



# From Cultural Governance to Sustainable Cultural Development: Reassessing Cultural and Creative Industries in Vietnam in The Context of Global Integration

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**ABSTRACT:** The growing importance of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) has generated significant scholarly and policy interest regarding their role in contemporary development strategies. While CCIs are often associated with economic growth, innovation, and creative entrepreneurship, their broader contributions to sustainable cultural development remain insufficiently explored, particularly in developing countries undergoing rapid globalization. This study examines the evolution of cultural and creative industries in Vietnam and analyzes their role as a framework for sustainable cultural development within the context of global integration. Using a qualitative research approach, the study employs literature review, policy document analysis, and comparative analysis to investigate the relationship between cultural governance, cultural sustainability, and creative industry development. Key policy documents, including Vietnam's National Strategy for the Development of Cultural Industries, UNESCO reports, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) documents, and relevant cultural policy materials, provide the primary analytical foundation. The findings indicate that cultural and creative industries in Vietnam have evolved from a predominantly state-centered cultural administration system toward a more diversified governance framework that incorporates market mechanisms, international cooperation, and creative economy initiatives. Beyond their economic contributions, CCIs play important roles in heritage preservation, national identity formation, creative innovation, social inclusion, and cultural resilience. However, challenges such as fragmented governance, commercialization pressures, and the need to balance local cultural values with global cultural influences continue to affect their long-term development. The study contributes theoretically by connecting cultural governance with sustainable development through the concept of cultural sustainability. From a policy perspective, it highlights the need to strengthen cultural sustainability indicators, support creative entrepreneurship, enhance community participation, and integrate cultural policies more closely with sustainable development objectives in Vietnam.

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Cultural governance, Cultural and creative industries, Sustainable cultural development, Cultural sustainability, Vietnam, Global integration.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Over the past three decades, Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) have emerged as an increasingly influential component of economic, social, and cultural development across the world. Originally associated with cultural production, media industries, and artistic activities, CCIs have gradually expanded into a broader framework encompassing creativity, innovation, cultural entrepreneurship, digital technologies, and knowledge-based economic activities (Garnham, 2005; Cunningham, 2009; Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Governments and international organizations have increasingly recognized that culture is not merely a symbolic or aesthetic domain but also a strategic resource that contributes to economic growth, social cohesion, urban regeneration,

and international competitiveness. As a result, CCIs have become a central component of development policies in many countries seeking to enhance their position within the global knowledge economy (O'Connor, 2020).

The growing prominence of CCIs has been accompanied by a significant shift in international development thinking. Since the publication of *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987), sustainable development has become a dominant paradigm guiding global policy agendas. Initially emphasizing the balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity, sustainable development has gradually incorporated cultural dimensions into its conceptual framework. International organizations, particularly UNESCO, have argued that culture should be recognized as an essential pillar of sustainable development because cultural values, heritage, creativity, and diversity shape the ways societies respond to social transformation and long-term development challenges (De Beukelaer et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2025). This perspective was further reinforced by the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlighted the importance of cultural diversity, heritage preservation, and inclusive cultural participation in achieving sustainable societies (United Nations, 2015).

Within Asia, the rapid expansion of the creative economy has generated new opportunities for cultural development and economic modernization. Countries such as South Korea, Japan, China, and Singapore have invested heavily in cultural industries, creative entrepreneurship, and cultural diplomacy as part of broader national development strategies. These experiences have demonstrated that cultural resources can contribute significantly to innovation, employment creation, international influence, and economic competitiveness while simultaneously strengthening national identity and cultural resilience. Consequently, the relationship between cultural governance, creative industries, and sustainable development has become an increasingly important area of scholarly and policy debate throughout the region.

### **1.2. Vietnam in the Context of Global Integration**

Vietnam provides a particularly significant case for examining these developments. Since the implementation of the *Đổi Mới* reforms in 1986, the country has undergone profound economic, social, and cultural transformations. The transition from a centrally planned economy toward a socialist-oriented market economy accelerated economic growth, expanded international trade, attracted foreign investment, and facilitated Vietnam's integration into global economic and cultural networks (Raffin, 2008; Schwenkel & Leshkovich, 2012). Alongside these economic changes, Vietnamese society has experienced substantial transformations in patterns of cultural production, consumption, communication, and identity formation.

International cultural exchanges have expanded considerably through tourism, educational cooperation, digital media, cultural diplomacy, and participation in international cultural programs. These developments have created new opportunities for artistic creativity, cultural entrepreneurship, and cultural innovation while simultaneously exposing Vietnamese society to intensified global cultural influences. As cultural interactions became increasingly transnational, policymakers began to reconsider the role of culture in national development and international competitiveness.

Within this context, the concept of cultural industries gradually entered Vietnamese policy discourse. The adoption of the National Strategy for the Development of Cultural Industries in 2016 represented a significant milestone in the institutional recognition of culture as a productive sector contributing to economic and social development. Influenced by international experiences and supported by organizations such as UNESCO, cultural industries became increasingly associated with innovation, creativity, cultural entrepreneurship, and sustainable development objectives (Tran, 2024). More recently, cultural and creative industries have been incorporated into broader discussions concerning cultural governance, digital transformation, cultural diplomacy, and national development planning.

### **1.3. Research Problem**

Existing scholarship on cultural and creative industries in Vietnam has made important contributions to understanding the emergence and development of this policy field. Previous studies have primarily focused on policy transfer, policy translation, governance reforms, international influences, and the development of the creative economy (Le, 2008; Gasparin & Quinn, 2020; Tran, 2024). These studies have provided valuable insights into how global policy concepts are adapted within Vietnam's political, institutional, and cultural contexts.

However, relatively less attention has been devoted to examining cultural and creative industries from the perspective of sustainable cultural development. In particular, limited research has explored how CCIs contribute to cultural sustainability, cultural resilience, heritage preservation, and the maintenance of national cultural identity under conditions of rapid globalization and marketization. Furthermore, existing studies often emphasize economic outcomes and institutional reforms while paying less attention to the long-term social and cultural implications of creative industry development.

As Vietnam continues to deepen its integration into the global economy and expand its participation in international cultural networks, understanding the relationship between cultural governance, cultural sustainability, and creative industries becomes increasingly important. A broader analytical framework is therefore needed to assess not only the economic contributions of CCIs but also their significance for sustainable cultural development and cultural continuity.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

To address these issues, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How have cultural and creative industries evolved in Vietnam within the context of globalization?

**RQ2:** How do cultural and creative industries contribute to sustainable cultural development?

**RQ3:** What challenges and opportunities exist for integrating cultural sustainability into Vietnam's cultural governance framework?

#### **1.5. Research Objectives**

Accordingly, this study pursues three main objectives. First, it examines the evolution of cultural and creative industries in Vietnam within the broader processes of globalization and international integration. Second, it assesses the contributions of cultural and creative industries to sustainable cultural development, including their roles in cultural preservation, cultural participation, innovation, and social resilience. Third, it identifies major policy challenges and future directions for strengthening the integration of cultural sustainability into Vietnam's evolving cultural governance framework. Through these objectives, the article aims to contribute to ongoing scholarly debates concerning cultural governance, sustainable development, and the future role of cultural and creative industries in contemporary Vietnam.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Cultural and Creative Industries**

The concept of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) has become one of the most influential frameworks in contemporary cultural policy and development studies. Although the origins of the concept can be traced to earlier discussions on cultural industries associated with the Frankfurt School, its contemporary policy significance emerged during the late twentieth century when governments increasingly sought to connect culture with economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness (Garnham, 2005). Since then, CCIs have expanded beyond traditional artistic and cultural activities to encompass a wide range of sectors including media, design, architecture, digital content, cultural tourism, publishing, and creative entrepreneurship.

A central debate within the literature concerns the economic value of culture. Proponents of CCIs argue that cultural and creative activities generate substantial contributions to employment, innovation, urban development, and national competitiveness. Cunningham (2009) emphasizes that the rise of CCIs reflects broader transformations associated with the knowledge economy, where creativity increasingly functions as a strategic economic resource. Similarly, O'Connor (2020) argues that creative industries have become closely linked to contemporary forms of innovation and economic modernization, positioning culture at the center of development strategies rather than at their periphery.

However, scholars have also expressed concerns regarding the growing marketization of culture. Garnham (2005) argues that the shift from "cultural industries" to "creative industries" often reflects a policy tendency to prioritize economic objectives over cultural and social values. Likewise, Hesmondhalgh (2013) cautions against reducing culture to purely economic functions, emphasizing that cultural production also carries important social, symbolic, and democratic dimensions. From this perspective, the development of CCIs should not be evaluated solely through indicators such as revenue generation or employment growth but also through their contributions to cultural diversity, social participation, and public value.

Another important debate concerns the relationship between creativity and innovation. While creativity is frequently celebrated as a driver of economic growth, scholars increasingly recognize that creative industries operate within complex institutional, cultural, and political environments. Consequently, the success of CCIs depends not only on market mechanisms but also on governance structures, policy support, cultural participation, and educational systems. These discussions suggest that CCIs should be understood as multidimensional systems that simultaneously generate economic, cultural, and social outcomes.

### **2.2. Cultural Governance and Cultural Policy**

The rapid expansion of CCIs has stimulated renewed interest in cultural governance and cultural policy. Traditional approaches often viewed cultural policy primarily as a state-centered mechanism for supporting arts, heritage preservation, and national identity formation. More recent scholarship, however, conceptualizes cultural governance as a complex process involving interactions among governments, international organizations, private actors, civil society organizations, and cultural communities.

Alasuutari (2016) argues that contemporary policy development increasingly occurs through processes of global policy synchronization, whereby ideas, concepts, and policy models circulate across national boundaries. Rather than simply copying foreign policies, countries adapt internationally recognized concepts to local institutional and cultural contexts. Expanding this perspective, Alasuutari and Qadir (2019) introduce the concept of epistemic governance, emphasizing how international organizations influence national policymaking through the production and circulation of knowledge, norms, and policy frameworks. Similarly, Clarke et al. (2015) highlight the dynamic nature of policy formation by emphasizing policy mobility, translation, and assemblage. Their approach challenges linear understandings of policy transfer and instead focuses on the ways policies are continuously reinterpreted, negotiated, and transformed across different contexts. Cultural policy therefore becomes a process of adaptation and negotiation rather than simple implementation.

Within the field of cultural policy, Gilmore et al. (2019) further emphasize the importance of governance networks and multi-level interactions. Cultural governance increasingly involves diverse actors operating across local, national, and international scales. This perspective is particularly relevant for countries experiencing rapid globalization, where cultural policy must simultaneously respond to domestic priorities and international influences.

Taken together, these approaches suggest that cultural governance should be understood as a dynamic and evolving process through which cultural values, economic objectives, and social priorities are negotiated. Such perspectives are especially valuable for understanding contemporary developments in Vietnam, where cultural policy increasingly intersects with globalization, market reforms, and international cultural cooperation.

### 2.3. Sustainable Cultural Development

The growing recognition of culture within sustainable development discourse represents one of the most significant conceptual shifts in contemporary development studies. The Brundtland Report introduced sustainable development as a framework balancing economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection (WCED, 1987). While culture was not initially treated as a distinct pillar of sustainability, subsequent scholarship and policy initiatives have increasingly emphasized its central role in long-term development.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of cultural diversity, heritage protection, and inclusive cultural participation as important components of sustainable societies (United Nations, 2015). Building on this foundation, UNESCO has advocated for culture as a fundamental dimension of sustainable development, arguing that cultural values influence social resilience, community well-being, identity formation, and social cohesion (UNESCO, 2025).

Within this emerging framework, scholars have introduced the concept of cultural sustainability. Cultural sustainability refers to the capacity of societies to preserve, adapt, and transmit cultural values, knowledge systems, traditions, and identities across generations while responding to changing social conditions (De Beukelaer et al., 2015). Unlike purely preservationist approaches, cultural sustainability emphasizes both continuity and adaptation.

Closely related to this concept is cultural resilience, which highlights the ability of communities to maintain cultural vitality despite economic, political, technological, or environmental transformations. In an era characterized by globalization and digitalization, cultural resilience has become increasingly important for societies seeking to balance global integration with the preservation of cultural identity.

Furthermore, sustainable cultural development is strongly associated with social inclusion. Access to cultural resources, participation in cultural life, and recognition of cultural diversity contribute to more inclusive and equitable societies. Consequently, sustainable cultural development extends beyond economic considerations to encompass broader questions of cultural rights, social participation, community empowerment, and long-term cultural well-being.

**Table 1. Major Theoretical Approaches to Cultural and Creative Industries and Sustainable Development**

| Theory                           | Main Concepts                                                  | Representative Scholars                                                                   | Relevance to Vietnam                                              |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural and Creative Industries | Creative economy, innovation, cultural production              | Cunningham (2009); Hesmondhalgh (2013); Garnham (2005); O'Connor (2020)                   | Understanding the emergence of CCIs and creative economy policies |
| Cultural Governance              | Governance networks, policy mobility, policy adaptation        | Alasuutari (2016); Alasuutari & Qadir (2019); Clarke et al. (2015); Gilmore et al. (2019) | Explaining policy transformation and institutional change         |
| Sustainable Development          | Economic, social, environmental sustainability                 | WCED (1987); United Nations (2015)                                                        | Providing the broader development framework                       |
| Sustainable Cultural Development | Cultural sustainability, cultural resilience, social inclusion | UNESCO (2025); De Beukelaer et al. (2015)                                                 | Assessing the long-term cultural impacts of CCIs                  |

**Source:** Author's synthesis based on Cunningham (2009), Garnham (2005), Hesmondhalgh (2013), Alasuutari (2016), Alasuutari and Qadir (2019), Clarke et al. (2015), Gilmore et al. (2019), United Nations (2015), UNESCO (2025), and De Beukelaer (2015).

### 2.4. Research Gap

Although existing scholarship has significantly improved understanding of cultural governance and creative industries in Vietnam, several limitations remain. Current studies primarily focus on governance reforms, policy transfer, policy translation, and the economic dimensions of cultural industries. Consequently, CCIs are often analyzed as instruments of economic modernization, institutional transformation, or international integration.

Relatively little attention has been devoted to examining cultural and creative industries through the lens of sustainable cultural development. Existing research rarely explores how CCIs contribute to cultural sustainability, cultural resilience, social inclusion,

and the preservation of cultural identity over the long term. Moreover, the relationship between cultural governance and sustainable development remains insufficiently theorized in the Vietnamese context.

Addressing these gaps, the present study adopts a sustainability-oriented perspective that integrates cultural governance, cultural sustainability, and creative industry development. By examining CCIs not merely as economic sectors but as mechanisms for sustaining cultural vitality and social resilience, the study seeks to contribute a more comprehensive understanding of cultural development in contemporary Vietnam.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the relationship between cultural governance, cultural and creative industries (CCIs), and sustainable cultural development in Vietnam. Qualitative methods are particularly appropriate for investigating policy frameworks, institutional transformations, and socio-cultural processes because they allow researchers to explore the meanings, values, and contextual factors embedded within policy documents and scholarly debates (Clarke et al., 2015). Rather than measuring economic outputs or cultural participation quantitatively, the study seeks to understand how CCIs have been conceptualized, institutionalized, and connected to broader objectives of sustainable development within the Vietnamese context.

The research employs three complementary methods: literature review, policy document analysis, and comparative analysis. First, a systematic review of international and Vietnamese academic literature was conducted to identify major theoretical approaches related to cultural and creative industries, cultural governance, and sustainable cultural development. Particular attention was given to studies addressing cultural policy, creative economy development, cultural sustainability, and globalization. This literature provides the theoretical foundation for understanding contemporary transformations in cultural governance and the increasing significance of culture within sustainable development agendas.

Second, policy document analysis was used to examine how cultural industries have been incorporated into Vietnamese development strategies and policy frameworks. Policy documents constitute an important source of evidence because they reveal official priorities, policy objectives, governance structures, and institutional approaches to cultural development. The analysis focuses on both national and international policy frameworks in order to understand the interaction between domestic policy agendas and global development discourses.

The primary documents examined in this study include the *National Strategy for the Development of Cultural Industries to 2020, Vision to 2030* (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2016), UNESCO reports on culture and sustainable development, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Vietnam's Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals, and selected Vietnamese cultural policy documents issued by governmental agencies. These documents provide insights into the evolving role of culture within development planning and governance reforms.

Third, comparative analysis was employed to identify similarities and differences between international conceptual frameworks and Vietnam's policy practices. Rather than conducting cross-national comparisons, the study compares international policy discourses on culture and sustainable development with the Vietnamese experience of cultural governance and creative industry development. This approach enables the identification of areas of convergence, adaptation, and policy innovation.

The analytical framework of the study is organized around three interrelated dimensions: cultural governance, cultural sustainability, and global integration. These dimensions were selected because they capture the principal factors shaping the development of cultural and creative industries in contemporary Vietnam. Cultural governance focuses on institutional structures, policy mechanisms, and governance arrangements. Cultural sustainability examines issues of cultural preservation, cultural resilience, social inclusion, and cultural participation. Global integration addresses the influence of globalization, international cooperation, and transnational cultural exchanges on cultural development strategies.

**Table 2. Analytical Framework of the Study**

| Dimension               | Indicators                                                                                               | Sources                                                                                       | Analytical Focus                                                                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural Governance     | Policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, governance mechanisms, cultural policies                  | National Strategy for Cultural Industries, governmental policy documents, academic literature | Understanding how CCIs are governed and integrated into national development strategies |
| Cultural Sustainability | Cultural preservation, cultural participation, cultural diversity, cultural resilience, social inclusion | UNESCO reports, SDG reports, cultural development literature                                  | Assessing the contribution of CCIs to long-term cultural development                    |
| Global Integration      | International cooperation, cultural diplomacy, globalization, creative economy discourse                 | UNESCO documents, international policy reports, academic studies                              | Examining the influence of global processes on Vietnamese cultural development          |

**Source:** Author's analytical framework.

## 4. THE EVOLUTION OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN VIETNAM

### 4.1. Historical Development

The evolution of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Vietnam cannot be fully understood without considering the broader historical transformation of the country's cultural governance system. For much of the twentieth century, cultural administration in Vietnam operated within a socialist framework in which culture was primarily viewed as an ideological instrument serving national liberation, socialist construction, and social mobilization. During this period, cultural activities were largely managed by state institutions, and artistic production was expected to contribute to broader political and social objectives. As Kim (2002) notes, culture was commonly regarded as an ideological front through which national identity, revolutionary values, and collective solidarity could be promoted.

Within this model, cultural production relied heavily on state support and administrative planning. Artistic activities, publishing, performing arts, museums, and cultural heritage institutions functioned primarily under public management. Economic considerations played only a limited role in cultural policy, as cultural activities were generally perceived as public goods rather than market-oriented sectors. Consequently, cultural governance emphasized ideological guidance, educational functions, and social cohesion rather than commercial viability or creative entrepreneurship (Gillen, 2011).

The implementation of the *Đổi Mới* reforms in 1986 marked a major turning point in Vietnam's economic and social development. As the country gradually transitioned toward a socialist-oriented market economy, significant changes occurred across multiple sectors, including culture. Economic liberalization, international trade, foreign investment, and market reforms created new opportunities for cultural production, consumption, and exchange (Raffin, 2008). At the same time, the expansion of mass media, tourism, and international communication accelerated the diversification of cultural activities and increased public demand for cultural products and services.

The market-oriented transformation of the Vietnamese economy encouraged cultural organizations to become more responsive to audience preferences and market conditions. New forms of cultural entrepreneurship began to emerge in sectors such as publishing, advertising, design, media production, entertainment, and tourism. While state institutions continued to play an important role, cultural activities increasingly incorporated market mechanisms and private-sector participation (Le, 2008). This gradual shift laid the foundation for the subsequent emergence of cultural and creative industries as a distinct policy field.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Vietnam experienced rapid economic growth and deeper integration into regional and global markets. These developments contributed to changing perceptions regarding the role of culture in development. Rather than viewing culture exclusively as an ideological or educational instrument, policymakers increasingly recognized its potential contributions to economic growth, employment creation, innovation, and international competitiveness. Consequently, cultural governance began to move toward a more integrated model combining cultural preservation with economic development objectives.

### 4.2. Emergence of Cultural Industries

The emergence of cultural industries as an explicit policy concept in Vietnam was closely associated with broader international discussions concerning creativity, innovation, and cultural development. During the early twenty-first century, international organizations increasingly promoted cultural and creative industries as strategic sectors capable of generating both economic and social benefits. UNESCO played a particularly significant role in advancing these ideas through its advocacy for cultural diversity, cultural expressions, and sustainable development (De Beukelaer et al., 2015).

Vietnam's participation in UNESCO programs and international cultural cooperation initiatives exposed policymakers to emerging global discussions concerning the creative economy and cultural industries. As international experiences demonstrated the economic potential of cultural production, creative entrepreneurship, and cultural tourism, Vietnamese policymakers became increasingly interested in adapting these approaches to national development strategies. The influence of UNESCO was especially important in promoting the understanding that culture should be viewed not only as a heritage resource but also as a driver of innovation, creativity, and sustainable development (Tran, 2024).

A major milestone occurred in 2016 with the approval of the *National Strategy for the Development of Cultural Industries to 2020, Vision to 2030*. This policy represented the first comprehensive national framework specifically dedicated to cultural industries. The strategy identified a range of sectors—including advertising, architecture, crafts, design, film, publishing, performing arts, visual arts, software, television, radio broadcasting, and cultural tourism—as important components of Vietnam's cultural economy. The strategy also established specific development targets related to economic contribution, employment generation, and international competitiveness.

The adoption of the strategy reflected the growing influence of the creative economy discourse within Vietnamese policymaking. Similar to developments observed in many other countries, culture increasingly became associated with innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge production, and economic modernization. The concept of cultural industries provided policymakers with a framework for linking cultural development to broader national objectives such as economic growth, digital transformation, and international integration.

At the same time, Vietnam's approach differed from purely market-oriented models. Cultural industries were not promoted solely for their economic value but also for their potential contributions to national identity, cultural preservation, and social development.

This dual emphasis reflects the continuing importance of cultural governance traditions within the Vietnamese policy system. As a result, cultural industries emerged as a hybrid policy field combining economic aspirations with broader cultural and social objectives.

#### 4.3. Global Integration and Cultural Governance

The development of cultural and creative industries in Vietnam has been strongly influenced by processes of global integration. Since joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007 and expanding its participation in regional and international organizations, Vietnam has become increasingly connected to global cultural, economic, and technological networks. These connections have facilitated the exchange of ideas, policy models, artistic practices, and creative technologies.

International cooperation has become an important mechanism for strengthening cultural capacity and institutional development. UNESCO, the British Council, international development agencies, and various foreign cultural institutions have supported projects related to cultural policy, heritage preservation, creative entrepreneurship, cultural education, and cultural industries. Such initiatives have contributed to knowledge transfer, professional training, and the expansion of international cultural partnerships.

Cultural diplomacy has also become increasingly significant within Vietnam's broader international engagement strategy. Cultural heritage, traditional arts, creative products, and cultural exchanges are now frequently used to promote Vietnam's image internationally and strengthen cultural relations with other countries. This trend reflects a growing recognition that culture can contribute to soft power, international visibility, and national branding.

In parallel, creative economy initiatives have expanded across various sectors. Urban cultural development projects, creative hubs, digital content industries, cultural tourism programs, and startup ecosystems have become increasingly visible in major cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. These developments demonstrate the growing integration of culture into broader innovation and development agendas.

Nevertheless, globalization has also introduced new challenges. Increased exposure to global cultural flows raises concerns regarding cultural homogenization, commercialization, and the preservation of local cultural identities. Policymakers therefore face the complex task of balancing international integration with cultural sustainability. The future development of cultural and creative industries in Vietnam will depend not only on economic growth but also on the ability to maintain cultural diversity, strengthen cultural resilience, and ensure that cultural development contributes to broader societal well-being.

**Table 3. Major Milestones in the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries in Vietnam**

| Period       | Major Events                                                 | Policy Changes                                    | Significance                                                          |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1945–1985    | Socialist cultural administration                            | State-centered cultural governance                | Culture viewed primarily as an ideological and educational instrument |
| 1986–2000    | Đổi Mới reforms                                              | Economic liberalization and market reforms        | Increased cultural diversification and private participation          |
| 2001–2010    | International integration expands                            | Growth of cultural exchanges and creative sectors | Emergence of creative economy discussions                             |
| 2011–2015    | UNESCO and international cooperation initiatives             | Policy discussions on cultural industries         | Recognition of culture as a development resource                      |
| 2016         | National Strategy for the Development of Cultural Industries | First comprehensive policy framework for CCIs     | Institutionalization of cultural industries                           |
| 2017–Present | Digital transformation and global integration                | Expansion of creative economy initiatives         | Integration of culture, innovation, and sustainable development       |

**Source:** Compiled by the author based on Kim (2002), Le (2008), Prime Minister of Vietnam (2016), Tran (2024), and UNESCO (2025).

## 5. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS A FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1. Cultural Preservation and National Identity

One of the most significant contributions of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) to sustainable cultural development lies in their capacity to support cultural preservation and strengthen national identity. In many developing countries, rapid modernization, globalization, and technological change have created concerns regarding the erosion of traditional cultural values and the gradual disappearance of cultural heritage. Within this context, CCIs provide important mechanisms through which cultural resources can be preserved, revitalized, and transmitted to future generations.

In Vietnam, cultural heritage constitutes a fundamental component of national identity. Historical experiences of foreign domination, colonialism, and national resistance have contributed to the formation of a strong cultural consciousness rooted in collective memory, traditional values, and local cultural practices (Marr, 1981). Likewise, Jamieson (1993) argues that Vietnamese cultural

identity has evolved through a complex process of adaptation and continuity, combining indigenous traditions with external influences while maintaining distinctive cultural characteristics. Consequently, cultural preservation remains an important objective of national development.

Traditionally, heritage preservation was often understood as the protection of historical monuments, museums, artifacts, and intangible cultural practices. However, contemporary approaches increasingly emphasize the active role of communities and cultural industries in sustaining cultural heritage. Rather than treating culture as a static resource, CCIs transform cultural assets into living and dynamic elements of social and economic life. Traditional crafts, performing arts, cultural festivals, folk music, cultural tourism, and creative design industries can all contribute to the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage while generating economic opportunities for local communities.

UNESCO (2025) highlights the importance of integrating heritage preservation into broader cultural development strategies. Cultural participation, cultural diversity, and heritage protection are viewed not only as cultural objectives but also as essential components of sustainable development. Similarly, Tu (2019) argues that cultural heritage in Vietnam should be regarded as a strategic resource that contributes simultaneously to cultural continuity, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Through cultural industries, traditional cultural values can be adapted to contemporary contexts without losing their historical significance. Furthermore, CCIs contribute to the construction and promotion of national identity in an increasingly interconnected world. As cultural products circulate internationally through tourism, digital platforms, film, music, and creative media, they become important vehicles for representing national culture and strengthening cultural visibility. Consequently, cultural industries perform a dual function: preserving cultural traditions while simultaneously projecting national identity into global cultural spaces.

### **5.2. Creative Innovation and Economic Development**

Beyond cultural preservation, CCIs have become important drivers of creative innovation and economic development. The growing significance of creativity within contemporary economies reflects broader transformations associated with digital technologies, knowledge production, and innovation-based growth. Unlike traditional industrial sectors that rely heavily on physical resources, CCIs generate value through creativity, intellectual property, cultural content, and symbolic production.

The emergence of creative entrepreneurship has been particularly important in this regard. Creative entrepreneurs operate across diverse sectors including design, digital media, cultural tourism, publishing, performing arts, advertising, and creative services. These activities contribute not only to economic growth but also to employment generation, technological innovation, and urban development. As O'Connor (2020) argues, creative industries increasingly function as central components of contemporary innovation systems because they combine cultural production with knowledge-intensive economic activities.

In Vietnam, the development of cultural industries has created new opportunities for creative labor and entrepreneurial activity. The expansion of cultural tourism, digital content production, creative startups, and cultural services has contributed to the diversification of economic activities while encouraging greater participation by young professionals and creative workers. Such developments are particularly important in a context where economic modernization increasingly depends on innovation, creativity, and human capital rather than low-cost manufacturing alone.

Gasparin and Quinn (2020) emphasize that cultural industries should be understood as components of broader creative ecosystems involving interactions among educational institutions, cultural organizations, businesses, policymakers, and local communities. Innovation emerges not solely from individual creativity but from networks that facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, and institutional support. Consequently, the development of CCIs requires supportive governance frameworks capable of nurturing creative talent and fostering entrepreneurial opportunities.

At the same time, economic development generated by CCIs should not be evaluated exclusively through financial indicators. Sustainable development requires balancing economic objectives with cultural and social considerations. In this sense, the value of CCIs extends beyond their contribution to GDP, encompassing their capacity to stimulate creativity, enhance social participation, and strengthen cultural vitality. The integration of economic innovation with cultural development therefore represents one of the most distinctive characteristics of CCIs within contemporary development strategies.

### **5.3. Social Inclusion and Cultural Participation**

A further contribution of CCIs to sustainable cultural development concerns social inclusion and cultural participation. Sustainable development is not merely a process of economic growth; it also involves expanding opportunities for individuals and communities to participate in social, cultural, and public life. Cultural participation strengthens social cohesion, encourages community engagement, and contributes to more inclusive societies.

UNESCO (2025) identifies access to culture as a fundamental dimension of cultural sustainability. Cultural resources should be accessible to diverse social groups regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, or socioeconomic status. Through cultural institutions, creative programs, community arts initiatives, and digital platforms, CCIs can expand opportunities for cultural engagement and participation.

In the Vietnamese context, cultural industries provide important channels for promoting cultural diversity and community involvement. Cultural festivals, community-based tourism, local crafts, traditional performing arts, and creative cultural events

enable communities to actively participate in cultural production and representation. Such activities not only generate economic benefits but also strengthen local identities and social networks.

The United Nations (2015) emphasizes that inclusive development requires the participation of diverse cultural communities and the protection of cultural rights. From this perspective, cultural industries contribute to social inclusion by creating spaces where different social groups can express their identities, share cultural experiences, and participate in cultural life. This function is particularly important in multicultural societies where cultural diversity represents both a social resource and a development challenge.

Moreover, digital technologies have expanded access to cultural content and cultural participation. Online platforms enable broader audiences to engage with cultural products, creative content, and artistic activities regardless of geographic barriers. Although digital inequalities remain an important concern, technological innovation has significantly increased opportunities for cultural participation and community engagement. Consequently, CCIs contribute to sustainable development by fostering more inclusive and participatory cultural environments.

#### 5.4. Cultural Resilience in a Globalized Environment

The contemporary global environment is characterized by rapid social, economic, technological, and cultural transformations. Globalization has intensified cross-cultural interactions while simultaneously increasing concerns regarding cultural homogenization and the erosion of local cultural identities. Under these conditions, cultural resilience has become an increasingly important dimension of sustainable cultural development.

Cultural resilience refers to the capacity of individuals, communities, and societies to maintain cultural vitality while adapting to changing circumstances. Rather than resisting change, resilient cultures are capable of integrating new influences while preserving core cultural values and identities. CCIs play a critical role in this process because they facilitate the continuous reinterpretation and renewal of cultural traditions.

Globalization has created both opportunities and challenges for cultural development in Vietnam. On the one hand, international cultural exchanges provide access to new ideas, technologies, artistic practices, and markets. On the other hand, global cultural flows may increase pressures toward cultural standardization and commercial homogenization. Sustainable cultural development therefore requires strategies that balance openness to global influences with the preservation of cultural diversity.

Digital transformation further intensifies these dynamics. Social media platforms, digital content industries, streaming services, and online cultural networks have dramatically altered patterns of cultural production and consumption. Traditional cultural expressions increasingly coexist with digital cultural forms, creating new opportunities for cultural innovation while raising questions regarding authenticity, ownership, and cultural continuity.

Within this context, CCIs function as mechanisms of cultural adaptation. They enable cultural traditions to be reinterpreted through contemporary forms of expression while maintaining their cultural significance. Traditional crafts can be integrated into modern design industries; folk music can be adapted for digital platforms; cultural heritage can be promoted through creative tourism; and local narratives can be transformed into contemporary cultural products. Such processes demonstrate that cultural preservation and cultural innovation are not necessarily contradictory but can operate as mutually reinforcing dimensions of sustainable development.

**Table 4. Contributions of Cultural and Creative Industries to Sustainable Cultural Development**

| Dimension             | Contributions                                            | Examples                                                                | Sustainability Outcomes                               |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural Preservation | Protection and revitalization of heritage and traditions | Traditional crafts, cultural tourism, folk arts                         | Cultural continuity and identity preservation         |
| Economic Development  | Creative entrepreneurship, employment, innovation        | Design industries, digital media, creative startups                     | Economic diversification and innovation-driven growth |
| Social Inclusion      | Expanded cultural participation and community engagement | Community arts, festivals, cultural education programs                  | Social cohesion and inclusive development             |
| Cultural Resilience   | Adaptation to globalization and technological change     | Digital cultural platforms, contemporary reinterpretations of tradition | Long-term cultural sustainability and adaptability    |

**Source:** Author's synthesis based on UNESCO (2025), United Nations (2015), Tu (2019), O'Connor (2020), and Gasparin and Quinn (2020).

## 6. CHALLENGES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Despite the growing recognition of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) as important drivers of sustainable cultural development, their implementation in Vietnam continues to face a range of institutional, economic, and socio-cultural challenges. While significant progress has been achieved in integrating cultural industries into national development strategies, important obstacles

remain regarding governance effectiveness, market pressures, cultural sustainability, and the management of globalization. Addressing these challenges is essential if CCIs are to contribute meaningfully to long-term sustainable development.

### **6.1. Institutional Challenges**

One of the most significant challenges concerns the institutional structure of cultural governance. The development of CCIs requires coordination among multiple governmental agencies, cultural organizations, educational institutions, private enterprises, and local communities. However, governance responsibilities are often distributed across different ministries, departments, and administrative levels, creating fragmented policy implementation and overlapping responsibilities.

The cultural sector increasingly intersects with tourism, education, science and technology, digital transformation, international cooperation, and economic planning. As a result, effective cultural development requires cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms capable of integrating diverse policy objectives. In practice, however, institutional fragmentation may reduce policy effectiveness, delay implementation, and create inconsistencies between national strategies and local initiatives.

Furthermore, cultural policies often operate within separate administrative frameworks from broader development planning processes. This separation can limit the integration of cultural objectives into national sustainability agendas. Consequently, cultural development may be treated as a supplementary policy concern rather than as a strategic component of long-term national development.

Strengthening institutional coordination therefore represents a critical priority for future cultural governance reforms. More integrated governance structures could facilitate cooperation among public agencies, improve policy coherence, and enhance the effectiveness of cultural development programs.

### **6.2. Marketization and Commercialization**

A second challenge arises from the increasing marketization of cultural activities. While market-oriented reforms have expanded opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship, investment, and innovation, they have also generated new pressures that may threaten cultural sustainability.

As cultural products become increasingly integrated into competitive markets, economic considerations often gain prominence over cultural, educational, or social objectives. Cultural organizations may prioritize commercially successful products while neglecting less profitable forms of cultural expression. Traditional cultural practices, local heritage, and minority cultural traditions may face difficulties competing with commercially dominant cultural products and global entertainment industries.

The commercialization of culture may also contribute to cultural commodification, whereby cultural values, traditions, and identities are transformed into marketable products primarily evaluated according to economic criteria. Although commercialization can generate resources for cultural preservation and creative production, excessive reliance on market mechanisms may undermine the broader social and cultural functions of culture.

This challenge highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between economic development and cultural sustainability. Cultural industries should generate economic value, but their success should not be measured solely by financial performance. Broader indicators related to cultural participation, cultural diversity, social inclusion, and heritage preservation should also be incorporated into policy evaluation frameworks.

### **6.3. Balancing Identity and Globalization**

A third challenge concerns the relationship between national cultural identity and globalization. Vietnam's increasing participation in global cultural networks has created valuable opportunities for cultural exchange, international cooperation, and creative innovation. At the same time, globalization has intensified the circulation of cultural products, values, and lifestyles across national boundaries.

These developments create both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, exposure to global cultural flows can stimulate creativity, encourage innovation, and facilitate access to international markets. On the other hand, globalization may contribute to cultural homogenization and weaken local cultural traditions if appropriate protective and adaptive mechanisms are not established.

The challenge is therefore not whether Vietnam should participate in globalization but how cultural governance can ensure that international integration strengthens rather than weakens cultural diversity and national identity. Sustainable cultural development requires a dynamic approach that allows cultural traditions to evolve and adapt while preserving their core cultural significance.

Digital transformation further complicates this process. Online platforms, social media, and digital entertainment have dramatically expanded access to cultural content while simultaneously increasing competition from global cultural industries. Policymakers must therefore consider how digital technologies can be utilized to promote local cultural production, expand cultural participation, and strengthen cultural resilience.

### **6.4. Policy Recommendations**

Based on the preceding analysis, four policy recommendations can be proposed to strengthen the contribution of CCIs to sustainable cultural development in Vietnam.

**Recommendation 1: Strengthen Cultural Sustainability Indicators**

Current policy evaluations often emphasize economic performance indicators such as revenue generation, employment, and investment. While these indicators remain important, future assessments should incorporate measures of cultural sustainability, including cultural participation, heritage preservation, cultural diversity, and community engagement. Developing a comprehensive system of cultural sustainability indicators would provide a more balanced understanding of cultural development outcomes.

**Recommendation 2: Enhance Community Participation**

Sustainable cultural development depends upon active community involvement. Local communities should be recognized not merely as beneficiaries of cultural policies but also as key actors in cultural preservation and creative innovation. Greater support should be provided for community-based cultural initiatives, local cultural enterprises, and participatory cultural governance mechanisms.

**Recommendation 3: Support Creative Entrepreneurship**

The continued growth of CCIs requires a supportive environment for creative entrepreneurs, cultural organizations, and creative workers. Policy measures could include financial support programs, training initiatives, creative incubation centers, digital infrastructure development, and stronger intellectual property protection mechanisms. Such initiatives would contribute to both economic innovation and cultural vitality.

**Recommendation 4: Integrate Cultural Policies with Sustainable Development Goals**

Finally, cultural governance should be more closely integrated with broader sustainable development strategies. Cultural policies should contribute not only to economic growth but also to social inclusion, education, environmental awareness, community resilience, and cultural sustainability. Aligning cultural development objectives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would strengthen the role of culture within national development planning and enhance policy coherence across sectors.

**Table 5. Challenges and Policy Recommendations for Sustainable Cultural Development in Vietnam**

| Challenge                                              | Impact                                                                              | Policy Response                                                                         | Expected Outcome                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fragmented governance                                  | Policy inconsistency and implementation gaps                                        | Strengthen inter-agency coordination and integrated governance mechanisms               | More effective and coherent cultural governance                     |
| Marketization and commercialization                    | Risk of cultural commodification and neglect of non-commercial cultural expressions | Develop balanced evaluation frameworks incorporating cultural sustainability indicators | Improved balance between economic and cultural objectives           |
| Globalization and cultural homogenization              | Pressure on local cultural identities and traditions                                | Promote cultural diversity, heritage preservation, and local cultural production        | Stronger cultural resilience and identity preservation              |
| Limited support for creative actors                    | Constraints on innovation and entrepreneurial development                           | Expand support for creative entrepreneurship, training, and digital infrastructure      | Sustainable growth of creative industries and cultural innovation   |
| Weak integration with sustainable development policies | Limited contribution of culture to broader development goals                        | Align cultural policies with SDGs and national sustainability strategies                | Greater contribution of culture to sustainable development outcomes |

**Source:** Author's analysis and policy recommendations.

**7. CONCLUSION**

This study has examined the evolution of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Vietnam and their contribution to sustainable cultural development within the broader context of globalization and international integration. The findings demonstrate that CCIs have undergone a significant transformation, evolving from a policy field primarily associated with cultural production and economic growth into a more comprehensive framework encompassing cultural preservation, creative innovation, social participation, and sustainable development. While economic contributions remain important, the analysis suggests that the significance of CCIs extends far beyond their role as productive sectors within the creative economy.

The study argues that CCIs should be understood as strategic instruments for sustainable cultural development. Through their contributions to heritage preservation, cultural identity formation, creative entrepreneurship, community engagement, and cultural resilience, CCIs provide important mechanisms for balancing economic modernization with cultural continuity. In the Vietnamese context, where rapid globalization and digital transformation are reshaping cultural practices and social relationships, cultural industries offer opportunities to strengthen both cultural vitality and national competitiveness. At the same time, the study highlights the continuing challenges posed by fragmented governance structures, commercialization pressures, and the need to balance local cultural identities with increasing global cultural flows.

From a theoretical perspective, this article contributes to existing scholarship by connecting the fields of cultural governance and sustainable development. Much of the previous literature has focused on policy transfer, governance reforms, or the economic dimensions of cultural industries. By contrast, this study emphasizes the importance of cultural sustainability as an analytical framework for understanding the broader societal functions of CCIs. The findings support the growing international recognition that culture should be considered a fundamental dimension of sustainable development alongside economic, social, and environmental objectives.

From a policy perspective, the study proposes several directions for future cultural governance reforms in Vietnam. These include strengthening cultural sustainability indicators, enhancing community participation, supporting creative entrepreneurship, and integrating cultural policies more closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such measures would help ensure that cultural development contributes not only to economic growth but also to social inclusion, cultural diversity, and long-term societal resilience.

Finally, several avenues for future research deserve further attention. Scholars may explore the implications of digital culture and digital platforms for cultural sustainability, investigate the role of creative cities in fostering innovation and cultural participation, develop more comprehensive indicators for measuring cultural sustainability, and conduct comparative studies examining cultural governance and creative industry development across ASEAN countries. Such research would contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving relationship between culture, governance, and sustainable development in an increasingly interconnected world.

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