

Developing Ethics Awareness

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Why Ethics Awareness?

Lack of it results in:

- Crime
- Corruption
- Pollution
- Human suffering and death
- Injustice
- Loss of faith in authorities
- Abuses
- Wastes of resources, human and natural
- Wars

Why Ethics Awareness?

In developing countries, lack of ethics awareness causes:

- Less or no development, or under-development
- Waste of talents
- Waste of nature
- A bad image for doing business
- Ongoing poverty
- Failing education
- An increasing gap between more developed, and less developed countries

Focus on Corruption

- Main force keeping countries from (further) growth and prosperity
- So common, it's regarded as 'normal'
- Two types:
 - Political
 - Corporate
- Never formal or legal
- Implicit systems
- Top down, bottom up
- When those in power depend on it, nothing will change

This lecture

1. Problem Statement
2. Current State of Affairs
3. Power Distance
4. Developing Ethics Awareness

1. The Problem

Elements:

- Ethics is a misunderstood concept
- Ethics is a personal consideration to weigh good and bad
- Ethics is more than words
- Ethics is hard to codify
- Ethics does not equal 'morals'
- Ethical does not mean 'law abiding'
- Ethics is often is a misused, misapplied term

Problem: lack of ethics education →

lack of ethics awareness → unethical behavior

2. Current State: South & East Asia

Transparency International publishes a list of countries, perceived by stakeholders (inhabitants; professional visitors) ranging from no or less corrupt to highly corrupt:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Singapore | 87. India |
| 13. Hong Kong | 91. Sri Lanka |
| 17. Japan | 110. Indonesia |
| 33. Taiwan | 116. Vietnam |
| 38. Brunei | 134. Philippines; Bangla Desh |
| 39. South Korea | 143. Pakistan |
| 46. Macau | 146. Nepal |
| 56. Malaysia | 154. Cambodia; Laos |
| 78. Thailand & China | 176. Myanmar |

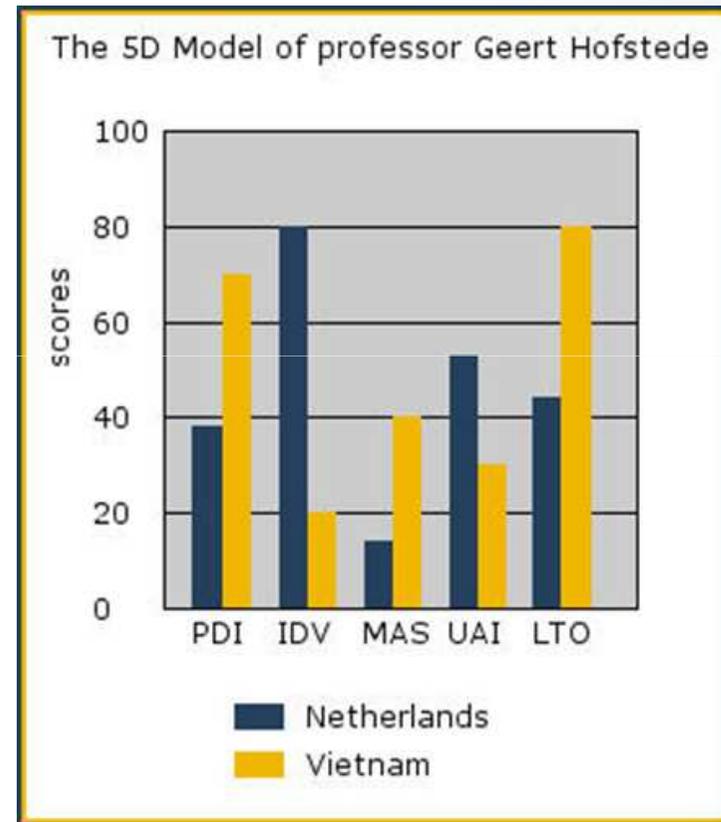
3. Power Distance

Hofstede's 5 Dimensions:

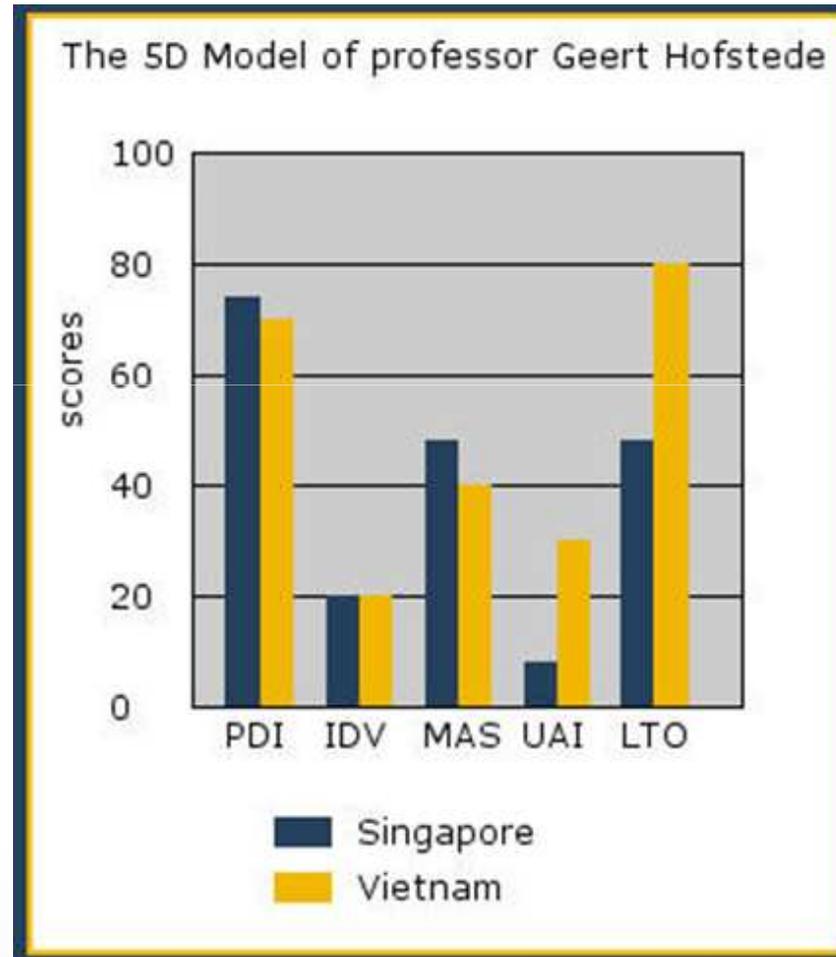
- Power Distance
- Individualism – Collectivism
- Masculinity – Femininity
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Longterm – Shortterm Orientation

Possibly lacking:

- Materialistic – Spiritual

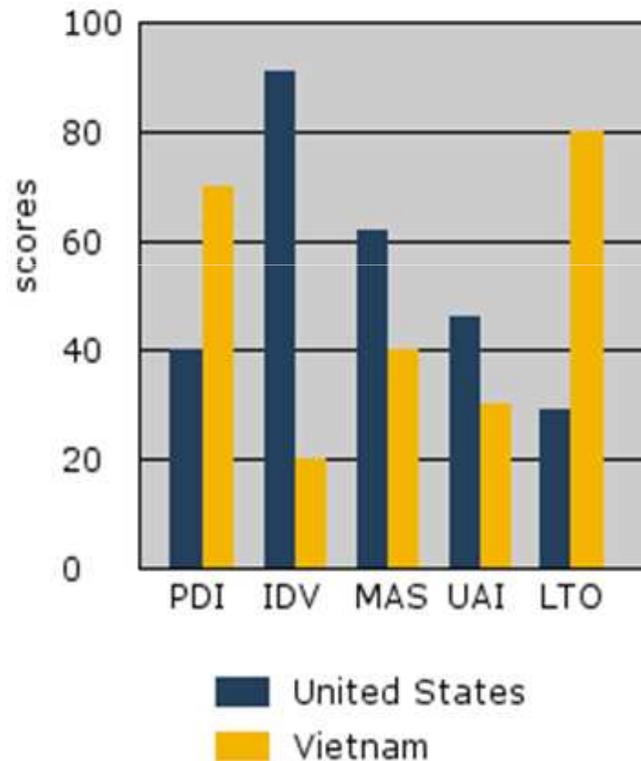


Power Distance & the Impact of Ethics (1)



Power Distance & the Impact of Ethics (2)

The 5D Model of professor Geert Hofstede



Master Kong

- Confucius' deep impact on South East Asian cultures and values
- Confirming and updating the ancient traditions of ethics and human relationships
- China has dominated large parts of South East Asia for many centuries



Human Relationships

2,500 years ago, in a time when China was in a chaotic state and in desperate need of social clarity, Master Kong defined strict rules for human relationships:

- Ruler and subject
- Husband and wife
- Parents and children
- Brothers and sisters
- Friend and friend

These rules are still in full force today.

Losing Face

4 types of Face:

1. **Diu-mian-zi:** this is when one's actions or deeds have been exposed to people.
2. **Gei-mian-zi:** involves the giving of Face to others through showing respect.
3. **Liu-mian-zi:** this is developed by avoiding mistakes and showing wisdom in action.
4. **Jiang-mian-zi:** this is when Face is increased through others, i.e. someone complementing you to an associate.

Losing Face: no criticism

“If someone disagrees with what another person says, rather than disagree publicly, the person will remain quiet. This gives face to the other person, while speaking up would make both parties lose face.”

So: in a Confucianist culture with its large Power Distance there is no room for subordinates criticizing their leaders.

As power tends to corrupt the minds of those in power, they carry a heavy responsibility to be ethical and in this way, be an ethical example.

4. Developing Ethics Awareness

To cure and improve ethics awareness and ethical behavior in South East Asia one needs:

1. ethics education: all levels of society
2. ethical decision skills: those in power
3. justice: judges, lawyers, law enforcement officers

Seven Areas of Ethics Awareness

1. Self: personal life
2. Family
3. Group (organization; ethnic entity)
4. Nation (country)
5. Mankind
6. Nature (both organic & anorganic environments)
7. Spirituality / Eternity / Divinity

Ethical Decision Skills

- Ethics is a personal consideration and choice
- Communication is the tool to discuss the validity of one's considerations, choices, and consequences
- Beware of 'Group Think': this may generate negative results
- In the end, it's the individual who makes up his/her mind
- Being accountable for one's decisions means, reporting on the ethical considerations that have resulted in a decision, and its consequences
- Being accountable does *not* mean: justifying unethical decisions & acts by referring to 'culture'

Conclusions

- To fully understand the background and behavior in South East Asian cultures it is mandatory to study their history, sociology, politics (old & new), religions, philosophies, geography and ethnology.
- People in power positions in South East Asia carry an even heavier responsibility regarding ethics awareness and ethical decision making than those in power in other parts of the world.
- This is due to the Confucianist roots of the various cultures, and the phenomenon of 'losing face'.
- Restoring / improving ethics awareness and ethical decision skills will take time.

Recommendations

1. Promote ethics awareness among leaders of organizations and representatives of the Law.
2. Develop ethics awareness programs for all educational levels, to develop ethical decision skills.
3. Study the Singapore 'system'.
4. Respect tradition and culture, unless misused as justifications for unethical practices.
5. Don't maintain low salaries for officials expecting they will compensate their monthly deficit by accepting bribes.
6. Condemn and end corruption, and develop a program to handle the consequences.
7. Lead ethical lives and be an ethical example to the young.
8. When on the road to Power, realize that "Power Corrupts".
9. Allow people to make mistakes while developing ethics awareness. Make sure they learn from their mistakes – not by punishing them, but by educating them.

Developing Ethics Awareness

Thank you for your kind attention.