

Understanding the Characteristics of Corporate Culture in Vietnam via Some Golden Periods in History



Pham Van Think

Thu Dau Mot University, Binh Duong, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: In the Vietnamese business heritage, there were several golden times during which beneficial elements emerged and became distinct features of company culture. Using the multidisciplinary method of History of Science - Cultural Studies, this article collects and organizes historical documents to sketch a historical and comparative analysis of the value hierarchy and strengths of Vietnamese corporate culture during its golden era. The findings demonstrate that, between the 17th and 18th centuries, unique human and cultural aspects in business activities emerged in the Southern Vietnam region of Vietnam, where merchants and other factors of Corporate culture was quite frequent. In the early years of the 20th century, Vietnam witnessed a business movement aimed at economic revival and cultural development for the noble goal of national revival. Corporate culture in Vietnam has been around for a long time, reflected in the intelligence, creativity, sensitivity, and quick adaptation of Vietnamese corporates and entrepreneurs.

KEYWORDS: Corporate Culture, Development, History, Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam's economic history, business itself has not been particularly robust. Originally a country with an Eastern feudal-style agrarian economy that lasted thousands of years, Vietnam's social structure has evolved throughout time due to the weakening of industrial and commercial industry. When talking about business in ancient Vietnam, people often think of a tribute regime in the form of an Eastern-style totalitarian society, where the village was organized according to the model of public farming, self-sufficiency, and limited consumption power of industry and commerce, downsizing industry and commerce in the local market model (Tran Dinh Huou, 1996). The self-sufficient agricultural economic model has created rural and urban societies that cannot rise to become the headquarters of the market economy and the arena of professional businessmen. In the world of folk culture, the image of traders was drawn with unsympathetic lines (Nguyen Thanh Tuyen, 2019).

Although doing business is not a strong heritage among Vietnamese people, history has documented periods and places where economic achievements occurred. These were historic watershed moments. People could find the strength to produce breakthroughs in economic structure, as well as the number and quality of traders, despite the fact that feudalism and colonialism continued to be strict. From those golden milestones, one may uncover the cultural values that have developed and become the priceless inheritance of the Vietnamese people; these values also have long-term relevance if we identify a dialectical relationship between them and the nation's fundamental value system.

This article investigates the beneficial aspects of corporate culture that have thrived in various historical periods and areas of Vietnam, linking them together to identify ideals. Vietnamese people and culture's essential ideas, habits, attitudes, and qualities are reflected in commercial activities. Through this connection, the article contributes to a better understanding of social movements aimed at economic revival, cultural development for the noble goal of national resurrection, successful trading norms, desirable behavior in relationships with consumers and partners in Vietnam's cultural heritage... Learning about the positive elements of corporate culture will contribute to answering the question of whether or not there is a tradition. Vietnamese corporate culture in history and at the same time find out what factors in the past could be the driving force to activate today's corporate culture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Literature review

Research on positive elements of corporate culture in history has been mentioned in many scientific works from countries around the world. Wang Shaoxiang and Liu Wenzhi (1995) investigated the clan characteristics of Chinese merchants as a key component of corporate culture. According to the author of this publication, all merchants who went out to trade originated from live families, forming unique merchant families; the big merchant clans all rely on the family's power to preserve and develop. In China, Phan Nai Viet (1994) expressed a very unique position on the possibility to apply classic Confucian ideals to social management activities and cultural commercial organizations in current times. Phan Nai Viet has made interesting discoveries about "village people" as the core of Confucius's management ideology, about Confucius's "righteousness" and the West's "public interest", about the credibility in the vitality of Confucius of an organization, about "selecting sages", "talent knowledge", "talent education" (promoting talented people, understanding talented people, training talented people) in business activities.

When discussing about the future of human and corporate activities in the new era, Rowan Gibson (editor, 2002) anticipated corporate culture as a new, revolutionary means of creating new wealth, has a revolutionary nature, overturning economic thinking. According to Rowan Gibson, nations in the process of integrating into the globalization stream are obliged to realign their commercial activities, and each business must be managed in the spirit of leadership, not managers who only understand how to operate.

Geert Hofstede (1991) is interested in cultural differences, aspects that might assist classify the organizational culture of countries, and so illuminate the business cultural identity of each country from an organizational perspective. Geert Hofstede identified variances in each country's corporate culture using the following dimensions: power distance; individualism-collectivism; masculine-feminine; control uncertainty.

A number of foreign international authors have published their findings on corporate culture, mostly to help elucidate the distinctiveness, structure, and norms of motion of this cultural phenomenon in business corporation. Some authors consider it an unconscious spiritual product of the business community, but many others emphasize the importance of being proactive in developing each company's corporate culture (Joseph Putti, 1998; Black, Richard, 2003; Thomas & Christopher (2005); Gabrielle, 2006).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Vietnamese social scientists have written numerous useful works exploring Vietnamese cultural views toward business and entrepreneurs, as well as historical traces of corporate culture. Notable among them are works on culture and development (Nguyen Hong Phong, 2000), culture for development (Pham Xuan Nam, 2005), culture from a value perspective (Do Huy, 2001), traditional and modern issues, including consideration of the role of Confucianism in the past and present in Vietnam (Tran Dinh Huou, 1996), and trading villages in the Northern Delta (Nguyen Quang Ngoc, 1993). These publications also discuss company culture at both the social and business levels.

Some works directly discuss corporate culture and business philosophy of business owners. Notably, Do Minh Cuong (2001) believes that corporate culture is *the use* of cultural factors in the subject's *business activities*; and is *the culture* that business entities *create* in the business process, forming their specific and stable *business styles*. Corporate culture is essentially the corporate culture of that enterprise" (...), it "creates the identity of the enterprise and affects the emotions, reason and behavior of all its members."

2.2. Research methodology

The article uses the interdisciplinary method of cultural history, which combines historical and cultural science approaches, to investigate popular cultural aspects and cultural interpretations of historical events. It investigates the records and narrative descriptions of previous material, as well as the continuity of events (that occur consecutively and lead from the past to the present and even to the future) associated with a culture.

Using this approach, the article chronicles and evaluates events in Vietnamese history in many periods linked to corporate culture, through social, cultural, and political contexts, or related to the economic history of an area, locality, or country throughout a calendar period. Jacob Burckhardt contributed to the development of cultural history as a field of study. Cultural history investigates and explains human society's records by representing the diverse ways of life established by the individuals under examination. Cultural history is the synthesis of historical cultural activities such as rituals, class practices, and interactions with local communities (Jacob Burckhardt, 1983).

Using an interdisciplinary approach to historical science and cultural science, the essay provides a historical and comparative assessment of the value hierarchy and strengths in the characteristics of Vietnamese corporate culture in the past. From there, it can help identify, synthesize, and connect some of the hidden notions that dominate Vietnamese corporate culture.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Unique features of people and culture in business activities in Southern Vietnam region of Vietnam in the 17th and 18th centuries

In the lengthy history of Vietnam's economy, Southern Vietnam in the 17th and 18th centuries, commanded by Lord Nguyen, had the greatest impact on foreign trade. People who were willing to enter the Asian market, were good at business transactions, and had a free way of doing business have emerged in this country for more than a century, despite the fact that it was purely agricultural and inherently non-trading, according to a Chinese traveler in the 13th century (Li Tana, 1998). The great development of international trade in Southern Vietnam was owing to the pressures of the time during the conflict with King Le and Lord Trinh in Outer Circuit. To survive and become stronger, Lord Nguyen proactively changed his way of thinking and created ways of doing things to suit the operating rules of foreign trade prevailing in Southeast Asia at that time. The story between Thich Dai San, a Chinese monk invited to visit Southern Vietnam in the 18th century, and Lord Nguyen Phuc Dieu (1691-1725) was a typical sign of this rapid involvement of the Nguyen Lords. (Thich Dai San, 1963). The story went that when saying goodbye to Lord Nguyen, the monk wished his kingdom good weather and prosperous crops. However, Lord responded by introducing a new criterion to measure the prosperity of the kingdom, which was the number of merchant ships arriving in the lord's territory in a year. It was no coincidence that a Vietnamese researcher said about the Vietnamese residents in the southern region at that time that the Vietnamese created here another way of "being Vietnamese" (Li Tana, 1998). Quite quickly, Southern Vietnam transformed itself into an important link in the trade between China and Japan. To be more specific, Southern Vietnam has become the number one seller of the trade relations arena in Asia. Besides using commercial relationships, the Nguyen lords also used marital relationships to strengthen foreign trade (Nguyen Phuc Toc Governing Council, 1995).

Giving civilians a certain place in business is a distinctive aspect of Southern Vietnam's corporate approach and culture. While Nguyen Hoang and his successors were actively involved in the trading networks of the Japanese, Chinese, Westerners, and Southeast Asians, he nevertheless made room for civilians in commerce. More and more Vietnamese people travel abroad for business. Kaihentai also documented the views of some Chinese merchants who came to do business in Siam (Thailand), stating that they were "acquainted with Quang Nam people who sometimes go to Siam and we met them there" (Li Tana, 1998).

While the Southern Vietnam lord's palace had a monopoly on gold trading at the start of the 17th century, they nonetheless allowed people to exchange small amounts of items like sugar and silk at local, open markets for the establishment and growing prominence of a merchant class in Southern Vietnam society. Vu Minh Giang (2019) discussed the economic strength and style of using money (not in kind) in the exchange and consumption of merchants in Hoi An, an important port in Southern Vietnam, providing an interesting comparison. He compared offerings to two pagodas, recorded in the 17th century, one in Pho Hien – the main commercial center in Outer Circuit – and one near Hoi An. According to Vu Minh Giang's calculations, "contributions to the temple near Hoi An are on average 8 times higher than contributions to the temple in Pho Hien. Contributions to the pagoda in Pho Hien were mainly in the form of rice, while contributions to the pagoda near Hoi An are usually in money.

Southern Vietnam agriculture was geared toward commerce, with some areas exhibiting signs of specialization. Foreign researchers' observations over the last two centuries revealed that agricultural production in Southern Vietnam was increasingly oriented toward commerce rather than self-sufficiency. For example, in the 17th century, inhabitants in the Thuan Hoa region concentrated on cultivating mulberries and raising silkworms to serve the silk export industry, to the point where they had to import rice from Siam and Cambodia. Southern Vietnam rice was inferior to mulberry and sugarcane when it came to exporting silk and sugar to Japan in the 1730s. A very interesting socio-economic phenomenon was that the specialization of sugar production for export has been demonstrated to each group of households in some areas in Southern Vietnam. The sugar industry at that time developed a production system based on household groups: a group of households specializing in growing sugarcane, a group of households specializing in pressing sugarcane, and a group of households specializing in cooking sugarcane juice into white sugar. Moreover, the increase in sugar production has led to the development of local small industries that produce jars to store sugarcane juice, serving the sugar production process. (Nguyen Quang Vinh and Tran Huu Quang, 2009).

Trading via boat and ship, as well as the introduction of the "Lai" (merchant) character into Vietnamese business lexicon. In Southern Vietnam, three important port towns appeared: Hoi An (Quang Nam), Thanh Ha (Thua Thien), and Nuoc Man (Binh Dinh), with Hoi An being the most prominent. Vietnamese merchants from the 17th to 18th century included minor traders, small owners, the trading class, and shop owners. Small enterprises frequently buy from the bottom and sell from the top. Some wealthy people kept items until the "trade season" when they could sell them to foreign traders. Gold, silk, pearls, areca nuts, dried shrimp, bird's nests, sea cucumbers, acacia, sugar, mother-of-pearl handicrafts, and rare woods were among the commodities exported. In addition to trading at markets, traders foreign merchants, Vietnamese merchants also hired boats to carry goods to trade long distances by sea.

Understanding the Characteristics of Corporate Culture in Vietnam via Some Golden Periods in History

According to Do Bang (1996), boat building was the primary mode of water transportation for people in the Thuan-Quang area (boats were 7m wide, 10m long, had three masts, weighed 100 tons, traveled at 7 nautical miles per hour, and can be transported against the wind). Many affluent merchants in Southern Vietnam purchased two or three gourd boats for coastal trade, allowing them to travel long distances to China, Singapore, and Thailand. Later, in the nineteenth century, the Southern region, with its intricate network of rivers and canals, and the valuable rice products of the Mekong Delta, elevated trade by waterways (including rivers and seas) in the South to new heights. From here, a new group of people in society called "drivers" appeared, people who "piloted" their ships and boats to do business and thereby became rich. This group of people, separated from agriculture to specialize in rice trading by water, and some of them around Saigon even – as John White observes – reached a high standard of technology. maritime people, are the people most suited to the sea (...) on par with the Chinese in this field. People often encountered Vietnamese people in Southeast Asian waters such as the Strait of Malacca, Batavia, Singapore, the Philippines... Officials of state trade delegations sometimes also encountered ordinary Vietnamese people trading in fishing boats in Southeast Asia. They carried rice to sell, some brought back... opium, so when they saw a state ship, they fled in all directions... (Nguyen Quang Vinh and Tran Huu Quang, 2009).

Unfortunately, after defeating the Tay Son, the Nguyen Dynasty returned to a policy of seclusion, prioritizing agriculture over trade. Rice, Nam Ky's main export product, was soon forbidden, and violators faced the death penalty. The court ordered individuals who had fled from the pursuit of business (commerce) to return to the fields. In any case, two centuries were insufficient to establish a more sustainable business, but they have resulted in innovation in social thought, the corporate environment, and the spread of new ideas. Merchants introduced components of corporate culture from the countryside to the port city, which were previously uncommon in Vietnamese society.

3.2. In the early twentieth century, social movements tried to revive the economy and establish industrial culture with the noble objective of national resurrection.

In the early twentieth century, amid the grip of French colonialism, a vigorous social movement emerged and spread like lightning from Central to North to South, combining political and economic reasons. Economic, cultural, and social progress toward the lofty aim of national revival. Although it lasted less than a decade, the Duy Tan movement left behind many good social concepts and principles that may be revived in modern hues given the new opportunities available to people today.

The truth was that from the late nineteenth century, a flood of inventive ideas has emerged virtually concurrently in Japan, China, and Vietnam, with varied developments based on the features of each country. Everyone recalled the renowned Japanese Iwakura delegation of approximately 20 persons, who traveled to Europe and America in 1888 to study. Since then, the Japanese have taken many good ideas from the structure of the British navy, the French army, the German railway system, and German civil law. They learned and operated those models in the Japanese style ("Western techniques, Japanese ethics"). The Chinese during this period also had many social, military and spiritual reforms, but in general they were not successful because they could not handle the relationship between tradition and modernity, or in other words, lacks a philosophy of innovation.

Famous figures in Vietnam, such as Nguyen Truong To, Nguyen Lo Trach, and Dang Huy Tru, have also advocated for innovation and reform. Everyone knew that during eight years, from 1863 to 1871, Nguyen Truong To sent 30 comments to King Tu Duc proposing a new vision and swift reforms to strengthen self-reliance. While studying in France, Nguyen met Japanese reformer Ito Hirobumi, who eventually became Japanese Prime Minister during the Meiji Restoration, and their reform views grew. Not straw fire. Nguyen Lo Trach criticized Vietnam for a lack of willingness and daring to innovate the country. He proposed that we need to learn from the West; must send their children to study abroad with full scholarships, to bring knowledge and technology back to help the country. He said our ships and guns were too weak, so we had to worry about strengthening ourselves as soon as possible. We must study and imitate the techniques of the Westerners to control their superior techniques. The case of Dang Huy Tru was a bit different: he was a royal official, so he could say important suggestions about shipbuilding, gun casting, developing trade, establishing a vocational training department etc, and had the conditions to carry out some of those innovative concerns. An example: in 1860, he shaved his head, impersonated a Qing national, went to Hong Kong to "interview the situation" (i.e., did a reconnaissance mission on the situation in the Western Ocean), then proposed many plans. Specifically, encouraging Vietnamese people to build ships in Hong Kong to study defense technology... (Nguyen Quang Vinh and Tran Huu Quang, 2009).

In that reforming tendency, Khang Huu Vi and Luong Khai Sieu's New Books and New Literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries featured capitalist class philosophies and economic theories. Rising Western assets (such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, Descartes, Darwin...) and Tan Dan's ideals have invaded Vietnam via the ports of Hai Phong, Da Nang, and Saigon, reaching the hands of patriotic and influential Confucianists throughout this era. If in the past Luong Khai Sieu went to Japan to read Western progressive books and newspapers in Japanese and thought like "a dark house can see the sun, a dry stomach can

Understanding the Characteristics of Corporate Culture in Vietnam via Some Golden Periods in History

see wine", then Vietnamese Confucian scholars read Khang-Luong, conveying those thoughts with enthusiasm through Chinese characters that felt like "a thunderclap exploding in the blue sky" (Huynh Thuc Khang's idea).

The Duy Tan movement arose in Vietnam during the first decade of the twentieth century, in that spiritual setting. This was a really lively and clean cultural revolution of the patriotic movement, supporting innovation in social thinking, arousing patriotism, promoting practical work, encouraging commerce and industry, and generating opportunities for people to flourish and gradually restore their autonomy. The slogan of the Duy Tan movement, similar to Phan Chu Trinh's, was "stirring the people's energy, opening up the people's wisdom, and following the people's livelihood". In each region of the country, the Duy Tan movement appeared with its own, very creative lines, but in the end, it trained two new human models, that is, workers who know how to work together and are educated, have skills, patriotic passion, and the businessman aims for modernization with patriotic fervor (Nguyen Hong Phong, 1999).

During 1905 and 1906, the Duy Tan movement in the Central area was particularly active, with key figures such as Phan Chu Trinh, Huynh Thuc Khang, Tran Quy Cap, and other radical Confucian professors. People with talent and creativity included Nguyen Trong Loi, Phan Thuc Duyen, Bang Ky Lam (Nguyen Toan), Mai Di, and Phan Thanh Tai. The spirit of self-reliance was demonstrated by the trio of organizations that always worked together, complimenting one another. Commercial, agricultural, and academic associations all work together.

The Commercial association was the prominent face of Duy Tan in the Central region: it was the Lien Thanh company in Binh Thuan (still existing today after 100 years. When Nguyen Tat Thanh set out abroad to find a way to save the country, it was also recognized This company gives 7 silver coins); Dien Phong Trading Joint Stock Company in Hoi An was the headquarter for many trading transactions in Quang Nam; Phong Thu trading union (in Dien Ban district, Quang Nam)... In these "joint trading" units, intellectuals and scholars participated in large numbers, and the technical organization of trade was also very new: spacious houses, the goods were arranged in an orderly manner, there were staff to take care of the books, the liquid goods were packaged in labeled bottles, and on each product for sale there was a bamboo tag with a certain selling price. Customers were very fond of these Combined trading "supermarkets", they often called the sellers "teachers", refuse to accept change, and even demanded to buy goods at a price higher than the set price so that the sellers could get money to buy drugs for his brothers to smoke for fun (Nguyen Van Xuan, 2000).

In addition to the trade associations, the Duy Tan movement in the Central region also established agricultural associations such as farming corporations with capital from many people to explore land for growing cinnamon, tea, strawberries, sugarcane, corn..., and continue to reap profits supporting for students studying abroad (Nguyen Van Xuan, 2000).

The Duy Tan movement's educational promotion associations and schools were inextricably linked to trade associations. For example, the staff and board of directors of Phong Thu Thuong Thuong all lived together and shared dorms with academics from the two adjoining institutions. Alternatively, close to Hop Thuong Dien Phong, the movement established Dien Phong School (private), which had approximately 200 students and did not follow the state program. Older students have learned about Civil Rights theory and have read the books Khang Huu Vi and Luong Khai Sieu; classes were already familiar with using blackboards and white chalk. In 1905, the school in Phu Lam hamlet, a typical Duy Tan village, established a class particularly for female pupils. The Duy Tan movement in the North was distinguished by the establishment of a big school with a great spiritual influence on the entire country, directed by Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc (modeled after Khanh Ung Nghia Thuc in Japan). The school principal was Luong Van Can, while the school supervisor was Mr. Nguyen Quyen. Because it was the foundation of the Duy Tan movement, the school not only taught progressive and practical subjects, but it also conducted book writing, lectures, and literary reviews to promote Duy Tan and patriotism.

Cultural activities were closely associated with the opening of business organizations sponsored by the movement to revive industry and trade, such as Tan Hong Hung brand of Nguyen Quyen, Dong Thanh Xuong of Hoang Tang Bi. The movement was so stimulating that a Lang Son murderer, Nghiem Xuan Quang, also returned to Hanoi to establish a Quang Hop Ich trading company. At that time, Hanoi had good coordination with Duy Tan industry and trade in Quang Nam. An anecdote told that two intellectuals in Hanoi wore black dyed domestic fabric pants from Quang Nam, with tie collars, to support the Central region's industry and trade moving to the North, coordinating with industry and trade outside the North. collectively known as Quoc Thuong.

A unique event related to corporate culture was that Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc published and taught Luong Van Can's *Trading Study's Motto* - a book considered the first textbook on Vietnamese business management. In the book, the author mentioned 10 things that made "our people's trade route" should be more prosperous but could not be done. Luong Van Can admitted that the ancients often despised trading, but one of the reasons was the harsh moral concept of "greed for profit" and "telling little truth". But that did not make the author hesitate in highlighting the power of the market and the importance of changing thinking and respecting commerce if we want our country's trade to prosper. He wrote: "There was a proverb that says: No trade was rich, great countries could become wealthy through trade, great capitalists could become wealthy through trade, enemies of the country, then trade

Understanding the Characteristics of Corporate Culture in Vietnam via Some Golden Periods in History

should not be strict before without paying attention to research. He continued: "In this competitive world, rich and powerful countries cannot compete in the business arena; The more advanced civilization was, the more prosperous trade becomes. Should we look down on or despise such a business that prospers and declines like that? (Tran Thai Binh, 2001). Tran Thai Binh also emphasized that, if we correctly understand today's trade, it was not as simple as many people think in the past: "There was no capital, no calculation, no books, no letters, no buying." Merchandising, display of goods, branding, marketing, commercial locations, shopping malls, communication with people, advertising, everything must have an agency. If you don't know how to study commerce, both virtue and talent, then impossible." So, 100 years ago, when training generations of modern businessmen in the early twentieth century, a Confucian scholar who quickly updated Western learning in the wind of the Duy Tan cultural revolution promptly discussed the rules of investment capital, purchasing techniques, branding, branding, marketing and public relations PR in business, etc (Tran Thai Binh, 2001).

The activities of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc and other economic establishments in Hanoi within the framework of the Duy Tan movement have had a positive influence on the South, contributing to accelerating the Minh Tan campaign of patriots in Saigon, My Tho, Ben Tre, Long Xuyen. According to Son Nam, businessmen following this trend want to promote a Minh Tan, which can be understood as a "campaign to reform the country following the example of the Chinese and Japanese in the early 20th century." Developing industry and commerce, expanding schools, and modifying customs are interrelated issues to achieve the ultimate goal of overthrowing the French colonialists" (Son nam, 1971). The activities of this group of businessmen were quite diverse. They opened Nam Trung Hotel in Saigon, Minh Tan Hotel in My Tho and established Nam Ky Minh Tan Technology, a kind of joint stock company, to produce soap, textiles, leather, crystal and teach young people to learn those professions. All three businesses mentioned above were owned by Tran Chanh Chieu. The Minh Tan movement also opened Chieu Nam Lau headed by Nguyen An Khuong (Mr. Nguyen An Khuong was the father of Nguyen An Ninh, leader of the Duy Tan movement in Nam Ky and one of the first people to respond to the Kinh Nghia Thuc movement). He was also an assistant writer for Nong Co Min Dam newspaper). These economic establishments both promoted the economic expansion of Vietnamese people, promoted the use of domesticated goods, and serve as a gathering place for like-minded Minh Tan people.

To encourage Vietnamese people to invest, Nguyen An Khuong published some extremely smart and compassionate comments in the Luc province newspaper Tan Van Nhan Chieu Nam Lau restaurant was opened: I once again wish for my fellow countrymen to be fearless of their reputation. If you want to be renowned, invest in your home, or collaborate to build five or seven little buildings like this, pay Qing people to cook properly and entertain your compatriots, you and I can do business together. How enjoyable, how gorgeous! (Son Nam, 1971).

Following the activities of Nam Trung Hotel, we saw that in addition to normal functions, this business also opened classes to teach business bookkeeping (sign up and pay 4 dongs per month), and was a center for providing market price information, and helped agricultural product traders from the provinces to Saigon have a place to ask to sell for them, check the weight for them, and avoid being cheated. Although Mr. Tran Chanh Chieu came from the West Village, he was a businessman and a respectable patriotic soldier. His Minh Tan hotel was searched, and he himself was arrested by the French many times. He died in 1919, at the age of 52. In his eulogy for Tran Chanh Chieu, Mr. Phuong Huu, a patriotic Confucian, said: "The nationality was called Phu Lang [France], Deep in the heart was the blood of the Hung Vuong family" (Nguyen Quang Vinh and Tran Huu Quang, 2009).

Duy Tan, Minh Tan, throughout the Central, South, and North all left lasting beautiful values for the cause of patriotism and business development associated with national pride.

Vietnamese corporates in French colonial cities: had a tendency to promote Vietnamese values and seek national interests. In today's exciting days of reform and innovation, when Vietnamese goods are proudly jostling to enter an increasingly fiercely competitive market, such as Trung Nguyen coffee in Tokyo (Japan), and Basa fish to America, Saigontourist tourism products, Viet Tien shirts, Nhu Y brocades and high-end AA Corporation furniture are present in many distant meridians and latitudes..., then people suddenly remember Vietnamese products in the 30s, 40s of the 20th century had to overcome many oppressions and jealousy of the colonial environment to participate in life. That was the story of Vietnam's "king of ships" Bach Thai Buoi (owner of Giang Hai Luan boat Bach Thai company) with 30 ships running all over the rivers and seas from North to South, defeating both French and overseas Chinese opponents along with time. His ships had very Vietnamese names such as: Nguyen Trai, Bai Tu Long, Cho Bo, Yen Bai, Pho Lu, etc. He sent people to the docks and to each ship to give speeches to promote the spirit of compatriotism, calling on Vietnamese people to use Vietnamese goods, ride Vietnamese ships, to compete with foreigners. Xam singers on the Bach Thai Buoi ship also sang songs promoting investment capital contribution, joining forces to fight for "love boats". On September 17, 1920, the 600-ton Binh Chuan ship, built entirely by Bach Thai Buoi company's workshop, arrived at Saigon port, exciting the spirit of Nam Ky businessmen at that time. They cast a bronze gift to "Give the Binh Chuan ship, the first An Nam ship at Saigon port" (the original inscription is in French). The use of talent by businessman Bach was also very unique. In 1928, when he opened his business to coal mining, which was an unfamiliar field, he sought technical experts by sending people to France to

Understanding the Characteristics of Corporate Culture in Vietnam via Some Golden Periods in History

sign contracts with students who passed valedictorian at the University of Mining. When they graduated, he took care of their plane tickets to Vietnam to work. One day in the fall of 1932, at the time of his death, Bach Thai Bui could only think back: "You must do something to make the flag of our Vietnamese company flutter on all five continents and four seas, so that the whole world know Vietnamese people and the country of Vietnam." Truly "a man in the business world" as a contemporary magazine praised. (Le Minh Quoc, 2000).

Another businessman of the harsh years before 1945 was Nguyen Son Ha, the first Vietnamese to produce domesticated paint using modern technology, with the addition of domestic herbal materials (such as tea tree oil). At its peak, his paint could be used to paint bicycles and cars, sold to Cambodia and Laos, and won quality awards at fairs in France. The story about Mr. Ha's paint company keeping its reputation was worth thinking about. After opening a subsidiary factory in Saigon, a customer once complained that the company's Résistance B paint took too long to dry. Upon receiving the news, he called to tell them to stop supplying the product to the market and quickly flew to Saigon. He discovered that the workers had to cook a batch of young oil, but because the delivery deadline was close, they kept delivering it to the customer. Mr. Nguyen Son Ha apologized; Anyone who buys that shipment and returns it will receive a refund with an apology. The social responsibility and civic spirit of entrepreneurs were also admirable. He bought 41 houses in Son Lam alley, Hai Phong, each 120 m² wide to gradually reward workers. He was also the one who built the Duc Anh home to raise orphans in Hai Phong and together with two friends founded the "Tam Huu Publishing Department", printing books to educate children about patriotism. During the golden week after the August Revolution, he and his wife donated 35,000 Indochina dong and 105 taels of gold to the country; Then he went to the war zone for 9 years of resistance, continuing to contribute to the production of raincoats, cooking oil, gun cleaning oil... Toward the end of his life, he still cherished the dream of painting airplanes, and "I will paint it myself." into our plane" (Le Minh Quoc, 2000).

If we look back in general, from Tran Chanh Chieu in the South, Nguyen Trong Loi, Nguyen Toan in the Central region, to Bach Thai Bui and Nguyen Son Ha in the North, we see that they had learned and acquired a lot of knowledge, skills, technology, common business practices of the West, of the Chinese, Indians... in the process of cultural acculturation, but all had been molded again intelligently and enthusiastically to become a benefit to family businesses, co-owned businesses, and to the national economy, even in a situation of dehydration! However, despite so many efforts and creativity from the big trips to the sea in Dang Trong to Duy Tan, Minh Tan and later..., innovation trends still could not overcome the "inertia" of the traditional Vietnamese social structure and the fierce controls of the colonial political regime to achieve a "Vietnamese-style Meiji".

The preparation in terms of social and cultural structure for the transition from traditional society to modern society needs to go through an era of transition, in order to promptly transform the established economic, social and humanistic germinating into dynamic foundations for genuine reform.

4. CONCLUSION

Vietnamese history records a number of periods that, in a special socio-economic context, became a period of rise for the entire Vietnamese society in the process of economic revival and development of diverse fields. This movement was expressed both in the field of economic structure, social structure and on elements of the superstructure such as legal, ethical views, and the general spiritual world of the people. The unique human and cultural features of business activities in Southern Vietnam of Vietnam in the 17th and 18th centuries, the passionate wishes and calculations of the Minh Tan, Duy Tan movements and of the Patriotism in the early 20th century has become a feature of Vietnam's business cultural tradition.

Overcoming many old prejudices, Vietnamese society has also had a golden age of seeing *business activities* as a form of *labor* and bringing *benefits* to society. Business has found its *legitimate, legal and ethical place* in social life. Society's positive concepts and values towards business have become the core of corporate culture at the social level. Understanding the positive factors in corporate culture shows that there is a clear connection between the *business and consumption behaviors* of people and businessmen and *national pride*.

It can be affirmed that Vietnamese corporate culture appeared very early. Through historical periods, overcoming the harsh economic and social conditions, Vietnam's corporate culture has always shown itself in the intelligence, creativity, acumen, and quick adaptation of Vietnamese businessman. This reform now needs to learn from history, enhance the role and position of businesses and entrepreneurs in society and is an important condition for Vietnam's corporate culture to gradually be developed with full nuance.

REFERENCES

- 1) Black, Richard J. (2003). *Organisational Culture: Creating the Influence Needed for Strategic Success*. London UK, ISBN 1-58112-211-X.

Understanding the Characteristics of Corporate Culture in Vietnam via Some Golden Periods in History

- 2) Cummings, Thomas G. & Worley, Christopher G. (2005). *Organization Development and Change*. 8th Ed., Thomson South-Western. USA, ISBN 0324260601.
- 3) Jacob Burckhardt (1983). *The Age of Constantine the Great*. University of California Press
- 4) Do Bang (1996). *Port town in Thuan Quang region in the 17th-18th centuries [Phố cảng vùng Thuận Quảng thế kỷ XVII-XVIII]*. Thuan Hoa Publishing House.
- 5) Do Huy (2001). *Developing a cultural environment in our country from a value perspective [Xây dựng môi trường văn hóa ở nước ta từ góc nhìn giá trị học]*. Culture Of Vietnamese Ethnic Groups Publishing House One Member Company Limited.
- 6) Do Minh Cuong (2001). *Culture and business philosophy [Văn hóa và triết lý kinh doanh]*. Vietnam: National Political Publishing House.
- 7) Geert Hofstede (1994). *Cultures and Organisations [Văn hóa và tổ chức]*. Harper Collins Business, London.
- 8) Ho Chau (2021). *Foreign trade in Southern Vietnam during the Nguyen lord's time [Ngoại thương Đàng Trong thời chúa Nguyễn]*. Doctoral thesis in history. Hue University.
- 9) Nguyen Phuc Toc Board of Governors (1995). *Nguyen Phuc's genealogical family*. Thuan Hoa Publishing House.
- 10) Le Minh Quoc (2000). *Vietnamese pioneers [Những người Việt Nam đi tiên phong]*. Tre Publishing House.
- 11) Li Tana (1998). *Nguyen Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the 17th and 18th Centuries*. Cornell University Ithaca New York
- 12) Nguyen Hong Phong (1999). *Vietnamese political culture, traditional and modern*. [Văn hóa chính trị Việt Nam, truyền thống và hiện đại]. Information an Communications Publishing House.
- 13) Nguyen Quang Vinh, Tran Huu Quang (2009). *Entrepreneurs and Corporate culture [Doanh nhân và văn hóa kinh doanh]*. Vietnam: Hochiminh City Publishing House.
- 14) Nguyen Quang Ngoc (1993). *About some trading villages in the Northern Delta in the 18th and 19th centuries*. [Về một số làng buôn ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ thế kỷ XVIII-XIX]. Vietnam Association of Historical Sciences.
- 15) Nguyen Thanh Tuyen (2019). *Ancient Vietnamese traders – Issues, characters, anecdotes*. [Thương nhân Việt Nam thời xưa – Vấn đề, nhân vật, giai thoại]. Vietnam: Saigon Cultural Publishing House.
- 16) Nguyen Van Xuan (2000). *Duy Tan movement [Phong trào Duy Tân]*. Da Nang Publishing House.
- 17) O'Donovan, Gabrielle (2006). *The Corporate Culture Handbook: How to Plan, Implement and Measure a Successful Culture Change Programme*. The Liffey Press, ISBN 1-904148-97-2
- 18) Phạm Xuân Nam (chủ biên, 2005). *Culture and development [Văn hóa và phát triển]*. Vietnam: Social Sciences Publishing House.
- 19) Phan Nai Viet (1994). *Confucius with modern management and business ideas [Khổng tử với tư tưởng quản lý và kinh doanh hiện đại]*. Tre Publishing House.
- 20) Rowan Gibson (1999). *Rethinking the Future [Tư duy lại tương lai]*. Tre Publishing House.
- 21) Sơn Nam (1971). *Heaven and earth association and the Minh Tan [Thiên địa hội và cuộc Minh Tân]*. Phu Sa Publishing House.
- 22) Thich Dai San (1963). *Overseas Memoirs [Hải Ngoại Ký sự]*. Vol. 3. Hue University.
- 23) Tran Dinh Huou (1996). *Coming to modernity from tradition [Đến hiện đại từ truyền thống]*. Vietnam: Culture Of Vietnamese Ethnic Groups Publishing House One Member Company Limited.
- 24) Tran Thai Binh (2001). *Understanding Vietnamese history [Tìm hiểu lịch sử Việt Nam]*. Culture Of Vietnamese Ethnic Groups Publishing House One Member Company Limited.
- 25) Vuong Thieu Tuong – Luu Van Tri (1999). *Chinese Merchants – Who were they? [Thương nhân Trung Hoa – Họ là ai?]*. Tre Publishing House.
- 26) Vu Minh Giang (2019). *Brief history of Southern Vietnam [Lược sử vùng đất Nam Bộ Việt Nam]*. Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City Press.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.