

VALUES VOICES

1. MANAGING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN GARMENT ASIA – PROFESSOR FANG LEE COOKE

Initially established in the 1970s, Garment Asia (pseudonym) is a Hong Kong-headquartered garment manufacturing MNC that has factories in many lower income countries, including China, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Vietnam. Its shopfloor workers are primarily young workers from villages, many of whom are women. Factories in Mauritius have relied heavily on immigrant workers due to an insufficient domestic labour supply. The Mauritius subsidiary initially employed a large proportion of Chinese migrant workers who were skilled garment makers and relied heavily on overtime wage payments to earn an attractive wage package, which was a typical practice in the manufacturing sector in China. To comply with international labour standards and other relevant international standards as an ethical and progressive company, Garment Asia has decided to reduce the overtime hours for its workers. This made working in its Mauritian factories an unattractive option for Chinese migrant workers, so they returned to China.

At the same time, the Ministry of Labour, Industry Relations, Employment, and Training of Mauritius decided to attract more temporary immigrant workers from Muslim countries to its manufacturing sector, in part to promote its cultural diversity and inclusion agenda. Since nearly 20 percent of the population

has an Islamic tradition, it was believed that temporary immigrant workers from Muslim countries could integrate with their fellow workers and the local community in Mauritius more easily than the Chinese immigrant workers, who encountered a greater level of language and cultural barriers.

Garment Asia responded to this government initiative by recruiting its workers from Muslim countries such as Bangladesh. Many of these workers were in their late teens or early 20s, with limited or no garment manufacturing skills. Training was provided to equip these workers with the skills necessary to perform basic production activities. Moreover, to help retain these workers, generous leave entitlements were provided to allow them to visit their families back home. Social events were organized regularly by the company and local workers to integrate these immigrant workers and to make them feel at home.

The global garment sector has become increasingly competitive. Many local or smaller foreign-owned garment factories in Mauritius had been incurring heavy losses, and some had failed to survive. Automation enabled Garment Asia's Mauritian factories to reduce their dependence on immigrant workers for labour supply. Another strategy was to focus on businesses at the upper end of the product market, which had a higher profit margin to help cover costs.



This case suggests that pressure on one aspect of the human resource management (HRM) function may trigger the need for and challenge other aspects of HRM. Similarly, pressure for diversity, equity and inclusion may come from both external and internal sources. Multinational corporations are particularly vulnerable to institutional and market factors at the regional and local levels, which may render a global HR strategy for developing a corporate image as a responsible and caring employer globally difficult to formulate and implement.

2. MAPPING WORKER GRIEVANCE ECOSYSTEMS IN VIETNAM'S EXPORT-ORIENTED GARMENT INDUSTRY – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR INGRID LANDAU, DR TRANG THI KIEU TRAN

Effective grievance mechanisms are a key component of responsible business conduct in the global garment industry. Recognising this, many garment brands have established their own grievance mechanisms that can be accessed by workers in their supply chains and/or participate in multistakeholder initiatives. These mechanisms are intended to complement factory-level and state grievance systems but in practice they can lead to multiple grievance channels within the one factory and to overlap, duplication and confusion for workers and businesses alike. Working with the ILO's Better Work Vietnam program and three global garment brands, this project takes an innovative 'ecosystem' approach that maps and evaluates the multiplicity of grievance mechanisms available to workers in a sample of factories in Vietnam's export-oriented garment industry. Combining qualitative interviews with brands, suppliers and other stakeholders with a large-scale survey of workers, this project aims to produce practical insights to improve business practices and access to remedy for workers in global garment supply chains.

THIS PROJECT AIMS TO PRODUCE PRACTICAL INSIGHTS TO IMPROVE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND ACCESS TO REMEDY FOR WORKERS IN GLOBAL GARMENT SUPPLY CHAINS.



3. EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT ATTITUDES TO WORKPLACE BULLYING – ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BRIAN COOPER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ROSS DONAHUE AND PROFESSOR HELEN DE CIERI

Workplace bullying is a complex social problem with serious costs and consequences for workers, employers and communities. Workplace bullying (WPB) costs Australian industry up to \$36 billion per year and is associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes for targets of bullying.

Research to date has largely assumed bullying is driven by deliberate and pre-meditated attitudes and behaviour. Associate Professor Brian Cooper, Associate Professor Ross Donohue and Professor Helen De Cieri from the Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Research Team at the Monash Business School question this assumption. This project forms one aspect of a broader research program looking at the antecedents and consequences of workplace violence and aggression. This study draws upon contemporary behavioural theories that highlight the importance of impulsive and automatic elements in human attitudes and behaviour. Leading dual-process theories postulate there are two aspects of attitudes, explicit (deliberate, controlled) and implicit (automatic, impulsive) that lead to behaviour. However, we know little about the implicit and explicit attitudes of those engaged in bullying behaviour. The WHS team's study extends previous work, which has focused on the target of bullying, by looking at the attitudes of perpetrators.

The lack of adequate measures of WPB has been a substantial point of concern for researchers, managers and policymakers. A novel feature of the WHS team's study is that it accommodates the possibility that those who are at risk of bullying (or workers who are already engaged in WPB) may be unable to identify their favourable attitudes to bullying due to unconscious bias. In addition, people may be unwilling to report their favourable attitudes to bullying due to social desirability bias, resulting from the sensitive nature of the behaviour.

To address this, the WHS team conducted a study to develop and validate two novel measures of implicit and explicit attitudes to bullying. In this study, they developed an Implicit Association Test (IAT) - to capture implicit attitudes towards bullying. The findings of their research are novel and challenge the existing "reasoned action" approach to understanding attitudes and behaviour.



Consistent with the Sustainable Development Goal of Good Health and Wellbeing, this research has the potential to be "scaled up" by using these new measures to inform and build interventions, policies and practices that can prevent or arrest these negative behaviours, rather than just ameliorate their impact on the targets of bullying.

4. DRINK CONTAINER RECYCLING PROGRAM – DR ANNEMARIE CONRATH HARGREAVES

In 2024, a drink container recycling initiative was introduced in the Accounting Department to help reframe how we view waste. A central drop-off point collects bottles and cans, which is regularly delivered to a recycling facility, thereby diverting them from landfill and contributing to a circular economy. Each container earns 10 cents, which are saved throughout the year and used to purchase gifts for the Christmas Toy Drive of a local charity. The program encourages staff to take everyday action in shaping more desirable futures, connects environmental responsibility with social impact, and has already seen over 400 containers recycled, with more departments joining the effort.

6. RESPONSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY – DR ALI SHEIKHBAHAEI

Dr Ali Sheikhbahaei is a great example of someone who quietly but consistently lives out the values of responsibility, inclusivity, and long-term thinking in both his teaching and research. As an education-focused academic in the Department of Banking and Finance, Ali manages to balance a heavy teaching load with a strong research profile—something that’s not easy to do, and something he’s worked hard to maintain.

In the classroom, Ali’s approach is always student-centred. He thinks deeply about the kind of world students are heading into, and what skills and habits of mind they’ll need to navigate it. His teaching practices reflect that. For instance, his scenario-based learning model using Generative AI, which was recently recognised with the 2024 Bloomberg Award for Innovative Teaching, isn’t just about using new technology for the sake of it. It’s about helping students build confidence in their own reasoning before turning to AI—and understanding when and how to use these tools responsibly. This kind of teaching reflects a value system that prioritises critical thinking, ethical awareness, and sustainable learning habits.

What’s equally important is that Ali hasn’t let go of research, despite his education-focused role. He continues to publish in respected journals, with recent work in the Journal of Banking and Finance and Journal of Business, Finance and Accounting exploring themes like corporate misconduct, governance, and information innovation. These are not just technical topics—they touch on real issues of accountability, trust, and impact, showing that his research is also guided by broader values.

Ali also brings a quiet sense of inclusion into his institutional contribution. Coming from a minority background himself, he’s especially mindful of the challenges some students face and works to create a learning environment where everyone feels seen and supported. His efforts to establish a scholarship for female Master’s students from underrepresented groups, in collaboration with an industry partner, is a great example of turning values into practical support.

Ali may not seek the spotlight, but his work reflects a steady, values-based approach that benefits students, colleagues, and the broader academic community. He would be a thoughtful and genuine contributor to the SIP’s Values Voices initiative.

5. GENDER EQUALITY – PROFESSOR DOMINIQUE ALLEN

Professor Dominique Allen published a series of journal articles about the changes to labour laws that reflect a strategic shift toward proactive gender equality for women in Australia. Her work considers strengthened provisions to address sexual harassment, including the Fair Work Commission’s new power to issue stop orders, the introduction of a positive duty on employers to prevent discrimination, reforms targeting workplace flexibility and the gender pay gap, and the reasons why so few women bring sex discrimination complaints.

