

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Dang Thi Ngoc Lan

*Director, Language Center and
Foundation Year*

*Vietnamese-German University
Vietnam*

✉: lan.dtn@vgu.edu.vn

☎: (+84) 939 233934



Ngoc Lan Thi Dang, Ph.D., is Director of the Language Center and Foundation Year of Vietnamese-German University (VGU) in Viet Nam. Dr. Dang earned her Master's degree in Educational Management and Human Resource Development at the University of Sydney in Australia in 2002, and her doctoral degree in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University (MSU) in the U.S. in 2012. Her research interests are in gender equality, women and leadership in academia, transcultural women's leadership, global citizenship, female students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), transnational higher education, and EMI (English as a medium of instruction).

Women in Academia, East and West: Navigating Institutional and Cultural Challenges and Leadership Styles

ABSTRACT

How do women in academia in the East and the West lead and attain their leadership positions? Existing literature on women in academia addressing this critical question is really scarce. Accordingly, this paper, which is part of a longitudinal empirical study exploring and comparing lived experiences of academic women leaders in Viet Nam, Malaysia and the United States, focuses on investigating challenges that female academics in the three countries face as they advance to mid-level leadership positions in their career. Particularly, the paper explores and describes the challenges they confront at their universities, how they navigate these challenges to move forward in their career, and their leadership styles. In-depth, face-to-face, and one-on-one interviews through Zoom platform were conducted with five women leaders at the middle level in each country. Moreover, documents related to national and institutional gender equality, institutional structures, and staff promotion in higher education were analyzed to shed more light on the participants' professional experiences and to triangulate the trustworthiness of the data collected from the interviews. Major findings show that there are both similarities and differences among the women leaders in the three countries and between the two countries in the East (Malaysia and Viet Nam) as well. The differences primarily result from distinct institutional policies, norms, and values as well as traditional and institutional cultures of Eastern and Western countries, which at times adversely affect women's professional and personal performances, decisions, and choices. Further, these differences, especially those in traditional and institutional cultures, cause academic women in the two continents of the globe (America and Asia) to develop diverse personal traits or attributes and various leadership styles. In this regard, although

the women academics in the three countries in the East and the West apply adaptive and participative leadership, those in the East exercise more servant leadership.

Keywords: women in academia, women's leadership, institutional norms, cultures, East, West