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VIETNAM'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ORIENTATION: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES AT VINH LONG UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

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Abstract: This article examines the perspectives and foreign affairs tasks of the Party and State of Vietnam in the process of international integration, while consistently adhering to the principles of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation, and development. Vietnam's international relations strategy prioritises national interests and simultaneously promotes multilateralisation and diversification of partnerships to maintain a stable environment for national development. This approach enables the country to adapt flexibly to global changes and to strengthen its role and position in the international arena. However, several limitations remain, including the need to innovate foreign policy thinking, enhance integration capacity, and improve responses to increasingly complex non-traditional challenges. The study employs a qualitative method, combining document analysis and a case study of Vinh Long University of Technology Education (VLUTE), drawing on Party Congress documents, thematic resolutions, and professional reports. VLUTE has applied national foreign policy in expanding international cooperation in education, research, and community engagement. These efforts are presented as contributing to human resource quality and sustainable development in the Mekong Delta region. The study illustrates how national foreign policy can be implemented at the institutional level; the evidence presented is descriptive and does not measure local impact.

Keywords: Vietnam's foreign affairs, international integration, international cooperation, higher education, VLUTE.

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INTRODUCTION

Since implementing the Doi Moi policy in 1986, Vietnam has consistently pursued an international relations strategy based on the principles of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and development, with a focus on multilateralisation, diversification of international relations and active participation in the process of extensive globalisation (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021; Thayer, 2010a). Guided by these principles, Vietnamese organisations, including higher education institutions, have been called upon to play a more active role in promoting national foreign policy goals, not only at the national level but also through grassroots and community-level initiatives (Nguyen Vu Tung, 2020; Le Dinh Tinh, 2023; Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen, 2022a).

Higher education institutions serve as important platforms for international cooperation, knowledge transfer, and inclusive growth (World Bank, 2020a; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021; UNESCO, 2022). In this context, VLUTE has emerged as a prominent example of a local university actively contributing to the implementation of Vietnam's foreign policy goals. Through various international partnerships, community service projects, and capacity building programmes, VLUTE has strived to enhance Vietnam's international image, promote educational diplomacy, and support sustainable development at the local level (Vinh Long University of Technology Education, 2023; Nguyen Van Thoai, 2021). This study explores the specific ways in which VLUTE has realised Vietnam's international relations orientation at the grassroots level over the past decade. The paper analyses the university's strategies, achievements and challenges in international cooperation and community engagement. Through qualitative research methods, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between higher education and the implementation of international relations orientation in Vietnam, especially in the context of volatile regional and global contexts (Vuving, 2016; Thayer, 2010b). Although there have been many research works clarifying Vietnam's foreign affairs and international integration orientation, to have a deeper insight, it is necessary to analyse in detail some typical works.

The diversification and multilateralisation described in the introduction are not presented in the recent literature as a purely bilateral story. Studies of Vietnam's external relations place the diversification of partners alongside a deliberate deepening of multilateral engagement, in which regional institutions provide both a venue for influence and a constraint on major-power pressure (Goh, 2008; Vuving, 2006). Within the Mekong subregion, cooperative mechanisms are treated as a practical extension of the same orientation, linking national development needs with neighbouring countries through shared institutions rather than through ad hoc bilateral ties alone (Thu & Tinh, 2019). A national-interest reading of Vietnam's ASEAN policy over the period 1986-2020 likewise finds continuity in the search for a stable external environment, with ASEAN membership serving as a framework for balancing partnerships rather than as an alternative to them (Ho & Tran, 2023).

This article addresses three research questions. First, how has Vietnam's international relations orientation developed since Doi Moi, and what principles and tasks have successive Party Congresses set for it? Second, what achievements and limitations have marked the implementation of that orientation at national level? Third, how has VLUTE implemented the national orientation in international cooperation and community service, and what does that practice show about implementation at institutional level?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vietnam's international relations orientation during the renovation period has been deeply analysed by many research works, clarifying the process of formation, development and adaptation in the context of globalisation. According to the Document of the 13th National Congress (Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021), Vietnam continues to adhere to an independent and self-reliant foreign policy, while proactively and actively integrating internationally to enhance the country's position in the context of globalisation and the 2021 Diplomatic White Paper (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021) emphasises that Vietnam has made a strong transformation in expanding international

relations, becoming a reliable partner of many countries and international organisations. Research by Le Dinh Tinh (2023) suggests that, in the context of strategic competition between major powers, Vietnam needs to strongly develop digital diplomacy and diversify its national image to maintain strategic interests and security. According to Nguyen Vu Tung (2020), the process of renewing Vietnam's foreign policy thinking has contributed to creating a more dynamic and proactive national image in the international arena, especially in the fields of economic cooperation and multilateral diplomacy. And as Thayer (2010a) analysed, Vietnam's foreign policy has proactively adapted to the challenges of globalisation by diversifying partners, deeply participating in multilateral mechanisms to increase strategic influence, showing that Vietnam responds to the challenges of globalisation through a multilateral international relations orientation, diversifying foreign relations, expanding cooperation with many countries and international organisations, while maintaining the principles of independence, autonomy and non-military alignment, discussing current and future challenges to Vietnam's international relations orientation, including tensions in the East Sea and competition between major powers.

The regional-order literature gives that account a comparative anchor. ASEAN centrality is described as a practice of keeping regional institutions at the centre of security cooperation even as major-power rivalry intensifies, with continuity in ASEAN's role since 1967 resting on institutional habits rather than on any single chairmanship or summit (Rolls, 2011; Kamasa, 2017). At the same time, the pressures on that centrality are visible at domestic level: anti-China protests in Vietnam have interacted with foreign policy towards China over the South China Sea, showing that public sentiment can narrow the room for diplomatic manoeuvre even where official policy seeks stability (Hoang, 2019). Direct clashes in the South China Sea have likewise been assessed as tests of crisis management rather than as isolated incidents, with implications for how Vietnam calibrates firmness and restraint in the same waters (Tseng, 2014).

In the domain of education, the Ministry of Education and Training (2022a) underscored the pivotal significance of international collaboration in enhancing the calibre of both training and scientific inquiry. Investigations conducted by Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen (2022a) indicate that international integration within Vietnam's higher education sector is not only generating numerous avenues for collaborative endeavours but concurrently presenting substantial challenges regarding the standards of training and the quality of scientific research. The World Bank report (2020a) articulates that the linkage between higher education and the global labour market constitutes a fundamental element facilitating Vietnam's enhancement of its international competitiveness and sustainable development. UNESCO (2022) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021) advocate that Vietnam ought to capitalise on advancements in digital technology to facilitate the transformation of higher education, thereby addressing the escalating demands of the global labour market. Vuving (2016) stated that closely combining foreign policy with domestic economic development strategy will be the key for Vietnam to ensure sustainable growth in a volatile international environment. In that context, local universities such as VLUTE (2023) play an increasingly important role in concretising the national international relations strategy through international cooperation activities in training, research, technology transfer and community service. The report by Nguyen Van Thoai (2021) also

emphasised the role of local universities in promoting regional development associated with the international integration strategy.

Internationalisation in higher education is defined in the literature as a process that integrates an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, with rationales that run from academic quality and student learning to institutional profile and national economic competitiveness (Knight, 2004). The motivations for that process are not uniform across institutions: Altbach and Knight (2007) distinguish between motives centred on quality and learning and motives centred on revenue and reputation, a distinction that matters for a local university whose partnerships are presented mainly in terms of training quality and technology transfer. In Vietnam, the internationalisation of the curriculum has been documented as uneven, with evidence from Vietnam National University of Hanoi showing that curricular change depends heavily on institutional capacity and staff readiness rather than on policy statements alone (Duong, 2013). A chapter on internationalisation in Vietnamese higher education reaches a similar conclusion at system level, tracing how policy encouragement, institutional initiative, and resource constraints interact (Tran, Marginson, & Nguyen, 2014). Skills development in Vietnamese higher education is likewise tied to labour-market alignment, with employers' expectations placing pressure on universities to combine disciplinary training with transferable skills (Trung & Swierczek, 2009).

Digital transformation is treated in recent Vietnamese studies as a further layer of that internationalisation agenda rather than as a separate technical project. Surveys of digital transformation in Vietnamese higher education describe the adoption of online platforms, digital administration, and technology-enhanced teaching as responses to both domestic reform demands and the expectations of international partners (Hai, 2022; Uoc, 2023). For a local university, that layer matters because joint programmes, online meetings, and exchange arrangements increasingly depend on digital infrastructure, and gaps in that infrastructure can limit the reach of otherwise well-established partnerships.

These activities not only contribute to training high-quality human resources but also affirm the role of education in enhancing global connectivity and integration, making practical contributions to promoting comprehensive growth and enhancing the country's position in the international arena.

The above studies have contributed to clarifying Vietnam's foreign policy orientation and international integration process. However, to have a more comprehensive and in-depth view, analysing typical works is necessary.

One interpretive lens that recurs in the discussion of flexible implementation is adaptive governance, understood as the capacity of institutions to combine stable core commitments with learning, experimentation, and adjustment in response to changing conditions (Folke, Hahn, Olsson, & Norberg, 2005). In social-ecological systems, adaptive governance is presented as a way of holding together long-term goals and short-term adaptation without treating either as sufficient on its own (Folke, 2006). A general framework for analysing the sustainability of social-ecological systems makes a related point at a more abstract level: outcomes depend on interactions among resource systems, governance systems, and users, so that a single policy instrument rarely explains success or failure (Ostrom, 2009). That lens is used in this article only as an interpretive frame for reading continuity and flexibility

together; it is not tested as a hypothesis, and no comparative evidence is presented for other countries.

Based on the presented research, this article delves into analysing how Vinh Long University of Technology Education applies Vietnam's foreign policy orientation into practice.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method, combining document analysis and case study approaches. Primary sources include documents from the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Vietnamese Government, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding foreign policy strategies. Additionally, secondary sources such as scientific journals, international reports, and specialised literature are consulted to contextualise Vietnam's international relations orientation within a broader framework. The case study approach is applied to evaluate practical implementation at VLUTE through the analysis of reports, community activities, and cooperation agreements. This mixed approach aims to ensure a comprehensive perspective on both theoretical and practical foundations.

The limits of a single-institution case built on documents and activity lists should be stated plainly. Partnership literature emphasises that campus-community partnerships are judged by the terms of engagement, including shared goals, reciprocity, and sustained commitment, rather than by the number of partners named (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Studies of university-community engagement likewise distinguish between the benefits claimed for engagement and the evidence available for those benefits, noting that challenges and uneven outcomes are common even in well-established programmes (Desta & Belay, 2018). Those cautions apply directly to the VLUTE material below, which lists partners and activities without dates, counts, or outcome measures. The case is therefore read as an illustration of how a local university organises cooperation and service, not as a measurement of their effects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Foreign Affairs Viewpoints And Tasks Of The Party And State Of Vietnam

Based on the identified foreign policy interests and goals, the Communist Party of Vietnam has set out the guiding ideology of foreign policy to uphold the principles of independence, unity and socialism, while at the same time being very creative, dynamic, flexible, suitable to the position, conditions and specific circumstances of Vietnam, as well as developments in the world and regional situation, suitable to each subject with which Vietnam has relations (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001).

In the face of the complicated developments of the world and regional situation in the early 21st century, the 8th Central Conference of the 9th tenure supplemented and deepened the guiding ideology of foreign policy with the viewpoint: "In any situation, avoid falling into confrontation, isolation or dependence, consolidate peace, security, create a favourable environment for national development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2003).

The 10th Party Congress continued to deepen the guiding ideology of foreign affairs by affirming the viewpoint: "Consistently implement the strategy of independent, self-reliant, peaceful, cooperative and developing international relations; orient international relations to

be open, multilateral and diversified. Proactively and actively integrate into the international economy, while expanding international cooperation in other fields. Vietnam is a friend and reliable partner of countries in the international community, actively participating in the process of international and regional cooperation" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2006). The viewpoint of the 10th Congress, inherited, supplemented and developed more comprehensively by the 11th Party Congress, determined: "Consistently implement the strategy of independent, self-reliant, peaceful, cooperative and developmental international relations; multilateralize and diversify foreign relations; proactively and actively integrate into the international community; enhance the country's position; for the interests of the nation and people, for a strong socialist Vietnam; be a friend, reliable partner and responsible member of the international community" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011).

Thoroughly grasping the above viewpoints is an important basis for protecting the supreme interests of the nation and people in foreign affairs and international integration, first of all maintaining peace, independence, autonomy, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and socialist orientation. On the other hand, Vietnam can continue to expand foreign relations, increase its influence in the international arena, and take advantage of external resources such as investment capital, modern science and technology, and advanced management experience, serving the construction and promotion of comprehensive growth, and defending the Fatherland.

On the basis of the country's new position and strength, the 11th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam emphasised the viewpoint of enhancing Vietnam's proactiveness and positivity in the increasingly complete and comprehensive international integration process, not only in the economic field but also in other fields. Vietnam also demonstrates a high sense of responsibility in participating in solving regional and international issues, thereby being able to play the role of an active member of the international community, striving for peace, cooperation and development. From the results of the implementation of the international integration process in recent years, the 12th National Party Congress clearly affirmed the guiding ideology of ensuring international integration as the cause of the entire people and the entire political system, promoting integration on the basis of maximising internal resources, closely connecting and promoting the process of enhancing the country's overall strength and competitiveness; economic integration is the focus, integration in other fields must facilitate economic integration; integration is a process of both cooperation and struggle, proactively forecasting and flexibly handling all situations, not falling into a passive, confrontational, and disadvantageous position.

In the new situation, the 13th National Party Congress emphasised the guiding viewpoints:

Firmly apply and creatively develop Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought; firmly adhere to the goal of national independence and socialism; firmly adhere to the Party's renewal policy; firmly adhere to the principles of Party building to firmly build and defend the socialist Fatherland of Vietnam.

Highly ensure national and ethnic interests on the basis of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, equality, cooperation, and mutual benefit. Continue to develop the country rapidly and sustainably; closely link and synchronously implement tasks, in which promoting comprehensive growth is the centre; Party building is

the key; cultural development is the spiritual foundation; ensuring national defense and security is essential and regular.

Strongly arouse the spirit of patriotism, the will of national self-reliance, the strength of great national unity and the aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country; promote socialist democracy, the combined strength of the entire political system and of Vietnamese culture and people, foster people's strength, improve the quality of human resources, have breakthrough mechanisms to attract and make good use of talents, promote innovation, strongly apply science and technology, especially the achievements of the fourth industrial revolution, create strong momentum for rapid and sustainable development.

Combine national strength with the strength of the times; uphold the will of independence, self-reliance, proactiveness, actively integrate and improve the effectiveness of international cooperation; maximize internal resources, take advantage of external resources, in which internal resources, especially human resources, are the most important.

Strengthen Party building and rectification, promote the nature of the Party's working class, improve the leadership capacity, governing capacity and fighting strength of the Party; build a clean and strong Party and political system in all aspects, build a streamlined State that operates effectively and efficiently; associated with streamlining the payroll, improving the quality and restructuring the team of cadres, civil servants and public employees; building a team of cadres and party members, especially a team of strategic-level cadres and leaders with sufficient qualities, capacity and prestige, equal to the task, closely attached to the people are factors that are decisive for the success of the cause of national construction, development and defense of the Fatherland (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

Foreign Affairs Tasks Of The Party And State Of Vietnam

During the period of renovation, the Party and State of Vietnam have consistently identified foreign affairs tasks, the basic content of which continues to be reaffirmed:

In the 11th Congress Document, it is "Maintaining a stable and safe atmosphere, favourable for promoting industrialization and modernization, firmly protecting independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity; enhancing the country's position" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011).

The 12th Congress determined and specified this basic content, which is: "maintaining a stable and safe atmosphere, making the most of external resources to develop the country, improve people's lives; resolutely and persistently fighting to firmly protect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Fatherland, protect the Party, State, people and socialist regime; enhancing the country's position and prestige and contributing to the cause of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress in the world". The foreign affairs mission clearly states the requirement for foreign affairs activities to first of all protect national interests, create a peaceful and stable environment to serve the cause of construction, promote comprehensive growth and protect the Fatherland. However, prioritising national interests does not mean abandoning true internationalism, but also contributes to fulfilling the international obligations of the Party and State of Vietnam in the context of the Communist Party of Vietnam and its ability to adapt to revolutionary and progressive forces in the world, fighting for the goals of the times: peace,

national independence, democracy and social progress (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016). The 12th Congress also pointed out a number of specific tasks in foreign affairs:

Improve the effectiveness of foreign affairs activities, continue to deepen cooperative relationships.

Improve the effectiveness of international economic integration, fully implement international commitments, develop and implement strategies to participate in free trade areas with important economic and trade partners, sign and effectively implement new-generation free trade agreements in a master plan with a reasonable roadmap, in line with the country's interests.

Promote international integration in the fields of culture, society, science-technology, education-training.

Enhance the quality and role of multilateral foreign affairs, to engage proactively and have a tangible input on the reformulation of multilateral institutions.

Firmly combat and resolutely eliminate any attempt to meddle in the internal affairs of Viet Nam, challenge the sovereignty, independency, territorial integrity, political stability and national security of our country (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016).

Completing the delimitation of the country borders in land, intensifying the settlement of maritime disputes referring to basic norms of international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the regional code of conduct at both mechanism levels.

Actively and proactively engage in multilateral platforms for defence and security cooperation, including [Geographical coverage], participation in additional higher-level cooperation activities such as UN peace operations, non-traditional security exercises and etc.

Key tasks during the 13th Congress term:

Continue to promote Party building and rectification, build a socialist rule-of-law State and a comprehensive, clean and strong political system. Innovate the Party's leadership and governance methods. Build a streamlined political system that operates effectively and efficiently. Continue to promote the fight against bureaucracy, corruption, waste, negativity, "group interests", manifestations of "self-evolution" and "self-transformation" within the Party. Build a contingent of Party members and cadres at all levels, especially at the strategic level, with leaders who have sufficient qualities, capacity, prestige, and are up to the task. Strengthen the people's trust and attachment to the Party, the State and the socialist regime. Focus on controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, mass vaccination of the community with COVID-19 vaccines; recover, promote comprehensive growth, strongly innovate the growth model, restructure the economy, build and perfect a synchronous development institution suitable for a full, modern, integrated market economy; develop synchronously and create linkages between regions, areas, economic sectors, and types of production and business; have policies to effectively support enterprises in agriculture; promote research, transfer, application of scientific and technological advances, innovation, especially achievements of the fourth industrial revolution, carry out national digital transformation, develop the digital economy, improve productivity, quality, efficiency, and competitiveness of the economy; mobilize, allocate, and effectively use resources, create momentum for rapid and sustainable economic development; perfect the legal system, especially laws on intellectual property

protection and settlement of civil disputes, and overcome bottlenecks that hinder the country's development. Maintain independence and self-reliance, continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of foreign affairs and international integration activities; strengthen national defense and security potential, build a revolutionary, disciplined, elite, and gradually modern People's Army and People's Public Security, with some forces advancing straight to modernity, creating a solid foundation to strive by 2030 to build a revolutionary, disciplined, elite, and modern People's Army and People's Public Security; resolutely and persistently defend independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, seas, islands, and airspace; maintain a peaceful and stable environment for national development. Arouse the aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country; promote cultural values and the strength of the Vietnamese people in the cause of building and defending the Fatherland and international integration; have specific policies to develop the culture of ethnic minorities; Implement social policies well, ensure social security and human security, create strong changes in social development management, achieve social progress and equity, improve the quality of life and happiness index of Vietnamese people.

Perfecting the legal system, mechanisms and policies to promote socialist democracy and people's mastery; at the same time, building a clean and strong socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam; reforming the judiciary, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring social discipline, first of all, exemplary compliance with the law, practicing socialist democracy of Party committees, Party organisations, authorities, the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organisations at all levels, of cadres and Party members; strengthening national solidarity.

Strictly manage, rationally and effectively use land and resources; protect and improve the environment; proactively and actively implement solutions to adapt to climate change and severe natural disasters.

The 13th Congress term emphasized: Continuing to improve the effectiveness of foreign affairs and international integration; maintaining a stable, safe and stable atmosphere for development; strengthening national defense and security potential; Developing the digital economy and promoting national digital transformation (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

Achievements In The Process Of Implementing International Relations Orientation

The implementation of the Party and State's international relations orientation has achieved many achievements, notably:

There has been a fundamental change in the strategic approach to building and defending the Fatherland in the context of globalisation and international integration; the goals, guiding viewpoints and major orientations on international integration have been increasingly clarified and specified; many policies and orientations on international integration have achieved high consensus within the entire Party and the entire people. The capacity of the staff from the central to local levels has been improved; the organisation and apparatus of state management agencies on international integration have been strengthened. The Vietnamese business community has matured (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

International integration has become one of the important driving forces for promoting comprehensive growth, contributing to strengthening the comprehensive national potential. The socialist-oriented market economy institution and the legal system have been increasingly improved; the national and business competitiveness have been enhanced; expand the market, attract large amounts of investment capital, knowledge, technology and other important resources; promote the image of the country and people of Vietnam, contributing to improving the intellectual level and material and spiritual life of the people (Ministry of Education and Training, 2022a).

Our country's relations with partners around the world are increasingly expanding and deepening. "To date, Vietnam has established diplomatic relations with 187 countries, economic relations with more than 224 countries and territories, becoming a member of most important regional and international organisations, including strategic partnerships with 15 countries and comprehensive strategic partnerships with 10 countries; is a member of most important regional and international organisations with increasingly enhanced position and role: Joining ASEAN (1995), joining AFTA (1996), being a founding member of ASEM (1996), joining APEC (1998), becoming the 150th member of the WTO (2007), joining TPP (2015), etc. Foreign affairs activities serving economic development have received special attention and promotion from the Party and the State. To date, Vietnam has attracted nearly 20,000 FDI projects with a total registered capital exceeding 240 billion USD. In addition to the main markets of Japan, China, Korea, the European Union (EU), the United States, ASEAN, Australia, etc., Vietnamese goods have now expanded to strengthen their position in many other markets such as Russia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

Table 1. National partnership and investment figures as reported

Indicator	Figure as reported
Diplomatic relations	187 countries
Economic relations	More than 224 countries and territories
Strategic partnerships	15 countries
Comprehensive strategic partnerships	10 countries
Foreign direct investment projects	Nearly 20,000 projects
Total registered capital	Exceeding 240 billion USD

Note: *The figures in Table 1 are reproduced exactly as reported in the article. The only source cited for the passage is the 2021 diplomatic white paper (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021); the figures are therefore presented as 2021-sourced figures, not as updated figures for 2026, and they have not been independently verified in this article.*

Trade integration through new-generation agreements is one part of that achievement story that has been studied in its own right. Research on Vietnam's trade under the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership finds both opportunities in market access and challenges in meeting deeper commitments on labour, environment, and regulatory standards (Le, 2022). That finding is consistent with the article's own emphasis on implementation capacity: signing an agreement and realising its benefits are presented as

different tasks, and the gap between them is where institutional reform and human resource development become decisive.

Vietnam's multilateral diplomatic activities have grown and developed remarkably. At international and regional forums, Vietnam has coordinated with many countries to fight for peace, protect the basic principles of international law and the United Nations Charter. Notably, Vietnam was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2008-2009 term; in 2013, the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly voted to elect 14 new member countries of the Human Rights Council for the 2014-2016 term and Vietnam was elected with the highest number of votes, marking Vietnam's international integration process becoming more complete and extensive. With its increasingly enhanced international position, Vietnam has favourable conditions to participate in solving economic, political-social, and international security issues that are directly or indirectly related, while contributing more actively and more to the efforts to maintain peace, stability, and development in the world (Nguyen Vu Tung, 2020; Vuving, 2016).

Along with the foreign affairs activities of the Party and the State, the foreign affairs activities of organisations, people's unions, localities, and defense and security have also taken place vigorously with many rich and diverse forms. Friendship organisations and professional associations have taken advantage of increasingly deep cooperation with foreign partners. The solidarity between the Vietnamese people and people of countries around the world has been strongly strengthened. Never before has Vietnam's foreign relations been as expanded and developed as they are today.

Foreign affairs activities have played an important role in promoting comprehensive growth, maintaining independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country, maintaining political security and social order and safety; improving people's lives; enhancing Vietnam's prestige and position in the international arena.

Assessing after 5 years of implementing the Resolution of the 12th National Congress, the 13th National Congress affirmed: "Foreign relations and international integration continue to expand and deepen, creating a framework for stable and sustainable relations with partners. Proactively participating in building principles and standards in regional and global multilateral institutions" (Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). Foreign affairs have stood side by side with the entire political system and the entire people, effectively implementing major political tasks throughout the past term.

Some Difficulties And Limitations

In addition to the achieved results, there are still many limitations and weaknesses, notably:

The Party's policies, especially the guiding viewpoints on the integration process, have not been fully grasped and seriously and promptly implemented. The implementation is still affected by one-sided, short-term approaches and local interests, thus failing to take full advantage of opportunities and effectively respond to challenges from international integration.

The process of international integration and the process of innovation, especially institutional innovation in the country, have not been carried out synchronously. Integration has not been

closely linked with the process of enhancing competitiveness, the requirement of strengthening national defense, protecting political security and social order and safety, preserving and promoting national cultural identity. Therefore, integration has caused negative impacts on the country's internal strength, contributing to aggravating social issues, especially the polarization between rich and poor, regions, areas, and ecological environment.

A stable position, intertwined interests and long-term interdependence in relations with partners, especially important partners for the country's security and development, have not been established. The ability to handle economic, political, security and cultural impacts from fluctuations in the regional and international environment from outside has not been fundamentally improved. International economic integration and integration in all other fields have not been carried out synchronously on the basis of a common integration strategy associated with a strategy to promote comprehensive growth and protect the Fatherland. In the coming time, the regional and world situation will continue to develop unpredictably and become more complicated in many aspects. Our country has become a low-middle income country, and the opportunity to access favourable conditions in terms of markets and international capital sources is no longer the same as before. Vietnam must fully implement its commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and implement new economic and trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), with a broader and deeper scope and level of commitment than all previous agreements. International integration poses new opportunities and challenges: The 13th Congress also frankly admitted: "Foreign affairs and international integration activities are present, but at times they have not kept up with developments in the situation and have not fully anticipated adverse impacts. We have not yet effectively exploited and promoted the intertwined interests with important partners. Coordination between sectors and localities in foreign affairs is not close and regular".

The difficulties described at national level have counterparts in the regional literature. Hierarchical order in Southeast Asia is analysed as a system in which smaller states manage major-power pressure through institutional hedging and diversified partnerships, a strategy that reduces dependence on any single partner without removing the underlying asymmetry (Goh, 2008). For Vietnam, that asymmetry is most visible in the South China Sea, where domestic protest and crisis management interact with official policy (Hoang, 2019; Tseng, 2014). Those studies do not contradict the article's list of limitations; they give the coordination and forecasting gaps a concrete setting, showing why synchronised implementation across sectors and localities is presented in the article as a continuing weakness rather than as a solved problem.

Implementation Practice At VLUTE

Regarding foreign affairs activities, the Party Committee, the School Council, and the School Board thoroughly grasp and implement them among all lecturers, managers, employees, students, trainees, postgraduates, and in all activities of VLUTE.

International cooperation and integration in education and training is one of the core tasks of VLUTE. In recent years, this work has been proactively carried out, contributing to enriching and deepening the School's foreign affairs activities, in which people's foreign affairs are mainly International Cooperation and Community Service.

Some International Cooperation Achievements Of VLUTE

VLUTE cooperates with many professional organisations, universities, and many business corporations to build and develop many joint training programmes, joint training programmes, and academic exchanges signed with foreign partners such as: cooperation with TONGMYONG University, CHOSUN University, YOUNGSAN University, AMU, CHINAN... joint training programmes not only bring greater opportunities for learners but also contribute to the transfer of training technology and management models for the School. VLUTE has cooperated with foreign partners in implementing scientific research activities, organizing annual international scientific conferences: Receiving BENGUET University, TOKUYAMA University, Tongmyong University (Korea), Koreatech University (Korea), CHOSUN University, KOICA, JEONJU University, Aix-Marseille University (France), TOKUYAMA, SKILL, ATLANTIC CANADA College, RAJAMANGALA, RMUTL, receiving IBARAKI delegation, receiving KSSA, SERACO company, TOWA company, SENECA, SI, KOREATECH, TOWN ACTIVITY COMMONST...

National projects on technical education and vocational training, international projects on building facilities and developing teaching methods such as Switcontact Project, Inwent Project, APEFE & IOF Project..

Student exchange with foreign universities, training for Lao students, Strengthening cooperation in training and receiving students of the School to work at companies abroad, Working with the Korean Ministry of Labor and Employment, Working with KOICA, Working with TU, SKILL online meeting, Celebrating 46 years of Vietnam-Japan

The School's postgraduates, trainees, and students are able to study, experience exchange abroad or go to businesses and organisations abroad for internships and experiences. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, every year, the School had lecturers studying in Thailand, working in Korea, Malaysia, Japan, New Zealand.

Read against the internationalisation literature, VLUTE's list of partners and exchanges is best understood as an input-level account: it shows the breadth of contacts through which joint training, research cooperation, and staff and student mobility are organised, while saying nothing about the quality or outcomes of any single partnership. Knight (2004) and Altbach and Knight (2007) both warn that breadth of partnership is a weak proxy for internationalisation outcomes, and the Vietnamese evidence on curricular change and skills alignment points in the same direction, with institutional capacity deciding how far a partnership changes teaching and learning (Duong, 2013; Tran, Marginson, & Nguyen, 2014; Trung & Swierczek, 2009). The VLUTE account should therefore be read as a record of activity, with outcome evaluation still to be done.

Some Achievements In Community Service

Donating tablets, Donating disinfectants, Children's summer camp, Giving gifts to Tan My Social Protection Center, Handing over high-tech mosquito net houses, Giving houses of gratitude, Children's summer camp, Pair of loving leaves, Donating stone benches to Song Phu High School - Tam Binh District - Vinh Long Province, Spring volunteering, Giving gifts to Tan My Social Protection Center, Giving gifts to cadres and union members in difficult

circumstances, Supporting students who are still staying at a dormitory due to Covid, Donating blood and supporting the Vaccine Fund...

Community service of this kind is the element of VLUTE's practice that most closely matches the partnership literature. International service-learning and community engagement are defined by reciprocity between university and community, with benefits claimed for students, institutions, and host communities alike (Ó Donnchadha & Ma, 2016; Finley, 2021). More recent work on community-campus engagement stresses that relationships and partnerships evolve over time and must be assessed on the quality of the relationship, not only on the volume of activity (Kniffin et al., 2020). Those standards are the reason the limitations section below treats the VLUTE activity list as descriptive: the activities are documented, but the terms of engagement, the beneficiaries' perspectives, and the durability of each activity are not reported in the article.



Figure 1. Awarding scholarships and learning equipment



Figure 2. Waves and computers for kids



Figure 3. Donating a tablet


Figure 4. Free sterilizer



Figure 5. Handover of high-tech greenhouse



Figure 6. Giving away charity houses


Figure 7. Children's summer camp


Figure 8. Pair of love leaves



Figure 9. Donating stone benches to Song Phu High School - Vinh Long province



Figure 10. Spring Volunteer



Figure 11. Giving gifts to Tan My Social Protection Center



Figure 12. Giving gifts to cadres and union members in difficult circumstances



Figure 13. Support for students still staying at boarding houses due to Covid



Figure 14. Blood donation and vaccine fund support

It can be affirmed that the achievements in foreign affairs of VLUTE during the development journey of more than 65 years have contributed significantly to the association, cooperation and companionship of international organizations, universities, enterprises and other international partners. VLUTE has many methods, forms and diverse models of cooperation and association with international partners in training high-quality human resources, in scientific research and knowledge transfer, in training and supporting enterprises and many other community support activities.

The regional setting for that claim is the Mekong Delta, where sustainable development is presented as depending on the interaction between industrial growth, environmental management, and human resource development rather than on any one of those factors alone (Nguyen & Ye, 2015). Mekong cooperative mechanisms are likewise treated as instruments through which a local institution's external ties can connect to a wider subregional agenda (Thu & Tinh, 2019). Those studies do not supply the missing VLUTE evidence; they show why the article's closing claim about regional development is framed as a contribution to a larger

process, and why it cannot be read as a measured regional outcome on the basis of the activity list alone.

LIMITATIONS

This article is a descriptive policy survey combined with a single-institution case sketch, and its limits follow directly from that design. The method section names document analysis and a case study but gives no corpus list, no inclusion or exclusion criteria, no date range for the documents or the case, no coding or analysis steps, and no information on informants or sampling. Readers therefore cannot reproduce the selection of sources or test how the conclusions were drawn from them.

One passage in the body remains unfinished as published. In the list of 12th Congress foreign affairs tasks, one item contains a bracketed placeholder, [Geographical coverage], where a geographic term should stand. The intended wording cannot be recovered from the article, and no term has been supplied in this version. The item should be corrected by the author before the passage is relied on.

The national figures in the achievements section are presented as reported and are sourced only to the 2021 diplomatic white paper. They are not updated figures for 2026, and they have not been independently verified in this article. The same caution applies to the membership history, including the 2015 partnership milestone, whose wording should be confirmed by the author, and to the statement that VLUTE's development journey spans more than 65 years, for which no founding date or source is given in the article.

The VLUTE evidence is limited to lists of partner names, programmes, and activities. Several partner names are truncated mid-word, full legal names, countries, and agreement dates are not given, and no date, count, budget, cohort size, or outcome measure is reported for any cooperation or community-service activity. The 14 photographs carry no date, place, photographer, source credit, or permission note. The impact claims in the abstract and conclusion, concerning human resource quality and sustainable regional development, therefore have no quantitative anchor in the body of the article.

No VLUTE-specific challenges section is presented, although the title promises challenges alongside implementation practices. The limitations discussed in the body are national-level limitations. The adaptive-governance reading and the comparison with other ASEAN countries that appear in the conclusion are interpretive comments; no comparative ASEAN evidence and no tested framework are presented in the body, and those points should not be read as findings of a comparative design.

CONCLUSION

Research on the implementation of Vietnam's international relations orientation during the Doi Moi period has suggested three main points. The three points below answer the research questions in order: the first addresses the development and principles of the national orientation, the second addresses national achievements and limitations, and the third addresses VLUTE implementation.

First, Vietnam's foreign policy orientation demonstrates steadfastness in principles while being able to adapt flexibly. Persisting in the values of independence, self-reliance, peace,

cooperation and development, while proactively adjusting to international fluctuations, shows creative application in practice. This is consistent with adaptive governance theory, emphasizing that in a rapidly changing world, the combination of core values and strategic flexibility is the key factor to ensure sustainable development.

Second, the implementation of foreign policy still has limitations. Some policies have not been thoroughly implemented synchronously, and the capacity to handle international challenges is not commensurate with practical requirements. This reflects the common difficulties that many countries in the ASEAN region are also facing, when policy synchronization and strengthening of strategic forecasting capacity are not really effective.

Third, practical experience from Vinh Long University of Technology Education shows that the concretization of foreign policy through international cooperation in training, research and community service has brought many practical results. Thereby contributing to improving the quality of human resources and the ability to integrate internationally, in line with the trend of internationalisation of higher education in the context of globalization.

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