

Market development of Vietnam's performing arts in Asean region from the perspective of regional integration

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ABSTRACT

When it comes to the performing arts of Vietnam, it is popular to think of types of arts which have become a part of the cultural and spiritual life of Vietnamese people such as Ca Tru (a complex form of sung poetry), Cheo (Vietnamese traditional opera), Boi singing (a Vietnamese operatic art form), Bai Choi singing (a folklore style of singing), Don ca tai tu music and song, Cai Luong (modern folk opera), Puppetry, Circus, etc. From the perspective of cultural economy, these types of arts are fully potential to become typical cultural products, with many competitive advantages in the overall national cultural industry. Therefore, developing the market for various types of performing arts in Vietnam is a story that needs to be discussed specifically and comprehensively. Within the scope of this paper, the author discusses the issue of market development of Vietnamese performing arts beyond the national territory, penetrating ASEAN market and the world market from considering the current ASEAN regional integration, which is a valuable opportunity that stakeholders need to exploit effectively.

1. From the term “Regional integration” to the issue

1.1. The connotation of “Regional integration”

“Regional integration” is the term that many researchers put forward with different concepts such as it is “one of the many forms of association, alliances, gathering forces that have existed in human history. This type of multilateral connection between countries and groups of countries is based on “geographic proximity and often starts from the economic sector” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V., 2010, p. 13). The author of this concept considers “geographic proximity” factor as the most important basis for establishment of the “regional integration”. Haas Ernst B. has the same point of view, but he argues that the purpose of forming "regional integration" between neighboring countries is “to loose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflict between themselves” (Ton, 2015, p. 20). From the practical development of “regionalism” in the world, De Lombaerde and Van Langehove identify “regional integration” as a global phenomenon, and its purpose is to "increase the interactions between their components, creates new forms of organizations which coexist with other traditional forms of state-led organizations at the national level” (Ton, 2015, p. 20). Overall, the scope of the “regional integration” under this concept is broader, which may include “economic, security, political, or

cultural and social issues through institutions and common rules” (Ton, 2015, p. 20).

In summary, the connotation of the term “regional integration” may not be consistent among researchers, but there are some common points such as:

- “Regional integration” are formed on a voluntary basis between countries (sovereignty) / territories;

- Differences in political institutions, economic development levels, cultural identities, etc. are not a barrier for countries / territories to participate in “regional integration”;

- The interactions between countries / territories are bilateral and multilateral;

- Countries / territories participating in the “regional integration” network can cooperate in many fields of economy, politics, military, culture, etc.

1.2. Foundation of “Regional integration”

From practices in the world for many years, there are two main bases for developing and promoting “regional integration”:

- *Similarities in historical and cultural aspects*

This integration model may include countries / territories which are not geographically close to each other, but have many cultural and historical similarities, such as: Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC), Group of eight developing Muslim countries (D-8); Francophonie community (La Francophonie), Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries, etc.

- *Countries in close geographic proximity to each other*

The characteristics of countries involved in this integration may have different levels of economic development and political regimes, but are geographically close to each other. The establishment and development of the European Union (EU) in 1993 with 27 countries and territories, or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are typical examples for this case.

1.3. Forms of Regional integration

The world has witnessed the birth of many different types of regional integration. Currently, it basically can be classified into two following types:

- *Regional integration in multiple fields*

In this form of integration, countries / territories have bilateral and multilateral relations and interactions at the same time in many fields of economy, politics, culture, military, etc. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (established in 1967), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (established in 1980), the Association of South Asia for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (founded in 1985), Community of Independent States (SNG) (established in 1991), European Union (EU) (established in 1993), Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of United Nations (UNESCO), are outstanding examples of this form.

- *Regional integration in a single field*

In this form of integration, all activities of member countries / territories focus on only a certain field, such as in political-military cooperation, there are North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (established in 1949); ANZUS military alliance (including 3 countries Australia, New

Zealand and the US) (established in 1952)¹, Warszawa Treaty Organization (Warsaw) (established in 1955)²; Military Near Middle East Alliance (CENTO) (established in 1955)³, Asia-Pacific Military Union (CEATO) (established in 1955)⁴, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (established in 2001), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (established in 2002), etc.

In economic cooperation, there are Central America Common Market (CACM) (established in 1960), Intergovernmental Organization Group of Developing Countries (G-77) (established in 1964), Community Bloc and the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) (established in 1973), Group of countries with the largest economies in the world (G-7) (established in 1976), Eastern and South African Common Market (COMESA) (established) established in 1994), Group of major economies in the world (G-20) (established in 1999⁵), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC or EAEC) (established in 2001), China Cooperation Organization Asia (established in 2002), etc.

2. Overview of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

At the end of the 1960s, the political - military confrontation between Eastern and Western nations made the political - military environment in the world became worse. Meanwhile, the countries in Southeast Asia began to generate conflicts of territorial sovereignty as well as the need to form an alliance to promote economic - cultural - military development. Therefore, on March 31, 1961 in Bangkok, Thailand, the leaders of the three countries of Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines announced the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), including Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines ” (Nguyen, Y. T. T., 2016, p. 59). However, ASA only existed until 1964 because the national interests of the member countries were not adequately addressed. In this context, on August 8, 1967, “foreign ministers of five countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia, Singapore) met in Bangkok, Thailand and announced the establishment of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)” (Nguyen, Y. T. T., 2016, p. 59). This objective was determined based on the reality of the “border and land disputes, and potential racial conflicts”. It is likely that these disagreements may transform and lead to armed conflicts, and long divisions between countries in the region” (Yah, 2002, p. 21). In particular, “in its declaration of establishment, ASEAN has made clear its goals: To promote economic growth, progress and development in the regional culture and through joint efforts in the spirit of equality and cooperation to strengthen a peaceful and prosperous community of Southeast Asian countries” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V, 2010, p. 28). However, for a variety of reasons, including political - military influences from the struggle against the US – Puppet state to liberate the South and reunify Vietnam, the relationship between Vietnam and ASEAN before 1975 did not have many positive progress, sometimes there were many times when the parties were in a dangerous hostility.

¹ By 1984, the treaties between the United States and New Zealand were no longer in effect, but were still valid between New Zealand and Australia.

² Dissolution in 1992

³ Dissolution in 1979

⁴ Dissolution in 1977

⁵ The G-20 comprises 19 countries with the world's largest economies (in terms of GDP, PPP) and the European Union (EU).

3. Opportunities for Market development to expand Vietnam's performing arts products to ASEAN

3.1. From the perspective of regional integration when Vietnam takes part in ASEAN region

After 1975, in the context of an independent and united nation, the Party and State of Vietnam set out a policy to strengthen international cooperation. As a result, the relationship between Vietnam and ASEAN countries gradually shifted from confrontation to dialogue. But when the Vietnamese army sent its troops to support the Cambodia's revolutionary forces against the Pol Pot genocide, the ASEAN nations “leaned against the policy, putting Vietnam under the siege and therefore making relations between the two sides increasingly tense for more than a decade” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V., 2010, p. 30). However, in many respects, the Vietnamese Government still “try to maintain dialogue with several ASEAN countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia in order to create mutual trust and understanding, and create favourable conditions for seeking a political solution to Cambodia as well as reducing regional security tensions” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V., 2010, p. 30).

Vietnam shows its persistent stance on developing sustainable diplomatic relations with countries in the region and around the world, The 13th Politburo Resolution of May 1988 emphasized the policy of “adding friends and reducing enemies”, diversifying international relations based on respect for independence, sovereignty and mutual benefit. At the 6th Central Conference, Session VI (March 1989), the Party and State of Vietnam continued to affirm that the need to establish new relations with ASEAN countries and actively participate in promoting Southeast Asia a region of peace, stability, friendship and cooperation” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V., 2010, p. 31). The Vietnamese people's army withdrew all troops from the territory of Cambodia back in September 1989, which helped the diplomatic relations between Vietnam and ASEAN countries to have many positive changes in the following years. Following the great progress of the Cambodian problem-solving process, on September 16, 1991, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister officially sent a letter to the foreign ministers of ASEAN countries asking to join the Bali Treaty. This is considered as the first step towards ASEAN participation.

Vietnam and ASEAN officially moved to a new phase of diplomatic development on July 22, 1992, at the 25th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, Vietnam officially became an observer of ASEAN. Next, in order to accelerate the process of ASEAN participation, the Party and State of Vietnam organized many high-level delegations to visit many countries in ASEAN. In April 1994, during his official visit to Indonesia, President Le Duc Anh announced to the ASEAN community that “Vietnam is promoting active preparations to soon become an official member of ASEAN” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V., 2010, p. 36).

After being a member of ASEAN, diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Southeast Asian countries has increasingly achieved greater and more comprehensive achievements in many fields from economy, politics, military to culture and arts. Regarding the economic sector, “according to the statistics of the ASEAN Department of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of Vietnam's five years of joining ASEAN (2000), the total foreign trade turnover of Vietnam with ASEAN countries increased from US \$ 2,583 billion in 1994 to 3,490 billion in 1995 and 4,152 billion USD in 1996” (Nguyen, Q. T., Dang, Ha, & Nguyen, D. V., 2010, p. 38). In addition, Vietnam has cooperated with ASEAN countries to gradually resolve disagreements to promote the stability in relations and cooperation such as signing with Malaysia to cooperate in exploiting overlapping regional sea resources between the two countries while waiting for a delimitation in 1992; signed an agreement with Thailand and Malaysia to exploit oil and gas in the overlapping region between the three countries on the

continental shelf; signed an agreement with the Philippines on 9 basic principles of conduct between the two countries in Bien Dong (East Sea), etc.

Having become an inseparable organic part of ASEAN, Vietnam's role in contributing to a stronger and more comprehensive development among member countries has been strongly asserted. Many Vietnam's initiatives are highly appreciated by countries member such as “developing a vision for 2020 for ASEAN, Hanoi Action Program, Hanoi Declaration on Narrowing development gap for closer ASEAN Integration, the idea of establishing the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community” (Nguyen, Y. T. T., 2016, p. 61). Especially, when the ASEAN community was founded at the end of 2015, it has brought opportunities for Southeast Asian countries to enter a more profound and substantive stage of development. “An ASEAN towards deeper integration will undoubtedly continue to provide enormous and practical benefits to countries member and regions. Besides being a densely populated country with a dynamic and growing economy, Vietnam has a multi-ethnic culture which have its own unique features but still have many characteristics of Southeast Asian culture. On that basis, with the spirit of active, positive and responsible manner, Vietnam will try its best for the future of a strong and united ASEAN Community” (Nguyen, Y. T. T., 2016, p. 61).

All the contents of regional integration, great achievements in international cooperation between Vietnam and Southeast Asia countries in recent years have created great premises for products of performing arts in Vietnam to penetrate into the Southeast Asian market in a stronger and more comprehensive way in the future.

3.2. From the intrinsic power of the performing arts in Vietnam

The identification of the performing arts in each country may not be consistent. Internationally, performing arts are “all types of theater arts, performed by artists and for audiences to enjoy (UNTCAD, 2010, p. 141). Vietnam is a multi-nationality country with 54 ethnic groups living across the country. Throughout a history of building and defending the country for thousands of years, the ethnic communities in Vietnam have created many unique cultural identities, including the performing arts. Researcher Le (2010, pp. 193-194) states that “Performing arts involve arts that share the properties, characteristics, environment, space, performance time with the creativity of many generations in the history of formation and development of culture of ethnic groups and societies in all eras, through various types of performing arts such as singing, dancing, music, Tuong (classical opera), Cheo (Vietnamese traditional opera), classical drama, etc. They change position in every space and different show time. That performance movement is performed by artisans and artists through sounds, shapes, gestures of human body, emotions and souls. These artisans and artists recreated, supplemented and perfected the present performances that existed in the cultural life of the community” (Le, 2010, pp. 193-194). From the perspective of state management, performing arts of Vietnam include: Tuong, Cheo, Cai Luong, Circus, Puppetry, Spoken drama, Drama in dance version, Drama in singing version, Mime, Folk Theater, Musical, Poetry chanting, Comedy, Vaudeville and other art forms are shown on stage through performing by professional actors. Accordingly, the stage category includes the art of Tuong, Cheo, Cai Luong, Circus, Puppetry, Drama, Mime, Folk Theater (the product is called a play). The dance and music category consist of various forms of Art - Dance - Music, Poetry, Theater, Comedy (the product is called a program) (Nguyen, H. T., 2009, pp. 66-67).

Performing arts in Vietnam “have general and comprehensive features; These are the second creation on the basis of association with the body, sensory capacities, performance of the artist through theatrical works to educate ideology, emotion, ethical issues; improve people's intellectual standards and aesthetics to meet their intangible cultural enjoyment. Promoting

performing arts in the right direction will help in building and developing an advanced culture deeply imbued with national identity” (Nguyen, L. T. K. , 2015, p. 46). Because of the unique values, many types of Vietnamese performing arts are not only conserved by the State, but also recognized by the world, such as:

Table 1

List of performing arts of Vietnam ⁶

No.	Types of performing arts	Remark	
1.	Nha Nhạc, Vietnamese court music	Unesco recognized	2003
2.	Space of gong culture	Unesco recognized	2005
3.	Quan Ho Bac Ninh folk songs	Unesco recognized	2009
4.	Ca tru singing	Unesco recognized	2009
5.	Xoan singing	Unesco recognized	2011
6.	Art of Don ca tai tu music and song in southern Viet Nam	Unesco recognized	2013
7.	Vi and Giam folk songs of Nghe Tinh	Unesco recognized	2014
8.	Practices related to the Viet beliefs in the Mother Goddesses of Three Realms	Unesco recognized	2016
9.	The art of Bai Choi in Central Viet Nam	Unesco recognized	2017
10.	Practices of Then by Tay, Nung and Thai ethnic groups in Viet Nam	Unesco recognized	2019
11.	Circus		
12.	Puppetry		
13.	Cheo singing		
14.	Cai Luong		
15.	Boi singing		

The artistic and cultural values of the performing arts in Vietnam have been recognized by the Vietnamese people and the international community. From the cultural and economic perspective, there are great potentials to promote such products to Southeast Asian market.

3.3. From the perspective of state management

As for promoting Vietnamese performing arts to Southeast Asian cultural and arts market, the Vietnamese government plays a leading role from the perspective of state management. Accordingly, in recent years, the government of Vietnam has issued many legal documents related to the state management of cultural and art activities in Vietnam, including performing arts such as:

Resolution No. 05/2005/NQ-CP on promoting socialization of educational, healthcare,

⁶ Accessed on March 1, 2020

http://www.mofahcm.gov.vn/vi/mofa/vd_quantam/nr150525163531/nr170711171141/ns170711171219/view

https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%A0i_ch%C3%B2i,

<https://vietnam.vnnet.vn/vietnamese/hat-then-%E2%80%93-giai-dieu-cua-than-tien/434278.html>,

cultural and physical training and sports activities;

Decree No. 11/2006/ND-CP on promulgating the regulation on cultural activities and public cultural service business;

Decree No. 103/2009/ND-CP enclosed with the regulation on cultural activities and of public cultural service business;

Decree No. 69/2008/ND-CP on policies to encourage socialization of activities in the fields of education, vocational training, health care, culture, sports and environment;

Decree No. 79/2012/ND-CP on regulations on art performances, fashion shows; beauty and model contests; circulation, commerce, audio and video recordings of music and dance performances;

Decree No. 75/2010/ND-CP on regulations on sanctioning administrative violations in cultural activities;

Decree No. 158/2013/ND-CP on regulations on sanctioning of administrative violations in the fields of culture, sports, tourism and advertising;

Decision No. 1456/QĐ-TTg issued on August 19, 2014 by The Prime Minister of Vietnam on approving the “Master Plan for the Performing Arts Development to 2020, Orientation to 2030”.

Among the legal documents mentioned above, the author pays special attention to Decision No. 1456/QĐ-TTg issued on August 19, 2014 by The Prime Minister of Vietnam on approving the “Master Plan for the Performing Arts Development to 2020, Orientation to 2030”. Specifically, some crucial points in the development of performing arts are as follows:

1. Develop performing arts to contribute to an advanced culture deeply imbued with national identity;
2. Develop performing arts in the direction of prioritizing investment in fostering human resources, perfecting the system of technical foundations of the sector and each region; preserve and promote the traditional art forms, simultaneously selectively absorb the quintessence of the world's art; create and develop modern art forms;
3. Promote the socialization of performing arts, encourage domestic and foreign organizations and individuals to invest in facilities and develop performing arts human resources in accordance with law

(The Prime Minister, 2014, Article 1).

Additionally, the Master Plan also outlines specific development goals of Vietnam's performing arts by 2030, including:

1. Build and gradually perfect the system of technical and material facilities for the development of performing arts; examine and upgrade a number of degraded theaters in localities, focusing on upgrading and equipping new appropriate technical equipment systems; build modern performing arts centers in Ho Chi Minh City;
2. Organize and rearrange public art units towards streamlining and professionalization; encourage organizations and individuals to invest in the development of performing arts in accordance with legal requirements; improve the capacity of art performance organizations nationwide;
3. Train and develop human resources in performing arts who have creative capacity, ensure the balance of specialties according to the needs of the society;

4. Create many works which are high in artistic, humanistic and educational value; enhance the promotion and dissemination of domestic and international performing arts products.

(The Prime Minister, 2014, Article 1).

To accomplish the above objectives, according to the Decision No. 1456/QĐ-TTg, there are solutions such as perfecting mechanisms and policies; human resources training activities, increasing mobilization of resources, communications to raise awareness of the whole society, and promoting international cooperation activities.

Particularly, in terms of the training of human resources, the Prime Minister emphasizes specific tasks such as:

- a) Improve the training capacity in education system and culture and arts schools system; combine long-term and short-term training, training through professional practices; invite international experts who are experienced in teaching and imparting advanced knowledge and skills in the world;
- b) Foster and enhance the level of composition and expression of works for creative performing artists and technicians in the field of performing arts. Improve the quality of lecturers and researchers for schools and research institutes; creative teams, performers, technicians at arts organizations; develop theoretical and performing arts critical teams who are skilled and professional; provide management teams with knowledge and capacity in consulting and planning policies;
- c) Recruit and nominate artists for long-term and short-term training abroad, “with priority given to a number of specific performing arts fields”.

(The Prime Minister, 2014, Article 1).

Order to mobilize resources to participate in the development of the national performing arts, the government emphasizes:

- a) The state budget shall provide funding support for upgrading and renovating performing arts facilities with appropriate size, given priority to localities in difficult areas and ethnic minority areas, remote areas, borders, islands; upgrade and renovate technical facilities for teaching and human resources training;
- b) The localities shall actively allocate local budgets in combination with the state budget's support funds to invest in renovating and upgrading art performance theaters and equipping technical facilities for arts performance activities of arts organizations;
- c) Encourage the whole society, domestic and foreign organizations and individuals to invest in developing facilities and training human resources activities in the field of performing arts;
- d) The government supports the creation of performing arts works for political missions.

(The Prime Minister, 2014, Article 1).

In regard to international cooperation activities, the government also identifies comprehensible solutions such as “a) Organize cultural and artistic exchange activities with other countries and international organizations; focus on integrating art performance programs associated with regional and international diplomatic events and cultural exchanges; b) Increase the introduction of Vietnamese art works to the world and valuable foreign art works into Vietnam; c) Establish joint ventures with foreign organizations in investing technical facilities, organizing art performance programs and

training human resources (The Prime Minister, 2014, Article 1).

In the context of cultural economy is increasingly becoming one of the key economic sectors of Vietnam's economy, the advent of Decision 1456/QĐ-TTg on approving the “Master Plan for the Performing Arts Development to 2020, Orientation to 2030” is important to further political economy dynamics so the performing arts not only continue to be appreciated and developed in Vietnam, but also flourish in Southeast Asia in particular and worldwide. This is considered as an effective way to preserve, promote and develop the performing arts of Vietnam at the present time.

4. Conclusion and further issues to be discussed

Regional integration is a trend that has existed and developed for a long time in human history. Regional integration models allow each country member to take advantage of its own benefits and the common advantages of the region, as well as other countries, for more sustainable development. The purpose, form and field of integration between countries in the world at different historical and regional periods are not completely the same. In the context of contemporary society, most regional integrations are concentrated in the fields of politics - military - economy - culture.

For Vietnam, participating in the Southeast Asian regional integration model to establish the ASEAN community is not only a historical but a contemporary requirement. Becoming a link - an organic element in the ASEAN community will allow Vietnam to enhance its international role, as well as provide opportunities for comprehensive and sustainable development of the country in the current situation.

With the benefits of ASEAN regional integration model that Vietnam participates in, from a cultural and economic perspective, the author supposes that with the support of the Vietnamese government and inherent internal strengths of performing arts will help these types of arts enter the ASEAN cultural and arts market. This brings practical benefits, and significantly contribute to the preservation, promotion and development of performing arts of Vietnam.

It should be noted that related subjects such as state agencies, art organization, corporations as well as other civil society organizations need to set up scientific, theoretical, legal foundations to ensure that measures taken to expand the performing arts market into the ASEAN region and the world achieve the same results as expected from economic, cultural diplomacy perspective.

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