

## The Role of Cultural Heritage in The Development of Tourism and Some Cultural Industries in Vietnam

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### Abstract

Many nations now view the cultural industry as a significant role in the country's cultural life and as a vital economic sector supporting sustainable development. Vietnam has an affluent cultural history with diverse cultural identities and is valuable in every way. The development of various cultural industries benefits greatly from the resources provided by cultural heritages. In order to elucidate the significance of cultural heritage in the growth of particular cultural industries, such as music, film, and cultural tourism, we employ synthetic analysis techniques and field research in this article. According to the research findings, cultural heritages are becoming important resources for the growth of cultural tourism, giving travellers motivation to travel, learn, and carry out research. Cultural heritage also provides resources and inspiration for music and film production, meeting the public's needs for cultural entertainment. The article makes inferences about the value of cultural heritage; development constraints, and potential solutions for preserving and enriching cultural heritage within the cultural industry. It also provides ways to improve human resources in the fields of music, film, and cultural tourism.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Cultural Industry, Film, Music, Tourism

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### Introduction

Art and culture have been a vital part of economic inquiry since the 1960s, the later of the nineteenth century acknowledging the shifting role of cultural industries as a source for supporting sustainable development of a nation, especially in the rise of employment rate, living standard and heritages preservation projects around the world (Aoyama, 2007). According to UWTO, 40% of international trips have a relationship with heritage and culture, both categories increased at the rate of 15% per year since 1990 (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). As mentioned in Lawrence & Phillips' work, cultural industries comprised products valued for their "meaning." they include goods and services related to visual arts, crafts, music, and cultural heritage (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002).

Vietnam is known for its affluent cultural history that leads to the rise of cultural industries. The 5th Central Conference of the Communist Party, Session VIII (1998) Resolution, "Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, both the goal and the driving force for socio-economic development", affirms the significance of culture. The Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee keeps highlighting the value of culture in its meetings and the 9th Central Conference of the Party, Session XI (2014), resolved in Resolution No. 33 on "Building Vietnamese culture and people to meet the needs of national development" that cultural resources are the natural strength that propels national development across the board. One of the five objectives for the new era of national development, according to the resolution, is the growth of the cultural sector. The decision "Approving the Strategy for the Development of

Vietnam's Cultural Industries to 2020, with a Vision to 2030”, known as Decision No. 1755/QĐ-TTg, was signed by the prime minister on September 8, 2016. The twelve disciplines that make up the cultural industries are radio and television; advertising; architecture; computer games and software; handicrafts; design; cinema; publishing; fashion; performing arts; fine arts; photography; and exhibitions (Government, 2016). The cultural sector has been seen as a constant promotion and income growth, reaching a total turnover of 44 billion USD between 2018 and 2022 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2024). According to VTV (2024), the Vietnamese cultural business is expected to generate 56 million USD in revenue in 2023 alone. The largest contributors to this revenue are cultural tourism and movies. This further reinforces the need to elucidate the significance of cultural heritage in the growth of cultural industries such as music, film, and cultural tourism. Therefore, verify the importance of cultural heritages as travellers’ motivation, inspiration for music and film production, and meeting the public's needs for cultural entertainment.

### Literature Review

In socioeconomic development, culture is seen as a source of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). It also serves as a resource and an input for the cultural industries. According to UNESCO (1982), cultural industries arise when people follow economic strategies rather than large-scale cultural development and produce, store, and distribute cultural commodities and services on industrial and commercial chains. The cultural industries, according to author O'Connor (2000), are trading operations for symbolic commodities whose economic value is derived from cultural heritage values.

Of the many explanations of the term “heritage”, the most popular is that heritage is what we take over from the past, use for today and try our best to protect for future generations (Ashworth, 2003). Studying cultural heritage as a resource for cultural industries and economic development has piqued the interest of numerous researchers. Resources related to cultural heritage have influenced social and economic advancement either directly or indirectly, boosting the travel and tourism sector and enhancing social and human capital (Throsby, 1999; Tran Thi Hien, 2022). The value of cultural heritage, particularly music, film, and cultural tourism was highlighted by Nguyen Thi Thu Ha (2017) in her work on economic development. Cultural legacy provides impetus and inspiration for the growth of the cultural industries. According to Nguyen Thi Thanh Xuyen (2020), traditional performances, festivals, and rituals are a few examples of cultural resources that can be used to boost tourism.

Studies conducted in the field of tourism at World Heritage Sites (WHS) have shown how important the numerous tangible cultural heritage assets are to raising the allure of the place. According to Panzera et al. (2021), cultural heritage is a potentially important predictor of the expansion of international tourism. It helps people and communities, especially in developed countries. According to Lee, S. et al. (2016), cultural legacy becomes a resource and a commodity to entice tourists. Similar conclusions were reached by Groizard et al. (2018) when they examined the impact of UNESCO WHS on international travel. According to the authors' examination of the WHS's effects on Arab countries between 1995 and 2013, these places are important for drawing in foreign visitors. They specifically draw attention to the potential 50% decline in tourism in the event that these sites are entirely demolished. Additionally, Cuccia et al. (2016) focused on how traveller demand is influenced by cultural heritage. Researchers in Italian areas found that WHS status had a positive effect on overnight stays between 1997 and 2015. This finding highlights the complex role that UNESCO WHS plays in promoting demand for inbound tourism.

Cultural heritage in the province of Thua Thien Hue has been utilised for the cultural industries. The author of research like Phan Thi Diem Huong (2020), which focuses on the use of Hue history in tourism, demonstrates how popular Hue's imperial heritage is with travellers. Hoang Thi Dieu Thuy's (2023) study, which looks at visitors' satisfaction with culinary services, illustrates the push and pull factors in culinary tourism. Examined closely, Hue City's creative and literary assets have developed into useful instruments for the growth of tourism (Le Vu Truong Giang, 2022). The expansion of tourism in recent years has affected Hue's cultural heritage conservation in both positive and negative ways (Nguyen Hoang Khanh Linh, 2021).

Thus, many scholars are interested in researching how cultural heritage is exploited in the cultural sector; yet much of the research has primarily looked at heritage tourism. In this article, we restate our conviction that culture is an important resource that contributes to the development of cultural industries. The paper's content highlights Hue's cultural heritage contributions to music and film and analyses its role in tourism. The paper makes several recommendations for utilising and protecting cultural heritage while advancing the cultural industry considering these assessments.

## Methods

The following methods are combined in this topic: analytical: a holistic approach to going over and analysing findings from earlier studies and examining cultural legacies that have been appropriated for the travel, film, and music industries; Multidisciplinary research method: The team of writers uses expertise from a variety of relevant disciplines, including anthropology, tourism, film, and the performing arts, to assess and offer a thorough, unbiased analysis of the research issue. To assure the validity of the data gathered, the researchers synthesise news, scientific research, and relevant publications from government and scientific journals for this study.

The authors carried out three fieldwork studies in July 2023, January 2024, and July 2024 to gather useful sources. To better grasp the cultural features and the function of cultural heritages in the research field, the authors observed and experienced Hue's cultural heritages during the fieldwork, particularly those that have been utilised in tourism, film, and performing arts. Hence, the paper includes primary and secondary data to further enhance objectivity, authenticity, and practicality of the research.

## Results and Discussion

### The role of cultural heritage in tourism

According to Tripadvisor – a recognised and prestigious World travel platform has honoured Hue with 8th place in the world's top 25 cultural destinations in the 2024 Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Destinations Award (Tuòng Bách, 2024). In addition, the American travel magazine – Travel+Leisure has selected Vietnam's Thua Thien Hue as one of the destinations in Asia that tourists cannot miss in their travel itinerary in 2024 (Phúc, 2024).

From the prestigious awards, the Director of the Tourism Department of Thua Thien Hue province – Nguyen Van Phuc said *“This is a golden opportunity to promote the position of Hue City and Thua Thien Hue in the process of becoming a centrally run city with the common tourism brand of Hue - the ancient capital, new experiences and trio of identities: Hue - the city of Festival, Hue - the capital of cuisine and Hue - the capital of Ao Dai”*. In 2023, the Department of Tourism of Thua Thien Hue province also launched the Hue City Tourist Passport application – Hue CIT with 2 versions including the Tourist Passport application and

paper publications. Hence, enhancing and diversifying experiential activities for tourists during their stays in Hue, especially cultural and long-history-based destinations like the Complex of Hue monuments and An Dinh Palace (Huế CIT, 2023).

*Cultural heritages as motivation for the development of cultural tourism – the case of The Complex of Hue monuments and An Dinh Palace*

The Complex of Hue Monuments is located in and around Hue City in Thua Thien-Hue Province in the geographical centre of Vietnam with easy access to the sea. The complex was recognised as a World Heritage by UNESCO in 1993 (UNESCO, 2019). Looking from above, the city has a combination of natural features that play a role as a protection shield against the enemy; the Ngu Binh Mountain (known as the Royal Screen) and the Perfume River, which runs through the city; hills characterising a protective screen in front of the monuments or taking the role of “a blue dragon” to the left and “a white tiger” to the right – which shield the main entrance and prevent the entry of malevolent spirits. The whole structure of the Complex of Hue Monuments is aligned cosmologically with the Five Cardinal Points which are centre, west, east, north, and south; the Five Elements (earth, metal, wood, water, fire), and the Five Colours (yellow, white, blue, black, red) (Tran & Pham, 2023).

An Dinh Palace is located on the bank of the An Cuu River, originally from the 14th year of Thanh Thai (1902), Phung Hoa Cong Nguyen Phuc Buu Dao established the government and named it An Dinh. In February 1922, An Dinh Palace became the potential of the Eastern Palace of Crown Prince Vinh Thuy (Emperor Bao Dai). After 1954, the Ngo Dinh Diem government confiscated An Dinh Palace. After 1975, Mrs. Tu Cung, the mother of King Bao Dai, donated An Dinh Palace to the revolutionary government. Up to now, the relics of An Dinh Palace are being restored regularly under the observation and evaluation of the Tourism Department of Hue; the government and related stakeholders. An Dinh Palace opened for tourists to visit in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, since then, several information technology applications on smartphones have been invented so that the public and tourists can interact and access information sources more clearly. In addition to the exhibition activities, the story of An Dinh is also connected to the experience of assembling the architectural model of the Palace for young people and those who like to explore. That is how the Hue Ancient Capital Relics Conservation Centre strengthens its organisation to foster an understanding of Hue royal architecture among young people, so that young people in particular and the public in general gradually understand, absorb, love and appreciate the national cultural heritage more and more (Quynh Hoa, 2016).

Since the construction of the Complex of Hue Monuments and An Dinh Palace, these cultural heritages received rapid growth in tourist rates due to the richness of cultural values and exquisite infrastructures (Table 1).

Table 1. Tourist arrivals to Hue City

Year	Total tourist arrivals	International tourist
2021	691.571	22.735
2022	2.050.000	263.000
2023	3.200.000	1.200.000
2024	1.950.251 (estimated)	821.290 (estimated)

Source: Department of Hue Tourism

Within the total tourist arrivals, the main categories of international tourists come from Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Japan, Germany, Taiwan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and

Thailand. The majority of tourists choose cultural heritage or destinations that are shown in music videos/films to visit (Linh et al., 2021).

### **The role of cultural heritage in the music**

Cultural heritages as motivation for music video making and storytelling. “We can’t be Together Eternally” (Không thể cùng nhau suốt kiếp) by Hoa Minzy – a Vietnamese singer was filmed in Hue City, Vietnam. The music video was based on the real historical love story between Empress Consort Nam Phuong (Saint name – Marie-Thérèse, given name Nguyễn Hữu Thị Lan) who devoted her life to Emperor Bao Dai – the last Emperor of Nguyen Dynasty. The music video was shot at several cultural destinations including An Dinh Palace and the Complex of Hue Monuments (Imperial Citadel, Imperial City, Imperial Palace, Noon Gate, and Purple Forbidden City).

The music video emphasised the role of cultural heritages (both tangible and intangible) through: 1) Portraying the fashion influences of Empress Consort Nam Phuong during the historical time with gold; dragon-embroidered tunic; red scarf; gold hat, and silver trousers symbolised the prosperity of the Dynasty that has been worn throughout the music video by the singer; 2) Displaying the annulment of “tam cung lục viện” – polygamous during the long shot at the Imperial City. This scene also emphasises the mindset of the previous generations on the role of a wife and a husband in the marriage; 3) Showing the cultural heritage sites such as An Dinh Palace, Khai Dinh Palace, the Complex of Hue Monuments, and Thien Mu Pagoda. Focusing on the architectural details of the buildings using long camera shots and wide lens zoom. Hence, providing viewers a wider and broader view that captivates the beauty of the heritage sites.

Since the establishment of the music video, Hoa Minzy fans and the public have had a different view of Traditional Vietnamese clothes, customs and infrastructure (especially the destinations where the music video took place). Hence, enhancing the number of tourists coming to An Dinh Palace and the Complex of Hue Monuments for check-in, exploring, and most importantly for research related to historical and heritage values that have been portrayed via the help of the music video.

### **The role of cultural heritage in the film**

Vietnamese filmmakers Nguyen Van Thong and Tran Vu achieved great value when selecting typical details of Vietnamese culture, such as houses, bamboo groves, rivers, banks, etc., creating a genuine and simple poetic quality in their 1962 film *The Passerine Bird* (Con chim vành khuyên), one of the first Vietnamese films ever made. After the Doi moi period, filmmaker Tran Anh Hung's 1993 film *The Scent of Green Papaya* (Mùi đu đủ xanh) depicted 1950s Vietnamese living in the setting of a traditional Vietnamese home. Both domestic and foreign viewers' emotions were profoundly affected by these pieces. Several highly successful Vietnamese-themed motion pictures have been released since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These included *Buffalo Boy* (Mùa len trâu-2003), which depicted Mekong Delta culture; *Story of Pao* (2006), helmed by Ngo Quang Hai, which capitalized on Hmong culture; and *The Moon at the Bottom of the Well* (2008), directed by Nguyen Vinh Son, which recorded Hue residents' way of life. A few recent movies are Luong Dinh Dung's *Father and Son* (2017), Victor Vu's *Dreamy Eyes* (2019) Bui Kim Quy's *Memoryland* (2021), Phi Tien Son's *Dao, Pho, and Piano* (2023), Victor Vu's *The Last Wife* (2023), Ly Hai's *Face Off 7: One Wish* (2024), and others. Based on cultural heritage, these works offer viewpoints and nuanced insights to produce high-quality material and visually appealing artwork that most effectively conveys Vietnamese culture. Furthermore, many international motion pictures, including *Indochina* (1992), *The*

*Lover* (1992), and *The Quiet American* (2001), take advantage of the indigenous cultural values of Vietnam. Most recently, in 2023, the film *A Tourist's Guide to Love* was produced by filmmaker Steven Tsuchida, who took advantage of Vietnamese cultural heritage.

Out of all the movies listed above, *Moon at the Bottom of the Well* stands out as a work that extensively plunders Hue culture. The same-titled short story by Hue author Tran Thuy Mai was turned into a movie in 2008 by director Nguyen Vinh Son. As a result, this romantic movie, which centres on the family life of Hanh, a romantic Hue woman who worships her husband and would do anything for him, is comparable to a soft, philosophical poem that is yet rather dramatic. Director Vinh Son focused on the smallest elements in the community's cultural activities while capturing each filming angle, then the Hue people's way of life—eating, living, and spirituality. The main character is an example of the Hue people's way of life and living quarters in a traditional house. The house is small, narrow, and built of wood in the style of a tiny noble mansion. The greenery, flowers, fruits, and water all help the house to blend in with the surrounding landscape. The way things are arranged in the house makes an entire area more architectural. Hon Chen Temple and Hue Citadel are two of the complex of UNESCO-designated tangible human heritage sites in Hue, which are also depicted in numerous scenarios. Furthermore, captured in the movie are the Truong Tien Bridge and further Hue vistas. The filmmaker makes full use of the food habits in addition to the lifestyle and artefacts. Hue people's sophisticated cuisine is demonstrated by the way food is processed, dishes are served, drinks are made, and the cooking area is used repeatedly. Hue's peaceful and endearing qualities are further emphasized by the settings with exquisite and detailed frames.

The movie makes use of intangible cultural legacies, such as belief systems and customs. With a rather long film duration, scenes such as the spirit medium dance, a way to end an old marriage relationship, and the moment where the local god is worshipped on the 30th night of Tet are recreated, providing the audience with a greater understanding of culture. A sizable amount of footage is available for the worship of the Mother Goddess, particularly during the Hon Chen Temple festival when the ritual is performed to highlight Vietnamese cultural traits. The Mother Goddess worship ritual was acknowledged by UNESCO in 2016 as a part of humanity's intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, the movie makes use of a traditional music genre that is associated with Hue, Ca Hue, and Ho Hue. Ca Hue consists of singing and instrumental performances that blend tasteful royal court music with straightforward folk tunes. The movie also depicts the characteristics of the Hue people, particularly the image and persona of the Hue women who feature in it—at times peaceful and pensive, at other times savagely to defend themselves.

Utilising Hue's extensive cultural heritage, the movie not only captures the breathtaking landscape of this poetic, serene, and alluring heritage land, but it also vividly captures the minute details of community life, residential culture, cuisine, and spiritual culture... of the Vietnamese people. These cultural traits might have had a part in the movie's success, and it has been shown in many Western nations. People in the world and the Vietnamese have gained a deeper understanding of Vietnamese culture thanks to the film's showing. *Moon in the Bottom of the Well* and other movies that make use of cultural heritage have done a great job of promoting Vietnam and its people. This is an additional means of drawing tourists to the rich cultural legacy of our nation.

It can be shown that cultural industries like tourism, music and film are heavily affected by the impacts of cultural heritage for tourist motivation; art-making motivation and so on. Previous studies in Vietnam have exploited the effects of filmmaking; music, and tourism in promoting socio-economic development. However, those studies haven't explored using culture and

heritage to promote and develop cultural industries. It is undeniable exploiting cultural and heritage values in developing cultural industries is a new way to encourage the growth of a nation. Hence, preserving the core values of a long history.

To promote the sustainable growth of cultural industries like tourism, filmmaking and music, it is important to improve the human resources and service quality by opening for new investors that meet the requirements of the government, local authorities, and local people; developing new tourism products, especially for the night segmentation such as traditional handcraft, workshops, and night visitations to cultural heritage sites; equipping new supported languages in cultural heritage sites, music and film with more subtitles; preparing short-term and long-term training courses focusing on the cultural heritage preservation process and tour guide skills; and evaluate regularly to ensure the balance of human resources quality. Vietnam in general and Hanoi as the capital of Vietnam have approved with Resolution No. 09-NQ/TU, dated February 22, 2022, of the Hanoi City Party Committee “On the development of cultural industry in the capital in the period of 2021 - 2025, orientation to 2030, vision to 2045” which identifies human resources as one of the key tasks and solutions to make the capital's cultural industry become a key economic sector.

Furthermore, empirical studies show the inadequate amount of research on the impacts of music and filmmaking on the growth of cultural industries. It is important to take into account more on this research field. In addition, human resources are the core of the cultural industry growth, so it is vital to study more on the relationship between music, filmmaking and tourism in the context of integration of these sectors leading to a harmonised community and sustainable development of a whole nation. Training courses and professional education institutions for these sectors should be taken care of more and get the supports from the Government and local authorities. Moreover, cultural institutions should consider linking these sectors so the students can augment their knowledge and experiences before they can work in the professional areas.

Moreover, it is crucial that by using cultural heritage values in filmmaking and music, the development of these cultural industries will also help in promoting tourism destinations alongside the branding of Hue city as “Hue - the City of Festival”, “Hue - the Culinary Capital”, and “Hue - the Capital of Ao Dai Vietnam”. Cultural heritages also proved to be a foundation to develop new tourism models, especially the community-based sea tourism model in Hai Duong and the eco-tourism model in Ru Cha – Con Te to form a centre of cultural tourism including exhibitions, introducing and selling traditional craft products. Additionally, filmmakers and music producer can use the cultural elements of Hue to enhance and improve the strong relationship between the cultural heritages and the culture of Hue and its people. Hence, providing a better tourism experience with a guidebook for the younger generation that includes all the arts (exhibitions, cultural heritage destinations, and high-tech museums that inspire music video/filmmaking).

Overall, studies on the subject of tourism and film have existed before, however, they are mainly focus on the impacts of tourism on the socio-economic development of a community and how film can affect the audiences in product consumption. This study exploits the cultural heritage values in promoting and developing the cultural industries including music, tourism and film which have not been investigated before.

## **Conclusion**

Cultural and heritage values play a significant part in the socioeconomic development of Hue City, Vietnam. Especially in cultural industries like tourism, music and film; the research

shows the strong relationship between cultural and heritage values in Hue city become the main motivation for tourists to travel to Hue; music inspired by real-life stories took place in Hue and film based on the scenario and lifestyle with cultural values reflected in characters portrait, film-making process and customs. The development of these cultural industries greatly benefits the growth of Hue City. Furthermore, the research shows that cultural heritages are becoming important resources for the growth of cultural tourism; and provide resources and inspiration for music and film production. To enhance the quality and enrich the affluent cultural and heritage values of Hue, it is important to navigate the suitable policy from authorities and local people that complies with the government's regulations and international laws; promote the beauty of Hue values via multi-media sources with the help from younger human resources; and develop more OCOP products to show the exquisiteness of cultural and heritage values of Hue City. For future research, it is recommended that a qualitative approach that focuses on the FGDs (Focus group discussions) will help researchers expand their understanding of the research problem; longer time should also be considered for a better comprehensive context, especially for cultural and heritage values which are vast and multi-dimensional.

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