetic explanations about the inconsistency of the norms and behaviors towards related to in different parts of the world.

It is worthy to note that the element of “time” can be understood in two different ways. Time is classified by Berger and Luckman (1966) as inner time and clock time. The two type of time are distinct in the way it is perceived by individuals. Inner time refers to the inner flow of time inside each individual, or the individual perception about temporality. In contrast to this subjective view, standard time (or clock time) is the cosmic time that is socially established by scientifically made calendars and clocks. Since our society is embedded with the emphasis on standard time, this type of time has become the dominant orientation toward temporality in the organizational literature (Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988). This current study however intends to view time in both of its forms. The reason for this incorporation is that there are always both inner time and clock time perceived simultaneously by a person. An individual therefore is always under the need to coordinate the two types of time in order to accomplish a certain goal. A neglect of focus on either type of time would make the study of individual temporality insufficient and incomplete. In this study, the concept of “time” in time orientation and perception of the passage of time construct is treated as inner time, because it deals with the internal temporal perception of individual. In contrast, the concept of “time” in time management behavior is treated as standard time because it addresses the cognition and behavior to cope with real-time temporal indicators such as deadlines or organizational plans.

#### II.1.1 Time orientation

Lewin (1951), in one of the earliest works on individual time orientation, proposed that a person’s temporal perspective represents “the totality of the individual’s views of his psychological future and psychological past existing at a given time” (p.75). This perception of time orientation is similar to that of William James (1890) presented in the chapter “The Perception of Time” in his



famous book *The Principles of Psychology*: “The knowledge of some other part of the stream, past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present thing” (p.607).

Nuttin (1985) shares the same viewpoint as Lewin (1951) by stating “future and past events have an impact on present behavior to the extent that they are actually present on the cognitive level of behavioral functioning” (p54). According to these authors, to understand the behavior of a person at a certain time, it is necessary to consider all the forces acting on him or her at that time, including the past experiences in similar situations as well as his or her expectations about the future.

The fundamental idea of time orientation of Lewin (1951) became the inspiration for Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) to develop their theory about time perspective. The central philosophy of the theory is that our perceptions of time influence our emotions, perceptions, and actions. In their work, time perspective is defined as “the often non-conscious process whereby the continual flows of personal and social experiences are assigned to temporal categories, or time frames, that help to give order, coherence, and meaning to those events” (p.1271). Rather than breaking down time perspectives into chronological categories that contain only the past, the present, and the future, Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) address five dimensions of an individual’s temporal aspect: past-positive, past-negative, present-hedonistic, present-fatalistic, and future time perspectives. Human beings’ time perspective has been found to be a relatively stable personality trait, and knowing how to handle temporal context is crucial to maximizing positive behaviors and minimizing negative ones.

According to these researchers, people with a past-negative time orientation possess a negative, aversive view of the past. This view may result from actual adverse experiences or could be due to a negative interpretation of incidents that happened in the past. In contrast, a past-positive time orientation indicates a warm, sentimental feeling for the past. People in this temporal category are characterized by a sense of security, optimism, well-being, and resilience. High scores on present-hedonistic are associated with pleasure- and risk-seeking attitudes, impulsivity, and a lack of concern about the future consequences of actions. People with present-hedonistic time orientation are adventurous, enjoy a good time, and tend to live their life at a fast tempo. On the other hand, present-fatalistic individuals are prone to having a pessimistic attitude toward the present and future because they believe that the future is predetermined and cannot be influenced by someone’s action, while the present must be left unchanged and accepted. Those with high scores on present-fatalistic time orientation tend to seek thrills and have depression, anxiety, and aggression, and they are less emotionally stable (Zimbardo, Keough & Boyd, 1997). Finally, individuals who score high on future time orientation tend to focus on achieving future goals and rewards. The core feature of those with this time perspective bias is gratification delay: the ability to postpone instant gratification in favor of future rewards and actions (Mischel, 1974; Gollner, Ballhausen, Kliegel, & Forstmeier, 2018 ).

Future time orientation is associated with positive behavior, including conscientiousness (Friedman et al, 1993), a high level of well-being, and less risk taking (Reuben, 2004). Remarkably, this preferred temporal orientation has been proven to have strong links with motivational processes and outcomes, such as attribution (Miller and Porter, 1980), locus of control (Koenig, 1979), academic achievement (De Volder & Lens, 1982), and achievement motivation (McClelland, 1985).

Among all these time perspectives, future time perspective is seen as the most useful for predicting an individual's positive present cognition and behaviors as well as his prospective success. Many scholars share the viewpoint that psychological future time orientation should be considered a motivational construct that develops in a motivational setting and has motivational consequences (De Bilde, Vansteenkiste & Lens, 2011; Nuttin & Lens, 1985). The core characteristic of this temporal perspective is actors' commitment to the planned behaviors, which subsequently lead to the success of the intended action. As mentioned above, a future time orientation is associated with several positive outcomes, such as superior academic achievement and fewer sensation and risk-seeking behaviors (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999).

At the group level, Waller and his colleagues (2001) have used time orientation as an individual-dispositional difference variable that shapes a person's perception of deadlines and subsequent deadline-driven behavior in group work settings. According to the conceptualization of time perspective of Zimbardo and Boyd (1999), group members with a present orientation are more likely to be motivated by immediate rather than distant deadlines, and they are unlikely to see a strong need for long-range strategic planning. Contrary to those with a present orientation, future-oriented group members are likely to be highly goal-oriented, consider future consequences, and engage in long-term planning. They are also inclined to be motivated to make more attempts in the present to meet future deadlines.

Time orientation and time perspective have been proven to be highly culturally dependent. A study by Hofstede (2001) did not specify the past-present-future but instead added a long-term versus short-term orientation, a factor that represents how far into the chronological future one's psychological future reaches; it found that most European countries are dominated by a strong short-term orientation, while a long-term orientation is prevalent among their eastern counterparts (indicated in his study by China and Taiwan). Accordingly, countries with a short-term orientation foster values involving future-oriented rewards, particularly perseverance and thrift, whereas those with a long-term orientation put a strong emphasis on respect for tradition, the preservation of "face," and fulfilling obligations. Similar to study by Hofstede (2001), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) have examined the time horizon, a concept that refers to the length of the planning horizon and the length of time a person uses to think about the past or the future, in 42 countries. Their study

concluded that Confucian cultures scored higher on long-term planning, whereas Western cultures scored higher on short-term planning.

Another cross-cultural study on time orientation was conducted in 2004 by the GLOBE project, which collected and compared data on leadership and organizational behavior in 62 countries. A factor of future orientation defined as “the degree to which a collectivity encourages and rewards future-oriented behaviors such as planning and delaying gratification” (Ashkanasy, Gupta & Mayfield, 2004, p.282) was included. The findings of the study show that Western countries were ranked high on the spectrum of how much future time orientation is practiced in a country. In contrast, Arab, Latin European, Latin American, and Eastern European countries were on a lower end. Interestingly, Asian countries were distributed across the spectrum. Studies by Gary and Gentry (1991) and Rojas-Mendez and Davies (1995) found the same results. Regarding the orientation among the past, the present, and the future, a study by Meade (1972) found a distinction in time orientation between Americans and Indians. When asked to create a story, Americans tended to write more stories with future themes, while their Indian counterparts made more stories with past themes.

The GLOBE Project (2004) also reveals another interesting finding that time orientation varies across languages, which are one fundamental proxy of culture that forms human beings’ basic cognition (Bowerman & Levionson, 2001; Whorf, 1965). In the study conducted in Switzerland, French speakers scored lower on future time orientation compared to their German speaking counterparts. In another vein, race and ethnicity, two other patterns of culture, were also proven to predict time orientation. For instance, in the U.S., Anglos are more future-oriented than Blacks and Hispanics (Graham, 1981). In support of this notion, a study by Shannon (1975) has also shown that Anglo-Americans developed a more extended future orientation with age, while the same did not occur to Indian- and Mexican-Americans.

To conclude, prior research has successfully verified the divergences in time orientation of people across cultures. More importantly, it has proven that these dissimilarities in time orientation lead to variance in culture-specific behaviors. Various aspects related to culture, such as geographic region, language, and ethnicity, have been investigated and confirmed to significantly influence the temporal orientation of the same culture-beholders. This raises the issue of whether conflicts would occur when people of various cultures who belong to different time orientations share the same workplace or act in a group work setting.

## **II.1.2 Perception of the passage of time**

The perception of time passing plays a substantial role in determining an individual's pace of action. The ways people perceive time have been found to diverge among different cultural groups. Hall (1989) has examined the way time was perceived and structured in different cultures and found that the ways time was framed and organized fall into two categories: monochronic and polychronic. Monochronic people view time like money that can be saved or spent and prefer doing one task at a time. Meanwhile, the polychronic counterparts perceive time to be more flexible and tend to multitask.

Graham (1981) has elaborated on the findings by Hall (1989) and developed three models of time perception, each of which characterizes how different cultural groups discern time. The three models of time perception are linear-separable, circular-traditional, and procedural-traditional. The linear-separable is similar to the Anglo perception, in which time is a continuum of the past, the present, and the future yet is separable into discrete partitions. People who hold this perception think that the past is old and has already been experienced and that time spent in the past cannot be reclaimed. In contrast, the future is new and has a set of situations for which one can prepare. Within this conceptualization, the time spent in the past that did not contribute to the present state is considered wasted. Likewise, time that is properly spent now will result in a better position for oneself in the future, and this better future state forms the basic idea of progress.

This temporal paradigm heavily emphasizes future orientation. People with a linear time perception perceive time as irrecoverable and hence try to benefit from its passing. They are action-driven and do not let time pass without decisions to be made or actions to be performed. Further, in the linear time model, since time is segmented into the separated past, present, and future, individuals are prone to schedule actions in a sequential way and simultaneously have the tendency to perform only one action at one time to assure that they can concentrate and complete it within a fixed schedule. This monochronic temporal characteristic is particularly common in Western Anglo society.

In the circular-traditional model, however, time is not perceived as a straight line that stretches from the past to the future, but rather as a circular arrangement in which the same events iterate according to cycles. This perception arises from traditional culture, where actions are regulated not by clock time, but rather by the natural cycles of the moon, sun, and seasons. All life activities, such as cropping, harvesting, hunting, and fishing, are organized around these cycles. The lack of an emphasis on "new events that may happen in the future" makes people with a circular-traditional time perception expect that the future will continue exactly like as it did in the past. The future offers no particular promises, and its contents do not need to be contemplated.

However, the present cannot be ignored, and one must cope with it. Therefore, individuals with this time perception often have a heavy bias to the present time orientation, where one only do the things that need to be done today with respect to immediate rewards. In this model, the use of time is neither planned nor segmented.

As a result, in the circular-traditional model, it is unnecessary to concentrate on one thing at a time. Instead, people with a circular-traditional time perception prefer to try to do many things at once. Those polychronic temporal perspective holders value the fulfillment of doing many things over efficiency and punctuality to achieve their goals before deadlines. Notably, since the future is perceived as occurring regardless of their influence, they see no rush when approaching a problem. Latino cultures, southern Europe, and the Middle-East are examples of this temporal perception's model.

In the last model, procedural-traditional, the amount of time spent on an activity is irrelevant, since activities are procedure-driven rather than time-driven (Graham, 1981). The issue of something being on time is not as important as being done correctly and following the procedures. The only thing that matters in societies that adhere to this temporal model is that things must be done when the "time is right." Phillips (1974) has described this perception of time applied to the Indians, who are the most exemplary objects of this model, as:

*Non-Indians learn from Indian what time the event will begin. Often the person questioned will say he doesn't know, but if pressed he may give a specific time, e.g., 8:00 pm or "some time after 9." The non-Indians will arrive at that time, only to find that "nothing is happening" yet, and no one seems to know when something will happen. They may wait anywhere from twenty minutes to several hours before the event "begins." (p.94)*

This temporal model is characterized by a loose timetable and the uncertainty of the beginning time for an event. In such a culture, where the starting time can be postponed infinitely, it is impossible to estimate the amount of time needed for an event with much precision. Likewise, the idea of altering the time so that it will end at the expected time is also impossible. Saving time and meeting deadlines are concepts that do not seem to exist or be feasible to those in whom the procedural-traditional model predominates.

Table 2.1 summarizes Graham's (1981) basic perceptual models of time. It is important to note that these three models do not represent all possible perceptions of the passage of time, but rather a categorization of some of the most well known time cultures. The perception of the passing of time is a valuable source to predict a person's attitude towards time as well as his or her engagement in preparing for future events (Graham, 1981).

Religious belief also appears to be associated with the way an individual perceives the need to strive for action in regard to the passing of time. The Protestant ethic, which encourages people to

work hard in order to fulfill their “beruf” (occupational calling) and views the action of accumulating money and assets as not shameful, is strongly linked to the recognition of making every minute as profitable possible. In regions where Protestantism is dominant, mostly in Western Europe, time is perceived as linear and is regarded as equal to money (Weber, 1930/ 2001). Therefore, in order to earn more, it is crucial to hurry. In contrast, Catholic religious beliefs put a strong value on being kind to others instead of striving for individual success. Furthermore, in this religion, it is believed that people should endure the wrong that has been done to them. As a consequence, Catholics believe that problems are meant to be and cannot be influenced (Wing, Sue & Sue, 1990). Similar to Catholicism, the Islamic religious ethic puts a strong emphasis on mutual help and cooperation (Barakat & Sarver, 1997). Further, Islamic belief holders believe that their time is given to them by their God, Allah. As a given thing, they are unable to control it, and consequently, ideas of time scheduling or making use of time do not make much sense in this belief system. Buddhism, which values equanimity, a peaceful state of mind, over materialistic needs, appears to demotivate people’s striving for wealth and devalues haste (Yeh, 2006). In addition, the Buddhist religion assumes that human beings’ spirit returns to the world after death for rebirth, which makes its believers’ perception of time close to the circular models proposed by Graham (1981). By the same logic, it can be argued that Buddhists are less inclined to feel pressured by time urgency.

In addition, the perceived need to perform an action with urgency is also associated with the geographical and economic situation of where the individual is located. Levine and Norenzayan (1999) have conducted a study that compared the speed of life across 31 countries. The pace of life was measured in each country’s largest city through three indicators: the average walking speed of adults during main business hours on clear summer days, the average amount of time it took a postal clerk to complete a standard request for stamps, and the average accuracy of clocks in the city. They found support for their hypothesis that hotter places have a slower life tempo than colder places. The logic given was that, in warmer climates, people require fewer and less costly belongings, such as simple clothes and simple homes, compared to those who have to sustain the harsh weather in colder climates. Thus, those in warmer climates experience less demand to make every moment productive, which leads to valuing the compression of time less.

The study by Levine and Norenzayan (1999) also proved that countries with individualistic cultures were faster than those that emphasize collectivism. They borrowed the logic proposed by Triandis (1995), which states that, compared to collectivist cultures, individualistic ones value individual achievement above social affiliation and conformity. Under the pressure of having to

Table 2.1: Summary of models of time perception by Graham (1981)

Model	Linear-separable	Circular-traditional	Procedural-traditional
Examples of culture	Anglo-Saxon (Europe and North America)	Latin America	India
View of time	The past, present, and future are separated. Events are separated by the timeline.	The past, present, and future continue in a circular system. The same events are repeated according to some cyclical pattern.	Events are ritual-driven and conducted with respect to traditional procedure rather than being time-driven.
Time orientation	Future-oriented	Present-oriented	Past-oriented
View towards future	Future is dynamic and can be predicted or affected.	Future is unknown and cannot be affected.	It is not important to think of the future.
Evaluation of time	Time is a commodity and is equivalent to money.	Time and money are not closely related.	Time and money are unconnected.
Task-conducting preference	One task at one time, or monochronic	Several tasks at one time, or polychronic	Not described
Attitude towards time	Time must not be wasted. Events must be conducted and finished at the scheduled time. People should invest time in preparing for future plans.	It is not useful to make future plans. Instant rewards in the present are more important.	The timetable is loose. Haste is perceived as a negative ethical feature.

stand out and produce more outcomes, people in individualistic cultures must be more concerned with time compared to their collectivist counterparts. Another prominent finding of the study by Levine and Norenzayan (1999) is that they found evidence supporting the correlation of a city's economic

vitality with its pace of life. More specifically, the higher the country's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, purchasing power parity (PPP), and average caloric intake, the faster the pace of life it has. This empirical support is, though important, not surprising. It is well known that most prosperous nations are industrialized ones where ideas about how to save time became prevalent early on. Time compression has been the inspiration for various time-saving business ideas that come from industrialized nations, such as factory mass production, a system in which conveyor belts are used and inputs are standardized to reduce wasted time, or the birth of the fast-food industry, which allows people to live under the pressure of time to be able to match the hectic tempo of life.

In addition to being highly culturally dependent, the perception of the passage of time has also been found to be influenced by the context and situation that a person experiences. Employees experience high time compression when they perceive high demands from outside parties (e.g., customers and supervisors) for the timely or speedy delivery of products and services (Gleick, 1999; Perlow, 1999). This experience of time pressure might merely be contingent on the time of the situation, or it may be permanent if it is the stable characteristic of the organization to which the individual belongs. In the latter case, individuals who belong to the same workplace should perceive comparable degrees of time compression, as they are exposed to the same contextual cues (Bartel and Milliken, 2004). Thus, the perception of the passage of time can be organizationally dependent, as well.

In summary, an individual's behavior towards time depends substantially on his or her perception of the passage of time. This perception varies by region, religion, and economic status. It is highly possible that a person's perception about the passage of time influences his or her time orientation (Bartel & Milliken, 2004). Furthermore, both time orientation and the perception of the passage of time differ across cultures. It is well known that norms and cognitions are the cornerstones to creating values and that values determine the attitudes and behaviors of individuals in society; thus, it is highly plausible that performing an action with respect to deadlines or with high time compression strongly depends on the culture to which the individual belongs. In other words, the variation of temporal cognitions explains why behaviors towards deadlines, schedules, and punctuality are inconsistent across cultures.

### **II.1.3 Time management behavior**

Time management behavior refers to an individual's behavior to set goals, develop the timeframe for a specific action by making plans, estimating the time needed, setting priorities, making a to-do list, and monitoring the process to ensure plans are completed in a timely manner



(Macan, 1994). An individual's behavior towards time is highly influenced by his or her temporal cognitions (Doob, 1971).

Similar to time orientation and the perception of the passage of time, time management behavior is also both individual- and group- or culture-oriented. In other words, this aspect is strongly influenced by both the individual's dispositional characteristics and the culture that he or she has experienced.

Much research on how a person's dispositional traits are associated with his behavior of scheduling time has been conducted and has resulted in fruitful findings. Similarly, much research has successfully investigated the relationship between an individual's cognitive traits (such as self-efficacy and self-esteem) and the application of techniques to perform timely behavior. Bond and Feather (1988) have found that time structure is positively related to a sense of purpose in life, self-esteem, and type-A behavior and is negatively related to neuroticism and anomie. In another vein, a study by Liu, Rijmen, MacCann, and Roberts (2009) has reported moderate to high correlations of a time management scale with two factors, deadline and planning, with conscientiousness, and low correlations with the remaining four personality dimensions of the Big Five. Francis-Smythe and Robertson (1999) have introduced a five-factor scale of time personality that includes the subscales of (1) punctuality, (2) planning, (3) polychronicity, (4) impatience, and (5) leisure time awareness. This study was designed to validate the construct of time personality rather than to examine a cause-effect relationship of time management behavior. However, it is suggested that the scale could be used to determine an individual's time management behavior. Along these lines, Lay (1990) has found that trait procrastinators obtained lower scores on the mechanics of time, including setting goals and priorities and methods to execute scheduled work in a timely way, and they have simultaneously reported higher levels of dilatory behavior compared to non-procrastinators.

In a different research stream, a study by Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist (1999) has found that people with a monochronic style (those who prefer to implement tasks sequentially) are more often engaged in detailed planning than people with a polychronic style (those who prefer to do multiple tasks simultaneously), yet they admitted that it was hard to enact the planning. Polychronics, however, stated that they reached their planned goals more often and were better at managing work interruptions than monochronics. The monochronic style was later found to be associated with linear-separable, while the polychronic one related to circular-traditional time culture.

The second category that predicts an individual's time management behavior is time management training programs. In support of Shahani, Weiner, and Streit's (1993) opinion that an

individual's time management behavior can be influenced, time management training programs are designed with the purpose of helping an individual improve his or her ability to manage time use. Many studies have investigated the impact of time management training programs on time management behavior; however, the results are mixed. Studies by Green and Skinner (2005); King, Winett, and Lovett (1986); Macan (1994); Slaven and Todderdell (1993); Van Eerde (2003); Orpen (1994); and Nadinloyi (2013), though diverse in the methods employed, commonly found support that time management training programs are positively related to time management. Participants stated that they engaged in time management behavior after taking time management training programs. A study by Macan (1996), however, did not confirm this. Nevertheless, in general, most past studies concur that time management training programs increase participants' self-reported time-managing skills. Some studies have even shown the confirmation of supervisors in an individual's enhanced time-management behavior.

The methods and techniques to enhance time management behavior were first developed in a scientific manner in Western industrial economies, where the cultures put a strong emphasis on saving time. It can be hypothesized that, in cultures where a future time orientation and a linear-separable time culture are dominant, people tend to develop higher respect towards time and thus engage themselves in learning and applying the mechanics of time management more seriously than those who belong to other time cultures. In industrial and organizational settings, employees' opportunities to access advanced time-management training programs were significantly proven to improve their personal time management skills. Here, again, culture plays the determinant role, as most time-management training programs to date are recorded mostly in Western industrialized countries.

## **II.2 Temporal distance**

Temporal distance refers to the degree of difference between the cognition and behavior towards time among parties involved in the same tasks to achieve a shared goal. At the individual level, temporal distance has been assumed to exist due to differences in dispositional characteristics and personal experiences of temporality among individuals. At the group level, it has been argued that temporal distance leads to disagreement among team members on temporal issues. If these are not resolved, temporal discrepancy will directly affect the temporal coordination among members and eventually result in the team's inability to attain quality output in time. In addition, when the ambiguity regarding time issues is not elucidated, team members start to accumulate temporal conflicts (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005, Gevers & Petters, 2009). Temporal conflict refers to intragroup disputes about time, the duration of a task, and the length of time the team should spend

on a specific task or goal (Gevers & Peeters, 2009; Orlikowski & Yates, 2002). Prior research has shown that temporal conflict not only negatively affects a team's performance but also induces decreased team satisfaction (De Wit, Greer, & Jehn 2012; Jehn, 1997; Passos & Caetano, 2005).

Since differences in temporality are found to vary across cultures, as demonstrated above, it is highly plausible that temporal distance can be considered a culture-level construct in which the degree of difference is due to temporal cognition discrepancy among cultures. Prior studies on cross-cultural temporal cognition have proposed that many time-related constructs are actually culturally dependent. Examples are the construct of long- and short-term orientation by Hofstede (1980) or time perspective by Zimbardo and Boyd (1999). The basic premise of these studies is that different cultures have different cognitions towards time orientation, and the difference can be computed and compared at the cultural level. Culture has been defined as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from another category" (Hofstede & Bond, 1988, p6). In these studies, country was used as the proxy for culture. This has continued as the trend in international business research, despite recent arguments that globalization has blurred the cultural boundaries among countries, with the result that countries are no longer an appropriate proxy to distinguish categories of people (Ronald & Welzel, 2005; Gerhart & Fang, 2005). Nevertheless, since temporal cognition is one of the most fundamental aspects that a person perceives, arguably, it cannot be easily changed without deliberately strong motivation. Hence, country might still be a proper unit to analyze time-related constructs, similar to what has been suggested and done in prior research. Accordingly, temporal distance can be a construct be studied at the country level.<sup>1</sup>

### **II.3 Chapter summary**

A review of literature on three aspects, (1) time orientation, (2) perception of the passage of time, and (3) time management behavior, illustrated the dynamics of the ways people around the world perceive time. Figure 2.1 encapsulates what has been investigated in the research area of time management. First, the three dimensions of temporal cognition and behavior are not discrete; rather, they closely cohere with each other. The cognitive dimension (including individual time orientation and the perception of the passage of time) plays the role of cognitive motivational factors in shaping a person's attitude towards time and, subsequently, influences the implementation of time management methods such as setting goals or planning (Bartel & Milliken, 2004; Doob, 1971).

Second, the diversity of time cognitions and time behaviors has been seen as the result of a wide array of factors that can be broadly classified as individual and social. A person's time

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<sup>1</sup> Note: in the next chapters, country and culture are used interchangeably.

orientation, perception of the passage of time, and skills to manage time can be personal attributes regardless of the cultural or social environment to which he or she belongs. For instance, not all individuals of Anglo Saxon ethnicity living in Europe or North America are strongly future-oriented. Among them, there are those who are past-oriented and present-oriented, as well. Likewise, it would be untrue to state that all Anglo Saxon individuals manage their time well as the result of their strong future time orientation. It is true that the societal environment provides the “building block” on which people develop their time orientation (Nurmi, 1991). However, the development of individual time perception is influenced by many other personal factors, such as education, opportunities, or a perceived change in economic prospects (Tremplala & Malmberg, 1998; Sundberg, Poole & Tyler, 1983). Therefore, an individual-level approach to time perception issue is comprehensible. In other words, differences in people’s time perception can be understood simply as the result of individual differences.

On the other hand, time perception is highly society-related (Graham, 1981; Hall, 1960; Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). This can be explained by cultural immersion theory (Dickson, Beshears & Gupta, 2004). According to this theory, when a person lives his or her entire life within a single culture, he or she becomes immersed in that culture and may in many ways forget that other cultures perceive and experience the world differently. In a community full of people who perceive the world in the same way, together, they develop “shared schemas,” or common patterns of thinking, responding, and interpreting stimuli they encounter. As a consequence, people who belong to the same culture and are exposed to the same societal factors often develop the same attitude and behavior towards a problem. The “shared schemas” thus make people’s perceptions distinct across cultures. This explanation is applicable to time perception, since time is one of the most fundamental aspects a human being perceives (Dickson, Beshears & Gupta, 2004). Hence, it is possible to treat temporal perception as a country-level concept in cross-cultural comparison studies.

Third, it is necessary to mention that temporal perception, especially time orientation, has also been investigated at the organizational level. Future orientation is the fundamental variable regarding decision-making within an organization because it represents the problem of the allocation of resources over time (Lavery, 1996). This approach allows researchers to view a whole organization as an independent entity with a certain time orientation. Similar to the case of individual time orientation, an organization time orientation is a predictor of its success in terms of performance (Brommer & De La Porte, 1992; Lim & Seers, 1993; Onken, 1992). Interestingly, changing the temporal dimension of an organization’s culture is extremely difficult because time orientation is one of culture’s most fundamental values, and it is strongly embedded within each

organizational member (Bluedorn, 2000). Though not impossible, it is indeed a difficult challenge that requires significant effort from leaders (Schein, 1985).

To conclude, people perceive time in inconsistent ways. This is the result of several dissimilarities in terms of societal, organizational, and individual factors. These factors simultaneously shape the attitudes of the individual towards time and influence his or her behavior towards time. It is difficult to say which among the societal, organizational, and individual factors has the strongest impact on an individual's temporal cognition and behavior. Nevertheless, since this study investigates time management practice differences among headquarters and subsidiaries, it adopts the perspective of most scholars in the international business domain, which treats temporal cognition and behavior as culturally and organizationally dependent and ignores the individual aspect of the concepts. In other words, the following sections of this dissertation assume that people from the same country to some extent possess the same temporal cognition and behavior, regardless of the individual difference in temporality and cognition that might exist among them. According to this premise, temporal distance is also understood in the following parts of this dissertation as a totally country-dependent construct, regardless of the individual-level temporal differences that may exist among individuals in the country.

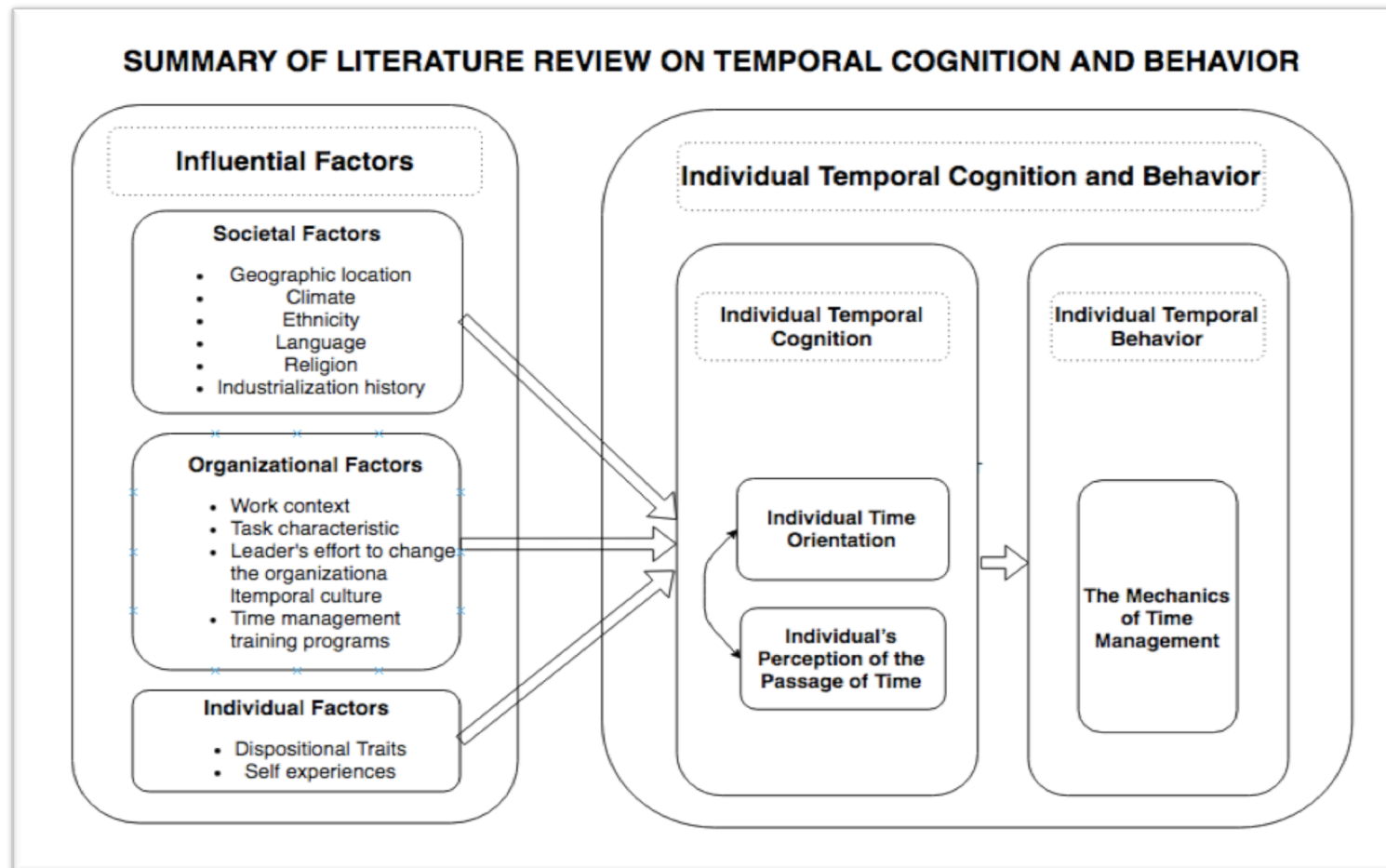


Figure 2.1: Summary of literature on temporal cognition and behavior

## CHAPTER III: TEMPORAL SYNCHRONIZATION WITHIN AN MNC

### III. 1 Definition of temporal synchronization

The previous chapter provided readers with extensive literature about differences in temporal perception and behavior across cultures. Cross-country temporal distance leads to the question of whether there are conflicts among people of different national cultures who work on the same task and pursue the same goals but do not share the same attitude and behavior towards time, which is one of the firm's most valuable resources. MNCs are perfect examples of places in which the issue of developing shared temporal cognitions between two or more countries must be considered.

In individual-level research, recent studies on time in work groups (Ancona & Chong, 1996; Blount & Janicik, 2002) has emphasized the necessity of temporal synchronization, "a condition in which work group members agree on the rate at which group activities should occur and align the pace at which they work to complete individual and shared tasks" (Bartel & Milliken, 2004, p.87) as a solution to conflicts induced by individual-level temporal distance. Temporal synchronization plays a crucial role in work groups, as it fosters effective coordination and subsequently contributes to the success of the task (Hackman, 1987). In the context of cross-culture business, the phenomenon can be understood as the synchronization of temporal cognition and behavior between headquarters and subsidiaries. Using the same logic, it can be posited that developing shared cognitions and behaviors towards time between the headquarters and a subsidiary is vital to the success of an international business, especially when the original temporal cognitions of the two parties are severely distant from each other. Within the scope of this dissertation, temporal distance is viewed as the difference in the cognition and behavior of expatriate managers, who represent the headquarters' management, and the local subsidiary organizational employees. Temporal synchronization is thus defined in a more specific manner as "a condition in which expatriate managers and local employees agree on the rate at which tasks are performed to secure the organization's expected efficiency."

The word "synchronization" means that the action is not a one-way coercion, but rather a combination of (1) the influence of one party on the other party with advanced time-related practice and (2) the adaptation of the transferred practice at the recipient unit. The transferring unit is the one with advanced time-related practice regarding the workplace's deadlines and punctuality; the recipient unit is the one that needs to improve work efficiency due to loose rules and regulations towards work time.

The literature on temporal synchronization at the cross-cultural level is scarce, since it is a newly developed concept and because time itself has not received sufficient attention from

scholars in the field of international business. In this dissertation, temporal synchronization is investigated through the actions of (1) transferring time-related practice between the headquarters and the subsidiary and (2) adapting the transferred practices to match the values of the recipient unit so that, in the end, the headquarters' and subsidiary's employees to some extent possess harmonized cognitions and behaviors towards time.

The synchronization of temporality begins with the phase of the transfer of time-related practice. This phase plays the role of the necessary condition, while the adaptation phase serves as the sufficient condition that makes a completed successful synchronization. Regarding the degree of difficulty, the transfer phase has been documented as extremely challenging compared to the adaptation phase because of the social and organizational pressure it induces in both the headquarters and the subsidiary parties. Therefore, much of the literature presented in this chapter is devoted to demonstrating the transfer phase in a specific manner.

### **III.2 Organizational time management practice**

Time management practice is a form of organizational practices, which Kostova (1999) has defined as “particular ways of conducting organizational functions that have evolved over time under the influences of an organization’s history, people, interests, and actions and that have become institutionalized in the organization” (p. 309). According to this author, practices incorporate the shared knowledge and competence of the organization and tend to be agreed upon and adopted by the organization’s employees. More specifically, organizational practices are comprised of a set of written or unwritten rules describing how a certain organizational function should be undertaken, and they are usually considered as the taken-for-granted way of doing certain tasks (Kostova, 1994; Nelson & Winter, 1982).

Adopting the viewpoint of Kostova (1999) on general organizational practices, this dissertation treats time management practice as the way time is used while performing a certain task in an organization. It defines time management practice as “a particular set of organizational rules regarding the use of time while carrying a certain task, through which organization members acquire work efficiency.” Examples of advanced time management practice include meeting deadlines with high quality outcomes, punctuality, or a fast work tempo.

### **III. 3 Overview of practice transfer within an MNC**

The accelerating development of globalization has provoked the growing attention of practitioners and scholars in the field of international management towards adopting standardized practices to homogenize the business behaviors among different units of an MNC. As an MNC



expands internationally, the need to spread best practices among its units increases (Ferner et al., 2006; Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Kostova & Roth, 2002; Saka, 2004). The transfer of practices in MNCs is viewed as a part of knowledge transfer between organizational units that is defined as “a process that covers several stages starting from identifying the knowledge to the actual process of transferring the knowledge to its final utilization by the receiving unit” (Minbaeva et al., 2003, p.587). In the case of MNCs, organizational units are the headquarters and/or other subsidiaries, while the receiving unit is usually the focal subsidiary. The transfer process occurs not only in the direction of the headquarters towards the subsidiaries (forward diffusion), but also from the subsidiaries towards the headquarters (reverse diffusion) or among subsidiaries (horizontal diffusion) (Edwards, 1998; Edwards & Tempel, 2009).

There are several reasons MNCs engage in the transfers of management practices among their units. First, developed organizational practices can be viewed as a valuable resource of competences that companies seek to replicate and exploit throughout the firm (Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Zaheer, 1995; Szukanski, 1996; Zander & Kogut, 1995) to improve the entire corporation’s performance (Jarrar & Zairi, 2000). Furthermore, internal consistency among different MNC units established through the transfer of practices contributes to the development of a shared corporate culture (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994; Smale et al., 2013), thus enhancing the equity and procedural justice within the MNC (Kim & Mauborgne, 1993). The integrity of practices in every unit of an MNC worldwide also serves as a source of coordination for it (Budhwar & Sparrow, 2002; Martinez & Ricks, 1989) and helps it manage external legitimacy as a whole (Kostova & Roth, 2002).

Nevertheless, the transfer of practices within an MNC is by no means an easy process. MNCs encounter many environmental uncertainties and resistance from the host country’s side. As mentioned in the previous section, according to culture immersion theory, people who belong to the same culture often develop the same schemas, or common patterns of thinking, in responding to and interpreting stimuli they encounter. As an outcome of this common cognition sharing process, organizations within that society have a high likelihood of having structures and cultures that reflect those schemas. Over the years, sociocultural events activate particular cultural meaning systems within a cognitive network and shape the ways people in the society think and respond to stimuli. Some schemas are activated more often than others as a result of cultural expectations. They become more readily available and easier to activate than other alternatives. Over time, people stop being aware of the fact that there are other ways of perceiving the world or responding to a problem. At the point when the cultural congruent schema becomes chronic, it is difficult to prompt people to consider less familiar alternative responses (Hanges, Lord, & Dickson, 2000).

Headquarters and subsidiaries that do not share cultural homogeneities are less likely to possess shared expectations that guide the development of such schemas. As a consequence, each entity is embedded in its own patterns of behavior practices and values, which have little association with each other. At the same time, subsidiaries have a high ratio of local employees. In most cases, the proportion of local employees is much higher than that of expatriates sent from headquarters. Therefore, the organizational nature of subsidiaries is likely to be characterized by the features local employees possess. Each subsidiary is therefore a community where organizational practices are strongly embedded within local work culture.

This notion is supported by a large number of scholars who have agreed that practices are country-specific (Badhwar & Sparrow, 2002; Björkman et al., 2007; Lincoln, Hanada & McBride, 1986; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994) because the sociocultural environments in which they have evolved affect them (Adler, 1995; Janssens, Brett, & Smith, 1995). Similar to many other aspects of business management practices, such as negotiation (Graham, 1985), leadership, and power distribution (Hofstede, 1980) and human resource management (Alder, 1995), time management in an organizational setting is also believed to be culture- and nation-bounded. MNCs therefore stand between the two choices of whether they transfer their practices, and if so, how they can overcome the sociocultural barriers in the host countries.

#### **III.4 The necessity of time management practice transfer within an MNC**

No research to date affirms that the time-management practices of MNCs are more advanced than those of non-MNCs or of subsidiaries located in different time cultural areas. Nevertheless, there are several relevant reasons to believe this. First, most previous and contemporary studies on time management and production efficiency in both general and industrial contexts were conceived in the West or in Japan, homelands of the vast majority of MNCs. As the beginning of this thesis noted, these countries' high manufacturing and marketing management efficiency (e.g., scientific management, time-based competition, the just-in-time system) have been a source of interest for researchers. Developed and evolved in such industrial environment, their MNCs must have possessed virtuous time management practice to standardize themselves with the surrounding business ecology.

Second, time-management practice evolved in advanced national business systems (e.g., developed countries) where market liberalization has long fostered the competition among business entities. Having to compete in a fierce market gave MNCs the opportunity to learn and accumulate new knowledge, which gradually made their time management practice increasingly sophisticated. Hence, MNC headquarters' time management practice is surely more advanced than that of their

subsidiaries, and the transfer of time management practice is a forward transfer (from the headquarters to the subsidiary) instead of a reverse one.

In addition to the general forces that drive MNCs to adopt best practices from the headquarters mentioned in the previous section, there are two other practical reasons that explain why the transfer of time management practice should be initiated. First, the work environment of subsidiaries located in developing or underdeveloped countries is usually characterized by a slow work tempo and poor respect for deadlines, which eventually results in low work efficiency and increasing human capital costs. In order to gain competitive advantages over both local and global competitors operating in the host country, MNCs must find methods to implement advanced time management practice into their subsidiaries to increase efficiency (Stalk, 1988).

Local competitors win competitive advantages over MNCs in terms of low costs, managerial flexibility, and adept understandings of the domestic distribution networks (Hexter & Woetzel, 2007). In particular, in emerging markets like China or India, the current rise of local firms has become a significant threat to multinationals (Chang & Park, 2012). It is no longer the case that most local, small-sized plants were meant to produce poor-quality products at low cost, as workers relied only on obsolete machine tools. Market liberalization has given locals the opportunity to access and learn new technologies and skills. As a result of the gradual improvement over the last decade, emerging markets' local firms now flourish and challenge MNCs, whose entrance into the market initially gave them the opportunity to initiate technological and managerial reforms (Giarratana, Pagano, & Torrisi, 2003; Huang, 2008). The concepts of efficiency, cost, and quality have increasingly been taken into consideration by local firms (Rawski, 1980). Recent research has even shown that many giant MNCs were eventually unable to withstand harsh competition from local firms and eventually had to leave the market (Meyer & Tran, 2006; Park, 2004).

Furthermore, MNCs also have to think of a scenario in which they compete with other MNCs in the same industry and that are also present in the host country. In this case, they must evolve and develop innovative practices to enhance their production and market-serving competitiveness (Mol & Birkinshaw, 2014) in an effort to avoid lagging behind global competitors. Pudelko and Harzing (2008) have argued that, in such a situation, rather than saying that MNC subsidiaries adopt the practices from the headquarters, it is more precise to say that they obtain them through the process of the "standardization towards global best practices." Since organizational time management practices regarding deadlines and punctuality are homogeneous among most MNC host developed countries (Levine, 1999), the adoption of sophisticated time management practices in MNC subsidiaries is not only necessary to synchronize the business pace with the headquarters, but

it is also an action to standardize themselves towards the global benchmark in an effort to gain competitive advantages over other MNC rivals.

Second, as the previous section noted, time management practices are the result of temporal cognition and people's behavior. Country-level temporal distance has been regarded as a source of intercultural organizational conflicts. MNCs that operate in regions far from their headquarters are the most vulnerable to exposure to the management conflicts caused by misunderstandings and a lack of sympathy for norms and beliefs that are incomparable among two parties (Hofstede, 2007; Ike, 2015; Pudelko & Tenzer, 2011; Ybema & Byun, 2009). A significant gap in value assumption that MNC managers must address exists between a culture in which time, one of the most valuable resources for a business, is respected and the one in which time is viewed as no more than a taken-for-granted intangible object.

Past studies have demonstrated that temporal conflicts later result not only in inferior business performance but also in declining trust and engagement between expatriates sent from the headquarters and local employees (Berrell et al., 1999). The distance between the two parties in various temporal aspects, such as time orientation and the perception of the passage of time, subtly influence the criteria each group uses in decision making, which leads to disagreements in problem-solving methods regarding scheduling and seeking advancement. For instance, a study by Berrell et al. (1999) comparing Australian and Vietnamese managers' behavior shows that temporal inconsistency between the two groups led to a discrepancy in respect for the work outcome. On a daily basis, tensions occurred when Australian managers were not prepared to proceed with work according to Vietnamese loose timelines. Moreover, incomparable time orientations made it difficult for the Australian managers to implement change and generate innovation within the subsidiary, since the local Vietnamese counterparts were in favor of the present situation and saw little necessity for improvement. In another study, Ayoun and Moreo (2009) have empirically compared and contrasted the management behavior of Thai and American hotel managers using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The results reveal that temporal cultural differences significantly accounted for the divergences in the strategic business decision-making styles of the two countries' managers. Compared to their American counterparts, Thai managers were prone to emphasizing longer-term strategic plans and were more likely to encourage their subordinates to involve in the process of developing the business strategy. They also possessed a stronger reliance on the long-term evaluation of strategy. The results of the study indicate that temporal orientation provides a proper proxy for testing the differences between managers from different cultures in terms of several aspects of strategic behaviors.

To conclude, although the issue of temporal heterogeneity is well studied in the cross-cultural business domain to demonstrate the difficulties of doing business among partners of divergent cultures, the difficulties in the case of the MNC setting have received relatively limited attention. Past studies have confirmed that differences in temporal cognition provoke several serious organizational outcomes, such as the subsidiary's low work efficiency, and a decline in the headquarters-subsidiary's commitment and trust. Nevertheless, the results of these studies are minor in terms of number and are unlikely to be powerful enough to generalize to the whole population of MNCs. This triggers a demand for further research to investigate the significance of temporal cognition synchronization within the business management of MNCs' local subsidiaries.

### **III.5 Pressures of MNCs regarding the transfer of time management practices**

Since organizational practice transfer has become one of the main focuses of cross-bordered management, researchers in the field have raised the major question of whether MNCs should align the practices of the headquarters with those of subsidiaries, or vice versa. As the previous section demonstrated, theoretically, there are reasons for MNCs to transfer the best time management practices from the headquarters to subsidiaries located in areas characterized by primitive and unsophisticated business time manners. Nevertheless, the transfer is by no means a simple task. Because of their unique organizational setting, MNCs are exposed to several pressures from the external environment in the host countries. The following section further demonstrates the challenges that MNCs face when transferring time management practices to their subsidiaries with distant temporal cognitions.

As previous literature has indicated, MNCs suffer dual institutional pressures from both the intra-organizational standards of the MNC headquarters and the social context of host countries (Clack & Legnic-Hall, 2012; Prahalad & Doz, 1987; Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991) due to their unique business context, which involves multiple institutional environments (Xu & Shenkar, 2002). Each institutional environment is characterized by several types of elements and can be categorized broadly in three components: cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulatory (Scott, 1995). The regulatory component of an institutional environment represents the existing rules and laws that encourage certain behaviors and restrict others. The normative component refers to the social obligations society holds, such as values and norms. Finally, the cultural-cognitive component reflects the shared understanding that creates a "common cognitive framework" and "taken-for-granted assumptions" (Scott and Davis, 2007).

MNCs simultaneously interface with two institutional environments, an internal one in its original country and another one in the host country (Ferner & Quintanilla 1998; Harzing &

Noorderhaven 2009). As a result, the management of MNCs in subsidiaries faces dual pressures from both sides when making decisions. In an effort to explain how MNCs react to pressure regarding the transnational transfer of practices, institutional theory has been widely applied (Kostova, 1999; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994).

Practices are formulated as a way for organizations to achieve optimal results (Yui and Makino, 2002). Successful experiences are diffused and shared among organizational members in the form of routines and taken-for-granted rules that guide members' behavior (Nelson and Winter, 1982). As a means to reduce cost and maintain efficiency, organizations repeatedly adopt those practices for future decision-making purposes (Scott, 1995). The management of foreign subsidiaries often regards best practices as guidelines for their offshore business operations (Rosenzweig & Sigh, 1991). The reasons for the dissemination of practices across borders are two-fold. First, it creates systematic and structural synchronization within all units of an MNC, which then removes the redundant need for MNCs as a whole business entity to search for alternative, appropriate practices (Nelson and Winter, 1982). Second, MNCs, with their superior knowledge, usually bring the latest practices that later set new standards in developing countries. Given the knowledge and experience constraints in the local context, the practices transferred from MNCs' headquarters are recognized as an important source of productivity enhancement (Hoffman, 1989). This can also be viewed as a way that headquarters create values for subsidiaries through synergy management and knowledge sharing (Foss, 1977). As a result, subsidiary management adheres to organizational practices developed by MNCs' headquarters, and they become congruent across the units of MNCs (Rosenzweig & Sigh, 1991).

At the same time, MNCs face pressure from the host country environment. Each host country has distinct social contexts from which different norms and values were created. In some cases, the best practices headquarters develop thus cannot be applied to subsidiaries, as they are not "optimal" in the sense of global calculation (Nelson & Winter, 1982). Since MNCs are embedded in a social context dominated by local norms and values, they cannot ignore societal influences when making managerial decisions (Oliver, 1997). Neo-institutional theorists have posited that multinational organizations face pressure to adapt to the local business context to gain legitimacy in an effort to ensure their survival (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). A behavior is viewed as legitimate when it is consistent with commonly shared norms (Scott & Davis, 2007). As noted above, the norms about time and time use are inconsistent across cultures. Therefore, it is highly plausible that the advanced time management practices of highly developed Western economies are inapplicable to developing countries located in different parts of the world (Nonis, Teng & Ford, 2005).

### **III.6 Globalization or localization?**

The institutional environment in which MNCs operate is complex due to the tension between the need for global integration and the need for local adaptation (Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991). The practices of the headquarters reflect the institutional environment in which practices were developed and institutionalized. Concurrently, MNCs have to face the institutional environment of the host country in which the best practices from the headquarters might possibly be perceived as inappropriate and rejected. Such an environment contains ample certainty regarding regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that may lead their business to failure. In this case, the institutional pressure facilitates mimetic behavior that results in adopting similar structures and practices (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In such a situation, organizations are inclined to make choices based on normative rationality rather than economic rationality (Oliver, 1997).

Based on these arguments, Ando (2011) has suggested that MNCs do not always adopt the most efficient organizational practices. Instead, in order to confront the existing social environment, they can adopt suboptimal organizational practices that do not necessarily guarantee economic rationality. Recent studies support the notion that MNCs make decisions not only based on economic purposes, but also by considering the social system of norms, values, and beliefs (Barreto & Baden-Fuller, 2006; Oliver, 1997).

A series of studies on several domains of practice transfer has proven that MNCs are prone to the localization strategy for decision-making related to staffing policies and human resource management practices. For instance, a study by Yuen and Kee (1993) has found that Japanese subsidiaries in Singapore abandoned Japanese human resource management practices and adopted a “wholesale” localization policy instead. In most personnel activities, Japanese subsidiaries followed the practices of those local firms that shared similar organizational characteristics. Another study by Ando (2011) has revealed that, although they are strongly affected by the parent company in the home country, foreign subsidiaries’ staffing policies tend to be modified to adapt to local contexts. In line with Yuen and Kee (1993), this study also concludes that MNCs appears to imitate policies previously adopted by other foreign firms that belong to the same reference groups in an attempt to relieve themselves of the pressure from the local environment.

In another vein, various studies have also concluded that the transfer of practices in MNCs is influenced to a great extent by host countries’ cultural and institutional framework and results in a hybrid strategy (Chew & Horwitz, 2004; Myloni, Harzing & Mirza, 2004). Notably, some studies have found that MNCs continue to adopt parent companies’ practices regardless of the pressure to align with the host country context (Fenton-O’Creevy et al, 2007; Yuen & Kee, 1993). There are some explanations for this behavior of ignoring MNCs’ local institution. First, according

to Kostova et al. (2008), MNCs are not always constrained by institutional isomorphism. They have argued that, because MNCs have advanced knowledge and bring something distinctive to their host countries that local institutions value and appreciate, it is unlikely that they would be expected to follow locally established practices. Although there are pressures from the countries, most are restricted to the regulatory and legal domains, and they rarely relate to local practice compliance. MNCs might also be viewed as belonging to another class, and being foreign allows them to enjoy “institutional freedom” (Kostova et al., 2008) and gives them a large latitude to do things differently (Richman & Copen, 1972). Moreover, since host countries do not have a clear view of which field MNCs belong to, they do not necessarily control the internal operation of MNCs. This results in the broad discretion of MNCs to choose the level of responsiveness to the local environment, as long as regulatory institutional rules are not violated (Kostova et al., 2008). Secondly, as Ando (2011) has argued, when MNCs have accumulated international experiences, the effect of local institutional pressure weakens, and they have less of a tendency to exhibit mimetic behavior. Experiences with multibusiness reduce the degree of the business uncertainty, which then creates room for MNCs to be able to make economically rational decisions instead of following local institutional rules that do not necessarily result in efficiency and effectiveness (Barreto & Baden-Fuller, 2006).

In conclusion, although most cross-border organizational theorists tend to accept the logic suggested by neo-institutional theory that MNC subsidiaries adopt practices that are similar to locally established ones, recent researchers have provided reasonable explanations that support the notion that MNCs can be unique and choose practices that fit them best.

### **III.7 Success of a practice transfer in an MNC**

Once an MNC headquarters makes the decision to transfer organizational practices to its unit, it must consider how the transfer should take place and what the criteria to evaluate the success of the transfer are. Most studies in the field of practice transfer agree that transfer is a complex and time-consuming process, in which expert facilitators and change agents to support the proceedings are indispensable (Ferner et al., 2011; Kostova & Roth, 2002; Kostova, 2009).

Kostova (1999) has suggested that “the process of transfer practices has two aspects: (1) the diffusion of a set of rules and (2) the transmission or creation of an ‘infused with value’ meaning of these rules among the employees of the recipient unit” (p. 311). This means that the transfer process does not simply end with the adoption of the formal rules; rather, it continues until these rules become internalized and accepted as a taken-for-granted practice at the recipient unit. The success of the transfer process was defined as “the degree of institutionalization of the practice at the recipient unit” (Kostova, 1999; p. 311). In other words, making best practices part of the culture of



work in the receiving unit is the ultimate goal for complete and effective transfers (Jarrar & Zairi, 2000).

Institutionalization has further been described as the process by which the transferred practice may achieve symbolic meaning for the employees who receive it. Two levels of institutionalization are conceptualized: implementation and internalization. The two levels are associated with each other in that the higher the implementation, the higher possibility of the internalization (Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002). From the institutional theory framework, implementation is a necessary condition for internalization. Nevertheless, implementation does not automatically result in internalization. The causality relationship happens only when employees of the receiving unit infuse practice with value by developing positive attitudes toward it (Kostova, 1999). Thus, a ritualistic imitation of practices where recipients do not believe in the effectiveness of the practices is likely to lead to unexpected results and is not likely to last (Björkman & Lervik, 2007). Instead, a full assimilation to the host country employees' mindset and normative framework is preferred.

Björkman and Lervik (2007) have elaborated on the work by Kostova (1999) by adding integration as another level to evaluate the success of the transfer process. Integration refers to "the degree a transferred practice is connected and linked up with existing routines and practices in the recipient location" (Björkman & Lervik, 2007; p. 322). At this level, the results of the transfer process are expected to influence not only employees' but also managers' attitudes towards value infusion for the practices. It involves every member of that company recognizing that the transferred practice is not merely a formal adoption to satisfy the headquarters' demand for organizational internalization, but rather is a contribution to the efficiency of the subsidiary in accordance with other existing practices.

At the individual level, Kostova (1999) has also suggested other criteria for the success of a practice transfer viewed from the perspective of host country employees. They include practice commitment (based on Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), which refers to the strength of a belief and acceptance of the practice's goals and values as well as a willingness to exert effort to implement and continue adopting the practices. Another benchmark to rate the success of the transfer is practice satisfaction (adopted from Locke, 1976) regarding an individual's positive attitude toward a transferred practice and his or her appreciation of the value of the practice for the recipient organization. Finally, employee psychological ownership of a practice (adopted from Pierce, Van Dyne, & Cummings, 1992) measures the state in which employees feel like they own the transferred practice. In other words, this criterion represents the degree to which an employee perceives the adopted practice as truly a part of the organization such that he or she can say, "This is our practice."

However, it is noteworthy that the success of a practice transfer is not always necessarily manifested by the existence and implementation of exactly the same practice as the one applied in the headquarters. As is mentioned above, practices are institutionalized and internalized through the value-infusing process, and values differ across institutions (Kostova, 1999). Hence, the transfer of practice may also result in the implementation of practices that are slightly modified compared to the original ones. In essence, this adaption is argued to increase the cognitive and normative legitimacy of the transferred practices, which subsequently lead to increase recipient motivation and ability to accept and learn them (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Samiee & Roth, 1992). In the case of time management practice, because norms about time are among the most difficult to discard, it is possible to hypothesize that the transfer of time management practice cannot result in the subsidiary's implementation of time management practice at a level that is as strict as in the headquarters. The transfer continues with the adaptation process and finally results in the dyadic synchronization of temporality between the two parties.

### **III.8 Factors that influence the success of a temporal synchronization process**

Factors that lead to the success of a transnational transfer and the adaptation of practices have been widely discussed in the literature (Bjerregaard et al., 2013; Björkman & Lervik, 2007; Ferner et al., 2011; Kostova, 1999). Those factors can be broadly categorized by national, organizational, and individual.

Firms develop, evolve, and adapt to environments to gain legitimacy (Brewster, Wood, & Brokkers, 2008; DiMaggio & Powell, 1987; Wood & Frynas, 2006). Hence, the characteristic of the national institution in which a firm operates has a powerful influence on the transfer and, later, the internalization of practices (Pudelko & Harzing, 2007). Regarding the national-level factors, Kostova (1996) has developed the concept of institutional distance, which refers to the degree of dissimilarity between home and host institutions. It is based on the institutional profile of a country that consists of three pillars suggested by Scott (1995): regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive (Kostova, 1997). Kostova and Zaheer (2002) have proposed that, the larger the institutional distance, the more difficult it is for MNCs to establish legitimacy in the host country and to transfer strategic routines to their foreign subsidiaries. In other words, a larger institutional distance triggers greater demand for the local responsiveness of MNCs in the host countries and thus makes it more difficult for them to balance external environment adaptation and organizational internal consistency (Xu & Shenkar, 2002). The success of an international business thus requires MNCs to equilibrate the two demands (Fayerweather, 1969; Prahalad, 1975). Beecher and Yang (1994) have shared the same viewpoint by claiming that cultural distance was predicted to obstruct the transfer of the home

country's organizational practices to overseas affiliates and strengthen the need for local isomorphism. Several studies, particularly in the field of human resource management practice transfer, have confirmed the significant influence of national and social institutions on transfer and adaptation success (Björkman, Feyon & Park, 2007)

At the organizational level, the success of a practice transfer has been viewed from several perspectives. Many researchers have posited that the results should be influenced by the degree to which the general strategy of an MNC is oriented towards global integration or local responsiveness (Pudelko & Harzing, 2008; Smale et al., 2006). Thus, the stronger the firm's orientation towards globalization, the more likely it is supported by top management to standardize its best practices by transferring them from the headquarters to foreign subsidiaries. In contrast, if the MNC's overall strategy is prone to local adaptation, it tends to resist the standardization of practices. In lieu of that, the subsidiary's practices are employed, which results in the discretion of subsidiary to choose whatever local practices fit its business in the host country context (Hayden & Edwards, 2001). From a control perspective, resource-dependence theory suggests that the more dependent a subsidiary is on its parent for resources, the tighter the parent's control on the subsidiary (Ghosal & Nohria, 1989), and thus the more likely it is that the parent's practices are transferred to the subsidiary (Myloni et al., 2007). In contrast, when the subsidiary has high autonomy, it begins initiating countervailing power and is thus likely to resist central policy imposition (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998). Nevertheless, in either case, the high orientation towards globalization strategy and high control power over the subsidiaries of the headquarters only serve as the catalyst for a transfer of practice to take place and to some extent influence its success. In order to achieve a successful transfer, Kedia & Bhagat (1988) have suggested that the headquarters and subsidiaries must fulfill two sufficient conditions: (1) the organizational cultures of the headquarters and subsidiary must be compatible and (2) the subsidiary must possess the absorptive capacity to accommodate and retain the new transferred practice.

Organizational culture, in its simple sense, is conceptualized as a set of values and assumptions that act as the defining elements around which other elements of culture, such as norms, symbols, rituals, and cultural activity, evolve (Schein, 1985). Similarly, Rousseau (1990) has defined culture as a set of values widely shared among organizational members. Drawing on these definitions, Kostova (1999) has proposed that the success of an organizational practice's forward transfer is associated with the degree of compatibility between the values implied by the practice and the value underlying that recipient unit's organizational culture. In an attempt more closely analyze the composition of organizational value, she built on the work of Chatman and his colleagues, which classifies organizational values in seven dimensions: innovation, stability, respect for people,

outcome orientation, detail orientation, team orientation, and aggressiveness (Chatman & Jehn, 1994; O'Reily, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) to arrive at the proposition that, if the recipient unit scores high on the “innovation” dimension, there is a high possibility that it will be open to receiving the practices from other units (Kostova, 1999). In this case, the success of the transfer is more likely to be ensured.

The transfer of practices from the headquarters to subsidiaries is commonly associated with changes at the recipient unit, where existing routines are reorganized or discarded. As a result, resistance from the members of the recipient organization occurs in an effort to maintain the status quo. Furthermore, the transfer, as a process, usually takes time and can be costly (Teece, 1981), since it requires additional training resources and time required for the recipient unit to learn and become familiar with the new practices (Chiang, Lemanski, & Birtch, 2017). Hence, the accomplishment of a successful transfer requires enduring the efforts and commitment of both parent and subsidiary. At the individual level, the success of the transfer process is attributed to the decision makers and key players at the recipient unit (Ciabuschi, Forsgren, & Oscar, 2011; Edwards & Ferner, 2004; Kostova, 1999).

As prior research has suggested, compared to their subsidiaries, headquarters usually play the role of providing support and coordinating transfer because they have the necessary resources to facilitate the process (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989). The involvement of the headquarters in the process can be either direct or indirect (Chiang et al., 2017). In the former case, the headquarters provides resources, assigns which practices and which unit to transfer (Tempel, 2011), and allocates decision-making rights (Ciabuschi et al., 2011). In the latter case, the headquarters manifests indirect involvement by establishing a corporate culture that fosters the sharing and receiving of practices among their units (Martinez & Jarillo, 1991) or creating corporate communication channels and interpersonal networks that enhance the dissemination of the shared values (Nohria & Ghoshal, 1997).

Although the contribution of the headquarters in the success of a practice transfer is unquestionable, a growing body of recent literature has shifted the focus to the subsidiary's side (Birkinshaw et al, 2005; Edwards & Ferner, 2004; Kostova, 1999). Since the distribution of power within an MNC is increasingly dispersed among its operational units (Anderson, Melanson, & Maly, 2007), the parent controlling power of the headquarters has become decentralized. Thus, it is not always possible for the headquarters to determine subsidiary behavior or impose the extent to which a practice is accepted and internalized (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994). Birkinshaw et al. (2005) have suggested that the multinational subsidiary be viewed as a semi-autonomous entity with entrepreneurial potential that can be independent from its parent. It has the power to take initiative

against the headquarters' restrictions (Birkinshaw, 1997) rather than passively receiving the commands (Bouquet & Birkinshaw, 2008; Kristensen & Zeitlin, 2005; Morgan & Kristensen, 2006). Subsidiary initiative, a concept that refers to the independence of the subsidiary from the headquarters, is considered to influence the success of the transfer process (Birkinshaw et al., 2005).

In case the subsidiary is in favor of the transfer, the next step to consider is the commitment and ability to initiate and implement changes of key players in the subsidiary. The set of key players, which Kostova (1999) has referred to as a transfer coalition, consists of two groups of people: (1) a stable "core" and (2) a flexible "expert" group. The core group consists of the key managers of the recipient units who are in charge of transfer of practices in general. These people must gain a wide range of discretion in making decisions regarding the transfer and implementation of the practice. The expert group includes those who are specialized in the area of the transferred practice. Together, the coalition serves as the bridge that connects the subsidiary and the headquarters (Kilimkeit & Reihlen, 2015; Kostova, 1999). The main course of actions of the coalition during and after the transfer is to understand and interpret the practice and to facilitate the process of infusing values into the transferred practices.

Figure 3.1 provides a holistic view of how each social, organizational, and individual factor contributes to the success of the practice transfer process. Social factors (e.g., the institutional distance between two parties) and organizational factors (e.g., the organizational cultural distance between two parties or the headquarters' support) fulfill the necessary condition for the transfer to take place and, to some extent, they determine the success of the transfer. However, ensuring the success of the transfer until the final stage (institutionalization and internalization) requires the efforts of managers in the subsidiary organizations. These managers are directly involved in each step of the process and, in most cases, have the discretion to make decisions regarding how the transfer should be conducted in detail. Subsidiary managers can thus be seen as a sufficient condition for the transfer success.

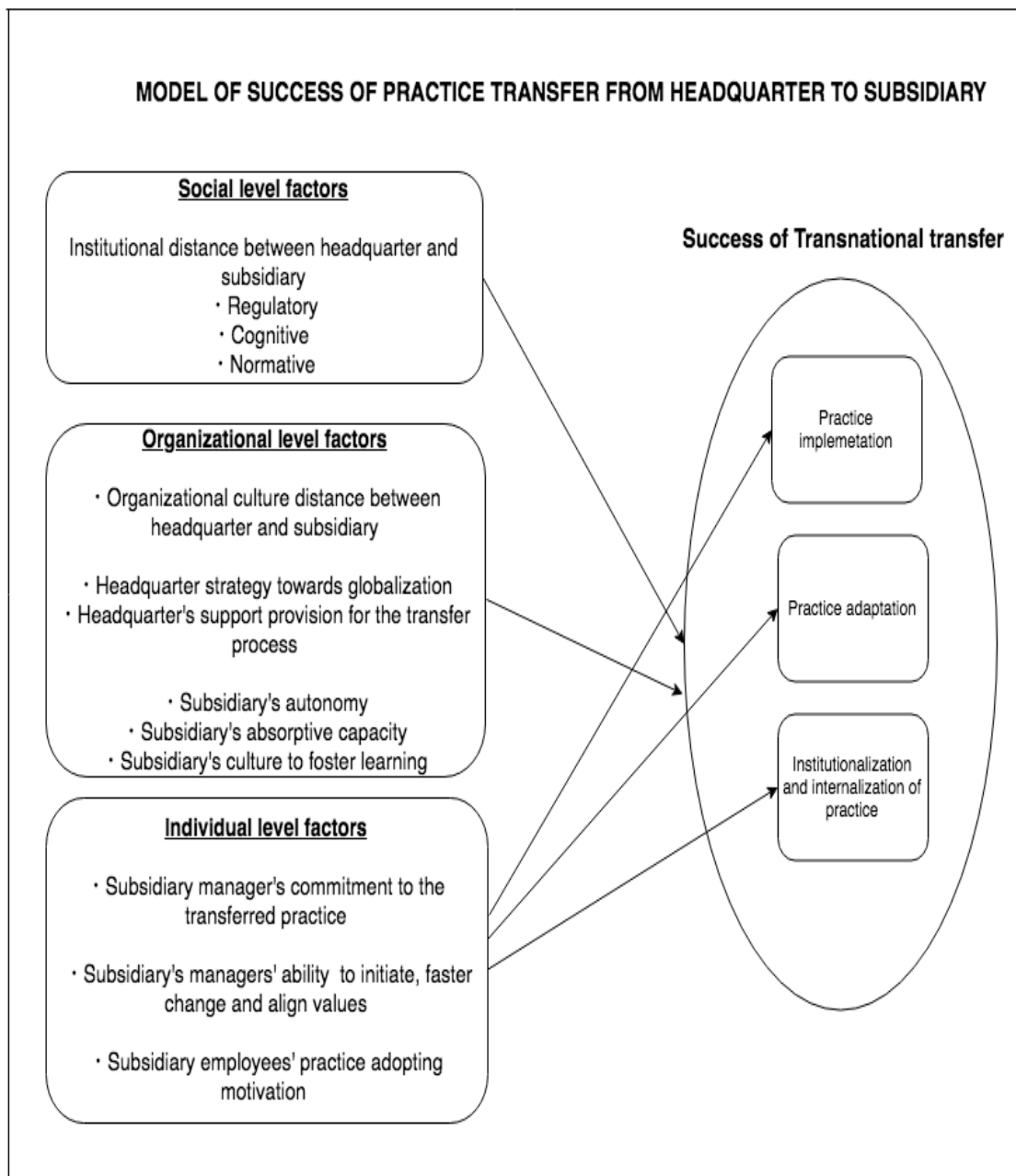


Figure 3.1: Model of success of practice transfer from headquarters to subsidiary  
(Modified from the Model of transfer success by Kostova (1999))

### **III.9 The role of leaders in transnational transfers**

While much conceptual and empirical research has been conducted to understand the contributions of institutional and organizational factors to the outcome of transnational practice transfers (Beechler & Yang, 1994; Björkman, Fey, & Parks, 2007; Clark & Lengnick-Hall, 2012; Ferner et al., 2004; Lunnan et al., 2005; Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002;), there is limited documentation on how individual actors influence the process (Klimkeit & Reihlen, 2015). The bridging coalition's function has been investigated in only a restricted number of studies. Overall, prior research to date has illustrated two main roles of managers in the transfer of practice between headquarters and subsidiary: (1) filling the cultural and institutional gaps and (2) transferring the knowledge required about implementing the practice to the subsidiary organization.

Kimkeit and Reihlen (2015) have explored two types of practice transfer leaderships that foster or inhibit the transfer success through a case study of a transnational firm. The first type is entrepreneurial transfer coalition, whose behaviors are opportunity driven, culturally responsive, and focus on solving problem/dissonance and fostering learning during the process. The other is ceremonial transfer coalition, which features a compliance-driven and low culturally responsive leadership style with the main focus on seeking certainty and technocratic control. The findings of the study indicate that the outcomes that the two types of leaderships generate are distinctly different. While entrepreneurial transfer coalition regarded organizational practice transfer as an opportunity to understand and solve critical subsidiary issues (business development, quality control, or HRM), ceremonial transfer coalition generally viewed the process as “an administrative task of a well-understood issue” (p. 867), and thus simply put the transfer into action by reducing uncertainty and implementing and routinizing the practices. As a consequence, subsidiary employees under this leadership type were demotivated to learn the transferred practices, and internalization (Kostova, 1999) did not occur. In contrast, entrepreneurial transfer coalition was reported to positively influence the learning of new practices among local employees, which later resulted in favorable organizational change.

Efforts to investigate the role of individual actors in the success of practice transfer were also credited to researchers whose studies focus on the function of expatriates (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Harzing, 2002; Harzing, Pudelko & Reiche, 2016; Song et al, 2013). These coalition members are considered valuable to the transfer of practices because they possess a high level of shared values with the headquarters and the subsidiary (Harzing, 1999). Recent studies that focus on the role of expatriate managers have indicated that these key players often act as “cultural carriers” in MNCs and attempt to introduce patterns from their headquarters to the subsidiary organization. Empirical evidence from Björkman and Lu (2001) and Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994)

has proven that the number of expatriates present in a subsidiary organization was a strong predictor of host resemblance to the parent organizational practices.

Simultaneously, ample research in the field of knowledge transfer has demonstrated that MNC practice transfers benefit from expatriates thanks to their ability to transfer the knowledge required to implement practices in the subsidiary organization. This knowledge transfer process is conducted and facilitated through the following mechanisms: (1) facilitating knowledge transfer in the subsidiary (Miao et al., 2011) and (2) enhancing the absorptive capacity of the subsidiary thanks to expatriates' ability to convey tacit knowledge (Doz & Prahalad, 1996, Harzing, 1999, 2002). Interestingly, in studies by Miao et al. (2011) and Harzing et al. (2016), expatriate managers were empirically found to be more effective and cooperative in facilitating knowledge transfer compared to subsidiary local managers, as they tended to be more concerned with the performance of the entire corporation.

Riusala and Smale (2007) have investigated the types of knowledge expatriates transferred in 112 Finnish managers' samples. The results showed that the areas of knowledge that expatriates most actively participate in transferring during their international assignments are management/leadership and cultural, followed by human resource management, accounting/finance, sales/marketing, product/service, and technical/production. This finding verified that the key task of expatriates is to serve as the bridge that connects the headquarters and the subsidiary and at the same time provide resolutions to cultural issues between the two organizations. Furthermore, it also indicates that expatriate managers are involved in a broad spectrum of knowledge to be transferred within an MNC. Another finding of the same study showed that the complexity of knowledge is positively correlated with the difficulty of knowledge transfer. Knowledge complexity is categorized into explicit and tacit forms (Polanyi, 1962). Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that can be documented and structured and is therefore easy to transfer. Meanwhile, tacit knowledge refers to knowledge that cannot be adequately articulated by writing or verbalizing, and it is thus difficult to transfer (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Kogut & Zander (1993) have further identified three levels of knowledge tacitness as (1) codifiability (which refers to the extent to which knowledge can be explicitly documented), (2) teachability (which refers to the extent to which knowledge can be taught or transmitted to a new audience), and (3) complexity (which refers to the number of critical and interacting elements an entity or activity embraces). A study by Riusala and Smale (2007) has found that the teachability of knowledge is negatively correlated ( $B = -.53, p < .05$ ), while the complexity of knowledge is positively correlated with the difficulty of transnational practice transfer ( $B = .45, p < .05$ ). These findings imply that expatriates need to be competent not only in translating



complex and uncodifiable knowledge, but also in teaching this knowledge to the host country employees, who may lack the ability or motivation to absorb it.

To summarize, research to date has demonstrated that managers in subsidiary organizations play a critical role in reducing the stickiness<sup>2</sup> and increasing the success probability of a transnational practice transfer. Compared to local managers, expatriate managers play a more critical role in articulating the home and host countries' cultures and transferring the knowledge demanded for the implementation of parent practices to the subsidiary organization.

### **III.9 Chapter summary**

The literature on both practice transfer and temporal cognition and behavior is abundant in terms of volume, method, conceptualizing, and empirical research, but the two fields have not yet reached a crossover point. In the field of international business, while the transfers of staffing policies or HRM practices have continuously received considerable attention from researchers, those on time management practice are mostly neglected, despite of the important role it plays in generating efficiency for the subsidiary business. The rare volume of literature on time management practice transfer can be attributed to the following reasons.

First, scholars might be prone to the assumption that MNCs are adopting local time management practice. As is mentioned in previous sections, MNCs' subsidiaries evolve in a new context and are influenced by the institutional environment. The decision of choosing which practice to adopt is made under the pressure of 'isomorphism' – the extent to which an organization's structures and processes resemble those of other organizations within the environment (Zucker, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Previous studies have found that MNCs tend to adopt staffing and HRM practices as a method to gain local shareholders' legitimacy (Yuen & Kee, 1993; Ando, 2011). Moreover, given that an employee's temporal cognition and behavior are extremely difficult to change due to their deep embeddedness in his or her personal characteristics and national culture, it is logical to assume that MNCs would localize time management practice.

Second, an extensive body of research has emphasized that expatriate managers tend to adjust themselves to fit with the culture of the host country instead of attempting to make changes to it. Andreason (2003) summarized the literature on challenges that face expatriate managers while working overseas. His work denotes that host country's cultural novelty and subsidiary's organizational cultural novelty are among the factors that expatriates have to adjust to in order to

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<sup>2</sup> In the practice transfer literature, the adjective "sticky" has been used to describe the experienced difficulty of a transfer in which tremendous efforts are required to resolve the transfer problems (Szulanski, 2006).

succeed in an international assignment (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991; Shaffer, Harrison & Gilley, 1999). Regarding national culture novelty, expatriates normally have to go through the process of acculturation in which they attempt to adjust to a new culture and to be emotionally and psychologically ready to face up with and overcome culture shocks (Black, 1990). In addition, they are also expected to quickly be able to break down organizational cultural novelty, which refers to the difference in organizational culture between the parent and subsidiary organization. Both kind of cultural adjustment are essential to their performance in the foreign affiliate. Time can be considered as a dimension of national culture (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaar, 1997; Schriber, 1985) and organizational culture (Schein, 1983; Schriber & Gutek, 1987). Borrowing the logic by Andreason (2003), it can be argued that expatriate managers are more inclined to adapting to the local temporal culture instead of trying to change it.

These two reasons partly account for the lack of attention of scholars towards time management practice transfer in the MNC context. Nevertheless, this study stands on the viewpoint that, although norms and cognition of time are difficult to alter, advanced time management practice is feasible to transfer to a certain extent. Kostova et al. (2008) has proposed that MNCs have the freedom to overcome the liability of being foreign by implementing practices that do not violate the regulatory and legal compliances and creating competitive advantages for the subsidiary organization. In addition, although expatriate managers are supposed to be able to adjust to the host country's national and subsidiary organizational culture, they are also expected to use their expertise to transform the subsidiary's existing obsolete time management practice of the subsidiary organization to obtain increased efficiency. Therefore, the question raised here is, to which extent the authenticity of headquarter's time management practice can be transferred and adjusted to be applicable to subsidiary organization,

Furthermore, studies that have illustrated the contributions of the "transfer coalition," which the managers in subsidiary organizations in large part represent, have emerged to provide a closer examination of how these managers enable and facilitate the process of practice transfer. Notably, compared to managers recruited in host countries, expatriate managers are more concerned with the transfer of practices, as they worry about the uncertainty of the unfamiliar host country context (Harzing et al, 2016; Miao et al., 2011). The findings from prior research have delineated two major roles that expatriate managers play in the practice transfer process. The first is to articulate the cultural values of home and host countries that might impede the transferability of practices (Kimkeit & Reihlen, 2015; Kostova, 1999), and the second is to convey the knowledge that is essential for the implementation of the transferred practice to the subsidiary organization (Riusala

& Smale, 2007; Doz & Prahalad, 1996, Harzing, 1999, 2002). The extant literature has also elucidated the types of knowledge that expatriates transfer. Nevertheless, the literature has not yet addressed the kind of knowledge required for the transfer of time management practice and how this knowledge is transferred to subsidiary organizations.

## CHAPTER IV: GAPS IN CURRENT RESEARCH AND PROPOSTION OF RESEARCH METHOD FOR THE STUDY

### IV.1 Gaps in current research

Despite the high amount of research conducted in the fields of temporal distance and transnational practice transfers, there are still gaps in current knowledge that demand further investigation. First, the topic of time itself has not yet received sufficient attention from scholars in the field of international business. It is surprising that little has been documented about the issue of how temporal distance may cause managerial problems in a cross-cultural work context. Most research to date on temporal conflicts primarily focuses on the performance aspect as the outcome of temporal distance. At the group level, some evidence proves that temporal distance among group members is detrimental to a team's ability to attain high work performance and quality (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011; Standifer et al., 2015). However, at the country level, only a few studies take this as the research issue. Theoretically, it can be hypothesized that the ignorance of time management practice will lead to a lack of efficiency at the subsidiary worksite. As a result of this loss of productivity, MNCs may suffer an increase in labor costs, which directly affects their competitive advantage. Nevertheless, further evidence is needed to support this notion.

More importantly, business performance is merely one among several issues that temporal difference induces. Unfortunately, most literature to date has focused only on the performance side of the outcome caused by temporal distance. From a cross-cultural business perspective, the differences in temporal cognition and behavior make people in different time cultures develop different schemas to react to the same problem. At the same time, differences in the norms of time result in disagreement in the beliefs, values, and expectations towards how work should be scheduled and performed. Obviously, when expectations are not met, a trust issue arises. The literature on organizational trust has posited that the inability to develop trust between management and employees creates extra expenses for the organization in terms of monitoring activities (Aboyassin, 2008). Employees also suffer from a lack of trust when they see that management does not respect their values towards time. In the case of MNCs, local employees may even consider it a sign of disrespect to the host country's value system. This may result in decreased organizational commitment among local employees, which in turn may lead to declining organizational internal cooperation, absenteeism, and turnover. A small amount of group-level research results suggest that temporal distance induces conflicts and decreased team satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingard, 2003; Standifer et al., 2015;). Hence, at the country level, it can be posited that, beyond the results of studies by Berrell et al. (1999) and Ayoun and Moreo (2009), there must be

many more issues related to temporal tensions that have not yet been explored. Here, this study raises its first question:

**RQ1: In the context of cross-cultural business, what are the managerial problems caused by temporal distance between the headquarters and the subsidiary?**

Second, prior research can be criticized for neglecting the problem of temporal synchronization at the country level. The idea that organizational members should hold a shared cognition and synchronize time-related behavior has only been discussed at the group level (Bartel & Milliken, 2004; Gevers & Peeters, 2009), whereas temporal difference is assumed to stem from individual personal characteristics. Elevated to the country level, especially in the case of MNCs, the issue of temporal synchronization becomes much more complex and sensitive, since a forced change in temporal values by the headquarters to the subsidiary may result in the loss of the MNC's legitimacy to operate in the host country. In this dissertation, attempts are made to investigate the process from the practice transfer perspective. This viewpoint allowed the study to some extent to imagine which challenges MNCs may encounter when they try to transfer time management practice to subsidiaries with distant temporal cognition. Nevertheless, even in the domain of practice transfer, there has so far been little discussion of how time-specific practices are transferred.

This ignorance could be due to several reasons. First, time is one of the most fundamental concepts that a person first perceives, and norms of time are extremely difficult to change or unlearn. Therefore, trying to alter employees' cognition and behavior towards time might be considered ineffective or useless in the first place. Second, the results of most research on transnational transfer to date have shown that MNCs are very much prone to the "localization" strategy, in which subsidiaries tend to recruit practices developed and used by local firms rather than adopting the headquarters' best practices. Recent research in the field of HRM practice transfer has reached the conclusion that MNCs face the paradox of "think global but act local" (Rowley & Benson, 2002; Smale, 2008a, b) because of the pressure to be compliant with the host country's standard values. Thus, it is plausible that practices in general are assumed to be localized instead of standardized with the parent company. If time management practice is categorized as a general operational practice, by consensus it should be performed in the local way.

Nevertheless, considering the critical role time management practice plays in the firm's success, it can be argued that a subsidiary's time management practice should not follow the localization strategy. The headquarters should attempt to make subsidiaries follow advanced time management practices to sustain efficiency and reduce temporality-induced work tensions. Furthermore, as Kostova et al. (2008) have suggested, as long as the practice to transfer is not constrained by regulatory and legal issues, MNCs have the freedom to be global and are free to

implement what they think will benefit the firm. As the “should transfer” and “can transfer” conditions are fulfilled, this study argues that the time management practices of MNC subsidiaries follow a globalization rather than a localization strategy.

Supposing that MNCs choose to globalize management practice, it is necessary to thoroughly delineate how the transfer and adaptation happens and what role each actor plays to make the process end successfully. The second research question is as follows:

**RQ2: Which challenges do MNCs face when attempting to synchronize the local temporal cognition and behavior with that of the headquarters?**

The final gaps in current research on temporal issues at the country level concern the limited research on how managers in subsidiary organizations can generate favorable temporal cognition and behaviors among local employees. The transfer coalition, especially managers in subsidiaries, serves as the bridge to assist with issues regarding the transfer of practice between headquarters and subsidiary. Nevertheless, sparse attention has been paid to how managers of the transfer coalition act to control and make a successful transfer (Doz & Prahalad, 1996, Harzing, 1999, 2002; Klimkeit & Reihlen, 2016; Riusala & Smale, 2007). Furthermore, the literature has mostly focused on whether MNCs should globalize or localize their organizational practices and has neglected the issue of conflicts that arise from the differences between two countries and between two institutions after the transfer. An understanding of how the transfer coalition plays the bridging role of connecting headquarters and subsidiary has not yet been specifically delineated in general and particularly in the case of time management practice transfer.

A scant volume of literature has partly illustrated the role that expatriate managers play in enabling and fostering the practice transfer process. Through the mechanisms of articulating values and transferring knowledge necessary to the implementation of practice in the subsidiary organization, expatriate managers are credited with enhancing the chance of the success of transnational practice transfer. Nevertheless, most studies that explore the functions of these managers were conducted in the context of HRM practice transfer (Björkman & Lu, 2001; Rosenzweig & Nohria 1994). Given that time management practice transfer has been poorly studied, this study demonstrates the need for in-depth investigations about managers’ behavioral mechanisms through which temporal synchronization between headquarters and subsidiary can be executed. The study proposes the following third research question:

**RQ3: Which leadership styles are required of expatriate managers to enable temporal synchronization in subsidiary organizations?**

As is mentioned above, there has been a lack of attention of scholars towards time management practice transfer in the MNC context. Similarly, there has been no studies to that

documented the scope of actions that expatriate managers can do enable the transfer of time management practice from headquarters to subsidiaries. Based on the literature presented in chapter two and three, it can be argued that the focus of the behavior performed by expatriate managers in subsidiary organizations is to change the inherent cognition and behavior towards time of employees in the subsidiary to a certain level, at which a temporal synchronization becomes feasible. However, because an individual's cognition is the result of a wide range of personal, cultural, and societal factors, it is extremely difficult to change. Instead of studying the change in cognition, it might be simpler to shift the focus on the change in attitude.

Attitude is defined as an evaluation of an object, ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive. There are two types of attitudes: cognition-based and affect-based (Insko & Schloplfer, 1967; Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). These two types are different in the dominance of affect during the attitude formation. For affect-based attitudes, the affective responses play the primary role and the attitude is formed with little cognitive appraisal. Subsequent to the affective responses, relevant information may be acquired to confirm or bolster the initially formed attitude. However, it does not account for the basic of the attitude formation. Meanwhile, for cognition-based attitudes, information is acquired first, and affect plays the additional role to form the attitude (Zanna & Rempel, 1988). In the case of time management practice transfer, although employees' inherent cognition of time is difficult to change, a change in their attitude towards time can still be expected if their affect, or in other words, their feeling of about the importance of time management exists. Hence, instead of the change in cognition, it might be easier to focus on the change in attitude towards time. Expatriate managers can change the attitude of local employees towards time while do not necessarily need to require them to substantially change their inherent cognition about time.

The study investigates the expatriate managers' course of actions that is aimed to influence the attitude and behavior towards time of local employees in subsidiary organizations. Figure 4.1 illustrates the boundary of expatriate managers' influence examined within the scope of this study.

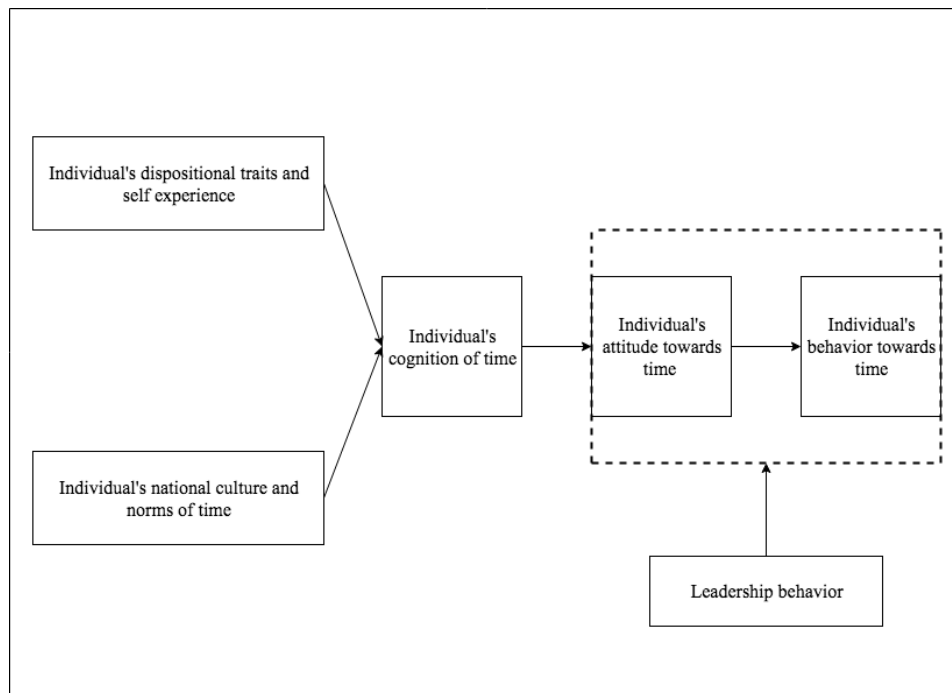


Figure 4.1: Scope of leader behavior examined in the study

## IV.2 Conceptual framework

Figure 4.2 illustrates the conceptual framework through which the study develops methods to explore the proposed questions.

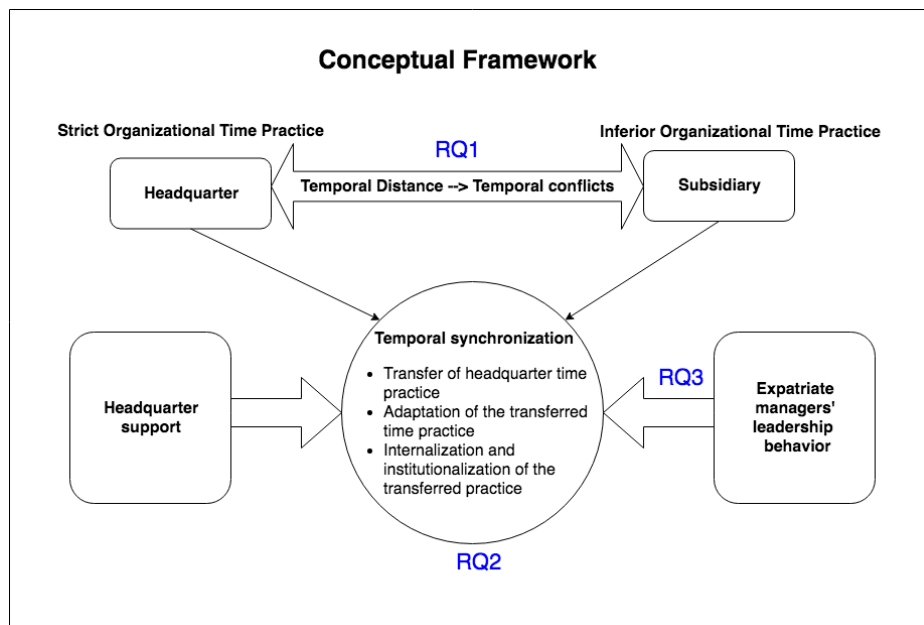


Figure 4.2: Conceptual framework of the study



### **IV.3 Proposed method for the study**

#### **IV.3.1 Unit of analysis**

The ultimate purpose of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of temporal synchronization between MNCs' headquarters and subsidiaries. More specifically, the intended context of the study is MNCs whose headquarters and subsidiaries have distant temporal cognition and behavior. As a study at the country level, it is important to specify the countries that are the objects of the study; this work focuses on Japanese MCNS in operating in Vietnam.

Japan and Vietnam are geographically close to each other. Both countries are located relatively close to China and share a long history of being subject to Chinese political influence. They both currently or have previously used Chinese characters as their main written language and are influenced by Confucian thought and Buddhism (Huang & Chang, 2017). Nevertheless, according to Hofstede (2001), they differ distinctly in aspects of some cultural dimensions. Japan scores significantly higher than Vietnam on Individualism (46 vs. 20), Uncertainty Avoidance (92 vs. 30) and Masculinity (95 vs. 40). On the other aspects, the two countries do show differences, but at a moderate level, for example, Long-term orientation (88 vs. 57) and Power distance (54 vs. 70). This study selects countries that are culturally close to each other as a way to minimize the effect of national culture on the final results. For this reason, instead of choosing an extreme pair of countries, this study recruited Japan and Vietnam as the countries under analysis.

Another reason to recruit the two countries as the research objects is the gap in their economic development. Japan witnessed spectacular social and economic growth in the 1980s after the Meiji Restoration. After the Second World War, the country rapidly recovered from devastation and became the world's second-largest economy in the 1970s. Meanwhile, Vietnam has a long history of struggling with wars, colonialism, and invasion by the Chinese, French, and Americans. The country's economy became open only after the economic reform Doi Moi in 1986 (Freeman, 1996; Tran & Yoon, 2008). As of 2019, despite being the world's fastest-growing economy, Vietnam is far behind Japan in terms of economic development. This gap in industrialization provides an interesting clue to expect a gap in time management practices between the two countries, as suggested by Levine and Norenzayan (1999), and specifically that temporal perception is highly embedded in growing economies.

#### **IV.3.2 Methods**

This study employs mixed methods followed by a case study to investigate three proposed research questions. Since temporal synchronization in MNCs is a new research domain, prior knowledge and theories related to the topic are deficient. It is therefore reasonable to start with

a qualitative study to seek the views of managers on international assignments concerning whether they think that temporal distance between two countries can cause managerial issues for MNCs. The purpose is to obtain in-depth information on the focused topic from those who actually experience it.

#### **IV.3.2.1 Mixed methods**

##### **IV.3.2.1.1 Mixed methods and its typologies**

The mixed methods approach to research “focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The concept of mixed method was first proposed by Jick (1979) as a means to seek convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods in social science research. The combination of both methods allows researchers to reach a more persuasive answer to their research question. Further, mixed methods give researchers the opportunity to highlight the similarities and differences between particular aspects of a phenomenon (Bernadic et al., 2007). These advantages play an important role in increasing the validity of the findings by using more than just one source of data. In the field of business research, the mixed methods approach is arguably effective in gaining a deeper, broader understanding of the phenomenon than studies that employ only one approach (Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006).

There are numerous designs and typologies to use in mixed methods depending on the level of integration of methods (fully or partly mixed), the sequence of qualitative and quantitative components (concurrent or sequential in data collection), and the emphasis of components (equal or dominant; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Regardless of the design and typologies, the ultimate purpose of any mixed methods study is to clarify the purpose of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods, since this is a critical determinant of how to design the study. More specifically, clarification in the purpose of using mixed methods can help researchers determine how the techniques relate to one another and how the findings of each method’s study should be integrated (Onwuegbuzie & Teddie, 2003).

Creswell (2006) has summarized four approaches to mixed methods design: the triangulation design, the embedded design, the explanatory design, and the exploratory designs. The triangulation design is the most common approach to mixed methods, and its goal is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic to achieve the best understanding of the research problem (Morse, 1991). This design is used when a researcher intends to compare and contrast results from both quantitative and qualitative data or to validate the results of quantitative results

with qualitative data. Because of this research purpose, quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time, and both have equal weight. It is noteworthy that the collection of these two data sets is concurrent but from separate sources. They are also analyzed independently by using the techniques traditionally used for each data type and eventually merged at the result interpretation part.

The embedded design is a mixed methods approach in which one data set plays the main role and the other is used in a supportive manner to supplement the insufficiency of the main data set (Creswell et al., 2003). Researchers use this approach when they have several questions to answer and each type of question requires different types of data. Studies including experiments are the most likely to use this type of mixed methods. The embedded design is particularly useful when a researcher needs to include qualitative or quantitative data to answer a research question within a largely quantitative or qualitative study. For instance, in an experimental study, quantitative data can be included at the end, after the researcher shows the results of the experiments, as an explanation for the results obtained.

In the explanatory design, quantitative data is introduced first, followed by the qualitative data. Qualitative data plays the role of explaining or building upon initial quantitative results. This approach is suitable when a researcher needs to use qualitative data to explain significant (or insignificant) or unexpected results, or to use quantitative participant characteristics to guide purposeful sampling for a qualitative phase (Creswell et al., 2003). With explanatory design, the study is conducted in two phases, starting with the collection and analysis of the quantitative data. After, qualitative data is collected and analyzed so that it follows the results of the first quantitative phase. In this research approach, researchers usually put greater emphasis on the quantitative methods than the qualitative methods. Typically, in the second phase, qualitative methods in the form of in-depth interviews are conducted to explain the results obtained from the quantitative data.

Similar to the explanatory design, the exploratory design is also a two-phase research approach in which the results of the first method help develop the second method. However, in this research design, the qualitative study is conducted first, followed by quantitative study. Because of its qualitative design at the beginning, this research approach is best suited to exploring a phenomenon. It is useful when a researcher wants to develop an instrument that is not yet available or to identify variables to study quantitatively at a later date. Using this research design, researchers start by collecting qualitative data, and based on it, they identify variables or develop hypotheses to test in the subsequent quantitative method phase. In contrast to the explanatory design, the exploratory design put greater emphasis on the qualitative data.

#### **IV.3.2.1.2 Rationale for using mixed methods for this study**

Each mixed methods research design has its own advantages and disadvantages regarding the availability of resources, time, and funding, as well as the efforts the researchers have to make in collecting data, planning a timetable for each method, and merging research results. It is highly recommended that researchers evaluate their own expertise and consider the qualitative and quantitative skills that they possess when choosing which mixed methods to use. Nevertheless, the ultimate reason to select a particular design must be largely based on the research problem that the researcher intends to study (Creswell et al., 2003).

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to explore the phenomenon of temporal synchronization between an MNC's headquarter and its subsidiary. As stated earlier, to date, there are no prior studies that investigate this issue at the country level. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a qualitative study first to obtain a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2003). For this reason, the exploratory mixed methods design is selected to investigate the research questions.

The exploratory mixed methods design has two common variants: the instrument development model and the taxonomy development model. Both models begin with a preliminary qualitative phase and end with a quantitative phase. However, the ways the researcher merges the two phases are different. The instrument development model is used when the researcher needs to develop a quantitative instrument based on the findings of the qualitative study. In this regard, the qualitative results play the role of guiding the development of items and scales for a quantitative survey. The researcher then collects data to validate the instruments developed in the earlier phase. In this design, the two phases of the research are connected through the development of the instrument items. Because of this, in this variant, researchers tend to place more emphasis on the quantitative phase. On the other hand, the taxonomy development model is used when the qualitative phase is conducted with the purpose of identifying important variables or to develop an emergent theory. The subsequent quantitative phase then tests or studies the results of the qualitative phase in more detail (Morgan, 1998; Tashakkori, 1998). Researchers use this variant model when they want to formulate research questions or create hypotheses based on qualitative findings and use quantitative method to answer the questions.

Following the recommendation of Creswell et al. (2003), this study employs the taxonomy development model of the exploratory design as the approach to the proposed research problem. In the initial qualitative phase, data was collected through interviews with top managers who currently working in Japanese MNCs' subsidiaries in Vietnam. The purpose of this qualitative phase was two-fold. First, it aims to test whether temporal distance between the two countries

actually causes difficulties in business management at the subsidiary worksite. Through in-depth interviews with those who have actually experienced the situation, detailed information was gathered to illustrate which management difficulties existed and how they manifested. This is to answer the first research question, “In the context of cross-cultural business, what are the managerial problems caused by temporal distance between a headquarters and its subsidiary?” Second, the qualitative phase also inspects which leader behaviors might be effective in fostering local employees’ acceptance of the headquarters’ time management practice. Based on these results, hypotheses were developed and tested in the second phase, with quantitative data collected from another source. The two phases together help the researcher holistically answer the third research question, “How can leader behaviors influence employee cognition and behavior towards time?”

#### **IV.3.2.2 Case study**

##### **IV.3.2.2.1 The case study and its typologies**

A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). Woodside and Wilson (2003) have provided a broader definition in which a case study is defined as an “inquiry focusing on describing understanding, predicting, and/or controlling the individual (i.e., process, animal, person, household, organization, group, industry, culture, or nationality)” (p. 493). Case studies are concerned with how and why things happen, and this characteristic allows the examination of contextual realities and the differences between what was planned and what actually happened (Anderson, 1993). Instead of focusing on the quantitative aspects, such as studying an entire organization, the case study research method concentrates on a particular issue, event, entity, or unit of analysis. Skinner (1996, p21) has highlighted this feature of case study research as “instead of studying a thousand rats for one hour each, or a hundred rats for ten hours each, the investigator is likely to study one rat for a thousand hours.”

As a research method that restricts the number of research objects to one, the case study has been criticized for a lack of rigor. Furthermore, based on the uniqueness in the choice of case, and the way it is conducted, and the data analysis, this method is often charged with non-replicability, subjective conclusions, and an inability to generalize conclusions (Creswell, 2014). Nevertheless, the distinguishing advantages of the case study are undeniable. First, it examines the object with a holistic approach that allows the researcher to capture a broad picture of the phenomenon instead of obtaining only small pieces of information (Stake, 2005). Second, case study research has the potential to provide detailed explanations of the relationships among the variables

understudy (Dul & Hak, 2008). Because of these merits, the case study method is strongly recommended when there is a focus on contemporary phenomena within a real-life context (Yin, 2003) and when in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991).

Yin (2003) has proposed three types of case study: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Exploratory case studies seek answers to the questions “what” or “who.” This type of case study is used when the researcher wants to gather data to generate hypotheses that will be tested in a subsequent piece of research, such as a large-scale survey. On the other hand, explanatory case studies tend to answer the “how” and “why” questions. It is employed when there is a need to explore cause-effect relationships or to study how events happen. Descriptive case studies describe a particular phenomenon within its context. Researchers select this type of case study to develop a document that fully illuminates the intricacies of an experience (Stake, 1995). Descriptive case study is often used to present answers to a series of questions based on theoretical constructs (Yin, 2003).

#### **IV.3.2.2.2 Rationale for choosing the case study for this study**

The descriptive case study method was chosen to seek answers to all of the proposed research questions, particularly the second one, “How do MNCs synchronize temporal cognition and behavior between the headquarters and the subsidiary?” There are two specific reasons to select this research method. First, the ultimate purpose of this study is to give readers a comprehensive understanding of a little-known phenomenon: temporal synchronization at the country level. The descriptive case study method gives the researcher an opportunity to study what actually happened in a company that experienced the process of synchronizing a headquarters’ and subsidiary’s temporal cognition and behavior. The descriptive interpretation of the findings will ensure the transparency of the collected data and thus help honestly illustrate the dynamics of the synchronization process. Second, there is a descriptive theory to support the description of the phenomenon, which ensures the rigor of the conclusion generated from the case (Yin, 2003).

#### **IV.4 Design of studies**

To review, this research employs exploratory mixed methods with the taxonomy development model, followed by a descriptive case study to answer three proposed research questions.

Each study is presented separately in each subsequent chapter with its own findings. A final synthesized summary of these three studies’ findings is presented in the last chapter.

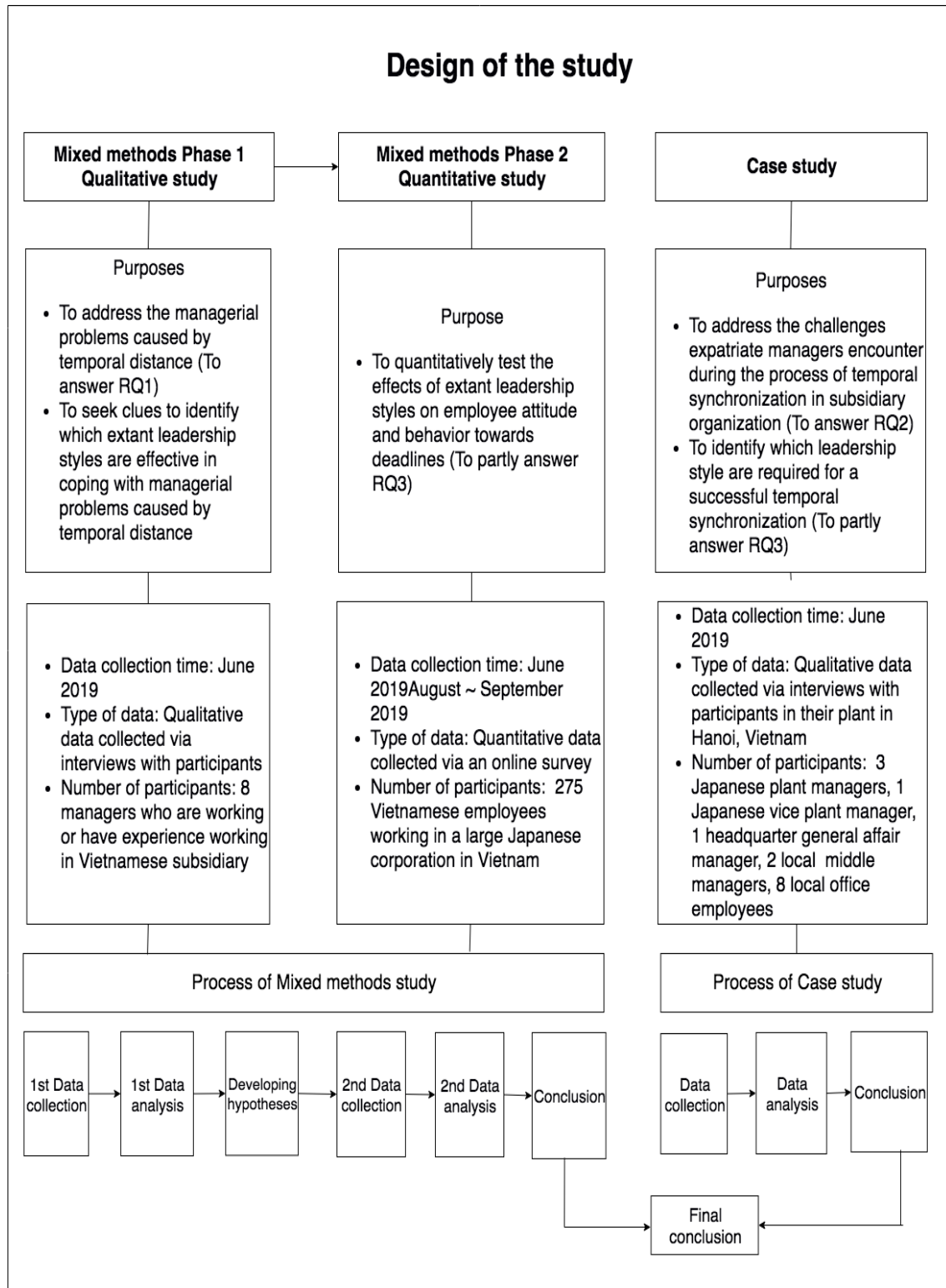


Figure 4.2: Design of the study

## **CHAPTER V: MIXED METHODS RESEARCH**

### **V.1 Phase one: Qualitative research**

#### **V.1.1 Purposes of the study**

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study is two-fold. First, it examines how temporal distance between a headquarters (represented by managers sent from the MNC's headquarters) and its subsidiary (represented by local managers and local employees) actually causes managerial problems. Second, it seeks to gain the initial opinions of managers about solutions to the problem.

#### **V.1.2 Research design**

##### **Sampling and interviews**

This study employed the qualitative method with in-depth interviews conducted with Japanese managers who currently working or with experience working at their company's subsidiary worksite in Vietnam. Due to the difficulty in traffic access, one interview was conducted via telephone, and another was conducted via email, and the interviewees typed answers to the questions sent in the form of a Word document. In total, eight interviews were conducted. Information regarding the participants, interview place, time, and means of interviewing are given in the Appendix. All face-to-face and telephone interviews took the form of an open dialogue (Bernard, 1995). Except for the email-based interview, all the others were semi-structured with open-ended questions, which allowed the interviewees to freely demonstrate their personal opinions in order to gain in-depth information (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Kvale, 1996).

The language of the interviews was Japanese. Since the interviewer is not a Japanese native speaker, the interview questions were prepared and sent to the interviewees in advance to prevent misunderstanding of the questions' content due to the language barrier. The Vietnamese nationality of the interviewer may have made the interviewees hesitant to discuss sensitive issues regarding culture. However, the interviewer presented herself as independent and encouraged the interviewees to honestly say what they thought about the Vietnamese employees' attitude and behavior towards time. All interviewees took part in the interview voluntarily and were promised that their company and personal information would appear anonymously in the dissertation for confidential purposes. With participant approval, all vocal interviews were audio-recorded to ensure a full transcript (Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

##### **Field observation**



The Eight interviewees came from four different companies. The researcher was given the opportunity to visit two of the four companies and take a tour around the office and plants. The observation of employees' attitudes, the means of communication between managers and employees, the organization of the offices and plants (particularly the use of time measurement [i.e., clocks]), and the work task timetable were observed and recorded.

### **Samples**

All participants who were interviewed came from five Japanese companies that had subsidiaries in Vietnam. Their companies belong to three industries: manufacturing, consulting, and construction and housing. Half of them have office-based jobs, and the rest were plant-based. The official language of communication is Japanese in two companies and English for the rest. Descriptions of the participants are provided in Appendix A.

Six of them were working on international assignment at the time of their interview, and two were already repatriated. Participants were all male and aged from 30 to 55. Seven were on the top management board, and only one was a non-position expatriate. The time spent in their Vietnamese subsidiaries varied from three months to 13 years. Two participants had experience working overseas for the same company prior to assignment in Vietnam, and another two experienced frequent, intermittent long business trips to Vietnam before officially starting work in their Vietnamese subsidiary. All participants reported learning about Vietnamese culture from various sources (books, the internet, friends, or colleagues) before coming to Vietnam. Only one participant rated himself as fluent in both oral and written Vietnamese, and another two said that they were confident with their skill in communicating at the primary level.

It is important to note that four of the managers who were interviewed came from firm X, which also appears later in the case study. In the scope of the mixed methods, only the interview content related to the purpose of the phase one qualitative study is analyzed.

### **Field notes**

Hand-written notes were taken during all interviews and enabled the researcher to track key points for subsequent data analysis purposes. They served as a means of ensuring trustworthiness for the transcribed interview data. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest, each interview's field notes included the date, time, and topics the interviewees mentioned. The topics addressed in the field notes included observations about the interviewee's attitude, particular events or experiences recalled, emerging themes the interviewees suggested after open-ended questions, and distinct points that distinguished the interviewee experience from that of others.

### **Pilot interviews**

Prior to the actual interviews, two pilot interviews were conducted with Japanese participants who had previous experience working in a Japanese company in Vietnam. Yin (2009) has recommended using pilot interviews as a way to develop relevant lines of questions and to assist with the process of refining data collection plans and procedures. The researchers carefully studied feedback from the pilot interviewees regarding the contents of the questions, method of asking, and nuances of the words used. In response to the suggestions of pilot interviewees, some questions were modified in order to enable the researcher to obtain richer information from the subjects.

### **Methods of analysis**

The final qualitative data set consisted of data from interviews, field observation, and field notes. Data analysis was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, interview transcripts were carefully reviewed several times to seek “recurring regularities” (Merriam, 1988, p. 180). Quotes and phrases from the interviewees that were significant to the research questions were highlighted. The constructivist grounded theory development method was employed to establish internal validity for the results. Categories that were consistent were identified, labeled, and placed in label folders representing each category (Merriam, 1998). Codes that were distinct from the rest or that seemed to contradict the mainstream analysis received special attention and were analyzed with more caution. Redundant codes that did not seem to help answer the research questions or create significant emerging theme were deleted (Moustakas, 1994). In the second phase, the coded interviews were then combined with the field notes and worksite observation data. Codes were clustered into themes and certified again across the data sources. After that, the interview data were tested for the last time with the conceptual frameworks suggested in the literature review (Figure 2.1). Finally, the categorized themes were integrated and refined until they reached solidity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

### **Trustworthiness**

Qualitative studies are often criticized for a lack of trustworthiness. Guba (1981) has proposed a set of four criteria to establish trustworthiness for qualitative research: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability. In this study, data were triangulated using three data collecting methods: interviews, field notes, and site observations to increase credibility (or internal validity). The researcher increased dependability (or reliability) by providing an audit document that describes how data were collected and analyzed in detail. Transferability (external validity) was assured by using rich, thick description to illustrate the findings (Merriam, 1998). Finally, confirmability (or objectivity) was secured through the researcher’s efforts to control for bias by constantly comparing and contrasting data, seeking the phenomenon in studies conducted at

different levels (i.e., temporal synchronization at the group level), and seeking information about the phenomenon from various sources and viewpoints (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

### **V.1.3 Findings**

#### **V.1.3.1. Temporal distance-induced managerial problems perceived by managers**

Regardless of the time spent on their assignment in Vietnam, all participants agree that the temporal distance between Japanese and Vietnamese employees is substantial, regardless of the significant cultural similarities between the two countries. The difference is profound in both temporal cognition and behavioral aspects. Interviews with top managers who were experienced in working in local subsidiaries revealed that there is a large gap in the way employees on both sides perceive time (especially deadlines), their time orientation, and their behavior of managing time at work. In each aspect, the temporal differences manifest through distinctive attitudes and behaviors. Overall, however, all the attitudes and behaviors appear to be highly correlated to each other. Coding results show that the managerial difficulties induced by temporal distance can be broadly classified into two categories: (1) work efficiency problems and (2) human resource problems.

*First, all participants reported that temporal distance causes difficulties for companies to achieve work efficiency.*

*(1) Tardiness.* Local employees tend to pay little attention to arriving at work on time or meeting a deadline. Tardiness occurs in all companies interviewed and in two main forms: being late for work and being late for a company meeting or event. Lateness at work was reported to occur in both office and plant employees. It is important to acknowledge that the definition of lateness in Japan and Vietnam is subtly different. To the Vietnamese employees, lateness means arriving at the office after the starting time, but to Japanese headquarters, it means arriving at a time that does not allow adequate preparation to prepare for the job to start. By this definition, Japanese managers expected their employees to come 15 or 20 minutes earlier to the office, but their Vietnamese employees preferred to arrive just in time. The influence of lateness on work performance is perceived differently by managers who do not share the same work nature. Compared to office-based work, plant-based work is more affected by employees' lateness. Due to its nature, plants are labor intensive and require the collective efforts of all members to respect time; the work line cannot start if employees are absent. Managers in the manufacturing company all stated that they struggled with the issue of workers' tardiness. It directly affected the efficiency and subsequently the credibility of the firm when an order from a customer was not produced and delivered on time.

**(2) Incapability of scheduling work.** Japan and Vietnam are very different in terms of the way they perceive what deadlines mean. Contrary to the Japanese, the Vietnamese counterparts do not have the habit of specifying a time that a task or an event must be completed.

*In Vietnam, the mindset that something must be done before a specific time does not really exist in the first place. When people are given the work, they do not think of a time they have to or should finish it. They just do it, and when it is done, it is done. This is very much different to the Japanese way. (Interview with Mr. G.K from company Y)*

All of the managers interviewed show a cross-industry consensus that the scheduling skills of Vietnamese employees were weak and regard this as the major reason it is difficult for Vietnamese employees to work towards deadlines. Expatriate managers rate their Vietnamese employees high on their competence to work quickly on a single given task. Some revealed that their employees in the local subsidiary are more efficient compared to those in the headquarters. However, regarding complex tasks that require task-doers to perform several steps, local employees are ranked as inferior to their Japanese counterparts.

The concepts of goals and schedules are vague to most Vietnamese employees. The final goal is of course important, but in order to reach it, it is critical to set milestones. When one milestone is not completed on time, the rest of the schedule is affected, and task-doers must reschedule the remaining activities. However, Vietnamese employees tend to underestimate the importance of these actions. They do not emphasize achieving milestones on time; usually, they simply focus on the ultimate goal and pay little attention to the process.

*Very often, the work is not seriously paid attention to until two or three days before a deadline. At that time, employees start working and devote all their energy to that. With that manner, only 70% to 90% of the required completeness is met. Again, our focus is not just the timing of the deadline, but also the quality of the job at the time of the deadline. (Interview with Mr. H.P from company P)*

Furthermore, the opinion that Vietnamese employees do not usually make an effort to control the starting and ending time of a task was also prevalent among subjects. They tend to be influenced by the workflow instead of proactively taking control over the temporal aspect of work. If the work requires the coordination of another party, employees tend to wait until the other party finishes his or her, job even when they do not seem likely to meet the deadline, rather than taking actions to influence the situation. The loose attitude towards time deadlines has led to the carelessness of the cooperator's work progress, which eventually resulted in a disrupted schedule for group work.

*Plant work goes through many processes that require the coordination of all employees. The output of the person in the first process will become the input of the person in the next process. But employees in the later process do not care how the first process is being done. If he does not get the output of the first process to start his process, he will be waiting*

*until it comes, instead of trying to figure out what happened. (Interview with Mr. O.M from firm X)*

Another demonstration of temporal distance in terms of time orientation is the impulsiveness in the decision making of Vietnamese employees. Work-related enquiries are usually made in a spontaneous manner and do not allow the task-doer to be able to allocate time for it. Similarly, local employees tend not to report decisions that affect the company on a larger scale. The most prevalent example of this subjects reported is sudden absences and turnover intention.

*It happened to me quite often that employees suddenly came to me and said that they are quitting the job tomorrow. In some other cases, they said they are leaving next week, without handling over their current work to the other. (Interview with Mr. H.P from company P)*

**(3) Low sense of preventive coping.** All subjects give a convergent opinion that Vietnamese people seem to be strongly inclined towards the present. Simultaneously, their orientation towards the future is relatively weaker than that of their Japanese counterparts. One of the manifestations of present time orientation among Vietnamese employees is satisfaction with the present condition. Simultaneously, the weak orientation to the future seems is observed through the neglect of preparation for meetings or events. While Japanese managers show high respect to prior preparation to ensure the readiness of work before it starts, their Vietnamese employees are more prone to starting actions only when the time comes. Similarly, all participants observed that their Vietnamese employees do not attempt to think of solutions to prevent a problem from occurring like their Japanese employees. Instead of “preventing,” they tend to think of how to “deal” with the problem after it happens.

Obviously, employees’ loose attitude towards time and scheduling affects the productivity and quality of the work, and the effect size is constant between both manufacturing and non-manufacturing companies. However, this is not the only difficulty these companies face. Employees’ disrespect for deadlines and weak time-managing skills are a liability to the management in both a physical and mental sense. Managers experience stress because the work performance is not as expected. They also have to spend more time monitoring the process, and companies sometimes have to bear extra cost by hiring an outside party (i.e., a business consulting firm) to ensure the progress of the work or projects. In a broader sense, because the work outcome cannot be guaranteed with a loose attitude towards time, the headquarters has to continue sending expatriates to manage the business in local subsidiaries. If the level of the work schedule and the management of local employees and managers do not improve, the companies face the cost of sending expatriates to secure the subsidiary performance.

*We are not a big company with an abundant budget for sending employees to support the overseas assignments. If it is not for the purpose of technical transfer or product development, we wish to minimize the number of Japanese expatriates here. However, at that moment, it was still hard to do that, since we are not yet able to count on our local scheduling and managing skills. (Interview with Mr. KI from firm X, participant recalls what occurred in the past)*

***Second, the difference in temporal distance creates human resource management problems in the subsidiary.*** These problems mostly encompass employees' competence enhancement and turnover.

Participants noted that the present time orientation of Vietnamese employees makes it difficult for the company to implement or improve new systems or encourage employees to learn new skills. A participant from a construction firm reported that Vietnamese employees in his company do not show a positive attitude towards organizational change. According to him, most employees place a strong value on the stability of the situation and do not appear to favor and commit to making continuous improvement (Kaizen) at work. When a change in the system causes a direct impact on a particular employee, it is likely that employee will quit the job. He noted that, in Vietnam, labor market liquidity is fairly high. Simultaneously, the country's economy is swiftly growing, which creates a large demand for labor. Unlike Japan, where the recruitment of new graduates is still common, in Vietnam, highly experienced job-seekers are preferable. Employees therefore have no difficulty changing their job when they feel the current job or workplace requires them to change or learn new knowledge or skills, even though these may benefit them later.

*Many employees do not like change. If there is a change in the organizational system or a requirement to make improvement for the work process that directly influences the person, most probably he will quit and find another "peaceful" workplace. (Interview with Mr. J.K from company W)*

A participant from manufacturing company X (office-based work) also demonstrated that their local employees are prone to keeping their traditional work habits even though they know that it is detrimental to their company. Employees do not seem interested in learning new skills, for instance, time-managing skills, which would help them create better work-managing methods and benefit themselves in the long term.

In another vein, participants from the manufacturing company gave another example of the difficulty their company has struggled with due to employees' short-term orientation. Their company is located in an industrial zone where many other companies operate in the same manufacturing industry. Employees and workers come from the same neighborhood and live relatively close to each other. They have many sources of information, and when they know that

another company in the same zone is paying higher, they will quit the current job. As they operate in a labor-intensive industry, sudden and frequent turnover intention has caused the company constant recruitment problems. A short-term orientation is observed in both white-collar and blue-collar workers. According to this participant, most Japanese companies in the industrial zone face the same problem of securing employees' commitment.

*Job-hopping is prevalent in the area we are operating in. Plant workers are not that difficult to find. We can manage to recruit new ones in a short time, but we are mentally prepared that the new one will again leave any time. I met some employees who left, and they admitted to me that the newly offered pay is higher but included extra work hours or was without any welfare like what we were offering... Engineers are the biggest loss for the company if they quit because we have invested a lot in training them. (Interview with Mr. O.M from firm X)*

In sum, from managers' perspectives, temporal distance between the Japanese headquarters and the Vietnamese subsidiary was found to cause problems regarding (1) work efficiency and quality and (2) the organizational incapability of developing employees' competence and commitment. The managers interviewed perceive both issues as critical. However, through the researcher's observations and comparison of the time they spent describing each problem, the issue of securing work efficiency appears to be more urgent and receive more concern from managers. All managers showed great interest in illustrating the phenomenon in detail and declared that, at the moment, this is the issue that receives their attention the most.

#### **V.1.3.2 Managers' opinions about the time issue in Vietnamese subsidiaries**

All managers who were interviewed declared that they are highly concerned about the problem of Vietnamese employees' time management. Among the problems identified above, the most urgent and critical to managers at the moment is how to make employees change their attitude and behavior towards time and deadlines. However, depending on the industry, the managers' emphasis on this issue is different. Managers from plant-based workplaces showed more concern about employees' tardiness and work-scheduling incapability than those from office-based workplaces.

All managers noted that, at the beginning, the differences in the way the two countries perceive and act towards time (i.e., deadlines) provoked a high level stress for them and anxiety for the headquarters. However, no signs of temporal distance-induced conflicts were reported. Managers revealed that the headquarters and they themselves acknowledged that the problem was in the difference in the cognition of the two parties. However, they do not blame local employees for their incompetence in managing time. In lieu of that, all managers demonstrated that they tried to prevent the temporal distance-induced tensions between the two parties.

Furthermore, all managers attempt to apply the time management practice of the headquarters, which demands respect for time and deadlines, to employees in the subsidiary instead of allowing the local practice. At the same time, they acknowledge that the imposition of the Japanese way of managing time on Vietnamese subsidiaries is infeasible due to the temporal cultural difference between the two countries. In order to avoid this paradox, managers demonstrate more effective leadership to cope with the situation. Furthermore, they make the practice less strict, which means that the time management practice in the subsidiary is modified to be less stringent compared to the authentic one of the headquarters. In other words, they are prone to using the “hybrid strategy” between the globalization and localization of time management practices. Managers stated that what they try to change is not the way an employee thinks about time, but his attitude and behavior towards time.

Finally, managers mentioned many organizational systems that their companies use to monitor employees’ behaviors towards punctuality and deadlines, such as making them on of “human resource management KPIs” or investing in an “automatic time card machine” to deal with employees’ time-related issues. Nevertheless, according to managers, these systems are effective only as a monitoring tool, not as a “problem solving method.” Rather than expecting this problem to be solved by the organizational HRM system, managers agreed that the company and managers themselves should view and handle employees’ time-related issues with more humanistic solutions.

#### **V.1.4 Conclusion**

The first qualitative phase of mixed methods was conducted through interviews with managers who worked for or had experience working in their company’s subsidiary in Vietnam. The analysis of the data gathered from participants’ experiences results in two principal findings.

First, Vietnamese and Japanese employees are substantially distant from each other in terms of cognition and behavior towards time. This temporal distance was reported to provoke managerial difficulties for Japanese managers in the subsidiary. At the country level, temporal distance was found to be negatively associated with organizational efficiency. This detrimental effect occurs through the extra expenditure of the organizational resource-time to secure the individual and organizational outcomes (Doob, 1971) and the incapability of organizational members (members and members/ members and managers) to coordinate and synchronize actions (McGrath & Rotchford, 1983; McGrath & Kelly, 1986). As an attempt to mitigate temporal distance-induced organizational inefficiency, MNCs have to implement situation-adaptive methods in which detailed managing and monitoring system are necessary. This incurs higher costs for MNCs



to secure the organizational performance compared to operating in countries with a lower temporal distance.

Differences in the time orientation also created several human resource-related problems in the subsidiary. The strong focus on the present time and local employees' short-term orientation are strongly connected to the fragile commitment to the organization. Provided the high liquidity of the labor market, managers in local subsidiaries struggle with how to retain their human resources. In addition, the strong focus on the present and the preference for stable status quo were reported to impede employees' willingness to accept change and learn new knowledge, which directly affects the company's capability to enhance its competitive advantage and is detrimental to the quality of the human resources.

Second, similar to what was reported at the group level, this study found that temporal distance induces stress in managers. Nevertheless, this stress did not lead to profound dissatisfaction with the subsidiary, nor did it develop into tensions or conflicts between the two parties. Managers revealed that they thought of shifting the management style as a means to cope with the situation and prevent tensions.

Qualitative evidence from manager participants also revealed that managers make efforts to apply the headquarters' time management practice in the subsidiary workplace. However, the observed degree (moderate/intensive) and scope (the interpersonal level between managers and employee/organizational level) of the practice transfer vary depending on the experience of managers and the nature of their workplace. In either case, all managers used the adaptive strategy of transfer instead of the rigid imposition of the authentic headquarters' time-management practice.

## **V.2 Phase two: Quantitative research**

### **V.2.1 Purposes of the study**

This study was conducted as the second phase of the exploratory mixed methods research with the purpose of hypothesizing and testing the effects of leadership styles that might be effective in addressing the most urgent temporal distance-induced managerial issue identified in phase one: meeting deadlines. The focus is the investigation of leadership as a mechanism through which employees' attitudes towards deadlines result in the behavior of meeting the deadlines. Based on both the findings of the first phase of research and prior literature, this study proposes three types of supervisor behavior that foster the temporal attitude and behavior of employees: task-oriented behavior, leader-member exchange theory, and role-modeling behavior. The study starts with the review of the extant literature on these supervisor behaviors. Drawing on prior theories on both the topics of leadership and time management, this chapter creates a framework to explain how leader

behavior can influence the relationship between an employee's attitude and his behavior towards deadlines.

## **V.2.2 Theoretical background**

### **Attitude and behavior towards deadlines**

Attitude is broadly defined as “a person's evaluation of the entity in question” (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977, p. 889), or in other words, as “affective evaluation (favorable or unfavorable) with regard to particular objects or behavior” (Kroesen, Handy, & Chorus, 2017, p. 191). Although conceptual research has generally assumed that a person's attitude predicts his or her behavior, empirical evidence to date has indicated that the correlation between the two constructs is relatively low (Duncan & Stenbeck, 1988; LaPiere, 1934; Wicker, 1969). These results have led researchers to reject the attitude-behavior cause-effect relationship (Blumer, 1955). However, later studies that resulted in small yet significant correlations between the two constructs (Schuman & Johnson, 1976) brought back the optimistic view of the predicting role of attitude on behavior. To give a thorough answer to the weak predicting power of attitude on behavior, scholars came back to analyze the fundamental question of how attitude could guide behavior.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) introduced Theory of Reasoned Action to help address this question. The center of their explanation is based on the expectancy-value model, which posits that people consciously act in consistency with their desires. This theory proposes that attitude is one of the key determinants of behavior intention, and is influenced by two factors: the strength of behavioral beliefs and the evaluation of the potential outcome. Strength of behavioral beliefs refers to the extent to which an individual associates the performance of a certain behavior with a certain outcome. Evaluation of the potential outcomes refers to the belief that a certain behavior will lead to a favorable outcome (Ajzen, 2012; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The theory postulates that there is a direct impact between attitude and outcome. In other words, if one believes that a certain behavior will lead to a desirable outcome, then he or she is likely to possess a positive attitude towards the behavior, in turn, is more likely to take the action to perform the behavior.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1977) gave another explanation to the inconsistency between attitude and behavior found in previous studies. The two researchers have proposed that the correspondence of attitude and behavior depends strongly on the correspondence between the targets of the attitude and behavior in question. Alternatively stated, a specific attitude, or an attitude towards a behavior will best predict that specific behavior, whereas general attitudes will best predict general behaviors. Based on this explanation, the low correlation between attitude and behavior in past research might have happened as

the results of inappropriate measurement of attitude or a failure to select the kind of attitude that was not directly related to the targeted behavior.

Borrowing the logic of Theory of Reasoned Action, this study hypothesizes that MNCs' employees have high evaluation of the potential outcome of meeting a work deadline. This is because by respecting work deadlines, he or she would be highly evaluated by the supervisor. In addition, that would increase their key performance indicators, which would eventually result in higher evaluation by the organization. In this case, the employee's attitude towards meeting deadlines would be positive, and that in turn leads to the commitment of him or her in performing the behavior of meeting deadline. Hence, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H1: Employee attitude towards deadlines is a predictor of their behavior towards deadlines.*

## **Effects of leadership behaviors on employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines**

### **Task orientation leadership**

Task-oriented leadership is a behavioral approach in which the leader focuses on the tasks that must be performed in order to achieve certain goals or performance standards (Burke et al., 2006). This type of leadership is characterized by the behaviors of the leader in communicating with employees to clarify the objectives, set processes for the work, issue the deadlines, and provide guidance if they encounter challenges (Carsimir, 2001; Tabernero, Chambal, Curral., & Arana, 2009).

Task-oriented leadership has been criticized as autocratic because the leader draws on the punishment/ reward system to facilitate the work process. This may result in low work motivation and, subsequently, a lack of commitment from employees. Despite this disadvantage, this type of leadership is credited with maintaining the high standards of the work with optimal efficiency. Since task-oriented leadership is process-organized and deadline-driven, it works especially well when employees do not manage their time well. In such cases, the leader takes the role of both a facilitator and a monitor to assure that the job is completed on time.

MNC subsidiaries located in developing countries (mostly Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa) suffer from employees' low skill in managing time. Emerging economies' workplaces are characterized by a slower work pace and higher disrespect for deadlines compared to those of developed ones. As a result, the personal as well as organizational demand to learn time-management tactics to work efficiently has been overlooked. A strong emphasis on the present combined with a weak focus on the future impedes employees' ability to see events in the distant

future; they usually do not take into account what comes later (Nuttin, 1985). Therefore, the result of the work cannot be ensured.

Additionally, unlike those with a strong future time orientation, employees with a short one are not skilled at anticipating the consequences of their present activities for longer behavioral plans or projects. They tend to engage themselves in risky behaviors because the utility value of present actions decreases (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Husman & Lens, 1999). “Utility value” refers to “how well the task relates to current and future goals” (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). A task might be perceived as having positive value for an individual, as it leads to the achievement of important future goals. This is true even when the individual is not intrinsically interested in or motivated by the task. In other words, the future goals itself is the motivation of the current behavior. The ability to relate current behavior to future consequences, however, is weak among individuals with a short future orientation. In addition, they are also not highly capable of delaying current gratification to focus on a task that subsequently contributes to the success of the established goals because this type of time orientation is usually associated with low adaptive self-regulatory behavior (De Bilde et al., 2011). Thus, by issuing deadlines and building a detailed work schedule, leaders can increase the pressure on employees, which can be described as bringing future goals closer to them. Further, with close monitoring, leaders can check the results frequently between the process and prevent last-minute action. The study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2<sub>a-1</sub>: *Task-oriented leadership behavior predicts an employee’s attitude towards deadlines.*

H2<sub>a-2</sub>: *Task-oriented leadership behavior predicts an employee’s behavior towards deadline.*

Considering the effect of attitude on behavior discussed above, the study also proposes the following hypothesis:

H2<sub>a-3</sub>: *An employee’s attitude towards deadlines mediates the relationship between task oriented leadership behavior and his behavior towards deadlines.*

### **Leader-member exchange**

Among all the theories on leadership, LMX theory (Graen, Novak & Sommerkamp, 1982; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) is unique in its way of approaching the phenomenon. Instead of focusing only on leaders, the theory takes both leaders and members as the subjects of examination. The dyadic relationship of leaders and followers is the focal issue of the theory. Based on role making and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Graen, 1976), LMX theory states that leaders

develop an exchange with their followers, and the quality of this leader-member exchange relationship influences followers' attitudes and behaviors.

A high-quality relationship between two parties is built based on strong trust, emotions, and respect for each other, while low quality LMX relationships are often marked by economic exchange, mistrust, low respect, and a lack of loyalty (Bauer & Ergoden, 2015; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The quality of the LMX relationship has been found to relate to various organizational outcomes, such as employee job satisfaction (Volmer, Niessen, Spurk, Linz & Abele, 2011), task performance (Bauer & Green, 1996; Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & van den Heuvel, 2013; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999), organizational relationship behavior (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Volmer et al., 2011), and work engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

The better the relationship's quality, the higher the possibility that employers will exert themselves to deliver a better work performance in order to fulfill the trust the supervisor has developed in him. Furthermore, the close relationship with the supervisor might increase employees' motivation to work in order to meet the supervisor's expectations. The influence of LMX on employees' cognition change is more substantial when the organization's norm is oriented towards strict respect for deadlines. With time management practice transfer, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2<sub>b-1</sub>: *LMX predicts an employee's attitude towards deadlines.*

H2<sub>b-2</sub>: *LMX predicts an employee's behavior towards deadlines.*

Considering the effect of attitude on behavior discussed above, the study also proposes the following hypothesis:

H2<sub>b-3</sub>: *An employee's attitude towards deadlines mediates the relationship between LMX and his behavior towards deadlines.*

### **Supervisors as the role models**

Standard Western time-management practice is a new phenomenon for most business organizations in emerging economies. As discussed above, the adoption of this practice is accompanied by changing beliefs and values, which eventually leads to the transformation of organizational members' behavior towards time. During and after the process of practice transfer, employees must become familiar with and learn a new way of doing things. They must adjust their attitudes and behaviors to conform to newly transferred norms and rules.

Porter, Lawler, and Hackman (1975) have proposed three reinforcement strategies in which individuals' attitudes and behaviors are gradually shaped to confront the norms of the

organization: reinforcement for desired behaviors, non-reinforcement for non-preferred behaviors, and punishment for undesired behaviors. Reinforcement refers to the introduction of a condition that makes the desired behavior more likely to happen, continue, or be strengthened in the future. On the other hand, punishment refers to the introduction of a condition that makes the behavior less likely to happen, continue, or be strengthened. In these strategies, managers and supervisors use rewards and punishment to foster the formation of work attitudes or employee behaviors, as well as to discourage those that do not fit with the organization's current norms. Vroom (1964) has also discussed a similar approach to facilitating employee behavior change. His theory of expectancy explains the impact of direct reinforcement on the development of behavior and outcome expectancies. According to this theory, an individual behaves in a certain way because of the results (or rewards) he or she expects to gain from that behavior later.

Bandura (1969) has elaborated on the work by Vroom (1964) with his social learning theory. In this theory, he agrees with Vroom (1964) that a certain behavior is selected or formed partly because the individual expects that it will lead to reward. At the same time, he emphasizes the role of observing rewards given to a model who also follows that specific behavior. Bandura (1971) has referred to this as vicarious reinforcement, or more specifically, a tendency to repeat and duplicate behaviors for which others are rewarded. According to him, imitation and modeling play an important role in influencing learning and the formation of behaviors of the observing individuals.

From a different perspective, Gächter and Renner (2018) have explained the effect of a role model on employees' behavior change by noting that people's beliefs are strongly shaped by examining others' behaviors. Further, a shift in beliefs eventually leads to a shift in behavior. Research in the social sciences, especially in domains of pro-social behavior such as charitable giving, tax evasion, corporate culture, and corruption found evidence suggesting that people's behaviors are influenced by beliefs about others' behaviors (Luttmer & Singhal, 2014; Scholz & Lubell, 1988), as they tend to regard others' behavior as an example or guideline for their own behaviors.

There are many examples of people who can become role models, such as parents, friends, senior students, and exemplary coworkers. In the field of organizational management, the role models are usually considered those in managing or leading positions. This is because, among several people who can play the modeling role, leaders are those whose behavior is visible to followers. The positive attributes that the role models possess become the motivation that inspires followers to emulate their behavior in order to earn the same positive outcomes. Weiss (1977) has found empirical evidence supporting this notion. The results from his study of 141 pairs of

subordinates and supervisors indicate that subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' success and competence were positively correlated with the degree of behavior similarity the two parties displayed.

Leader behaviors also trigger employees' emulation through the mechanism of power perception (Michel & Grusec, 1966; Chartier & Weiss, 1974; Weiss, 1977; Merton, 1957). Leaders are in a particularly high position in which they can shape or influence employees' change in beliefs. Gächter and Renner (2018) have proposed that leaders who behave too selfishly, evade taxes, accept bribes, etc., may induce followers to do the same and may nurture people's beliefs that other people in the community do the same; this is because these behaviors are proven by people who hold the power. Another mechanism to explain the imitation of leader behavior is perceived leaders' reward power – the belief about how important a supervisor's or a leader's opinion is in employees' attainment of organizational rewards, such as a salary raise, a promotion, or better career opportunities within the organization. However, it is important to note that this mechanism works only when employee self-esteem is low (Weiss, 1977).

In line with the above literature, Brown and Trevino (2006) have postulated that the supervisor's behavior is often seen as conveying the expectations and intended norms of the organization. This is an implicit way for leaders to inform employees that the behavior is desirable in their organization and that employees should try to behave in the same way to conform to the organizational norms. A study by Ruiz-Palomino and Martinez-Canas (2011) on 4,500 employees in the banking and insurance industry in Spain showed that the supervisor's ethical role modeling is positively associated with employee ethical behavioral intention. It concluded that leaders serve as the moral ideology of followers when it comes to pro-social issues.

To briefly conclude, when an organization experiences a paradigm shift such as organizational change or practice transfer, leaders usually take the role of a model for employees to emulate. By looking at the attitudes and behaviors leaders display, employees subtly learn what is desirable and try to change or adapt their current behavior to meet the standard that the organization or leader expects. Supervisor attitudes and behaviors towards time may give them a hint on how seriously they should commit to the behavior of respecting deadlines. The study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2<sub>c-1</sub>: *Leader role model predicts an employee's attitude towards deadlines*

H2<sub>c-2</sub>: *Leader role model predicts an employee's behavior towards deadlines*

Considering the effect of attitude on behavior discussed above, the study also proposes the following hypothesis:

H2<sub>c-3</sub>: *An employee's attitude towards deadlines mediates the relationship between leader role model and his behavior towards deadlines.*

In addition to the direct impact on employee attitude and behavior, based on the contents of actions displayed by the three leadership behaviors, this study argues that there should also be the moderating effects of supervisor behaviors on the relationship between employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines. As is mentioned in the previous section, attitude and behavior of an individual towards a certain object is not always highly consistent (Duncan & Stenbeck, 1988; LaPiere, 1934; Wicker, 1969). Even when an employee shows a positive attitude towards time and deadlines at works, there are many reasons preventing him or her from performing the actions to meet deadlines. For instance, the individual may lack the motivation to do that, or the work environment does not encourage punctuality and respect for deadlines.

A large number of researchers have postulated that the strength of the relationship between attitude and behavior is influenced by various moderating factors (Norman, 1975; Schwartz, 1978; Fazio & Zanna, 1978). In this study, the focus is put on leadership behaviors. By displaying task-oriented leadership behavior, supervisors create an environment in which all employees are highly aware of the necessity of respecting work deadlines. Furthermore, the strict monitoring behavior of supervisors can be seen as the motivational condition that facilitates employees to perform advanced temporal behaviors towards deadlines (Yukl, 2002). The study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H3a: Task-oriented leadership moderates the relationship between an employee's attitude and his behavior towards deadlines. The higher task-oriented leadership, the stronger the relationship between the employee's attitude and behavior towards deadlines.*

High LMX provides important materials and instructional resources to help employees engage in learning activities (Bezuijen et al, 2010). Hence, the study argues that high LMX increases the likelihood that employees will receive education and training on time management tactics from their supervisors, which are the tools to help them actualize the process of transforming the attitude towards time into positive time respecting behaviors. In addition, a high level of LMX indicates a good quality and high frequency of communication between supervisors and employees (Fairhurst, 1993). The frequent dyadic communications allows the feedback from supervisors to quickly reach employees and help them certify whether their time management methods are performed in a right way and result in outcomes that benefit the organization. The mechanism of instructing and delivering feedbacks provides reasons to hypothesize the moderating effect of LMX on the relationship between employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines. The study proposes the following hypothesis:



*H3b: LMX moderates the relationship between an employee's attitude and his behavior towards deadlines. The higher LMX, the stronger the relationship between the employee's attitude and behavior towards deadlines.*

Similar to the mechanism displayed by task-oriented leadership behavior, supervisor's role modeling behavior is also effective in creating an environment that foster employees' awareness of serious time management practice, which, in turn, encourages employees to turn positive temporal attitude into actual actions of meeting the work deadlines. Furthermore, the attitude of supervisors towards deadlines serves as a mechanism to make deadlines become an organizational norm that must be respected and complied by all employees (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Ruiz-Palamino & Martinez-Canas, 2011). These two mechanisms trigger the motivation of employees to develop behavior to conform the deadlines-related requirement by the organization, thus strengthens the association between employee attitude and behavior of meeting deadlines. The study proposes the last hypothesis as follows:

*H3c: Supervisor role model moderates the relationship between an employee's attitude and his behavior towards deadlines. The higher the standard of the role model, the stronger the relationship between the employee's attitude and behavior towards deadlines.*

Figure 5.1 and 5.2 denotes the hypothetical models to investigate the proposed mediating and moderating effects.

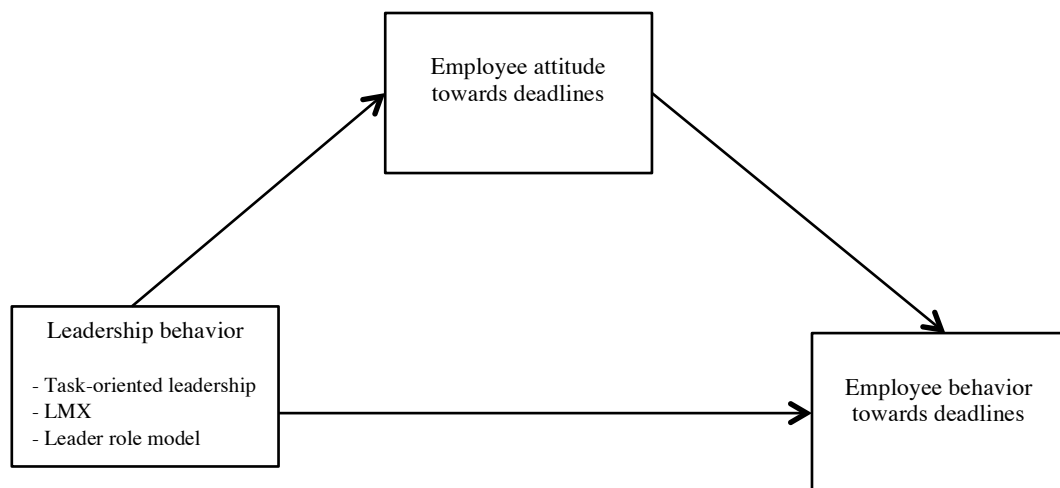


Figure 5.1: “Leadership behavior” linking to “employee behavior towards deadlines” mediated by “employee attitude towards deadlines”

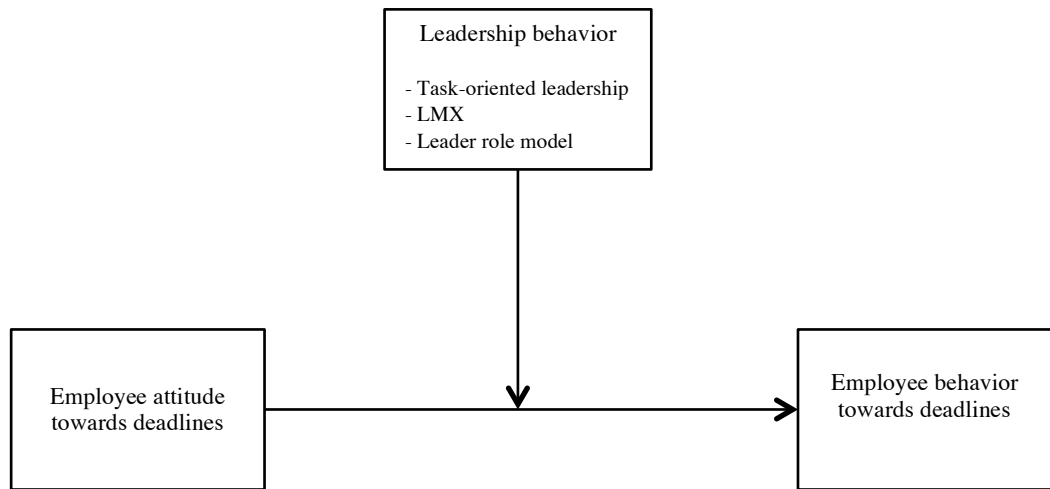


Figure 5.2: “Employee attitude towards deadlines” linking to “employee behavior towards deadlines” moderated by “leadership behavior”

### V.2.3 Method

#### Sampling

Data were collected from an online survey from early August until the end of September of 2019. The participants are employees who currently working in a Japanese company’s subsidiary in Vietnam. The subsidiary has operated in Vietnam since 2003. According to the HR managers, due to the high labor market liquidity, the recruitment of new employees is conducted frequently to avoid a labor shortage. This information implies that the transfer and adaptation of time management practice in new employees occurs quite often among individual employees.

Due to the length of the questionnaire, and as a method to avoid common method bias, the survey was divided into two phases. In each phase, the link containing the questionnaire was sent to employees via an independent link with the support of the company’s HR department. However, participants however did not need to provide any personal information (i.e., email, name, employee number) to access the link. The questionnaire also did not contain any questions requiring them to provide their personal information. Participants were informed at the beginning at the survey in phase one that (1) their responses would be sent directly to the researcher and not via their company, (2) all the information they provided would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes, and (3) their participation was not compulsory, and they could stop the survey any time they wanted.

In each phase, participants were given two weeks to complete their answers. After the first phase ended, the researcher waited three weeks to send the link for the questionnaire to them in the second phase. During the two phases, respondents were asked to create an identical passcode so

that the researcher could match their answers afterwards. In total, the number of respondents was 372 in the first phase and 343 in the second phase. The results of the matching process show that 275 respondents who cooperated in both phases of the survey.

Among the 275 respondents, 123 (45.7%) were male, and 152 (55.3%) were female. All were employed as regular employees, and 26 had a Japanese supervisor, while the remaining 249 worked under a local supervisor. 119 respondents reported having experience working in foreign-invested firms before entering the current company, while the other 156 did not.

## Measurements

All items were translated into Vietnamese by two professional researchers in the field of organizational behavior and human resource management. Back translation was conducted subsequently to verify the validity of the translated content.

*Employee attitude towards deadlines* was assessed using five items (Cronbach's Alpha = .883) adapted from Schriber and Gutek's (1987) "Schedules and Deadlines" construct. Schriber and Gutek (1987) have developed an instrument to measure 13 temporal dimensions of organizational culture. The dimension "Schedule and Deadline" originally used nine items to measure how organizational members perceive the importance of work schedules and deadlines. In this study, those items were adopted and modified to match the purpose of measuring employees' attitudes towards deadlines. Five items with the highest loading were selected. A sample of a statement for a respondent to rate is, "It is very important to me to complete work before the deadline." Respondents answered these questions using Likert scale values ranging from 1 (very untrue) to 5 (very true).

*Employee behavior to meet deadlines* was assessed through four items from Lay's (1986) scale to measure an individual's procrastination. The original version has 19 items. However, only items measuring the behavioral aspect of procrastination were selected. Items measuring procrastination as a personal trait were excluded. An example of the selected items is, "I often have a task finished sooner than necessary." Respondents answered these questions using Likert scale values ranging from 1 (very untrue) to 5 (very true).

*Task-oriented supervisor behavior* was assessed using six items (Cronbach's Alpha = .895) from Yukl et al. (2002). The original version of the scale consists of 10 items. However, only six items with the highest loading were chosen. A sample of a statement for respondent to rate is, "My supervisor makes goals and issues deadlines for each task." Respondents answered these questions using Likert scale values ranging from 1 (very untrue) to 5 (very true).

*LMX* was assessed using seven items (Cronbach's Alpha = .850) from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). A sample of a statement for respondent to rate is, "My supervisor understands my job problems and needs." Respondents answered these questions using Likert scale values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

*Leader role model* was assessed using five items (Cronbach's Alpha = .883) adapted from Schriber and Gutek's (1987) "Schedules and Deadlines" construct. A sample of a statement for a respondent to rate is, "My supervisor pays great attention to work schedules." Respondents answered these questions using Likert scale values ranging from 1 (very untrue) to 5 (very true).

Employees' age, tenure, experience working in foreign-invested firms (dummy variable), and employee position (dummy variable) were added to the regression as control variables, since these variables seem to directly influence the dependent variables.

#### **V.2.4 Results**

Table 5.1 shows the means, standard deviation, and correlations among all tested variables. Among four control variables, employee experience working in foreign firms (dummy variable) is negatively correlated with their behavior towards deadlines, and employee position (dummy variable) is positively correlated with their behavior towards deadlines.

The dummy variable "experience in foreign firms" (1 = with experience, 0 = without experience) is negatively correlated with "behavior towards deadlines" ( $B = -.162, p < .05$ ), implying that those who used to work in foreign firms are more prone to missing deadlines. There are two possible justifications for this unexpected result. First, employees may possess work experience in foreign companies that do not have the custom of working towards deadlines. Second, it is more likely that those who had work experience in foreign firms are placed in higher positions in which their work has more complexity, which makes it difficult for them to finish on time.

The dummy variable "employee position" (1 = divisional manager, 2 = others) is positively correlated with "employee behavior towards deadlines." This result implies that, compared to non-position employees and top managers, divisional managers are the most committed to meeting deadlines. This is possibly due to the fact that their work description is not as complicated compared to that of managers in higher level, and therefore it is possible for them to complete the work on time.

Table 5.1: Means, Standard Deviations, and zero-order correlations of variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	28	.33	1								
2. Tenure	4	.25	.84***	1							
3. Experience in foreign firm	.43	.03	.380**	.254**	1						
4. Employee position	.03	.01	.204**	.308**	-0.078	1					
5. Task-oriented leadership	3.66	.03	-.171**	-.194**	-0.049	-.159**	1				
6. LMX	4.22	.03	-.154*	-.189**	0.001	-0.095	.414**	1			
7. Supervisor role model	4.22	.03	-0.019	-0.037	-0.062	-0.091	.528**	.266**	1		
8. Attitude towards deadlines	4.44	.03	.134*	.157**	0.001	0.071	.134*	.173**	.286**	1	
9. Behavior towards deadlines	4.0	.04	-0.013	0.004	-.162**	.135*	0.047	0.003	.189**	.410**	1

Notes: n=275; significance level: \*p< .05, \*\*p< .01; Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0= without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Divisional manager, 0 = Other

Regressions were conducted using SPSS version 22.0. First, a hierarchical regression was conducted to test the effect of employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines (model 1). In this model, “employee attitude towards deadlines” was included at step 2 after adding four control variables. The inclusion of this variable results in the significant F-change, with an  $R^2$  change of 16.5%. Together, the five variables explain 19.2% the variance in “employee behavior towards deadlines.” “Employee attitude towards deadlines” significantly predicts their behavior towards deadlines ( $B = .411, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis H1 is therefore supported.

Table 5.2 Results of regression analysis of model 1

		<u>Employees' behavior towards deadlines</u>	
		Step 1	Step 2
Control Variables	Age	.059	.045
	Tenure	-.042	-.097
	Experience foreign firm (dummy)	-.164*	-.145*
	Employee position (dummy)	.123	.115*
Employees' attitude towards deadlines			.411***
Adjusted $R^2$		.028	.192
$\Delta R^2$			.165
F value		2.973	14.028
F value change		2.973***	55.833***

Notes: n=275; significance level: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0= without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Division manager, 0 = Others.

Next, three hierarchical regressions were independently conducted into steps in each model to test the effect of “task-oriented leadership”, LMX, and “leader role model” on “employee attitude towards deadlines” (model 2<sub>a-1</sub>, 2<sub>b-1</sub>, 2<sub>c-1</sub> respectively) and on “employee behavior towards deadlines” (model 2<sub>a-2</sub>, 2<sub>b-2</sub>, 2<sub>c-2</sub> respectively). Table 5.3 and 5.4 present the regression results of these models.

In model 2<sub>a-1</sub>, 2<sub>b-1</sub>, and 2<sub>c-1</sub>, each examined leadership behavior was included in each model at step 2, after four control variables were added at step 1. The inclusion of each leadership behavior in each model results in the significant F-change, with an  $R^2$  change of 2.9%, 4.4%, and 8.6% in model 2<sub>a-1</sub>, 2<sub>b-1</sub>, 2<sub>c-1</sub> respectively. Together, the five variables explain 3.9%, 5.4%, and 9.6 % the variance in “employee attitude towards deadlines” in model 2<sub>a-1</sub>, 2<sub>b-1</sub>, 2<sub>c-1</sub>

respectively. “Employee attitude towards deadlines” is significantly and positively associated with “task-oriented leadership” ( $B = .176, p < .05$ ), LMX ( $B = .214, p < .001$ ), and “leader role model” ( $B = .295, p < .001$ ). These findings provide support for hypothesis  $2_{a-1}$ ,  $2_{b-1}$ , and  $2_{c-1}$ .

Similarly, in model  $2_{a-2}$ ,  $2_{b-2}$ , and  $2_{c-2}$ , each examined leadership behavior was included in each model at step 2, after four control variables were added at step 1. However, only the inclusion of “leader role model” in model  $2_{c-2}$  results in the significant F-change, with an  $R^2$  change of 3.7%. In this model, together, the five variables explain 6.2% the variance in “employee behavior towards deadlines”. “Leader role model” significantly predicts “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = .193, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis  $H2_{c-2}$  is therefore supported. Meanwhile, the inclusion of “task-oriented leadership” and “LMX” in each of the model  $2_{a-2}$  and  $2_{b-2}$  does not result in the significant F-change, meaning that the inclusion of these variables do not increase the prediction power of these models. Correlation coefficients between “task-oriented leadership” and “LMX”, and “employee behavior towards deadlines” were also insignificant with  $B = .064$  ( $p > .05$ ) and  $B = .016$  ( $p > .05$ ) respectively. This leads to the rejection of hypotheses  $H2_{a-2}$  and  $H2_{b-2}$ . Since there is no direct effect of “task-oriented leadership” and “LMX” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” found,  $H2_{a-3}$  and  $H2_{b-3}$  are also rejected.

Because a significant positive relationship was found between “leader role model” and “employee behavior towards deadlines”, the study continued with testing the mediating effect of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on the relationship between these two variables. To estimate the hypothesized indirect relationship, the study used the bootstrapping approach with analysis conducted with PROCESS (model 4) suggested by Hayes (2013) on SPSS version 22.0. With 5000 replications, the results show that when there is no control for “employee attitude towards deadlines”, the correlation coefficient between “leader role model” and “employee behavior towards deadlines” is significant ( $B = .216, p < .001$ ). After controlling for “employee attitude towards deadlines”, the correlation coefficient between “leader role model” and “employee behavior towards deadlines” became non-significant ( $B = .089, p > .05$ ). This result provided support for the mediating effect of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on the relationship between “leader role model” and “employee behavior towards deadlines”. The indirect effect was recorded with  $B = .126$ , bootstrap estimates  $SE = .032$ ,  $CI [.072, .201]$ . Hypothesis  $H2_{c-3}$  is therefore supported.

Table 5.3: Results of regression analysis of model 2<sub>a-1</sub>, 2<sub>b-1</sub>, and 2<sub>c-1</sub>

		Employee attitude towards deadlines					
		Model 2 <sub>a-1</sub>		Model 2 <sub>b-1</sub>		Model 2 <sub>c-1</sub>	
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Control Variables	Age	.036	.043	.036	.039	.036	.014
	Tenure	.133	.154	.133	.171	.133	.146
	Experience foreign firm (dummy)	-.045	-.043	-.045	-.055	-.045	-.020
	Employee position (dummy)	.019	.039	.019	.026	.019	.048
Task-oriented leadership			.176**				
LMX					.214***		
Leader role model							.295***
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.013	.039	.013	.054	.013	.096
$\Delta R^2$			.029		.044		.086
F value		1.847**	3.212**	1.847**	4.107	1.847	6.850
F value change		1.847**	8.368**	1.847**	12.715***		26.060***

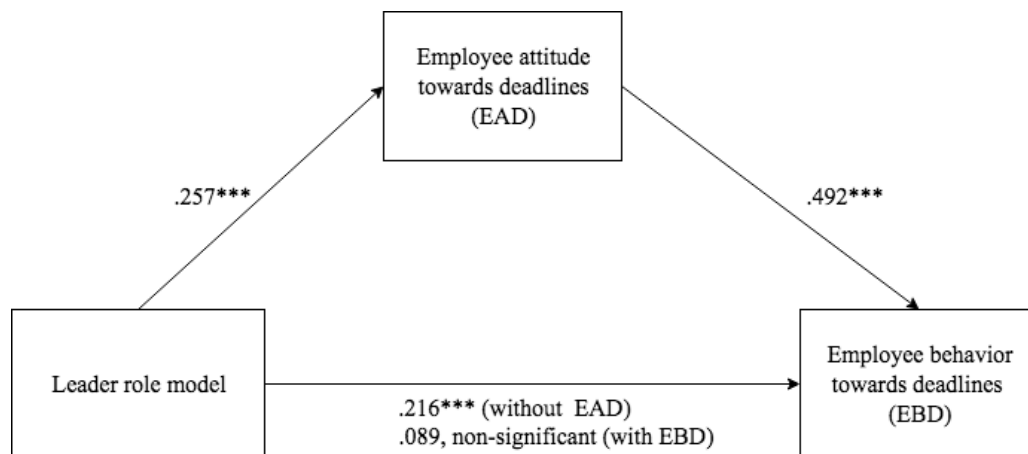
Notes: n=275; significance level: \*p< .05, \*\*p< .01, \*\*\*p< .001, Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0= without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Division manager, 0 = Others.



Table 5.4: Results of regression analysis of model 2<sub>a-2</sub>, 2<sub>b-2</sub>, and 2<sub>c-2</sub>

		Employee behavior towards deadlines					
		Model 2 <sub>a-2</sub>		Model 2 <sub>b-2</sub>		Model 2 <sub>c-2</sub>	
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Control Variables	Age	.059	.062	.059	.059	.059	.045
	Tenure	-.042	-.042	-.042	-.039	-.042	-.033
	Experience foreign firm (dummy)	-.164*	-.164*	-.164*	-.164*	-.164*	-.164*
	Employee position (dummy)	.123	.123	.123	.123	.123	.123
Task-oriented leadership			.064				
LMX					.016		
Leader role model							.193***
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.028	.028	.028	.025	.028	.062
$\Delta R^2$			.004		.000		.037
F value		2.973***	2.596***	2.973***	2.385**	2.973***	4.606***
F value change		2.793***	1.086	2.793***	0.73	2.793***	10.713***

Notes: n=275; significance level: \*p< .05, \*\*p< .01, \*\*\*p< .001, Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0= without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Division manager, 0 = Others.



Indirect effect = .126\*\*\*, CI [.072, .201]

Figure 5.3: Results of mediation analysis

Finally, three independent hierarchical regressions were conducted in three steps in three different models to test the moderating effect of “task-oriented leadership” (model 3a), LMX (model 3b), and “leader role model” (model 3c) on the relationship between employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines. In all models, the addition of control variables at step 1 explains 2.8% of the variance of the dependent variable “employee behavior towards deadlines.”

Table 5.5: Results of regression analysis of Model 3a

		Employee behavior towards deadlines		
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Control Variables	Age	.059	.044	.041
	Tenure	-.042	-.098	-.102
	Experience foreign firm (dummy)	-.164*	-.145*	-.139*
	Employee position (dummy)	.123	.114*	.123*
Employee attitude towards deadlines			.413***	.415***
Task-oriented leadership			-.009	-.008
Employee attitude towards deadlines x Task-oriented leadership				.117*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.028	.189	.200
$\Delta R^2$			.165	.014
F value		2.973	11.651	10.795
F value change		2.973***	27.828***	4.691***

Notes: n=275; significance level: \*p< .05, \*\*p< .01, \*\*\*p< .001, Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0= without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Divisional manager, 0 = Others.

The results show that, in model 3a, “task-oriented leadership” and “employee attitude towards deadlines” were included at step 2 after adding four control variables. The inclusion of the two variables results in the significant F-change, with an R<sup>2</sup> change of 16.5%. Together, the six variables explain 18.9% the variance in “employee behavior towards deadlines.” “Employee attitude towards deadlines” significantly predicts their behavior towards deadlines ( $B = .413, p < .001$ ), while “task-oriented leadership” shows a non-significant influence on “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = -.009, p > .05$ ).

At step three, the inclusion of the interaction of “employee attitude towards deadlines” and “task-oriented leadership” results in a significant F-change, though the R<sup>2</sup> change is relatively

small (1.4%). A significant F changes means that the inclusion of the interaction variable improves the prediction power of the model. This result indicates that the interaction variable significantly influences “employee behaviors towards deadlines” ( $B = .117, p < .05$ ). The inclusion of the interaction variable results in the increase of the influence of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = .415, p < .001$ ), which proves that “task-oriented leadership” significantly moderates the relationship between “employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines.” More specifically, the higher “task-oriented leadership” is, the more powerfully “employee attitude towards deadlines” influences their behavior towards deadlines. Hypothesis 3a is therefore supported.

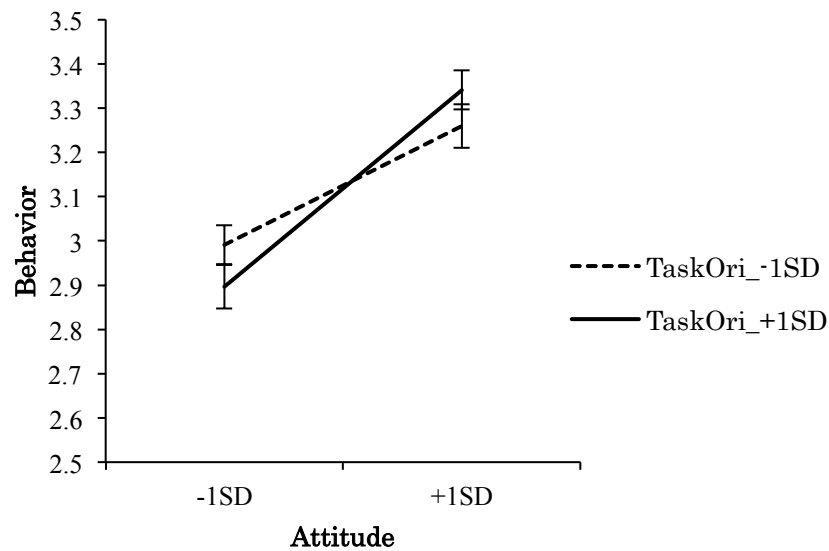


Figure 5.1: Influence of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” moderated by “task-oriented leadership”

Table 5.6: Results of regression analysis of Model 3b

		<u>Employees' behavior towards deadlines</u>		
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Control Variables	Age	.059	.043	.046
	Tenure	-.042	-.112	-.129
	Experience foreign firm (dummy)	-.164*	-.141*	-.121*
	Employee position (dummy)	.123	.113	.115*
Employees' attitude towards deadlines			.427***	.445***
LMX			-.075	-.097
Employees' attitude towards deadlines x LMX				.144*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.028	.194	.212
$\Delta R^2$			.170	.020
F value		2.973	12.013	11.510
F value change		2.973***	28.868***	6.904***

Notes: n=275; significance level: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0 = without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Divisional manager, 0 = Others.

In model 3b, LMX and “employee attitude towards deadlines” were included at step 2 after adding four control variables. The inclusion of the two variables results in a significant F-change, with an  $R^2$  change of 17%. Together, the six variables explain 19.4% of the variance in “employee behavior towards deadlines.” “Employee attitude towards deadlines” significantly predicts their behavior towards deadlines ( $B = .427, p < .001$ ), while LMX shows a non-significant influence on “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = -.075, p > .05$ ).

At step three, the inclusion of the interaction of “employee attitude towards deadlines” and LMX results in a significant F-change, though the  $R^2$  change is relatively small (2%). Significant F changes mean that the inclusion of the interaction variable improves the prediction power of the model. The result indicates that the interaction variable significantly influences “employee behaviors towards deadlines” ( $B = .144, p < .05$ ). The inclusion of the interaction variable results in an increase in the influence of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = .445, p < .001$ ), which proves that LMX significantly moderates the relationship between “employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines.” More specifically, the higher LMX is, the more powerfully “employee attitude towards deadlines” influences their behavior towards deadlines. Hypothesis3b is therefore supported.

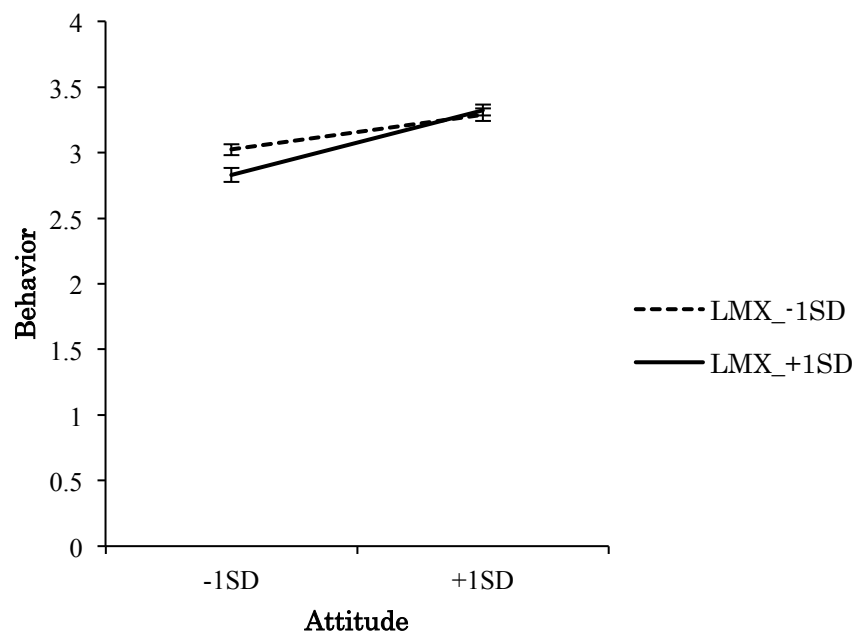


Figure 5.2: Influence of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” moderated by LMX

Table 5.7: Results of regression analysis of Model 3c

		Employees' behavior towards deadlines		
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Control Variables	Age	.059	.040	.021
	Tenure	-.042	-.090	-.071
	Experience foreign firm (dummy)	-.164*	-.140*	-.122*
	Employee position (dummy)		.124*	.104
Employee attitude towards deadlines			.388***	.399***
Supervisor role model			.078	.062
Employee attitude towards deadlines x Supervisor role model				.162**
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.028	.195	.218
$\Delta R^2$			.170	.025
F value		2.973	12.013	11.510
F value change		2.973	12.041***	11.889***

Notes: n=275; significance level: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , Experience in foreign firm dummy: 1 = with experience, 0 = without experience; Employee position dummy: 1 = Middle manager, 0 = Others.

In model 3c, “supervisor role model” and “employee attitude towards deadlines” were included at step 2 after adding four control variables. The inclusion of the two variables results in a significant F-change, with an R<sup>2</sup> change of 17%. Together, the six variables explain 19.5% of the variance in “employee behavior towards deadlines.” “Employee attitude towards deadlines” significantly predicts their behavior towards deadlines ( $B = .388, p < .001$ ), while LMX shows a non-significant influence on “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = .078, p > .05$ ).

At step three, the inclusion of the interaction of “employee attitude towards deadlines” and “supervisor role model” results in a significant F-change, though the R<sup>2</sup> change is relatively small (2%). Significant F changes mean that the inclusion of the interaction variable improves the prediction power of the model. The result indicates that the interaction variable significantly influences “employee behaviors towards deadlines” ( $B = .162, p < .05$ ). The inclusion of the interaction variable results in the increase of the influence of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” ( $B = .399, p < .001$ ), which proves that LMX significantly moderates the relationship between employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines. More specifically, the higher “supervisor role model” is, the more powerfully “employee attitude

towards deadlines” influences their behavior towards deadlines. Hypothesis 3c is therefore supported.

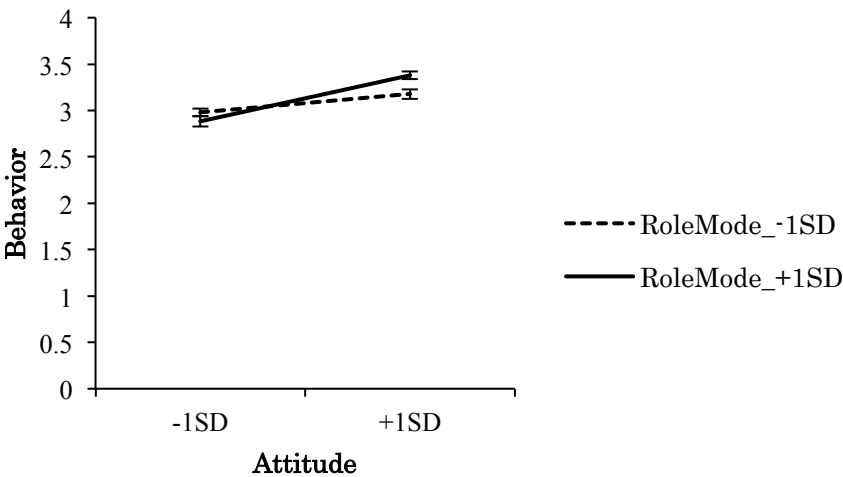


Figure 5.3: Influence of “employee attitude towards deadlines” on “employee behavior towards deadlines” moderated by “supervisor role model”



### V.3 Chapter conclusion

Based on the findings of the first qualitative study, which indicated that managers from headquarters in MNCs' subsidiaries struggle with managerial problems due to the difference in local employees' temporal cognition, the study proposed three styles of leadership that might influence the action of meeting deadlines in employees. The quantitative phase tested the impact of three proposed leadership styles (1) task-oriented leadership, (2) LMX, and (3) leader role model on "employee attitude towards deadlines" and "employee behavior towards deadlines", and on the relationship between the two variables. Phase two of the exploratory mixed methods research provided many important results.

First, the findings indicate that there is a significant positive influence of employee attitude on their behavior towards deadlines. The effect size is moderately strong ( $B = .411, p < .001$ ), implying that an employee's attitude towards deadlines is a reliable predictor of his behavior towards deadlines. This finding provides support for the contemporary postulation that an individual's attitude towards a specific behavior is a predictor of his engagement in performing the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977).

Second, the regression results of model  $2_{a-1}$ ,  $2_{b-1}$ , and  $2_{c-1}$  provide support for the proposition that leadership behavior has an impact on employee attitude towards deadlines. The effect size is moderate in "leader role model" ( $B = .295, p < .001$ ) and LMX ( $B = .214, p < .001$ ); weaker, yet still significant in "task-oriented leadership" ( $B = .176, p < .05$ ). Compared to "task-oriented leadership", the influence of "leader role model" and LMX are more substantial. This can be explained by the logic that task-oriented leaders focus more on the task itself rather on influencing employees with changes, compared to the two other examined leadership styles. Meanwhile, high quality LMX is argued to be effective in encouraging employees to create change. The focus of LMX is more on the employees themselves rather than on the task. Therefore, compared to task-oriented leadership, this leadership style can be more effective in changing an employee's mindset and attitude. The largest effect size found in leader role model can be rationalized in the way that, this leadership style strongly shapes the organizational norms of respecting deadlines. Furthermore, the role model displayed by leaders implicitly informs employees that they are expected to behave in the same way. Hence, the influence of this type of leadership styles might be stronger than that of LMX.

Thirdly, the regression results of model  $2_{a-2}$ ,  $2_{b-2}$ , and  $2_{c-2}$  show that among the three styles of leadership, only "leader role model" significantly has an impact on "employee behavior towards deadlines" ( $B = .193, p < .001$ ). In addition, the process macro test results show that this relationship is partially mediated by employee attitude behavior towards deadlines. This result

implies that “leader role model” has both direct and indirect effects on “employee behavior towards deadlines”. Regarding the indirect effect, “leader role model” initially influence an employee’s attitude towards deadlines, which, in turn, affects his behavior towards deadlines. The results of model 2<sub>a-2</sub> and 2<sub>b-2</sub> show no significant impact of task oriented leadership and LMX on employee behavior towards deadlines. Combing these results with those of model 2<sub>a-1</sub> and 2<sub>b-1</sub>, it can be concluded that “task-oriented leadership” and LMX significant affect “employee attitude towards deadlines”. An employee attitude towards deadlines in turn affects his behavior towards deadlines. Nevertheless, there is no direct effect of task-oriented leadership and LMX on employee behavior towards deadlines. Hence, the route for these leadership styles to influence employee behavior is to change an employee’s attitude first, because the change in an employee’s attitude will, in turn, lead to the change in his or her behavior towards deadlines.

Finally, the regression results of model 3a, 3b, and 3c indicate a significant impact of leader behavior on the relationship between employee attitude and behavior towards deadlines. The moderating effect size is moderate in leader role model ( $B = .162, p < 0.5$ ), and slightly weaker in LMX ( $B = .144, p < 0.5$ ) and task-oriented leadership ( $B = .117, p < 0.5$ ). These findings suggest that leader behaviors significantly facilitate employees’ path from attitude to the behavior of attempting to meet deadlines.

To summarize, these results of the mixed methods’ phase one provided importance to support for the findings of the qualitative phase, which has concluded that supervisor behavior significantly influences the attitude and behavior towards deadlines of employees. Quantitative evidence significantly confirmed the impact of leadership styles on employees’ attitude and behavior towards deadlines. The effect varies depending on the type of leadership that the supervisors display. Furthermore, supervisors’ leadership behavior not only has a direct impact but also has a moderating impact on the relationship between an employee’s attitude and behavior towards deadlines. The higher the leadership behavior standard that supervisors perform, the stronger the predicting power of employee attitude on his behavior towards deadlines. This significant moderating results found can be attributed to the behavior of supervisors to create an environment that facilitates the respect of deadlines among employees, for instance, strengthening the organizational norms of deadlines, or enabling communication channels to foster the learning of advanced time management methods.

## CHAPTER VI: CASE STUDY

### VI.1 Purposes of the study

The results of mixed methods research have partly elucidated what managerial challenges that managers dispatched from headquarters face with when managing a subsidiary with substantial temporal distance. The initial qualitative evidence shows that managers from headquarters attempt to implement the headquarters' time management practice at different levels: implicitly between managers and employees, and explicitly within the organization. Based on the results of the study in both phases, it can be preliminarily concluded that the managing behavior of managers in the subsidiary significantly affects the temporal attitude of local employees and indirectly influences their behavior towards time. However, that conclusion describes only a small part of what managers have done in order to synchronize the temporal attitude and behavior of local employees with the headquarters. Its focus was limited to the aspect of managing in response to the challenges induced by temporal distance during the transfer process. The "bridging role" (Kostova, 1999) of managers in the transnational time management practice transfer has not yet been investigated. Furthermore, the mixed methods research also could not provide a panorama picture of the dynamics inside the process of temporal synchronization. Due to these limitations, a case study was conducted with the purpose of specifically delineating what actually happens during the process of transferring, adapting, institutionalizing, and internalizing time management practice in the subsidiary. It also practically illustrates which factors make up a successful synchronization and how managers from headquarters function and contribute to that success.

### VI.2 Context and method

#### VI.2.1 Site

A single and unique case study was employed to gain insights into the role of the bridging coalition's leadership during the process of temporal synchronization. The case study context is a plant-based subsidiary of a Japanese multinational company in Hanoi, Vietnam. There are two reasons to choose a plant-based subsidiary to research. First, as suggested by the results of the qualitative study in chapter V, plant-based workplaces are more inclined to implement advanced time-related practice due to their labor-intensive characteristics and the high for of timely coordination among several work processes. Therefore, a plant-based subsidiary may experience more time pressure, which makes their operation more time-oriented than an office-based workplace (Gleick, 1999; Perlow, 1999). Second, plant work deals with both blue-collar and white-collar workers; thus, it is expected to give the study more diverse insights into the temporal synchronizing process conducted between the headquarters and both types of workforce.

The firm chosen is a Japanese MNC with headquarter located in Osaka, Japan. For confidentiality purposes, the study keeps the company name anonymous and refers to it as Firm X. Firm X has operated in the manufacturing industry since 1954 and is now one of the world's leading companies in the industry. As of 2019, the firm has established a widespread international business network with eight foreign offices in America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The products that Firm X provides the market are highly technologically sophisticated and require a high level of accuracy. Most of its production plants are located in the Japanese Kansai region. In 2005, Firm X decided to establish its first production plant in Vietnam. The operation of the plant started in 2005 and is in charge of producing parts to supply the Japan-based plants, which use the parts to make the firm's final products. Each plant is independent in terms of management and accounting. Therefore, the Japan-based plants can be considered B2B customers of Firm X.

#### **VI.2.2 Sampling and data collection**

The case study involved multiple data sources, including interviews, plant and office observation, and company documents. The researcher initially contacted Firm X in order to gather data for the qualitative research conducted in chapter V. An interview with the current factory manager (Mr. K.I), who is also the top manager of the subsidiary, took place in the plant office in Hanoi in mid-June, 2019. However, the results showed that, at that time, the factory manager did not see himself faced with serious temporal distance-induced problems during his three-year assignment in Vietnam, although there were some trivial issues, such as an occasional delay in the production lines. Another interview with the vice-manager (Mr. F.S) who was sent to Vietnam and has served at the subsidiary since 2006 revealed that they have encountered serious problems related to the deficient time management of local employees and continually tried to handle it. As realizing that the firm could be an example of successful temporal synchronization, the researcher continued to contact and solicit further opportunities for following up on investigation from former factory managers who served in the subsidiary from the beginning of the firm's operation in Vietnam. Another two interviews were conducted in Firm X's head office in Osaka in mid-June 2019 with the first- (Mr. H.T) and third-generation plant managers (Mr. O.M) who served in the subsidiary from 2005 to 2009 and 2013 to 2016. The researcher was not able to collect data from the second-generation plant manager due to his personal reasons. In total, four interviews were conducted with top managers who currently work or used to work in the firm's subsidiary.

In order to verify the performance of the subsidiary, the researcher conducted an independent interview with the headquarters' general affairs manager (Mr. M.N). Another 10 interviews were also conducted in the subsidiary with local employees and local managers to

evaluate the success of the temporal synchronization process of Firm X's headquarters with its Vietnamese subsidiary.

Each interview with plant managers and the headquarters general affair manager took the form of a semi-structured interview, in which open-ended questions were used to obtain insight into the rich experience of participants and allow them to emphasize what they found important about the topic (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Each interview was conducted independently and lasted between 25 and 75 minutes. Two interviews with local managers were semi-structured and lasted 25 minutes each. The other eight interviews with local employees were fully structured and lasted from 15 to 20 minutes each. Descriptions of the participants and interviews are provided in Appendix B.

The purpose of the interviews was presented to the manager interviewees as seeking to understand how and to what extent the headquarters had applied the Japanese way of time management to its Vietnamese subsidiary. Each interview focused on the managers' reflections on their experience with the process of implementing and adapting the headquarters time management practice (particularly punctuality, scheduling, and meeting deadlines) to the subsidiary context. Managers were also asked to evaluate to what extent they thought their employees implement the headquarters' time management practice.

To local managers and employees, the purpose of the interviews was presented as gaining an understanding of their perspective on the company's current time management practice. Interview questions were created based on the framework suggested by Kosotva (1999) to measure the internalization of the process by local employees. They covered three aspects: (1) employees' commitment to the practice, (2) employees' satisfaction with the practice, and (3) psychological ownership of the practice.

Interviews with managers and the headquarters general affairs manager were conducted in Japanese, and those with local managers and employees were in Vietnamese. All interviews were conducted, recorded, transcribed, and translated into English by the researchers within two or four days after the interview was conducted. Coding for all interviews were performed using the English language.

### **VI.2.3 Data analysis**

Data analysis for the interviews with managers followed the grounded theory framework suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008). Fully translated and transcribed interviews were divided into smaller, manageable pieces such as sentences or paragraphs. The content of each piece was given a conceptual name that reflected the idea within the piece. Each challenge managers faced during the synchronization process was identified, along with the methods managers used to handle

the problem. The coding process resulted in nine second-order categories, which were later aggregated into three broader emerging concepts.

### **VI.3 Findings**

#### **VI.3.1 Overview of the success of temporal synchronization in Firm X**

Four interviews with plant managers and the vice manager reveal different results concerning the implementation of the headquarters' time management practice in the subsidiary. Mr. H.T (the first-generation manager) stated that, during his four years with the subsidiary, the company always had to struggle with the problem of not being able to deliver the order on time to its customers in Japan. This caused Firm X problems because their plants in Japan could not receive the parts as the input for their own manufacturing processes. Their incapability was due to several time-related reasons: employees' tardiness, sudden absences, employees using their time doing something else instead of working, inferior work scheduling and execution by local managers, and a lack of coordination among employees in different processes of the same project. According to him, the problem concerned both employees' attitude towards time and their inadequate skills in managing time. Mr. O.M (the third-generation manager) also mentioned the same issues but reported that they occurred with less frequency starting in 2012. Data collected from Mr. F.S (vice manager) correlated with what Mr. O.M said. However, when the fourth-generation manager, Mr. K.I, started serving in the subsidiary, according to him, the company did not have any trouble with its operation regarding local employees' time management problem.

Another piece of evidence to assess the success of temporal synchronization was gathered from the interview with Mr. M.N (headquarters general affairs manager). Mr. M.N was the key person in charge of establishing the subsidiary in Vietnam and has visited it frequently since the beginning of its operation in Vietnam. In the head office, he has played the role of bridging operations between the headquarters and the Vietnamese subsidiary. The interview with Mr. M.N revealed two things. First, the Vietnamese subsidiary's time-related problems (late or delay of delivery of products to its Japan-based firms) was critically resolved since late 2013 and had been stable since then. Second, all managers and the vice manager sent to the Vietnamese subsidiary had experience working at the same position in Japan before. They were all considered serious about time issue and worked towards the Japanese manner of keeping time. This information increases the reliability and objectivity of the data collected from interviews with those managers about the time management problem in the subsidiary.

Based on the analysis of data from the three plant managers, the vice manager, and the general affairs manager, it can be concluded that the implementation of Japanese time management

has achieved success in Firm X's Vietnamese subsidiary. Simultaneously, the results of interviews with 10 local managers and employees show that they do not see themselves as having problems accepting the company's time-management practice. They frequently reported that, "because it is a Japanese company, so we see being on time essential," which implies that they may not have internalized the practice to the extent that they feel they are its "psychological owner." Nevertheless, all 10 participants indicated that they were satisfied with the implementation of the practice by stating that it "is not extreme," it "good for me because it is a good manner," "I have to be on time, but at the same time I do not have to wait for people, either," and "my work is scheduled." Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the adaptation and internalization process in the subsidiary has to a certain extent been successful.

### **VI.3.2 Identification of the temporal synchronization's leadership**

Three core leadership concepts emerged from the analysis of the data collected from three managers and the vice managers. Each concept is delineated in the following part, and the second-order categories are provided after the data analysis (the data structure is given in Figure 6.1).

#### **The cultivating leadership**

This leadership was manifested through four core behaviors: (1) attempting to identify the cause of the problem, (2) influencing employees to engage in solving the problem, (3) instructing them with advanced time-management skills, and (4) encouraging them to commit to the newly learned practice.

- (1) *Attempting to identify the cause of the problem.* Managers reported that they made efforts to research the reasons local employees did not see meeting deadlines and being on time as a work ethic. The practical reason they used to explain the situation was that local employees were not born in a society that valued time. The current state of economic development had not been dynamic enough to change this perception. More importantly, the Vietnamese education system directs students to be effective and skilled at solving instant problems instead of training them to be able to envision the future. Furthermore, the thought that not doing something on time means causing others a nuisance is also not a norm in Vietnam. Hence, according to managers, the problem was both distant cognition between two countries about time and a lack of training given by social institutions such as family and schools.
- (2) *Influencing employees to engage in solving the problem.* As the problem was identified as originating in the cognitive distance, managers influenced employees to make them think that the implementation of advanced time-management tactics was important. Managers described

this the most challenging action. Due to the language barrier, not all subtle nuances were successfully conveyed to employees, which sometimes caused difficulties for managers in making employees fully understand what they wanted to say. For instance, a long talk expressing the expectation of managers to employees about keeping a timely manner was translated into just a few words. Managers also reported feeling worried if the unsophisticated translation generated cultural conflicts between the two countries.

*The staff we have in the subsidiary can manage to speak to some extent Japanese. But it is just at the simple business level. Based on what I saw, I can say that they could understand only half of what I really wanted to say. ...*

*But I don't give up. I talk to them about the same thing almost every day until I think that they finally get it. And then those who understand Japanese translate and convey the message to those who don't. No matter how hard it is, I believe direct communication is the best way to show them how much I care about the problem and how much I want them to improve. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

Managers regard communication as the most difficult challenge, but at the same time, it is also the key success factor of this step. In Japan, the norm of time is strict, and employees have more chances to be educated by surrounding colleagues or supervisors and change their attitude to meet the company's expectations. In the subsidiary, however, the only one who can influence employees' attitudes is their Japanese manager. Therefore, increasing the direct interaction with expatriate managers is perceived to be effective in enhancing local employees' perceptions about the importance of time management.

Both the means of communication and the content of the communication also made a difference in shaping employees' attitudes about time. According to three of the managers interviewed, letting the employee know that he causes troubles for the manager and other members is a wise way to develop that employee's sense of responsibility for being on time or meeting deadlines in the future. The means of conveying the message, however, must be sensitive enough to avoid harming the employees' self respect.

*When my employee fails at meeting the deadline, I avoid shouting at him. I usually try to tell him that if they had scheduled the work better, they wouldn't have caused us (me and his other colleagues) and our customers trouble. I think making a person regret what he has done wrong to the other members is more effective than focusing on criticizing his individual bad performance. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

- (3) ***Instructing employees with the headquarters' time-management practice.*** The implementation of time management in the subsidiary requires more than the influence of managers to change the attitude of local employees. As managers noted that the problem was the lack of training from family and society, they invested in intra-organizational training for their local employees.

*We can reduce employees' tardiness simply by asking them to change their attitude, but it doesn't work that way with more complex tasks, such as scheduling for a project to meet the*



*deadline. It requires a long time learning and practicing. There were times I knew that employees tried to work in a timely manner, but they just could not make it because they didn't have the skills. (Interview with Mr. F.S)*

Managers revealed that they started instructing employees in the simplest skills, such as making a to-do-list, writing memos, and using calendars. Local employees resisted using these tactics at the beginning. There was a strong tendency among them to depend on memory to memorize the work schedule. Therefore, managers' suggestions were considered redundant to them.

*I talked with them about the need for a notebook and asked them to bring it. Many thought that I was such an annoying supervisor. But I kept insisting on them doing that, sometimes, I would say, forcing. (Interview with Mr. H.T)*

To enable a work process to commence on time, it is common sense in Japan that people prepare carefully for its start. However, this preventive coping behavior was not observed in the Vietnamese workers' mindsets. Managers had to gradually raise the awareness of the importance of the action and instructed local workers and employees on how to prepare for work so that they could handle it most efficiently.

*I remember teaching them even the smallest things, such as the tools used today must be rearranged and put back to the initial place so that, in case they are late tomorrow, they can still start the work immediately with the well-prepared tools. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

*At the beginning, those who used the last piece of material never reported it to his line manager. And the (local) managers also never checked. There were days we came to work and noticed that there was no materials to start the process. We tried to make it a practice, but it took very long time with a lot of cogitation. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

Managers noted that the most challenging part was giving instructions to local managers. Their work deals with planning and scheduling, which requires them to develop the ability to envision and see far into the future – the skill considered deficient in most Vietnamese employees. The instruction to managers was performed by teaching them skills and working together at the plant (on-the-job training). This training process was repeated non-stop and was time-consuming, and the result was not instant; it could only be seen after several years.

*Mr. A is now our senior manager. He joined the company in 2007. Among all the engineers we had, he was the best qualified and was also very diligent. We wanted to expand his ability so that he could be the key person of this company. He had experience working in another company before. His technical knowledge was outstanding, but unfortunately he didn't have with him any skills of managing work. He was fully trained in our company, and it took us around eight to nine years to cultivate such a senior manager. ... We can count on him most of the time now, but when there are too many orders, the Japanese managers still work with him to make sure there will be no lags in between. (Interview with Mr. F.S)*

- (4) **Encouraging.** Managers highlighted that a change in attitude and behavior would not develop into a habit if employees were not encouraged and motivated to continue. Positive feedback from managers about the improvement or performance that employees achieved through their

positive change in attitude and behavior towards time increased their willingness to continue the practice to achieve subsequent good performance. Mr. O.M stated that he believed that the encouragement from managers would give employees the sense that he took time issue seriously and encourage them to expend more effort to response to his expectation.

*There is a big whiteboard placed at the place that everyone can notice. I write down how many orders we had to delay every month. Every time when the number is 0, we make a party. I want them to feel the joy of accomplishing work with a serious manner. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

### **The value-articulating leadership**

Value-articulating leadership is manifested through two core behaviors: (1) value relocation and (2) value negotiation. These behaviors are inevitable in the adaptation process and play a key role in determining the degree to which the headquarters and a local subsidiary can develop a shared viewpoint towards time management practice.

- (1) **Value relocation.** The relocation of value is aimed at aligning with two value sources: local societal culture and local work culture.

Deadlines must be met. However, the process until the deadline is met must be modified to match the Vietnamese culture and its current state of “time-related common sense development.” As Mr. O.M explained, respecting time and deadlines is not yet common sense in Vietnamese society. It is also not seriously considered as a work ethic in the organizational context. Therefore, the imposition of the Japanese strict evaluation of deadline violations would not be effective. Based on his experience, Mr. H.T stated that, at the beginning, with his experience of seven years of working in the same position in Japan, he was confident that the work would be executed as long as managers scheduled it carefully. However, the autocratic application of strict time-related rules widened the gap between him and local employees. Local employees regarded this as a sign of disrespecting local culture. When it was not explained to them why they had to change their traditional working habit towards time, they simply viewed it as the inflexible practices every Japanese company asks of its employees.

Showing agreement with Mr. F.S, he highlighted that, at the current stage, workplaces in Vietnam did not yet put a strong value on the time-related work ethic of employees. Employees still had not developed the “awareness that they must have a time-respecting manner to get good jobs.” The reason is that, even without that manner, they still had opportunities to be recruited by many other companies. Rigidly forcing employees to follow a strict time management practice would result in the opposite effect, such as employee turnover, while there was no guarantee that the newly hired employees would be capable of working in a timely manner. He

therefore believed that managers should actively instruct and cultivate the time-management cognition and habit for local employees.

*The current recruiting practice of companies in Vietnam now has not yet reached the sophisticated level at which employee work manner is put in the must-have virtue list. As the market cannot provide the economy with the kind of employees we expect (those with a serious attitude towards time), we had to accept the situation, shift our management style, and try to cultivate the expected human resource by ourselves. (Interview with Mr. F.S)*

- (2) **Value negotiation.** According to managers, value negotiation and negotiating ability are the most important mission and expertise that a manager needs to enable the process of adaptation in the subsidiary. This refers to managers' ability to develop a condition in which both parties are satisfied with the implementation of the practice. Without this ability, the implementation is no more than a "ritualistic imposition of value to the receiving party" (said Mr. H.T while talking about his failure experience above). Value negotiation can be seen as a lubricating mechanism by which internalization and institutionalization are enabled or accelerated.

Value negotiation requires managers' efforts in researching and verifying the local societal and local work culture to determine common sense regarding time issues in the host country. This guides managers regarding how they should modify the practice to compromise with the environment in which the company subsidiary operates. Nevertheless, it does not mean that managers must compromise with the local time-management practice. Depending on their negotiating skills, managers can skew the practice more towards the authentic one of the headquarters. What is important to note about this action is that, after the negotiation reaches its final result, managers have to announce it publicly and clearly to all employees. Otherwise, the practice would be understood ambiguously as "better to follow the headquarters' way, but if impossible, just follow the local way."

*We are working in Vietnam, so we must respect the Vietnamese culture. When we consider making a rule regarding not just time but any other issue, I ask employees how Vietnamese people normally react in the same situation. I also ask the Vietnamese people I know outside the workplace. I ask as many people as possible. After knowing the consensus, I negotiate with them the extent to which we can agree on the execution of the new rule. A rule won't be established and implemented if employees do not agree on it. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

To help negotiating reach a shared value with local employees, managers reported that they had to remain unprejudiced to "open the door for local employees' opinions." Furthermore, it was noticed that managers made the first move in the negotiating process. From the standpoint of employees, they felt reluctant and might think that it is impossible to disobey a rule or to initiate the negotiation with those in higher positions. Therefore, the managers were always the ones to begin the inquiry.

Mr. O.M also revealed that the process of negotiation required them to enhance their communication skills of both listening to employees' opinions and conveying their thoughts and expectations. The language barrier was significant given that all blue-collar workers did not speak Japanese. Hence, transmitting the manager's expectation to all members and obtaining their feedback to decide on the level of agreement on time management practice took them a great deal of time. Nevertheless, he insisted that involving everyone in this decision-making process was extremely important. Japanese-speaking employees and local managers played important roles in disseminating the company's thoughts to plant workers and facilitating the negotiating process.

**The problem-responsive leadership.** Even when time-management practice is implemented and a shared attitude towards work time is developed between the headquarters and a subsidiary, all managers agreed that they still needed to cautiously continue planning, preventively coping and controlling to keep the work on the right track. As mentioned above, a more advanced attitude towards time is preferable; however, it does not necessarily guarantee that employees achieve adequate results in a timely manner. Since local employees' skills in managing time are still weak, managers still need to be involved in the process to ensure the final outcome of the plant.

**(1) Planning and monitoring.** All managers noted that they strongly emphasized clarifying goals and creating a detailed schedule for employees to follow. The scheduling skills of local employees and local managers are relatively weak. In addition, managers agreed that the Vietnamese education system was not created to help local people develop the habit of envisioning the future. In addition to clarifying the final goals, managers also set smaller milestones in between to make sure employees could reevaluate and reallocate their time if a milestone was not reached on time.

Because local employees shared the habit of focusing on the final target and ignoring the process, managers reported that they required their employees to make intermittent reports to prevent them from procrastinating on the task. Managers disclosed that they needed to devote more efforts to following their employees and monitoring the whole process. Most of the monitoring task is done through direct communication. They realized that it was difficult for the company to frequently do *hou-ren-sou* (report-contact-consult) in written documents due to both parties' limited capability to thoroughly understand each other's language. The monitoring action via *hou-ren-sou* was modified to rely mostly on oral language for simple incidents, and written forms such as email or notes were used for important incidents only.

**(2) Preventive coping.** All managers, even the current ones, agreed that actions to prevent lags in production and the general workflow are particularly imperative to plant-based work, given that the

subsidiary's time schedule is not as strictly followed as in Japan. Managers described a wide array of techniques that they used to cope with employees' tardiness and inadequate scheduling ability. For instance, they set mock deadlines to ensure that, in case of any difficulties, the plant could still have sufficient time to fix them. To prevent employees' tardiness, the company arranged the morning assembly before starting a workday to explicitly tell employees that they had to schedule time to leave home earlier not only to make the work hour at 8:00 but also to meet for the morning assembly at 7:50. The 10 minutes from 7:50 to 8:00 could be considered the "grey time" so that even if there was unexpected minor lateness, the plant could still start at 8:00.

**(3) Controlling.** Since 2010, the company has implemented biometric fingerprint attendance machines and plant-monitoring cameras as an HR tool to evaluate employees. Nevertheless, according to managers, they did not count on these monitoring systems to help their workers develop a positive work attitude towards time.

*A camera for monitoring has no meaning when you don't check it. We are very busy and don't have room for doing that. To be honest, I have never checked it unless there was trouble. I care more about how to change people's attitude towards work, rather than how to force them to behave right by letting them know that they are watched by the camera system. (Interview with Mr. H.T)*

Although managers criticized the fact that the controlling systems were rigorous, they admitted that, to a certain extent, letting employees know that they are controlled is effective in influencing their attitude and behavior.

*We offer the company bus for workers and employees who live far from the company. Japanese and local employees take a different bus. At the beginning, the bus carrying local employees barely arrived on time, though in the early morning there was nearly no traffic on the route. We found out that the driver usually stopped to wait for those who were late instead of leaving on time to pick up the next one. We decided that we would get on the same bus with our employees. Those who were late were left behind. After some time, the situation got better. (Interview with Mr. O.M)*

#### **VI.4 Chapter conclusion**

The case study featured a multinational company that moderately succeeded in cultivating Japanese time management. It provided a holistic view of what challenges managers encountered and how they responded to be able to synchronize the temporal and behavior between the headquarters and the subsidiary. There are two main important findings. First, temporal synchronization is a difficult, time-consuming process. It took Firm X nearly 10 years until the last managers (Mr. K.I) could say that there was not much to say about time-related issues inside the company. Part of the reason for the difficulty might be that time-management practice is highly and

sensitively dependent on culture, which makes it hard for mindsets to rapidly accommodate the cognitive shift. In addition, it was also difficult because many people were involved in the decision-making process (*A rule won't be established and implemented if employees do not agree on it*, said Mr. O.M) to ensure that every member subsequently internalizes the practice.

Second, the findings of the study indicate that there is not one but three different types of leadership that expatriate managers need to demonstrate during the temporal synchronizing process. They are (1) the cultivating leadership, (2) the value-articulating leadership, and (3) the problem-responsive leadership. It is arguable that, among these leadership styles, the problem-responsive leadership is the necessary condition that allows the start of the transfer of time-management practice. However, if the company did not want to stop at the transfer step; it expanded to the synchronizing level, and the other two leadership styles are essential. The cultivating leadership plays the role of providing time-management skills to make the transfer practice fully function, and the value-articulating leadership contributes to the development of the “degree of agreement on time management practice” between the headquarters and subsidiary employees. Without these two leadership styles, adaptation and internalization processes cannot occur.

The case study also revealed that direct communication plays a significant role in determining the success of these leadership actions. It lubricates all organizational relations by filling in the gap of misunderstanding between the two parties. Using direct communication, the managers could understand many “why” questions regarding the value standard of the host country and convey the “how” to employees instead of just imposing “what” they had to follow. Given the situation of Firm X, managers had many difficulties in conveying what they truly wanted to say to employees due to the language barrier. Nevertheless, the results shows that the efforts of managers in developing an effective, frequent communication channel eventually paid off.

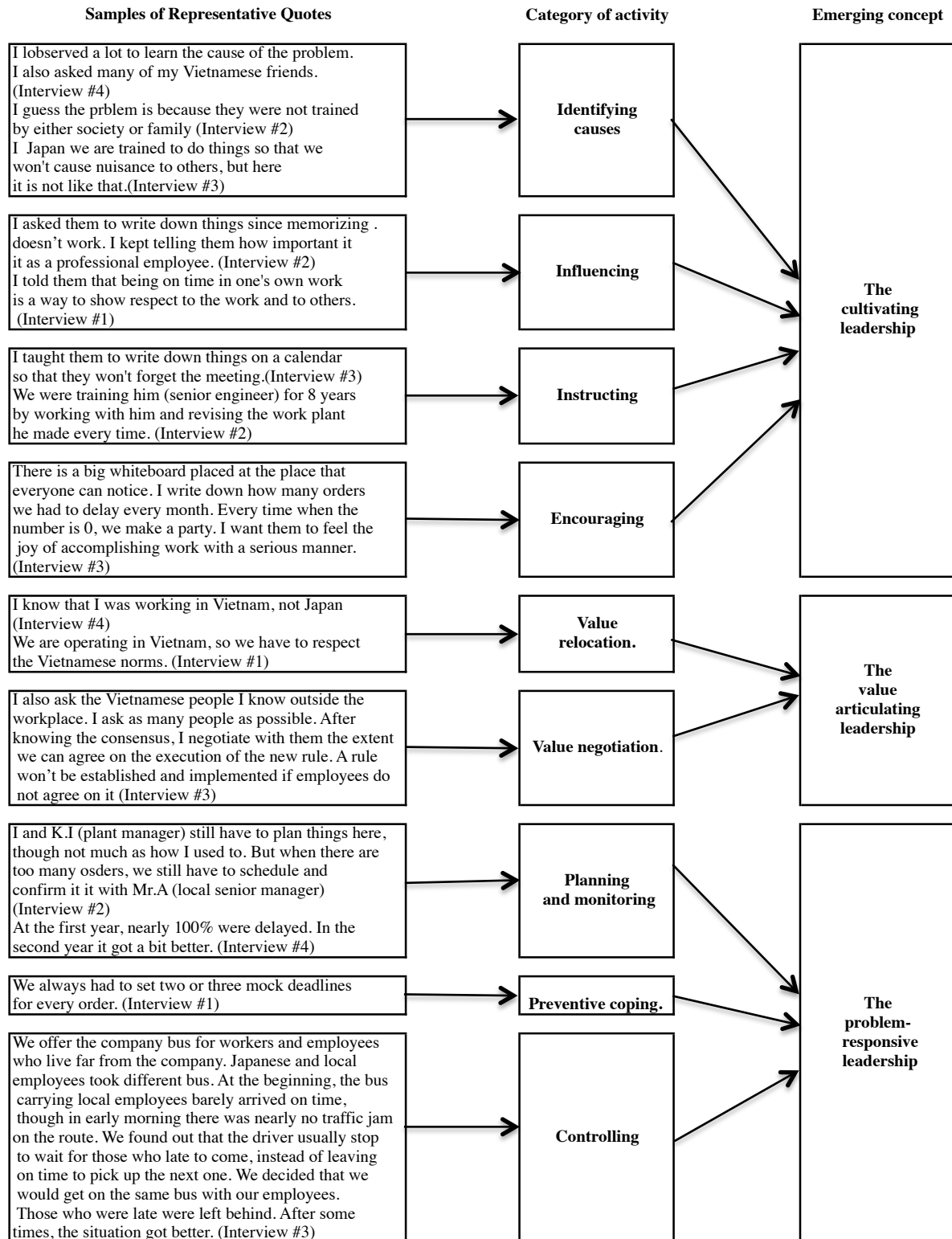


Figure 6.1: Data structure

## CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

### VII.1 Discussion of findings

This dissertation investigates the phenomenon of temporal synchronization between an MNC's headquarters and its subsidiary. Three studies using exploratory mixed methods and a case study were conducted to seek answers to three major research questions:

RQ1: In the context of cross-cultural business, what are the managerial issues caused by temporal distance between a headquarters and its subsidiary?

RQ2: Which challenges do MNCs face when attempting to synchronize the local temporal cognition and behavior with those of the headquarters?

RQ3: Which leadership styles are required of expatriate managers to enable temporal synchronization in the subsidiary organization?

The study used Japanese MNCs with subsidiaries in Vietnam as its subjects. Qualitative and quantitative evidence was collected from independent sources. This section aggregates and discusses the final findings gathered from these three studies.

#### **(1) Temporal distance-induced managerial issues**

The findings of the first qualitative phase of mixed methods research revealed that, in the context of transnational business, temporal distance largely accounts for managerial difficulties in the subsidiaries. Temporal distance was found to induce the MNC's subsidiary's inefficiency, as it costs the organization more time and other resources to execute work and to secure outcome quality. Similar to what was previously found in research at the group level, at the country level, temporal distance is detrimental to the performance of the organization and requires managers to spend more time and attention on scheduling and monitoring the work process (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011; Santos et al., 2015). In addition to the work aspect, nonaligned temporal cognition, especially in time orientation, was found to make it difficult for the headquarters to apply new organizational systems and changes to the subsidiary due to employees' high resistance to change. This finding is compatible with prior results found by Berrell et al. (1999), which found that Vietnamese time orientation values the traditional way of problem solving and pays less attention to active strategic planning and innovation. Furthermore, from the human resource management aspect, a strong temporal orientation towards the present, accompanied by a short-term orientation towards the future, was found to result in frequent employee turnover, which affected the company's ability to retain human resources and increase their competence through training. Japanese MNCs with a long-term orientation and a focus on building and cultivating human resources found it difficult to manage this issue.



Similar to what was reported at the group level, this study found that temporal distance induces stress for managers who were sent from the headquarters to the subsidiary. Nevertheless, Japanese managers have little perception of this negative outcome of temporal distance. This result is in contrast to the results of Berrell et al. (1999), which found that the difference in the perception of time creates tension between the Australian expatriate managers and local Vietnamese employees. In this study, the incompatibility in temporal cognition and behavior was not recognized as a generator of intra-organizational conflicts. There are two possible explanations for this difference in our findings. First, the conflict management styles of Japanese and Australians slightly differ from each other. Both Japanese and Australian people are known for a high respect for social harmony. Under the influence of Confucianism, Japanese culture highly values the individual's concern for social harmony and positive social relationships. Therefore, the Japanese prefer conciliation or avoiding conflict-resolution tactics (Lather, Jain & Shukla, 2011; Ohbuchi, Fukushima & Tedeschi, 1999). Similarly, Australians also favor compromise to a competitive approach when dealing with conflicts due to the impact of egalitarianism (Leung, Brew, Zhang & Zhang, 2011; Renwick, 1991). Nevertheless, compared to Japan, Australia is still more aggressive in its conflict-management style. Japanese people are more prone to the avoiding strategy, while Australians prefer solving the problem at a certain level through collaboration (Lather, Jain & Shukla, 2011).

Second, the study of Berrell (1999) did not specify the role of managers who participated in the study. It is possible that the managers' conflict management style differs depending on the type of business in which they work. Managers of joint ventures tend to think of a win-win situation with local firms, as both sides utilize each other's resources to ensure the success of the co-business. Thus, when one party shows a negative attitude or behavior, the other party tends to understand it as a sign of disrespect and betrayal, which will likely create tensions. The even share of control power between two parties makes it difficult for one party to take control or request the transformation in attitude and behavior of the other(s) (Geringer & Hebert, 1988; Shaan, 1983). Meanwhile, compared to joint ventures, in MNCs, headquarters have a controlling role over subsidiaries. Since it is not a win-win situation, expatriate managers seem to think that it is their responsibility to address the organizational problems and thus develop a more adaptive manner of coping with subsidiary-induced conflicts instead.

## **(2) Challenges that expatriate managers encounter during the process of temporal synchronization**

In line with what was found in prior research on transnational practice transfer, the findings of the case study also indicate that temporal synchronization is a difficult, costly, long, and sticky process (Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Kostova, 1999), which requires a high level of managers'

commitment to the headquarters' practice and particular styles of leadership to respond to the managerial issues in the subsidiary caused by two countries' temporal distance. The findings of phase one of the mixed methods research and case study show that the main challenges that managers from the headquarters encounter during the process of temporal synchronization include work-related and human-related problems. Regarding the former, at the starting point of temporal synchronization when employees are not yet familiar with the new time-related practice and have not yet acquired effective time management skills, the work was delayed, and the organization paid extra costs to cover the loss induced by the inefficiency. Regarding human-related problems, managers encounter three main challenges. The first is the resistance of employees to shifting their attitude towards time (i.e., being punctual, meeting deadlines) and habits to manage time better. Since norms about time are extremely difficult to change, local employees' resistance to implementing the headquarters' time-management practice is not unexpected. This struggle has previously been documented in studies that have illustrated the process of implementing new organizational practices in cross-border businesses in which the headquarters and subsidiary do not share the same standard of value towards the transferred practice (Bjerregaard et al., 2016) or in which there is a lack of motivation for local employees to adopt a foreign practice to replace an existing one with which they were familiar to and highly satisfied (Katz & Ellen, 1982; Szulanski, 1996). Given the high liquidity of the labor workforce in Vietnam, the fierce resistance of local employees to changes to adapt to the headquarters' time-management practice may result in employee turnover, and there is no guarantee that newly hired ones will favor the new practice.

Second, the challenges also lie in local employees' inherently inferior skills in managing time. This can be seen as the result of their unserious cognition and attitude towards time. Provided that the economic development of Vietnam is incomplete and the human resource management policies are not yet sophisticated enough to consider the attitude towards time as a recruitment or evaluation criterion, local companies' management and employees have not yet seriously considered the issue of how to manage time. Time-management tactics and time-management training programs that help increase work proficiency (Green & Skinner, 2005, King et al., 1986, Macan, 1994; Nadinloyi et al., 2013; Orpen 1993; Slaven & Todderdell, 1993, Van Eerde, 2003) are still relatively unfamiliar to Vietnamese firms. The literature on time management methods has been well documented and can thus be considered codifiable and teachable knowledge (Kogut & Zander, 1993). Nevertheless, the findings of the study demonstrated that this kind of knowledge is not easily transmitted or taught to local employees. In other words, the fact that time-management methods can only be enacted after temporal cognition and attitude are somehow influenced makes this knowledge close to tacit knowledge rather than explicit knowledge. Thus, the knowledge transmission process is more

challenging, and more commitment and effort are required from expatriate managers to convey not only the “how to do” practice but also “how to make it a habit” spirit.

Third, in the case of transnational transfer, given the linguistic and cultural barriers, the issue of how to create effective intra-organization to foster the value-sharing process is also important. This finding is compatible with what has been found in prior research on the influence of communication on the outcome of international practice transfer (Lauring & Selmer, 2011; Riege, 2007). The case study provided evidence of how misunderstandings or rough translations could lead to local employees’ underestimation of the importance of the issues that expatriate managers intend to address. Problems regarding how to convey the message to local employees and how to receive and understand local employees’ feedback on temporal issues impede managers’ efforts to establish shared values between the two parties about temporal issues. They thus slow the process of developing the temporal synchronization’s condition for which both managers and local employees can agree on the rate of the work execution.

### **(3) Leadership styles that foster the process of temporal synchronization**

The quantitative results found in phase two of the mixed methods research show that three styles of leadership, task-oriented leadership, LMX, and leader role model, significantly influence employee attitude towards deadlines. Furthermore, leader role model has a direct impact on employee behavior towards deadlines. Although the same quantitative results were not obtained with task-oriented leadership and LMX, the findings of the case study suggest that these leadership behaviors do have an impact on the behavior towards deadlines of employees. This influence might not be direct, but via the mechanism of changing employees’ attitude towards deadlines.

Overall, the findings indicate that managers handle the managerial problems created by temporal distance through both practical and non-practical behaviors. With practical behaviors, managers directly deal with employees’ time issues by setting deadlines, making detailed schedules, and supporting employees with problems they encounter during the process of the work. With non-practical behaviors, managers have influence by developing a close relationship to foster interaction with employees. Through communication, the two parties increase the exchange of work-related information, which may be effective in reminding employees of the deadlines and making them more committed to meeting them. The behavior of managers to develop a high quality relationship with employees results in the exertion of employees to complete the work on time to meet managers’ expectation. Finally, managers strengthen the relationship between employees’ attitude and behavior towards deadlines by being role models who think and act seriously towards time. By being a role model, managers implicitly tell their employees that respecting time is the

norm, and employees should follow that to gain legitimation from managers and from the organization. In addition, by being a role model, managers can inspire employees with their professional manner towards time or disseminate positive time-management habits to employees, thus giving them the motivation and skills to transform attitude into behavior towards time.

In addition, managers also play the role of the catalyst that motivate and transform an employee's attitude towards deadlines into the actual performance of behaviors to meet deadlines. This mediating role is played through the mechanism of fostering an environment, in which the high respect of deadlines becomes an organizational norm aware by all employees. Furthermore, managers can also create intra-organizational communication channels that foster employees' awareness of such norm, and enhance their learning of advanced time management methods. Employees' learning of time management tactics is an essential instrument to promote the path from their attitude to actual actions of meeting deadlines.

The findings of the case study, which featured an MNC that succeeded in synchronizing temporal cognition and behavior between the headquarters and the subsidiary, indicate that, in order to overcome the challenges listed above, managers must develop three types of leadership skills: (1) the cultivating leadership, (2) the value-articulating leadership, and (3) the problem -responsive leadership. This finding is in line with what was quantitatively found earlier and helps broaden the understanding gained from the results of phase two of the mixed methods research. The results of the case study demonstrate that task-oriented leadership is just one of the components that belongs to the more holistic concept of problem-responsive leadership, which consists of two other behaviors of preventive coping and controlling. However, responsive leadership simply plays the role of the necessary condition to enable temporal synchronization. It is similar to the kind of leadership that managers of an MNC need to develop to respond to the complex managerial situation created by temporal distance in the subsidiary. In order to achieve a synchronization, it is essential that managers address the challenges of resistance to shift the value towards time and address local employees' inability to manage time.

The results of the case study highlighted that successful temporal synchronization requires two other kinds of leadership: cultivating leadership and value-articulating leadership. Time-management practice is highly culturally dependent and is difficult to unlearn because temporal cognition can be viewed as one of the inherent, dispositional characteristics of a person or a culture. Resistance to shifting the cognition and altering the attitude towards time from the employees' side is comprehensible. Managers have to stay open-minded to understand why employees do not want to change and how they can foster a change in employees' attitudes. This pattern of behavior (value relocation) is critical to every transnational transfer and is not necessarily

limited to temporal practice (Makilouko, 2004; Klimkeit & Reihlen, 2016). However, it is insufficient for the case of practice synchronization. In order to reach a condition in which two parties are both satisfied with the practice, managers have to display the “value negotiating” behavior. This behavioral pattern is difficult in the sense that it requires managers to be able to negotiate with employees to adapt and remain committed to the headquarters’ practice. Communication is essential for managers to successfully complete this mission.

Finally, specific to the case of temporal synchronization, cultivating leadership is demanded. Unlike other organizational practice, such as HRM practice, in which employees are passively influenced by its implementation, time-management practice requires employees not only to adjust value and change their attitude but also learn new skills and methods to enable the practice to function in the subsidiary. This characteristic of the practice calls for managers’ ability to create a learning-fostering environment by being the leaders and directly instructing employees about time-management techniques and motivating them to stay committed to the practices learned.

In conclusion, the process of temporal synchronization in a transnational context demands that managers develop not only one but several leadership skills at the same time. The framework of leadership that this study proposed has some patterns that overlap with those of the entrepreneurial transfer leadership developed by Klimkeit and Reihlen (2016). The leadership consists of four core behaviors (1) conveying conviction, (2) being purpose- and value-driven, (3) culturally responsive communication, and (4) face-to-face communication. Nonetheless, the one this study proposes is unique in that it also features the “value negotiation” and learning-fostering behavior of the leaders. These behavioral patterns might also be applicable to other practice transfers that require employees’ learning of tacit knowledge to accommodate the newly transferred practice.

## **VII.2 Theoretical contributions**

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the extant literature. First, it sheds light on research on temporal conflicts at the country level investigated in the context of international business. It also supports the results found in the literature on temporal distance at the group level, which have demonstrated that, when temporal distance is not solved, temporal conflicts will develop and will be detrimental to the commitment of members (De Dreu & Weingard, 2003; Standifer et al., 2015). At the country level, together with Berrell et al. (1999) and Ayoun and Moreo (2009), the results of the study contribute to the scarce literature to date on temporal conflicts and temporal conflict management in the context of international business.

Second, this study elaborates on the work of previous researchers on temporal synchronization (Ancona & Chong, 1996; Bartel & Milliken, 2004; Blount & Janicik, 2002) on the

country level. The results obtained from three studies show that, at this level, the phenomenon of temporal synchronization is much more complex than at the group level since MNCs have to deal with the tensions between choosing the globalization and localization strategy. The problem of articulating home and host country norms and values towards temporal cognition and behavior further increases the complexity of the issue. Hence, the solution to the problem of temporal synchronization at the country level requires more sophisticated leadership styles compared to those suggested at group level by Mohammed and Nadkarni (2011). At the group level, the problem of temporal distance can be solved with team temporal leadership, which refers to “leader behaviors that aid in structuring, coordinating, and managing the pacing of task accomplishment in a team” (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011, p.492). Nevertheless, at the international organizational level, the solution requires the simultaneous function of multiple leader behaviors to combat the challenges of the process of transfer, adaptation, and internalization of the time management practice.

Third, this study contributes to the current literature on transnational practice transfer. By investigating temporal synchronization through the process of practice transfer and adaptation, this study supports previous findings that international practice transfer is a long, difficult, and costly proceeding that requires constant efforts of both the headquarters (Ciabuschi et al, 2011; Edwards & Ferner, 2004; Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Kostova, 1999; Teece, 1981) and the subsidiary (Birkinshaw et al, 2005; Edwards & Ferner, 2004; Kostova, 1999). In particular, it supports the finding that not only managers but also local employees play an important role in the success of the transfer (Chiang et al., 2017, Kostova, 1999).

Forth, the results of the quantitative research give a clear explanation of how leaders can influence employees’ performance by successfully verifying the direct effect of leadership on employees’ attitudes and behaviors, and the moderating effect of leadership on the relationship between the two constructs. With these finding, this study contributes to the existing literature on the topic of leadership, specifically how leaders can influence followers’ work attitude and performance through the mechanism of communication and playing an exemplary role to follow (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Gächter & Renner, 2018; Luring & Selmer, 2011; Riege, 2007;)

Fifth, in addition to making contributions to the mainstream leadership theories, the findings of both the quantitative and case study research allow the study to develop a leadership framework that is specific to the case of temporal synchronization. This framework is distinct from the one proposed by Klimkeit and Reihlen (2016) in that it not only concentrates on the role of transnational practice transfer leaders in shifting their own values to fit with the new context, but it also focuses on the aspect of “value negotiating,” through which the adaptation and internalization of

practice are enabled and accelerated. Together with the work by Klimkeit and Reihlen (2016) and Kostova (1999), this study contributes to the scarce literature on the bridging role of the transfer coalition in facilitating the implementation and adaptation of the headquarters' practice in the subsidiary. In addition, the findings of the case study indicate that knowledge related to time-management practice can be considered a kind of tacit knowledge that is difficult to codify or transmit (Kogut & Zander, 1993; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1994). This study therefore contributes to the extant literature on knowledge transfer by empirically proving that expatriate managers play an indispensable role in educating local employees and conveying expertise required for the implementation of practices in subsidiary organizations. These findings support the results of prior researchers that this type of manager is imperative to facilitating knowledge transfer in a subsidiary (Miao et al., 2011) and to enhancing the absorptive capacity of a subsidiary thanks to their ability to convey tacit knowledge (Doz & Prahalad, 1996, Harzing, 1999, 2002). ).

Sixth, given the global business context in which the study was conducted, the results of the study also contribute to the literature of international human resource management. It offers another perspective to visualize which obstacles induced by cultural distance that expatriates managers have to overcome. Furthermore, the study also proposes suggestions of how they should make decision to prevent conflicts between home and host institutions, yet still be able to attain the organizational goal of increased efficiency (Bornay-Barrachina, 2019). From another viewpoint, this study specifically focused on the training aspect of human resource management in MNCs' subsidiary organizations. To a certain extent, the training of time management practice can be regarded as a kind of HRM practices that aims at cultivating highly efficient human resource for the subsidiary organizations. The results of the study provided evidence to elucidate the contemporarily controversial debate on whether HRM strategies of the home institution should be differentiated or integrated with those of the host institution (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Evan, Pucik, & Barsoux, 2002). Our findings strengthens the universalist perspective of that MNCs' advanced HRM practice is a type of competitive resource that is possible to be transferred to overseas subsidiaries (Dickman, 2003; Gooderham & Nordhaug, 2003).

Lastly, with the approach from the aspect of temporal culture, this study brought a new perspective to guide subsequent investigations about issues related to international business management. In other fields of business such as marketing, temporal cognition has been widely used as a cultural-level construct to examine the behavior of customers in different cultures (Graham, 1981; Klicperova-Baker, Kostal, & Vinopal, 2015). However, the attention paid to time as a cultural aspect to explore managerial issues in the context of international business is still limited. The

findings from this study prove that time can definitively be considered a culture-level concept that deserves greater concern and further study by scholars in transnational business settings.

### **VII.3 Practical implications**

This study proposed the following practical suggestions for practitioners. First, temporal distance is an unavoidable phenomenon in an international business context. However, managers can prevent it from becoming an organizational conflict by researching and comprehending the reasons for the differences in cognition and the behavior of the two parties. Only by clearly analyzing the causes can managers seek a relevant way to handle the issue thoroughly. In addition, the results obtained from the study suggest that headquarters managers can prevent organizational conflicts induced by temporal distance by shifting the management style to match the situation encountered.

Second, efforts regarding the work-related facet of the problem, for example, scheduling work or proactively coping with the work delay caused by employees' inability to manage deadlines, only help address the problem at its surface. To thoroughly solve the issue at its root, it is necessary for managers to devote time to instructing employees on advanced time-managing skills, since these this training was not provided by the educational institutions or the recruitment system as a must-have core competence.

Third, transnational business managers should always stay open-minded to temporal issues in the recipient unit (in both the cases of joint ventures and MNCs) and develop the ability to initiate discussion and negotiation with local employees. Mutual understanding and respect of each other's values is the center of the discussion. Only by enabling communication and discussion with employees can managers make the decision of how both parties can reach an agreement on temporal issues.

Fourth, in order to foster the change in employees' behavior towards time, it is crucial to consider how to change their attitude first. Managers can change employees' attitude towards time by providing them with the education about the role and meaning of time management practice to the organization. Another way to approach the change in employees' attitude is to raise their awareness of how one's performing of advanced management practice can reduce troubles to his or her coworkers and enhance work coordination among organizational members.

Finally, it is important for managers to remain the role model to inspire and motivate the accommodating and learning of new temporal perspectives and time-management skills of local employees. The results of the mixed methods quantitative study suggest that headquarters should invest time and efforts in cultivating the professional time attitude and the behavior of local managers first, since they subsequently act as role models for their colleagues and employees.



#### **VII.4 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research**

There are four limitations that the research could not avoid. First, the sample size in the mixed methods qualitative study was relatively small (eight participants). The reason for this limited number is that the study targeted subjects at top managerial position, who are difficult to access. According to Creswell (2007), in order to obtain data saturation with the grounded theory approach, at least 20 to 30 interviewees are required. Future research can expand the number of participants and use the same interview content in order to obtain richer and more saturated results.

Second, in the mixed methods quantitative phase, although the study was designed to avoid common method bias by putting a time delay between phases of data collection (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2003), regarding the method of responding, data were collected from a self-report survey where participants themselves were the single source of data provision. This might have affected the validity of the constructs measured. Dyadic data collection, in which both supervisors and employees take part, in responding to each corresponding items to is recommended in future research.

Third, this study focused on Japanese MNCs in all three studies to enable comparison and contrasting of the results in the end. This approach helps the result to eventually gain a holistic yet objective result. However, at the same time, the selection of one type of samples makes it difficult to generalize the findings. It can be argued that the findings are reliable and that the implications can be applied to the case of Japanese MNCs in Vietnam but may not be true of other MNCs and subsidiaries. Because of this limitation, the study calls for further investigation of the issue on different subjects and in different context settings. Another suggestion for future research is to build a robust empirical construct of, for instance, the perceived temporal distance to enable large-scale quantitative data collection on subjects (managers, employees) from more diverse temporal culture.

Finally, based on the findings of the case study, the research proposed a fundamental yet distinct framework for investigating temporal synchronization leadership. However, it has not able to establish the scale to measure constructs that prior scholars have not explored, such as “value negotiation.” This construct is arguably applicable not only to the case of temporal synchronization, but also to general practice adaptation. Future study should further elaborate this leadership framework and develop the questionnaire items to enable the qualitative measurement of the proposed construct.

## APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS PRESENTED IN MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

	Participant	Company	Position	Time spent in Vietnam	Place & time of the interview	Method of interview	Length of the interview
1	Mr. K.I (Japanese, male)	Firm X (manufacturing industry, small and medium firm)	4th generation plant manager (2017 ~ June 2019)	9 years	June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interview	60 minutes
2	Mr. F.S (Japanese, male)		Deputy plant manager (2005 ~ June 2019)	12 years	June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interview	66 minutes
3	Mr. O.M (Japanese, male)		1st generation plant manager (2005 ~ 2009)	5 years	June 21st, 2019 Firm X's headquarter in Osaka, Japan	Face-to-face Group interview (with Mr. H.T)	77 minutes
4	Mr. H.T (Japanese, male)		2nd generation plant manager (2009 ~ 2014)	5 years		Face-to-face Group interview (with Mr. H.T)	
5	Mr. G.K (Japanese, male)	Company Y (manufacturing industry, large company)	Deputy director of company Y's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	3 months	June 11th, 2019 Y company's subsidiary office in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Group interview (with Mr. H.K)	35 minutes
6	Mr. H.P (Japanese, male)	Company P (consulting industry, large company)	Currently working as a consultant in company Z's subsidiary office in Hanoi, Vietnam	6 months		Face-to-face Group interview (with Mr. H.K)	
7	Mr. I.O (Japanese, male)	Company Z (manufacturing industry, large company)	Sale manager in company Q's subsidiary in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam	2 years	June 17th, 2019	Telephone Individual interview	50 minutes
8	Mr. J.K (Japanese, male)	Company W (construction industry, large company)	Director of company W's subsidiary in Hochiminh city, Vietnam	13 years	July 9th, 2019	Email Individual interview	/

## APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS PRESENTED IN CASE STUDY

	Participant	Company	Position	Time spent in Vietnam	Place & time of the interview	Method of interview	Length of the interview
1	Mr. K.I (Japanese, male)	Firm X (manufacturing industry, small and medium firm)	4th generation plant manager (2017 ~ June 2019)	9 years	June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interview	60 minutes
2	Mr. F.S (Japanese, male)		Deputy plant manager (2005 ~ June 2019)	12 years	June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interview	66 minutes
3	Mr. O.M (Japanese, male)		1st generation plant manager (2005 ~ 2009)	5 years	June 21st, 2019 Firm X's headquarter in Osaka, Japan	Face-to-face Group interview (with Mr. H.T)	77 minutes
4	Mr. H.T (Japanese, male)		2nd generation plant manager (2009 ~ 2014)	5 years		Face-to-face Group interview (with Mr. O.M)	
5	Mr. M.N (Japanese, male)		General affair manager of firm X's headquarter in Osaka, Japan	None	June 21st, 2019 Firm X's headquarter in Osaka, Japan	Face-to-face Individual interview	25 minutes
6	Mr. A (Vietnamese, Male)		Production manager		June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interview	20 minutes
7	Mr. F (Vietnamese, Male)		Production team leader		June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interview	20 minutes
8	8 office employees (Vietnamese, all female)		Office employees		June 10th, 2019 Firm X's subsidiary in Hanoi, Vietnam	Face-to-face Individual interviews	15~20 minutes each

## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Could you please tell me about your company?  
The industry your company (in Japan) operates in  
Your company size  
The industry your company (in Vietnam) operates in  
Number of employees in Vietnamese subsidiary  
Years of operation in Vietnam
2. Could you please tell me about yourself?  
Years working in parent family  
Position in the subsidiary  
Years of the Vietnamese assignment  
Prior experience of international assignment before coming to Vietnam  
Your Vietnamese language ability  
Your level of understanding about the Vietnamese culture
3. Based on your experience and observation, could you please tell us if you ever feel or think that Vietnamese employees have unserious attitude towards time compared to Japanese employees? (Hints: deadlines, delivery dates, planning, scheduling)
4. Could you please tell me more specific about the manifestation of these undesired behaviors towards time of local employees?
5. Does the unserious attitude of local employees influence your work and the company work in a good way or bad way? If there is, please specify.
6. What time orientation do you think Vietnamese employees possess? If is similar or different to those of Japanese employees that you have worked with? Does their time orientation cause you any difficulties to manage as a manager?
7. How many percentages of local employees do you think to have unserious time attitude?
8. How do you feel when working with people who has unserious time attitude?
9. How do you feel working in a company with many people who have unserious time attitude?
10. How do you response to the unserious attitude of local employees? Do you take actions to prevent it or change it?
11. What do you think would be the reasons for the unserious attitude towards time of local employees?
12. If you have a colleague who is going to Vietnam for an international assignment, which managerial advice to cope with the issue would you give him?

## APPENDIX D

Mixed methods' quantitative study  
Items of the measured constructs

Construct	Items	Likert scale range
Task-oriented supervisor behavior	1. My supervisor organizes work activities to improve efficiency	(1) Very untrue ~ (5) Very true
	2. My supervisor plans short term operations	
	3. My supervisor assigns work to groups or individuals	
	4. My supervisor clarifies role expectations and task objectives	
	5. My supervisor explains rules, policies, and standard operating process	
	6. My supervisor emphasizes the importance of efficiency, productivity, and quality	
LMX	1. I usually know how to satisfy my supervisor with what I do.	(1) Strongly disagree ~ (5) Strongly agree
	2. My supervisor understands my job problems and needs.	
	3. My supervisor recognizes my potential.	
	4. Regardless of how much formal authority my supervisor has built into his or her position, he or she would use his or her power to help me solve problems in my work.	
	5. Regardless of the amount of formal authority my supervisor has, he or she would "bail me out" at his or her expense?	
	6. I have enough confidence in my supervisor that I would defend and justify his or her decision if he or she were not present to do so.	
	7. I have a good relationship with my supervisor at work.	
Supervisor's role model	1. My supervisor feels that deadlines don't really matter.	(1) Very untrue ~ (5) Very true
	2. Staying on schedule is important to my supervisor.	
	3. It is important for my supervisor to meet his deadlines.	
	4. My supervisor does not pay much attention to schedules.	
	5. It is very important for my supervisor to be on time for everything	
Employee's attitude towards deadlines	1. I feel that deadlines don't really matter.	(1) Very untrue ~ (5) Very true
	2. Staying on schedule is important to me.	
	3. It is important for me to meet my deadlines.	
	4. I don't pay much attention to schedules.	
	5. It is very important for me to be on time for everything	
Employees' scheduling behavior to meet deadline	1. I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before.	(1) Very untrue ~ (5) Very true
	2. I usually have to rush to complete a task on time.	
	3. I often have a task finished sooner than necessary.	
	4. I do not do tasks until just before they are to be handed in.	

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