

Recession Reflections, Doubts and Mitigation in Vietnam: Proactively Dealing with an Economic Depression

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Abstract: Recession fears can be both stressful and a force, often driving individuals and organizations to confront uncertainty with renewed focus and resilience. Economic downturns disrupt livelihoods, create anxiety, and test organizational capacity, yet they also encourage innovation, adaptation, and strategic thinking for those willing to prepare and respond proactively. This study employs an open-ended survey questions methodology to gather perspectives from 25 seasoned entrepreneurs, executives, and business experts in Vietnam, who collectively bring over 366 years of professional experience across diverse industries. Their insights shed light on how recessions impact workers, managers, and organizations, as well as how cultural, structural, and market dynamics in Vietnam influence resilience strategies.

Vietnamese working adults expressed significant concern about recession-related challenges driven by global economic instability, rapid inflation, and the accelerating impact of AI and automation on job security. Organizations are responding with cost-control measures, selective hiring, and increased digital transformation, while employees emphasize the need for continuous upskilling, adaptability, and financial preparedness. Overall, the findings highlight a workforce facing structural shifts and advocating proactive strategies to enhance resilience in an increasingly competitive and technologically evolving labor market. The findings highlight not only the challenges posed by economic contractions, such as reduced demand, tightened budgets, and workforce uncertainty, but also the opportunities for growth, efficiency, and innovation that emerge during such times.

Drawing on these responses, this paper outlines practical recommendations for navigating recessions successfully. Key actions include consciously planning for the worst-case scenarios while remaining attentive to opportunities, fostering adaptability and innovation, and investing in both human capital and technological advancements. Entering a recession with “open eyes” means acknowledging risks realistically, preparing financial and operational safeguards, and cultivating a proactive mindset. By doing so, individuals, managers, and organizations in Vietnam can position themselves not only to stay afloat but to thrive and emerge stronger in the post-recession environment.

Keywords: Recession; Vietnam; layoffs; terminations; economic downturns.

Introduction

It is essential for researchers and managers to regularly assess recession signs and keep track of economic trends to anticipate potential slumps and defend the stability of businesses through proactive planning. As inflation, trade tensions, conflict in the Strait of Hormuz, and global interest rate increases continue to influence international markets, we must understand recession indicators, such as declining national growth, rising unemployment, and shrinking consumer confidence (Al Ramada et al., 2025; Mujtaba et al., 2025). Studying recession trends enables managers and policymakers to align their decisions with emerging economic realities. The ability to foresee and prepare for economic challenges is a necessity for sustainability, sufficiency, and growth of an organization and a nation (Fernandes et al., 2025).

Fears of a slump or recession usually creates unnecessary anxiety because it can result in a slowdown of the economy, while increasing the chances of layoffs (Barbarino & Scotti, 2020; Frick, 2019; KN and Thomas, 2024; Leachman & Sullivan, 2020). Researchers should study and plan for recessions in Vietnam because the country’s economic structure makes it particularly sensitive to global fluctuations. As an export-driven economy deeply integrated into international supply chains, Vietnam is vulnerable to shifts in global demand, geopolitical tensions, and disruptions in manufacturing or trade (Bui and Mujtaba, 2025). Understanding how these external forces affect domestic employment, inflation, and industry stability is crucial for developing policies that protect both businesses and workers. Additionally, Vietnam’s rapid technological transition, marked by

increased automation and digitalization, adds another layer of complexity that requires careful analysis to ensure that growth remains inclusive and sustainable during downturns.

Moreover, studying recessions is vital for strengthening Vietnam's long-term resilience and sustainable competitiveness (Ly and Mujtaba, 2025). Effective planning allows government agencies, organizations, and workers to anticipate labor market shifts, build stronger financial buffers, and adopt adaptive strategies that reduce vulnerability. Evidence-based research can guide policymakers on where to invest in education, social protection, and economic diversification to minimize the social and economic costs of future downturns. By proactively understanding recession dynamics, Vietnam can move from reactive crisis management to a more strategic and prepared approach, thereby safeguarding national stability and creating a more resilient workforce. To glean insights and recommendations, the research question is: What does an economic depression or recession mean for workers, jobs, managers and organizations in Vietnam?

Literature Review

Any economic recession inevitably affects industries across the board, though the depth of impact varies by sector. As LaPonsie (2025) explains, during "economic downturns, companies typically tighten their belts, and that often means reducing the size of their workforce", where non-revenue-generating roles like management development and training are often the first to go (para. 3). This highlights the vulnerability of employees in administrative or support roles, as well as small firms that may lack the financial reserves to weather prolonged instability. Yet, recessions do not bring equal consequences for all businesses. Some entrepreneurs and organizations manage to not only survive but also thrive during these difficult periods by finding creative ways to cut costs and addressing new consumer demands that emerge in a changing economy (Career Guide, 2025; Agarwal, 2022). Such resilience demonstrates that adaptability, innovation, and strategic foresight are critical traits for businesses aiming to navigate economic turbulence successfully.

On the workforce side, recessions often reshape the labor market, creating heightened competition for fewer opportunities. Mujtaba and Parrino (2025) emphasize this reality by noting that "A recession often means fewer jobs available and more qualified candidates applying for them" (p. 61). Von Wachter (2021) further demonstrated that workers entering labor markets during economic instability face significantly reduced job opportunities because of intensified competition for fewer available roles. This reality coupled with the growth of AI technologies intensifies the need for individuals to recession-proof their skills by pursuing continuous learning, developing digital and analytical competencies, and cultivating professional versatility to remain marketable. At the same time, organizations have a responsibility to strengthen their structures and talent strategies in ways that promote both sustainability and employee security. By fostering innovation, diversifying revenue streams, and supporting employee development, leaders can provide their families, staff, and communities with a greater sense of stability even in uncertain times. Ultimately, both employees and employers must view recessions not only as challenges but also as opportunities to build long-term resilience.

There are certain industries that historically experience less disruption during recessions because of their essential nature and steady consumer demand. Among these are healthcare, utilities, grocery stores, discount retailers, education, food and beverage, freight and logistics, financial services, cleaning products and sanitation services, and do-it-yourself repairs (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). These industries thrive on providing basic needs, which people continue to rely upon even when cutting back on discretionary spending. Areas such as healthcare, utilities and essential infrastructure maintain stability regardless of economic fluctuations. Dillender et al. (2021) found persistent demand for medical services during economic downturns. Similarly, labor market analysis highlights that roles related to essential services remain more resilient as these roles cannot easily be postponed or eliminated during a financial crisis (OECD 2026). These occupations are typically linked to essential services, public safety, or critical infrastructure that societies cannot function without. For instance, healthcare positions that require certification, such as registered nurses, pharmacists, and mental health counselors, are consistently in demand because healthcare needs remain constant regardless of economic fluctuations. Similarly, technology specialists are increasingly recession-resistant, as organizations across industries continue to depend on digital systems, cybersecurity, and information technology to maintain operations and protect sensitive data (Mujtaba et al., 2025; Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025, Adam, 2025).

In addition to healthcare and technology, many public sectors and energy-related roles also exhibit resilience in the face of recessions. Jobs within the energy sector, such as utility workers, are indispensable for ensuring access to electricity, water, and other basic services that households and businesses require daily. Likewise, police officers, firefighters, emergency workers, and soldiers provide critical public safety and national security functions, which governments prioritize even in times of fiscal constraint. Accountants also play a key role during recessions, as individuals and organizations alike rely on them for tax compliance, auditing, and financial management during uncertain times. Hollaar et al. (2025) further indicated that public sector organizations tend to enjoy high level of stability due to increasingly adopting resilience building strategies that ensure continuity of essential service, which in turn creates workforce stability. As a result, public sector and federal employees more broadly tend to enjoy higher levels of stability due to government-backed budgets that are less volatile than private markets. Together, these professions illustrate that recession-proof careers share a common foundation: they provide essential, skill-based, and socially necessary services that remain indispensable despite economic cycles.

In addition to these specialized careers, recession-proof jobs are often concentrated in adaptable industries that can pivot more quickly to changing consumer behaviors and serve a diverse range of customer needs (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). For this reason, careers in these fields tend to offer employees greater stability and peace of mind when compared to positions in more cyclical industries. While there are no guarantees, according to Mujtaba and Parrino (2025), the following actions can help to recession-proof some jobs and careers:

- Focus on what you can control.
- Increase your visibility.
- Make yourself indispensable.
- Learn new skills.
- Be a team player.
- Network and make professional connections.
- Update your online presence.
- Job search but don't look like a flight risk.

Conversely, there are industries more vulnerable to economic slowdowns and financial contractions. Sectors such as construction, automotive, luxury goods, travel and tourism, real estate, technology and electronics, advertising and marketing, hospitality, fashion and apparel, as well as recreation and leisure are more likely to be negatively impacted by a looming recession (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). In many cases, businesses within these sectors rely heavily on consumer confidence, discretionary spending, or investment capital, comprising the factors that quickly shrink during economic turbulence. Of course, every recession is unique, and its impact can vary across industries. Some companies demonstrate agility by adapting to new circumstances and seizing emerging opportunities, while others struggle to survive, with a few ultimately going into bankruptcy. These dynamics illustrate that while certain industries are safer bets for long-term stability, both employees and organizations benefit by preparing strategies that enhance resilience in the face of unpredictable local, national, and global economic cycles.

Vietnamese Economy and Culture

Vietnam's economy has demonstrated resilience over the past three decades, rebounding quickly from global shocks in 2023 and 2024, posting a GDP growth of 7.1% in 2024, supported by strong export performance. Looking ahead, growth is forecasted to expand in the range of 6.2–6.8% as Vietnam seeks an ambitious economic transformation with a shift from low-cost manufacturing to innovation-led sectors like semiconductors, AI, renewable energy, and finance (Pham, 2025). These advancements are supported by major national infrastructure projects, such as the planned high-speed North–South railway which is predicted to enhance productivity across the country. Important infrastructure projects, coupled with investment from private enterprise into areas such as structural reform, digital transformation and diversified industrial capabilities will help Vietnam develop long-term competitiveness (Huong et al., 2025).

Despite strong growth, Vietnam remains deeply exposed to external volatility. Tariff pressures, particularly from the United States pose substantial risk to the export sectors such as electronics, garments and seafood with potential disruption to export volumes and supply chain. At the same time climate change is also posing economic challenges for Vietnam, impacting fisheries, including anchovy stock which are vital for industries such as fish sauce production (Tran et al., 2022). While Vietnam has avoided recession, caution is growing regarding a slowdown in global demand, trade fragmentation, and internal vulnerabilities including corporate debt risk and energy constraints. However, ongoing public investment, financial sector reforms, and private sector empowerment offer stabilizing buffers. The core challenge is now a balancing act that involves sustaining inclusive growth while managing demographic shifts, climate risk, and a complex geopolitical landscape (Ly and Mujtaba, 2025, Huong et al., 2025).

As of 2025, Vietnam's population stands at around 101.6 million, showing steady growth which reflects improvements in living standards and healthcare access. This is despite fertility rates continuing to decline to below the replacement threshold of 2.1 children per woman. With life expectancy approaching 75 years, Vietnam faces rising pressures on health systems, social protection, and long-term care. Together, these demographic shifts highlight Vietnam's position at a pivotal moment, balancing the socioeconomic challenges of rapid aging with the opportunities to develop a more productive, knowledge-based, and innovation-oriented workforce (Maheshwari & Maheshwari, 2024; Tran et al., 2020).

Many Vietnamese people traditionally live modestly, with a lifestyle rooted in sustainability, simplicity, family support systems, and careful financial management. Many households prioritize saving, often avoiding excessive debt and practicing frugality in daily expenses (Nguyen et al., 2012). Even in urban areas where consumer culture is growing, families still emphasize cooking at home, relying on local markets, and maintaining multigenerational living arrangements to share costs and responsibilities. This cultural emphasis on modesty not only preserves financial stability but also fosters resilience when economic downturns arise, as people are accustomed to managing within limited means rather than overspending or depending heavily on credit (Nguyen et al., 2015). Such traditional and cultural norms help people to mitigate against any extreme economic depression, inflation, and recessions.

Sustainability is another key factor in how Vietnamese society adapts to economic uncertainty (Ly and Mujtaba, 2025). Many communities practice small-scale farming, gardening, or raising livestock, ensuring a degree of self-sufficiency in food. Recycling, reusing household items, and repairing instead of replacing goods are also common habits that reduce waste and expenses (Fernandes et al., 2025). These practices, deeply ingrained in both rural and urban life, allow families to cushion the impact of recessions while maintaining a sense of security. By combining cultural frugality with sustainable living, Vietnamese people have developed an enduring approach to navigating financial hardship and organizational instability (Ly and Mujtaba, 2025).

Vietnam's cultural tapestry remains vibrant, rooted in ancient traditions and reinforced through living heritage. Parallel to its cultural pride, Vietnam faces growing tension between digital expression and censorship. Social media usage has surged among the Vietnamese population, and especially among youth, but legislations require user verification and stricter content removal, prompting widespread self-censorship. This regulatory environment is reshaping how citizens engage with information online and might help protect children from being victims of crimes (AlMatrooshi, 2021).

Vietnam today stands at a crossroads between traditional roots and modernization which brings eustress and innovative leadership challenges (Nguyen et al., 2013; Tran et al., 2020). Its rich cultural heritage endures amid tightening digital controls. Demographically, an aging yet entrepreneurial population fuels economic vigor. With a young and growing educated workforce, economic and administrative reforms are accelerating in Vietnam. Yet, recession worries are not distant specters, but looming realities driven by global uncertainties, environmental pressures, and structural stress. How Vietnam navigates these intertwined challenges will determine whether it truly becomes Asia's next "tiger economy."

It is important for Vietnamese citizens and managers to understand the signs of an incoming recession because early awareness allows for proactive, ethical and responsible preparation to minimize financial and organizational risks (Nguyen et al., 2015). For citizens, recognizing these signals encourages saving, reducing unnecessary spending, and strengthening family or community support

networks, which are vital for maintaining stability during downturns. For managers and business leaders, anticipating economic slowdowns helps in adjusting budgets, managing inventories, diversifying supply chains, and safeguarding jobs, while also identifying opportunities that often emerge during crises (Bui and Mujtaba, 2025). In a fast-growing yet globally connected economy like Vietnam's, where external trade shifts and global market disruptions quickly ripple into domestic industries, being prepared is essential for sustaining resilience, protecting livelihoods, and positioning organizations for recovery once conditions improve.

Methodology

To conduct a literature review for this study on the Vietnamese context, a systematic approach was applied. The process began by defining the research question to guide the search for relevant publications. Selected studies were then reviewed to gather insights into the research question, and the findings were synthesized to highlight patterns and gaps in existing knowledge.

For expert input, open-ended survey questions provide valuable perspectives (Mujtaba et al., 2025), to encourage in-depth responses, with experts chosen based on their relevance to Vietnam and their subject expertise. Questions were completed as a self-paced process with the respondents coming mostly from a group of working adults who were enrolled in an Executive MBA program in Ho Chi Minh City. This group's members were chosen for their extensive business experience in Vietnam and collective knowledge of industry. The results of these questions were triangulated with the literature review to strengthen conclusions and identify areas needing further study. By combining literature and expert perspectives, a more comprehensive understanding of the Vietnamese research context is developed.

To get insights from the Vietnamese entrepreneurs and organizational executives on "What does an economic downturn or recession mean for workers, jobs, managers, and organizations?", we asked questions such as the following (see Appendix):

1. What are your concerns regarding the Vietnamese jobs and/or economy?
2. How do managers and organizations prepare for a recession regarding jobs?
3. During the oncoming of a possible recession, what should Vietnamese employees do to help protect their job?
4. Do Vietnamese managers and organizations hire new employees during recessionary times?
5. What mistakes do Vietnamese make when they see an imminent recession approaching?
6. What else should everyone know to better prepare for a recession in Vietnam?

Using an online platform, the consent form and survey links were initially emailed to 98 working adults enrolled in three different Executive MBA Programs cohorts in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Since the targeted population were all enrolled in English programs which required excellent fluency as a prerequisite, the questionnaire was not translated into the Vietnamese language. We received 21 completed replies, providing a response rate of about 21.4%. Using the snowball sampling procedure, we obtained 4 additional completed surveys from Vietnamese residents through personal contacts, which provided a total of 25 completed responses for analysis.

Findings

Recession experiences can significantly shape people's perceptions and attitudes toward wealth redistribution and social equity. A study revealed that experiencing recession during young adulthood leads to enduring support for wealth redistribution, though this support is often directed more strongly toward one's own group rather than society at large (Meier et al., 2022). This finding underscores the idea that formative personal experiences during periods of economic downturn can influence long-term values and political preferences related to economic policy and social welfare programs (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). Such perspectives suggest that recessions not only affect immediate financial well-being but also leave a lasting imprint on the ways individuals and groups perceive fairness, opportunity, and the role of government intervention in the economy (Mujtaba et al., 2025).

It is critical to analyze recessions and economic decision-making within longer time horizons rather than in isolated short-term contexts. Research highlights that studying the impact of recessions requires examining extended periods of data and experiences to fully capture their consequences on employment, health, and social stability (Benach et al., 2022). This longer-term lens implies that both organizations and employees benefit from preparing for recessions with strategies aimed at resilience and sustainability, instead of focusing exclusively on immediate survival tactics (Mujtaba and Parrino, 2025). To conduct such investigations, multilevel modeling serves as a valuable methodology, as it allows researchers to integrate individual, organizational, and societal variables into a comprehensive analysis.

Table 1 – Interviewee Demographics

No.	Gend.	Edu	Industry	Position	Yrs. Exp.	Exp. REC.?	VN. prepared?	Viet prepared?
1.	1 = M	B.S.	Manufacture	Head of Sales	5	Yes	4	5
2.	2 = F	Master	Education	Finance Mgr.	17	Yes	3	3
3.	1	B.S.	Manufac., Plastics	Factory Mgr.	14	Yes	4	3
4.	2	B.S.	Retails	Department Head	15 +	Yes	3	4
5.	1	B.S.	Advertising and business	Developmt. Director	20 +	Yes	4	4
6.	2	B.S.	Technology	Chief Fin. Off.	16	Yes	3	3
7.	2	B.S.	FMCG	Transport. Digitalization	11	Yes	4	4
8.	1	B.S.	Electrical	Office Mgr	16	Yes	4	3
9.	1	Master	Healthcare	Sales Mgr.	19	Yes	4	3
10.	1	B.S.	FMCGs	Planning	17	Yes	4	3
11.	2	B.S.	Healthcare	Human Cap. Devel. Mgr.	13	Yes	3	2
12.	1	Master	Packaging	Supply Chain Director	20	Yes	4	4
13.	1	Master	Logistics	Customer Exp. Mgr.	10	Yes	3	4
14.	2	B.S.	Home Furnishing	Finance & Oper. Mgr.	17	Yes	3	2
15.	1	B.S.	Semiconduct.	Senior Manager	14	Yes	4	2
16.	2	B.S.	Advertising	Senior Director	18	Yes	4	4
17.	1	Master	Export sales	Head of Int. Bus. Dev.	15	Yes	4	3
18.	1	Master	Farming	Business Mgr.	15	Yes	5	5
19.	2	Master	Software	Finance Director	18	Yes	4	3
20.	2	B.S.	Retail	Manager	15	Yes	2	3
21.	2	B.S.	FMCG	Supply Planning	10	Yes	4	3
22.	1	B.S.	Retail	Marketing & Project Mgr.	10+	Yes	4	4
23.	2	Master	Retail	CFO	18	Yes	4	3
24.	2	Master	Construction machinery	Bus. owner (legal rep.)	15	No	2	1
25.	1	Master	Banking and Fin.	HR and Credit Risk Mgr.	8	Yes	4	3
Total					366			

In this study, we interviewed experts, entrepreneurs, managers, consultants, and executives, many of whom possess between 10 to 15 years of professional experience. These participants have not only observed, but also directly navigated multiple economic upheavals and recessions in the East Asian region, providing rich insights into both challenges and adaptive strategies. Table 1 summarizes the general demographic characteristics of these experienced respondents who contributed their perspectives on how a looming recession might impact workers, jobs, and organizations, offering a foundation for identifying broader patterns and lessons.

As shown in Table 1, the respondent pool reflects a balanced gender composition, with 56% male (14 participants) and 44% female (11 participants). All respondents are working professionals, suggesting that the insights are informed by practical experience and active engagement in the labor market. The near-even gender distribution enhances the representativeness of the sample, reducing the likelihood of gender-based bias in the responses. The findings suggest a high level of contextual knowledge among respondents, given their collective 366 years of experience with Vietnamese culture and the economy. This depth of familiarity strengthens the credibility of their perceptions regarding economic preparedness. Nearly all respondents have lived through at least one recession, implying that their views are grounded in firsthand exposure rather than abstract assumptions. Moreover, the fact that two-thirds believe Vietnam is prepared to handle a downturn indicates a generally positive outlook on the country's institutional capacity, policy responsiveness, or socio-economic resilience.

However, the results also reveal areas of uncertainty and divided opinion, particularly regarding how Vietnamese people compare to others in the region. The large proportion of respondents who “do not know” whether citizens are better prepared reflects potential ambiguity about household-level resilience or uneven public understanding of economic risks. The mix of agreement and disagreement further suggests that while confidence in national preparedness exists, perceptions of societal readiness are more variable. This gap highlights the need for clearer communication, public education, or comparative regional data to shape more informed assessments.

Recession Concerns in Vietnam

In response to the open-ended question, “What are your concerns regarding the Vietnamese jobs and or economy?”, respondents (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 19, 21, 25) indicated that the primary concern regarding the Vietnamese economy was the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and associated automation impacting employment. A total of 11 respondents (44%) shared this concern, with apprehension around decreased job opportunities for entry level and administrative position, and other roles which include high degrees of repetition. In this regard, respondent number 5 went further and suggested that “AI and automation will replace most blue-collar workers and office worker jobs”. While AI is a reoccurring concern, respondents also associated AI with workforce downsizing, increasing job competition and uncertainty in relation to future career prospects. Even though respondents collectively identified AI as part of our future, with an understanding of the potential impacts of AI (positive and negative), some respondents remain concerned about Vietnam's preparedness and understanding of the future implications of AI, the country's level of knowledge and readiness to effectively utilize this rapidly developing and growing technology. This lack of preparedness may offset the potential positives to be gained from AI.

The second major theme which was raised by 9 respondents (5, 6, 12, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25), considers the impact of global economic conditions and geopolitical uncertainty. A range of issues were identified by respondents, with repeated mentions of international instability, trade tensions, and a general perception of a worldwide economic slowdown. Of particular concern was the impact of tariffs, with respondent 14 stating “tariffs play key barrier to global trade and impact to all companies”, while respondent 21 indicated “recent changes in US tariff policies have had a significant impact on Vietnam's labor market”. These global issues may also have a negative impact on key economic indicators such as business, confidence and long-term employment. Furthermore, Vietnam's export orientated sectors, and more broadly overall economy, remain vulnerable to these global and geopolitical instability which creates concern for the Vietnamese labor market.

Inflation and rising living costs were also identified by respondents (4, 8, 9, 13, 16, 19, 23) as a concern which is closely connected with employment insecurity. Of a particular note is the fact that multiple respondents indicated that living expenses were increasing faster than wages, which in turn has a negative impact on the overall economy due to reduced consumer spending. As a result of these

pressures, some firms may adopt conservative hiring practices and cost-cutting strategies, further weakening labor market conditions. Collectively, respondents indicated overall concern regarding Vietnam's employment outlook in the face of technological disruptions, global exposure and uncertainties which are negatively impacting the Vietnamese labor market. While automation and digital transformation are perceived as inevitable, respondents maintain concern about the ability of the economy to adapt to these changes.

Preparing for a Recession

When respondents were asked how to prepare for a recession, respondent 11 summarized the sentiment of 48% of the respondents in stating that, "organizations typically strengthen financial discipline". Part of this financial discipline can have a direct impact on employment with respondent 23 identifying that "most companies focus on cost optimization, controlling cash flows, and restructuring operations, delay hiring, and review vendor contracts" in times of recession. Cost optimization and cost cutting were specifically identified by six respondents (4, 10, 12, 18, 23, 25) as the primary way organizations prepare for potential recessions. The overall sentiment of respondents was that managers would prioritize short-term financial stability and survival over a long-term workforce development due to the uncertainty of recessions and economic downturns. This approach creates conflict with the needs of the employees during periods of downturn with nine respondents (2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 15, 17, 18, 21) identifying that a key to recession would be employees acquiring new technical and professional skills. As respondent five identified, the need for additional skills is driven by the need to have current staff "expand their individual capacity to take on additional tasks" which are often created due to the cost cutting measures. In this regard, respondents 10 and 18 noted during periods of uncertainty organizations prefer to invest in training existing staff as opposed to expanding the number of employees. Overall, both managers and employees see upskilling and reskilling as a key strategy to increase adaptability in uncertain labor market.

Closely linked to upskilling is the widespread focus on technology adoption, digitalization and the use of AI to improve efficiency. Applying AI, data systems and digital tools to streamline operations and reduce workload was mentioned by multiple respondents, with respondent 19 indicating "my company focuses on using AI/data/systems to replace workload and apply lean management to prepare for the worst case". This sentiment was shared by other respondents (3, 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23) who also look to digital transformation as a way of maintaining productivity with a reduced workforce. In this regard technology can be positioned as not only a cost-saving measure but also a way in which to build strategic capability within the organization.

Protecting One's Job

When considering what employees can do to protect their interests in the face of economic downturns, respondents were very clear (respondents 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25) that employees need to continuously upskill and pursue professional development. Respondents repeatedly emphasized the need for employees to consistently improve technical and professional skills, as well as pursue further education and formal qualifications. Notably, respondent 14 indicated that "Vietnamese employees need to enhance their skills to adapt to more advanced and competitive work environments". Six respondents (3, 5, 8, 12, 13, 25) specifically noted that self-directed learning and professional training were essential strategies for employees to protect their roles. Overall, respondents perceive skill development as the primary personal level that employees can control to improve job security in uncertain labor markets.

A key component, and second dominant theme, specifically identified building digital, AI and data related competencies as part of the upskilling. Five of the respondents (1, 18, 19, 20, 25) explicitly linked mastering technology and tools, particularly AI for forecasting and decision-making as a key for job protection. Importantly, some respondents (5, 14, 21) identified enhancing digital skills to avoid being replaced by technology, suggesting that employees should deliberately develop competencies that complement AI and automation

Beyond skills and technology, many respondents emphasized behavioral and attitudinal factors as critical for job security. Respondents (12, 14, 21, 23, 25) encourage employees to become multi-skilled workers willing to take on cross-functional and/or additional responsibilities as a way of protecting their role. Respondent 14 suggested that "skill with right competences, those that cannot be replaced by AI". Collectively, these respondents suggest that employability during a recession is

shaped not only by what they know, but also by how they behave, respond to change and demonstrate a commitment to organizational goals.

Hiring During a Recession

Overwhelmingly it is evident that the onset of a recessionary event will have a significant impact on the hiring of new employees. While not all respondents indicated hiring would cease, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that a recessionary period would have a negative impact on hiring. Six respondents (2, 3, 13, 15, 18, 24) indicated that new hiring would cease altogether. Whereas other respondents (6, 19, 22) indicated that organizations would be significantly more cautious and conservative in their hiring behavior during a recession period. Respondent 6 indicated that organizations “may freeze or slow recruitment to control costs, focusing instead on retaining employees in improving productivity with existing staff”.

Hiring undertaken during this period would be for essential, high demand or specialist positions that directly contribute to productivity and revenue generation. In this regard hiring is often focused towards the recruitment of positions that support key areas such as digital transformation, technology development, and product improvement as identified by respondents 12, 19, 23 and 25. This is important as it indicates that the hiring of staff during recession period is not purely driven by cost related mechanisms, rather strategic and operational needs, and business circumstance may also play a role in the hiring of staff during these periods. In addition, participants repeatedly point out that hiring behavior varies by industry, organizational strategy and business circumstances (1, 4, 9, 11, 16, 21, 23). Respondent 4 suggested, “within retail, our company is optimizing headcount structures to secure current staff positions. While we do not plan to hire replacements, we are continuing to hire new staff to support new store openings.”

Beyond cost control and selective recruitment, several respondents emphasize that organizations prefer to optimize their existing workforce before hiring externally. This includes reallocating tasks, combining roles, expanding the responsibilities of current employees and prioritizing internal redeployment or upskilling (5, 8, 10, 12, 25). In some cases, productivity and skill levels of existing employees are used as the main basis for deciding whether new recruitment is needed at all (17). Together, these responses indicate that although caution dominates, hiring during recession in Vietnam remains highly contingent on sector-specific conditions and each organization’s strategic priorities.

Mistakes to Avoid in a Recession

When respondents were asked What mistakes do Vietnamese make when they see an imminent recession approaching? the overwhelming response could be summarized as weak financial preparedness. The lack of preparedness identified by multiple respondents (3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 23) presented in a variety of ways include a lack of savings, a lack of financial planning, and even a continuation of unnecessary spending. Respondent 23 suggests that “many underestimate financial planning and fail to adjust spending habits early”. This can lead to excessive use of credit and difficulties balancing saving; investing and family-related expenses are also highlighted as key mistakes (3, 20). Overall, the responses indicate that a vulnerability for Vietnamese employees is insufficient financial resilience, which increases stress and limits their ability to cope with job loss or income disruption during recessionary period.

Many respondents state that employees often stop updating their skills, delay learning new competencies or neglect professional development when uncertainty increases (3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 17, 21). Some employees may assume their role is secure or that layoffs are avoidable, which leads to passivity rather than proactive skill building (6, 13, 21). Limited attention to employability and adaptability, rather than purely organizational decisions, is viewed as a critical mistake made by employees during recessionary periods. In this regard, there is a suggestion that employees may also underestimate the recessionary impacts and become reactive to change rather than proactively preparing for the change. Several respondents (1, 5, 22) suggest the employees regularly fail to recognize early warning signs or believe that economic problems are distant and will not affect them personally. Collectively, these responses indicate a tendency to respond only after negative impacts are felt which is a major weakness in how employees approach recession risk.

Suggestions for Dealing with A Recession

When reflecting on what people should know to better prepare for a recession in Vietnam, the response was unanimous that continuous learning and proactive skill development are essential to remain employable in a changing labor market. In this regard, several respondents (2, 7, 20) indicated that employees need to understand future job trends and in-demand skills to be prepared for an economic downturn. Further to this, respondents 9 and 18 suggest that employees learning should accelerate during periods of uncertainty. Overall, learning and skills development are seen as the most important and controllable form of individual protection against recession-related job risk.

Analyzing the responses, an interesting trend emerged where respondents felt the need to answer the question by specifically addressing an employee perspective, as well as a managerial perspective. For example, respondent 17 suggested “managers should strengthen financial control by maintaining cash reserves, reviewing budgets and optimizing non-essential costs. Employees, meanwhile, should improve financial discipline, create emergency savings and continually update professional skills. Similarly, many respondents (3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25) made comments which distinguished the actions that should be taken by management and those that should be taken by employees. With respondent 12 identifying that there are shared responsibilities between employees and management, where they both should recognize that “recessions are cycle and can also create opportunities for transformation”.

Another strong and consistent theme relates to the importance of strategic awareness and forward planning, particularly for managers and organizational leaders. Respondents argue that both managers and employees should understand the root causes and likely impacts of recessions (1, 3) and continuously update information from multiple sources to improve judgement and preparedness (5, 10). Scenario planning, forecasting and risk management are frequently highlighted as essential managerial capabilities, including developing multiple business scenarios and identifying appropriate responses for different levels of downturn (9, 11, 21). Several responses emphasize the need for strategic planning focused on productivity, efficiency, talent investment and long-term resilience rather than short-term reactions (12, 17, 19, 23, 25). Overall, respondents view proactive analysis and structured planning as critical for reducing uncertainty and enabling organizations to respond more deliberately to economic disruption.

Beyond skills, finance and strategic planning, respondents also highlight the importance of adaptability, flexibility and openness to new forms of work. This includes being willing to change roles, take on new projects, and explore other opportunities (6, 7, 17, 18, 21). Several participants stressed the importance of staying informed about broader political, economic and policy developments to better recognize risks and opportunities (3, 5, 14, 15, 24). Finally, some participants highlight that recessions should not only be seen as threats but also as opportunities for innovation, transformation and organizational renewal (12, 25).

Discussion

While recession and economic downturns may be expected over the course of time, these periods appeared to accentuate trends which exist within economies and heighten concerns. The onset of AI for example presents an unknown future, which sees employers asking if AI can help navigate an economic downturn, whereas employees may feel that an economic downturn may escalate the timeframe for implementation and as such raise questions around job security. Overall, periods of recession and economic downturn to accentuate existing trends and concerns within industry, lead to increased anxiety for both employees and employers. That said, there are others who will see economic downturns as catalyst for change and opportunity to better prepare for the future. This section outlines the overall themes from the findings.

AI Driven Employment Insecurity

The most prominent theme identified across all respondents was the repeated reference to anxiety caused by the onset of artificial intelligence (AI) and associated automation of workplace tasks. General conversations around the impact of AI center on the displacement of roles which exhibit high levels of routine, administrative processes and in some cases entry level roles. The impact of an economic downturn is to potentially see organizations wanting to fast track advancements in AI as a response. This creates a scenario in which employees’ insecurity is compounded by factors relating

to AI are now combined with insecurities and uncertainty associated with recessions and economic downturns.

While these findings may correlate with the experience of many countries around the world (Adam, 2025., OECD 2026), as identified by Huong et al. (2025) and Pham (2025), there are some nuances which may be specific to the Vietnamese context. Even though Vietnam is a growing economy, questions remain around its preparedness to effectively integrate AI and automation into work processes. As identified by Mujtaba (2024), AI adoption without ethical and educational clarity risks magnifying inequality rather than enhancing productivity. Vietnam has a young labor force but an insufficient supply of digitally skilled workers. The paradox they identify is telling, a labor surplus coexists with talent shortages, because the workers available do not match the competencies demanded in an increasingly automated economy.

The uncertainty around AI in Vietnam is reflected in the fact that AI was a dominant theme across three of the six key research questions which formed the basis of this research. AI was listed as the most dominant theme in recession concerns, the second most dominant when discussing how employees can protect their roles, and the third most dominant theme when discussing preparing for a recession. For Vietnam, employment insecurity is not purely driven by the unknown impact of AI and automation on future employment but is also driven by a perceived gap in the readiness of employees and organizations to implement AI and automation across industries.

Skills Development

A consistent message across responses is the need for employees to continuously upskill, especially in digital literacy, AI tools, data analysis, and cross-functional capabilities. Workers view adaptability, being able to take on diverse roles, learn quickly, and understand broader business contexts, as critical to job protection. Many respondents believe that only those who reinvent themselves will remain competitive during a downturn.

Respondents describe organizations preparing for recession primarily through cost control, cash-flow management, restructuring, and selective hiring freezes. However, many companies also invest in digital transformation, AI adoption, and process standardization as long-term cost-reduction strategies. The impact of an economic downturn is that often the justification for these changes becomes a shortsighted cost driven focus which prioritizes cutting expenses as a means of navigating uncertain times.

Throughout the responses skills development appears as a central mechanism through which both employers and employees see it as vital for Vietnam to manage recession related risks. Across five of the six research questions, a dominant theme appeared with regular use of terms such as “new skills”, “upskilling”, and “reskilling”. The overall sentiment of these requiring comments was that during a time of economic downturn a way in which employees can increase their level of job security is to learn new skills. Often these comments are also related to employees becoming more adept at the use of AI. Skills development was seen by respondents as a practical and controllable strategy available to employees in an uncertain labor market.

During economic downturns, organizations have indicated they would limit the recruitment of new staff, with a preference for upskilling existing staff to receive enhanced technical, professional and analytical skills. In the Vietnamese labor market, upskilling may prove to be a key differentiator and enable employees to demonstrate increased value during economic downturns.

It appears the consensus is that skills development provides benefits to both the organization and employees alike. Interestingly, the responses raised the question of who is responsible for the upskilling of employees. The development of the skill ultimately falls to the employee who will be the person to receive training, refine their skills and ultimately be a more highly qualified employee. Conversely the organization will receive the benefits of employees with a higher level of skill and greater capability which provides the organization with a greater ability to adapt to an increasingly changing environment. The question which arises through the responses is where the responsibility for this upskilling and re-skilling lies. For many of the respondents this is seen as the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they remain relevant during economic downturns.

Short Term Survival Through Financial Discipline

Respondents describe organizations preparing for recessions primarily through cost control, cash flow management, restructuring, and selective hiring freezes. Many companies also invest in additional transformations, AI adoption and process standardizations as cost reduction strategies. In response to question exploring what organizations may do to undertake preparations for a recession it is notable that the main theme, and overall response was that organizations would look to various forms of cost cutting as a form of preparation. Similarly, when respondents provided their responses to questions about hiring staff during a recession or economic downturn, the overwhelmingly dominant theme wants to stop all hiring as a measure of cost cutting and financial discipline. The second most common response to this question, or to be significantly reduced, was a selective hiring policy.

While, not suggesting there is no room for increased financial discipline, respondents appeared to highlight short-term reactive strategies which addressed the immediate economic conditions as opposed to a more considered long-term economic outlook. This pattern is consistent with organizational responses to recessions (Frick, 2019; KN & Thomas, 2024), cost control is the dominant managerial response. Mujtaba and Senathip (2020), and Mujtaba (2022) also identified layoffs and operational restructuring as normal responses to economic downturns.

However, several respondents criticize organizations for focusing too heavily on short-term financial survival at the expense of long-term workforce resilience which could be achieved through the upskilling of staff and strengthening of workforce capabilities. In a Vietnamese labor market where the spread of skilled labor is uneven across the economy, the impacts of short-term strategies such as cost-cutting related to labor, reduce workforce, and a reduced commitment to overall employment may see more acute impacts.

Vietnamese Context

Taken together, the responses portray a Vietnamese workforce navigating the dual pressures of economic volatility and rapid technological change. Workers and managers alike view recession risk not just as a temporary downturn but as part of a broader transformation of Vietnam's labor market. Concerns over AI, inflation, global instability, and structural skill gaps underscore a sense that future economic resilience hinges on agility, digital capability, and long-term human capital development. The collective insight is clear: Vietnam's economic challenges are significant, but so are its opportunities, provided both individuals and organizations proactively adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Considering the growing concerns over a potential economic recession in Vietnam, it is essential for individuals, managers, and organizations to take proactive steps in planning and managing risks to safeguard both stability and long-term success. For individuals, this requires deliberate actions to strengthen their economic resilience, such as pursuing affordable training programs to expand skillsets, improving digital literacy to adapt to an increasingly technology-driven market, and diversifying income streams through side businesses, freelancing, or agricultural activities. These steps are especially critical in Vietnam, where informal employment and self-employment represent a significant share of the labor force, leaving many workers more vulnerable during economic downturns. Strengthening professional networks, both locally and regionally, also offers individuals greater opportunities for collaboration and access to resources in difficult times.

For managers in Vietnam's dynamic and competitive business landscape, recession planning must include addressing employee concerns with empathy and clear communication, recognizing that uncertainty can heighten workplace stress. Building resilient and agile teams will depend on fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and adaptability while prioritizing essential tasks and encouraging continuous improvement. Vietnamese managers who actively invest in employee well-being, professional development, and upskilling are more likely to maintain morale and productivity even when facing shrinking budgets or shifting consumer demand. In addition, managers can promote cross-functional collaboration and flexibility, helping teams adjust more effectively to sudden changes in markets or supply chains.

Organizations operating in Vietnam can further mitigate the effects of a downturn by diversifying revenue streams beyond domestic demand, tapping into ASEAN regional markets, and expanding

their presence on digital platforms and e-commerce channels. Building financial reserves and buffers, while simultaneously investing in innovation and automation, can strengthen competitiveness, sustainability, and operational efficiency. Vietnamese companies also benefit from engaging with local entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly the country's fast-growing startup sector, which often provides new technologies and business models that can spark growth even in challenging economic climates. By combining traditional strengths in manufacturing and agriculture with modern strategies in digitalization and sustainable development, firms can uncover new opportunities for expansion during and after recessionary periods.

Ultimately, preparing for a recession in Vietnam is not solely about short-term survival, it is about laying the groundwork for long-term success and resilience. By adopting a forward-looking mindset, staying attentive to both domestic and global economic trends, and investing in people and innovation, individuals, managers, and organizations can transform challenges into opportunities. In doing so, they position themselves not only to endure economic turbulence but also to emerge stronger, more competitive, and better prepared for Vietnam's role in an increasingly interconnected regional and global economy.

Recommendations

Vietnamese business owners, managers, and public sector leaders can and should proactively enact relevant policies and procedures to avoid destructive mistakes prior to and during a recession economy (Senathip et al., 2017). A proactive strategy for mitigating economic challenges in Vietnam must begin with addressing the country's widening skills gap and technological transition. The rapid adoption of AI, automation, and digital tools means that both workers and employers must prioritize continuous learning and upskilling. Training programs should shift from ad hoc, individual-driven efforts to coordinated national and organizational initiatives that equip employees with digital literacy, data competency, and cross-functional problem-solving abilities. At the same time, educational institutions and vocational centers need to align their programs more closely with industry needs to reduce the mismatch between labor supply and market demand. By strengthening human capital development and building strategic leaders, Vietnamese officials and entrepreneurs can build a workforce that is resilient not only to recessions but also to long-term technological shifts (Mujtaba & Isomura, 2012).

Organizations should complement workforce development with stronger strategic and financial resilience planning. Many respondents noted that companies tend to rely heavily on cost-cutting during downturns, which can weaken long-term competitiveness. Instead, businesses should adopt scenario planning frameworks, diversify customer and supplier networks, and invest in digital transformation that enhances productivity without overburdening existing staff. Strengthening cash-flow management, building contingency reserves, and optimizing operational processes can reduce the need for drastic layoffs when economic pressures arise. Furthermore, retaining key talent, especially employees with high adaptability and digital skill sets, should be prioritized through targeted incentives and career development pathways.

For workers, the most realistic and actionable strategy involves cultivating career adaptability and financial preparedness. Employees should maintain updated skill portfolios, pursue additional certifications, and remain open to cross-functional work. Equally important is personal financial planning: creating emergency savings, reducing unnecessary debt, and learning to adjust spending early when signs of recession appear. Employees who demonstrate flexibility, reliability, and a willingness to take on broader responsibilities are more likely to remain valuable to employers during economic contractions. Additionally, growing professional networks, both inside and outside the organization, can provide critical safety nets and new opportunities during challenging periods.

Finally, managers and employees would benefit from fostering transparent communication and a culture of innovation during uncertain times. Organizations that communicate openly about business conditions, performance expectations, and restructuring plans strengthen trust and reduce panic-driven decisions. Encouraging innovation through idea-sharing, experimentation with digital tools, and process redesign helps companies identify new revenue sources and operational efficiencies even in downturns. Vietnam's ability to navigate future economic volatility will depend not only on technical skills and financial discipline but also on building workplaces and mindsets that embrace change, collaboration, and strategic foresight.

This study is limited primarily by its relatively small sample size of 25 well-educated respondents, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to the broader Vietnamese workforce. The reliance on self-reported perceptions also introduces potential bias, as respondents' views may be influenced by personal experiences, industry background, or levels of economic awareness. Additionally, the study does not capture perspectives from unemployed individuals, rural populations, or marginalized groups who may experience recessions differently. The cross-sectional nature of the data provides only a snapshot in time, preventing an understanding of how attitudes or conditions evolve throughout different phases of economic cycles.

Future research should incorporate larger and more diverse samples to better represent Vietnam's varied demographic and economic landscape. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable for examining how perceptions and adaptive behaviors change before, during, and after recessions. Including quantitative economic indicators alongside qualitative insights could strengthen the analytical depth and allow for more robust comparisons. Furthermore, future work should explore sector-specific vulnerabilities, the role of government policies, and the impact of technological transformation on recession preparedness to develop more targeted strategies for enhancing national and workforce resilience.

Summary

The study reveals that Vietnamese working adults are highly aware of the economic vulnerabilities facing the country, especially during a recession. Their concerns center on three major themes: deteriorating global demand that weakens Vietnam's export-driven sectors, fast-rising inflation that outpaces wages, and the accelerating impact of AI and automation on job stability. Respondents highlight a troubling mismatch between labor supply and employer needs, characterized by oversaturation in certain fields and shortages in others, which contributes to both unemployment and talent scarcity. Combined with geopolitical instability and shifts in international trade policies, these factors create a labor market that feels increasingly uncertain and competitive.

Managers and organizations are responding to these pressures primarily through cost-control measures, selective hiring, restructuring, and digital transformation initiatives. While many employers prioritize cash-flow stability and essential staffing, others see downturns as opportunities to modernize processes, adopt AI, and build long-term efficiency. Employees, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of protecting their value in the workplace by upskilling, developing cross-functional capabilities, embracing digital tools, and maintaining strong performance. Both groups acknowledge that adaptability and continuous learning are now essential for weathering economic uncertainty.

Despite widespread anxiety, respondents offer clear strategies for navigating recessions effectively. They recommend financial preparedness, scenario planning, and improved communication between managers and employees. They also stress that recessions, while disruptive, can act as catalysts for innovation, talent development, and organizational resilience. Overall, the findings indicate that Vietnam's workforce recognizes the structural shifts reshaping the job market and is increasingly focused on agility, skills advancement, and proactive planning to secure long-term stability in an evolving economic landscape.

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Appendix A: Recession and Jobs Survey of Managers and Entrepreneurs

Direction: This survey is confidential, and participant names will not be recorded or published. Based on your current or past role as a manager, human resource professional, and/or entrepreneur in the industry, please answer each question to the best of your knowledge. We look forward to receiving your answers, reflections, views, and recommendations.

Demographics Variables	Participant Answers
Your industry? (education, healthcare, retail, etc.)	
Your position title or expertise in the industry?	
How many years of total work experience thus far?	
Gender: 1-Male, 2-Female	
Education: 1- bachelor's degree, 2- Master's degree +	

1. Have you experienced a recession or downward Vietnamese economy during your lifetime? 1-Yes
2- No (underline or highlight your option)
2. Today, the Vietnam is prepared for a recession, better than most other countries in East Asia? 1-Strongly disagree 2- disagree 3-No idea 4-agree 5-Strongly Agree
3. Vietnamese people are prepared for a recession, better than most others in East Asia?
1-Strongly disagree 2- disagree 3-No idea 4-agree 5-Strongly Agree
4. What are your current concerns regarding the Vietnamese jobs and/or global economy?
5. How do managers and organizations in Vietnam prepare for a recession regarding jobs?
6. During the oncoming of a possible recession, what should Vietnamese employees do to help protect their job in the event of a recession?
7. Do Vietnamese managers and organizations hire new employees during recessionary times? Why or why not?
8. What mistakes do Vietnamese employees make when they see an imminent recession approaching?
9. What else should managers and employees know to better prepare for a recession in Vietnam?

Appendix B: Respondents Comments

What are your current concerns regarding the Vietnamese job and all global economy?

1. Replaced by AI. High quality manpower shortage.
2. Lay-off is the result of both economic recession and technological evolution.
3. I am concerned about the decline in employment opportunities as many manufacturing and export companies in Vietnam are facing reduced orders and rising operating costs. In addition, factories are increasingly adopting high-tech and AI-based machinery to improve productivity and cut costs, which may further reduce the creation of new jobs.
4. The unstable of economic. The inflationary pressures.
5. Global economy: why? because it will affect to Vietnamese's economy nowadays the world is flat, in my opinions (not have any research support), the most concerning point is AI and automation they will replace most blue-collar workers and office workers jobs; so far, this is the enormous labor force contributing to almost the developing countries. Even though all governments of developing countries have prepared for the worst-case scenarios however the AI/Automation is developing so quickly – will these governments be able to adapt in time? And the second concerning point is the unstable geo-political and armed conflicting also will affect to the bad scenarios of the global economic. Vietnamese jobs: In my opinion with quick glance (not have any research support) with the developing quickly of AI it's replacing tasks of first jobbers bringing more challenging for entry level employees. However, in contrasting characteristic of Gen Z is that even though finding a job may be more difficult than before, while they do find or take on a job, they tend to either truly like the work itself or have high respect for their leaders. It is only under these conditions that they will dedicate themselves and make their best effort. Otherwise, they are ready to resign quickly to find another job. The consequence is a paradox that there is a labor surplus, yet businesses are currently facing a staff shortage.
6. I'm concerned that global economic fluctuations could impact Vietnam's hiring stability and wage competitiveness in the near term, as many employers adopt a more conservative approach to long-term investment and cost control.
7. Companies are not familiar with developing AI / use AI as support tool; it will be lack of opportunity increasing productivity & forecast accuracy.
8. Unemployment and inflation.
9. The decline of capital investment, economic restructure, inflation.

10. Economy has not recovered yet, and with the strong development of AI that makes the challenge to secure the job, to improve productivity.
11. Unemployment Rate, Skills Gap, AI transformation.
12. Global political issues and crisis.
13. Many businesses are cutting costs and delaying hiring, while living costs keep rising faster than wages.
14. Repetitive or analyzed works will be replaced by AI. Economic uncertainties remain; tariffs play key barrier to global trade and impact to all companies.
15. Asset bubble.
16. More challenge for Vietnamese and all people since inflation is fast and high. CPI also increasing and people have intent to spend less money for more saving.
17. Mismatched between the skills and industry demand.
18. I'm not concerned about the Vietnamese job market, at least in my industry, because farming is a main pillar of the economy. However, unpredictable incidents related to US policies and conflicts in many regions are a concern.
19. I'm concerned about the slowdown in global demand, which affects Vietnam's export-driven economy. There is also a growing skills gap, as many workers are not yet equipped for digital and higher-value roles. At the same time, the cost of living in major cities is rising faster than wages, which impacts job satisfaction and retention. Additionally, global uncertainty and currency fluctuations are creating challenges for business planning and investment.
20. Reduce job vacancies, and lower staff number.
21. The job market in Vietnam is currently highly competitive and stressful, especially with the rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI). Many foreign-invested companies have been downsizing due to declining consumer demand and increasing competition from low-cost imported goods from China. As a result, many workers feel insecure about their job stability and future career prospects. The recent changes in U.S. tariff policies have had a significant impact on Vietnam's labor market, in key export-oriented sectors such as textiles, footwear, furniture, electronics, and seafood. Vietnamese goods become less competitive, decline in export orders and production volumes. Consequently, many companies are forced to reduce working hours or lay off workers. The production decrease in export sectors also affects supporting industries, including raw material suppliers, packaging, transportation, and logistics. This results in job losses across the broader supply chain, especially in key manufacturing regions. Some multinational companies chose Vietnam as a manufacturing base for exports to the U.S. are now considering relocating to other countries (e.g., India, Mexico) to avoid high tariffs. This shift may reduce future job creation and impact long-term economic growth.
22. Currently, there are many unemployed workers due to the impact of the political and economic situation in Vietnam. Every year, many new workers are added, but the rate of companies in Vietnam is not enough to meet the recruitment needs. Some training sectors have excess human resources (for example: IT, network administration, economics, business, healthcare, education, etc.), some sectors have a serious shortage of human resources (for example: geology, mining, minerals, etc.), so the current unemployment situation is very high. International: Due to the domestic political situation affecting business and investment decisions in Vietnam, there are none or very few foreign companies investing in Vietnam. This has greatly affected Vietnam's economy in the past 5 years.
23. My primary concerns include reduced consumer spending, high inflation, and the impact of global supply chain disruptions on local retail operations. Additionally, exchange rate volatility and declining investor confidence may limit capital availability for businesses.
24. Vietnam currently has a large young labor force, but there is a shortage of skilled workers. A key economic concern is the country's heavy reliance on foreign-invested enterprises.
25. My main concern is the increasing risk of job instability and reduced credit availability as global interest rates remain high. The banking sector may face rising non-performing loans, leading to cost-cutting or restructuring that could affect employment levels. Moreover, automation and digital transformation could widen the skill gap if reskilling programs are not implemented effectively.

The following are statements regarding how managers and organizations prepare for a recession regarding jobs:

1. Talent pool management. Employer Branding.
2. Equip with more knowledge, technical & skills necessary for the job.
3. Managers need to continuously improve their leadership and acquire new skills to enhance their management capability. Organizations are actively adopting advanced technologies, modern machinery, and AI in daily operations to meet practical business needs.
4. Cashflow management.
5. Based on my perspective and the reality currently faced by my company, I have the following short-term solutions: Increase the salary slightly higher than the previous position to attract talent. Current staff need to expand their individual capacity to take on additional tasks. Effectively utilize the existing personnel. Hire short-term collaborators or freelancers to handle the immediate staffing crisis.
6. Most of my peers focus on improving professional skills and maintaining strong performance at work, while being cautious with personal spending and savings to stay prepared for any uncertainty.

7. AI development & Application, Digitalization which utilize people in other valuable jobs.
8. Enhancing the economies globally, calling for investments, restructuring the economy.
9. Reorganize the structure, standardize process, leverage technology.
10. Training and Upskilling, Cost Management, Flexible Work Arrangements.
11. In Vietnam, managers and organizations typically strengthen financial discipline, diversify customer portfolios, and improve digital capabilities to remain competitive. Regarding jobs, they aim to retain essential staff while implementing performance-based restructuring or short-term work arrangements.
12. They focus on cutting costs, freezing recruitment, and consolidating headcount instead of upskilling or building long-term workforce resilience.
13. One of the best ways is to constantly find the way to be more efficient, optimize the usage of digital in process and operations. For critical roles, try to enhance retention packages.
14. Diversify your assets.
15. Applied technology - equips staff with mindset of continuous learning to prevent outdated. Control and using AI skills are top important.
16. Focus on productivity and digital transformation.
17. I am pursuing high degree in business (the EMBA) to compensate for my technical background. Many of my peers are doing same, just in case we are fired tomorrow. However, not everybody is willing to invest in higher education after 30s.
18. Managers often focus on cost control and resource efficiency, such as prioritizing essential roles and delaying non-critical hiring. At the same time, many companies invest in upskilling current staff to improve productivity instead of expanding headcount. Organizations also work to diversify markets and customers to reduce dependence on one region, and they focus on employee retention strategies for key talent to maintain stability when recovery comes.
19. My company focuses on using AI/ Data/ System to reduce workload and apply Lean management to prepare for the worst case.
20. Restructuring teams to be leaner and more agile Encouraging multi-skilled employees who can take on diverse responsibilities Offering short-term contracts, freelance, or part-time roles to reduce long-term contract Cost optimization strategies such as reducing overhead, renegotiating supplier contracts, and improving operational efficiency. Managers are expected to demonstrate how their teams contribute to cost savings and productivity.
21. Upskilling & Reskilling Employees: Encouraging employees to obtain certifications and online training.
22. Currently, many companies have gone bankrupt and closed, including many large corporations and companies. The premises and offices for rent in major cities in Vietnam are almost unoccupied. The temporary solution is that the company must stop operating, or change its model, reduce its apparatus, hire fewer employees or only retain employees with good performance, convert the business to online sales and sell directly to customers who need to buy, bypassing intermediaries, agents, traditional stores, etc.
23. Most companies focus on cost optimization, controlling cash flow, and restructuring operations, delay hiring, and reviewing vendor contracts. In the retail industry, we focus on optimizing inventory, negotiating better payment terms, and prioritizing digital transformation to maintain efficiency.
24. The Vietnamese market is currently optimistic and not showing signs of recession. However, there are concerns about potential market bubbles and the depreciation of the Vietnamese dong.
25. In my observation, most Vietnamese managers focus on cost optimization, retaining key talent, and strengthening internal efficiency. At Nam A Bank, we emphasize employee performance evaluation, productivity-based incentives, and flexible workforce planning to ensure sustainability during uncertain times.

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments on what can or should employees do to help protect their jobs:

1. Catch up the trend, master of the tools such as AI.
2. Equip with more knowledge, technical & skills necessary for the job. Switch from transactional task job to the role of partnering which require insight of the business, market, customer behavior for better value added in the organization.
3. Vietnamese employees should participate in professional training programs to improve their competencies and learn new skills. They should also plan their personal finances carefully, maintaining savings that can cover at least three to six months of living expenses in case of sudden unemployment.
4. Focus on building up their network, additional/transformable skills and deliver higher value /effective outcome from their job.
5. To prepare for the worst-case scenario of a job crisis, in my opinion, workers need to prepare. - upgrade knowledge or skills depending on the field, refer to programs suitable for your field that AI/Automation is difficult or cannot replace through government-supported organizations (above). - study to change to fields where AI/Automation/Robots cannot replace humans.

6. Vietnamese employees should focus on continuously upgrading their skills and staying adaptable to business changes. Maintaining strong work performance, a positive attitude, and willingness to take on new responsibilities can make them more valuable to employers during uncertain times.
7. Exploring new model development, reducing manual tasks, learning a new career.
8. They must be active to improve skills and make value add to their experience.
9. Building the capability, learning new things, expanding the network, being more agile, and resilience capability.
10. Improve your self-capability.
11. Enhance Skills, Networking, maintain a Positive Attitude, Show Flexibility.
12. Vietnamese employees should focus on improving their professional skills, increasing productivity, and demonstrating flexibility.
13. They should be proactive, willing to take on additional responsibilities, and continuously update their knowledge to remain valuable to the organization.
14. Employees should focus on being adaptable and multi-skilled, take on cross-functional tasks, and show strong ownership. Upskills with right competence, those that cannot be replaced by AI. Enrich the network to be aware of market trends and learn experience from experts.
15. Be good at your technical skills.
16. Keep learning new things - new skill set
17. Improve knowledge, skills, and expertise in the industry.
18. I have suggested to the managers, reporting to me, that they pursue higher education (Master, MBA, PhD, etc.) and encourage them to learn a new foreign language and how to use AI. New skills and degrees will make them more useful and competitive
19. Employees should focus on building strong performance, being reliable, and taking initiative. They should learn new skills, especially digital and English skills, to increase their value. Staying flexible with tasks and willing to take on additional responsibilities also helps. Finally, maintaining a positive attitude and contributing to team solutions makes them harder to replace.
20. Well, prepare for AI/ System/ Data on working processing. Using data for better analysis, predict & forecast.
21. Self-Learning: some special skills such as data analysis, digital marketing, project management, or AI-related tools. Be open to taking on multiple roles or cross-functional tasks Being a growth mindset Focus on efficiency, productivity, and cost-saving initiatives Avoid unnecessary debt and manage spending wisely.
22. Employed workers are looking for ways to maintain their current positions, to stabilize their lives, to calculate income and expenses to suit the economic situation, to do additional business, or to learn other professions to earn more money to increase their income, or to sell online, open online shops to sell products of famous brands or sell products that they sell themselves, open small restaurants, etc.
23. Employees should improve cross-functional skills, digital literacy, and adaptability. Demonstrating productivity, flexibility, and willingness to take on new roles can increase job security during uncertain times.
24. Vietnamese employees need to enhance their skills to adapt to a more advanced and competitive work environment.
25. Employees should actively upgrade their skills, embrace digital tools, and demonstrate adaptability to organizational changes. They should also maintain strong communication with supervisors, show commitment to teamwork, and seek opportunities to add value beyond their job description.

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments on whether managers and organizations hire new employees:

1. Yes and No. Depend on the current demand; replacement position is priority but not the new investment.
2. Rare, the organization will hire new employees which fit to their business need.
3. In general, new hiring is minimized to reduce costs during this period. However, some essential positions that help improve operational efficiency and cost control are still selectively recruited.
4. The approach varies by industry. Within retail, our company is optimizing headcount structures to secure current staff positions. While we do not plan to hire replacements, we are continuing to hire new staff to support new store openings
5. In my opinion and in my organization, during a recession, we find it difficult or impossible to hire new employees because - resources (cashflow) are available to get through this period, or even layoffs. - in addition, this is a time to expand the working capacity of current employees because everyone is afraid of layoffs, so one person can take on new tasks.
6. During a recession, most Vietnamese managers and organizations become more cautious about hiring. They may freeze or slow recruitment to control costs, focusing instead on retaining key employees and improving productivity with existing staff. However, some companies still hire for critical or high-demand roles to stay competitive.
7. Yes, just limited position & high demand adaptation.

8. No, they don't. They tried to minimize the cost and maximize the current abilities to cover the lack of power shortage.
9. It depends on the industry and the strategy. Less hiring for the tasks be automated or AI-based.
10. Rarely, depend on the position. Normally, try to combine and reallocate tasks first before considering for new recruit. Because business is still difficult.
11. Usually more cautiously, but it depends. Because of Cost-cutting, Automation and tech, Preference for flexibility.
12. Vietnamese managers tend to be cautious about hiring during recessions. They prioritize internal talent development and reassignment before bringing in new employees. Hiring decisions are made only when the role directly supports business survival, digital transformation, or strategic growth opportunities.
13. Usually not, unless the hiring is critical. Most companies freeze hiring to control costs.
14. Only yes if that is a critical role and that is some expertise that organization needs.
15. No. I think when business goes down, we need to keep good cost control.
16. Yes! They will still process new hire but not much vs previous time. Since there are also some people quit organization due to high pressure.
17. It should depend on the productivity of the employee and the level of skill or experience of the employee.
18. Hard to say, but during the difficult time in the past, my organization stopped hiring new people in months. The longest tough time I experienced was 1 years, minimum travel, no meeting and no new hiring.
19. Generally, organizations hire less during a recession because they need to control costs and limit financial risk. However, they may still hire for critical or revenue-generating roles and for high-skill talent that can support efficiency and growth. So, hiring does not stop completely but becomes more selective and strategic.
20. We tend to hire only for critical and essential positions. We aim to control costs and maintain operational efficiency when revenue and market demand decline. Additionally, they focus on recruiting highly skilled and competent employees who can contribute effectively to productivity and help the organization overcome challenges. In other words, hiring decisions become more selective, emphasizing quality over quantity to ensure that every new employee brings significant value to the company.
21. Yes, but selectively. It depends on the business situation of each company for decision about hiring new employees. Some businesses use downturns to restructure teams, hire multi-skilled or high-potential candidates, and build talent pipelines for future growth. Hiring managers or professional-level employees from outside the organization can bring fresh perspectives to the business. These individuals often offer new strategies and approaches that help companies adapt more effectively to changing market demands.
22. Currently, organizations and companies in Vietnam are recruiting very little. If they are recruiting, they will recruit mid-level positions or higher, recruit positions with extensive experience and knowledge, etc. Limit recruiting more people if possible because the financial and business situation in Vietnam is very difficult.
23. Generally, they are cautious in hiring during a recession. However, some still recruit in critical areas such as sales, digital marketing, and technology to sustain long-term competitiveness. Recruitment decisions depend on strategic priorities and available resources.
24. During a recession, companies typically do not hire new employees to reduce costs.
25. Some organizations temporarily freeze recruitment, focusing instead on upskilling existing staff. However, strategic hiring still occurs for roles critical to digital transformation, compliance, and risk management- areas that can strengthen competitiveness and resilience in a downturn.

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments on mistakes employees make when they see a recession looming:

1. Underestimation of the side effects of the imminent recession.
2. Not well prepared for the changes.
3. Some common mistakes include poor personal financial planning and excessive use of credit cards for unnecessary spending. In addition, many people do not prioritize learning new knowledge or skills to adapt to the changing job market, which makes them passive and unprepared during economic downturns.
4. They continue unaware spending.
5. This is my subjective opinion (no research has supported it), in fact, the views are very different between regions (North, Central and South), but in general, Vietnamese workers make the following mistakes: - not anticipating the damage and causing direct impact on their jobs. - and lack of awareness of the economic recession and thinking that this is not theirs and it is somewhere far away. - lack of financial preparation to overcome the recession in the short term.

6. Most are becoming overly cautious or disengaged at work when uncertainty rises, which can reduce performance and visibility. Some neglect to invest in continuous learning or skill development, assuming layoffs are inevitable, while others rely too heavily on their current employers instead of maintaining professional networks and financial readiness.
7. Risky Investments; Not Updating Skills; No Contingency Plan.
8. They don't prepare well finance and their experience. They think they cannot be replaced.
9. Not very well-prepared, reactively waiting for the recession.
10. Not well financial preparation, not upgrading skills, less communication with Management and making decisions in emotional way rather than strategy.
11. Ignoring Skill Development, Poor Financial Planning, Lack of Communication.
12. A common mistake among Vietnamese employees is failing to adapt and upskill during uncertain times. They often underestimate the importance of flexibility, teamwork, and continuous improvement. Emotional reactions and short-term thinking prevent them from turning challenges into opportunities.
13. They wait for management decisions instead of upskilling or finding new opportunities.
14. Do not prepare a proper plan for recession with downscales prioritization. Too quick to follow the other company.
15. They invest in things at high risk.
16. Do not update themselves continuously.
17. Poor Financial and Career Planning, Neglecting Continuous Learning.
18. Many of my colleagues lost their jobs and remained unemployed for years. I assumed they struggled to accept the reality of the situation and continued to seek jobs with equivalent compensation to what they had lost. Additionally, their failure to acquire new skills over a prolonged period made them more vulnerable to recessionary impacts at any time.
19. Many employees panic and think about changing jobs too quickly, which can increase risk during unstable times. Some stop learning and only focus on short-term tasks, instead of improving their skills to stay competitive. Others may avoid communicating with managers about workload or performance, leading to misunderstandings. Finally, some lose motivation or become negative, which can make them more vulnerable to layoffs.
20. Employees may struggle with the decision of whether to change jobs or stay in their current position. Second, they find it difficult to balance between investment, saving, and short-term financial plans. Their financial decisions are often strongly influenced by family-related expenses, especially plans for their children or babies at school, which can cause additional financial stress during uncertain times
21. Some workers delay learning new skills, assuming their current role is secure. Waiting for the company to take care of everything instead of proactively seeking feedback, new responsibilities and self-improvement, resisting change or refusing to adapt to new roles, technologies, or work models. This can make employees appear less flexible or valuable during restructuring.
22. Workers in Vietnam often make this mistake because they do not have general knowledge about the political and economic situation, do not recognize upcoming situations, do not learn new things when they achieve success, do not listen, and only invest in products and industries that they think will be profitable in the short term, do not invest properly from the beginning, often have the mentality of following the crowd, living quickly, for example: only investing money in real estate without investing in other fields or investing in new ideas, new innovations, ... or spending money to buy gold when they see the price of gold going up without thinking about the consequences later.
23. Many underestimate financial planning and fail to adjust spending habits early. Others focus only on job security instead of improving their skills or exploring new opportunities.
24. Vietnamese employees may choose to resign or take on multiple jobs to increase their income when a recession seems imminent.
25. Common mistakes include panic-driven job changes, neglecting self-development, and focusing only on short-term income instead of building long-term professional credibility. Some also underestimate the importance of networking and emotional intelligence during organizational transitions.

During an oncoming recession, the following are respondents' comments and suggestions about what managers and employees should know to better prepare:

1. Understanding the root cause of the recession with the outcome of the recession may help the managers and employees.
2. Future trends of the job.
3. Vietnamese managers and employees should clearly understand and accurately assess the impact of an economic recession on both individuals and businesses. They should establish reasonable financial plans. Managers need to improve their skills, update new knowledge, and apply AI tools to enhance work efficiency. Everyone should stay informed about economic and employment trends to remain proactive in all situations.
4. More financial training/education sessions.

5. For managers: improve analytical skills, need to update information from many sources, from there predict recession, plan to prevent or overcome recession, create appropriate scenarios. For employees, need to understand more about domestic political economy, and see recession as not the state's responsibility, need to prepare finances (in the short term) to be able to satisfy basic needs if a bad scenario occurs.
6. Both managers and employees should focus on adaptability, transparent communication, and continuous learning. Managers need to plan strategically and maintain trust, while employees should strengthen their skills and remain flexible in changing business needs.
7. Be Flexible & Adaptable; Create an Emergency Fund; Network Actively; Identify In-Demand Skills.
8. Must do closely with forecast, maximize the current ability, don't widen so much. Prepare well finance when recession passes over.
9. Accelerating the learning, changing management and simplify the investment/ procedure.
10. Stay focused, proactive and flexible, invest talent, build planning scenarios.
11. For Managers: Strengthen Communication, Enhance Employee Support, Invest in Technology. For Employees: Be Proactive, Lifelong Learning Habit, Financial Resilience.
12. Vietnamese managers and employees should recognize that recessions are cyclical and can also create opportunities for transformation. Building trust, improving efficiency, and fostering innovation are key. A culture of collaboration and adaptability will help organizations not only survive but emerge stronger after the downturn.
13. Managers should train employees in productivity and cost awareness, while employees should build a personal financial buffer and keep upgrading their skills to stay competitive in the job market.
14. Listening and observation of reality.
15. How economic and politic run.
16. Learning - update - leveraging AI for career improvement.
17. Managers should strengthen financial control by maintaining cash reserves, reviewing budgets, and optimizing non-essential costs. Employees, meanwhile, should improve financial discipline, create emergency savings, and continuously update professional skills—especially in digital, analytical, and cross-functional areas. Building strong professional networks and staying open to new forms of work (freelance, hybrid, or cross-industry roles) increases career flexibility.
18. Vietnam politic and economy is predictable in last 20 years. But people should understand that while a recession is unpredictable, we can always prepare for it, as it does not happen overnight. Acquiring new skills, expanding one's network, taking on new jobs or projects, and training and coaching others are the best ways to prepare for any potential changes a recession might bring
19. Managers should plan by protecting cash flow, prioritizing essential roles, and investing in key talent. Employees should strengthen their skills, stay adaptable, and maintain strong performance. Both sides should focus on open communication, realistic expectations, and long-term thinking rather than short-term reactions.
20. Skill Development for future: In case of AI/ Data will be more affected by the working environment. Ability to adapt to change & Mental health.
21. For manager: Build scenario Planning & Risk Management: develop multiple business scenarios (best case, moderate, worst case) and have solutions to mitigate the head-win impact. Invest in Technology & Efficiency: Automate repetitive tasks to reduce resource costs, upgrade system to improve productivity, use data analysis to make smarter, faster decisions. Explore new markets, products, or services to find new opportunities. For employees: Stay valuable: Take initiative, contribute ideas, and show adaptability. Be aware of how your role contributes to the company's bottom line. Build a strong network inside and outside in area. Embrace digital tools and enhance new ways of working. Plan Financially: reduce unnecessary expenses and build an emergency fund.
22. You should learn more, think more, accept risks when investing. And calculate expenses reasonably, only invest in businesses that you know and have experience in, do not invest speculatively according to the majority, be creative, not follow trends, invest creatively from the beginning, do not copy ideas.
23. Managers should invest in digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and financial resilience strategies. Employees should focus on continuous learning and adaptability. Open communication and trust within organizations are key to sustaining morale and performance during difficult times.
24. They should stay informed about market conditions and understand national development policies.
25. Managers and employees should understand that recession is both a challenge and an opportunity. It encourages organizations to innovate, digitize, and strengthen teamwork. Continuous learning, transparent communication, and mental resilience are key to sustaining performance during economic downturns. Strategic human capital planning will determine which organizations recover faster.

BIOGRAPHY

Bahaudin G. Mujtaba is Professor of management, human resources, and international management. Dr. Mujtaba has served as a professor, director, and department chair at the Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University since 2002. Bahaudin was given the prestigious annual “Faculty of the Year Award” twice at NSU. Bahaudin is a certified trainer on “Situational Leadership” by the Paul Hersey organization, and a “Cultural Competency” trainer through the National Multi-Cultural Institute (NMCI). He has been involved in leadership, management development, and cultural competency education since the late 1990s. Bahaudin worked with Publix Super Markets, Inc. in retail management and as a senior management development specialist in their human resources department for sixteen years. Bahaudin’s research and writing interests are in the areas of human resources, leadership, sustainability, international management, and higher education.



Douglas Foster, now serving as the Provost of Western Sydney University Vietnam, brings 30 years of experience in management and entrepreneurship. His career seamlessly blends a strong practical background in business with academic excellence. This extensive real-world experience significantly enhances his teaching and research, especially within the context of higher education in Vietnam and the broader Southeast Asia region. As the former Vice Dean of the International School of Business (ISB) at the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, Dr. Foster successfully developed international programs through strategic partnerships with leading foreign universities, including Western Sydney University and the University of Quebec Montreal. His research is particularly impactful in analyzing the effects of intellectual capital on firm performance in small and medium enterprises across 15 developing countries in Asia. Dr. Foster is deeply committed to advancing higher education in Vietnam, focusing on equipping students with the skills needed to compete globally. In his current role, he continues to drive academic and operational excellence at Western Sydney University Vietnam.



Timothy Hall is a senior academic and researcher at the School of Business, Western Sydney University, where he has taught since 2001. With over 25 years of industry experience and more than two decades in academia, Dr Hall brings a unique integration of practice and theory to his teaching, research, and consulting. A qualitative researcher, his work focuses on customer and guest experience, experiential learning, mobility programs, and the strategic development of tourism and hospitality services. He has led and contributed to research collaborations with a range of organizations including City Tattersalls Club, Bankwest Stadium, Taronga Zoo, and Populous Activate, securing more than \$500,000 in research and mobility funding. Dr Hall’s qualitative research approach underpins his commitment to deep, context-rich insights—particularly in projects involving lived experiences and stakeholder engagement. His dedication to practice-based learning is evident through the coordination of over 75 student-industry projects within the capstone hospitality unit. He has also played a leading role in internationalizing the student experience, having facilitated outbound mobility programs to Vietnam since 2010 and co-authored the EPITOME project, supported by the Office for Learning and Teaching. His research output includes journal articles, book chapters, and industry reports, with a strong focus on improving student and customer experiences through grounded, empirical inquiry.

