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1. Introduction

The report is a critical analysis of the international business operations of AstraZeneca PLC, a UK-based multinational biopharmaceutical firm. It researches the opportunities and obstacles of the globalisation of the company, and considers the role of strategic models, OLI paradigm and cultural aspects, on business expansion and success. The analysis is crucial since the pharmaceutical companies have highly regulated, culture-conscious, and innovation-based global environments. Long-term success is thus highly dependent on strategic international decisions. The report will be structured into six sections that encompass a review of the international activities of AstraZeneca; its international value chain and entry modes; OLI analysis of Vietnam; comparative cultural profile between the UK and Vietnam; SOP recommendation; and the final conclusive outline of the strategic picture.

2. Benefits and challenges of international operations

a. Why AstraZeneca qualifies as an MNC/ TNC

AstraZeneca is a multinational corporation that functions in more than 100 different countries and earns \$54.1bn in revenue during FY2024 (AstraZeneca, 2024). Sales contribute about 43% in the United States alone, which reflects the global scope of the company and its economic influence (AstraZeneca, 2025b).



Figure 01: AstraZeneca (AstraZeneca, 2024)

Integrated and International value chain

AstraZeneca operates global integrated R&D facilities, factories and sales divisions. It has strategic R&D centres in 50 or more countries, with six within the UK and US, as well as in Sweden and China (Reuters Staff, 2021). The important centres of manufacturing are in the US and Brazil. The firm collaborates with the contract manufacturers within emerging markets and buys active pharmaceutical ingredients and materials globally, and has high levels of transnational coordination (MSF Access, 2020).

AstraZeneca's operations across countries

AstraZeneca is based in the UK and holds the majority of its R&D facilities and corporate management. The company has numerous R&D, manufacturing and commercial locations in the US, including Gatehouse Park BioHub and the Rockville plant, tens of thousands of employees and recently made significant investment announcements (Ambipar, 2023). AstraZeneca has extensive commercial and manufacturing facilities in Cotia in Brazil, and demonstrated local production and public-health relationships in partnership with Brazil during COVID-19 (AstraZeneca, 2024). AstraZeneca has well-

established investment and partnership programmes in Vietnam, such as the announcement of a multi-billion USD investment into the market and capacity building.

Governance, Partnerships, and Global Risk Management

The company makes decisions centrally on finances, intellectual property, and strategy as perceived in its Form 20-F and annual reports, yet the company decentralises commercial activity (Vishnu Priya N, 2021). This mix depicts the common transnational model that balances global control and local responsiveness. Sustainability and access promotions, global clinical trials, large alliances and collaboration revenues support AstraZeneca as a multinational (AstraZeneca, 2025b).

AstraZeneca meets both the definitional and practical criteria of a multinational or transnational corporation based on its global revenues, geographic concentration, strategic R&D across countries, multinational production, and country-specific investments and alliances in the UK, US, Brazil, and Vietnam.

b. Nature of Global Operations- Value Chain Overview

This section discusses AstraZeneca's global operations across the value chain. Its innovation and scale are ensured through centralised R&D and intellectual property protection, and market responsiveness and commercialisation through decentralised manufacturing and commercialisation (AstraZeneca, 2023).

Research and Development (R&D)

AstraZeneca focuses its strategic science and discovery efforts in a few global R&D centres but maintains an active research and development presence in numerous countries. AstraZeneca has five or six strategic R&D centres in the UK, the US, Sweden and China and has more than 15,000 employees in research and development (BioProcess International, 2025). This design can be used to sustain a global innovation model, where core discovery is centralised, and clinical development and trials take place around the world to access different patient populations and reduce costs. The company has continued to invest heavily in R&D in FY2024, as reported in its annual report and Form 20-F (European Pharmaceutical Review, 2025). It declared multi-billion-dollar R&D

and manufacturing investments in the US, among which 3.5bn in 2024 and 50bn in 2025-2030, as well as a 2.5bn R&D hub investment in China, highlighting the size and location diversification of its capital investments (Franck Le Deu, 2025).

Sourcing and Procurement

AstraZeneca procures active pharmaceutical ingredients, excipients and packaging materials through a worldwide supplier base and releases sustainable sourcing and supplier expectations policies (EloQ Communications, 2023). The supplier tiers are globally spread; the business maintains supplier finance and risk-management schemes so that continuity will prevail. Although procurement is scaled and priced through globalisation, some of its inputs, like local regulatory documentation and cold-chain logistics, are done locally (Duc, 2019).

Production and Manufacturing

Manufacturing is hybrid. Big high-volume locations in big markets, including the U.S. expansion and Brazilian Cotia facility used in vaccines, are supported by local fill-finish and contract manufacturing partners in the emerging markets (CEPI, 2020). The partnerships with AstraZeneca in the production of COVID-19 vaccines demonstrated the integration of global physical property with the local manufacturing or licencing relationships in Brazil/Fiocruz and other partners (Blankenship, 2020). The manufacture is, to some extent, globalised with core biologics, sterile fill and localised with packaging and distribution.

Sales, marketing, and Market Access

Business processes are highly decentralised: national divisions in the UK, U.S., Brazil and Vietnam localise pricing, reimbursement policy and relationships with state buyers. Vietnam AstraZeneca has employed local alliances and investment pledges (Goodley, 2025). Such as a VND 5 trillion programme, to enhance access to the market; in Brazil, it entered into agreements to supply vaccines to the public. Market access and sales execution are thus very localised to comply with regulatory and payer landscapes (Grubert, 2025).

Financing, Treasury, and Risk Management

The foreign-exchange, tax and country-level cash management is managed by region, and the centralisation of these elements is centred around the group treasury and legal departments (Jones, 2025). Huge capital programmes, including a US\$3.5 billion investment and a US\$50 billion promise, are planned on the central level with the implementation of the country-level partners (Haigney, 2025).

Talent, Partnerships, and Knowledge Flows

AstraZeneca attracts talent on the international stage, such as R&D scientists, trial workers and regulatory work teams, and leverages alliances, acquisitions and licencing to hasten capability, as in new acquisitions and China licencing deals (Kelly and Peel, 2025). Global programmes govern knowledge flows, whereas local groups offer regulatory and cultural insight.

Summary

AstraZeneca has a hybrid value chain. R&D and intellectual property are both global, and manufacturing consists of global hubs and local partners. Localisation is the sales and market access to satisfy payer and regulatory realities (Grubert, 2025). This arrangement provides scale economies and country responsiveness in the UK, USA, Brazil and Vietnam.

c. Entry Modes and Dominant Approaches

AstraZeneca employs four primary entry modes, such as foreign-direct investment (FDI) or wholly owned subsidiary, strategic alliance, licensing, and acquisition. The decision is based on market nature and strategic objectives (Goodley, 2025).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) / Wholly Owned Subsidiaries

AstraZeneca mostly enters into large markets through FDI and wholly owned subsidiaries and establishes R&D, manufacturing or regional headquarters, which it has direct control. The company owns its headquarters, manufacturing centres and research and development centres in full in the US (EqualOcean, 2022). In China, it spent \$2.5 billion

on new R&D and manufacturing plants in Beijing. Its major formulation and production facilities in Puerto Rico, Sweden, France, and Germany are also owned by FDI, placing the company under total control of supply and quality (Guidechem, 2025). These FDI entries entail direct investment in plants and infrastructure to have full control of operations.

Strategic Alliances, Joint Ventures, and Partnerships

AstraZeneca also collaborates with local firms to exploit the knowledge, regulatory experience, and joint share of risk. In China, it collaborates with biotech companies like Harbour BioMed and Syneron Bio on the co-development and commercialisation (Sourav Adak, 2024). The firm relies on Joint-venture production and co-development licences to establish a presence without ownership (Macro Trends, 2024). It's AstraZeneca-CICC Healthcare Investment fund in China is a mixture of capital investment and local market intuition. AstraZeneca collaborates with higher educational institutions and research centres in Japan and other Asian countries to customise products and boost access (PMLiVE, 2025).

Licensing Agreements

Licensing enables AstraZeneca to utilise its intellectual property without possessing local plants. In the case of COVID-19, the company licensed its vaccine to the Serum Institute of India, allowing the Indian company to produce and distribute the vaccine to Asia and Africa under the license agreement. This action expanded access and shared IP (Reuters Staff, 2025). AstraZeneca, through World Health Organisation frameworks, also provides voluntary generic licences in over 70 countries to enhance the availability of therapies in the low- and middle-income markets (Reuters, 2020).

Acquisitions and Mergers

AstraZeneca moves globally through acquisitions that provide it with direct operations and market presence. Its major acquisitions are Alexion Pharmaceuticals, which expands its rare-disease acquisition on a global scale and Gracell Biotechnologies in China, which enhances local technology and local presence (Rochabrun, 2020). These agreements

hasten the entry into the markets by transferring operational and regulatory presence to the company's global network (Reuters, 2021).

Dominant Entry Mode

The primary entry mode used by the company is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the core markets, including the United States, France, Germany, Sweden and China, where the company establishes significant R&D and production facilities (Reuters Staff, 2021). Through this entry mode, the company could ensure high global standards compliance, high quality in manufacturing, as well as protect intellectual property.

d. Key benefits derived from International Operations

Some of the major advantages that AstraZeneca obtained through international operations are discussed below.

Revenue Growth and Market Expansion

Due to its worldwide operations, AstraZeneca can generate high turnover. For example, in 2024, it gained 54.1 billion in sales (AstraZeneca, 2025b). About 43% of the sales were from operations in the US (Goodley, 2025). It is the largest single market for the firm. Similarly, though Brazil and China are emerging countries, the company saw substantial growth in its revenue (European Pharmaceutical Review, 2025). Over 25% of revenue came to Asian markets, such as Japan, China, India, and Southeast Asia, indicating the importance of geographic diversification outside of the UK (Macro Trends, 2024). This wide base increases the market to be covered and powers long-term leading the lines.

Competitive Advantage and Innovation

AstraZeneca's competitiveness is more focused on global R&D synergies. The company enables the rapid innovation and reduction of development times by leveraging research talent and clinical trial locations in the UK, US, China and Europe (BioProcess International, 2025). Multi-region trials enhance the regulatory acceptance and increase the range of clinical data, which facilitates approvals on a global scale (MSF Access,

2020). This international research presence drives innovations in oncology, heart and lung therapy, which AstraZeneca leads in.

Cost Efficiency and Scale Economies

The global activities provide economies of scale in procurement, manufacturing and supply-chain. Procuring active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and raw materials across the globe lowers costs, and centralised procurement programmes ensure attractive supplier conditions (AstraZeneca, 2024). Puerto Rican and the US large-scale manufacturing facilities are capable of supplying products worldwide at reduced unit rates compared to local sites, which are isolated (Ambipar, 2023). Non-core manufacturing outsourced to emerging markets on a contract basis also minimises capital requirements and risks.

Risk Diversification

Geographic diversification lessens country-specific risks, such as economic, political and regulatory. As European markets are becoming softer due to price pressure, Asia or Latin American growth can balance overall performance (Tongxin, 2025). Using a variety of payers and healthcare systems, AstraZeneca can reduce the reliance on one reimbursement regime or regulatory environment. The distribution increases sustainability.

Talent Access and Knowledge Transfer

Global business allows AstraZeneca to access the finest talent globally and relocate skills regionally. External research and development units and joint ventures enhance knowledge exchange and a library of common innovation (The Economic Times, 2021). The multicultural teams enhance cultural awareness in markets like Vietnam and Brazil to personalise strategies of local adoption.

The global presence of AstraZeneca enables revenue growth, competitive innovation, cost effectiveness, diversification of risk, and access to global talent and knowledge (Skari, 2020). Collectively, these benefits amplify financial performance and create a solid global brand equity and develop long-standing resiliency across key markets.

3. OLI Analysis to assess the impact of AstraZeneca's Entry into Vietnam

The OLI model, or eclectic paradigm, is used to describe the expansion of multinational enterprises to foreign markets. This is where they possess Ownership (O) benefits, invasion Location (L) benefits in a host country, and internalisation (I) benefits, rendering them valuable in bringing direct control over foreign operations (Adarkwah and Malonæs, 2020). The combination of these characteristics defines the entry mode wholly owned subsidiaries to joint ventures, licensing, and alliances, between competitive advantages and risks in the target market.

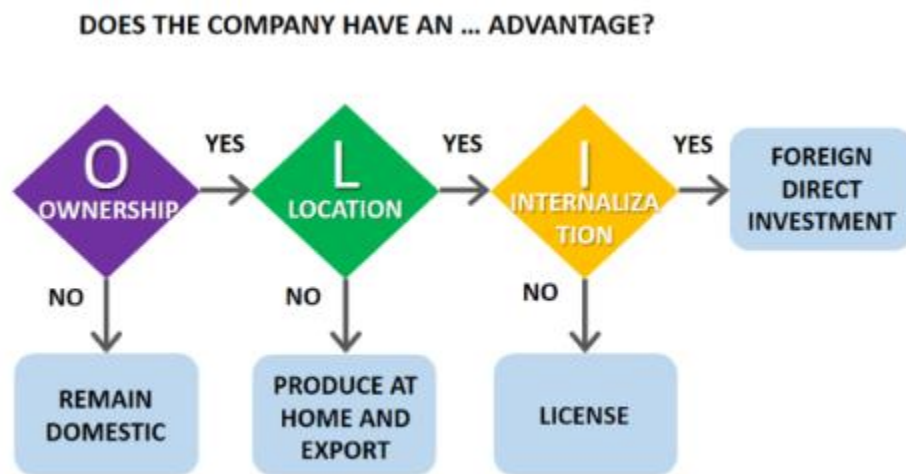


Figure 02: OLI Analysis (Adarkwah and Malonæs, 2020)

Ownership Advantages (O)

Ownership advantages are firm-specific resources that provide a company with an advantage in the foreign market. They may be either tangible, like capital and technology, or intangible, like brand reputation and patents (Akosua Mireku, 2022).

Strong brand reputation: AstraZeneca is a large international biopharmaceutical corporation, with its therapeutic pipeline and global vaccine development projects, such as the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine (Brown, 2025). Its success in more than

20 countries, such as Vietnam, demonstrates the trust and credibility of the brand in the life-saving vaccines (Haigney, 2025).

Technological leadership and Intellectual property: The company invests heavily in progressive R&D, multimillion-dollar international projects and alliances in innovative biologics and targeted therapies that local Vietnamese rivals can hardly keep at par. Its high-tech focus is further supported with planned investment of US\$50 bn in the United States by 2030 (Lang, 2025).

Exclusive product portfolio: The global portfolio of the company includes oncology, respiratory, cardiovascular, renal and rare disease, in that it can provide differentiated products that meet diverse healthcare requirements (James, Sawant and Bendickson, 2020). This diversity expands its bargaining power and market attractiveness at the global level and in Vietnam.

Manufacturing and distribution expertise: Large-scale manufacturing plants in key markets like the U.S., investments in Maryland and Virginia ensure high quality and severe capacity control (Mary, 2024). These advantages enable AstraZeneca to spread effectively into such markets as Vietnam.

Capability gaps

Limited local production in Vietnam: Whereas Vietnam considers the local factory opportunities, AstraZeneca traditionally relies primarily on imports and licensing as the ways of supplying certain vaccines (Reuters, 2021). This indicates there is a relative absence of local factory ownership as opposed to when the company operates its own facilities. But there are future benefits to the continued government subsidies on the transfer of technology and new factory construction.

Location Advantages (L)

Location advantages are host-country features which are attractive to foreign investment. These are market size, potential growth, cost structure, and regulatory incentives (The Investor, 2025).

Growing healthcare market: The pharmaceutical market in Vietnam is rapidly expanding due to the increase in incomes, ageing population and the need for specific medicines, vaccines and more (Reuters Staff, 2021a). Vietnam is a new market that multinational enterprises can explore, as the government has focused on healthcare reform and control of chronic diseases.

Cost and resource competitiveness: Vietnam offers comparatively low labour and production costs relative to developed markets, and tax incentives against high-tech and pharmaceutical projects (Vietnam, 2024). These benefits assist in maintaining lower operational costs in future local manufacturing.

Government policy support: The government, too, is overhauling the pharmaceutical FDI laws, easing drug registration procedures and encouraging business partnerships with the government (Vu and Pearson, 2021). These reforms reduce the hurdles to international innovators such as AstraZeneca.

Strategic location and Trade integration: Vietnam's membership in ASEAN and other regional trade agreements opens up regional access, which is advantageous to optimise supply chains and export prospects (Zhao et al., 2015).

Limitations in location: The pharmaceutical industry is highly sensitive one. It is regulated strictly by governments across the world to protect people from hazards. Hence, operating pharmaceutical business needs several approvals, licenses and certifications. Completing paper work may require long time eroding attractiveness of a Vietnam. However, Vietnam government is working to facilitate FDI (Báo Chính Phủ, 2025).

Internalisation Advantages (I)

Internalisation benefits occur when companies carry out actions within the company framework instead of using external contracts or companies. This secures proprietary technology, provides quality control, and harmonises the global strategy (Blankenship, 2020).

Quality and control assurance: AstraZeneca ensures uniform quality in markets through internalising the major processes in its value chain, like R&D, compliance with

regulations and strategic distribution (Reuters Staff, 2021a). This is necessary in pharmaceuticals, where safety is the major consideration.

Global strategic coordination: Moving decisions on global pipeline priorities and regulatory submission plans within the firm will enable the firm to align launches and maintain the competitive edge (Franck Le Deu, 2025). It is particularly important in the case of international products where a multi-market launch is synchronised.

Value chain capture: Internalisation allows AstraZeneca to retain greater value than it generates. Utilising its research, production expertise and global logistics, the company is able to shun suppliers that may reduce profits or reveal sensitive data (Goodley, 2025).

Internalisation challenges

High investment requirements: Establishing fully owned subsidiaries and large in-house operations are very expensive, particularly in emerging markets where returns begin at a lower level (Grubert, 2025). Due to this, AstraZeneca can delay full internalisation until the local market infrastructure is robust enough.

Impact of OLI on Entry Mode Choice

A hybrid entry mode will suit AstraZeneca in Vietnam instead of the immediate opening of a wholly owned subsidiary due to the synergy between high ownership benefits, positive local triggers and internalisation selectivity benefits (Guidechem, 2025). Strategic alliances and licensing would decrease the initial risk and place the company in a position to venture into foreign direct investment or domestic production, as specified by Vietnamese policy objectives, with internal quality control and branded product differentiation (Reuters, 2020). This moderated strategy helps to reduce risk in a complicated regulatory process and allows the company to play to its advantages, without over-investing a lot of capital at an early stage.

The OLI model affirms that the entry mode that AstraZeneca used in Vietnam, initially focusing on the importation, licensing, and partnerships, was viable in consideration of regulatory complexity in the market, the necessity of quality assurance, and the intention to establish the trust of the brand (Grubert, 2025). Although intense ownership and

internalisation benefits warrant greater commitment, the dynamic location benefits demand prudent expansion. Local production incentives and partnership opportunities can be expanded and, by extension, AstraZeneca can increase its control entry mode, such as joint venture or FDI, in due course (Reuters Staff, 2021a). This gradual approach is congruent with the minimisation of risk, as well as the maximisation of long-term value capture in the developing Vietnamese healthcare market.

Conclusion

The company has ownership benefits, a strong brand and a progressive product line, which sells better than mere exporting when considering Vietnam. AstraZeneca had to secure its intellectual property, preserving product quality, especially for vaccines, and gaining the confidence of the regulators (Jones, 2025). This case is evidenced by the early approval of its COVID-19 vaccine in Vietnam; it received regulatory acceptance and created a market opportunity (CEPI, 2020).

Vietnam has numerous location advantages. Demand in the healthcare industry, competitive prices, and government reforms indicate a long-term investment. Nevertheless, the lack of local drug-manufacturing facilities and low IP protection has traditionally forced AstraZeneca to stick to importation and licensing, including COVAX and procurement programmes, before expanding its local operations (Kelly and Peel, 2025).

The internalisation incentives in AstraZeneca revolve around directly managing the key operations, such as regulatory compliance and market education. This helps in maintaining brand integrity and quality (Reuters Staff, 2025). Consequently, the company seeks strategic alliances and import-distribution agreements with local companies and yet maintains international control of the product standards.

4. Cultural Differences and Their Impact on Market Entry

The model by Hofstede describes national culture using six dimensions, including power distance, individualism, masculinity (achievement orientation), uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation and indulgence (Hofstede, 2015). The dimensions are predictive of organisational behaviour, leadership anticipations, and decision style across nations. These differences have a direct impact on how multinational corporations such as AstraZeneca plan entry modes and their operations in emerging markets.

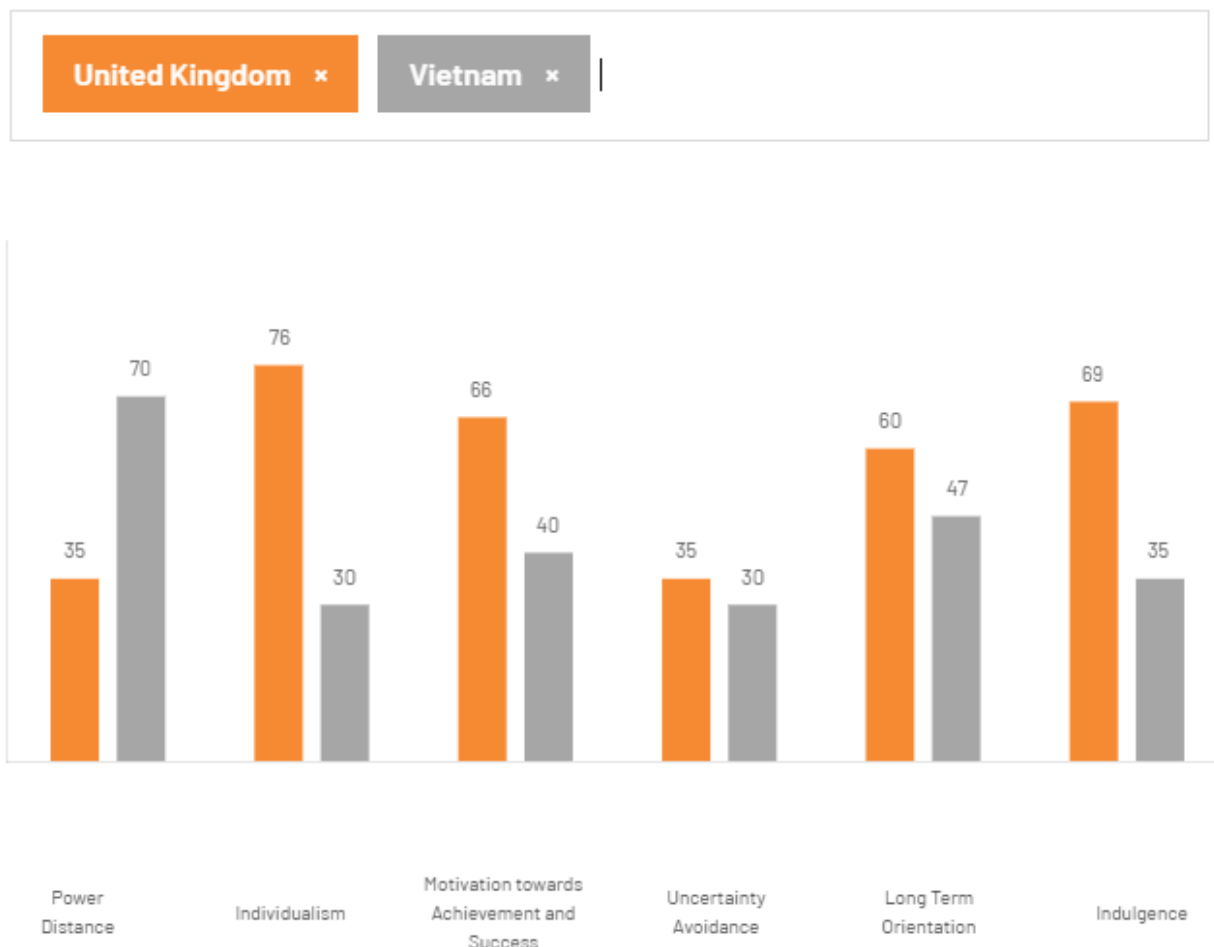


Figure 03: Hofstede's Model of National Cultures (The Culture Factor, 2020)

Power distance

Power distance is a measure of how much inequality and ranking are tolerated in a society (Vu and Pearson, 2021). The UK has a low power-distance index (35) with a preference

for flat hierarchies and participative management. Vietnam scores high (70) on acceptance of hierarchy and centralised authority (Vishnu Priya N, 2021).

Impact on Market Entry Strategy: AstraZeneca should understand the hierarchical nature of the Vietnamese society by first focusing on senior-level government contacts, formal approvals and respect of authority in regulatory authorities like the Ministry of Health (World Bank, 2025a). The UK-style decentralised decision-making might not work well in initial market entry.

Impact on Potential for Success: Companies that can modify their leadership culture to the hierarchies of Vietnam can achieve regulatory goodwill and long-term relationships. This may hurt institutional relationships and delay approvals (Vietnam, 2024).

Individualism vs Collectivism

The current dimension measures how much people value individual success compared to social cohesion (Hofstede, 2015). The United Kingdom scores very high in individualism orientation, at 76, an indicator of high autonomy and personal responsibility. Vietnam, on the other hand, has a strong collectivist orientation (score 30), which is based on group loyalty and consensus building (Tongxin, 2025).

Impact on Market Entry Strategy: AstraZeneca should respond by changing its human resources, negotiation, and partnership policies in Vietnam by focusing on long-term relationship interactions, the common good, and institutional cooperation instead of using individual performance incentives in response (The Investor, 2025). Local distributors and local hospitals expect interaction based on relationship dynamics.

Impact on Potential for Success: Compliance with collectivism improves trust, retention of employees, and stability of partnerships. Individual reward systems practised in the UK style can also be demotivating when they are not adapted to the local culture (Sourav Adak, 2024).

Masculinity / Motivation towards Achievement (MAS)

Masculinity as a cultural dimension denotes the emphasis of a society on competition, achievement, and success relative to cooperation and quality of life (Skari, 2020). In the United Kingdom, the score is moderately high (66), which indicates a performance-oriented culture. The score of Vietnam is lower at 40, which indicates an increased concern for social harmony and well-being (The Culture Factor, 2020).

Impact on Market Entry Strategy: AstraZeneca must thus create a balance between performance goals and building relationships as well as socially responsible messages, especially on public health projects and access-to-medicine programmes in Vietnam (Rochabrun, 2020).

Impact on Potential for Success: A focus on health outcomes and social worth, instead of violent commercial goals, reinforces the validity of AstraZeneca as part of the public healthcare framework in Vietnam (Reuters Staff, 2025).

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty dimension measures the level of ambiguity and risk tolerance (Hofstede, 2015). The United Kingdom (35) and Vietnam (30) have rather low to moderate scores, which indicates pragmatic views on policies and flexibility (MSF Access, 2020).

Impact on Market Entry Strategy: Vietnam has the flexibility, but its regulatory environment is very procedural. To enter the market successfully and reduce regulatory risk, the company has to publish documents with detailed required information, compliance guarantees, and so on (Kelly and Peel, 2025).

Long-term Orientation

The dimension of future orientation embodies the focus on long-range rewards as opposed to short-term ones (Lang, 2025). Vietnam is rated relatively higher (47) in comparison to the United Kingdom (60), but more balanced, which points to a strong focus on long-term development and perseverance (Macro Trends, 2024).

Impact on Market Entry Strategy: AstraZeneca's long-term investment in training, healthcare capacity building, and government consultation is a positive match to the future-oriented think process of Vietnam (Reuters, 2021).

Impact on Potential for Success: Long-term commitment builds trust and sustainability so that AstraZeneca can be viewed as a long-term partner in healthcare as opposed to a short-term profit maker (Kelly and Peel, 2025).

Indulgence vs Restraint (IVR)

Indulgence construct is aligned towards the freedom to gratification, whereas the restraint emphasises the social and regulatory conformity. The United Kingdom scores 69 in empirical scoring, which points to an indulgent culture and Vietnam scores 35, which points to a restrained culture (The Culture Factor, 2020).

Impact on Market Entry Strategy: Therefore, marketing and communication must assume a conservative, compliance-driven and socially responsible approach, avoiding the direct-selling culture of Western markets (Jones, 2025).

Impact on Potential for Success: In the highly sensitive healthcare sector, conformity helps boost acceptance of the brand and reduce reputational risk (James et al., 2020).

Altogether, the cultural differences between the United Kingdom and Vietnam have a strong impact on the market entry strategy and the effective functioning of AstraZeneca. Power distance and collectivism are high, which requires relationship-based, government-based approaches, and Vietnam's long-term orientation aligns with the sustainability of AstraZeneca (Reuters Staff, 2021). Inability to convert UK-centric leadership, human resources, and marketing practices may undermine assurance and diminish regulatory performance. AstraZeneca has the chance of achieving continuous success in the emerging pharmaceutical market in Vietnam by aligning its entry strategy with local cultural forces.

5. SOP Adjustments for Ensuring Success in Vietnam

This part suggests three standard operating procedure (SOP) modifications that AstraZeneca would need to undertake to achieve success in Vietnam, clearly connecting each recommendation to the previous OLI analysis and cultural understanding.

Linking SOP Adjustments to OLI and Cultural Factors

The OLI analysis of AstraZeneca denotes strong Ownership resources, such as brand equity, intellectual property, and research and development, and appealing Locational resources, such as market expansion opportunities and policy incentives, and selective Internalisation requirements, such as quality assurance and IP protection (Duc, 2019). Analysis of culture depicts that Vietnam has high power distance, collectivism, long-term orientation, and reserved temperament compared to the United Kingdom. Based on this, SOP changes have to protect global quality, intellectual property, and leverage local benefits and regulatory incentives, consider culturally sensitive governance, stakeholder involvement, and human resources practices (Global Law Experts, 2025).

SOP Adjustments 1: Enhanced Regulatory and Local Compliance SOP

AstraZeneca needs to redefine its global regulatory system by developing a Vietnam-specific SOP that is fully incorporated with global GxP and GCP standards of the company and the national pharmaceutical market regulation of Vietnam (MOH circulars) (Lee and Ande, 2023). The SOP would institutionalise high-level government interest and open a Regulatory Fast-Track Protocol to address emergency MOH requests in an effective manner. It will also include a standardised compliance template that is aligned with Circular 12/2025, and well-established escalation contacts, which will involve the senior management and accredited local legal advisors to ensure focus and fast decision-making (Mary, 2024).

Reasons to bring changes: The internalisation gains force, AstraZeneca is to maintain strict quality and regulatory control of its products. The changing regulatory landscape of Vietnam, as manifested by Circular 12, and its strong power-distance culture, imply that permits are easily obtained by formal contact with the authorities and clear lines of

hierarchical approach (Neo, 2025). Customised SOP would reduce approval time and reputational risk and maintain ownership via IP and quality protection.

Implementation: In order to apply this SOP successfully, AstraZeneca needs to amend its currently used global GxP and GCP templates with Vietnam-specific annexes of local language documentation procedures, timelines, and submission requirements (Orissa International, 2020). A resident regulatory affairs director with a reserve of authority to meet directly with the MOH and coordinate dossier preparation is needed. It should also maintain established local regulatory law firms like Viet An Law or Luat Minh Nguyen to provide real-time regulatory interpretation and establish regular training programmes to bring local teams in touch with changing MOH expectations (Research and Markets, 2024).

Expected benefits: The desired outcomes are improved product approvals, improved government contacts, minimised regulatory non-conformance risks, and better ability to conduct locally representative clinical trials, which will help secure the market entry and long-term product lifecycle in Vietnam (Tilleke and Gibbins, 2025).

SOP Adjustment 2: Localised Manufacturing and Supply-Chain SOP

AstraZeneca must develop a gradual localisation SOP to facilitate manufacturing and supply-chain operations in Vietnam in a risk-managed process. The SOP will comprise three phases (Akosua Mireku, 2022). Phase 1 will be based on an import and partner model, with trusted local contract manufacturing organisations (CMOs) and contract fill-and-finish systems. Phase 2 will entail small technology-transfer pilot projects. Phase 3 will allow complete FDI in local manufacturing under predetermined return-on-investment and regulatory-certainty levels (Ambipar, 2023). The SOP should have effective intellectual property safeguard declarations, confirmed technology-transfer checklists, an extensive supplier quality plan and accurate emergency contingency guidelines.

Reasons to bring changes: Ownership (manufacturing know-how), internalisation imperatives (quality control) advocate restrictive tech transfer. Vietnam has location benefits, a rising market and local production incentives, but regulatory and contract risk as well (BioProcess International, 2025). A gradual SOP will enable the capture of

location benefits without exposing core IP early on, while it also complies with the long-term orientation to capacity building in Vietnam.

Implementation: This shall be implemented through rigorous audits of suppliers on GMP, GDP standards, compulsory data-integrity assessment, and a common law template with non-disclosure and manufacturing licence (Duc, 2019). AstraZeneca ought to implement third-party escrow of essential know-how, impose staged training programmes on local personnel, and impose KPI-based decision gates between the phases. It should be integrated with local workforce development targets to meet government partnership expectations (Global Law Experts, 2025).

Expected benefits: Improved manufacturing proximity is anticipated to deliver improved cost efficiency and supply responsiveness, protect the ownership benefits and global quality resonance of AstraZeneca and enhance ties with Vietnamese public-sector stakeholders (Lee and Ande, 2023).

SOP Adjustment 3: Culturally Adapted Commercial and HR SOP

AstraZeneca must adopt a Cultural Engagement and Human Resource SOP that effectively incorporates relationship-oriented commercial practices and culturally sensitive people management into its Vietnam operation. Such an SOP will necessitate an organised inclusion of leading stakeholders such as hospitals, distributors and government, among others, with a focus on local leader-building and shared incentive systems (Mary, 2024). It will institutionalise exception-level relationship management of key opinion leaders, the Ministry of Health authority, and hospital leaders, and will establish socialised performance indicators instead of individual ones. Advertising efforts will be guided by conservative, ethics-based principles in line with the modest cultural orientation and global criteria like the bar in the IFPMA Code (Neo, 2025).

Reasons to bring changes: The collectivist culture and high power distance in Vietnam require the top-level relationship management and group incentives as the crucial ones for market access (Vietnam, 2024). Joining local culture lessens negotiation tension, enhances partner maintenance, and hastens innovative therapy adoption in procuring therapies (Orissa International, 2020).

Implementation: To adopt this SOP, AstraZeneca would revise the hiring procedure to focus on bilingual local managers with solid institutional ties and integrate cultural-sensitivity training into leadership onboarding (Research and Markets, 2024). Substitute individual-level metrics with team-level KPIs, including institutional adoption rates and group sales results. The company also ought to develop a compliance-appropriate, country-based marketing template and formalise a Senior Stakeholder Contact Protocol with clear roles and lines of communication (Research and Markets, 2024).

Expected benefits: The anticipated returns include improved government and hospital relations, employee participation and retention, ethical compliance levels, and success in public tenders, which will speed up market penetration and boost the long-term reputation of AstraZeneca in Vietnam (Vu and Pearson, 2021).

Integrated SOP Transformation for Vietnam Success

The three SOPs have to collaborate with the Regulatory, Manufacturing and Commercial/HR functions. The project management office (PMO) will monitor milestones, introduce local advice and auditors, and hold quarterly cultural-competency audits (Tongxin, 2025). Regulatory schedules, tech-tailor preparedness, supplier online qualities, stakeholder geo interaction ratings, and local labour force training rates ought to be followed in KPI dashboards (Sourav Adak, 2024). This combination strategy aligns both the ownership competence of AstraZeneca and the location advantages of Vietnam with the cultural dynamic that determines success.

6. Conclusion

This report indicates that the global success of AstraZeneca is based on the ability to harmonise its ownership strength, location benefits, and internalisation strategies with the host-country institutional and cultural environments. The case study analysis of Vietnam as an emerging economy proves that, though the company has good brand equity, developed R&D and global quality benchmarks, its continued success depends on close adjustment of business operations. AstraZeneca can mitigate market-entry risks, safeguard intellectual property, and gain the trust of stakeholders by implementing Vietnam-specific regulatory, manufacturing and cultural engagement SOPs. These modifications enable the company to access the potential growth of Vietnam and stay globally consistent and ethical. Finally, a long-term competitive advantage of AstraZeneca will be an integrated approach of a globally oriented fashion with a localised approach to the ever-changing pharmaceutical market in Vietnam.

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