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### ESTUDIOS

#### **The Modernization Resolution of Vietnam's Education System by the Francophone Road in the East-West Cultural Conflict of the Late Nineteenth Century and the Early Twentieth Century**

La resolución de la modernización del sistema educativo de Vietnam por la vía francófona en el conflicto cultural Este-Oeste de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX

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# The Modernization Resolution of Vietnam's Education System by the Francophone Road in the East-West Cultural Conflict of the Late Nineteenth Century and the Early Twentieth Century

*La resolución de la modernización del sistema educativo de Vietnam por la vía francófona en el conflicto cultural Este-Oeste de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX*

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**Summary:** I. Introduction.—II. The francophone road in the integration of Vietnamese education into the modern world one in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. 1. The introduction and development of the francophone education system in Vietnam. 2. Impacts of the francophone education model on the contemporary Vietnamese education system. 3. The future and prospects of educational relationship between Vietnam and francophone education.—III. Conclusion.

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**Abstract:** Even though the colonial authorities tried to use education as a political tool to serve their ruling purposes, the francophone education system was an important bridge between Vietnam's traditional Confucian education and mankind's modern one. One of the greatest achievements of the francophone education system in Vietnam was the training of a modern westernized intelligentsia different from traditional Confucian intellectuals. Although the Soviet and other socialist educational models later replaced the francophone education system, the cornerstones of all existing modern educational models of Vietnam have originated from the very first settlements of the francophone education in the Far East Country. The fundamental elements of the francophone education therefore play an important role in the integration and development of the Vietnamese education into the modern world education system. The modernization of the Vietnamese education system in the colonial period under the decisive influences of the francophone model could, to some extent, be seen as a historical resolution to modernity of Vietnam's schools in the circumstances of the East-West dispute that nearly all Asian countries experienced in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

**Keywords:** modernization, education system, francophone road, Franco-Vietnamese education, modern westernized intelligentsia.

**Resumen:** Aunque las autoridades coloniales intentaron utilizar la educación como una herramienta política para servir a sus propósitos, el sistema educativo francófono fue un puente importante entre la educación confuciana tradicional de Vietnam y la educación moderna de la humanidad. Uno de los mayores logros del sistema educativo francófono en Vietnam fue la formación de una intelectualidad moderna occidentalizada diferente de los intelectuales confucianos tradicionales. Aunque el sistema educativo francófono fue reemplazado más tarde por el soviético y otros modelos educativos socialistas, las piedras angulares de todos los modelos educativos modernos existentes en Vietnam se originaron desde los primeros asentamientos de la educación francófona en el país del Lejano Oriente. Por lo tanto, los elementos fundamentales de la educación francófona juegan un papel importante en la integración y el desarrollo de la educación vietnamita en el sistema educativo mundial moderno. La modernización del sistema educativo vietnamita en el período colonial bajo las influencias decisivas del modelo francófono podría verse en cierta medida como una resolución histórica a la modernidad de las escuelas de Vietnam en las circunstancias de la disputa Este-Oeste que experimentaron casi todos los países asiáticos en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX y la primera mitad del siglo XX.

**Palabras clave:** modernización, sistema educativo, vía francófona, educación franco-vietnamita, intelectualidad moderna occidentalizada.

## I. Introduction

The dominance of the education model of the English-speaking countries in the current international academic activities often leads to thinking that the internationalization of Vietnam's education system is the process of operation, development, and integration into the educational world of the English-speaking ones. However, the history of formation and development of the modern Vietnamese education system has proved that before being immersed in the general flow of the English-speaking education model, which is usually considered as one of the most preeminent standards of mankind's current education, Vietnam's traditional education system with obvious characteristics of Eastern Asian Confucianism had been in strong contact with another Western education system. The francophone education model has been formed and developed in Vietnam since the French officially set foot on Vietnamese soils and has still been playing a certain part in the internationalization of Vietnam's current education system, but grew strongest in the colonial period from 1858 to 1954. Globally, Vietnamese scholars have often considered the francophone education system as an integral part of the Western education model in difference from and in contrast to the inherent Eastern Asian education system of their own one. Although Western education does not mean the francophone education only, the francophone education system shares, in general, a lot of similarities that are difficult to recognize in comparison with other Western education systems in the eyes of the traditional Vietnamese intellectuals.

It means that prior to the appearance of the French colonialists in Indochina, Vietnamese people had successfully built their own model of education. In such a circumstance, the arrival and presence of the francophone education in Vietnam not only provided the native residents with an entirely different model of development, but also opened a new chapter in the integration of the Vietnamese education into the world's modern one. However, this process did not take place as easily and simply as it has been described in the available literature. This is on the one hand because the Eastern Asian feudal dynasties never wanted to give up their dominance in the field of education in particular and in all other aspects of life in general. On the other hand, the new comers and the western colonialists would like to impose a new form of education on the conquered groups according to their own model of training. How did the Vietnamese education system react to such an East-West conflicting situation of the colonial period and choose the way to keep moving forward? How did the francophone education system affect the modernization of Vietnam's traditional Eastern Asian education system

in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century? What elements of the francophone education system should be preserved, promoted, and developed in the international integration of the Vietnamese education in the coming time? These issues have been basically addressed by several Vietnamese researchers and foreign scholars in various forms and degrees. However, none of them has fully focused on analyzing the impacts of the francophone education model on the modernization and internationalization of Vietnam's traditional educational system and the historical resolution of Vietnam's schools to the East-West cultural conflict in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. This paper therefore studies specific contributions of the francophone education system to the formation and development of Vietnam's modern education model in comparison with other multilingual education systems. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, it confirms that although the English-speaking education model has currently been demonstrating its practical quality and effectiveness in global academic activities in general and its superiority in Vietnam's education system in particular, it was the francophone education model that established the first bases for the appearance and development of a modern Vietnamese education system and, at the same time, contributed significantly to the introduction of the Vietnamese education to the external world. The modernization of the Vietnamese education system by the francophone road could therefore be seen as a historical choice and alternative resolution of Vietnam's schools to the East-West cultural dispute in the Indochinese colonial period. Based on the aforementioned research results, the study offers some suggestions to maximize the inherent advantages that the francophone education system can contribute to the international integration of Vietnam's education in the decades to come.

## **II. The francophone road in the integration of Vietnamese education into the modern world one in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century**

### *1. The introduction and development of the francophone education system in Vietnam*

The establishment and development of the francophone education system in Vietnam was closely linked to the French presence in Indochina and can be divided into three phases (1861-1906-1919-1945) and several periods. The first period took place in the years of 1861-

1868. On September 21, 1861, the *Évêque d'Adran* interpretation school (Bá Đa Lộc) was established to train interpreters for the colonial government<sup>1</sup> due to language barrier<sup>2</sup>. This is considered as one of the first steps for the emergence and growth of the francophone education system in Vietnam later<sup>3</sup>. Although this school was also a teacher training ground for other schools, its size was still too modest and although the colonial administration intended to increase the number of scholarships for the school of Bá Đa Lộc<sup>4</sup>, the Confucian education of Nguyễn Dynasty was still maintained in the three newly occupied provinces (Biên Hòa, Gia Định, Định Tường). The maintenance of this traditional education system did not find favor from many French, as it would contribute to creating the seeds of resistance to the newly established colonial administration<sup>5</sup>.

Facing such a situation, on July 16, 1864, the French government opened a number of primary schools in the occupied provinces to teach Vietnamese national scripts and mathematics. By 1866, the French established 47 primary schools with 1,238 pupils<sup>6</sup> and began sending

<sup>1</sup> Phan Ngọc Liên, *Giáo dục và thi cử Việt Nam (Trước Cách mạng tháng Tám)* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Từ điển bách khoa, 2006), 111. (Phan Ngoc Lien, *Education and Exams in Vietnam (Before the August Revolution)* (Hanoi: Encyclopedia Publishing House, 2006), 111).

<sup>2</sup> Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 2006), 35-36. (Phan Trong Bau, *Modern Vietnamese Education* (Hanoi: Education Publishing House, 2006), 35-36).

<sup>3</sup> One of the Vietnamese figures of the time who contributed greatly to the establishment and development of this school is the scholar, namely Trương Vĩnh Ký. In the year of 1851, Trương Vĩnh Ký or sometimes called as Petrus Ký was taught French language by a French priest. In the year of 1858, Trương Vĩnh Ký took the role of an interpreter for the French colonialists in Vietnam. In the year of 1860, he accepted to be an interpreter for Jauréguiberry. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1862, Trương Vĩnh Ký was invited to occupy an official position as a teacher at the interpretation school of Bá Đa Lộc. In the year of 1866, Trương Vĩnh Ký participated in the management of the Newspaper of Gia Định. Together with Huỳnh Tịnh Của, Hồ Văn Nghi and other colleagues, he tried to promote the study of the national script (chữ quốc ngữ) and encourage the spread of modernized Western studies into Vietnam. Activities of this intelligentsia are thought to have played an important role in the process of transforming the quốc ngữ into the official writing system of the colonial government apparatus. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1871, the Pedagogical School of Cochinchina was established. Trương Vĩnh Ký was invited to take the managerial job at one of the first specialized schools for education which was built according to Western criteria in Vietnam.

<sup>4</sup> Bá Đa Lộc is the Vietnamese name of Pierre Joseph Georges Pigneau de Behaine which is often shortened to Pigneau de Behaine (1741-1799). His name in Chinese characters are 百多祿 which are translated from the French name of *Pierre* and similar to the name of *Petrus* in Latin.

<sup>5</sup> Phan Trọng Báu (2006), *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 37.

<sup>6</sup> Phan Ngọc Liên, *Giáo dục và thi cử Việt Nam*, 111.

Vietnamese children of the colonial officials to France for study<sup>7</sup>. The situation seemed to be better in Christian communities, as the Bible was often more accessible than the Newspaper of Gia Định. On that basis, the French were extremely optimistic about their “*spiritual conquest*”<sup>8</sup>, but they could not immediately spread this educational model to all 2,000 Cochinchina's villages. Therefore, village schools still taught Chinese characters, while Vietnamese and French teaching schools were only allowed to open to the extent permitted<sup>9</sup>. After taking over the whole area of Cochinchina in 1867, Admiral Lagrandière opened a primary school in each provincial town with the help of a number of interpreters as teachers to train students how to read and write. These learners then went to the villages to open new schools for rural residents<sup>10</sup>.

In addition to the opening of colonial schools, the French colonialists in Indochina also began to send Vietnamese people in the colonial system to study in France. In the early year of 1867, they began to send 12 Vietnamese students to France for this mission. At the end of that year, 15 more ones were sent to France for further education and training<sup>11</sup>. The number of French-trained students in Vietnam was hence gradually increasing in the following decades. This number was continuously added by a rising number of children of landlords, children of affluent families, and some scholarship holders from a wide variety of sources for study in France or other Western countries. These Westernized or western educated people later became modernized intelligentsia who could both speak French and use the quốc ngữ (the Vietnamese national language script) as native speakers.

Nevertheless, *in the years of 1868-1885*, the francophone education was only rooted in Cochinchina<sup>12</sup> and was still unable to become a stable model as a whole, while there was basically nothing significant in Tonkin and Annam. Although nearly 10 years of efforts had been over and traditional Confucian education in Cochinchina existed only with sporadic classes in the countryside<sup>13</sup>. The francophone education did not become a stable and

<sup>7</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ* (Sài Gòn: Nhà xuất bản Lửa Thiêng, 1970), 241. (Nguyen The Anh, *Vietnam under French domination* (Saigon: Lua Thien Publishing House, 1970), 241).

<sup>8</sup> Taboulet, G., *La geste Francaise en Indochine* (Paris: Andrien, 1955), 600, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 2006), 47.

<sup>9</sup> Luro, *Cours d'administration annamite* (Sài Gòn), 783, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 40.

<sup>11</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 241.

<sup>12</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 1995), 40. (Long Nguyen The Long, *Confucianism in Vietnam - Education and Exams* (Hanoi: Education Publishing House, 1995), 40).

<sup>13</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 40.

systematic model for the newly conquered inhabitants. In 1868, Admiral Lagrandière built a primary school for French children at elementary level, primary college, and French and Vietnamese interpreters, which were taught according to the curricula of the French high school<sup>14</sup>. However, it was until 1868 that the French colonialists were only able to open a total number of 58 schools in Cochinchina. This included two schools of the Church with 1,368 students<sup>15</sup>.

On July 10, 1871, Admiral Dupré established *the Colonial Pedagogical School* in Saigon to train teachers and official staffs with 60 students<sup>16</sup>. In 1873, the French administration opened a series of schools to teach the national language script, some primary levels of French language, and some scientific knowledge to replace the Confucian schools, but the number of people attending was not as numerous as expected. Therefore, the education conference of the whole Cochinchina in early 1873 concluded that the francophone education had not been successful over the past 10 years. Chinese characters were still regularly studied in the countryside, while the French and Vietnamese national languages were still very limited to a small number of urban inhabitants. A sudden change in education was therefore completely impossible in the short term<sup>17</sup>.

Facing such a challenging situation, in 1874 the French established the Cochinchina Agency for Education and issued the Regulation on Education to divide the francophone education system into two levels: primary (3 years) and high school (3 years). While more people were given more opportunities to attend primary schools in Saigon, Chợ Lớn, Mỹ Tho, Vĩnh Long, Bến Tre, Sóc Trăng, they could only attend high schools in Saigon<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Luro, *Cours d'administration annamite*, 783, in: Phan Trọng Bái, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Vial, P., *L'instruction Publique en Cochinchine* (Paris, 1872), 14, in: Phan Trọng Bái, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> In 1874, the first graduates of this school were allocated to 20 different primary schools in Cochinchina.

<sup>17</sup> Luro, *Cours d'administration annamite*, 783, in: Phan Trọng Bái, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 41.

<sup>18</sup> On November 14, 1874, the first high school was established in Saigon, the Chasseloup Laubat High School (Collège Chasseloup Laubat) or the Indigenous School (Native School). This school was not only the gathering place for the large part of the most outstanding pupils of Cochinchina at that time, but it also attracted a lot of famous teachers. The most typical on the side of learners are Trần Ngọc Án, Nguyễn Bính, Phan Văn Hùm, Hồ Văn Ngà, Tân Hàm Nghiệp, Nguyễn Văn Sâm, Vương Hồng Sển, Trần Văn Thạch, Nguyễn Văn Thịnh... On the teacher side are Diệp Văn Cương, Cao Hữu Đình, Nguyễn Văn Mai... At the beginning of the twentieth century, the school offered all levels of education from primary to baccalaureate education according to the French program. The school was renamed to *Lycée Jean Jacques Rousseau* in 1920 and Lê Quý Đôn School in 1966.



Nevertheless, the results achieved in practice were still insignificant<sup>19</sup>, because the French colonialists were reported to be too hasty in the early years of colonization in Cochinchina. However, after implementing the policy of teaching what the Vietnamese people had hitherto learned with their own script, the Chinese characters gradually lost their prestige in Southern Vietnam<sup>20</sup>. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese national language script and French language became increasingly popular.

After a number of tireless efforts, in 1878<sup>21</sup>, the quốc ngữ and French eventually replaced the Chinese characters in the colonial administration system of Cochinchina<sup>22</sup>. Anyone who would like to work for the colonial administration system of Cochinchina since then needed to prove their ability to use their Vietnamese national language script for their job<sup>23</sup>. French and Vietnamese national languages became a compulsory part of local examinations (các kỳ thi Hương) from 1903. In similarity to Vietnamese, only those who could use French for work were recruited into the colonial state system. From 1906, candidates of the local, central, and court examinations, which were organized for every 3 years, had to pass French and mathematic quizzes (primary arithmetic)<sup>24</sup>. In 1932, this provision was also applied for Tonkin and Annam<sup>25</sup>.

Overall, in spite of granting a wide variety of scholarships, the newly established francophone education system did not attract the expected number of native learners. In 1879, a three-level education system: the communal school (3 years), the district school (3 years), and the secondary school (4 years) were established under the *New Regulation*. This plan was hoped to “eliminate Chinese characters”<sup>26</sup> from the education system in

<sup>19</sup> Luro, *Cours d'administration annamite*, 746, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Taboulet, *La geste Francaise en Indochine*, 595, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 47.

<sup>21</sup> According to the famous researcher in Vietnam's education history, Phan Trọng Báu, the landmark to abolish the quốc ngữ (the national language script) in Cochinchina was in 1882. “Along with the plan to open schools, the authorities issued decrees that forced the people to use national language (quốc ngữ) in all state documents since 1882, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 51. The data here is taken from Lê Văn Giảng, *Lịch sử giản lược hơn 1000 năm nền giáo dục Việt Nam (Sách tham khảo)* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Chính trị Quốc gia, 2003), 78. (Le Van Giang, *A Brief History of More than 1000 Years of Education in Vietnam (Reference Book)* (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2003), 78).

<sup>22</sup> Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, 52.

<sup>24</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 41.

<sup>25</sup> Lê Văn Giảng, *Lịch sử giản lược hơn 1000 năm nền giáo dục Việt Nam*, 79.

<sup>26</sup> *L'Ère nouvelle* (Kỷ nguyên mới) (Sài Gòn, September 1879), 2, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 42.

Cochinchina. Developing the national language script was also considered as a measure to limit the influence of Chinese characters<sup>27</sup>. Under this new decision, a primary school would be built in each district. A total number of 20 primary schools would be opened in the whole Cochinchina apart from 6 secondary schools. Chasseloup Laubat High School was designed to offer high school curricula, but elementary school courses were still temporarily provided, while the school of Bá Đa Lộc was the educational institution for all three levels of training. All of them were under the management of the Cochinchina Department of Education, which were established on March 17, 1879.

However, as the village communities and the communal bases were largely ignored and the manpower and facilities of the colonial state were in shortages, the plan proposed on March 19, 1879 ended up only on paper. In such a context, Lemyra de Viler intended to build an education system resembling exactly the French content, but taught in the Vietnamese national language script. Within the framework of this plan, on June 14, 1880, Chasseloup Laubat High School was allowed to teach all three levels of education, while a new high school was opened in Mỹ Tho, and a school dedicated to overseas Chinese children and Chinese half-children was opened in Chợ Lớn. On July 2, 1880, a new school was opened in Saigon for both boys and girls from 6 to 12 years of age. Of the 12 pre-existing district schools, 3 of them were boarding schools and served by French teachers, 2 schools were given to missionaries and became Catholic schools, 7 other schools were merged with communal schools. The remaining communal schools were still fully autonomous. Although the plan of Lafont and Lemyre de Viler could not be successfully implemented due to lack of facilities and personnel<sup>28</sup>, a francophone education system was formed in Cochinchina. According to this model, provincial schools usually offered courses in all 3 levels of education, district schools only provided 2 levels of education, and communal schools only served primary learners.

Despite a wide range of efforts, after nearly 20 years of domination in the colonial Cochinchina (1867-1886), the entire francophone education system in Vietnam could only include 17 schools managed by the European colonialists. Of these, 10 schools were designed for boys and 7 schools for girls. Only 48 French teachers and 78 Vietnamese ones who were responsible for teaching 1,829 pupils from 10 boy schools served the whole newly established education system. In addition, there were 25 French

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Cultru, *L'histoire de la Cochinchine française des origines à 1883* (Paris, 1910), 400, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 51.

female teachers and 13 Vietnamese teachers who were in charge of the teaching for 992 pupils from girl schools. Furthermore, 24 French teachers and 51 Vietnamese ones worked for 16 district schools with 1,553 pupils. Moreover, 270 Vietnamese teachers served at 219 inter-communal schools with 10,441 pupils. At the same time, 91 Vietnamese were teachers of 3,416 pupils in 91 communal schools across Cochinchina. The whole education system of Cochinchina in 1885 consisted of a total number of 343 educational institutions, 600 teachers (97 French and 503 Vietnamese ones), and 18,231 pupils. By 1885, Cochinchina was home to three schools for consultant training, while schools for interpreters and legal judges were also opened in Hanoi. However, Tonkin had only two French and Vietnamese national language schools founded in 1885 by General Brière De Lisle<sup>29</sup>. Overall, the French failed to realize their goals of eliminating Chinese characters and the influences of Confucian scholars to build the totally novel francophone education in Cochinchina.

More specifically, the proportion of learners in the francophone education system in Vietnam at that moment was less than 1% of native inhabitants, while the school system, which was instructed in Chinese characters, still existed with nearly 9,000 students and 426 teachers. Inter-communal schools and communal schools accounted for a very high proportion with 316 out of 503 schools (71.5%), but education quality was still problematic<sup>30</sup>. Therefore, the francophone education system in Cochinchina was only able to train a few Vietnamese to speak French, but most of them were not standardized<sup>31</sup>. At the same time, locally run schools fundamentally failed to meet the expectations to the extent that their existence and disappearance was not different<sup>32</sup>. That means the French colonial governors tried to use various methods to train interpreters and state staff for the colonial apparatus as well as to build a francophone education for the replacement of the traditional methods of education in Cochinchina. However, after nearly 25 years of attempt they were still unable to replace the Chinese characters by the French and Vietnamese national language script. The French colonial administrators in Indochina therefore showed more caution in the process of building the francophone education in Tonkin and Annam afterwards. Nevertheless, *the French laid the first bricks for a completely new education in the direction of*

<sup>29</sup> Marc, H. and Cony, P., *Indochine française (Đông Dương thuộc Pháp)* (Paris, 1946), 12, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Cultru, *L'histoire de la Cochinchine française des origines à 1883* (Paris, 1910), 400, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 54.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, 54.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, 54.

*integration with the world in Vietnam.* In general, although the percentage of learners in the francophone education system in Vietnam was less than 1% of the population<sup>33</sup>, *a completely new education system was established in Vietnam towards integration into the modern world education.*

*In the years of 1886-1906*, the education in Vietnam turned to a new page with the appearance of Paul Bert as general ambassador to Tonkin and Annam in June 1886. In addition to the establishment of the Academic Committee for native scholars, Paul Bert also reformed the educational apparatus and opened many new schools, but training programs were much more simplified<sup>34</sup>. This was the foundation of the French-Vietnamese school system in the later decades. Administrative centers were encouraged to open new schools and invite interpreters, civil servants, and even non-commissioned officers in the French army to work as teachers at schools. At the same time, the colonial administration also sponsored the missionaries to open more private schools for children from all lifestyles. Two vocational schools were also established during this period. One school was designed to train carpenters and blacksmith workers, another was constructed for the training of native handicraft workers<sup>35</sup>. It was also during this period, a special high school to teach French language for royal members and the children of high-ranking mandarins in the court was opened in the former capital city of Hue<sup>36</sup>, while Tonkin Academy of Northern knowledgeable men was also established on July 3, 1886<sup>37</sup>. As a result, a school for interpreters, 9 elementary schools for boys, 4 elementary schools for girls with the same curriculum as that of Cochinchina's elementary schools, one drawing schools, and 117 national language schools<sup>38</sup> were set up within around a year. However, Paul Bert's death at the end of 1886 brought his educational reform plans to an essential halt<sup>39</sup>.

In 1889, the French colonial administrators in Cochinchina erected a few of new schools in Cao Bằng, Đông Đăng, Lạng Sơn, Na S'ân, Thất Khê... In 1892, they opened night French classes for some Vietnamese and

<sup>33</sup> Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 2-3, 54.

<sup>34</sup> Marc, H. and Cony, P., *Indochine française (Đông Dương thuộc Pháp)* (Paris, 1946), 12, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Dumoutier, G., *Les débuts de l'enseignement française au Tonkin* (Hà Nội, 1905), in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 41.

<sup>37</sup> Phong Nguyen, "The Vietnamese Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium: A Study of the Pioneering Works of Gustave Emile Dumoutier (1850-1904)," *ASIANetwork Exchange*, Vol. 25, Issue 1 (2018), 101 (96-114).

<sup>38</sup> Dumoutier, G., *Les débuts de l'enseignement française au Tonkin* (Hà Nội, 1905), in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 59.

<sup>39</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 41.

Chinese civil servants in Đông Hưng and Móng Cái. Paul Bert's ambition to build a francophone education system in Tonkin and Annam was then partly followed by Governor General De Lanessan from 1894, when he restored the classes, which were instructed in Vietnamese and Chinese characters for French officials, opened printing houses, and founded the *Gazette* in Chinese characters. The francophone education system in Vietnam continued to be expanded with the establishment of Hue's School of Quốc học (Hue National High School), which was managed by Annam Governor under General Governor Rousseau. Following the civilized career of the predecessors, in 1898, Paul Doumer founded the French School of the Far East (École française d'Extrême-Orient, EFEO). One of the first missions of this school was to do research and propose an educational reform program<sup>40</sup> for the colonies in Indochina<sup>41</sup>.

However, nearly 10 years after Paul Bert's death in 1886, the educational career of the French colonialists in Tonkin and Annam was still assessed not to achieve significant results<sup>42</sup>. It means that the expensive lessons from hastily building the francophone education system in Cochinchina forced the French to accept the existence of the Confucian education system in Tonkin and Annam for a longer time<sup>43</sup>. Nevertheless, it was in essence nothing more than a strategy to buy time, as it was difficult for the French administrators in Cochinchina to accept the existence of an educational system that was contrary to their own governing philosophy<sup>44</sup>.

In 1900, the number of French-Vietnamese schools was distributed to the following provinces: Hanoi 15, Hải Phòng 5, Nam Định 4, Thanh Hóa 2, Vinh 2, Huế 2, Hội An 1, Nha Trang 1. Furthermore, there were two more high schools in Hanoi and Hue as well as 16 evening classes taught by interpreters in Hanoi. It was until 1905 that Vietnam's education system existed in three different forms. In Cochinchina, most communes were home to French-Vietnamese primary schools that taught French and national languages to native learners. Chinese characters were almost completely abolished or were only a minor subject at the elementary

<sup>40</sup> Professor C.L.E. Maitre, a member of the school, had a research work in the service of the educational reform in 1906.

<sup>41</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 41.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, 41.

<sup>43</sup> Nguyễn Văn Kiệm, *Lịch sử Việt Nam đầu thế kỷ 20-1918* (Hà Nội : Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 1979), 30. (Nguyen Van Kiem, *History of Vietnam in the early 20th century-1918* (Hanoi: Education Publishing House, 1979), 30).

<sup>44</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)* (Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh: Nhà xuất bản Đại học Quốc gia Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, 2003), 24. (Ho Son Diep, *Southern intellectuals in the resistance war against the French (1945-1954)* (Ho Chi Minh City: Ho Chi Minh City National University Press, 2003), 24).

schools. Additionally, Cochinchina at this time also had a number of famous high schools such as Chasaloup Laubat and Bá Đa Lộc. In Tonkin and Annam, the number of French and Vietnamese national language teaching schools was still relatively modest. In Annam, Chinese characters teaching schools were still fairly popular<sup>45</sup>.

That means in the early years of the twentieth century, traditional Chinese education still prevailed in Tonkin and Annam. A few of new Franco-Vietnamese schools were established mainly to train interpreters and low-ranking officials for the colonial government. The francophone education system was still unable to compete with Chinese education in the rural areas. There were 407 private schools teaching Chinese characters in the rural areas of the province of Bắc Ninh, while there were only 15 public French schools organized and managed by the colonial state<sup>46</sup>. Those who graduated from the francophone education system were basically still relatively inferior compared to the former Confucian school graduates on the road to power promotion<sup>47</sup>. The fact shows that although Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina possessed different educational systems, the basic premises for a comprehensive education reform began to appear.

In 1905, Governor-General Paul Beau established the Education Reform Council for the whole Indochina Federation. In 1906, the French colonialists established the Indochina Department of Education<sup>48</sup>, which was in charge of carrying out educational reform, revising and supplementing the traditional education system<sup>49</sup>. The Decree of May 31, 1906 divided the old education into 3 levels of education: Preschools (*Ấu học*) in communal schools and village schools to obtain admissions degrees (*Tuyển sinh*), Primary schools (*Tiểu học*) at district schools for the *Khóa sinh*, and High schools in provincial schools to prepare for local exams and central exams<sup>50</sup>. In addition, the francophone model of education was also used by the Church to spread religion, but they were not owned by the state and used to serve the entire community.

*In the period of 1906-1918*, although the number of pupils and teachers was believed to be limited by the colonization, it gradually increased as a

<sup>45</sup> Dumoutier, *L'Enseignement Francaise – Annamite* (Hà Nội, 1900), 33, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 60.

<sup>46</sup> Maitre, C. L. E., *L'enseignement indigène dans L'Indochine Annamite*, (Hà Nội, 1907), 6, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 62-63.

<sup>47</sup> Gourdon, *L'enseignement des indigènes en Indochine* (Paris, 1910), 17, in: Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 63.

<sup>48</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

<sup>49</sup> Phan Ngọc Liên, *Giáo dục và thi cử Việt Nam (Trước Cách mạng tháng Tám)*, 116.

<sup>50</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 41.

rule to modernity. In 1906, Vietnam had a total number of 26 secondary schools taught in French<sup>51</sup>. In 1913, Vietnam had 19,399 pupils at primary school and 12,103 pupils at primary colleges<sup>52</sup>. According to another source, in the same year of 1913, the number of primary pupils in public schools in Tonkin was 34,292 ones, in Annam was 15,051 ones, and in Cochinchina was 48,131 ones, but only 502 Vietnamese teachers were in charge of the teaching for these students<sup>53</sup>.

However, after having fully prepared the necessary conditions for the birth of the Franco-Vietnamese education, the French colonial administrators in Indochina officially abolished the Confucian education in Tonkin in 1915 and this was applied for Annam in 1919<sup>54</sup>, but they still had to admit the existence of some part of Hue court education<sup>55</sup>. In 1915, the local exam was eliminated in the North and in 1917 in the Central Vietnam<sup>56</sup>. On December 21, 1917, the colonial government issued new regulations on the organizational structure of the educational apparatus to facilitate further developments of the francophone education system<sup>57</sup>. This policy brought the francophone education system to the forefront to replace the traditional education system in Vietnam<sup>58</sup>.

*After the First World War (1914-1918)*, Governor General Albert Sarraut issued a new educational regulation that emphasized the higher status of the French language. The teaching of French had to begin at the elementary level<sup>59</sup>. In other words, Governor-General Albert Sarraut introduced the teaching of French language to the primary schools in Indochina following the First World War (1914-1918)<sup>60</sup>. By 1924, after sixty years of 'being civilized,' there were only 72,709 pupils in Cochinchina<sup>61</sup>. In the years of 1936-1937, there were only 2,322 primary schools in the entire Vietnam, including the North (Tonkin), Central (Annam), and South (Cochinchina) Vietnam. That is one school for every

<sup>51</sup> Nguyễn Văn Kiệm, *Lịch sử Việt Nam đầu thế kỷ 20-1918* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 1979), 30.

<sup>52</sup> Furnival, J. S., *Educational progress in Southeast Asia* (New York, 1943), 82, in: Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 239.

<sup>53</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Nguyễn Văn Kiệm, *Lịch sử Việt Nam đầu thế kỷ 20-1918*, 30.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Vũ Ngọc Khánh, *Tìm hiểu nền giáo dục Việt Nam trước 1945* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 1985), 168. (Vu Ngoc Khanh, *Understanding Vietnamese education before 1945* (Hanoi: Education Publishing House, 1985), 168).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, 168.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, 168.

<sup>59</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 239.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, 239.

<sup>61</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

3,000 people with the rate of 2% of the population going to school<sup>62</sup>. If the total number of Vietnam's primary school pupils were rated as 100% in the years of 1941-1942, that of primary school was 15%, that of primary college was 2%, and that of secondary school was only 0.4%<sup>63</sup>. In 1943, Vietnam's population was around 20 million people<sup>64</sup>. It means that all the attempts of the French colonialists in Indochina were basically only significant to the general education system, as the biggest changes in the francophone higher education system in Vietnam mainly occurred during the Second World War (1939-1945).

For higher education and vocational education, on July 10, 1871, Admiral Dupré established the *Colonial Pedagogy School* in Saigon to train teachers and administration staff. To serve the purposes of the colonial exploitation, France's Indochinese colonialists built the Institute of Microbiology in Saigon in 1891. In 1898, the Saigon Agricultural and Industrial Research Institute was established<sup>65</sup>. In 1898, Paul Doumer established the French School for Far East Studies (*École française d'Extrême-Orient*)<sup>66</sup>. In 1901, the French authorities agreed to open the School of Fine Arts and then Institute for Plant Seed Research in Thủ Đức Một<sup>67</sup>. In 1902, the University of Medicine<sup>68</sup> or Medical University<sup>69</sup> was founded in Hanoi<sup>70</sup>. In 1903, Biên Hòa School for the Practice of Fine Arts came into existence<sup>71</sup>.

In the atmosphere of educational reform of 1906, a number of professional schools, colleges, and universities were also formed<sup>72</sup>. Right after the promulgation of the policy of education reform, Governor-General Paul Beau opened the *Pedagogical schools* to train teachers in Hanoi, Nam Định, Hue and Gia Định. Additionally, vocational education was also a sphere of interest from the colonial state. In 1906, Asian Mechanical School came into being in Saigon. In 1907, Indochina University was established, but only had the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Law<sup>73</sup>. This university had to be closed in 1908 due to the revolutionary

<sup>62</sup> Vũ Ngọc Khánh, *Tìm hiểu nền giáo dục Việt Nam trước 1945*, 161.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, 161.

<sup>64</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 230.

<sup>65</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Nguyễn Thế Long, *Nho học ở Việt Nam - Giáo dục và thi cử*, 41.

<sup>67</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

<sup>68</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 240.

<sup>69</sup> Phan Ngọc Liên, *Giáo dục và thi cử Việt Nam (Trước Cách mạng tháng Tám)*, 116.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, 116.

<sup>71</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Vũ Ngọc Khánh, *Tìm hiểu nền giáo dục Việt Nam trước 1945*, 168.

<sup>73</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 240.



movements of students that sometimes went beyond the control of the colonial government and was reopened in 1917 under Governor General Albert Sarraut<sup>74</sup>, but with new faculties of Science and College of Fine Arts<sup>75</sup>. However, the University of Indochina (Université Indochine) only really operated from 1939<sup>76</sup>. In 1913, the birth of Gia Định Fine Arts School was recorded<sup>77</sup>. That means in the years 1886-1918, the French colonialists tried their best to carry out educational reform, but encountered fierce resistances from several sides<sup>78</sup>.

In 1941, the College of Medicine and Pharmacy (École de Plein Exercice de Médecine et de Pharmacie) was changed to the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Indochina (École de Médecine et de Pharmacie de l'Indochine) and the College of Law was lifted to the University of Law. These two universities, along with the College of Science, the College of Fine Arts, the College of Agriculture and Forestry, the College of Veterinary Medicine, the College of Public Works, and the College of Pedagogy, belonged to the Indochina University. All of these higher education institutions were organized and operated in similar ways to the French universities at that time. In the academic year of 1941-1942, the Indochina University was home to a total number of 834 students (628 Vietnamese ones). After the August Revolution of 1945, the universities and colleges in Hanoi were operated according to the educational model of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam<sup>79</sup>.

In the South of Vietnam in the years of 1954-1975, there were nominally 18 institutes of higher education (7 public and 11 private) with a total number of 166,475 students. Around 80% of them were students of public universities. While Saigon University was structured by 8 member schools, the Universities of Huế, Cần Thơ, Đà Lạt, and Vạn Hạnh all had 5 member schools (faculties), but other universities usually had only 2-3 faculties with around 500 students. All higher education institutions of Southern Vietnam in the years of 1954-1975 were operated according to the French and the US model of higher education<sup>80</sup>.

*In terms of organizational structure*, the colonialist authorities took direct control over the francophone education system in Indochina. In

<sup>74</sup> Phan Ngọc Liên, *Giáo dục và thi cử Việt Nam (Trước Cách mạng tháng Tám)*, 116.

<sup>75</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 240.

<sup>76</sup> See: <http://www.binhthuan.gov.vn/khtt/Giaoduc/sukien/sukien-idx.htm> (accessed on 21 October 2019).

<sup>77</sup> Phan Ngọc Liên, *Giáo dục và thi cử Việt Nam (Trước Cách mạng tháng Tám)*, 116.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem*, 116.

<sup>79</sup> See: <http://www.binhthuan.gov.vn/khtt/Giaoduc/sukien/sukien-idx.htm> (accessed on 21 October 2009).

<sup>80</sup> See: *Ibidem*.

charge of the education of three divided regions of Vietnam were three departments of education for indigenous people (*service de l'enseignement local*) headed by the French authorities (*chef de service*). These departments of education were under the control of the French Embassies<sup>81</sup>. In 1874, the French colonialists established the Office for Education of Cochinchina. On March 17, 1879, the Department for Education of Cochinchina was created. In 1886, Paul Bert formed the Board for Education of Tonkin and Annam<sup>82</sup>. In 1906, the French established the Indochina Department of Education<sup>83</sup>. In 1933, the colonial government founded the Ministry of Education and assigned Phạm Quỳnh to the seat of minister to manage primary schools in Central Vietnam (Annam), but it must be under the control of the French Ambassador to Huế. When the Indochina Federation was formed, the Indochina Department of Education was headed by the French in charge of the education section of the whole federation<sup>84</sup> until the day the French totally withdrew from Vietnam in 1956. Nevertheless, the influences of the francophone education system in Vietnam have still lasted until later and even today.

In conclusion, the history of formation and development of the francophone education system in Vietnam can be divided into 3 different stages. *The first phase* was associated with the emergence and rising of the first francophone education institutions in Vietnam until the traditional education system was basically officially terminated by the colonial government. The greatest achievement of francophone education in Vietnam in this period was the establishment of a number of schools for interpreters in Saigon in 1864 and in Hanoi in 1905, a school for mandarins in Hanoi in 1903<sup>85</sup> and a school for mandarins in Hue in 1911<sup>86</sup>, a number of technical schools for elementary or secondary vocational learners, three core schools for the general education system, including: the Chasseloup-Laubat School in Saigon in 1874, the National High School (Trường Quốc học) in Huế in 1896, the Protectorate School in Hanoi in 1908. *The second*

<sup>81</sup> Lê Văn Giảng, *Lịch sử giản lược hơn 1000 năm nền giáo dục Việt Nam*, 81.

<sup>82</sup> Phan Trọng Báu, *Giáo dục Việt Nam thời cận đại*, 58.

<sup>83</sup> Hồ Sơn Diệp, *Trí thức Nam Bộ trong kháng chiến chống Pháp (1945-1954)*, 24.

<sup>84</sup> Lê Văn Giảng, *Lịch sử giản lược hơn 1000 năm nền giáo dục Việt Nam*, 81-81.

<sup>85</sup> In Vietnamese, it is called Trường hậu bổ. In French, it is written as École des aspirants-mandarins (School of Mandarin Aspirants), École d'Apprentis Mandarins (Mandarin Apprentice School) or École des fonctionnaires indigènes (Native Officials School or school of indigenous functionaries). A type of school which is similar to today's l'École nationale d'administration (National School of Administration).

<sup>86</sup> In Vietnamese, it is called Trường hậu bổ. In French, it is named as École d'Administration à Huế (School of Administration in Hue).

*phase (1906-1919)* witnessed the collapse of the traditional education system and the systematic confirmation of the francophone education throughout Vietnam. *The third period (1919-1945)* was the time the francophone education system in Vietnam was operated according to western principles of modern education in the historical context of an Eastern Asian colonial society.

## 2. *Impacts of the francophone education model on the contemporary Vietnamese education system*

In spite of being introduced into Vietnam by colonialist foreigners, the francophone education system in Vietnam gradually proved its scientific nature and superiority in comparison to the traditional education models. The preeminent nature of the francophone education system in Vietnam was sometimes beyond the subjective desires of both the colonial authorities and indigenous forces against the colonial dominance to become one of the orienting flows and guide the international integration of Vietnam's contemporary education system. The influence of the francophone education system on the internationalization of Vietnam's current education system was not limited to the period of time when the colonial system was still in power in Vietnam (1884-1954), but expanded to some extent to later decades and even in Vietnam's current education system in nearly every aspect. This process took place in many different forms and degrees and in nearly all aspects. However, the most important impacts of the francophone education on the modernization of Vietnam's contemporary higher education system mainly occurred in the areas of *educational philosophy, organizational structure, governance model, operating mechanism, participants in the education system, contents of educational programs, and educational methods as well as materials and technical facilities for teaching and learning.*

*Educational philosophy:* it is necessary to distinguish the differences between the goals of the colonial education that some colonial officials wanted to impose on the Vietnamese people and the liberal nature of the orthodox francophone education. It is not everything that the French colonial education in Indochina offered could represent the whole nature of the orthodox francophone education. Part of the French colonialists in Vietnam would like to use education as a political tool to entice the Vietnamese to side with them. However, the orthodox francophone education is in essence to liberate people and create conditions for everyone to have the opportunity to develop themselves to the best possible extent. The influence of the francophone educational philosophy on Vietnam's

education system was therefore not all that some colonial officials wanted to do in the discriminatory fashion.

Instead, the long-term effects and the most profound impacts of the francophone education system on the modern Vietnamese education in terms of development philosophy is the soul of a liberal education and the aspiration to free people from all forms of dependence. That philosophy is embodied via the slogan of *Freedom - Equality - Fraternity*, which inspired several generations of Vietnam's patriotic youth in the early twentieth century to find ways for saving their country. It was in this regard not the political publications and propaganda system of the colonial regime that nurtured the patriotic spirit and incubated the revolutionary ideals for national movements of the Vietnamese youth in the early twentieth century.

In preference, the francophone education system somehow brought the revolutionary spirit and ideals of liberating people to Vietnam through true French revolutionaries. It was those spirits and ideals, which equipped several Vietnamese patriotic generations with a sharply struggling weapon and the way to go for those who shaped the future and the fate of the whole nation later. The humanistic and modern education philosophy of the francophone education system therefore not only oriented the integration road of the Vietnamese modern education, but also contributed significantly to the fighting for national liberation of the twentieth-century Vietnamese people through the liberal products created by that system itself.

*Organizational structure, governance model, and operating mechanism:* the francophone education system has left deep imprints in the internationalization of the Vietnamese modern education. In the traditional Confucian education system, most of Vietnam's educational institutions were locally private and had distinct class characters. Most of the educational activities under this model took place according to personal relationships and aimed at the purpose of passing examinations to become officials in the state administration. However, the French brought to Vietnam a completely novel and unprecedented model of modern education which had never existed in the Vietnamese history. That was the francophone education model organized and managed by the colonial administration.

Although there was still a system of private educational institutions, they were all instructed by the modern model of the Western world. Public francophone educational institutions were not only a part of the state apparatus, but the people working in these public educational institutions were also members of the state. Education has since then ceased to be the private work of the people only, but has become a regular and ongoing task of the state. On the contrary, to a certain extent the public education system had also to serve certain tasks of the state in specific cases and certain

circumstances. That means the French colonialists were entitled to establish new educational institutions following their own model, but at the same time were authorized to close the educational institutions under their charge. It was an operating mechanism that was still relatively administratively burdensome, but seemed quite modern compared to the traditional spontaneously private education system.

This organizational structure, operating mechanism, and governance model of the francophone education system was applied for Vietnam from the lowest to the highest level of education. It was an educational model according to Western standards with well-organized schools and classes, clear training programs, conducted by a number of qualified professionals, and managed by a system of functional agencies of the state apparatus. Vietnam's current education system has inherited several modern elements from this francophone education model since the early days of its birth after the August Revolution of 1945. A typical example for this matter occurred on the area of personnel. Teachers at comprehensive francophone schools such as Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon and Albert Sarraut in Hanoi were mainly French<sup>87</sup>, but in the remaining francophone school system were mainly French-using Vietnamese. French teachers were sometimes included in some primary and baccalaureate colleges.

Professionally, teachers for elementary level had to graduate from primary schools. Those who worked for the primary schools had to earn at least a degree from elementary colleges. Teachers of primary colleges had to graduate from Hanoi Pedagogical College. Teachers of baccalaureate level had to earn the bachelor degree in France or a higher degree such as master degrees. All teachers had to qualify pedagogical skill examinations, except for the cases who had graduated from official pedagogical schools. Of the approximately 4,700 French colonial government officials in Vietnam in 1937, the education sector had 590 ones<sup>88</sup>. The francophone education system had not only trained a considerable number of human resources for Vietnam's colonial administration according to modern standards, but also provided the majority of teachers and staffs for Vietnam's national education system from the August Revolution of 1945 until the first Vietnamese education officials completed their training courses according to Soviet model in the 1950s.

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<sup>87</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 265.

<sup>88</sup> The number of the overseas French in Vietnam is not very large. There were only around 30,000 French people in the year of 1937. However, nearly half of them served in the colonial army. See: Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 265-266. It means only approximately 15,000 French people worked in the whole colonial administration system for Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina.

More importantly, those who had been trained in the francophone education system often possessed a number of elements of integration with the modern education. Therefore, whether they were used in the public education system of the state or in the private system, their capacity to internationalize and modernize was still higher than those of the human resources trained in the remaining education systems in Vietnam. This reality confirms that the francophone education system has had an enormous impact on the modernization of Vietnam's national education system regarding *personnel structure, governance model, and operational mechanism*.

*The participants in the education system:* class and discrimination from the owners of power and properties characterize the feudal Confucian education. Although children of non-aristocratic families were also able to study and become mandarins in certain cases, most of them grew up in private village schools. Formal state educational institutions were usually reserved only for the feudal nobility. The francophone education system in Indochina was not really more advanced than the traditional Confucian education in this respect. Although learners in the francophone education system in Vietnam were not always children of mandarins or pro-French people, they were required to side with the French colonial administration. The nature of these class-based educations deprived a large number of people's rights to study with real needs and abilities in the field of science.

However, it is necessary to distinguish the instrumental function of class education systems from the apolitical nature of normal educational systems. Both the feudal Confucian education system and the francophone education system in Indochina had to prioritize the training of human resources for their government apparatus. It is an inevitable law of class societies and class struggles. However, the nature of the formal francophone education system is open to all learners who wish to access educational services under permissible conditions and possible circumstances. Therefore, although the francophone education system in Indochina were unable to be open to everyone, it was not the real function of the formal francophone education system. The essence of the colonial education system was to become an effective tool for the foreign state apparatus. In such a complex social context, even though the francophone education system in Indochina was capable of paving the way to everyone, it was impossible for it to welcome the enemies of its own fatherland.

In addition, it should be noted that in the context of a colonial society with many difficulties, the ability to meet the learning needs of everyone was unthinkable. Furthermore, although more people attended Confucian schools in the countryside than in the francophone education system, the recruitment for the francophone education system in Indochina was

described as somehow similar to violent obligations in many cases. For this reason, many people were granted scholarships to study abroad, but they deliberately refused or offered the chances to others to avoid being implicated later. Several communities had become familiar with the bamboo of villages and they did not intend to change themselves by the educational path of a strange world. Psychological factors, economic circumstances, and political contexts also played a certain role in determining the size of the educational objects of the francophone system in Vietnam at that time.

However, while traditional indigenous educational institutions often accepted learners of their own nationalities only, both the francophone education in Indochina and formal francophone education around the world were sometimes open to learners of all ethnic origins and social strata. In 1927, only 341 out of 731 pupils of Albert Sarraut High School in Hanoi were Vietnamese<sup>89</sup>. In 1944, francophone primary schools had around 90,000 pupils (3.6% of the population) and secondary schools had approximately 4,000 pupils. Only 77% of the Indochinese University's 1,500 students were indigenous people. About 80% of the population was illiterate<sup>90</sup>.

It means that while the francophone education system in Vietnam usually accepted learners from different backgrounds, but this number was only limited to those who were obligated to take the side of the colonial government, the formal francophone education system often promoted multicultural factors and international integration rather than merely political factors. In this respect, the internationalization of Vietnam's education system has benefited greatly from the westernized intelligentsia, which were trained in the formal francophone education environment based on the concept of liberalism and the multicultural integration policy of the modern world.

*The content of the educational programs:* although the content of the educational programs of the French colonialists in Vietnam often emphasized the superiority of Western civilization and underestimated the local cultures<sup>91</sup>, a part of Vietnamese advanced intellectuals who had been in touch with innovative ideas and bourgeois democracies organized speeches and debates, opened schools, wrote books in the Vietnamese national language and published newspapers in order to build a new academic background for the nation. Therefore, although the nature of the

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<sup>89</sup> Thompson, V., *French Indochina* (London, 1937), 295, in: Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 239-240.

<sup>90</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 241-242.

<sup>91</sup> Vũ Ngọc Khánh, *Tìm hiểu nền giáo dục Việt Nam trước 1945*, 164-165.

francophone education system in Indochina was to train human resources for the colonial government, the training program and learning content of the modern model of the francophone education system were sometimes full of scientific knowledge and documentary information.

It means that even though the colonial authorities wanted to use education as a tool of governance, they could not prevent the Vietnamese from the acquisition of human knowledge. Historical practice has proven that although some parts of the colonial officials in Indochina might not always really be interested in the liberation of indigenous peoples by the road of the truly francophone education, the superior nature and scientific spirit of the formal francophone education contributed to changing the nature of learning content and training program of Vietnam's traditional education system. It also changed the whole educational background of the twentieth-century Vietnamese people in practice.

At the same time, a large number of French revolutionaries working in the francophone education system were also ready to revolutionize the natives and share scientific experiences to the Vietnamese by all possible means. However, the most decisive factor was the progressive spirit and the ability to absorb human knowledge of generations of Vietnamese students in the francophone education system. All of these factors contributed to the changing of the nature of learning contents and training programs of the traditional Vietnamese education system and in fact changed the education of Vietnamese people in the 20th century.

For example, in the traditional Confucian education, people usually only learned the painting skills, the human characters, the wisdom, and the faith, but natural sciences, life sciences, and applied technologies partly began to be taught in a systematic way in the Indochinese francophone education. It was an educational program that was considered more comprehensive, because in addition to the traditional social sciences this education was supplemented by natural sciences, engineering issues, and foreign languages<sup>92</sup> thanks to the francophone education system<sup>93</sup>.

More specifically, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, Confucian education was still maintained in Annam and Tonkin. The French colonial administrators began to make several changes in studying and taking exams from 1906 onwards. Local examinations and central examinations were still held regularly in Tonkin and Annam, but the traditional Confucian subjects were somewhat reduced, while life sciences

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<sup>92</sup> Ngô Minh Oanh, "Importation of the Western education to South Vietnam under the French domination (1861-1945)," *Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Journal of Science*, No. 28 (2011), 21 (13-22).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, 21 (13-22).



were increased. In such a general context, the training programs of schools for mandarins, supervisory schools, schools of instructors, and schools of teachers were also changed for more application in practice<sup>94</sup>.

Meanwhile, the last local examination (thi Hương) in Cochinchina was held in 1864, in Nam Định in 1916 and in Thanh Hóa in 1918. The central examination (thi Hội) at the Hue court was officially abolished in 1919. At the same time, the emergence of French documents enabled Vietnamese to access a larger number of human civilized achievements through school road. Many new scientific subjects were introduced into the curriculum of the francophone education system to replace the traditional Confucian education. Although modernized intellectuals such as Nguyễn Trường Tộ and Nguyễn Lộ Trạch had sometimes proposed these learning contents and training programs, it had to wait until the French established their own education system to be implemented in reality. It proves that the francophone education system not only gradually eliminated the traditional influences of Confucian education, but also step by step integrated Vietnamese education into the common system of the modern world education.

A very progressive feature of the francophone education system in Vietnam is that although the training program was regulated by the state and was compulsory for both teachers and learners, textbooks were often provided by experiencing teachers who compiled and published the textbooks privately for reference. Similarly, even though in the humanities and social sciences, colonial officials deliberately propagated the superiority of Western civilization to draw the Vietnamese closer to the side of the colonialists, the francophone education still equipped the Vietnamese who were fortunate enough to study in this system, with a very scientific, logical, and dialectical way of thinking and working style. On the basis of this logical thinking and dialectical working method of the francophone education, it was the Vietnamese who discovered which were the propaganda elements and which were the real sciences of the francophone education? Critical thinking and the ability to think independently are the most important products that the francophone education brought to the Vietnamese education in the process of modernisation over the past century, but that is not all.

Prior to the arrival of the francophone education in Indochina, Vietnamese people mainly had known the world through their Chinese-language education with a preference to militarism and Eastern morality, but the French educational system brought to Vietnam a system of scientific concepts and unprecedented sources of information which had

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<sup>94</sup> Vũ Ngọc Khánh, *Tìm hiểu nền giáo dục Việt Nam trước 1945*, 168.

never been recorded in Vietnam's previously educational history. The most typical of these was the French-style system of measurement units and formulas that Vietnamese people have still employed in almost all areas of life in difference from the English education system or those of other countries.

Meanwhile, the appearance and development of the national language script (*chữ quốc ngữ*) was also thanks in no small part to the francophone education system in Vietnam. From 1919 to the August Revolution of 1945, the national language script became a vital weapon of spiritual liberation and a tool to popularize French culture in Vietnam<sup>95</sup>. The tireless efforts of famous cultural figures of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Trương Vĩnh Ký (1837-1898), Nguyễn Văn Vĩnh (1882-1936), Phan Kế Bính (1857-1921), Phạm Quỳnh (1892-1945) and Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu (1889-1939), have contributed to making the national language script not only overcome the scope of the Catholic churches, but have also gradually become a modern common language of academic literature and superior sciences<sup>96</sup>.

Although the national language script was spread throughout Vietnam for native speakers, French was still the main language in the education system as well as the state administrative apparatus. The education programs were basically designed according to French models rather than the Vietnamese one. Even after the August Revolution of 1945, Vietnam's undergraduate education program was still heavily imprinted by the francophone education. Courses were still conducted in both French and Vietnamese, while training programs were translated from French into the Vietnamese national language to suit local practices<sup>97</sup>.

Even though the French language was gradually replaced by Vietnamese in the education system in Northern Vietnam after 1954, it was still used alongside English in South Vietnam until 1956<sup>98</sup>. It means that with the changes in the development philosophy and governance model, the francophone education system made a true revolution in terms of learning contents and training programs to Vietnam's traditional education system towards gradual integration and approach to the standards of the modern education of the world.

<sup>95</sup> Huard, P. et Durand, M. *Connaissance du Vietnam* (Paris-Hanoi, 1954), 33, in: Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 242.

<sup>96</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 242.

<sup>97</sup> Anh Ngọc Trinh, "Local Insights from the Vietnamese Education System: the impacts of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism of globalization," *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2018), 69-71 (67-79).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, 69-71 (67-79).

*The educational method:* on the basis of the Eastern autocratic monarchies which were often operated according to the hierarchical rules in social relations, traditional Confucian education usually emphasized the role of the teachers in educational activities. The most important task of learners in this educational system was to memorize as much as possible all of what is written in the holy books and to follow everything the teacher said as eternal laws and undoubtable truth. It is an authoritarian educational method to train the people who were only able to obey orders, but they were not capable of independent thinking nor critical thinking. The inevitable consequence of this one-way imposed education is that there were a large number of learners, but very few scientific and technological creations. In many cases, creativity was considered a sin, because creativity often goes beyond the scope of ordinary laws, while the people who only follow ordinary laws are rarely able to be meaningfully creative. However, the francophone education system blew a new flow of wind to Vietnam's educational methodology. After the First World War (1914-1918), Governor General Albert Sarraut promulgated a new educational regulation, which promoted the status of the French language. Western-style teaching methods as well as scientific research were introduced more systematically into francophone schools in Indochina<sup>99</sup>.

Although obedience and strict compliance had been traditionally inherent and essential attributes of Vietnamese learners according to the social principles of feudal dynasties, the critical thinking and academic discussions began to appear in the training processes of modern educational institutions. One of the most critical thinking products of the francophone education system in Vietnam was Nguyễn Tất Thành. Since the time of attending the National School of Huế, Nguyễn Tất Thành not only challenged the education system that was training him, but he also posed a big question to the worldwide colonial system. As for the francophone education system in Vietnam, why did the French administrators come to Vietnam to preach freedom, equality, and charity at schools according to their own beautiful ideals, but they treated the natives differently in reality? As for the worldwide colonial system, why were some people born in this world just to be happy on the pain and sweat of others, while the miserable nations had to sacrifice day and night for the futile purposes of bottomless ambitions?

This kind of critical thinking was not only restricted to the people's mind, but it also turned into practical motivation and actions through Hồ Chí Minh's journey to find the truth of time for the people of Vietnam as well as for the needy humanity around the world in the 1920s. This critical

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<sup>99</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 239.

thinking was not only conceived by Hồ Chí Minh, but it was also acquired by several generations of Vietnamese younger patriotic people through the francophone education in various forms and degrees. It means critical thinking and the ability to think independently are a human attribute. Basically, everybody is able to think independently and to conceive critically in a number of ways. However, how is that kind of thinking formed and how far can it develop depends entirely on the nature of the educational systems as well as the practical operating mode of social relations. This reality proves that the francophone education system in Vietnam not only utilized a system of teaching methods based on modern pedagogical principles in educational processes<sup>100</sup>, but also truly created an important turning point in the international integration of the Vietnamese education regarding educational methods.

*Facilities and equipment for teaching and learning:* the traditional Vietnamese wordy and literary education system often emphasized the elements of courtesy in social relations rather than science and technology. Therefore, the conditions of facilities and technical equipment for teaching and learning were usually not too complicated and fussy. In contrast, the francophone liberal education in particular and the West education in general highly stressed practical, applied, and precise elements. Likewise, the traditional Confucian education system discouraged criticism, but the francophone education emphasized independent and creative thinking. The investment in scientific research of traditional education was therefore not really urgent.

However, research and innovation are integral parts of the francophone education system. This fact shows that the francophone education requires a corresponding system of facilities and equipment for teaching and learning. The true goals of the colonial administrators in Indochina were not always to develop a modern education on par with the metropolitan for the indigenous peoples. However, the practical pressures of revolutionary struggles and the increasing need to study of the people in reality forced the French administration in Vietnam to sometimes accept investment in building material foundations and technical equipment for the native education system. Even though the proportion of investment in education by the colonial government was still well under the actual needs of the francophone education system in Indochina at that time, historical practices have proved that it was the first time in the Vietnamese history that Vietnamese people were trained in a completely

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<sup>100</sup> Nguyễn Ái Quốc, *Đây! Công lý của thực dân Pháp ở Đông Dương* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Sự thật, 1962), 77. (Nguyen Ai Quoc, *Here! Justice of the French colonialists in Indochina* (Hanoi: Truth Publishing House, 1962), 77).

new school system, from facilities and technical equipment to architectural models and building materials.

Although the number of schools of the francophone education model in Vietnam was not really noticeable, it was clearly a type of school that had never appeared in the previous education history of Vietnam. The structure of schools and classes at the high school level of the francophone education system was built according to the French general education model, which was formed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was completed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most importantly, this model of schools not only contributed to making Vietnam's school architecture style more diverse and richer, but it also to a certain extent helped improve the physical conditions and technical equipment of the Vietnamese education system to get closer to advanced educational models in the world.

In 1930, there were totally only 4,806 schools in Indochina. As of 1941, the colonial government opened 850 new schools more. Averagely, every 3,245 people could study at a school in 1941<sup>101</sup>. At the same time, a system of research institutes, higher education institutions, scientific journals, laboratories, and modern libraries were also gradually introduced to serve educational activities in accordance with the modern model of the francophone education<sup>102</sup>. School structures of the francophone education system were constructed according to the French model. Some new schools were built according to Western architecture. Classrooms were equipped with tables and chairs, blackboards, learning tools, libraries, laboratories... Learning was then also classified by age according to birth certificate, while learning results were recorded in the school profiles... These phenomena had never appeared in the history of education in Vietnam<sup>103</sup>. Simultaneously, a system of modern research institutes, higher education institutions, scientific journals, laboratories, and libraries were also established to serve education activities according to the standard model of the francophone system<sup>104</sup>.

In 1939, Vietnam was in possession of totally 48 daily newspapers, 68 journals, and 292 works of all genres published in the national language script<sup>105</sup>. That is considered as an important foundation in the process of formation and development of the national education in the direction of

<sup>101</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 242.

<sup>102</sup> See: Lê Thanh Huyền, *Thư viện Việt Nam thời Pháp thuộc*, Luận án tiến sĩ, Chuyên ngành: Khoa học Thông tin - Thư viện, Mã số: 62 32 02 03 (Hà Nội: Trường Đại học Văn hóa Hà Nội, 2014), 49-121. (Le Thanh Huyen, *Library of Vietnam during the French colonial period*, Doctoral thesis, Major: Information Science - Library, Code: 62 32 02 03 (Hanoi: Hanoi University of Culture, 2014), 49-121).

<sup>103</sup> Nguyễn Ái Quốc, *Đây! Công lý của thực dân Pháp ở Đông Dương*, 77.

<sup>104</sup> Lê Thanh Huyền, *Thư viện Việt Nam thời Pháp thuộc*, 49-121.

<sup>105</sup> Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 242.

modernity<sup>106</sup>. All of these elements are indispensable parts of advanced education systems in the present-day world. In this respect, the francophone education system contributed to equipping the Vietnamese with a large volume of material foundations and technical equipment for teaching and learning during the colonial period. A large part of these has still been preserved to the present day and has even worked in some specific cases. Many universities and research institutes in Vietnam today are the successors of the francophone education system. It means the francophone education model played a prerequisite role in the modernization and internationalization of the teaching facilities and research equipment for the Vietnamese contemporary education system.

In summary, in spite of being brought to Vietnam by the conquerors and aiming to serve the colonial administration, the essence of the formal francophone education was still given the opportunity to take effects in the traditional studious environment of the Vietnamese culture. It is the long-standing academic tradition and the liberal nature of a modern education that helped the francophone education system in Indochina overcome psychological, ideological, and politics-oriented objective barriers to provide the Vietnamese people with a completely new education system following the modern model of the mankind. The appearance of the francophone education system in Vietnam on the one hand gradually eliminated the Confucian traditional education model and on the other hand contributed to the modernization of Vietnam's national education system in different forms and levels. Although several institutions of the francophone education system have not played the dominant role in training human resources for Vietnam since the French withdrawal from Indochina in 1956, Vietnam's education system was heavily been influenced by the francophone education system at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. This fact is most clearly shown in the aspects of *educational philosophy, organizational structure, governance model, operating mechanism, participants in the educational system, contents of educational programs, and educational methods as well as material and technical facilities for teaching and learning*. It means that even if Vietnam's national education system has developed according to several other models since 1954, the turning point which has been crucial for the international integration of Vietnam's education system took place with the introduction of the francophone education system in Indochina in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Although the francophone

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<sup>106</sup> Dương Quảng Hàm, *Việt Nam văn học sử yếu* (Sài Gòn, 1968), 404, in: Nguyễn Thế Anh, *Việt Nam thời Pháp đô hộ*, 242.

education system was not always absolutely dominant in Vietnam, it pulled the education of the indigenous peoples of Indochina out of the traditional educational context of the region and paved the way for the process of deeper integration with the modern educations of the world. The francophone education system therefore laid the first foundations for the modernization and internationalization of Vietnam's contemporary education system in accordance with the introduction of the French culture into Indochina by colonialists from 1858 to 1954. This process took place in the historical context of a severe conflict between Confucian-dominated cultural traditions and French-newly imported elements in Vietnam at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In such a very conflicting circumstance, the Vietnamese schools chose to preserve positive factors of the traditional education, but simultaneously did not refuse advanced elements of the western civilization to build a new national education system according to the francophone model for the indigenous people. This choice of the Vietnamese education system could be viewed as an alternative resolution to the combination of the national traditions and international civilizations for a new one, which does not entirely give up its origin, but is also not left behind too far by the advanced education system in the colonial background of the East-West cultural conflict.

### *3. The future and prospects of educational relationship between Vietnam and francophone education*

The francophone education system has experienced many vicissitudes along with the history of political relations between Vietnam and France. Although it contributed to removing the traditional Confucian education system from the academic life of the Vietnamese people and integrating the Vietnamese education into the general flow of the modern world education, the role of the francophone education system in Vietnam has changed in nature. The development of the English-speaking education system and Vietnam's process of diversification and multilateralization of international relations have no longer allowed the national education system of this country to follow any specific single model. Instead, Vietnam's national education system is becoming a potential market to many advanced education systems in the world. In such a quickly changing context, although the francophone education system has no longer played a leading role in Vietnam's national education system since 1956, the future and prospects of the educational relationship between Vietnam and the francophone educations are still very extensive. This can be seen in several specific aspects as follow:

*Firstly*, although the English-speaking countries' education model is predominant in the current world education, the francophone education is still one of the most attractive addresses to developing countries' learners around the world<sup>107</sup>. French is not only one of the languages of the United Nations and the arts, but it is also a language of science. French is both widely used in international relations and in academia. Most of the world's most important scientific and political documents are translated into French<sup>108</sup>. At the same time, a wide range of globally scientific concepts have been originated from French in the fields of social sciences and humanities as well as natural sciences and technology. Many of these concepts have become defining standards of the modern world for which no more rational modes of explanation have been found so far<sup>109</sup>. Mastering the French language is therefore a great advantage to all of those who desire to conquer new peaks of human knowledge in the age of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. This is clearly a very attractive option for the international integration process of the current Vietnamese national education system.

*Secondly*, France is one of the world's leading countries in science and advanced technologies. This science has produced prominent names for international scientific communities, but it is also the place to nurture potential talents for the future. Ngô Bảo Châu of Vietnam is one of them that the contemporary Vietnamese education is fortunate to have the opportunity to share the nurturing responsibility, but the potential and prospects of this leading European science and technology are still much more than what could have been seen. France is one of the places that has been mastering many of the most modern scientific and technological achievements of mankind for centuries. Among these, a number of scientific inventions and technological achievements are exclusive to the French. These advanced scientific achievements, together with leading experts of the world, will be the inspiration and motivation for the promising scientific talents to advance in the coming time<sup>110</sup>. More

<sup>107</sup> The Crown in Right of Alberta, the Minister of Learning, *Affirming Francophone Education - Foundations and Directions*, A Framework for French First Language Education in Alberta, French Language Services Branch (Alberta: Alberta Learning, 2001), 15-20.

<sup>108</sup> See: Wright, Sue, "French as a lingua franca," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 26 (2006), 35-60.

<sup>109</sup> Love, Susan, *French and Tây Bồi in Vietnam: A study of language policy, practice, and perceptions*, Thesis submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in the Centre for European Studies and General Linguistics (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2000), 43.

<sup>110</sup> See: Trần Nguyễn Khang, *Sức mệnh mềm của Pháp giai đoạn 1991-2012*, Luận án tiến sỹ, Chuyên ngành: Quan hệ quốc tế, Mã số: 62 31 02 06 (Hà Nội: Học viện Ngoại giao, 2017). (Tran Nguyen Khang, *The soft power of France in the period 1991-2012*, Doctoral thesis, Major: International relations, Code: 62 31 02 06 (Hanoi: Diplomatic Academy, 2017).



importantly, France's advanced science and technology has not only served this nation, but has also distributed to the developing world in many cases<sup>111</sup>. Accessing advanced scientific and technological achievements with preferential conditions of France is clearly a significant advantage for the education systems in difficult situations such as that of Vietnam. The francophone education system is therefore not only a model to follow, but it is also a priority partner in the process of internationalizing the contemporary national higher education system in Vietnam.

*Additionally*, the francophone education system has not long been able to keep itself within the borders of France. Instead, the francophone education system has become a world system that stretches from North America to Africa and Asia-Pacific. In 2008, there were about 200 million people speaking French as their first language in 70 countries around the world. This number accounted for 11% of global population and 12% of human budget at the time<sup>112</sup>. In addition to the spreading across a relatively wide areas and territories on the global scale, the francophone education system has also been preferred to be used as the official education system of many French-speaking countries. This fact shows that the francophone education system has become an international model of education and has played a vital part in the education system of the member countries of the francophone community. The francophone community is not only one of the largest cultural and educational alliances of the advanced world, but it has also been linked historically and culturally in several aspects to member states. In addition to the usage of the French language as a medium of communication in daily life and historical relations, member states of the francophone community share a vast number of similarities brought about by the influences of French culture during the colonial period<sup>113</sup>. The similarity in culture, constituent factors of the national education system, and especially the language is obviously a huge advantage for the international integration of the member states' education systems of the francophone community. In reality, although French is no longer the dominant language in daily life of Vietnamese people, the traditional cultural and educational relations between the two countries have still been maintained and developed regularly over the last decades. The francophone path is therefore an advantage and opportunity for the modernization of the contemporary Vietnamese education system.

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<sup>111</sup> See: La Francophonie, *The French Language worldwide 2018* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2019), 3-23.

<sup>112</sup> Wright, Sue, "Allegiance, influence and language: The case of Francophonie and Vietnam," *Synergies Europe* n° 3 (2008), 51-67.

<sup>113</sup> See: Bagayoko, Niagalé and Ramel, Frédéric, "Francophonie and strategic depth," *Étude de l'IRSEM*, n°26 (2015), 12-103.

*Furthermore*, Vietnam and other member countries of the francophone community not only have had several traditional bilateral relations, but these relations have also continuously been developed more in recent decades<sup>114</sup>. The francophone education system was once a bridge for the Vietnamese education to connect with the modern world. Although this education system no longer plays the pivotal role today, its influences and impacts on the contemporary Vietnamese national education system are still very strong. At the same time, French cultural imprints in Vietnam have also become an indispensable part and important elements of Vietnam's modern national cultural identity<sup>115</sup>. Aside from the architectural system and fashion style, the organizational system of many local administrative units as well as the francophone academic background is an important link in the process of modernizing Vietnamese culture<sup>116</sup>. Similarly, the Vietnamese community in France is one of Vietnam's largest overseas groups on the earth. These communities have not only contributed to the preservation of a number of Vietnamese traditional elements in France, but also brought several French cultural achievements closer to Vietnam. This is one of the important bridges for Vietnam's educational relations with France in particular and other member countries of the francophone community in the coming time in general. All of these historical traditional elements are vital catalysts for the integration of Vietnam's education system into the francophone education system and the modern world ones.

*Finally*, although the francophone education has no longer played the leading role, it is still an important factor in the internationalization of the contemporary Vietnamese education system. The francophone education system is not only an ideal model for the Vietnamese one in several ways, but it is also a potential partner in the international integration. The number of Vietnamese who have searched for opportunities of learning and cultural exchanges with France has been increasing for decades<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> Wright, Sue, "Allegiance, influence and language, 56-57 (51-67).

<sup>115</sup> Burlette, Julia Alayne Grenier, *French influence overseas: the rise and fall of colonial Indochina, LSU Master's Theses*, 1327, submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in The Department of History (Louisiana: Louisiana State University, 2007), 7-84.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*, 7-84.

<sup>117</sup> Nguyễn Hồng Chi, *Dòng chảy của du học sinh Việt Nam*, Việt Nam học - Kỷ yếu Hội thảo quốc tế lần thứ tư (2012), 49, in: [http://repository.vnu.edu.vn/bitstream/VNU\\_123/19918/1/KY\\_05622.pdf](http://repository.vnu.edu.vn/bitstream/VNU_123/19918/1/KY_05622.pdf) (accessed on 23 October 2019). (Nguyen Hong Chi, *The flow of Vietnamese international students*, Vietnamese studies - Proceedings of the fourth international conference (2012), 49, in: [http://repository.vnu.edu.vn/bitstream/VNU\\_123/19918/1/KY\\_05622.pdf](http://repository.vnu.edu.vn/bitstream/VNU_123/19918/1/KY_05622.pdf) (accessed on 23 October 2019).

The influx of Vietnamese people to France to study and research has not been shortened in recent years<sup>118</sup>. In 2018, French universities were officially educational instructors for more than 6,000 Vietnamese students. Although this figure was an increase of 36% in comparison to that of the period of 2013-2018<sup>119</sup>, France has increasingly been becoming one of the most attractive destinations for Vietnamese international students with good language skills and academic achievements<sup>120</sup>. The number of Vietnamese students enrolled in France's universities even rose to around 7,000 ones in 2019<sup>121</sup>. Most importantly, the number of Vietnamese who have become globally well-known thanks to the francophone education system is increasing day by day. Historical practice has proved that the francophone education system is one of the most fertile gardens for the Vietnamese modernized intelligentsia as well as the academic and research achievements of Vietnam's current students. The francophone education system is one of the producers that have provided many famous Vietnamese scientists to the world. This is on the one hand because right from the modern era, the francophone education system has been the main source of human resource supply and training for the Vietnamese modernized intellectuals. On the other hand, even though many other education models have also attracted a number of Vietnamese students, the training quality of the francophone education system is confirmed on a regular and continuous basis through the academic and research achievements of the Vietnamese candidates. Therefore, even though English education is taking the dominant position in the international academic life and is a preferred choice for Vietnamese learners, francophone education is still a very attractive option of many young people and Vietnamese scholars. This role of the francophone education system will certainly continue to grow in the future.

In summary, although the francophone education system is no longer the core element of the contemporary Vietnamese national education

<sup>118</sup> *Ibidem*, 49 (44-58).

<sup>119</sup> Trọng Nhân, *Rộng cửa du học Pháp* (2018), in: <https://tuoitre.vn/rong-cua-du-hoc-phap-20181221223726594.htm> (accessed on 23 October 2019). (Trong Nhan, *Open doors to study in France* (2018), print: <https://tuoitre.vn/rong-cua-du-hoc-phap-20181221223726594.htm> (accessed on October 23, 2019)).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>121</sup> Trọng Nhân and Thanh Yên, *Tăng gấp đôi số du học sinh Việt Nam đến Pháp* (2019), in: <https://tuoitre.vn/tang-gap-doi-so-luong-du-hoc-sinh-viet-nam-den-phap-20190121144113777.htm> (accessed on 23 October 2019). (Trong Nhan and Thanh Yen, *Double the number of Vietnamese students coming to France* (2019), in: <https://tuoitre.vn/tang-gap-doi-so-luong-du-hoc-sinh-viet-nam-den-phap-20190121144113777.htm> (accessed on October 23, 2019)).

system, its influences and impacts on the internationalization of the current Vietnamese education system still remain relatively clear. The remaining legacy of the francophone education system in Indochina is one of the foundations for the international integration of Vietnam's education system in the coming time. However, it is the superiority of the francophone education system as well as the development level of the French science and technology that are the decisive factors for the future and prospects of the educational relationship between Vietnam and the francophone education. In addition, the recent growth of the francophone community is also an objective factor, which could be potential advantages for further developments of education relations among French-speaking countries. The similarity in the educational model that was strongly influenced by the francophone education system, the advantage of using French in communication, and the traditional historical relationships are the important catalysts for the prospect of cooperation between Vietnamese education and that of member countries of the francophone community. However, the academic and scientific achievements of Vietnamese people in the francophone education system is the central motive for younger generations. The ability of Vietnamese students to become famous in the francophone education system has not only been historically proven, but it has also become a remarkable phenomenon in the world's recent international academic communities. It is the foundation for the bright future and expected prospect of the educational relationship between Vietnam and the francophone education system in the coming time.

### III. Conclusion

Although the francophone education has no longer been playing the pivotal part in the Vietnamese national education system<sup>122</sup> since 1954<sup>123</sup>, its position in the modernization and internationalization of Vietnam's contemporary education system is not only extremely important, but also undeniable. This is most evidently manifested in the introduction of a completely new education system to Vietnam by the francophone education system<sup>124</sup> in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half

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<sup>122</sup> Ngan Nguyen, "How English Has Displaced Russian and Other Foreign Languages in Vietnam Since "Doi Moi," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 23 (2012), 259-266.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem*, 259-266.

<sup>124</sup> Lê Văn Giảng, *Lịch sử giáo dục hơn 1000 năm nền giáo dục Việt Nam*, 80.

of the twentieth century. The construction of the francophone education system in Vietnam was not only basically done according to the model of France, but it has also contributed to bringing into Vietnam a completely new education system<sup>125</sup>. Although the colonial governors often used enough excuses to delay or limit the opening of new schools<sup>126</sup>, a francophone education system was gradually formed in Vietnam in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The most typical of these were Chasseloup-Laubat High School in Saigon (1874), Mỹ Tho High School in Cochinchina (1879), Hue National High School (1896), the Protectorat School in Hanoi (1908), Albert Sarraut High School in Hanoi (1918), Yersin School in Đà Lạt (1935). It means that although the scale of the francophone education system in Indochina was still extremely limited in terms of the proportion of learners in the population and the colonial authorities were not always ready for the systematic opening of new schools<sup>127</sup> according to the francophone model to serve the enormous demands of further learning for Vietnamese people, its influence on the modernization and internationalization of Vietnam's current educational system is substantial. Both the educational philosophy and governance model as well as the training program, objects of education, educational methods, and facilities of the current Vietnamese education system were fundamentally imprinted by the modern French education system. The Westernized higher education laid the foundation for the Vietnamese modern education system in both form and content<sup>128</sup>. The francophone education system in Vietnam not only gradually replaced the contents, pedagogic methods, school organizations, and writing systems of the traditional education, but it also trained a new intelligentsia for Vietnam with a variety of educational levels and professions<sup>129</sup>. All of these factors are the basic premises for an open future and long-term prospect of educational cooperation relations between Vietnam and other member states of the francophone community. In this respect, the francophone

<sup>125</sup> *Ibidem*, 80.

<sup>126</sup> Nguyễn Ái Quốc, *Đây! Công lý của thực dân Pháp ở Đông Dương*, 77.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*, 77.

<sup>128</sup> Nguyễn Thị Thái Châu, "Giáo dục Trung Kỳ thời Pháp thuộc (1887-1945)," *Tạp chí Giáo dục (Số đặc biệt)*, Kỳ 3 (June 2016), 132 (130-132). (Nguyen Thi Thai Chau, "Education in Central Vietnam during the French colonial period (1887-1945)," *Education Magazine (Special Issue)*, Issue 3 (June 2016), 132 (130-132).

<sup>129</sup> Trần Thị Thanh Thanh, "Nho học và giáo dục công lập ở Nam Kỳ thuộc Pháp thời kì 1867-1917," *Tạp chí KHOA HỌC ĐHSB TPHCM*, Số 60 (2014), 31 (19-33). (Tran Thi Thanh Thanh, "Confucianism and public education in French Cochinchina in the period 1867-1917," *Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Journal of Science*, No. 60 (2014), 31 (19-33)).

education system has made a revolution in the area of education for modern Vietnam. This process happened in the historical circumstance that the Eastern Asian feudal dynasties were in momentum of declination and facing many reformative pressures from the Western colonialists. Some Asian feudal dynasties were successful in their attempts to renovate their countries according to the Western model such as the Meiji (1868-1912) in Japan and the Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) in Thailand, but the majority of Asian countries were not lucky enough to enjoy such achievements in the second half of the nineteenth century. The East-West cultural conflict in these countries occurred even more fiercely. Vietnam was one of the traditionally Confucian-dominated countries, which witnessed some attempts of reform from both the royal members and feudal mandarins, but all eventually ended in vain. The imposition of the French culture into the Confucian-based society was at first very difficult, but the intelligentsia became increasingly opener to the new comers as major military attempts against the unexpected visitors had mainly been defeated from 1858 to 1896. In such a conflicting situation, the Vietnamese education system was modernized according to the francophone model around the colonial administration of the upper classes, while the unofficial education system still existed within the non-westernized schools in the lower strata. Even though the colonial education system of Vietnam was small in number and basically served the purposes of training human resources for the colonial regime, it is the origin of Vietnam's current education system. This fateful escape of the Vietnamese education system from the historical background of the East-West cultural conflict was a proper choice and natural law of popular development resolutions of human history that the majority of Asian countries also experienced in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.

### **About the author**

**Nguyễn Mậu Hùng** graduated from Hue University of Education in 2003 with a BA in History and became a lecturer for Vietnamese Studies and Oriental Studies at the University of Đà Lạt in the same year until May 2009. During that period of time, he was offered an extensive English course by Ford Foundation at Hanoi University in 2005 and finished his MA in History from Da Lat University in 2007. He was then awarded another academic English course by Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) at the Australian Center for Education and Training in Ho Chi Minh City in 2008 and a German course by the German Academic Exchange

Service (DAAD) at the Vietnam-German Center at Hanoi Technology University in 2009. This was followed by a three-month course for German learning at Carl Duisberg Centre in Cologne (Germany) prior to joining the research team at the Institute for Historical Seminar, Faculty of Philosophy and Historical Sciences, Goethe University-Frankfurt am Main, Germany (October 2009 - May 2015). Nguyễn Mậu Hùng then served as a History teacher at Hùng Vương High School, Quảng Bình (October 2015 - December 2017). This was followed by the doctoral program at the University of Sciences, Hue University (2016 - 2020). Currently, he holds the position of a lecturer for international relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hong Bang International University. Dr. Nguyễn Mậu Hùng published more than 160 works in several languages for a wide range of topics, but his favorite ones are political philosophy, international political economy, international relations, modern world history (with a strong focus on Vietnam and Germany), and Vietnam's cultural contact with the outside world.

## Sobre el Autor

**Nguyễn Mậu Hùng** se graduó en la Universidad de Educación de Hue en 2003 con una licenciatura en Historia y se convirtió en profesor de Estudios Vietnamitas y Estudios Orientales en la Universidad de Da Lat en el mismo año hasta mayo de 2009. Durante ese período de tiempo, recibió un curso de inglés extensivo de la Fundación Ford en la Universidad de Hanoi en 2005 y terminó su Máster en Historia en la Universidad de Da Lat en 2007. Después, se benefició de otro curso de inglés académico gracias a Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) en el Centro Australiano para la Educación y la Formación en Ho Chi Minh City en 2008 y de un curso de alemán impartido por el Servicio Alemán de Intercambio Académico (DAAD) en el Centro Vietnam-Alemania de la Universidad Tecnológica de Hanoi en 2009. A esto le siguió un curso de tres meses para el aprendizaje de alemán en el Centro Carl Duisberg en Colonia (Alemania), antes de unirse al equipo de investigación del Instituto para el Seminario Histórico, en la Facultad de Filosofía y Ciencias Históricas de la Universidad Goethe-Frankfurt am Main, Alemania (octubre de 2009 - mayo de 2015). Asimismo, se desempeñó como profesor de Historia en la escuela secundaria Hung Vuong, Quang Binh (octubre de 2015 - diciembre de 2017). A esto le siguió el programa de doctorado en la Universidad de Ciencias, Universidad de Hue (2016 - 2020), y actualmente es profesor de relaciones internacionales en la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades de la Universidad Internacional Hong Bang. El Dr. Nguyễn

Mậu Hùng ha publicado más de 160 obras en varios idiomas sobre una amplia gama de temas, pero sus investigaciones se han centrado sobre todo en cuestiones que versan sobre filosofía política, economía política internacional, relaciones internacionales, historia moderna mundial (con un fuerte enfoque en Vietnam y Alemania) y la cultura de Vietnam en contacto con el mundo exterior.