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**MIDDLE MANAGER LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES IN CHINA:  
PERCEPTIONS OF MBA AND EMBA STUDENTS AT NANKAI UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis in  
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by  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to measure students' perceptions of the importance of leadership competencies to the success of middle managers in China; investigate the relationships between those perceptions and the participants' demographic backgrounds; and explore the perceived effectiveness of developmental activities as these contributed to middle managers' leadership competencies. Utilizing a modified U.S. competency model, the researcher developed, translated, validated and distributed a questionnaire to MBA and EMBA students at Nankai University, China. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression were used to answer the research questions. Study findings revealed that all of the leadership competencies were perceived to be important to the success of middle managers in China. The top five most frequently identified competencies were: *Accountability, Team Building, Relationship Management, Continual Learning and Conflict Management*. Significant regression results were found between the independent variables (age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization) and two competency categories (*Results Driven, Business Acumen*). The most effective leadership development activity was "special projects or assignment within one's own job responsibilities", while the least effective activity was "computer based learning". Based on the study findings, recommendations were proposed to current and potential middle managers, executives and HR departments, education institutes, government and future researchers.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### Study Background

All eyes are on China. Over the past three decades, China has demonstrated its increasing significance socially, economically, and politically on the world stage. Through its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), China has been facing accelerated reforms and an increasingly competitive environment. China's firms are forced to adjust more rapidly to competition on a global playing field (Nolan, 2001; Panitchpakdi & Clifford, 2002). During this special historical period in the transitional economy, whether China can maintain the high rate of development and achieve further gains depends very much on the managers who are playing especially important roles in leading, implementing, and overseeing the continual changes (Brown & Porter, 1996).

Leadership writings to date have concentrated mostly on the roles and functions of senior executives. However, the roles and functions of middle managers have received increased attention (Fenton-O'Creevy, 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1996, 2000). Although there is no generally valid demarcation among "low-level", "middle-level" and "top-level" management (Stahle & Schirmer, 1992), the reality is that the vast majority of managers in today's large organizations are middle managers. According to Floyd and Woodridge (1996):

Middle managers' positions are located somewhere between the strategic apex and the operating core of the organization. Traditionally, they have been charged with overseeing some aspect of the organization's operation—what organization theories would call 'subunit work flow'—with one or more layers of management reporting to them. They have at least access to upper management. Their responsibilities have been defined mainly according to functional boundaries, and they have held formal authority over operating – level managers, supervisors, and individual contributors. (p. 4)

In this study, middle managers include those who work between the senior management group in the organization and the first-line managers and front-line employees. Depending on the organization, the middle manager group is likely to encompass several layers within the organization.

### *Middle Manager as Leader*

In the literature, the middle manager has often been singled out as the main reason for resistance to organizational change (Peters, 1987, 1992; Wheatley, 1992). However, increasingly, research and practice have shown that middle managers' roles do not only center on the planning, controlling and monitoring of their units' activities, but they also can influence strategy in both upward and downward directions (Floyd & Woodridge, 1992, 1997; Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990). This is also true for middle managers in China. There are three primary reasons why today's middle managers in China need to play the

role of leader; the critical position of the middle manager, leadership continuity, and motivation issues.

First, middle managers are serving in critical positions in today's organizations in China. The external environments for China's organizations are characterized by incredible competitiveness and complexity. It is often middle managers rather than the top managers who have their hands on the "pulse of the organization" and are closer to customers and other stakeholders (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997). Middle managers play a pivotal role in detecting new ideas, mobilizing resources, championing issues, and communicating information about important strategic agendas (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1996; Kanter, 1982). Middle managers also play an important role in leading people and retaining employee because they manage, motivate and communicate with supervisors and front line employees everyday. To meet the requirements of their roles, middle managers need to be aware of organization strategy, have a keen sense of the environmental context, remain extremely sensitive to the nature and demands of other members, develop cooperation, and get people to work together to reach a common goal (Dutton, Ashford, Wierba, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997). An organization's competitive advantage will increasingly depend on the degree to which it allows middle managers to enjoy an enhanced role that involves greater input into the strategy and policy arena (Dopson & Stewart, 1990; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1997; Frohman & Johnson, 1993; Kanter, 1982; Smith, 1997).

Leadership continuity is another issue related to middle managers' leadership. China's State Family Planning and Population Commission predicted that the number of Chinese residents aged 65 or older will grow to more than 200 million in 2007; there

were just under 100 million in 2000 (“Aging population in China”, 2004). Within the next twenty years, a significant percentage of the executives in China are going to reach their retirement age. Today’s middle managers will be the next generation of business leaders. If they are not ready to take over, there will be a potential loss of retired executives’ skills and experience. In 2004, several entrepreneurs in China retired or passed away accidentally, and the situation attracted a great deal of attention from practitioners and researchers interested in succession planning and management issues in China (Ye & Pang, 2005). Moreover, compared with previous generations of leaders who grew up during the upheavals of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution and who obtained their working experience in the government-led environment for many years (Chen, 2001), current middle managers have a more systematic education background and market-oriented management experiences. Whether middle managers can take over an organization effectively is a key determinant in China’s success on the world stage in the next twenty years. Accordingly, middle managers, the next generation of the executive leadership team, need to capitalize on leadership and managerial skills so that they can take the leadership reins smoothly in the future.

In addition to middle managers’ critical position in organizations and the succession planning issue, motivation is the third driving factor for middle manager leadership. Influenced by Confucian philosophy, Chinese people view the leader as a respectable and powerful role (Tjosvold, Yu, & Liu, 2004). Compared with previous generations, today’s younger generation of employees in China have a stronger motivation for personal development (Koo, 1999). They wish to be more engaged in their work environment and to be part of a culture that complements their personal values.

Middle managers who are engaged in leadership feel a greater sense of belonging and achievement, which will motivate and encourage better performance.

In conclusion, the critical nature of the position and the leadership continuum require middle managers take on the role of leader. At the same time, the middle managers themselves also have strong motivations to be more engaged in leadership. Although there are also other related issues, these three are the most influential reasons for the leadership competencies of middle managers to be an important topic with social and academic significance.

#### *Challenge of Middle Management in China*

Although China is the country that has the most population in the world, it is still running short of people, and especially short of managers who have creativity and leadership skills. In many cases, organizations expend significant effort and develop fascinating strategies, but the strategy cannot be implemented effectively because of the failure of middle management (Zhang, 2000). Too often, middle managers in organization are promoted because they are good at technical aspects of their job, but not in leading people. Many of them focus on the planning, controlling and monitoring of their units' activities, but are weak at influencing strategy in both upward and downward directions, leading people to achieve strategy goals. According to a report released in 2004 by the Development Research Center (DRC) of the State Council, Chinese enterprises lag far behind in fostering would-be enterprise leaders ("China releases human resources report", 2004). Nearly 60% of the companies surveyed for the 2003

Best Employers in China study reported shortages in leadership skills (Keeley, 2004). The consulting firm McKinsey estimated that Chinese companies would need up to 75,000 internationally experienced leaders if they wanted to continue to grow over the next 10 to 15 years. Currently, McKinsey estimated, there were only 3,000 to 5,000 such leadership talents in China (Schafer, 2005). Due to an insufficient number of qualified managers, some foreign firms have to persuade the expatriates they send out to stay longer because they cannot replace them with cheaper local hires as quickly as they hope to.

Although tremendous efforts have been committed to developing managers' leadership skills in China, the overall quality of development programs within and outside of organizations is lacking. Berthal, Bondra and Wang (2005) showed that more than half of the HR professionals who participated in the survey felt that current leadership development programs in China were of poor or fair quality. There is no more important task with regard to leadership development than to identify the competencies that comprise leadership (Tubbs & Schulz, 2006). Chinese organizations too often fail to design development programs based on competency models (Berthal, Bondra & Wang, 2005). Therefore, without a good understanding of what it means to be an effective middle manager, development programs may miss important skills or focus on the wrong behaviors.

Due to the huge demand for qualified middle managers and a limited supply of talent, the turnover rate for middle managers in China is very high. Middle managers have strong desires for career advancement and the fast growth of the Chinese economy provides tremendous opportunities. One in ten managers changed jobs in the southern

city of Shenzhen in 2004, and one in 12 changed jobs in Beijing, according to Hewitt (“China’s People Problem”, 2005). Yearly turnover in management in many of these foreign companies was higher than 14% (Hickey, 2002). The instability imposes significant costs on each organization for recruiting, screening, and training replacement middle managers.

In conclusion, it is important to explore what leadership competencies are important for middle managers in China, and how to acquire those competencies. Although related studies have been conducted in the United States, Canada and other western countries (Booth & Farquhar, 2003; Fenton-O’Creevy, 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992, 1996, 1997, 2000), there is still little research on the leadership competencies of middle managers in China.

### Purpose of the Study

This study had three main purposes. The first purpose of the study was to measure the importance of leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in China according to the perceptions of Master of Business Administration (MBA) students and Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) students at Nankai University. The second purpose was to investigate the relationships between those perceptions and the participants’ demographic and biographic background, including age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization. The third purpose was to explore, based on the participants’

perceptions, the effective approaches to use in enabling middle managers to acquire those leadership competencies.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

*Q1: What are the perceptions of MBA and EMBA students enrolled in the Nankai University regarding the importance of the leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in their organizations in China?*

*Q2: Are there significant relationships between these perceptions and the participants' student's age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization?*

*Q3: What are the perceptions of participants regarding the effectiveness of each activity for developing leadership competencies of middle managers in their organizations in China?*

### Significance of the Study

This study responds to the needs of organizations in China and also contributes to research on the leadership competencies of middle managers in China. Study outcomes will benefit at least four groups: current and potential middle managers, executives and human resource development professionals, educators, and future researchers. Current

and potential middle managers can assess themselves against the important competencies found in the study, recognize the gaps in their current skills, knowledge and abilities, use the effectiveness of different development approach as reference and form their own development plan. Executives and human resource development professionals can use study findings as a reference in designing competency models for their own companies, building up middle management development strategies and integrating other HR functions based on the competency models. Educators can use the study findings to evaluate, adjust the content of curriculum and the setting up of the whole academic programs. This study was a first step in exploring the importance of leadership competency and effectiveness of developing activities for middle managers in China. Future researchers can use study findings as a foundation as they conduct more in-depth and broader studies in this field.

### Limitations

This study had several limitations:

- The framework was based on United States research, which might or might not reflect all of the leadership competencies of middle managers that were perceived as important by participants in China.
- The study focused only on leadership competencies. It didn't explore the behaviors associated with those competencies. Therefore, the findings may be weak at providing behavior level guidance.

- The questionnaire was translated from English into Chinese. Despite the great efforts put by the researcher into the validation and translation procedures, the translated version may not have been perfectly equivalent to the original English version.
- The study participants were MBA and EMBA students from one university in China. The findings only reflect the perceptions of the target population and cannot be generalized beyond the boundaries described.
- Although the researcher provided a definition and examples of middle managers at the beginning of the questionnaire, in practice, the demarcation of management was vague. Thus participants may have had a different understanding of the definition of middle managers. Also, participants may have had different understanding of the definition of the success of middle manager. Those factors might have influenced their responses to questions.

#### Definition of Terms

*Job competency* is an “underlying characteristic of an employee (i.e., motive, trait, skill, aspects of one’s self-image, social role, or a body of knowledge) which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job” (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 20).

*Competency Identification* is “the process of identifying job competencies” (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999, p. 91).

*Leadership* is “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives”(Yukl, 2002, p. 7).

*Leadership Competency* describes “the attributes of high performing leaders needed to produce results” (Eyde, Gregory, Muldrow, & Mergen, 1999, p. v.).

*Middle Managers* are “are located somewhere between the strategic apex and the operating core of the organization. Traditionally, they have been charged with overseeing some aspect of the organization’s operation—what organization theories would call ‘subunit work flow’—with one or more layers of management reporting to them. They have at least access to upper management. Their responsibilities have been defined mainly according to functional boundaries, and they have held formal authority over operating –level managers, supervisors, and individual contributors” (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1996, p. 4).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter contains a profile of research related to the leadership competencies of middle managers in China. The literature review is divided into three sections. The first section introduces the research on leadership competency; the second section contains a summary and discussion of the leadership competency of the middle manager; and the third section reviews existing studies related to the leadership competency of middle management in China.

#### **Leadership Competency**

Numerous studies have been done on leadership (Bass, 1990; Bennis, 1959; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 2002). If stacked, the studies would equal the size of a small mountain (Rost, 1993). For the purpose of this study, this section focuses on a review of the literature on leadership competency. Typical competency modeling approaches, with an emphasis on leadership competency modeling approaches, are reviewed. Research conducted by the U.S. Office of Personal Management (OPM) is reviewed in detail as is the foundation of the study.

### *Competency Study*

In response to the incredibly competitive and changing environment, there has been a growing concern that traditional job analysis procedures are not up to playing a central role in the new human resource management environment (Olian & Rynes, 1991; Sanchez, 1994). Competency study has gained more interest and attention. According to a survey of 292 organizations conducted by Cook and Bernthal (1998), 75% were using competency-based practices. Competency-based management provides an integrated framework through which to maximize the human capital of an organization. It aligns a number of human resource management practices, including selection, development, succession planning and performance management to achieve organizational goals.

Numerous attempts have been made by scholars to study competency (Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland, 1973; McLagan, 1983, 1989, 1996; Rothwell, 1999; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; White, 1959). Rothwell and Lindholm (1999) stated, "Current competency programs are based on the work of John Flanagan, Robert White, David McClelland, Patricia McLagan, Richard Boyatzis, Lyle and Signe Spencer, C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel, and David Ulrich" (p. 91). The work of John Flanagan (1954) established the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as a precursor to the key methodology used in rigorous competency studies. Robert White (1959) identified a human trait that he called "competence". Following that, David McClelland, known as the father of competency, launched the competency modeling movement in the United States. Patricia McLagan introduced competency models as a focal point for planning, organizing, integrating and improving all aspects of human resource management systems. Richard

Boyatzis (1982) advanced competency study by authoring the first empirically based and fully researched book on competency model development. McLagan's (1983, 1989) studies brought widespread attention to competency modeling by introducing practical examples to training and development practitioners. Lyle and Signe Spencer (1993) published the most research-oriented and comprehensive of all competency books, which made competency modeling more accessible. Later, the work of C. K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel (1990), and David Ulrich (1997) directed and extended competency modeling beyond the realm of individual performance into the realm of organizational performance.

Notable to discuss is the difference between individual competency and organizational core competency. Individual competency is the characteristics of an individual that result in effective performance (Boyatzis, 1982). Organization competency, on the other hand, means "the collective learning in an organization, especially how to coordinated diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies" (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999, p.91 ). Organization competency is the strategic strength and the key to making the organization competitive. For the purpose of this study, competency refers to individual competency.

Competency identification has been used as a focal point in recruitment and selection, assessment, individual development planning, training development, coaching, succession planning and other human resource management systems (McLagan, 1980). The competency model can be used in three unique ways: to identify the underlying characteristics of high performers; to establish a comprehensive list of competencies

needed for work and to create a work culture that supports and develops them; and to identify the work and tasks within the organization (McLagan, 1996).

The competency model can be developed through various approaches. The most rigorous competency studies use behavioral event interviewing while the least rigorous use generic, off-the-self models modified to fit the company culture of the performers (Dubois, 1993). Rothwell and Lindholm (1999) claimed that three major approaches were typically used in competency modeling: (a) the borrowed approach; (b) the borrowed-and-tailored approach; and (c) the tailored approach. The borrowed approach was the easiest and least expensive, but also the least rigorous one. The borrowed-and-tailored approach required a minimalist methodology. When using the borrowed-and-tailored approach, tailoring might be conducted by surveying members of a targeted group, holding focus group meetings, or conducting small-scale studies using behavioral event interviewing. The tailored approach required the greatest research rigor and was the most useful in ensuring legal defensibility. The selection of approaches was determined by “the nature of the group targeted for study, the value of the targeted group to the organization’s financial objectives, the skills and sophistication levels of internal practitioners, and the corporate culture” (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999, p. 97).

In conclusion, competency study has gained more interest and attention because it provides an integrated framework through which to maximize the human capital of an organization. Various approaches can be used to identify competencies. The method used in the study is the borrowed-and-tailored approach, which is typically used in the competency study.

### *Leadership Competency*

The identification and assessment of characteristics underlying successful management performance and leadership behavior have a rich and varied history (Bass, 1990; Speitzer, McCall, & Mahonney, 1997). Pernick (2001) identified three ways in which organizations determine critical leadership competencies: (1) use generic leadership competencies found in theories; (2) build their own competencies; or (3) derive competencies from the organization's mission statement and core values. As a result of organizational differences, such as size and structure, and the different methods of identifying leadership competencies, no universal set of leadership competencies has been identified as being appropriate for all organizations.

According to the literature review, the perception of leadership in the work situation is frequently used by researchers when studying leadership competency (Velde, Jansen & Vinkenburg, 1999). Leadership is always concerned with the impression it makes on other leaders, subordinates, and society (Klein & Rittle, 1984; Yukl, 2002). Tsui and Ashford (1994) also stated that the way in which managers were perceived and evaluated was important to managerial success. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used the perceptions of MBA and EMBA students as the main measurement. The participants were all middle managers or middle managers' subordinates or supervisors. Accordingly, their opinions were representative and important.

Another important issue of leadership competency is cross-culture leadership study. Extensive work has been conducted on cross-cultural research on leadership (Maczynski, Jago, Reber & Bochnishch, 1994; Suutari, 1996). Several studies have been

conducted in China and focused on cross-cultural competency models in relation to joint venture research in China (Leung, Wang, & Smith, 2001; Zhang, 2003). Cross-culture leadership helps identify aspects of existing theories that are universally applicable and those what are culturally contingent (Triandis, 1993; Yukl, 2002). Cultural traditions and norms were bound to differentiate leadership styles (Smith & Peterson, 1988). Hofstede (1980) argued that culture could be regarded as a collective programming of mind that determines values, attitudes and behaviors. Accordingly, cultural differences have profound implications for management and restrict the extent to which management theories and practices can be generalized across national boundaries. Hofstede's study yielded several important dimensions of Chinese culture. In Chinese culture, there is a tight social framework in which people seek fulfillment and happiness in the harmony of the group. Chinese culture shows a high power distance. Thus obedience, conformity, autocratic decision making and close supervision characterize supervisor-subordinate relationships. Chinese people are usually comfortable with ambiguity and not likely to be emotional and intolerant of change. In this study, the researcher borrowed a U.S.-based leadership competency model and modified it according to the Chinese culture context. The questionnaire was reviewed by subject experts, including several native Chinese.

#### *U.S. Office of Personal Management (OPM) Leadership Competency Models*

Previous leadership competency studies are extensive (Donahue, 1996; Goleman, 1998; Katz, 1955; Robbins, Bradley & Spicer, 2001). To limit the extensive literature to those studies related to the focal topic of this thesis, the *Leadership Effective Framework*

(LEF) and the *1998 Leadership Competency Model* are reviewed because they served as the foundation for this study.

*The 1992 OPM study.* In 1991, OPM conducted an occupational study of federal executives, managers and supervisors. The primary objective of the study was to “establish an empirically-based continuum of executive, managerial, and supervisory behaviors and competencies to guide curriculum design and evaluation efforts and to update and revise the Management Excellent Framework (MEF)” (Gregory & Park, 1992, p. 1). Also, the occupational information was expected to be collected for the development of consistent and job-related products.

To meet the purpose, the Multipurpose Occupational Systems Analysis Inventory—Closed—Ended (MOSAIC) was employed. MOSAIC is a process that gathers data for many HRD purposes using survey methodology and computer statistical analyses to make decisions about the data (Gregory & Park, 1992). First, the PRD researchers developed a conceptual model of the effective executive, manager, and supervisor. A comprehensive literature review of leadership and managerial behaviors was conducted first and critical individual and organizational competencies related to high performance of leaders were documented. Following this review, researchers developed a survey instrument and pilot tested it with approximately 400 representative samples of supervisors, managers, and executives across the federal government. In addition, focus groups were held with executives. The final version of the LEF consisted of five parts: background, managerial tasks, managerial competencies, occupational description and personal and organizational style. The sampling was drawn from the population of all federal supervisors, managers, and executives, for a total of 20,664

officials. Overall, 10,061 completed surveys were returned, for an overall response rate of 49%.

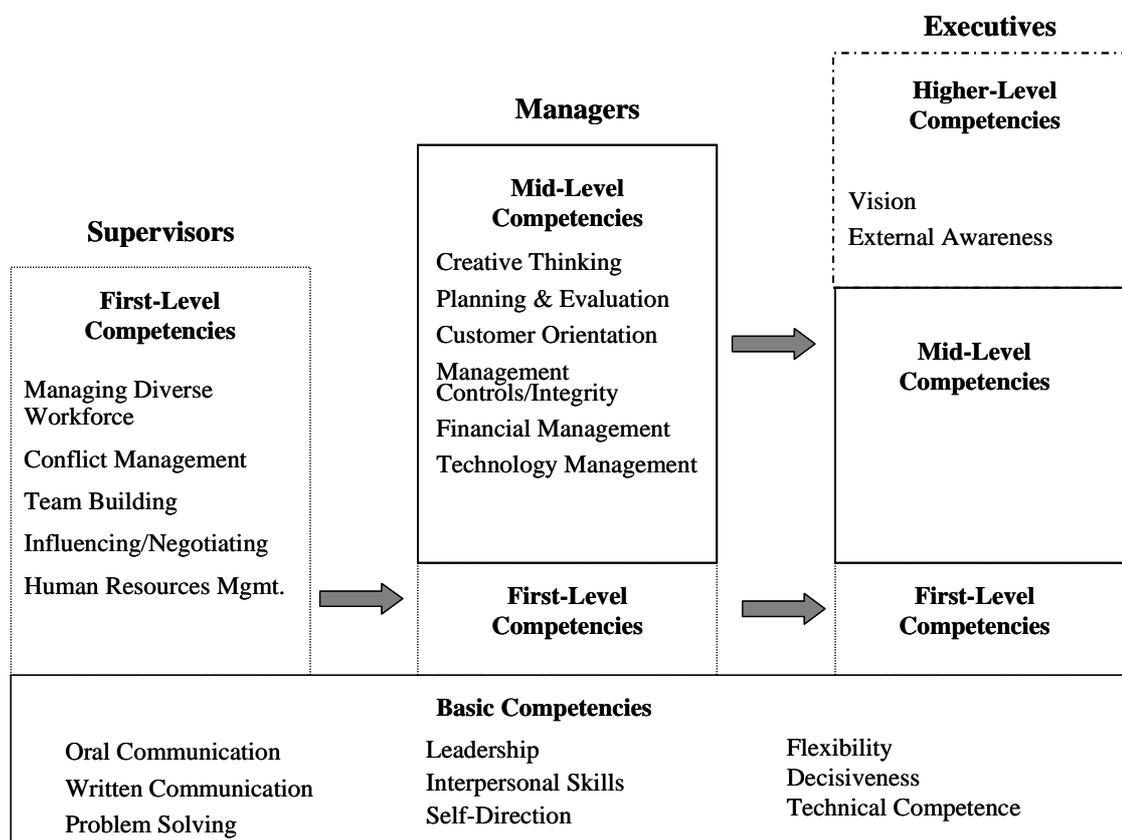


Figure 2.1. Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF).

Source: Gregory, D. & Park, R. K. (1992). *Occupational study of federal executives, managers, and supervisors*. Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

As Figure 2.1 shows, the research-based information obtained from the analyses of the LES defined a model of 22 leadership competencies (Gregory & Park, 1992). It was an empirically based continuum of individual and organizational competencies that are important for effective performance across the three employment levels.

The LEF competency model included basic competencies needed by all professionals, additional first-level competencies needed by supervisors, additional mid-level competencies needed by managers, and additional higher-level competencies needed by executives. Basic competencies included decisiveness, flexibility, interpersonal skills, leadership, oral communication, problem solving, self-direction, technical competence and written communication. Additional first-level competencies needed by supervisors included conflict management, human resource management, influencing/negotiating, managing diverse workforce and team building. Additional middle-level competencies needed by managers were creative thinking, customer orientation, financial management, management controls/integrity, planning and evaluating and technology management. External awareness and vision were perceived to be additional higher-level competencies needed by executives. As professionals progress to higher grade positions, they should become increasingly proficient in the basic competencies and begin to develop new abilities. The LES data also provided information about the work behaviors and/or tasks performed by the three management levels.

The LEF was “the largest government competency modeling effort conducted in the USA to date” (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999, p. 101). It provided the necessary data not only for training needs assessment, succession planning, and training curricula development, but also for building an integrated system of valid, job-related products. It provided a common source of job-related information on supervisory, managerial, and executive positions (Eyde et al., 1999).

*The 1998 OPM study.* To ensure that the LEF model reflected the rapidly changed environment, the OPM Personal Resources and Development Center (PRDC) conducted several projects to update the 1992 model. These projects included: (1) a behavioral indicators study; (2) a review of management and leadership literature; (3) an examination of private sector competency models; and (4) focus group meetings with experts from the OPM Office of Executive Resources Management, the National Academy of Public Administration, and various federal agencies (Eyde et al., 1999).

During the winter of 1996, PRDC psychologists wanted to generate behavioral examples of the 22 leadership competencies identified in 1992 and develop verifiable benchmarks of those competencies for a variety of human resource applications. To meet that purpose, PRDC first reviewed relevant literature and prepared tentative examples for analysis by expert panels. Then, PRDC generated 304 observable behavior indicators for the 22 competencies based on feedback from the panels. Panelists then independently determined the lowest leadership level at which each behavior is critical for effective performance. The study confirmed the original 1992 competencies as important and revealed that “competency importance does not depend on leadership level or position in the organization hierarchy” (Eyde et al., 1999, p. 5). However, different types of managerial behaviors are exhibited at different managerial levels in terms of scope, complexity, impact and the nature of interactions. Furthermore, the panel experts identified emerging competencies that were increasingly important for effective leadership. They were risk-taking, entrepreneurship, partnership, and adaptability.

In January 1997, building on the 1992 Corts and Gowing review, PRDC began a literature review to identify and describe leadership competencies needed to deal with

present and future challenges. The focus of the review was new competency requirements stemming from organizational and environmental changes, and competencies reflecting the most current characteristics of high performance leaders. The literature review helped to identify and define new competencies, provide information on their importance for a 1998 leadership model, and also support adding five new competencies to an updated leadership competency model.

During winter 1996, PRDC surveyed the best practices of private sector companies to determine how private sector competency models compared to OPM's 22 managerial competencies. To meet the research purpose, the members of the Competency Model Consortium from various industries provided OPM with their competency models and corresponding definitions. Participating consortium members included: American Express Company; Amoco Corporation; Ford Motor Company; GTE; Holiday Inn Worldwide; Philip Morris, USA; and Xerox Corporation. PRDC psychologists and several other experts conducted a matching process with OPM's original competencies. The process revealed a high degree of overlap between OPM's competencies and indicated that OPM's model was applicable to a variety of organizational settings. Five new competencies were added: *Partnering*, *Resilience*, *Political Savvy*, *Service Motivation* and *Entrepreneurship*.

After each of the 1996-1997 leadership competency research projects, the results were evaluated and implications for OPM's leadership model were analyzed. The competencies were grouped into "meta-competencies" based on similarities of content. A group of personnel research psychologists used a factor analysis of the importance ratings gathered from incumbents in 1991 and their professional judgment to accomplish the

initial grouping. The proposed meta-competency clusters were reviewed and revised in focus group sessions by government wide subject matter expert panels.

The extensive research and review process produced the *1998 Leadership Competency Model* with a set of 27 competencies grouped into five clusters based on similarities relating to importance and content. This single set of leadership competencies was applicable to all levels of leaders within the federal government. The degree to which various competencies were critical to effective performance, however, was directly related to the specific leadership roles and nature of the work performed. Figure 2.2 shows the 1998 Leadership Competency Model.

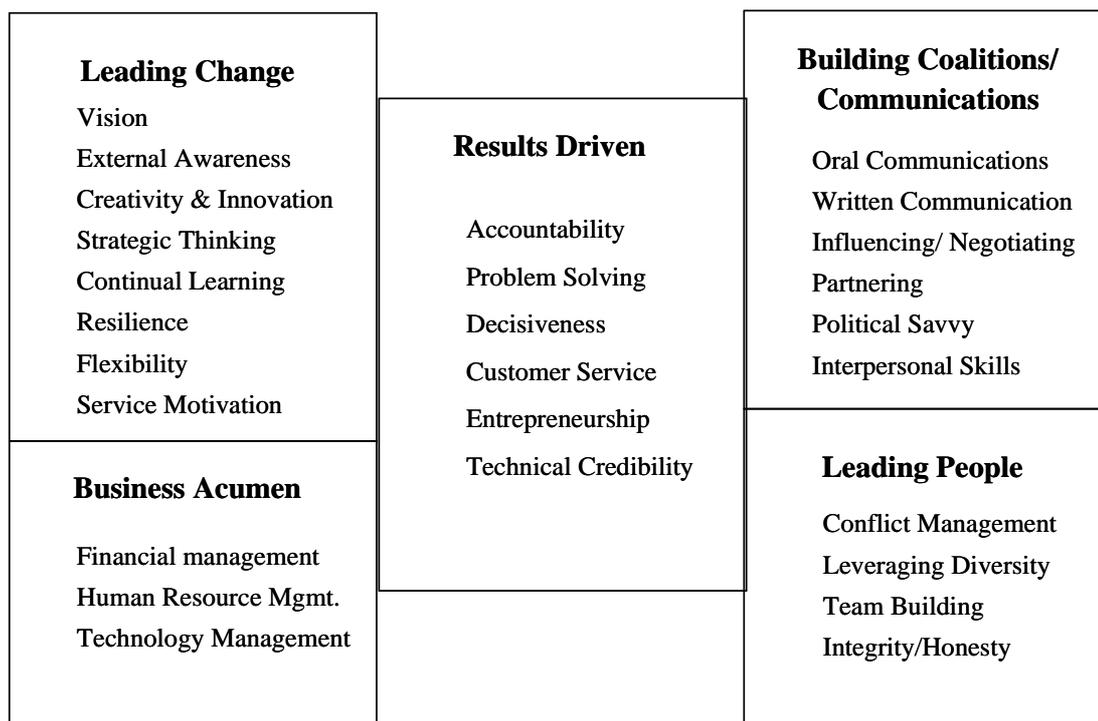


Figure 2.2. The 1998 Leadership Competency Model.

Source: Eyde, L., Gregory, D., Muldrow, T., & Mergen, P. (1999). *High-performance leaders: A competency model*. Washington, DC: Office of Personnel Management.

*The Donahue 1996 study.* In 1996, using LEF competencies Donahue conducted a pilot study of practicing electrical engineers in central Pennsylvania. The purpose of the study was to discover and measure the importance of various leadership competencies and tasks based on the perceptions of practicing engineers at four different position levels. The study also tried to identify leadership development opportunities for practicing engineers.

A census survey was conducted among the practicing members who were categorized into four position levels: entry/first level, supervisor, manager, and executive. The questionnaire was mailed to each of the 534 members on a mailing list. The response rate was 44.8%.

The relative perceived importance of the competencies at each position level was revealed. Analysis of the self-reported data gathered revealed commonalities across the four position levels. Positive correlation was found between the competency dimension and their associated tasks. The results showed that study has important implications for curriculum planning and development.

In conclusion, the *1998 Leadership Competency Model* developed by OPM was a widely used research-based model. It provided a model for use in succession management and for developing a leadership cadre of supervisors, managers, and executives. It was applicable to a variety of organizational settings and has been tested in different culture context.

### *Leadership Development*

The building and development of a competent workforce is critical to any entity (Snell & Dean, 1992). There is a substantial body of research evidence regarding the importance of leadership development to organizational success (Fullmer & Goldsmith, 2001; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002; McCauley, Moxley & Van Velsor, 1998; Vicere & Fulmer, 1998). For the purpose of the study, the Berthal and Wellins (2006) study is reviewed in detail.

Since 1999, by repeatedly assessing and reporting on practices related to effective leadership, DDI conducted several research studies on leadership forecasts (Berthal & Wellins, 2006). Participants in its 2005-2006 study included 4,550 leaders and 944 HR representatives from 42 countries. Of those, 1309 participants were from the United States. The study identified the most prevalent and useful leader development practices. As Table 2.1 shows, the perceptions of the effectiveness of development practices were different. All the programs listed in the study have value, depending on the participants' point of view. Special projects within and outside of normal job responsibilities were perceived as most valuable. *Fortune Magazine* and Hay Group conducted an Executive Survey of Leadership Effectiveness in 1999 and compared the leadership development efforts of some of *Fortune Magazine's* Most Admired Companies with their peers. The results also revealed that on-the-job assignment were taken as the most important and effect leadership development practices by *Fortune Magazine's* most admired companies. McCall's study (1988) also revealed that on-the-job training was perceived by successful executives as an effective approach to developing their leadership.

The DDI study also showed that tests and alternative learning methods (computer based learning) gained relatively lower ratings. Formal training, the most widely used development activity, was not deemed the most valuable (Berthal & Wellins, 2006). The results also showed that executive coaching and other forms of leader coaching have become very popular in recent years.

Table 2.1

*Ranking of Leadership Development Activities by Mean Perceived Effectiveness (n=1310)*

Ranking	Developing Activity	M	SD
1	Special projects or assignments within one's own job responsibilities	3.62	0.61
2	Special projects or assignments outside of one's own job responsibilities	3.41	0.73
3	Coaching with internal coaches or mentors	3.34	0.78
4	Formal workshops, training, seminars	3.33	0.70
5	Coaching with external coaches or mentors	3.22	0.80
6	Reading articles/books or other reference materials	3.04	0.74
7	Expatriate assignment	3.01	0.96
8	Tests, assessments, or other measures of skills	2.80	0.82
9	Computer based learning (Internet, CD-ROM, software)	2.73	0.80

*Note:* The data were from DDI *Leader Forecast 2005-2006: Best Practices for Tomorrow's Global Leaders*. Used with permission

In conclusion, leadership development is very important to organizational success. Various approaches can be used to improve participants' knowledge and skills; however, the effect varies.

## Leadership Competency of Middle Managers

Many leadership experts assume that all effective leadership behaviors are applicable across the different levels of managerial positions (Bass, 1990; Dopson & Steward, 1990; Lee, 1981). But, overwhelming evidence shows that to be effective, different hierarchical positions require different managerial behaviors (Kraut, Pedigo, Mckenna, & Dunnette, 1989). This section contains a discussion of the leadership competencies exclusively found among middle managers.

Intensive research studies have been conducted on middle managers, including studies exploring the roles of middle managers (Currie & Procter, 2001; Fenton-O’Creevy, 2000; Peters, 1987, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Wheatley, 1992), the relationship between employee involvement and middle managers (Fenton-O’Creevy, 1998), HR and middle managers (Currie & Procter, 2001) and so on. For the purpose of this study, the studies on the leadership competency of middle managers were reviewed.

### *The Floyd and Wooldridge 1992 Study*

Floyd and Wooldridge (1992) conducted a study of the strategic roles of middle management, developed an instrument that would measure these roles, and examined their effects on the substantive strategy of the firm. To achieve the goal, first, drawing on previous clinical research, a theoretical typology of middle management roles in strategy was developed. Then, to examine the validity of the typology and its relationships to strategy in a relatively general context, they offered an MBA course that allowed participants to gain access to an organization, collect company documents, interview top

and middle managers, and administer a middle management survey. From these sources, student investigators developed cases that focused on strategy content, strategy process, and organizational structure. All 25 projects were conducted according to a strict timetable, adhered to a detailed table of contents and were conducted at the business-level. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to examine the overall association among the four types of middle management strategic involvements and the organization's strategic type. Results suggested the usefulness of measures for each role in assessing both the level and type of middle management strategic activity. In addition, the findings showed that middle managers reported significantly higher levels of upward mobility and divergent forms of strategic involvement than those who were viewed as analyzers and defenders. The findings suggest that middle managers' strategic influence arises from their ability to mediate between internal and external selection environments.

#### *The Conference Board of Canada 1998 Study*

In 1998, the Conference Board of Canada studied the changing role of middle managers in five organizations in early 1998 (Farquhar, 1998). The purpose of the study was to explore the changing roles of middle managers and how organizations need to support them in taking on new roles and significant challenges that come with the roles. The methodology used was qualitative. Five companies--IBM Canada, Imperial Oil Limited, Canadian National, Consumers Gas and CIBC--that were facing dramatic changes in their industry and recognized the importance of middle management were selected to provide a cross-section of industry and organizational structure. Structured

interviews were conducted with select senior management, middle managers and human resources practitioners in these organizations. In total, more than thirty interviews were conducted.

Study findings revealed the following results. Middle managers in these five organizations assessed where they spent their time and devoted their efforts. Five distinct roles of middle managers were found: (1) focusing on strategy implementation; (2) acting as a change agent; (3) brokering opportunities for innovation and collaboration; (4) ensuring communications; and (5) providing expertise and project management. Also, the results showed that companies needed to support their middle managers in taking on these new roles and the significant challenges that attend them: provide management development and training resources; create opportunities for growth and learning; and recognize middle managers for their contributions to the organization. This transformation reflected the competitive environment for all organizations and the need to respond more quickly, with better expertise and the commitment of everyone in the organization to these changes. It also demonstrated that middle managers failed to completely understand their vital role in the early part of the decade.

#### *The Conference Board of Canada 2002 Study*

The study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada in 2002 was titled *Leading from the Middle*. The aim of the follow-up study was to examine the evolution of the middle manager role and identify essential skills and competencies. The report was based on practical information and insight gained through more than 50 hours of one-on-

one interviews with middle managers, senior executives, and HR specialists in four major Canadian organizations: Dofasco, TELUS, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, and RBC Royal Bank (RBC). Additional insight was sought from middle managers in two federal organizations.

The report pointed to a new set of roles for successful middle managers. These were: executing strategy and delivering results; leading, motivating and inspiring people to perform exceptionally; managing, developing and retaining key talent; and building relationships and influencing others. The organizational supports considered critical for current and potential middle managers to make an effective contribution were: (1) organizational environment (vision and values, culture and leadership); (2) structure, systems, and processes; (3) leadership and communication initiatives; and (4) learning and leadership development.

This report examined the experience of leading organizations in supporting their middle managers as they carried out these five roles. It also explored the emerging roles for middle managers as they and their organizations anticipated increasing workloads and time demands, while facing the growing complexity of issues and a premium on retaining the right talent.

In conclusion, studies showed that successful middle managers needed to take on strategic roles. There were special leadership competencies that were suitable for middle managers. Thus, the intention of the study was to explore those special leadership competencies of middle managers in China.

## Leadership Competency of Middle Managers in China

Several research studies have been conducted in China on leadership competency modeling (Leung, Wang, & Smith, 2001; Wakabayashi & Chen; Wang, 2001) and some research studies have looked at middle management in China (Neelankavil, Mathur & Zhang, 2000; Neiryck, 2003; Wang & Chen, 2002; Wang & Schneider, 2003). However, little research has examined the leadership competency of middle managers. This section therefore contains a review of related leadership competency research in China and of research on middle management in China.

### *Leadership Competency Studies in China*

Leadership competency studies in China included research that explored the specific features of leaders in China (Wang & Chen, 2002) and cross-cultural competency models (Kaye & Taylor, 1997).

*The Wang and Chen 2002 study.* Wang and Chen (2002) conducted a study of managerial competency modeling for assessment and selection in China. They used a strategic hierarchical job analysis and a survey on leadership competency to formulate a model of managerial competency structure. They interviewed 148 managers to generate critical leadership behavioral descriptions and designed a questionnaire that was distributed among a sample of 420 managers and their deputies from various companies in China. Both criticality and frequency of leadership competencies for manager and deputy manager positions were analyzed. Based on the results of the research, a model of leadership competency was proposed that had four dimensions of leadership

characteristics and managerial performance. The four dimensions of leadership competency were:

1. Psychological traits: Cognitive abilities of critical reasoning and problem-solving; personality traits of conscientiousness, emotional stability, group compatibility, extraversion, openness.
2. Leadership predispositions: Moral quality in leadership integrity, work values, job commitment, and enterprising; leadership motives of achievement, power, and relationship.
3. Managerial skills: strategic decision-making, relationship coordination, empowerment and facilitation, business monitoring, and innovation.
4. Professional knowledge: functional and financial knowledge and experience. Managerial performance; behavioral, functional, organizational performance.

The results illustrated that in the Chinese context relationship-based competencies showed a “diffusion effect” across other competency components and became the second-order competency factors, indicating the dominance of culture-specific competencies in the model.

*The Wang and Schneider 2003 study.* Wang and Schneider (2003) conducted a 3-year longitudinal research project to examine the dynamics of multicultural leadership team development. The emphasis was on a cross-cultural managerial competency-performance framework. The results showed that four dimensions of leadership

competencies were crucial to working in multicultural leadership teams in joint ventures in China. They were:

1. Cultural competency with two key components: the ability to adjust oneself to different cultures and relationship management skills such as developing, adapting, and maintaining good relationships and networks with colleagues, superiors, and customers.
2. Achievement competency with two key components: the ability to organize, monitor, and control tasks and the skills needed for achievement management such as goal-setting and time, deadlines, and performance management.
3. Decision competency with two components: the ability to take on reasonable risks and responsibilities at work and the ability to make strategic decisions rapidly.
4. Team competency with two components: a high level of group compatibility and the skill to utilize team resources, especially across cultures.

These four cross-culture competency dimensions proved to have close relationships with organizational performance and could be used in the assessment, selection, and development of multicultural joint venture leadership teams.

*The Kakabadese and Wang 2003 study.* Kakabadese and Wang (2003) conducted leadership competency research. The purpose of the study was to change the traditional way of evaluating managers and supervisors, and identify a comprehensive structure of leadership competency for management selection and evaluation in China as well as in

the UK. The results of the study reflected Chinese characteristics in business leadership competency. Those competences included:

1. Holistic competency structure: the structure of Chinese management competencies was more holistic and showed greater competency factors than those for British and Australian managers.
2. Culturally general competency factors: three culturally general factors—change uncertainty, independence, and work satisfaction. These were similar across several cultures.
3. Culturally specific competency factors: three more holistic competency factors—leadership skills, communication, feedback/people skills.

The research results also indicated that managers in the Chinese state-owned enterprises had high levels of product-systems managerial competency, whereas joint venture managers showed high levels of business-action managerial competency with interpersonal relationship skill as the key competency for both types of ownership in China.

In general, the former study indicated that special leadership competency items for managers in China differed for those from other countries. The study proved the importance of identifying those special competencies.

*Middle Management Study and Practice in China*

*The Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang 2000 study.* Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) conducted a study of differences in the effects on middle managers' performance in four countries—China, India, the Philippines, and the United States. Data were collected directly from middle-level managers in these four countries using self-administered questionnaires. A total of 784 responses were received from all four countries; among them were 204 responses from 38 companies in China. A unique result was the mapping of cultural distances among the four countries. The study found that according to middle managers' perceptions of managerial performance factors, the U.S. and China was the most dissimilar pair. China differed from the U.S. on all managerial performance factors except for planning and decision making. Differences also existed among Chinese, Filipino and Indian managers in their beliefs about what determines the effective managerial performance of middle-level managers.

*The China Accelerated Management Program (CAMP)--Motorola University.* During the 1990s, with the rapid growth of business in China, the number of expatriates in Motorola China Electronics Limited (MCEL) increased rapidly. To decrease the cost of expatriates and replace the significant number of expatriate managers with local managers, Motorola University initiated the China Accelerated Management Program (CAMP) in 1994 (Wiggenhorn, & Cheah, 1997). The objective of the program was to train a sufficient number of qualified Chinese employees to become middle-level managers at Motorola in the short term, and to develop effective general managers in the long term. A managerial knowledge and skills model for the middle manager was

designed based on the experts' opinions and observation of practices in organizations (Avishai, 1997). In the model, managerial knowledge and skills for middle managers included functional & technical knowledge, cognitive skills, administrative skills, leadership skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, personal adaptability and personal motivation. Based on the model, training, action learning, rotation, coaching and mentoring were used to improve participants' knowledge and skills. Program results were significant. As observed by managers, job improvement occurred in the areas of ability to think strategically, being more customer-focused, having a better understanding of Motorola culture, exhibiting maturity in working with people, using the teamwork approach in problem solving, and improving presentation skills. The feedback from CAMP participants also showed the positive effects of shifting from a task-focus to a people-and team-focus, improved English language skills, the ability to take initiative, and so on.

In conclusion, little research and practice on the leadership competency of middle management has been conducted in China. Earlier research and practice on the leadership competency of management and on middle management development in China demonstrated the importance of research on the leadership competency of middle managers in China and offered important references for the modification of the U.S. model to the Chinese model.

## Summary

Although a considerable number of studies have been done on leadership, fewer have been done on the leadership competency of middle managers. The number of studies focused on leadership competency of middle managers in China is even fewer. The results of the limited research suggested that to be successful in an uncertain and dynamic environment, middle managers must take a more proactive leadership role and be more strategically focused. The research conducted in China revealed that middle managers in China shared several general competencies with western managers; however, some competency differentiations were unique to the Chinese culture.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter contains a description of the research methodology used in this study. The study was conducted in three phases: preparation, data collection, and data reporting. Table 3.1 shows the main steps and provides a specific description of each step. The chapter introduces each step in more detail.

Table 3.1  
*Research Procedure*

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Phase 1: Preparation</b>	
Select Methodology	Based on the research purpose, survey was chosen as research method.
Select Target Group and Sample	The target population consisted of all MBA and EMBA students based in Tianjin from Nankai University in China.
Determine Variables	<p>The dependent variables were the perceptions of the importance of leadership competencies for middle managers in participants' organizations and perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership development activities.</p> <p>The independent variables were: age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization.</p>
Develop Questionnaire	<p>The <i>1998 Leadership Competency Model</i> was selected as the basic model.</p> <p>The instrument was reviewed by a Subject Matter Expert Panel.</p> <p>The instrument was translated into Chinese and the translation was doubled-checked to maintain consistency.</p> <p>The cognitive pilot test including six Chinese MBA students in Penn State was conducted.</p> <p>The validity of the instrument was established and internal consistency was checked.</p>
<b>Phase 2: Data Collection</b>	
Distribute Questionnaire	Questionnaire was distributed to all students in classes.
Collect Questionnaire	<p>Students filled out the questionnaire in class.</p> <p>Students returned the questionnaire before they left class.</p>
<b>Phase 3: Data Reporting</b>	
Analyze data	<p>For the first research question, the study used descriptive statistics to describe the perceived importance of leadership competencies.</p> <p>For the second research question, multiple regression was employed to explore the relationship between perceptions and the participants' demographic and biographical information.</p> <p>For the third research question, descriptive statistics were used to report the perceptions of the effectiveness of development activities.</p>
Report	<p>The researcher drafted conclusions and recommendations based on findings.</p> <p>The draft of the recommendations and conclusions was sent to the Subject Matter Expert Panel to review.</p> <p>The researcher finalized the report based on panel review comments.</p>

### Select Methodology

Since this study was a first step in exploring the level of importance of leadership competencies and effectiveness in developing activities for middle managers in China, descriptive survey research was carried out. Survey research generally involves interviews or questionnaires. The sample for the study involved more than 500 students. Due to the cost and time involved in conducting the research, the interview was deemed impractical. Hence, a questionnaire was employed in the research.

### Select Target Population and Sample

The target population for this study was composed of approximate 450 MBA students and 70 EMBA students of Nankai University in Tianjin, China. The reason for selecting MBA students for the study was that the majority of them have been or would be middle managers themselves; therefore, they had an intensive understanding of middle management. Also, most EMBA students were taking senior positions in their organizations, playing the role of middle managers or their supervisors (“Nankai EMBA graduates”, 2002) and they exerted a strong influence on either weakening or strengthening middle management leadership interventions in organizations.

The MBA Center of Nankai University was founded in July 1997. It was specifically established to administer and carry out the MBA education program at Nankai University. The MBA program at Nankai University is one of the top three in China according to the first accreditation performed by the Ministry of Education in 2002. According to a survey of MBA professional managers by the Organic Committee

of the World Managers, the Nankai MBA program was the fifth most influential MBA program in 2003 (“MBA Center”, 2004). The number of students entering for the MBA examination at Nankai University has constantly kept the program ahead of the others in recent years. The program offers courses in Managerial Ethics, Career Development and Management, and Strategy Management at the very early stages. The mission of the program is to offer early career professionals an opportunity to enter or move up in a business-related field, and prepare professional managers who have international perspectives and leadership. The EMBA program at Nankai University is one of the first programs offered by universities in China since 2002. The program is designed for middle-level and senior managers as well as executives. Most students enter the program with more than eight years of work experience and about four years of experience in a management position. The EMBA curriculum focuses on business fundamentals from a leadership perspective and students benefit from the professional experience of their executive peer group. It is one of the best EMBA programs in China with most of the students being high performers in their organizations (“Nankai Business School”, 2004). Therefore, collecting data from this group has major academic and practice significance.

The entire population of MBA and EMBA students based in Tianjin was included in this study. Thus, information was requested from every individual. Since no sampling was involved, there was zero sampling error.

### Identify Variables

According to Pernick (2001), as a result of organizational differences, such as size and structure, and the different methods of identifying leadership competencies, no universal set of leadership competencies is appropriate for all organizations. For the purposes of this study, the perceptions of MBA and EMBA students regarding the importance of leadership competencies for middle managers in their organizations and the effectiveness of leadership development activities were taken as dependent variables and the demographic and biographical information for the students were taken as independent variables.

#### *Dependent Variables*

For the purposes of this research, two groups of perceptual measures were employed in this study: perceived importance of leadership competencies and perceived effectiveness of leadership development activities. To gather information on perceptions of the importance of leadership competencies, there were a total of 27 leadership competency items. All of the participants provided their perceptions of the importance of those competency items for the success of middle managers in China by rating them from 1 to 5, with 1 equaling “not important” and 5 equaling “extremely important”. Based on the framework (Eyde et al., 1999), the 27 individual competency statements were clustered into five competency categories: *Leading Change*, *Leading People*, *Results Driven*, *Business Acumen*, and *Building Coalitions/Communication*. With regard to the perceived effectiveness of leadership development activities, the participants were asked

to rate the effectiveness of nine activities with 1 equaling “not effective” and 4 equaling “very effective”. A total of 10 developing activities were listed. The structure of the question was borrowed from Berthal and Wellins’ (2006) *Leadership Forecast* study, which was widely conducted in the U.S. and many other countries.

### *Independent Variables*

To answer research questions, based on the original instrument and literature review, seven selected independent variables were examined for their influence on the perceptions of the importance of leadership competency. They were age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization.

*Age.* Age was treated as a continuous variable. The participants were asked to indicate their current age in the survey. Several research publications have focused on the relationship between leadership and age (Kabacoff & Stoffey, 2001; Kakabadese, Kababadese & Myers, 1998). Kakabadese, Kababadese and Myers (1998) argued that age, along with other time-related dimensions, had a powerful effect in shaping attitudes. Age group differences were found in the rating of effectiveness and behavior of leadership from several former studies (Kabacoff & Stoffey, 2001; Schubert, 1988).

*Gender.* Gender was treated as a nominal variable. The participants were asked to offer their gender information. Extensive research has been done on gender and leadership of managers (Collard, 2001; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995). Numerous authors have supported the argument that women inherently

possess certain feminine characteristics such as good communication skills, good listening, and empathy, as well as interpersonal skills that diverge sharply from male leadership characteristics (Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Valian, 1998). The opposite position in the argument perceives little or no gender difference in leadership styles. Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) revealed that the sex of direct reports did not make any difference in rating their leaders. Chow (2005) conducted a study to explore empirically how female and male managers describe their perceived leadership qualities in an Asian context. The research findings revealed that irrespective of the sex of the person making the direct report, perceived attributes in rating managers showed no substantial differences.

*Highest position held.* Position level was categorized into non-manager, supervisor, middle manager, and executive manager. If they were currently not employed, the participants were asked to consider the organization they were employed in before entering the program. From the literature, the subordinates, supervisors, peers and self-perceptions often differ in their judgments of leadership behavior (Velde et al., 1999). Atwater and Yammarino (1993) found that personal attributes differed as a function of the positions of the individuals who rated leadership. Supervisors appreciated a high degree of conformity, responsibility and discipline whereas subordinates valued intelligence and athletic experience. Therefore, comparing multiple perspectives of leadership is a highly utilized approach (Becker, Ayman & Korabik, 2002). In the study, this variable was used to differentiate perceptions of the non manager, supervisor, middle manager, and executive manager.

*Program enrolled.* The variable referred to whether they were MBA or EMBA students. MBA students had different demographic and biographic background from EMBA students. Therefore, this might influence their attitudes and perceptions. Thus, this variable was used to differentiate perceptions between MBA and EMBA students.

*Size of organization.* This referred to the number of full-time employees in the organizations in which the participants were employed. If they were currently not employed, the participants were asked to consider the organization they were employed in before they entered the program. Based on the number of employees, the size of the organizations was categorized into three groups: the organization has fewer than 101 employees, the organization has 101–500 employees and the organization has 501 or more employees. Organization size influences the function and numbers of middle managers, and thus might influence the required leadership competencies of middle managers.

*Ownership of organization.* This variable referred to the ownership of the organization in which participants were employed. If they were currently not employed, the participants were asked to consider the organization they were employed in before they entered the program. The ownership of organizations in China can be broadly classified into four categories: private company, state-owned company, multinational & joint-venture company, and government & non-profit organizations. Research studies have shown that the different ownerships of organizations have different cultural contexts and operating systems (Braun & Warner, 2002; Wong & Slater, 2002). Pernick (2001) claimed that leadership was fundamentally a relationship between leaders and followers, so different organizational contexts would require different leadership competencies of

managers. In this study, four types of organizations were categorized: private company, state-owned company, multinational & joint-venture company, and government & non-profit organizations.

*Business type of organization.* This variable referred to the business type of the organization in which participants were currently or previously employed. The organization business type was classified into 13 categories: Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing, Computers and High-Tech, Construction, Finance/Insurance/Real Estate, Food, Government and non-profit, Healthcare Services, Manufacturing, Mining, Retail Trade, Services, Transportation/Communications, Utilities & Energy, and Wholesale Trade.

#### Develop Data Collection Instrument

The development of the data collection instrument included the following steps: select instrument, modify instrument, translate instrument, and establish validity and reliability of the instrument.

#### *Selection of the Instrument*

In this study a questionnaire was based on the *1998 Leadership Competency Model*, which was developed and validated by OPM in 1998. The model was selected for several reasons. First, according to Eyde et al. (1999), the *1998 Leadership Competency Model* was thoroughly researched and validated through the use of both face and content validity standards and periodic cross-validation studies. The *1998 Leadership*

*Competency Model* represents the largest federal occupational study of managers and executives ever conducted. Second, although it is presently in use by the U.S. federal government, it has been established that the model also suits the private business environment. Third, the framework has been used in former studies in other countries (Daou, 1996) and specific job categories (Donahue, 1996) and had been proved to be a generic instrument.

#### *Modification of the Instrument*

Based on the original *1998 Leadership Competency Model*, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher and modified first by the Subject Matter Expert Panel. The expert panel was selected as an effective way to establish the content validity of the instrument (Grant & Davis, 1997) because the original *1998 Leadership Competency Model* was developed in a U.S. environment for all managers, and thus some items might not be suitable for this study. When selecting members of the panel, according to the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1985), the experts needed to have relevant training, experience and qualifications with content journals. For the purposes of this study, the panel was composed of seven subject experts in the fields of leadership development, management in China and competency study methodology. Three of them were native Chinese, and four of them were from the U.S. The panel had two responsibilities: to double-check the

instrument and offer modification suggestions; and to review the findings and recommendations developed by the researcher and offer related suggestions.

To modify the questionnaire, the researcher sent a draft of the instrument to panel members by email individually. Then, the experts provided their comments through face-to-face meetings or conference calls. Based on the feedback from experts, the format and the contents of the instrument were improved. According to the feedback of the expert panel, the competency item, “*Partnering*” was changed to “*Relationship Management*” to suit the Chinese situation better because Chinese culture is a high relationship, harmony oriented culture (Hofstede, 1980). Then, based on the review comments, the researcher finalized the questionnaire.

A one-page cover letter was designed to explain the background and purpose of the study, confidentiality issues, voluntary participation, whom to contact with questions and the way to return the questionnaire. The background questions were asked at the beginning of the survey. Then, participants were asked to rate how important they consider each of the following leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in their organization. All of the participants provided their perceptions by rating them from 1 to 5, with 1 equaling “not important” and 5 equaling “extremely important”. Following that question, the participants were asked to select the five most critical leadership competencies for middle managers in China and mark them. The participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of each development activity for developing leadership competency of middle manager. One open-ended question was asked at the end of the questionnaire about specific suggestions for enhancing the leadership development of middle managers in China.

### *Instrument Translation*

The scales, which were originally written in English, were translated into Chinese by the researcher who is a native Chinese. According to Guthery and Lowe (1992), researchers can use several different techniques to translate existing instruments into the target language version, including simple direct translation, modified direct translation, translation/back translation, the ultimate test, the parallel blind technique, and the random probe technique. The technique used in the study was modified direct translation. The researcher independently translated the questionnaire into Chinese after reviewing many Chinese publications in the leadership development field. Afterward, another bilingual researcher who was also familiar with the field double-checked the translation. Then the researcher and expert discussed the discrepancies until agreement was reached. This approach allowed a check for possible deviation and ensured conceptual consistency (Guthery & Lowe, 1992).

### *Establishment of Validity*

The questionnaire for this study was adapted from OPM research, which was thoroughly researched and validated. In adapting the model to this study, its face and content validation were assessed by a panel of experts (Grant & Davis, 1997). The purpose of this validation was to ensure that the modified questionnaire would reflect the Chinese cultural context.

### *Establishment of Reliability*

According to Brace (2004), conducting a pilot test before committing to a large-scale study is an essential precaution for a new or adapted questionnaire because questionnaires are rarely their best at the first attempt. Therefore, to establish the reliability of the instrument, a cognitive group interview was conducted to pilot test the instrument. The cognitive interview enables a discussion in which the respondent provides verbal feedback to the research as the survey forum is conceptual (Willis, 2005). Brace (2004) argued that respondents should be chosen to represent a broad range of the types of people to be included in the main study. Therefore, the questionnaire was sent to six Chinese MBA students who were studying at Penn State. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on any difficulties that they had in following the questionnaire instructions, translation or reading out the words. Then, the researcher made modifications according to those suggestions.

When using Likert-type scales, it is imperative to calculate and report Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliability for any scales or subscales (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Reliability often is reported only for the total score. The subscores must be used cautiously because they generally have lower reliability than the total test score (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Table 3.2 shows the overall reliability coefficients and coefficients across five competency categories. The reliability across the total of 27 leadership competencies was .925. The internal consistency for each competency subgroup was from .570 to .813. In general, item scales that yield scores with a reliability of .80 or higher are considered sufficiently reliable for most research purposes. David

Garson, Professor of Public Administration at North Carolina State University, indicated that internal consistency values of .60 are marginally acceptable ([Http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/pa765/garson.htm](http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/pa765/garson.htm)). Therefore, the internal consistency reliability of the instrument was approved.

Table 3.2

*Reliability Coefficients across the 27 Leadership Competencies and Competency Category (n=250)*

	Cronbach's Alpha
Total of 27 Leadership Competencies	.925
Leading Change	.813
Leading People	.716
Results Driven	.709
Business Acumen	.570
Building Coalitions/Communications	.749

#### Collect Data

To save on costs and increase the response rate, group delivery was selected for questionnaire distribution (Dillman, 2000). The researcher attended the classes of each MBA and EMBA group, and distributed the questionnaire in the classes. The students filled out the survey and gave it back to the researcher before they left the room.

#### Analyze Data

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic and biographic information on the respondents. Background information included the students' age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, and size, ownership and business type of

organizations in which students were employed. The information was calculated by frequency and percentage.

For the first research question, “What are the perceptions of MBA and EMBA students enrolled in the Nankai University of the importance of the leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in the organization in which they are currently working or worked with before they entered the program”, the mean value, standard deviation and 95% CI were calculated. Also, the participants were asked to identify the five most critical leadership competencies for middle managers in China. The count and percentage of 250 respondents were reported.

The second research question was “Are there significant relationships between these perceptions and the participants’ student’s age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization?” Multiple regression was employed to analyze the data. Some of the independent variables were nominal variables, and in regression nominal they need to be dummy coded. Table 3.3 illustrates the dummy coding used.

The researcher checked for outliers using box and Whisker plots and for normality using skewness values available in the SPSS Explore program. The results indicated acceptable levels of normality and no extreme outliers.

Table 3.3  
*Description of Variables Dummy Coded with Coding and Recoding Information*

Variables	Coding
Female vs. Male	1 = Female 0 = Male (rc)
EMBA vs. MBA	1 = EMBA 0 = MBA (rc)
<i>Highest Position</i>	
Supervisor vs. Non manager	1 = Supervisor 0 = Non manager (rc) Includes Middle managers, Executives managers
Middle manager vs. Non manager	1 = Middle manager 0 = Non manager (rc) Includes Supervisor, Executive manager
Executive manager vs. Non manager	1 = Executive manager 0 = Non manager (rc) Includes Supervisor, Middle manager
<i>Ownership</i>	
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	1 = Private Company 0 = Government/Non-profit organization (rc) Includes State-owned, Multinational/JVC
State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	1 = State-owned company 0 = Government/Non-profit organization (rc) Includes Private, Multinational/JVC
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	1 = Multinational/Joint-venture company 0 = Government/Non-profit organization (rc) Includes Private, State-owned
<i>Group Size (employee)</i>	
Less than 101 vs. More than 501	1 = Less than 101 0 = More than 501(rc) Includes 101-500
101-500 vs. More than 501	1 = 101-500 0 = More than 501 (rc) Includes Less than 101
Manufacturing vs. All other industries	1 = Manufacturing 0 = All the other industries (rc)

*Note.* The reference category was always coded as 0, and the 1 category is compared against that 0 category in regression.

## Report Data

Based on the findings, the researcher developed several recommendations for practice and future research. The draft of the report was sent to panel members for review. Based on the feedback from the experts, final recommendations were addressed by the researcher in the report. Two of the seven experts dropped off the process.

## Summary

This chapter contained a description of the research methodology used in this study. The research procedure occurred in three phases. The first phase was the preparation for research. The target group included MBA and EMBA students enrolled in Nankai University in China. Seven selected independent variables were examined for their influence on the perception of the importance of leadership competencies. The instrument used in the study was based on the *1998 Leadership Competency Model* and modified by the subject matter expert panel. Modified direct translation was conducted to ensure conceptual consistency. A cognitive interview was employed to pilot test the instrument and establish the reliability of the instrument. The second phase of the research involved administration of the survey. A questionnaire was distributed and collected in class. The third phase included data analysis and report writing. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression were used to answer the three research questions. The conclusions and recommendations were sent to the panel for review. Based on the panel's suggestions and comments, final recommendations were addressed in the report.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

This chapter contains a report on the analysis results for the survey data. Descriptions of survey responses are presented first. Then, the findings are reported according to the sequence of the three research questions.

#### Survey Response

This section presents the characteristics of the study participants. A total of 263 MBA and EMBA students at Nankai University responded to the Leadership Competency survey. The response rate was 51% (263 of 520 MBA and EMBA students). Of the 263, 250 offered usable data that were included in the data analysis. Background information on the respondents was categorized into seven characteristics: age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization. Table 4.1 presents this information in greater detail.

With regard to individual characteristics, the majority of the study participants were younger than 35 years old (90%), predominantly male (70%), and from the MBA program (89%). In addition, more than half of the participants (55%) had ever worked as middle or executive managers.

Table 4.1

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants by Characteristics (n=250)*

Characteristic		<i>f</i>	%
<i>Age</i>			
	< 30	114	45.6
	30-35	112	44.8
	>35	24	9.6
	Total	250	100.0
<i>Gender</i>			
	Male	173	69.2
	Female	77	30.8
	Total	250	100.0
<i>Program enrolled</i>			
	MBA	223	89.2
	EMBA	27	10.8
	Total	250	100.0
<i>Highest position held</i>			
	Non manager	35	14.0
	Supervisor	78	31.2
	Middle manager	112	44.8
	Executive manager	25	10.0
	Total	250	100.0
<i>Ownership of organization</i>			
	Private company	59	23.6
	State-owned company	83	33.2
	Multinational/joint-venture company	86	34.4
	Government/non-profit organization	22	8.8
	Total	250	100.0
<i>Size of organization (employees)</i>			
	Less than 101	72	28.8
	101- 500	78	31.2
	501 or more	100	40.0
	Total	250	100.0
<i>Industry of organization</i>			
	Agriculture/forestry/fishing	2	0.8
	Computers and high-tech	11	4.4
	Construction	13	5.2
	Finance/insurance/real estate	28	11.2
	Food	8	3.2
	Government and non-profit	23	9.2
	Healthcare services	8	3.2
	Manufacturing	59	23.6
	Retail trade	22	8.8
	Services	27	10.8
	Transportation/communications	20	8.0
	Utilities & energy	15	6.0
	Wholesale trade	1	0.4
	Others	13	5.2
	Total	250	100.0

In terms of organizational characteristics, respondents represented all four major ownership types of organization. The represented organizations ranged in size from small-size entities with fewer than 101 employees (29%) to medium-sized entities with 101–500 employees (31%), to large-size entities with 501 or more employees (40%). Approximately one quarter of participants were from the manufacturing industry.

### Findings for Research Question One

*Q1: What are the perceptions of MBA and EMBA students enrolled in the Nankai University regarding the importance of the leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in their organizations in China?*

This section corresponds directly to research question one. Responses to items 1 through 27 of question 9 in the questionnaire were calculated in order to determine a rating of the importance of the 27 competencies. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the perceived importance means, standard deviations and 95% CI for the mean for each leadership competency. The results in Table 4.2 reveal that, with regard to the importance of leadership competency, the highest mean importance value reported was for *Accountability* ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = .85$ ). The lowest mean importance value reported was for the leadership competency *Political savvy* ( $M = 3.34$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ). Also presented in Table 4.2 are the overall summary statistics for each of the five competency groups. With regard to the competency categories, the highest mean importance reported was for *Leading People* ( $M = 3.99$ ;  $SD = .63$ ). The competency category scale *Business Acumen* reported the lowest mean importance value ( $M = 3.61$ ;  $SD = .68$ ).

Table 4.2

*Perceived Importance of the Leadership Competencies for Middle Managers in China by Competency Category (n=250)*

Leadership Competency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Leading Change	3.73	0.63	3.65	3.81
Continual Learning	4.05	0.83	3.95	4.16
Creativity and Innovation	3.82	0.98	3.69	3.94
External Awareness	3.52	1.04	3.39	3.65
Flexibility	3.69	0.88	3.58	3.80
Resilience	3.99	0.84	3.89	4.10
Service Motivation	3.85	0.86	3.74	3.95
Strategic Thinking	3.51	1.11	3.37	3.65
Vision	3.41	1.03	3.28	3.54
Leading People	3.99	0.63	3.91	4.06
Conflict Management	4.05	0.76	3.95	4.14
Integrity/Honesty	4.16	0.90	4.05	4.28
Leveraging Diversity	3.59	0.95	3.47	3.71
Team Building	4.14	0.78	4.04	4.23
Results Driven	3.92	0.59	3.85	4.00
Accountability	4.25	0.85	4.15	4.36
Customer Service	3.95	0.96	3.83	4.07
Decisiveness	3.95	0.93	3.84	4.07
Entrepreneurship	3.36	1.15	3.22	3.50
Problem Solving	4.16	0.75	4.06	4.25
Technical Credibility	3.88	0.89	3.76	3.99
Business Acumen	3.61	0.68	3.52	3.69
Financial Management	3.42	1.03	3.29	3.55
Human Resource Management	3.80	0.90	3.69	3.91
Technology Management	3.60	0.85	3.50	3.71
Building Coalitions/Communications	3.91	0.58	3.84	3.98
Influencing/Negotiating	3.97	0.86	3.86	4.08
Interpersonal Relationship	4.16	0.90	4.05	4.28
Oral Communication	4.24	0.72	4.15	4.33
Political Savvy	3.34	1.11	3.20	3.48
Relationship Management	4.18	0.75	4.08	4.27
Written Communication	3.70	0.80	3.60	3.80

*Note:* The response scale was 1 = Not Important; 2 = Slightly Important; 3 = Important; 4 = Very Important; 5 = Extremely Important

The participants were asked to identify the five most critical leadership competencies for middle managers in China. As Table 4.3 indicates, the top five competencies that were most frequently identified were *Accountability*, *Team Building*, *Relationship Management*, *Continual Learning* and *Conflict Management*. The perceived importance mean value for the five competencies was higher than 3.84, with *Accountability* having the highest mean value, *Relationship Management* the third highest mean value, and *Team Building*, *Continual Learning* and *Conflict Management* the sixth, seventh and eighth highest mean values, respectively.

Table 4.3

*The Frequency of Leadership Competencies Identified as the Five Most Critical Leadership Competencies for Middle Managers in China (n=250)*

Ranking	Leadership Competency	Count	% of Total
1	Accountability	161	64%
2	Team Building	115	46%
3	Relationship Management	88	35%
4	Continual Learning	77	31%
5	Conflict Management	69	28%
6	Creativity and Innovation	68	27%
7	Oral Communication	64	26%
8	Decisiveness	62	25%
9	Problem Solving	54	22%
10	Customer Service	49	20%
11	Influencing/Negotiating	46	18%
12	Interpersonal Relationship	42	17%
13	Human Resource Management	41	16%
14	Strategic Thinking	39	16%
15	Flexibility	38	15%
16	Integrity/Honesty	37	15%
17	Resilience	32	13%
18	Entrepreneurship	29	12%
19	Technical Credibility	29	12%
20	Financial Management	28	11%
21	Service Motivation	21	8%
22	External Awareness	15	6%
23	Technology Management	14	6%
24	Political Savvy	11	4%
25	Vision	8	3%
26	Leveraging Diversity	7	3%
27	Written Communication	6	2%

*Note.* Percentage (%) represents the percentage of 250 respondents identifying the leadership competency as one of top five most important competencies for middle managers in China.

## Findings for Research Question Two

*Q2: Are there significant relationships between these perceptions and the participants' student's age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization?*

Table 4.4 shows the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for factors used in the regression analysis. There were five leadership competency categories: *Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions/Communication*. The regression analyses were conducted among those five dependent variables and independent variables, respectively. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Tables 4.5 through 4.9.

The regression analysis results between *Leading Change* and independent variables are presented in Table 4.5. The results in Table 4.5 indicated that the  $p$  value (.07) was greater than .05; therefore, no significant relationship was found between the variance for the perceived importance of *Leading Change* and the independent variables in the overall regression model.

Table 4.6 shows the overall model of regression for *Leading People* and the independent variables. The  $p$  value (.07) was greater than .05; therefore, no significant relationship could be found between the variance for perceived importance of *Leading People* and the independent variables.

Table 4.7 shows the relationships between the perceived importance of *Results Driven* and the independent variables. The results indicated that the individual characteristics and organizational characteristics explained a significant amount of the

variance ( $p = .01$ ) in the perceived importance of *Results Driven*. Collectively, the 12 independent variables in the regression model explained 10.3% of the variance in the dependent variable, *Results Driven*. Gender and program enrolled show a significantly positive influence on perceived importance of *Results Driven*, which means that females compared to males tended to have better perceptions of the importance of *Results Driven*; EMBA students tended to rate the importance of *Results Driven* higher than MBA students.

Table 4.8 shows the relationships between the perceived importance of *Business Acumen* and the independent variables. The results indicated that the individual characteristics and organizational characteristics explained a significant amount of the variance in the perceived importance of *Business Acumen*. The R-square value for the regression model indicated that 11.2% of the variance in *Business Acumen* was explained by the 12 independent variables. Gender and organization ownership showed a significantly positive influence on perceived importance of *Business Acumen*, which means that females tended to have better perceptions of the importance of *Business Acumen*; the participants who worked in private companies and multinational/joint-venture companies had better perceptions of the importance of *Business Acumen* than those who worked in government/non-profit organizations.

The results in Table 4.9 indicated that the overall model of regression for Building Coalitions/Communications is not significant. Given that the p-value (.38) was greater than .05, no significant relationship was found between the variance for the perceived importance of Building Coalitions/Communications and the independent variables in the overall regression.

Table 4.4

*Means, Standard Deviations, Zero-Order Correlations for Factors Used in the Regression Analysis (n=250)*

Factor	Zero-Order Correlations																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
1 Leading Change	1.00																	
2 Leading People	0.69**	1.00																
3 Results Driven	0.75**	0.69**	1.00															
4 Business Acumen	0.72**	0.60**	0.67**	1.00														
5 Building Coalitions/Communications	0.66**	0.70**	0.59**	0.61**	1.00													
6 Age	0.05	0.00	0.12	0.07	0.02	1.00												
7 Female vs. Male	0.17**	0.16*	0.19**	0.20**	0.12	-0.06	1.00											
8 EMBA vs. MBA	0.13*	0.09	0.24**	0.18**	0.06	0.46**	0.07	1.00										
<i>Highest position held</i>																		
9 Supervisor vs. Non manager	-0.05	0.02	-0.02	-0.06	-0.08	-0.23**	0.06	-0.01	1.00									
10 Middle manager vs. Non manager	0.09	0.09	0.11	0.17**	0.15*	0.17**	0.08	0.05	-0.61**	1.00								
11 Executive manager vs. Non manager	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.06	0.00	0.35**	-0.19**	0.10	-0.22**	-0.30**	1.00							
<i>Size of organization (employees)</i>																		
12 Less than 101 vs. More than 501	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	0.00	0.06	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.07	0.00	0.14**	1.00						
13 101-500 vs. More than 501	0.12	0.09	0.11	0.08	0.06	0.16**	0.07	0.27**	-0.06	0.18**	-0.05	-0.43**	1.00					
<i>Ownership of organization</i>																		
14 Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.10	0.10	0.07	0.09	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.17**	0.05	-0.05	0.16*	0.29**	0.01	1.00				
15 State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	-0.13*	-0.14**	-0.08	-0.09	-0.05	-0.11	-0.07	-0.16**	0.06	-0.09	-0.04	-0.13**	-0.13**	-0.39**	1.00			
16 Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.09	0.07	0.06	0.10	0.00	0.16*	0.08	0.05	-0.11	0.16*	-0.04	-0.13*	0.06	-0.40**	-0.51**	1.00		
17 Manufacturing vs. All other industries	-0.01	0.08	-0.01	-0.05	0.02	-0.02	-0.09	-0.16**	0.09	0.01	0.00	-0.23**	0.07	-0.06	-0.09	0.25**	1.00	
<i>Mean</i>	3.73	3.99	3.92	3.61	3.91	30.57	0.31	0.11	0.31	0.45	0.10	0.29	0.31	0.24	0.33	0.34	0.24	
<i>SD</i>	0.63	0.63	0.59	0.68	0.58	3.9	0.46	0.31	0.46	0.50	0.30	0.45	0.46	0.43	0.47	0.48	0.43	

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

*Notes.* *Leading Change* values could theoretically range from 8 to 40 with higher values indicating greater values indicating greater importance. *Leading People* values could range from a low of 4 to a high of 20. *Results Driven* values could range from a low of 6 to a high of 30. *Business Acumen* values could range from a low of 3 to a high of 15. *Building Coalitions/Communications* values could range from a low of 6 to a high of 30.

Table 4.5

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Characteristics on Perception of the Importance of Leading Change (n = 250)*

Variables	<i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	95% C I for <i>b</i>	
		Lower	Upper
Age	-0.12 (0.10)	-0.32	0.08
Female vs. Male	1.61* (0.70)	0.23	2.98
EMBA vs. MBA	1.178 (1.22)	-1.23	3.58
<i>Highest position held</i>			
Supervisor vs. Non manager	1.70 1.04	-0.35	3.74
Middle manager vs. Non manager	2.14* (1.03)	0.12	4.16
Executive manager vs. Non manager	2.56 (1.48)	-0.35	5.46
<i>Ownership of Organization</i>			
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.57 (1.30)	-2.00	3.13
State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	-0.81 (1.22)	-3.21	1.59
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.17 (1.26)	-2.30	2.65
<i>Size of Organization (employees)</i>			
Less than 101 vs. More than 501	0.00 (0.84)	-1.65	1.66
101-500 vs. More than 501	0.45 (0.81)	-1.16	2.05
Manufacturing vs. All other industries	0.84 (0.82)	-0.77	2.45
		<i>F</i> = 1.70	Multiple <i>R</i> = .28
		<i>df</i> = 12, 237	<i>R</i> Square = .08
		<i>p</i> = .07	Adj. <i>R</i> Square = .03

Table 4.6

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Characteristics on Perception of the Importance of Leading People (n = 250)*

Variables	<i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	95% C I for <i>b</i>	
		Lower	Upper
Age	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.16	0.04
Female vs. Male	0.80* (0.35)	0.11	1.49
EMBA vs. MBA	0.59 (0.61)	-0.61	1.79
<i>Highest position held</i>			
Supervisor vs. Non manager	0.85 (0.52)	-0.17	1.87
Middle manager vs. Non manager	1.07* (0.51)	0.06	2.08
Executive manager vs. Non manager	1.28 (0.74)	-0.18	2.73
<i>Ownership of Organization</i>			
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.28 (0.65)	-1.00	1.57
State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	-0.41 (0.61)	-1.61	0.79
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.09 (0.63)	-1.15	1.33
<i>Size of Organization (employees)</i>			
Less than 101 vs. More than 501	0.00 (0.42)	-0.83	0.83
101-500 vs. More than 501	0.22 (0.41)	-0.58	1.03
Manufacturing vs. All other industries	0.42 (0.41)	-0.39	1.22
		<i>F</i> = 1.70	Multiple <i>R</i> = .28
		<i>df</i> = 12, 237	<i>R</i> Square = .08
		<i>p</i> = .07	Adj. <i>R</i> Square = .03

Table 4.7

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Characteristics on Perception of the Importance of Results Driven (n = 250)*

Variables	<i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	95% C I for <i>b</i>	
		Lower	Upper
Age	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.16	0.12
Female vs. Male	1.27** (0.49)	0.31	2.24
EMBA vs. MBA	2.34** (0.86)	0.65	4.02
<i>Highest position held</i>			
Supervisor vs. Non manager	0.76 (0.73)	-0.68	2.19
Middle manager vs. Non manager	1.23 (0.72)	-0.19	2.65
Executive manager vs. Non manager	1.24 (1.04)	-0.80	3.28
<i>Ownership of Organization</i>			
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.53 (0.91)	-1.27	2.33
State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.22 (0.86)	-1.47	1.90
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.47 (0.88)	-1.27	2.21
<i>Size of Organization (employees)</i>			
Less than 101 vs. More than 501	-0.15 (0.59)	-1.31	1.02
101-500 vs. More than 501	0.17 (0.57)	-0.95	1.30
Manufacturing vs. All other industries	0.06 (0.57)	-1.07	1.19
		<i>F</i> = 2.27	Multiple R = .32
		<i>df</i> = 12, 237	R Square = .10
		<i>p</i> = .01	Adj. R Square = .06

Table 4.8

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Characteristics on Perception of the Importance of Business Acumen (n = 250)*

Variables	b (SE)	95% C I for b	
		Lower	Upper
Age	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.10	0.06
Female vs. Male	0.70* (0.28)	0.15	1.25
EMBA vs. MBA	0.86 (0.49)	-0.10	1.82
<i>Highest position held</i>			
Supervisor vs. Non manager	0.17 (0.41)	-0.65	0.99
Middle manager vs. Non manager	0.69 (0.41)	-0.12	1.49
Executive manager vs. Non manager	0.11 (0.59)	-1.05	1.27
<i>Ownership of Organization</i>			
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	1.15* (0.52)	0.13	2.17
State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	0.71 (0.49)	-0.25	1.66
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	1.08* (0.50)	0.09	2.07
<i>Size of Organization (employees)</i>			
Less than 101 vs. More than 501	-0.10 (0.34)	-0.76	0.56
101-500 vs. More than 501	0.06 (0.33)	-0.58	0.70
Manufacturing vs. All other industries	-0.29 (0.33)	-0.93	0.36
		<i>F</i> = 2.49	Multiple R = .34
		<i>df</i> = 12, 237	R Square = .11
		<i>p</i> = .00	Adj. R Square = .07

Table 4.9

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Characteristics on Perception of the Importance of Building Coalitions/Communications (n = 250)*

Variables	<i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	95% C I for <i>b</i>	
		Lower	Upper
Age	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.19	0.09
Female vs. Male	0.89 (0.49)	-0.07	1.86
EMBA vs. MBA	0.66 (0.85)	-1.02	2.34
<i>Highest position held</i>			
Supervisor vs. Non manager	0.30 (0.73)	-1.13	1.74
Middle manager vs. Non manager	1.33 (0.72)	-0.08	2.75
Executive manager vs. Non manager	1.10 (1.03)	-0.94	3.13
<i>Ownership of Organization</i>			
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit	-0.26 (0.91)	-2.06	1.53
State-owned vs. Gov/Non-profit	-0.30 (0.85)	-1.98	1.38
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit	-0.46 (0.88)	-2.20	1.27
<i>Size of Organization (employees)</i>			
Less than 101 vs. More than 501	0.64 (0.59)	-0.52	1.80
101-500 vs. More than 501	0.40 (0.57)	-0.72	1.53
Manufacturing vs. All other industries	0.47 (0.57)	-0.66	1.60
		<i>F</i> = 1.08	Multiple <i>R</i> = .23
		<i>df</i> = 12, 237	<i>R</i> Square = .05
		<i>p</i> = .38	Adj. <i>R</i> Square = .00

## Findings for Research Question Three

*Q3: What are the perceptions of participants regarding the effectiveness of each activity for developing leadership competencies of middle managers in their organizations in China?*

The results in Table 4.10 show that “special projects or assignment within one’s own job responsibilities” were perceived to be the most effective way to develop middle managers’ leadership competencies, and “computer-based learning” was perceived to be the least effective way.

Table 4.10

*Ranking of the Leadership Development Activities for Middle Managers in China by Mean Perceived Effectiveness Among MBA and EMBA Students (n=250)*

Ranking	Developing Activity	M	SD	95% CI	
				Lower	Upper
1	Special projects or assignments within one's own job responsibilities	3.43	0.78	3.33	3.53
2	Coaching with internal coaches or mentors	3.14	0.94	3.03	3.26
3	Special projects or assignments outside of one's own job responsibilities	2.77	1.03	2.64	2.90
4	Formal internal workshops, training, seminars	2.72	0.90	2.61	2.84
5	Coaching with external coaches or mentors	2.68	0.97	2.56	2.80
6	Reading articles/books or other reference materials	2.58	0.93	2.46	2.70
7	Formal external workshops, training, seminars	2.56	0.96	2.44	2.68
8	Academic degree programs	2.55	0.99	2.44	2.68
9	Tests, assessments, or other measures of skills	2.39	1.14	2.25	2.53
10	Computer based learning (Internet, CD-ROM, software)	2.34	0.90	2.23	2.46

*Note:* The response scale was 1 = not effective; 2 = slightly effective; 3 = moderately effective; 4 = very effective.

## Summary

Results of the data analysis were presented and discussed in this chapter. First, descriptive statistics were used to describe the background information on the respondents. The results showed that the majority of the respondents were male MBA students who were younger than 35 years of age. More than half of the participants (55%) had ever worked as middle or executive managers.

Second, the perceptions of the importance of the leadership competencies of middle managers in China were reported. The highest mean importance value reported was for the competency *Accountability* and the lowest mean importance value reported was for *Political savvy*. *Leading People* was rated as the most important leadership competency category, and the competency category *Business Acumen* had the lowest mean importance value. The top five competencies most frequently identified were *Accountability*, *Team Building*, *Relationship Management*, *Continual Learning* and *Conflict Management*.

Third, multiple regression was applied to test the relationship between these perceptions and the independent variables. No significant relationships were found between the 12 independent variables and the three competency categories *Leading Change*, *Leading People*, *Building Coalitions/Communications*. There were significant regression results between the 12 independent variables and the two competency categories *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen*. The results indicated that females as compared to males, EMBA students as compared to MBA students, tended to rate the importance of *Results Driven* higher; females as compared to males, and participants who

worked in private companies and multinational/joint-venture companies as compared to those who worked in government/non-profit organizations, tended to rate the importance of *Business Acumen* higher.

Fourth, the perceptions of effectiveness of leadership development activities for middle managers in China were reported. Based on the perceptions, the most effective development activity was “special projects or assignment within one’s own job responsibilities”. The least effective activity was “computer-based learning”.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Study Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the study, discuss and interpret the findings and make recommendations. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section summarizes the research purposes, literature review, methodology, and findings of the study. The second section contains discussion, interpretations and conclusions drawn from the findings. In the third section, the researcher provides detailed recommendations.

#### **Study Summary**

The roles and competencies of middle managers have received increased attention. Today's increasingly complex, uncertain and challenging environment in China requires more dynamic leadership. As the bridge between executive managers and front-line employees, middle managers are also the next generation of executive managers. Therefore, middle managers need to be accountable, able to execute strategy, and successfully deliver quality outcomes (Floyd & Woodridge, 1996). While China is the country that has the most population in the world, it is still running short of people, and especially short of managers who have creativity and leadership skills (Keeley, 2004). The development of middle managers is perceived as ineffective because there are few fully developed competency models on which to base leadership development (Berthal,

Bondra & Wang, 2005). Although studies of the leadership competencies of middle managers have been conducted in the United States, Canada and other western countries, little research has been done on this topic in China.

The purpose of the study was to: (1) measure Nankai University MBA and EMBA students' perceptions regarding the importance of leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in China; (2) investigate the relationships between those perceptions and the participants' demographic and biographic background; and (3) explore the perceived effectiveness of developmental activities that contributed to middle managers' leadership competencies.

The literature review revealed that many studies have been conducted on general leadership competencies. For example, the *1998 Leadership Competency Model*, used in this study, was originally developed by the United States government and has been widely used in the United States and other countries as a generic instrument. However, inadequate research has been found on middle management leadership competencies. The results of the limited research suggested that to be successful in an uncertain and dynamic environment, middle managers must take a more proactive leadership role and be more strategically focused. The research conducted in China revealed that middle managers in China shared several common competencies with western managers; however, some competency differentiations were unique to the Chinese culture.

To support the aims of this study, a descriptive survey was administered to a target group of 450 MBA and 70 EMBA students enrolled in Nankai University in Tianjin, China. The survey was translated into Chinese and verified by a third party bilingual researcher. An expert panel composed of seven subject matter experts was

organized to verify and modify the instrument and review the results of the study. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a cognitive group interview was conducted to pilot test the instrument. The researcher distributed the survey instruments and collected them in class. A total of 263 survey questionnaires were returned; the response rate was 51%.

Study findings revealed all 27 leadership competencies were perceived to be “important” or “very important”. The highest mean value was for the *Accountability* competency leadership competency while the lowest mean importance value was for *Political Savvy*. The top five competencies most frequently identified were *Accountability*, *Team Building*, *Relationship Management*, *Continual Learning* and *Conflict Management*. The competencies items that were more strategic, like *Vision*, *External Awareness*, *Strategic Thinking*, and *Entrepreneurship*, gained relatively lower mean values. Based on the multiple regression analysis results, no significant relationships were found between the independent variables (age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization) and the three competency categories (*Leading Change*, *Leading People*, *Building Coalitions/Communications*).

Significant regression results were found between the previously listed independent variables and two competency categories *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen*. The results indicated that females tended to rate the importance of *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen* higher than did males. EMBA students tended to rate the importance of *Results Driven* higher than did MBA students. The participants who worked in private companies and multinational/joint-venture companies as compared to

those who worked in government/non-profit organizations tended to rate the importance of *Business Acumen* higher. The total percentage of the variance of dependent variables that can be explained by the independent variables was approximately 10%.

Regarding the leadership development activities, the most effective activity was “special projects or assignment within one’s own job responsibilities” while the least effective activity was “computer based learning.”

## Conclusions

This section presents a discussion of the findings, literature review and conclusions. The section is organized according to the sequence of research questions.

### *The Importance of Leadership Competencies for Middle Managers in China*

*Q1: What are the perceptions of MBA and EMBA students enrolled in the Nankai University regarding the importance of the leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in their organizations in China?*

The discussion of research question one includes two parts: the overall rating results and the discussion of the ranking of leadership competencies.

*Overall rating results.* There was a high level of agreement among participants on the importance of leadership competencies. All leadership competencies were perceived to be “important” or “very important” for middle managers to perform successfully. This fact supported the findings from the 1998 Office of Personal Management (OPM) study

(Eyde et al., 1999), which acknowledged the 27 competencies were important for the success of managers. The reorganization of the importance of leadership competencies was also consistent with other former studies (Conference Board of Canada Organizational Performance Group, 2002; Farquhar, 1998; Fenton-O’Creevy, 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1996, 2000) that revealed leadership was important for middle managers who wished to achieve extraordinary performance and prepare for their next higher position.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this finding. First, the importance of leadership competencies to middle manager’s success is recognized in the study. Leadership competencies are important to the success of middle managers for their current and next higher level jobs. To perform successfully in their current jobs, middle managers should not only focus on the planning, controlling and monitoring of their units’ activities, but also need to be aware of the organizational strategy, have a keen sense of the environmental context, develop cooperation within and outside of the organization, and lead the people effectively to achieve goals. Also, to prepare for their next higher level job as executive managers, current middle managers need to capitalize on leadership and managerial skills so that they can take the leadership reins smoothly in the future. The results of the study shows that the importance of leadership competency to the success of middle managers in China has been widely recognized, which is very encouraging for middle management development. In the future, the importance needs to be further addressed. The leadership competencies should also be taken into account when selecting, developing, and evaluating middle managers because those competencies

can improve employees' working performance, thereby enhancing organization performance (Dubois, 1993).

Second, all of the leadership competencies tested in the study were borrowed from a US-based instrument. The results showed that the leadership competencies identified in the United States were all perceived to be important for middle managers in China. Leadership theories can be universally applicable or culturally contingent (Triandis, 1993; Yukl, 2002). The result revealed that successful middle managers in China were perceived to share many common attributes with managers in the U.S. Management is management everywhere. Therefore, when developing leadership competency models and designing leadership development programs for middle managers in China, the tools, instruments and programs from western countries can be borrowed as foundations or references.

*Ranking of leadership competency items.* Because the original study did not provide the ranking of the 27 competencies (Eyde et al., 1999), the researcher could not compare the ranking of the study with original study. However, it was still very important to check the ranking of the importance of the leadership competency items. Although all 27 items were rated as important or very important competencies for middle managers' success, it is necessary to examine the competencies that are most and least frequently mentioned. The findings revealed that the top five most frequently identified leadership competencies for middle managers' success were *Accountability*, *Team Building*, *Relationship Management*, *Continual Learning* and *Conflict Management*. They were all rated "very important" to the success of middle managers with average mean values higher than 4.00 out of 5.00.

In this study, *Accountability* was defined as follows: holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities, and can be relied upon to ensure that projects are completed. More than three-fifths of the participants identified it as one of the top five most important leadership competencies. This finding was consistent with those from former studies (Conference Board of Canada, 1998, 2002;) which suggested that the ability to execute and implement strategy was critical to the success of middle managers. Middle managers are integral vertical links between the strategic decision-makers and the first-level supervisors and front-line employees in their business units (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997). Therefore, middle managers need to ensure the integrity of the organization, translate organizational strategy into actions, deliver qualified outcomes, and meet deadlines within budget.

*Team Building* was defined as follows: “inspires, motivates, and guides others toward goal accomplishments. Encourages and facilitates cooperation within the organization and with customer groups; fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, trust.” About half of the participants ranked it as one of the five most critical leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in China. This supported the former studies (Conference Board of Canada, 1998, 2002) that showed middle managers as the “glue” in an organization, responsible for leading their team to achieve the goals of the organization. Middle managers need to lead others to achieve goals, and develop cooperation within the organizations and with customers. They also need to develop others through coaching, mentoring, rewarding and guiding employees. This is extremely important for today’s China because high turnover rate has been one of the biggest challenges for many of Chinese organizations.

*Relationship Management* means the following: “develops networks and builds alliances, engages in cross-functional activities; collaborates across boundaries, and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders; utilizes contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases” in the study. This competency was identified as very important by several former studies conducted in China (Sull, 2005; Wang & Schneider, 2003; Wiggenhorn & Cheah, 1997). In China’s unpredictable environment, the resources needed by organizations to survive and thrive are provided by government agencies, customers, technology partners, suppliers, investors and distributors. Middle managers are positioned in the middle of the organization, having complex links with them. Therefore, middle managers need to place a great emphasis on a sense of connectedness and the importance of relationships among individuals. To fulfill the function, the competency of developing, adapting, and maintaining good relationships and networks is extremely important for middle managers in China.

*Continual Learning* was defined as follows: “grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.” In the turbulent workplace, the pace of change and the required evolution of skills place a premium on continuous learning (Morgan, 1991). To catch up with the rapidly changing environment in China, middle managers must keep updating their knowledge and skills so that they can keep their professional competence in their current job and be prepared for the next higher position.

*Conflict Management* was defined as follows: “identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and

resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative impact”. About one-third of the participants selected this item as one of the most critical leadership competencies for middle managers in China. This was consistent with former studies (Eyde et al., 1999; Gregory & Park, 1992), which revealed that middle managers needed to learn about conflict management as one of their main responsibilities. In Chinese society, harmony and conformity not only tend to govern all interpersonal relations, but these qualities also enjoy social and cultural approval (Hsu, 1981). Middle managers’ unique position puts them in a complex network with others. Therefore, middle managers must know how to manage and solve the conflicts and create a positive environment in their organizations.

Although all of the competencies were rated as important or very important to the success of middle managers in China, some competencies were less frequently mentioned as important items. When checking the competencies items that were more strategically focused, like *Vision*, *External Awareness*, and *Strategic Thinking*, *Entrepreneurship* gained relatively lower mean values. This supported former studies (Kraut, Pedigo, Mckenna, & Dunnette, 1989) that revealed that different hierarchical positions required different managerial behaviors. Farquhar (1998) and Kraut and Pedigo (1986) suggested that compared to executive managers, middle managers needed to focus more on execution, implementation and leading people. Middle managers were integral vertical links between the strategic decision-makers and the front-line employees in their business units, and they were responsible for translating organization strategy into actions and results (Dutton, Ashford, O’Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997).

Based on this finding, the researcher argued that to perform successfully, middle managers need to have a better understanding of the strategy of the organization, and be actively involved in strategy development. However, the emphases of their job would be on execution, implementation and leading people. In practice, although all of the listed competencies are important, the priorities are different. When selecting, developing, and evaluating middle managers, the most important competencies need extra attention and emphasis. Future research is suggested to explore the difference between middle managers' and other management levels' roles and competencies.

In addition, the results of the leadership competencies items also showed that the cultural context in China had evident influence on the rankings. Culture, as collective mental programming that determines values, attitudes and behaviors, has profound implications for management (Hofstede, 1980; Smith & Peterson, 1988). The items that gained relatively higher rankings, including *Relationship Management*, *Team Building*, and *Conflict Management*, were mostly related to relationship and people. This reflected the cultural context in China, which respects harmony and conformity on interpersonal relations (Hsu, 1981). Accordingly, the researcher argued that although we could borrow the western instruments or models, localization was indeed very important and necessary. Also, further research needs to be conducted to identify whether there were other unique important leadership attributes among middle managers in China.

### *The Relationship between the Perceptions and the Background of Participants*

*Q2: Are there significant relationships between these perceptions and the participants' student's age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization?*

This section contains a discussion of the relationships between the perceptions of the importance of middle managers and the background of the participants. The discussion has two parts: non-significant regressions relationships and significant regressions relationships.

*Non-significant regression relationships.* Based on the multiple regression analysis results, no significant relationships were found between the independent variables (age, gender, highest position held, program enrolled, size of organization, ownership of organization, business type of organization) and the three competency categories (*Leading Change, Leading People, Building Coalitions/Communications*). Based on the literature review, it was hypothesized that there were differences in the leadership attributes as perceived by different groups (Kabacoff & Stoffey, 2001; Schubert, 1988, Velde et al., 1999). For example, age group differences were found in the rating of effectiveness and behavior of leadership from several former studies (Kabacoff & Stoffey, 2001; Schubert, 1988). Position differences were found in the Velede et al. (1999) study which revealed that subordinates, supervisors, peers and self-perceptions also differed in their judgments of leadership behavior (Velde et al., 1999).

There are several possible reasons for the results. One of the likely reasons is that there were indeed no differences. If so, the researcher argued that study results showed

that participants with different backgrounds shared very similar perceptions of the importance of competency. Accordingly, it is possible and necessary to conduct this exploration in order to build some universal leadership competency models for middle managers in China. Another possible reason for the results was the existing differences, but these were not found in this study. First, only the relationships between the independent variables and dependent variables were tested, while the interaction between independent variables was not tested. This might influence the results of the regression. Second, there might be other variables that can make a difference, but they were not included in the study. Third, all of the participants in the study were MBA or EMBA students in one university. Therefore, similar education backgrounds might significantly influence their perceptions rather than other demographic and biographic factors. Therefore, the researcher recommended that future studies be conducted to extend the population, find out the exact reasons for the similarity, whether the differences exist, and what the influence factors are.

*Significant regression relationships.* Significant regression results found between the previously listed independent variables and two competency categories: *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen*. The results indicated that females tended to rate the importance of *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen* higher than did males. EMBA students tended to rate the importance of *Results Driven* higher than did MBA students. The participants who worked in private companies and multinational/joint-venture companies as compared to those who worked in government/non-profit organizations tended to rate the importance of *Business Acumen* higher. The total percentage of the

variance of dependent variables that can be explained by the independent variables was approximately 10%. The significant regression results were showed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.

*Significant Multiple Regression Results for Results Driven and Business Acumen Criterion Variables (n = 250)*

Independent Variables	Results Driven	Business Acumen
Female vs. Male	*	*
EMBA vs. MBA	*	
Private vs. Gov/Non-profit		*
Multinational/JVC vs. Gov/Non-profit		*

*Note.* \* Denotes statistical significance at .05 level.

*Gender.* This study found that females had a greater likelihood of rating higher on the importance of *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen*. *Results Driven* was composed of six leadership competency items: *Accountability*, *Customer Service*, *Decisiveness*, *Entrepreneurship*, *Problem Solving* and *Technical Credibility*. *Business Acumen* was composed of *Financial Management*, *Human Resource Management* and *Technology Management*. This was consistent with former studies which revealed that gender differences existed in the perceptions of leadership (Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Valian, 1998). However, numerous authors supported the argument that women inherently possess certain feminine characteristics related to good communication skills, good listening, empathy, as well as interpersonal skills that diverge sharply from male leadership characteristics (Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Valian, 1998). Study results showed that females rated all leadership competencies higher than did males. The possible reasons for the higher ratings in the study may be that success in China requires

females to work harder to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities. Therefore, females, especially the participants in the study who enrolled in MBA or EMBA programs to advance their career, tended to have a higher standard for themselves and more self discipline. Accordingly, they tended to have a better sense of the importance of *Results Driven* and *Business Acumen*. Further investigations are needed to find out the possible reasons for the results, and how they will influence each organization's middle management development strategy.

*Program enrolled.* EMBA students were found to have a greater perception of the importance of *Results Driven* than were MBA students. There were several possible reasons for the differentiation. First, the mission of the MBA program is to offer early career professionals an opportunity to enter or move up in a business-related field, while the EMBA program is designed for middle-level and senior managers as well as executives and focuses on business fundamentals from a leadership perspective. Therefore, compared to MBA students, the education received by EMBA students might make them more sensitive to the importance of the results. Except for different education backgrounds, EMBA students also revealed other differences. Among the 27 EMBA students and 223 MBA students who completed qualified questionnaires, the average age of EMBA students was 36, which was six years older than the average age of MBA students. The average working experience as a middle manager for EMBA students was five years, while MBA students had two years of working experience as middle managers, on average. Therefore, generally speaking, EMBA students were older, more experienced and held senior positions in organizations. Therefore, they might be more sensitive to the need to get things done on time. Future research needs to be conducted to

find out the exact reasons for the differentiation and possible influences on decisions about leadership development.

*Ownership of organization.* Participants who worked in private companies or multinational/joint-venture companies were found to have a greater perception of the importance of *Business Acumen* compared to those who worked in government/non profit organizations. This finding was consistent with those from former studies (Braun & Warner, 2002; Wong & Slater, 2002) which revealed that the different ownership of organizations had different cultural contexts and operating systems. Compared with government and non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, including private and multinational/joint-venture, need to have higher requirements for financial management, human resource management and technology management. Future research needs to be conducted to find out the exact reason for the difference and possible influences on decisions about leadership development.

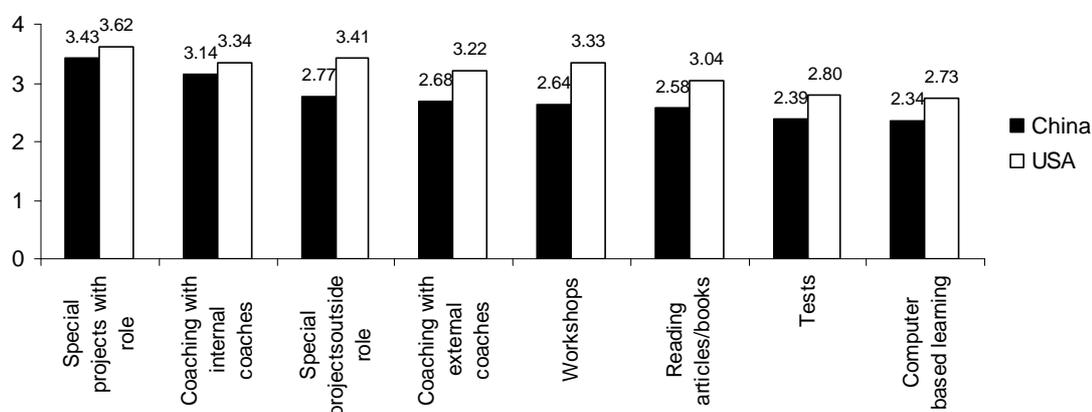
#### *Leadership Development Activity*

*Q3: What are the perceptions of participants regarding the effectiveness of each activity for developing leadership competencies of middle managers in their organizations in China?*

All of the listed leadership development activities were perceived to be from “slightly effective” to “very effective”, but the perceived effect level varied. “special projects or assignment within one’s own job responsibilities” and “coaching with internal

coaches or mentors” were perceived as the most effective ways, while “computer based training” was perceived to be the least effective approach.

Since this study used content items and measurements similar to those used in the DDI 2006 leadership forecast study (Berthal & Wellins, 2006), it would be valuable to compare results about perceptions of the effectiveness of activities between U.S. and China participants. It should be mentioned that the DDI study was about the leadership of all managers, while this study focused only on middle managers. Also, those leadership development items that were not included in both studies, like “expatriate assignment” and “academic education”, were not included in this comparison. The comparison between the two studies is shown in Figure 5.1.



*Figure 5.1.* Comparison of the Perception of the Effectiveness of Leadership Development Activities between China and the US.

*Note:* The response scale was 1 = not effective; 2 = slightly effective; 3 = moderately effective; 4 = very effective.

The following key points were viewed to sketch out the results of the comparison. First, perceptions of the effectiveness of the leadership development activities in both studies were similar. The differences between the average ratings of each activity were between .19 and .69 on the 4-point scale. The results for both studies revealed that “special projects or assignment within one’s own job responsibilities” were most effective, while “computer based training” was least effective. Based on the results, the researcher argued that participants in China share common perceptions with participants in the U.S. in terms of preference for leadership activities. Further investigation is suggested on the reasons for the similarities and whether the differences will still exist at the implementation level of each approach.

Second, both studies showed that “special project within one’s job” was found to be the most effective way to develop leadership. This is consistent with the results from the former study conducted by *Fortune Magazine* and the Hay Group (1999), which revealed that on-the-job assignments were taken as the most important and effective leadership development practice by *Fortune Magazine*’s most admired companies. Therefore, the researcher argued that the HR department and executive teams must recognize the importance of on-the-job training, and use it as an important approach in developing middle managers. It should be noted that not all job assignments can lead to automatic learning. Special projects that develop middle managers need to be designed and managed. According to McCall (1988), to enhance the effectiveness of on-the-job training, organizations need to search the organization to identify appropriate special tasks for management development. Also, during the process of handing out special assignments, organizations need to provide timely and regular feedback, assistance and

corrections. In conclusion, development can occur only when corporate resources are brought to bear consistently toward the objective. China's growing economy will offer many opportunities through special projects and assignments to leaders so they can grow their skills (Berthal, Bondra, & Wang, 2005). Organizations need to manage those opportunities and make the work an effective learning experience.

Third, coaching with coaches, especially internal coaches, was perceived to be very valuable in both of the studies. Through coaching, middle managers can obtain individualized diagnosis of needs, feedback, development planning, one-on-one training, and tracking of results (Berthal & Wellins, 2006). With the close attention, middle managers can find out their specific leadership strengths and development needs. Therefore, by leveraging the experiences of these effective leaders, organizations can create mentoring/coaching relationships to build the skills of middle managers. Executive managers, who usually will play the role of the internal coach for middle managers, need to realize the importance of coaching, and deliver effective coaching to middle managers.

Fourth, formal training, the most widely used development activity, was not deemed as the most valuable approach in both studies; the rating of the items in the China study was especially lower. This is consistent with the Berthal, Bondra, and Wang (2005) study, which showed that more than half of HR professionals felt that current leadership development programs in China were of poor or fair quality. Therefore, the research showed that identifying the important leadership competencies for middle managers and developing a proper training workshop are very important. Future research should be conducted on this topic. Also, to enhance the impact of training courses, HR and the executive managers should help middle managers link training to special follow-up

projects and provide ongoing management support, so that middle managers can apply newly learned skills in the workplace.

In conclusion, all listed leadership development activities were perceived to be valuable to middle management development. To effectively develop middle managers, first, organizations need to outline their business strategy and goals, and identify leadership competencies that are in line with implementing their strategy. Leadership programs should be linked to the competencies important to leadership success. Second, each leader has a different learning style preference. Some may prefer to learn skills in the classroom, on the job, or through alternative media. Organizations will need to carefully examine their preferences and provide an effective development approach. Third, each develop activity also has its strengths and weaknesses. Based on leadership competency development needs, by integrating different development activities, organizations need to provide varied and high-quality program packages to improve the overall quality of the learning experience.

### Recommendations

Based on study findings, the following recommendations are proposed to current and potential middle managers, executive managers and HR departments, educational institutions, government, and future researchers.

*Recommendations for Current and Potential Middle Managers*

First, current and potential middle managers need to be aware of the importance of leadership competency to their success in the organization, and should be more active and strategy-focused. They need to realize that they are playing important roles in enhancing communication between executive managers and front-line employees, and effectively leading people to execute strategy and deliver quality outcomes.

Second, middle managers must actively acquire the important leadership skills. They can assess their current proficiency level regarding the important leadership competencies found in the study. Through these comparisons, they will recognize the gaps in their current skills, knowledge and abilities and decide on development needs. The ranking of the importance of the leadership competencies in the study can also help middle managers to decide on priorities for their self-development plan. Middle managers can consider their own learning preferences and design their most effective development package to acquire leadership competencies.

*Recommendations for Executive Managers and HR Departments*

First of all, executive managers and HR departments need to recognize the importance of leadership competencies to the success of middle managers and the whole organization, and conduct projects to develop their own leadership competency models for middle managers. Executive managers should be the leader while HR departments need to administer the projects. The competency model can be developed through various approaches. Organizations can: (1) borrow a fully developed model and use it directly in

their organizations; or (2) borrow a model, and then modify it to fit the company culture; and then (3) develop their own model. To develop a model, organizations can use surveys of middle managers and their supervisor and subordinates, hold focus group meetings, or conduct behavioral event interviews with exemplary middle managers. Organizations need to consider organizational culture, financial investment, and the skills and sophistication levels of internal practitioners and decide on the most appropriate approach (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). Study results can be used by organizations in developing their own competency model. The organizations that already have their own leadership competencies can also compare the study findings with their models, find out whether there are any common or different areas, and improve their own models.

Second, executive managers and HR departments need to provide middle managers with management development and training resources, and create opportunities for their growth and learning. By comparing the leadership competency model and current proficiency level of middle managers in their organizations, the HR professionals can identify the training needs of middle managers, consider the learning preferences of middle managers, leverage organization resources, and develop varied and high-quality development packages for middle managers. Executive managers, as the coach and mentor of middle managers, need to give middle managers timely guidance and feedback, help middle managers to realize their strengths and weaknesses, and coach them to turn special projects and assignments into effective learning experiences. Study findings can be used as references when organizations decide on their middle management development priorities and strategies.

Third, HR departments can also integrate the leadership competencies with other HR functions, such as recruiting, selecting and evaluating middle managers. The competency is the important skills needed to perform successfully as middle managers; therefore, using competency as a standard and measure in the job-match process could ensure that the best qualified person is selected. When competencies are clarified in advance, the evaluation is more objective and accurate.

#### *Recommendations for Educational Institutions*

The study findings can also help MBA programs, EMBA programs and other educational institute whose missions include preparing middle managers to evaluate the setting up of their academic programs, adjust the content of the courses, and modify the structure of the program. The important leadership competencies revealed in the study can be included in the curriculum objectives. The results of the study also showed that learning by doing was very effective approach to develop leadership competencies. Therefore, education institutes need to create more effective internship programs or other practicing opportunities, and prepare students for their leading roles before they enter the real workplace.

#### *Recommendations for Government*

Whether China can maintain a high rate of development and achieve further gains depends very much on its managerial talents (Brown & Porter, 1996). The shortage of

qualified middle management talents has and will continue to influence the growth of organizations in China. Therefore, the government needs to organize or sponsor research institutes or companies to conduct more in-depth leadership competency studies on a broader scope in China. Also, the government needs to conduct or sponsor more leadership development activities to improve the overall leadership competencies of middle managers in China.

#### *Recommendations for Future Researchers*

Many issues about the leadership competencies of middle managers remain unanswered because they are beyond the scope of this study. The following recommendations are proposed for future research.

First, the study borrowed a U.S. instrument and only measured the importance of the leadership competencies recognized in U.S. studies. The researcher recommends that in the future, researchers need to find out whether other leadership competencies are important, particularly for middle managers in China. This information can be obtained through qualitative methods, including holding focus group meetings, conducting behavioral event interviewing, and conducting case studies.

Second, according to the scope of the research question, this study focused only on leadership competencies. In future research, it is also important to explore and identify the behaviors associated with those competencies. According to Eyde et al. (1999), competency importance might not be associated with leadership level or position in the organization hierarchy, but different types of managerial behavior are exhibited at

different managerial levels. The researcher strongly recommends that future research be conducted on importance and frequency at the behavior level. By doing so, the future researcher might locate more practical guidelines.

Third, this study focused only on the importance of the competency. Future study is needed to explore the current proficiency level of middle managers regarding those leadership competencies. By comparing the importance of the leadership competencies and current proficiency level of middle managers, future researchers can find out what competencies are most important to development needs.

Fourth, all independent variables listed in the study can only explain a portion of the variance in dependent variables. In the future study, the researchers can use a different analysis methodology to explore whether the interaction of current independent variables, such as age, gender, highest position held, and organization type, will influence perceptions of the importance of leadership competencies. Further study will also be needed to find out whether other important factors will influence people's perceptions of leadership competencies. Some examples of possible variables that need to be tested include participant's own expertise, participant's department, management style, and organization structure.

Fifth, the population in this research was MBA and EMBA students from one university. In future research, the population should be extended to more universities and companies. The information should be collected from different groups, including executives, middle managers, supervisors and front-line employees. This will ensure that the results of this research will be more valuable in terms of its broader implications.

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## Appendix A

### Exempt Consent Form and Questionnaire with Cover Letter in English

#### Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

**Title of Project:** *Leadership Competency of Middle Manager in China—Perceptions of MBA and EMBA students enrolled at Nankai University*

**Principal Investigator:** Wei Wang, Graduate Student  
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1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to explore what are the important leadership competencies for the success of the middle managers and how to develop their leadership competencies.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to answer 12 questions on a survey.
3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions are personal and might cause discomfort.
4. **Benefits:** You might have a better understanding of leadership competency of middle manager. You might use this survey as an instrument to develop yourself.
5. **Duration:** It will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questions.
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** The survey does not ask for any information that would identify to whom the responses belong. Your responses will remain confidential. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses.
7. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Wei Wang at 1-814-880-9597 with questions about this research. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (1-814) 865-1775.

8. **Compensation:** Participants will receive a ball pen (valuing \$1) as a means to thank you for participating.
9. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion and return of the survey implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research. Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

Dear MBA and EMBA Students:

Welcome to on the research project, *The Leadership Competency of Middle Managers in China*! The purpose of the study is to identify the important leadership competencies needed by middle managers to be successful, and to ascertain how best to develop those competencies.

As MBA or EMBA students, you have been, currently are or will be middle managers. So your opinion is very valuable to our study! You can also take the survey as a self-evaluation instrument to find out how to develop your learning plan. Currently, there are few similar studies in China, and we totally understand how difficult it will be to collect first hand data to do this research. But we believe this is a very valuable topic for China and your career development; your participation will be the best support for our study! It will take you about 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your information will not be used for any other purpose than this report. When the results are compiled, no individuals or organizations will be identified; rather, only summary statistics will be reported and published. .

Please complete the questionnaire in its entirety. To thank you for your participation, we will send you a gift. To receive a summary of the completed survey results, please write your email address here \_\_\_\_\_ .

Your participation is voluntary. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Wei Wang ([wxw163@psu.edu](mailto:wxw163@psu.edu)).

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\***Middle Manager** includes those who are between the senior management group in the organization and the first line managers. Please answer the following questions according to your current job. If currently you are not employed, please consider the last job you had.

1. Which one of the following best describes the highest position you have ever held?
  - Non manager
  - Supervisor (Has at least one level subordinate)
  - Middle manager (between supervisor and executive manager)
  - Executive manager (VP or higher)
  
2. How long have you been working in middle management position? If you haven't ever been middle manager, please insert "0".
 

\_\_\_\_\_ Years
  
3. What is your age?
 

\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  
5. Which one of the following best describes your organization's ownership?
  - Private Company
  - State-Owned Company
  - Multinational/Joint-Venture Company
  - Government/Non-profit Organization
  
6. Which one of the following best describes the number of full-time employees in your organization?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,001-5,000
<input type="checkbox"/> 11-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,001-10,000
<input type="checkbox"/> 51-100	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-20,000
<input type="checkbox"/> 101-200	<input type="checkbox"/> 20,001-50,000
<input type="checkbox"/> 201-500	<input type="checkbox"/> 50,001 or more
<input type="checkbox"/> 501-1,000	
  
7. In what industry is your organization classified?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing
<input type="checkbox"/> Computers and High-Tech	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail Trade
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	<input type="checkbox"/> Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Food	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Communications
<input type="checkbox"/> Government and non-profit	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities & Energy
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale Trade
<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( Please specify	)
  
8. In which program are you currently enrolled?
  - MBA
  - EMBA

9. Please rate how important you consider each of the following leadership competencies for the success of middle managers in your organization. Please use the following rating scale for your response: 1 = Not Important 2 = Slightly Important 3 = Important 4 = Very Important 5 = Extremely Important.

Competencies	Description	Importance to middle managers in your organization					
		Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important	
1	Accountability	Assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities. Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans; focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Conflict Management	Identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative impact.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Continual Learning	Grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Creativity and Innovation	Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements; creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Customer Service	Balancing interests of a variety of clients; readily readjusts priorities to respond to pressing and changing client demands. Anticipates and meets the need of clients; achieves quality end-products; is committed to continuous improvement of services.	1	2	3	4	5

Competencies	Description	Importance to middle managers in your organization					
		Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	Decisiveness	Exercises good judgment by making sound and well-informed decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; makes effective and timely decisions, even when data is limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; is proactive and achievement oriented.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Entrepreneurship	Identifies opportunities to develop and market new products and services within or outside of the organization. Is willing to take risks; initiates actions that involve a deliberate risk to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage.	1	2	3	4	5
8	External Awareness	Identifies and keeps up to date on key national and international policies and economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization. Understands near-term and long-range plans and determines how best to be positioned to achieve a competitive business advantage in a global economy.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Financial Management	Demonstrates broad understanding of principles of financial management and marketing expertise necessary to ensure appropriate funding levels. Prepares, justifies, and/or administers the budget for the program area; uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities; monitors expenditures in support of programs and policies. Identifies cost-effective approaches. Manages procurement and contracting.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Flexibility	Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Adjusts rapidly to new situations warranting attention and resolution.	1	2	3	4	5

Competencies	Description	Importance to middle managers in your organization				
		Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
11	Human Resources Management	1	2	3	4	5
12	Influencing /Negotiating	1	2	3	4	5
13	Interpersonal Skills	1	2	3	4	5
14	Integrity /Honesty	1	2	3	4	5
15	Leveraging Diversity	1	2	3	4	5
16	Oral Communication	1	2	3	4	5

Competencies	Description	Importance to middle managers in your organization					
		Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important	
		1	2	3	4	5	
17	Relationship Management	Develops networks and builds alliances, engages in cross-functional activities; collaborates across boundaries, and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders. Utilizes contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Political Savvy	Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Approaches each problem situation with a clear perception of organizational and political reality; recognizes the impact of alternative courses of action.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Problem Solving	Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organizational problems	1	2	3	4	5
20	Resilience	Deals effectively with pressure; maintains focus and intensity and remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks. Effectively balances personal life and work.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Service Motivation	Creates and sustains an organizational culture which encourages others to provide the quality of service essential to high performance. Enables others to acquire the tools and support they need to perform well. Shows a commitment to public service. Influences others toward a spirit of service and meaningful contributions to mission accomplishment.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Strategic Thinking	Formulates effective strategies consistent with the business and competitive strategy of the organization in a global economy. Examines policy issues and strategic planning with a long-term perspective. Determines objectives and sets priorities; anticipates potential threats or opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5

Competencies	Description	Importance to middle managers in your organization					
		Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important	
		1	2	3	4	5	
23	Team Building	Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward goal accomplishments. Consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships. Encourages and facilitates cooperation within the organization and with customer groups; fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, trust. Develops leadership in others through coaching, mentoring, rewarding, and guiding employees.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Technical Credibility	Understands and appropriately applies procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise. Is able to make sound hiring and capital resource decisions and to address training and development needs. Understands linkages between administrative competencies and mission needs.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Technology Management	Uses efficient and cost-effective approaches to integrate technology into the workplace and improve program effectiveness. Develops strategies using new technology to enhance decision making. Understands the impact of technological changes on the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Vision	Takes a long-term view and acts as a catalyst for organizational change; builds a shared vision with others. Influences others to translate vision into action.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Written Communication	Expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing and organized manner.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Others ( Please be Specific)						

10. Please select 5 most critical leadership competencies for middle manager in China and mark them with “X”.

#	Competency	Important
1	Accountability	
2	Conflict Management	
3	Continual Learning	
4	Creativity and Innovation	
5	Customer Service	
6	Decisiveness	
7	Entrepreneurship	
8	External Awareness	
9	Financial Management	
10	Flexibility	
11	Human Resources Mgt.	
12	Influencing/Negotiating	
13	Integrity/Honesty	
14	Interpersonal Skills	
15	Leveraging Diversity	
16	Oral Communication	
17	Political Savvy	
18	Problem Solving	
19	Relationship Management	
20	Resilience	
21	Service Motivation	
22	Strategic Thinking	
23	Team Building	
24	Technical Credibility	
25	Technology Management	
26	Vision	
27	Written Communication	
Others		

11. Please rate the effectiveness of each activity for developing leadership competency of middle manager.

- 1 = Not Effective  
 2 = Slightly Effective  
 3 = Moderately Effective  
 4 = Very Effective

Development Activities	Effectiveness			
	1	2	3	4
Formal internal workshops, training, seminars	1	2	3	4
Formal external workshops, training, seminars	1	2	3	4
Reading articles/books or other reference materials	1	2	3	4
Computer based learning (Internet, CD-ROM, software, self-study courses)	1	2	3	4
Special projects or assignments within one's own job responsibilities	1	2	3	4
Special projects or assignments outside of one's own job responsibilities	1	2	3	4
Expatriate assignments (moves to same or different roles/jobs in other countries)	1	2	3	4
Coaching with internal coaches or mentors	1	2	3	4
Coaching with external coaches or mentors	1	2	3	4
Tests, assessments, or other measures of skills (simulations, role plays, group discussions, 360 assessment tools)	1	2	3	4
Others ( Please specify)	1	2	3	4

12. Please briefly describe, if any, specific suggestions for enhancing leadership development of middle manager in China.

## Appendix B

### Exempt Consent Form and Questionnaire with Cover Letter in Chinese

美国宾州州大学参加社会科学研究同意书

研究题目：中国中层管理者领导力——南开大学国际商学院MBA及EMBA调查

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1. 调研的目的：本项调研的目的在于了解成功中国中层管理者应具有的领导能力，以及如何有效提高。
2. 调研程序：您将需要回答调查问卷上的12个问题。
3. 不适和风险。参加本项调查不会给您带来特殊的风险。有些涉及个人信息的问题可能会造成不适。
4. 收益：参加本项调查您可以对于中层管理者的领导力有更多的了解。这份问卷也可以作为您自我测评的一项重要工具，帮助您更有效地确定个人发展计划。
5. 时间：本项调查大约持续15-20分钟
6. 保密：您的回答是匿名的。美国宾州州立大学“研究保护办公室”和“社会科学研究审查委员会”会对项目的记录进行审查。与本项目相关的任何出版物和报告都不会涉及任何个人信息。
7. 提问的权利：如果您对于此项目有任何疑问，请致电王威 (1-814-880-9597)。  
如果您有关于您的参与权利的问题，请致电宾州州立大学研究保护办公室 (1-814) 865-1775。
8. 报酬：为表示感谢，您将收到一份包括签字笔在内的礼品。
9. 自愿参加原则：您的参加完全自愿。您可以在任何时候停止填写问卷。您不需要回答您不想回答的问题。
10. 您必须年满18岁才能参加此项调查。如果您填写并交回本问卷，那么意味着您已经阅读以上内容，并同意参加此项调查。请保留该文件以备将来查询。

尊敬的MBA及EMBA同学：

您好！欢迎您参加关于“中国中层管理者领导力”的调查研究！本项研究以美国管理者领导胜任力模型为基础，目的在于了解成功的中国中层管理者应具有的领导能力，其领导能力现状以及如何有效提高。

作为MBA或EMBA学生，您曾经是、已经是或者即将成为中层管理者，因此，您的意见对我们的研究非常重要！同时，这份问卷也可以作为您一项重要的自我测评工具，帮助您更有效地确定个人发展计划。目前在中国类似的研究很少，我们清楚地了解收取第一手资料进行研究的难度。但我们相信“中国中层管理人员领导力”是一个对中国以及您的职业发展都是非常有价值的研究课题，您的参与是对我们最大的支持！这项调查大概需要占用您宝贵的15-20分钟。

您的回答不会被用于撰写此研究报告以外的任何用途。只有报告的总结分析结果会被报告和发表，您的个人信息及公司信息不会被报告。

请您**完整填写**此问卷。为了表达我们对您参加调查研究的谢意，我们将赠送给您一份精美的礼品。如果您希望得到本研究的调查报告，请留下您的Email地址\_\_\_\_\_。

您的参与是完全自愿的，如果您有任何疑问，请与我（[wxw163@psu.edu](mailto:wxw163@psu.edu)）联系。

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注：在本项调查中“**中层管理者**”是指企业中处于高层领导者（副总经理及以上）和一线主管之间的管理人员，中层管理人员通常主管某个部门或者组织的某项主要功能，包括部门经理，项目主管，品牌经理等。对问卷中的所有问题，请您根据你目前工作的企业或组织的情况进行填写。如果目前您没有工作，请根据您的上一项工作的情况作答。

请在正确的答案前划“√”。

1. 请问您目前所从事的，或曾经从事过的工作岗位最高级别是什么？
  - 非管理人员
  - 一线主管（有一级直接下级的管理者）
  - 中层管理人员（处于一线主管和高级管理人员之间的管理者）
  - 高级管理人员（副总经理及以上级别的管理者）
2. 您具有多少年作为中层管理人员的工作经验？如果您没有从事过中层管理工作，请填写“0”。
 

\_\_\_\_\_ 年
3. 您的年龄？
 

\_\_\_\_\_ 岁
4. 您的性别？
  - 男 性
  - 女 性
5. 您所在的企业/组织属于下列哪一类？
  - 民营企业
  - 国有企业
  - 外资/合资
  - 政府部门/非营利组织
6. 您所在组织的员工总数为多少？
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 1-10人	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,001-5,000人
<input type="checkbox"/> 11-50人	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,001-10,000人
<input type="checkbox"/> 51-100人	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-20,000人
<input type="checkbox"/> 101-200人	<input type="checkbox"/> 20,001-50,000人
<input type="checkbox"/> 201-500人	<input type="checkbox"/> 50,001以上
<input type="checkbox"/> 501-1,000人	
7. 您所在的公司属于下列哪一行业？
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 农业/林业/渔业	<input type="checkbox"/> 制造业
<input type="checkbox"/> 计算机与高科技	<input type="checkbox"/> 零售业
<input type="checkbox"/> 建筑	<input type="checkbox"/> 服务业
<input type="checkbox"/> 金融/保险/房地产	<input type="checkbox"/> 交通/通讯
<input type="checkbox"/> 食品	<input type="checkbox"/> 电力/能源
<input type="checkbox"/> 政府及非营利性组织	<input type="checkbox"/> 批发
<input type="checkbox"/> 医疗健康服务	<input type="checkbox"/> 其它（请说明：_____）
8. 您目前是：
  - MBA学生
  - EMBA 学生

9. 请评估在您所在的企业或组织中，以下各项领导力对于中层管理人员的成功的重要性。

1 = 不重要; 2 = 有些重要; 3 = 重要; 4 = 很重要; 5 = 极其重要。

领导力素质	描述	对于中层管理者的重要性				
		不 重 要	有 些 重 要	重 要	很 重 要	极 其 重 要
1 诚信而可 Accountability	律人律己，遵守规定和承担责任；值得信赖，能够按时按质完成工作任务。	1	2	3	4	5
2 冲突管理 Conflict Management	发现可能造成矛盾的情况，并以积极的手段解决，降低负面影响。	1	2	3	4	5
3 不断学习 Continual Learning	捕捉和掌握新技术和知识；了解自身优缺点，虚心听取他人的意见，不断自我提升。	1	2	3	4	5
4 勇于创新 Creativity and Innovation	发展新的思路和方法促进组织进步；鼓励创新。	1	2	3	4	5
5 服务客户 Customer Service	预测并满足客户的不同需要，持续不断地提高服务质量。	1	2	3	4	5
6 决断性 Decisiveness	能够及时有效地做出决策，预测决策可能产生的影响以及具体的实施过程。	1	2	3	4	5
7 企业家精神 Entrepreneurship	辨别企业或组织内外部的机遇，勇于冒险，能够承担适度风险以获取收益。	1	2	3	4	5
8 了解外界环境 External Awareness	与时俱进，对于国际国内可能影响企业或组织发展的政治、经济、社会发展趋势保持敏锐性。	1	2	3	4	5
9 财务管理 Financial Management	了解财务管理原则，根据成本效益最大化思路判定事情的优先顺序。	1	2	3	4	5
10 灵活性 Flexibility	乐于接受变化和新信息，并相应地调整行动和工作方法，迅速适应新环境。	1	2	3	4	5
11 人力资源管理 Human Resources Mgt	根据组织目标和预算确定人力资源需求，根据绩效合理选拔，发展，使用，评估和回报员工。	1	2	3	4	5
12 影响和协商 Influencing /Negotiating	有效说服他人，通过合作获取信息，创造双赢的局面。	1	2	3	4	5
13 诚实正直 Integrity/Honesty	相互信任，倡导高标准的道德规范；行事公正，遵守操守。	1	2	3	4	5
14 人际关系 Interpersonal Relationship	适应不同个人的需求；富有同情心而敏锐；尊重其他人。	1	2	3	4	5

领导力素质	描述	对于中层管理者的重要性				
		不重要	有些重要	重要	很重要	极其重要
16 语言沟通 Oral Communication	能够清楚地表达自己想法，有效倾听，促进沟通，创造坦诚的沟通氛围。	1	2	3	4	5
17 政治敏锐性 Political Savvy	识别组织内外部政治动向，并相应采取行动，解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5
18 解决问题 Problem Solving	辨别和分析问题，有效利用信息，合理判断，解决问题。	1	2	3	4	5
19 人际关系管理 Relationship Management	有效的建立联络和合作，跨部门协作，运用人际关系网络寻求支持。					
20 抗压力 Resilience	有效应对压力；即使身处逆境，态度依然乐观，持之以恒，从挫折中迅速崛起。	1	2	3	4	5
21 服务导向 Service Motivation	具有服务精神，鼓励服务内部客户，从而提高企业绩效。	1	2	3	4	5
22 战略思考 Strategic Thinking	在全球化经济环境下，制定有效的商业竞争战略；确定目标和优先顺序，预测可能的威胁和机遇。	1	2	3	4	5
23 团队建设 Team Building	鼓励并领导他人实现目标，促进组织与顾客之间的合作，培养守信、团队精神、自豪感、信任以及员工的领导力。	1	2	3	4	5
24 专业能力 Technical Credibility	了解并合理运用专业领域的程序、法规和政策，知道如何有效获取资源，实现目标。	1	2	3	4	5
25 技术管理 Technology Management	有效而经济地运用技术提高组织效率；运用新的技术辅助决策；了解技术的变革对于组织的影响。	1	2	3	4	5
26 提出并实现远景 Vision	放眼长远，促进组织变革；与他人建立共同远景；推动他人将远景变成行动。	1	2	3	4	5
27 书面表达 Written Communication	清晰、有说服力地、以及有组织性地通过书面表达说明事实和想法。	1	2	3	4	5
28 其他						

10. 请您回顾以上所有的27项领导力，综合考虑，选出您认为对于您组织中的中层管理者最重要的前5项领导力，并在相应的能力旁打“√”。

	领导力	重要
1	诚信而可靠 Accountability	
2	冲突管理 Conflict Management	
3	不断学习 Continual Learning	
4	勇于创新 Creativity and Innovation	
5	服务客户 Customer Service	
6	决断性 Decisiveness	
7	企业家精神 Entrepreneurship	
8	了解外界环境 External Awareness	
9	财务管理 Financial Management	
10	灵活性 Flexibility	
11	人力资源管理 Human Resources Mgt	
12	影响和协商 Influencing /Negotiating	
13	诚实正直 Integrity/Honesty	
14	人际关系 Interpersonal Relationship	
15	有效运用多元化 Leveraging Diversity	
16	语言沟通 Oral Communication	
17	政治敏锐性 Political Savvy	
18	解决问题 Problem Solving	
19	人际关系管理 Relationship Management	
20	抗压力 Resilience	
21	服务导向 Service Motivation	
22	战略思考 Strategic Thinking	
23	团队建设 Team Building	
24	专业能力 Technical Credibility	
25	技术管理 Technology Management	
26	提出并实现远景 Vision	
27	书面表达 Written Communication	
28	其他	

11. 请对下列人力资源开发活动对于“提升中层管理者领导力的有效性”进行评估。请在您觉得符合的选项前面打“√”。

1 = 无效 2 = 有一定效果 3 = 比较有效 4 = 非常有效

人力资源开发活动	有效性			
	无效	有一定效果	比较有效	非常有效
	1	2	3	4
企业 <b>内部</b> 的正式培训	1	2	3	4
企业 <b>外部</b> 正式的培训	1	2	3	4
学历教育	1	2	3	4
通过阅读文章，书籍等进行自学	1	2	3	4
通过互联网、CD、软件等进行自学。	1	2	3	4
通过本职工作 <b>以内</b> 的特殊项目或任务得到锻炼	1	2	3	4
通过本职工作 <b>以外</b> 的特殊项目或任务得到锻炼	1	2	3	4
组织 <b>内部</b> 的领导人/师傅/导师/有经验者的辅导	1	2	3	4
组织 <b>外部</b> 的领导人/师傅/导师/有经验者的辅导	1	2	3	4
各种考试和测评（包括环境模拟，角色扮演，小组讨论，360度评估等	1	2	3	4
其他有效的提高领导力的方法：请举例说明				

12. 您对于提高中国的“中层管理者领导能力的提高”还有什么意见和建议？

## Appendix C

### Biographies of Subject Experts

**Dr. Al Vicere** serves as Executive Education Professor of Strategic Leadership for The Smeal College of Business Administration at Penn State. He was the Smeal College's Associate Dean for Executive Education for nearly 12 years, leading that unit to international prominence as a center of excellence in executive development. He is also the President of Vicere Associates, Inc., a consulting firm whose clients span the globe. Dr. Vicere is the author of several books and has published some eighty articles and professional papers in leading journals.

**Dr. Arthur Yeung** is Philips Chair Professor of HRM, Professor of Management, Director of the Centre of Organization and People Excellence, and Academic Advisor for Executive Education at CEIBS. He also holds a joint appointment as Professor of Business Administration and Director of the China Center at the University of Michigan Business School. Considered one of the leaders in the field of HRM, his works appears frequently in the *Human Resource Management Journal*, *Human Resource Planning Journal*, *Harvard Business Review* (China), and many other leading journals and academic books. Dr. Yeung's research interests focus on building organizational capability for strategic implementation, organizational learning and transformation, strategic human resource management, and leadership development.

**Dr. Rick Jacobs** has been a Professor of Psychology at Penn State since 1979 and has been a regular contributor to the general industrial psychology literature with over 50 articles, book chapters and presentations. He specializes in performance measurement, research design and analysis, and test validation and development. Dr. Jacobs has been the principal investigator for research grants with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Brookhaven National Lab. These projects focused on the development of new methods for understanding and auditing inhibitors to safety in high-reliability (nuclear power plants) work settings. He also has conducted extensive research into the relationships among seniority, experience, performance and attitudes in the private and public sectors, with particular emphasis on the teaching profession.

**Dr. Shanhong Qi** is the Vice Dean of the International Business School at Nankai University in Tianjin, China. He has served as a consultant for many organizations. His main areas of expertise include psychology, management and tourism management. He has served on many doctoral students' committees and has published several articles and books.

**Wayne Chen** is the General Manager of the Hay Group (China). He graduated from East China Normal University and has an M.S. degree in Human Resource Development from Penn State. Wayne joined the Coca-Cola Company as its first-generation marketing executive in China. Since early 1994, Wayne has been involved in HR consulting; his clients include GE, Microsoft and Ericsson. His main areas of expertise include organizational learning, leadership development, executive coaching, sales performance improvement, assessment and emotional intelligence.

**Dr. William J. Rothwell** is Professor of Workforce Education and Development Program in the College of Education at the University Park Campus of Penn State. In that capacity he teaches graduate courses in the full range of performance technology issues, directs research projects, and consults with organizations in the business, industry, government, and nonprofit sectors. A registered Organization Development Consultant (RODC) and a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR), he has authored over seventy articles on human resource development and related fields.

**Dr. Yan Li (Lilian)** is a Senior Learning Consultant in the Division of Performance Improvement of Caterpillar University at Caterpillar Inc. Prior to joining Caterpillar, Lilian was a Senior Consultant to the Hay Group and has held various other managerial positions, leading the learning development functions of several multinational firms during her career. Lilian holds a Ph.D. in Workforce Education and Development from Penn State. She won the 2003 Best Dissertation Award from The University Council for Workforce and Human Resource Education.

## **VITA**

### **Wei Wang**

Wei Wang was born in Jianchang, Liaoning Province, China. She earned her bachelor's degree in economics and master's degree in management from Nankai University, Tianjin, China. Before she came to Penn State, she worked as an HR consultant and training manager at the Management Consulting Institute of the Academy of Telecommunication Research in Beijing, China.

Wei Wang's research interests include leadership development, competency, learning and performance. She has more than ten publications and has made more than ten professional presentations, including presentations to the American Society for Training and Development International Conference. Wei Wang has won several awards during her studies, including a Penn State Alumni scholarship, Graham Fellowship Award, and P&G First-class Scholarship.

She worked as a graduate research assistant in Workforce Education and Development and the Penn State Office of Economic & Workforce Development. She also has actively pursued practical experiences in the workplace. She had internships with Motorola University (Beijing, China), Development Dimensions International, Inc. (DDI) (Pittsburgh, US), and American Society for Training and Development (Alexandria, US) and as a result has extensive and varied professional experiences.

During her time at Penn State, Wei Wang was actively involved in volunteer work. She served as vice president of the Penn State Society for the Study of Workforce and Economic Development, and was a leader in the Workforce Education and Development Program new student orientation committee, member of the ASTD Central Pennsylvania chapter program development committee, and member of the Chinese Friendship Association of Pennsylvania State University.