

Cultural - Educational Cooperation of Taiwan - Vietnam Under the New Southbound Policy: Assessments and Prospects in the 3rd Decade of the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Since 2016, Taiwan has implemented the New Southbound Policy, pivoting its cooperation across all sectors with Southeast Asia, with Vietnam emerging as one of its key partners. This strategy stresses commerce while also emphasizing the vital role that cooperation in training and education plays in enhancing ties between Taiwan and Vietnam. The NSP has sought to utilize economics, culture, & education as means of reinforcing Taiwan's purpose of diplomatic expansion towards Southeast Asian nations in recent years. It highlights how joint activities, collaborations, and programs initiated by Taiwan and Vietnam align with the shared goals of the NSP. The article looks at a number of academic collaborations, cooperative research projects, and scholarship programs that have made it easier for academics and students to travel between them. It then makes comments on the potential and difficulties that the two sides may encounter in promoting cultural and educational cooperation in the 3rd decade of the 21st century.

Keywords- cultural cooperation, educational cooperation, NSP, soft power.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of China (Taiwan) previously maintained diplomatic ties with the former Republic of Vietnam, operating an Embassy in Saigon and a Consulate General in Da Nang. These offices ceased operations with the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on April 30, 1975 (TECO, 2016). In 1992, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Vietnam and the Taipei Economic Office in Ho Chi Minh City were established. The following year, in 1993, the Vietnam Economic and Cultural Office was opened in Taipei.

Before 2016, a significant Vietnamese community emerged in Taiwan during the 1990s and early 2000s, primarily driven by labor migration and international marriages. This community became an essential link for cultural exchange, introducing Vietnamese traditions, cuisine, and festivals to

Taiwanese society. To aid integration, the Taiwanese government and various NGOs implemented language-learning programs, organized cultural events, and promoted community-building activities. These efforts helped Vietnamese migrants adapt to Taiwanese society while fostering mutual understanding between the two communities. Cultural festivals, such as those showcasing Vietnamese music, dance, and cuisine, played a key role in highlighting Vietnamese culture in Taiwan. Meanwhile, Taiwanese cultural representatives who visited Vietnam helped share Taiwan's arts and traditions. Collaborative efforts in film and art further enriched this relationship by exploring shared cultural narratives and historical connections. In the 2000s and 2010s, economic relations were arguably the cornerstone of Taiwan-Vietnam ties, with Taiwan standing out as one of Vietnam's top foreign investors. Taiwanese investment in Vietnam surged as numerous Taiwanese companies relocated their operations there to benefit

from favorable conditions and reduced production costs. According to Vietnam's Foreign Investment Agency in Hanoi, foreign-invested sectors created over 200,000 jobs in 2008, eventually employing 1.4 million people, with Taiwan making a major contribution to job creation (Tingting Yang, 2017, p.24 - 25).

In the field of education, Taiwan had already established itself as a popular study destination for Vietnamese students before the NSP. Vietnamese students were attracted by Taiwan's high-quality education system, affordable tuition, and vocational training opportunities. Many pursued studies in key areas such as engineering, business, and technology. Taiwanese universities actively encouraged Vietnamese enrollment through scholarships and institutional partnerships. Notable initiatives included Taiwan's Ministry of Education programs, which provided financial support for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral studies. These were complemented by exchange programs aimed at fostering research collaboration, faculty mobility, and student exchanges. Technical and vocational training programs were also prominent, offering Vietnamese students and workers practical skills in industries like electronics and textiles. These collaborations supported the development of a skilled workforce for Taiwanese businesses operating in Vietnam. Moreover, partnerships between Taiwanese and Vietnamese universities focused on shared interests, such as agriculture and industrial innovation. NGOs also contributed to this educational cooperation by supporting Vietnamese-Taiwanese families with programs that provided supplementary education, language training, and cultural enrichment, ensuring cultural preservation and smooth integration for the children of Vietnamese immigrants in Taiwan.

However, before the implementation of the NSP in 2016, cultural and educational cooperation between Taiwan and Vietnam existed, but it was limited in both scale and structure. At that time, most educational exchanges were led by individual Taiwanese institutions aiming to attract foreign students, with a growing interest from Vietnamese students in Taiwan's affordable yet high-quality education, especially in fields like business, computer science, and engineering. These students were drawn to Taiwan's academic offerings, but, due to a lack of a coordinated policy, their options for study were relatively restricted. Opportunities were often limited to bilateral agreements between select universities or individual scholarships, meaning that only a handful of Vietnamese students could take advantage of these programs. Cultural exchange, meanwhile, was even more restricted. Although some informal interaction occurred, mainly through Vietnamese immigrant communities residing in Taiwan, there were few organized programs to foster deeper cultural understanding. Taiwan's presence in Southeast Asia, as studies on Taiwan-Vietnam relations have indicated, was primarily economically focused, with limited investment

in "soft power" initiatives that might support sustainable, person-to-person relationships such as cultural or educational exchanges (Chen, Taiwan's Outreach in Southeast Asia, 2014). Consequently, while some foundations for exchange between Taiwan and Vietnam existed, these were generally scattered and lacked the cohesive, strategic framework that the NSP would later bring to Taiwan-Vietnam relations, ultimately establishing more structured and supported opportunities for meaningful engagement in culture and education.

Up to 2016 there was cumulative 96,446 Vietnamese married to Taiwan nationals. There are more than 5000 Vietnamese students studying in Taiwan according to the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Vietnam (Taipei Tech, nd). For Taiwanese institutions of education, Vietnam has become the single largest source of international students, attracted in part by 500 Vietnamese government scholarships and approximately 100 scholarships from Taiwan (Nick Clark, 2013). It can be seen that, Taiwan-Vietnam relations were marked by strong economic ties and budding cultural and educational exchanges. Economic cooperation was the cornerstone, with Taiwan becoming a leading foreign investor in Vietnam, driving job creation and large-scale industrial projects. Meanwhile, a significant Vietnamese diaspora in Taiwan emerged through migration and international marriages, fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding. In education, Vietnam became the largest source of international students in Taiwan, attracted by scholarships and high-quality, affordable programs, especially in engineering, business, and technology. However, these cultural and educational efforts lacked a cohesive framework, relying on individual institutional initiatives and informal exchanges. The absence of a strategic policy limited the scale and depth of collaboration, leaving significant untapped potential. This foundation, while promising, set the stage for the New Southbound Policy in 2016, which aimed to create a more structured and comprehensive approach to Taiwan-Vietnam relations.

II. OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS OF CULTURAL - EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION OF TAIWAN - VIETNAM UNDER THE NSP

1. In the field of cultural cooperation

1.1 Tourism

The tourism boom has had a positive economic impact, contributing millions of dollars annually to Taiwan's economy. Taiwanese businesses, particularly in the hospitality, retail and food services sectors, have benefited from the influx of Vietnamese tourists, with an estimated revenue of more than \$300 million generated by Vietnamese tourists in 2019 alone (Taiwan Tourism Administration, 2023). From 2016 to 2023, Taiwan and Vietnam have successfully organized 5 tourism

cooperation conferences, respectively: The 5th Conference took place on October 19, 2016 in Kaohsiung City (Taiwan), the 6th Conference held in 2017 in Quang Ninh Province (Vietnam), The 8th Conference took place on October 18, 2019 in Vung Tau City, Ba Ria - Vung Tau Province (Vietnam), the 9th Conference was held in 2022 in Tainan (Taiwan), the 10th Conference took place on November 27, 2023 in Thanh Hoa Province (Vietnam). Through 5 tourism cooperation conferences, the number of Vietnamese tourists to Taiwan has shown obvious changes, bringing positive signals to both sides. Right from the 5th Conference, the number of Vietnamese visitors to Taiwan increased by 17.3% in the first 8 months of 2016, Vietnam also became the country with the highest number of delegations to Taiwan after the implementation of the policy of simplifying the entry visa process.

In addition, both sides also showed their efforts in overcoming difficulties during the COVID-19 period. Before the pandemic, the number of Vietnamese tourists to Taiwan in 2019 exceeded 400,000 people, and the number of two-way exchanges between Vietnam and Taiwan reached more than one million people. Since Taiwan opened its borders in October 2022, the National Tourism Administration has organized 4 delegations with a total of 75 people who are tourism industry officials, representatives of Vietnam's main tourism and travel companies to Taiwan to participate in promoting new tourism products. By January 2023, the number of visitors from Vietnam to Taiwan reached 19,026 people, recovering 94.5% compared to 2019 (20,132) (The World and Viet Nam Report, 2023). Vietnam has also become the country with the highest recovery rate among Taiwan's tourism markets. By the end of 2023, the total number of Vietnamese tourists to Taiwan will reach 382,529 people (The World and Viet Nam Report, 2023). According to information from BestPrice.vn, as of 2024, the total frequency of Taiwan's flight schedule is about more than 700 flights per day, including 23 direct flights. Through strategic visa policies, promotional campaigns, and the expansion of flight routes, Taiwan has successfully attracted a large number of Vietnamese tourists, reflecting the NSP's success in using tourism as a tool to strengthen cooperation, cultural exchanges in the region. The positive trajectory in tourism cooperation shows that Taiwan and Vietnam are maintaining a good position to continue to promote these achievements, promote a sustainable future and deepen connectivity.

1.2 Cultural Events and Festivals

Through the success of the NSP's tourism policies, it has further strengthened cooperation and cultural exchange activities through first-hand experiences of Taiwan's heritage and festivals, promoting deeper mutual understanding and goodwill between the two sides. According to Ms. Nhieuh Khanh Linh - Chairman of Taitung District "In Taitung, people

can easily find street food stalls selling very delicious Vietnamese food. Immigrants from Vietnam are friendly, enthusiastic and hardworking." (VietnamNet, 2019). A 2022 survey by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 70% of Vietnamese attending Taiwan's cultural events expressed interest in visiting Taiwan, citing the country's rich cultural heritage as the main driving force for them to learn, arousing interest in Taiwan. It is also the main motivation for them to make decisions to travel, study or develop their careers through exchange activities (VietnamNet, 2019).

With the deepening cultural cohesion, on August 26, 2019, a symbol of Taiwanese culture was erected in Hanoi. The work is a work designed by artist Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy with a length of 18m and a height of 1.6m on Nghi Tam road, Hanoi. The ceramic painting depicted iconic images of Taiwan such as fireworks on the 101-story building of the Taipei International Financial Center, the Xiaoding Bear - the representative image of the Taiwan Excellence campaign, Alishan National Forest, etc. The ceramic wall is considered a cultural symbol of connection, affirming the increasingly strong relationship between Taiwan and Vietnam to work together towards higher goals in the future.

In addition, cultural exchanges and cooperation are also expressed through cinematic works. In the 2nd Taiwan Film Salon event held in 2020, there were 7 unique Taiwanese works premiered in Hanoi (Dan Sinh, 2020). When the country's audience is too familiar with films from Korea and China, the wave of Taiwanese films through film screening weeks has made an impression on Vietnamese audiences. Within the framework of the film screening week, the Organizing Committee also created side activities to create interaction with the audience such as answering online with 3 questions about the newly introduced film work to receive 1 special souvenir and 2 free movie tickets at the National Cinema Center. This activity continues to mark a good development step on the way to expand cooperation and exchanges between Vietnam's cinema and art culture and Taiwanese cinema - a long-standing film industry that has been having a great resonance in the international market.

1.3 New Immigrants

After the implementation of the NSP and new immigration policies, the number of Vietnamese in Taiwan has increased significantly, creating outstanding results, contributing to improving cultural cooperation, increasing mutual understanding, and contributing to the common development between the two sides. In 2016, only 171,000 Vietnamese were recorded living in Taiwan and there were about 133,000 people working in factories (Tuoi Tre News, 2023). After 7 years of implementing NSP under President Tsai Ing-wen, this number has increased significantly with about 120,000 brides, mainly housewives and unskilled workers; nearly 254,000 contract workers; nearly 24,000 international students (VGP News, 2023). Organizations and

associations of the Vietnamese community include 1 political party (New Immigrant Party) and nearly 20 officially registered associations, 1 student association and 2 young intellectual organizations (VGP News, 2023). At the same time, the NSP has also had significant implications in reshaping the relationship between immigrant women and the Taiwanese government.

Because there have been prejudices about Vietnamese brides in Taiwan because of problems related to labor exploitation or women's trafficking lines, making this a sore social problem for a while. But now, under the influence of the NSP, there are more and more multicultural families, they are not only encouraged to maintain Vietnamese identity and culture but also to continue and promote those good values in Taiwan. As a result, after only 2 years of implementation, Taiwan officially made Vietnamese the second elective language taught in high schools, many Vietnamese classes have been opened to serve the needs of communication, learning and more importantly, discovering a new language. a new culture. It is this hybrid generation that is said to be the mainstay of NSP to eliminate prejudices about cross-border marriage and become a link between the two cultures.

2. In the field of educational cooperation

2.1 Scholarships and Student Enrollments

Under the positive impacts that the NSP brings, the educational cooperation between Taiwan and Vietnam has achieved extremely impressive numbers. In the period of 2016 - 2023, Taiwan has become one of the preferred destinations for Vietnamese students because of the high quality of education, ranking 17th in the world and 4th in Asia (only after Japan, South Korea, China) according to the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) world education ranking organization at an affordable cost. The cost of living in Taiwan ranges from NT\$20,000 to NT\$25,000 per month (Thanh Nien Magazine, 2024), which is one-third of that of Australia and about one-fifth of that of the United States, with a variety of policies on scholarships and jobs right from high school for international students. Accordingly, through 3 years of high school, students will earn a salary ranging from 600 to 800 USD/month. At the bachelor's level, students can earn a salary of up to NT\$30,000/month to pay for personal expenses. In addition, Taiwan's English entry requirements with a minimum IELTS of 5.0 are much lower than those in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom that require IELTS of 6.5 or higher. Especially, in the context of many countries such as the US, Australia...which are the leading countries in terms of the number of Vietnamese students who are increasingly tightening regulations on student visas, the number of Vietnamese students in Taiwan shows growth and maintains a stable rate (Thanh Nien Magazine, 2024).

Since 2016, the number of Vietnamese students has reached nearly 5,000, in 2018 it reached more than

10,000 and in 2023 it set a record at more than 27,000 people, an increase of 22,491 compared to 2016. Although COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the number of Vietnamese students coming to Taiwan, at that time, the Taiwanese government still has policies to support quarantine, health care regimes like Taiwanese citizens when they have participated in health insurance as well as apply a discount of nearly half the ticket price for Vietnamese students' study again. Therefore, after the pandemic ended, Vietnam gradually occupied the leading position in the number of international students in Taiwan in 2023, previously belonging to Malaysia.

2.2 Academic Partnerships and Exchange Programs

In addition, Taiwan and Vietnam have also strengthened educational cooperation through memorandums of understanding and agreements to open up more opportunities for students to access advanced education, experience culture and improve life skills. From 2016 to 2023, Taiwan and Vietnam have signed 1 Memorandum of Cooperation and 1 Agreement. In which, the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation "*Education Exchange between Vietnam and Taiwan*" was signed on January 24, 2018 to improve the quality of education between the two sides and the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Diplomas between Taiwan and Vietnam signed on December 20, 2019 with the goal of creating favorable conditions for the recognition of qualifications between the two sides. helping to simplify admission procedures as well as ensuring the quality of the input and output framework for students and students.

In addition to the minutes and agreements between the governments, universities on the two sides also organize many forums and seminars to study abroad, connected by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Vietnam. On December 21, 2019, the 6th Vietnam-Taiwan Education Forum was held at the National Economics University with the participation of school leaders and the Deputy Minister of Education of Taiwan. In addition to formal agreements on student exchanges, annual exchange activities, ... The two sides also implemented the Taiwan Government's research project on "Enhancing research capacity and exchanging experiences between the National Economics University in Vietnam and Taiwan's educational institutions on climate change and disaster risk management" to promote scientific research activities, creating a driving force for development in the fields of science and technology. In addition, other universities such as Chang Gung University, Tsing Hua National University, Kaohsiung National University in collaboration with the University of Da Nang, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Ho Chi Minh University of Economics have reached agreements to organize student exchanges, cultural exchanges between the two sides. Along with that, in 2023, Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNU in collaboration with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office will organize the Taiwan

Higher Education Expo 2023 with the participation of more than 44 leading universities in Taiwan in diverse fields. Within the framework of the exhibition, the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNU and a number of Vietnamese universities have signed a memorandum of understanding with universities in Taiwan on cooperation in training, scientific research, student and lecturer exchanges. This is the result of the continuous efforts of Taiwan and Vietnam, not only at the government level but also at all levels of ministries, departments, branches and leaders of schools of the two sides.

2.3 Vocational Training and Talent Development Programs

Taiwan currently supplies more than half of the world's semiconductor chips, accounting for 92% of production, according to statistics from Boston Consulting. This opens up many opportunities for Vietnamese students to participate in talent search and upskilling programs organized by the Taiwanese government and businesses.

Taiwan and Vietnam achieved the first achievements on February 9, 2021 in successfully signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation in training high-level human resources between Dong Thap Province (Vietnam) and National Taipei University of Business and a Memorandum of Cooperation between the three parties: Taiwan-Vietnam Association, National Taipei University of Business and Taiwan-Myanmar Association. The signing of these three memorandums of understanding has shown that the New South policy of the Taiwan government has taken a new step forward in constantly seeking high-quality human resources in Southeast Asia in general and Vietnam in particular. In addition, in order to become a key institution for training talents in New South, National Taipei University of Business established the "New South Talent Training Center" on the same day.

Moreover, with the need to find highly skilled resources in fields such as automation, semiconductor chip industry,... In 2023, Taiwan's Ministry of Education is activating the "Special Program for International Industrial Talent Education" (INTENSE Program) exclusively for students in this major. The special feature is that students will receive government and business subsidies of at least NT\$10,000 per month. Students will have a training period of 2 years and start an internship in the 2nd year at enterprises and be directly recruited as full-time employees of enterprises after graduation (Tuoi Tre News, 2024). In addition, the schools also provide opportunities for students to work part-time, and Vietnamese students also enjoy Taiwan's universal health insurance regime, which can extend their residence visa for one more year to find a job after graduation. Thus, it can be seen that Taiwan is currently leading the world in the semiconductor industry as well as developing strongly in the automation industry, but companies are currently lacking high-quality human resources. Grasping that trend, in January 2024, more

than 10 universities in Vietnam have opened majors in IC Design and Semiconductor Technology, including the top schools in the country such as Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam-Korea University of Information and Communication Technology and Da Nang University of Science and Technology, etc Can Tho University, Saigon International University (SIU), Phenikaa, FPT, in order to catch up with the demand for human resources (VNExpress, 2024). Therefore, this will be a great opportunity for Taiwan and Vietnam to strongly connect, further strengthen cooperation in finding and training vocational training so that in the future it will create quality human resources to serve the country in the future.

From 2016 to 2023, cultural and educational cooperation between Taiwan and Vietnam under the New Southern Policy (NSP) has achieved important milestones, strengthening bilateral relations and promoting mutual understanding. In cultural cooperation, both sides have organized many tourism events, cultural weeks as well as activities such as art exhibitions and joint film festivals that have enriched exchanges between the two cultures, while workshops on language and calligraphy have promoted language understanding.

Educational cooperation has grown exponentially, facilitating the improvement of academic quality, exchange and training of high-quality human resources. The number of Vietnamese students studying in Taiwan continues to lead among Southeast Asian countries, reflecting Taiwan's attractiveness as a new educational destination in addition to traditional destinations such as the United States and Australia,... The universities of both sides have signed numerous agreements, initiated joint research projects and student exchange programs in areas such as technology and sustainable development.

Key achievements include the recognition of academic qualifications between the two sides, facilitating student mobility and career prospects. Cooperative initiatives in vocational training have prepared skilled workers, in line with the needs of the industry in both. These efforts, according to NSP, not only strengthening Taiwan - Vietnam relations but also promoting regional integration, proving the success of this policy in developing sustainable and comprehensive cooperation.

III. PROSPECTS AND LIMITATIONS OF CULTURAL - EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION OF TAIWAN - VIETNAM UNDER THE NSP IN THE 3RD DECADE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

3.1. Prospects

The third decade of the 21st century presents a pivotal opportunity for Taiwan and Vietnam to deepen their cultural and educational cooperation, fostering

closer ties that will benefit both sides and contribute to broader regional stability. As both economies and societies undergo rapid transformation, the need for strengthened cultural exchange and educational collaboration becomes increasingly significant. By addressing current gaps and proactively building on shared interests, Taiwan and Vietnam can create a vibrant, interconnected future that celebrates their unique identities while working toward common goals.

One of the most promising areas for cooperation is education, where both sides can leverage their respective strengths to cultivate a new generation of globally-minded citizens. Expanding scholarship programs for Vietnamese students to study in Taiwan has already laid a strong foundation for people-to-people connections. Building on this success, both governments can increase funding for academic scholarships, offering targeted opportunities in fields like technology, business, environmental science, and healthcare. These sectors align closely with the development goals of both Taiwan and Vietnam, ensuring that the knowledge and skills gained through such programs directly contribute to economic and social progress in both parties. Additionally, establishing joint degree programs and facilitating dual enrollment between Taiwanese and Vietnamese universities can strengthen institutional ties while providing students with enriched learning experiences.

Student exchanges represent another avenue for nurturing cultural and educational cooperation. By creating more structured exchange programs, universities in Taiwan and Vietnam can foster greater intercultural understanding and collaboration among young people. Programs that encourage students to immerse themselves in the language, culture, and traditions of their host country will not only enhance their academic journey but also deepen mutual appreciation. Research collaboration can further strengthen educational ties, particularly in areas of shared interest such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and technological innovation. Encouraging researchers from both parties to work together on these critical issues will enhance knowledge-sharing and contribute to long-term development. To strengthen educational cooperation, both Taiwan and Vietnam can expand scholarship programs aimed at enhancing people-to-people ties and promoting academic exchanges. Taiwan should increase the number of scholarships available for Vietnamese students to study in Taiwanese universities, particularly in fields that align with Vietnam's development goals, such as engineering, technology, and environmental science. Likewise, Vietnam can offer scholarships for Taiwanese students to study in Vietnam, especially in fields related to Southeast Asian studies, economics, and public policy. Moreover, both parties should establish joint degree programs, allowing students to receive degrees from both Vietnamese and Taiwanese universities. This could

involve pairing universities in major cities such as Taipei and Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City to create specialized programs in areas like digital technology, international trade, and public health. These programs would foster academic collaboration, create new avenues for research, and help students develop deeper ties with their counterparts in the other country.

Language education is a cornerstone of cultural exchange, and expanding Vietnamese-language programs in Taiwan and Mandarin Chinese programs in Vietnam can serve as a bridge for deeper communication and collaboration. Increased investment in language learning initiatives can include the establishment of dedicated language centers, integration of language courses into school curriculums, and funding for language teachers and materials. These efforts will enable citizens from both sides to engage more meaningfully with each other's cultures and facilitate smoother collaboration in various sectors. Both parties can significantly benefit from expanding language learning programs that encourage mutual understanding. Taiwan could offer more Vietnamese-language courses in universities, allowing Taiwanese students to learn more about Vietnam's culture, language, and history. Similarly, Vietnam can expand Mandarin Chinese programs to give students the language skills necessary for deeper engagement with Taiwan's economy and culture. Additionally, both parties can introduce programs designed to teach students about each other's cultural practices, traditions, and history. These programs could include curriculum-based learning as well as extra-curricular activities like cultural exchange visits, seminars, and performances. By building a foundation of mutual respect and cultural competence, both societies can work more closely together in the future.

Cultural exchanges also hold immense potential for fostering mutual understanding and appreciation. Taiwan and Vietnam can prioritize initiatives that showcase each other's rich cultural heritages through exhibitions, festivals, and artistic collaborations. Organizing events such as joint cultural festivals or heritage days would allow the people of both parties to celebrate their unique identities while finding common ground through shared experiences. Collaborative media projects, including film, literature, and visual arts, can serve as powerful platforms to highlight the cultural richness of both. For instance, producing documentaries or artistic showcases about Vietnamese traditions for Taiwanese audiences, and vice versa, can deepen cultural awareness and respect. Taiwan and Vietnam can organize annual festivals that showcase the best of both parties' traditions ranging from art, music, food, and fashion to literature and traditional performances. These events could rotate between major cities in Taiwan and Vietnam, such as Taipei, Taichung, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City. Collaborative exhibitions and art shows, focusing on traditional and contemporary art, would

provide a platform for artists from both parties to present their work and engage with diverse audiences. These exhibitions can highlight the shared historical influences between Taiwan and Vietnam, while also celebrating each country's unique culture.

Institutions and governments can play a vital role in sustaining and scaling these cultural efforts. Establishing cultural centers in major cities in both Taiwan and Vietnam could serve as hubs for artistic collaboration, language learning, and cultural exhibitions. These centers would provide a space for ongoing dialogue and connection between the two societies, fostering a sense of mutual respect and admiration. Further, Taiwanese soft power strategies, which have successfully promoted values like democracy, human rights, and innovation, can resonate with younger Vietnamese audiences who are increasingly engaged in global conversations about these issues. These shared values provide a strong foundation for deeper cultural and educational ties.

The advent of new technologies offers additional opportunities for Taiwan and Vietnam to enhance their cooperation. Digital platforms can be leveraged to create virtual exchange programs, online language courses, and joint research initiatives. This approach not only reduces logistical barriers but also expands the reach of these programs, allowing a broader audience to participate in cultural and educational exchanges. Virtual collaborations can also bring together artists, academics, and students to work on projects that address global challenges, further solidifying the partnership between the two sides.

Taiwan's role as a regional leader in innovation and technology provides a unique advantage in educational cooperation. Partnering with Vietnamese institutions to develop cutting-edge research centers or innovation hubs can drive significant advancements in areas like artificial intelligence, green technology, and smart cities. These initiatives will prepare both to meet the challenges of the 21st century while fostering a sense of shared achievement. At the same time, Vietnam's rich cultural history and growing global presence offer Taiwan valuable insights and opportunities for collaboration. Showcasing Vietnamese culture in Taiwan through dedicated programs and initiatives can help address the current imbalance in cultural representation and build a more equitable exchange. Encouraging Taiwanese audiences to engage with Vietnamese art, literature, and traditions will foster a deeper appreciation of Vietnam's contributions to global culture.

Looking forward, Taiwan and Vietnam must adopt a proactive and inclusive approach to cultural and educational cooperation. Governments, academic institutions, and civil society organizations must work together to create comprehensive strategies that address barriers to collaboration and maximize the benefits of their partnership. Funding for these initiatives should be prioritized to ensure their sustainability and impact. By

embracing these opportunities, Taiwan and Vietnam can strengthen their bilateral relationship and set a model for regional cooperation.

The third decade of the 21st century holds vast potential for Taiwan and Vietnam to forge a robust cultural and educational partnership. By building on existing ties, embracing innovation, and addressing shared challenges, both sides can create a future that is prosperous, interconnected, and culturally rich. The benefits of these efforts will extend beyond their borders, contributing to regional stability, mutual growth, and a deeper understanding of the shared humanity that binds the peoples of Taiwan and Vietnam.

3.2. Limitations

Despite the growing cultural and educational cooperation between Vietnam and Taiwan, several limitations continue to shape and constrain the relationship. These limitations arise from Vietnam's commitment to the "One China" policy, differences in educational systems, language barriers, administrative challenges, issues of illegal labor migration, and the one-sided nature of educational exchanges. While both sides have made strides in deepening ties in various fields, these factors create challenges that must be addressed to foster a more balanced and mutually beneficial relationship.

Firstly, the primary limitation in educational and cultural exchange between Vietnam and Taiwan stems from Vietnam's steadfast adherence to the "One China" policy. This foreign policy position, which recognizes the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of China, including Taiwan as part of its territory, prevents the development of formal, state-level relations between Vietnam and Taiwan (Nhan Dan Newspaper, 2024). As a result, only unofficial, non-governmental interactions are maintained, focusing on areas such as economics, trade, investment, science, technology, culture, and education. This political constraint limits the scope and depth of bilateral relations, particularly in sectors that would benefit from formal government-to-government collaboration, including large-scale cultural programs. Vietnam's adherence to the "One China" policy also shapes its approach to sensitive issues in the Taiwan Strait, as it emphasizes the importance of peace and stability in the region, while avoiding actions that could be seen as challenging China's internal affairs. The absence of formal diplomatic ties restricts the potential for official cultural exchanges, forcing most interactions to occur through non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, or business groups. This limits the visibility and impact of cultural initiatives. Furthermore, language barriers pose an additional challenge, as Mandarin is not widely spoken in Vietnam and Vietnamese is not commonly used in Taiwan, making mutual understanding and cultural exchange more difficult. While Taiwan's cultural influence in Vietnam has increased through media, entertainment, and business,

the reverse flow of Vietnamese culture into Taiwan remains relatively limited, creating an imbalance in cultural appreciation. Overcoming these limitations will require more grassroots efforts and innovative approaches to foster cultural exchange and mutual understanding outside of formal diplomatic channels.

Secondly, in the realm of educational cooperation, language barriers and differences in educational systems present significant challenges. Taiwan's education system is primarily conducted in Mandarin (Eliassen Isabel, 2021, p.6), which is not widely spoken or understood by Vietnamese students. While many Vietnamese students who study in Taiwan are able to adapt and learn Mandarin, it remains a substantial barrier for those who are interested in pursuing educational opportunities but lack language proficiency. Conversely, very few Taiwanese students have access to Vietnamese language programs, which limits their ability to take advantage of educational opportunities in Vietnam. This creates an imbalance in educational exchanges, as Vietnamese students tend to study abroad in Taiwan, but there are few reciprocal opportunities for Taiwanese students in Vietnam. Additionally, the educational systems in Taiwan and Vietnam differ in structure and standards, which can complicate collaborative efforts. For example, the recognition of academic credits, degrees, and qualifications between the two parties is not always seamless, leading to difficulties for students who wish to transfer or apply their credentials in both regions. Administrative hurdles, such as visa requirements, bureaucratic processes, and the lack of standardized agreements on academic cooperation, further slowdown the progress of educational partnerships. These challenges hinder the full potential of educational exchange programs and collaborative research initiatives, preventing a more fluid and dynamic flow of knowledge and talent between Taiwan and Vietnam.

One more thing, Taiwan has developed a fair education financing model, offering 12 years of free tuition in both public and private schools and providing partial subsidies for higher education (Nguyen Tan Hung, 2019, p.28). This ensures equal access and keeps tuition fees low, preventing financial barriers to education. However, challenges remain, including funding sustainability and maintaining quality as demand increases, with smaller private universities often struggling financially. In contrast, Vietnam's education system faces more pressing challenges, particularly regarding unequal access, especially in rural areas. Despite efforts to expand education, many students, especially in disadvantaged regions, cannot afford rising tuition costs. Vietnam lacks a comprehensive financing model like Taiwan's, which limits opportunities for higher education and the country's overall human capital development. Without stronger government support and regulation of tuition fees, many Vietnamese students

remain unable to pursue further education, widening the gap between urban and rural populations.

Thirdly, significant challenge in Vietnam-Taiwan relations is the issue of illegal labor migration (Jono Thomson, 2024). Taiwan has been a popular destination for Vietnamese laborers seeking employment opportunities abroad, especially in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and domestic work. However, a growing number of Vietnamese workers overstay their visas or enter Taiwan illegally, creating a complex issue for both governments. These undocumented workers often face exploitation, poor working conditions, and limited legal protections, which tarnishes the image of Vietnamese labor in Taiwan and complicates bilateral labor agreements. The issue of illegal labor migration also puts strain on the relationship as both sides must navigate the challenges of enforcement, repatriation, and labor regulation. Taiwan, for its part, has implemented stricter policies to curb illegal immigration and improve the management of foreign workers, but the problem persists. On Vietnam's side, the government faces the challenge of providing its citizens with enough domestic employment opportunities to reduce the need for migration, as well as improving the regulation of overseas labor recruitment to prevent exploitation and trafficking. This issue remains a significant obstacle in the broader context of Vietnam-Taiwan relations, as it impacts not only labor but also diplomatic engagement and cooperation in other fields.

Finally, a major limitation in Vietnam-Taiwan educational cooperation is the one-sided nature of scholarship programs and educational exchanges. The flow of students is primarily from Vietnam to Taiwan (Thanh Nien Magazine, 2024) with very few Taiwanese students studying in Vietnam. This imbalance can be attributed to several factors, including Taiwan's more developed education system, its extensive scholarship offerings to attract international students, and the global reputation of its universities, particularly in technical fields. While this has created valuable opportunities for Vietnamese students to gain advanced education and training, it has not fostered a reciprocal exchange of knowledge or cultural understanding, which is essential for building long-term, people-to-people ties. The one-way flow of students and scholars also limits Taiwan's exposure to Vietnamese academic and cultural perspectives, potentially reducing the effectiveness of academic collaboration. Taiwanese universities may miss out on the opportunity to collaborate with Vietnamese scholars and researchers in areas of mutual interest, such as agricultural science, environmental studies, or Southeast Asian studies, which could benefit from Vietnam's unique expertise. To create a more balanced and mutually beneficial educational exchange, both sides need to develop programs that encourage more Taiwanese students and researchers to engage with Vietnam's academic institutions and culture.

Addressing these limitations will require concerted efforts from both sides to create more balanced, mutually beneficial, and sustainable frameworks for cooperation. Only by overcoming these challenges can Vietnam and Taiwan unlock the full potential of their partnership in the coming decades.

IV. CONCLUSION

The evolving relationship between Taiwan and Vietnam is influenced by a range of interconnected factors, including economic interests, historical ties, cultural similarities, and regional geopolitical dynamics. These factors have significantly shaped the trajectory of their collaboration, particularly in the fields of culture and education. The growing economic interdependence between Taiwan and Vietnam has been one of the primary drivers of their relationship. Taiwan's role as one of the largest foreign investors in Vietnam has fostered strong business ties, creating opportunities for deeper collaboration in other areas, including educational exchanges and cultural cooperation. Vietnam's strategic location, burgeoning consumer market, and cost-effective labor force have made it an attractive partner for Taiwanese businesses, and this mutually beneficial economic partnership has laid the groundwork for a broader bilateral relationship.

Historically and culturally, Taiwan and Vietnam share common Confucian values that have further facilitated cooperation, particularly in the realm of education. These shared values emphasize the importance of education, family, and social harmony, and they serve as a cultural bridge between the two societies. The presence of a growing Vietnamese diaspora in Taiwan also contributes to the human-to-human connections that have strengthened cultural ties. Through festivals, food, and traditions, both Taiwanese and Vietnamese people have increasingly engaged in mutual cultural exchange, creating a rich foundation for further cooperation in education and other areas.

Geopolitical dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping the limitations and potential of Taiwan-Vietnam relations. While Vietnam's adherence to the "One China" policy precludes the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, the two have maintained close ties through non-governmental channels, particularly in the fields of economics, trade, science, technology, culture, and education. This pragmatic approach has allowed both Taiwan and Vietnam to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape while maintaining constructive engagement. The shared interest in regional stability, particularly in the face of tensions in the South China Sea, further solidifies their unofficial partnership.

NSP introduced by Taiwan has proven to be a significant catalyst for enhancing cultural and educational cooperation between the two. The NSP has created new frameworks for collaboration by providing financial incentives, exchange platforms, and

institutional support to facilitate educational and cultural interactions. Taiwan's emphasis on deepening ties with Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, has led to increased student exchanges, joint research initiatives, and cross-cultural programs. The NSP has not only strengthened bilateral relations but has also fostered mutual understanding, creating a more robust foundation for long-term collaboration in the education and culture sectors.

Nevertheless, the third decade of the 21st century presents both substantial opportunities and significant challenges for Taiwan and Vietnam in their pursuit of closer cultural and educational cooperation. The opportunities arise from increasing mutual interests and regional integration. The growing demand for skilled labor and higher education in both Taiwan and Vietnam presents new possibilities for student exchanges, academic partnerships, and joint research initiatives. Additionally, regional trade agreements and economic cooperation frameworks provide a conducive environment for fostering educational ties that can drive innovation and knowledge-sharing between the two.

However, as predicted, several challenges also remain. Geopolitical tensions, particularly concerning Taiwan's delicate international status and its complex relationship with China, continue to place constraints on how far bilateral cooperation can progress. Vietnam's adherence to the "One China" policy imposes a ceiling on the depth of state-level engagement between the two, limiting government-backed cultural and educational programs that could otherwise significantly enhance ties. Additionally, language barriers, differences in educational systems, and administrative hurdles continue to slow the process of collaboration. While Taiwan and Vietnam share many cultural values, these logistical challenges must be overcome to ensure smoother exchanges in education and culture.

Another key challenge lies in the imbalance of cultural influence. While Taiwanese culture has made significant inroads into Vietnam through media, entertainment, and business, Vietnamese culture has not seen the same level of penetration in Taiwan. This asymmetry makes it difficult for both sides to fully appreciate and engage with each other's cultural heritage. Taiwan and Vietnam must address this imbalance through more focused efforts to promote Vietnamese culture in Taiwan, potentially through increased Vietnamese-language education, cultural exhibitions, and bilateral media projects.

Vietnam also faces its own set of challenges in adapting its education system to benefit more fully from Taiwanese cooperation. Vietnam's educational system, particularly in rural areas, struggles with issues of unequal access, outdated infrastructure, and limited government resources. In contrast, Taiwan's education system is more developed, with a focus on providing equitable access to higher education through partial subsidies and tuition controls. Taiwan's success in

offering affordable education to its citizens serves as a model for Vietnam, but the differences in their respective systems require careful adaptation to ensure that the benefits of cooperation are realized fully.

In sum, the article confirms that Taiwan and Vietnam stand at a crossroads of opportunity and challenge as they seek to deepen their cultural and educational cooperation. The economic, historical, and cultural factors influencing their relationship continue to provide a strong foundation for collaboration, but the geopolitical realities and practical challenges must be navigated carefully. The NSP remains a critical tool in promoting these exchanges, offering financial support and institutional frameworks to facilitate engagement. Moving forward, both Taiwan and Vietnam must focus on addressing the limitations that constrain their relationship while leveraging the opportunities created by regional integration and mutual interests. By doing so, they can create a more balanced, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnership in the third decade of the 21st century.

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