

# Vietnamese Studies in South Korea: Development and Trend

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**Abstract:** *In contemporary South Korea, after the adoption of the Doi Moi reform policy in late 1986 in Vietnam and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Vietnam in December 1992, the interest in Vietnam increased rapidly. As the two countries expanded their cooperation, the increased interest in Vietnam created the “boom” of Vietnamese studies in Korea, which produced many Vietnam specialists during the second half of the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s. These specialists are in the second generation of Vietnamese studies and form the backbone of Vietnamese studies in Korea now. The researches conducted by not only Vietnam specialists but also by researchers who conduct case studies about Vietnam have significantly increased in the fields of economics, business management and social studies. Vietnamese studies in Korea have been closely related to social change. The future task for the development of Vietnamese studies in Korea is to promote quality of researches based on quantitative growth.*

**Key words:** Korea, Vietnam, Southeast Asia, Area Studies, Case Studies

## I. Introduction

South Korea and Vietnam celebrated their 25th anniversary of the normalization in December 2017. The cooperation between the two countries began in the economic sector, particularly since the establishment of diplomatic relations in December 1992, and has expanded rapidly in cultural and human exchanges. The amount of trade between the two countries increased more than 120 times in the past 25 years, from US \$500 million in 1992 to US \$64 billion in 2017, making South Korea (hereafter

Korea) the second largest trading partner of Vietnam and making Vietnam the fourth largest trading partner of Korea. In the foreign direct investment sector in Vietnam, Korea has been ranked first since 2014 with accumulated amount of investment approvals. In the field of culture, Korean television dramas have received favorable reviews from Vietnamese viewers since late 1990s, and this trend has spread to the movie, music, and food sectors. Now there are about 150,000 Koreans who live in Vietnam and a similar number of

Vietnamese live in Korea. The number of Vietnamese women married Korean men increased to 50,000, ranking second in the foreign spouse in Korea. It was unexpected and unprecedented that the bilateral relations have developed quickly in 25 years.

During the post-Cold War period, the two countries were economically in need. At the starting point of the two countries' full-scale economic exchanges, Vietnam had just begun to industrialize and needed companies to hire a lot of idle laborers, and Korea was in the stage of transferring labor-intensive industries abroad. Since then, Korean enterprises have invested not only in the light industry but also in the heavy industry sector such as construction and steel making, contributing to the construction of Vietnam's industrial base. As the industrialization in Vietnam proceeds, the investment of Korean companies is shifting to the high value-added production sector.

In order for this close bilateral relationship to be firmly maintained and developed, both peoples must broaden their understanding of the other party, and the academic researches must be expanded. How did Koreans understand Vietnam and study academically? In general, it is said that Vietnamese studies in Korea are still not enough. In the case of neighboring Japan, there are many researchers who have academic interest in Vietnam in the fields of humanities and social sciences. The number of members of the Japanese Association of Researchers in Vietnamese Studies, founded in 1987, reached about 100 members by 2000, which was similar

to the number of Vietnam researchers in Europe as of 1999 (Furuta, 2000: 227). As explained below, the number of Korean researchers who received PhDs in Vietnam-related studies by 2015 has reached about 100.

The purpose of this research is to explore the development process and major research trends of Vietnamese studies in Korea from the beginning to the present. The period covered by this research ranges from the liberation from the Japanese occupation in 1945 to the present, between 1990 and 2015 in particular.

## II. Scope and method of the research

This study, as the scope of "Vietnamese Studies in Korea," includes researches, by researchers whose main field of academic activities is Korea, which were published as books and articles in academic journals, and master's and doctoral theses in Korea. In order to get the results of this study, the author first searched for '베트남' (Vietnam), '월남' (Wolnam), '안남' (Annam) in Korean<sup>1</sup>, on the website of the Research Information Sharing Service (<http://www.riss.kr>), operated by the Korea Education & Research Information Service, to search for domestic master's and doctoral theses and domestic journal articles. Master's and doctoral theses in Korea were also searched by putting the English term

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<sup>1</sup> All three terms have been used in Korea, while '베트남'(Vietnam) is the most popular term in contemporary society. '베트남'(Vietnam) is just Vietnam by the Vietnamese pronunciation, while '월남'(Wolnam) is the Korean pronunciation of Chinese character of Vietnam. '안남'(Annam), which was originated from Chinese calling Vietnam in history, was also used usually in Korea before the contemporary era.

‘Vietnam’. From the searched list, only the researches related directly to Vietnamese studies were sorted out and classified by the research field and time period<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the researchers’ research results were searched on the Korea Researcher Information website (<http://www.kri.go.kr>), and the information collected by the author himself was supplemented and used comprehensively. On the other hand, in order to see the change in the proportion of researches on Vietnam in Southeast Asian studies, the author searched for the proportion of articles on Vietnam compared to all articles published in the journal *Southeast Asian Studies* published by the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies.

### III. Development process of Vietnamese Studies

#### 1. Studies before 1945

The Korea’s Vietnamese studies were started by Kim Young-kun, a Korean researcher who stayed in Vietnam during the Japanese

dominated period (Youn Dae-yeong, 2009). Kim Young-kun was a librarian from 1931 to 1940, working at the French EFEO in Hanoi. In 1937, for instance, he sent an opinion on the romanization of Hangul (Korean characters) in “Annam Hanoi Correspondent” to Lee Yun-jae, the editor of the journal *Hangul* (Kim Young-kun, 1937). After returning to Japan, he published a series of books, such as <日佛安南語會話辭典> (*Japanese-French-Annamese Conversational Dictionary*) in 1942 and <印度支那と日本との關係> (*Indochina’s Relationship with Japan*) in 1943. Unfortunately, his work did not lead to Vietnamese studies in Korea afterwards, and his works were mainly published in Japan, which makes it inadequate for him to be included in the scope of “Vietnamese Studies in Korea”. Therefore, his researches may be regarded as the epoch of Vietnamese studies in Korea, but it is not appropriate to call him the first-generation researcher.

#### 2. Birth of Vietnamese Studies since 1945

During the Japanese colonial period, Koreans were able to sympathize with Vietnamese as colonists. Koreans read and reread a book entitled <월남망국사> (*Wolnam Mangguksa*), the Korean version of *Việt Nam vong quốc sử* (History of Vietnamese National Decay), authored by Phan Boi Chau (潘佩珠) and edited by Liang Qi-chao. However, after the liberation from Japan in 1945, Koreans would not have any interest in Vietnam in a rapidly changing society. In this situation, no scholarly work on Vietnam was carried out. South Korea went through a war in 1950-53 and established a diplomatic relationship with South Vietnam in the

<sup>1</sup> Although comparative studies which specify Vietnam in the title are included in the scope of this study, comparative studies of several countries which do not include Vietnam in the title are excluded, as they are considered to focus on comparison rather than studies on Vietnam itself. However, researches of Korean foreign policy or international relations related to the Vietnam War such as the dispatch of the Korean troops to Vietnam and relationships of countries related to the war, can be excluded from the study of Vietnam identified narrowly, as they are more focused on the Korean foreign policy or international relations, but they are widely interpreted and included in the scope of Vietnamese studies. While the studies related to the marriage migration to Korea are also considered as a study on Korean society narrowly, those researches are included as studies of Vietnamese diaspora.

process of cooperation with the regional anti-communist states<sup>1</sup>. In response to this change, the interest in Vietnam slowly began to emerge in Korea. However, the only academic research in the 1950s was done by Cho Hyo-won, a professor of politics at Yonsei University, who inserted a general description of Indochina in his book entitled <아세아정치론> (*Asian Politics*) in 1955, and published an article titled “월남의 정부조직” (The Organization of Vietnamese Government) in 1959<sup>2</sup>. In the 1950s, any study related to Vietnam exclusively was not published, and information about Vietnam was included in world history or geography textbooks

published in 1959 by the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, it seemed like a booklet for business reference. The Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry then published a book titled <월남의 농업협동조합> (*Agricultural Cooperatives of Vietnam*) in 1960.

The increase in the publication of Vietnam-related books was related to Korea's dispatch of soldiers to South Vietnam since 1964. In 1965, Hahm Jae-gun published <이것이 베트남이다> (*This is Vietnam*) and the Research Institute of International Affairs (국제문제연구소) published <베트남: 그 역사적 배경과 현실> (*Vietnam: Its Historical Background and Reality*), which introduced Vietnam to Koreans in general.

**Table 1. Number of Korean PhD degree holders on Vietnam by Year, 1969-2015**

Year	1969-1980	1981-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2015	Total
Vietnam specialists	2	1	4	9	13	6	5	40
Vietnam observers	5	3	8	7	6	12	24	65

Source: The author's calculation by information from various sources

(Yoon Dong-soo, 1954; Park No-sik, 1956; Pyo Mun-hwa, 1958; Choi Chi-ryun, 1958). One book published in the 1950s was <월남공화국> (*Republic of Vietnam*),

Almost Vietnam-related books published in 1965-66 were policy studies, such as <월남전과 한국의 안전보장> (*The Vietnam War and Korean Security*) by the Research Institute of International Affairs, <월남전과 한국> (*The Vietnam War and Korea*) by Won Yong-seok. <한국과 월남과의 관계> (*Relationship between Korea and Vietnam*) authored by Choi Sang-soo in 1966, was the first full-scale academic study dealing with Vietnamese history and the Korea-Vietnam relationship in depth.

In the field of theses, it was first that Park Hee-ju received, in 1964, a master's degree

<sup>1</sup> After being divided by the Geneva Conventions in July 1954, South Vietnam was converted to the Republic of Vietnam through a referendum in October 1955, and Ngo Dinh Diem took office as a president on October 26, 1955. When the Ngo Dinh Diem government was launched, the Korean government approved it in the next day and established official diplomatic relations.

<sup>2</sup> It is still not sure whether this article was the first academic paper on Vietnam published in Korea since 1945.

first with a thesis titled “The role of Southeast Asian political groups: Myanmar, Indonesia and Vietnam”. Subsequently, Han Sang-sun received a master’s degree with a thesis, “An empirical study on the Vietnamese market,” in 1965. Afterward, master’s theses on the Vietnam War were presented (Kim Ki-jo, 1966; Yang Jung-gyu, 1966). For the doctoral dissertation in Korea, Choi Sam-seop was recorded first with a study of “An epidemiologic investigation of malaria in the South Korean army in Vietnam” in 1969, followed by Hwang Chung-hyun in 1971 with “An investigative research on the resistance of flea for flea index and pesticides in Vietnam,” and Lee Dae-jin in 1972 with “An epidemiologic study of intestinal bacterial infection in some areas of Vietnam”. These early doctoral dissertations on Vietnam were all medical studies. They can be regarded as the by-products of the Korea’s participation of the Vietnam War. In the humanities and social sciences, Professor Lee Eun-ho was the first scholar to receive a PhD degree in political science in 1972 with “The role of the military in nation-building: South Vietnam and Korea” in the U.S. Professor Yu Insun received his PhD degree in history in 1978 with a study of “Law and family in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of Vietnam” in the U.S. In Korea, professor Kim Ki-tae received his PhD degree in political science in 1983 with a dissertation of “Korea’s participation of the Vietnam War and Korea-US Relations”. In this sense, The Vietnamese studies in Korea began again in the mid-1960s and early 1970s despite the fact that a few studies were carried out only.

### 3. *Growth of Vietnam specialists*

This author intends to classify researchers who are currently involved in Vietnamese studies in Korea into two categories as Vietnam specialists and Vietnam observers. Vietnam specialists are PhD degree holders who have studied Vietnam mainly for their PhDs and continue their studies about Vietnam after getting PhD degrees. Vietnam observers are scholars who majored in Vietnam for their PhDs while do not conduct researches on Vietnam any more after getting PhD degrees and scholars who majored in the other fields for their PhDs, have conducted researches on Vietnam-related topics as case studies<sup>1</sup>.

Among Vietnam specialists, the number of doctoral degree holders was three by the 1980s, four in the first half of the 1990s, nine in 1996-2000, thirteen in 2001-2005, six in 2006-2010, and five in 2011-2015 (See Table 1). While Lee Eun-ho, Yu Insun, and Kim Ki-tae are in the first generation of Vietnam specialists in Korea, other PhD degree holders can be included in the second generation of Vietnam specialists. According to the classification criteria of Park Seung-woo (2013), the second-generation of Vietnam specialists can be classified into three cohorts. Four Vietnam specialists in the first cohort received doctorates in the first half of the 1990s, and nine specialists in the second cohort received doctorates in the second half of the 1990s. 24 Vietnam specialists in the third cohort received doctoral degrees from

<sup>1</sup> The scope of Vietnam specialists is narrower than the Park Seung-woo’s (2013) category of experts on Vietnam.

2001 to 2015. In particular, in the second half of the 1990s and first half of the 2000s, 22 scholars received PhD degrees in Vietnam specialists, causing a “boom” in Vietnamese studies in Korea. This was a period of the Vietnam research “boom” not only in Korea, but also in the world, when Vietnam was expanding its openness after declaring *Doi Moi* (renovation) in late 1986 and adopting an all-out reform policy. The Vietnam specialists who emerged during this period may be called as “the *Doi Moi* generation” in Vietnamese studies.

Afterward, there were many PhD degree holders in Vietnamese studies since the late 2000s, but only a few people have been involved in Vietnam-related researches continuously, whereas some PhD degree holders have tended not to continue their studies after obtaining their PhD degrees. Persons who do not continue their academic activities on

characteristic of doctoral degree holders in the late 2000s and the early 2010s is the increase in the number of researchers who wrote doctoral dissertations on various social issues related to the marriage migration of Vietnamese women to Korea. Recently an increasing number of researchers who earned PhDs in Vietnamese studies have focused on various subjects such as engineering, architecture, urban developmental issues, etc. Many of the researchers who earned PhDs on marriage migration and other various subjects are also not consistently engaged in researches on Vietnam.

Among the Vietnam specialists in Korea, political scientists are eleven, followed by six historians and six anthropologists. The percentages of Vietnam specialists by academic discipline in the first and second generations in this study are 27% in political science, 17% in history or

**Table 2. Number of Korean PhD degree holders on Vietnam by Discipline, 1969-2015**

Discipline	Language	Literature	History, Philosophy	Politics	Economics, Business management	Anthropology	Sociology	International Studies	etc	Total
Vietnam specialists	3	4	7	11	2	6	4	1	2	40
Vietnam observers	2	2	3	15	9	3	4	5	22	65

*Source:* The author’s calculation by information from various sources

Vietnam are considered as persons who studied Vietnam as a case study for their own academic disciplines rather than Vietnamese studies, or persons who obtained doctorates due to their businesses rather than academic activities. Another

philosophy, and 15% in anthropology (See Table 2). This result is somewhat different from the Park Seung-woo’s (2013) research which showed the PhD degree holders of the second-generation of Southeast Asia specialists; 46% in political science, 16%

in anthropology, and 12% in economics. Compared with the entire Southeast Asia experts, there are relatively few political scientists and historians among the Vietnam specialists. However, if we include political scientists with doctoral degrees related to the Korea's participation of the Vietnam War, the share of Vietnam specialists by academic discipline will be closer to the situation in Southeast Asia in general. The proportion of economists among Vietnam specialists is relatively small compared to that of all Southeast Asia experts, because few economists have written doctoral dissertations on Vietnam but many Vietnam observers have conducted researches on Vietnam as case studies on economic issues.

#### 4. Publication of history books and dictionaries

Vietnam specialists have published history books and dictionaries which have important implications for the study of Vietnam in Korea. <베트남사> (*History of Vietnam*) was published by Yu Insun (1984; 2002) and Song Jung-nam (2000; 2010), and <동남아시아사> (*History of Southeast Asia*) was published by Choi Byung-wook (2006; 2016). While a book on Vietnamese history titled <安南紀略藁> [*A brief introduction to Annam*] was published in Japan between the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, recorded as the Japan's first publishing of Vietnamese history (Furuta, 2000: 229), the publication of Vietnamese history in Korea was very late. But it cannot be considered meaningful. In addition, compilation of the *Vietnamese-Korean Dictionary* was done by Cho Jae-hyun (2006) and the *Korean-Vietnamese Dictionary* was done by Song

Jung-nam, Lee Kang-woo and Park Yeon-gwan (2011). These have provided the basic tools for Vietnamese studies in Korea.

#### IV. Recent trend of researches

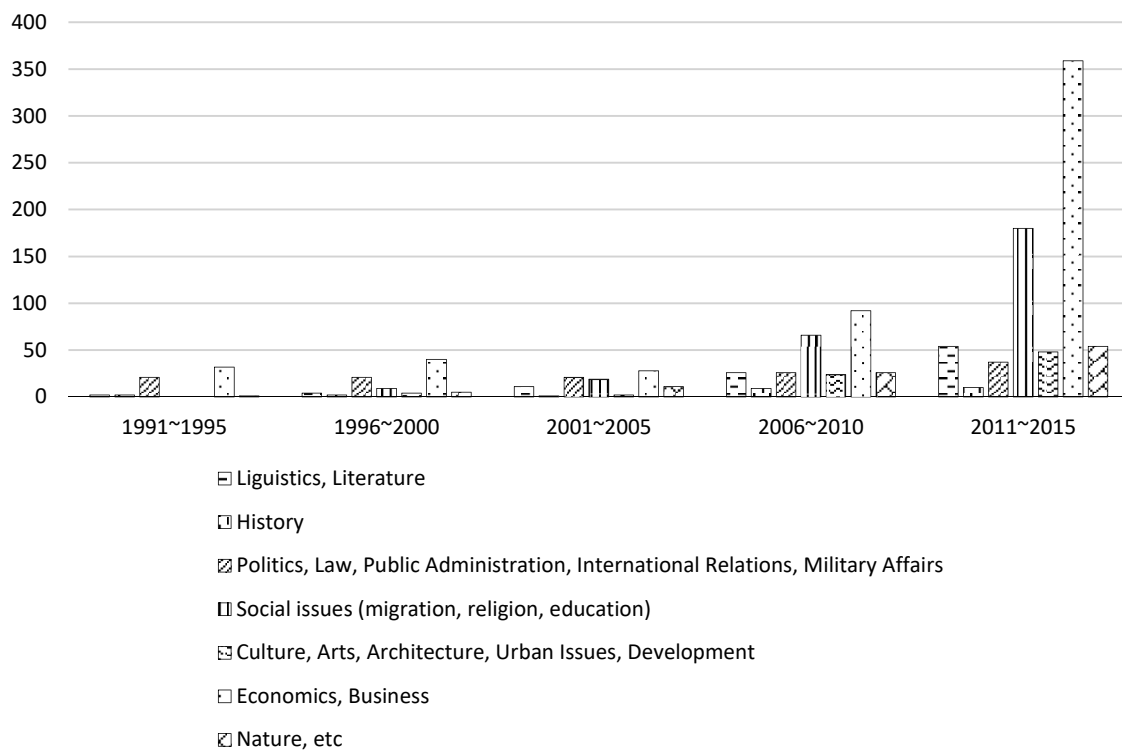
##### 1. Sectoral changes in researches on Vietnam

In order to understand the recent trend of researches on Vietnam through the master's and doctoral theses and journal articles published from 1991 to 2015, which are registered on the Research Information Sharing Service website (<http://www.riss.kr>), the author classified them by academic discipline and period. The number of master's and doctoral theses related to Vietnam was less than 10 a year until the early 1990s and about 10 to 25 per year from the mid-1990s to 2005, but the number increased rapidly since the mid-2000s, up to 34 in 2006 and 186 in 2012<sup>1</sup>. In terms of academic discipline, there were more researches on economics and business management compared to the other fields in all periods, and the number of articles on the social issues increased rapidly since the mid-2000s (See Figure 1).

Theses submitted by Vietnamese at graduate schools in Korea began in the mid-1990s. Bui Anh Tuan (1995) and Tran Van Hoe (1995) are recorded as the first Vietnamese to obtain a master's degree on Vietnam in Korea, at the Research Information Sharing Service website (<http://www.riss.kr>). They were followed by two Vietnamese

<sup>1</sup> During 2012-2015, dozens of Vietnamese students received master's degrees in business management from Soongsil University, which contributed to a surge in master's thesis during this period. The number is about 70 in 2012, about 40 in 2013, about 90 in 2014, and about 20 in 2015.

Figure 1. Sectoral Proportion of Master's and Doctoral Theses on Vietnam



Source: The author's calculation from the Research Information Sharing Service website (<http://www.riss.kr>)

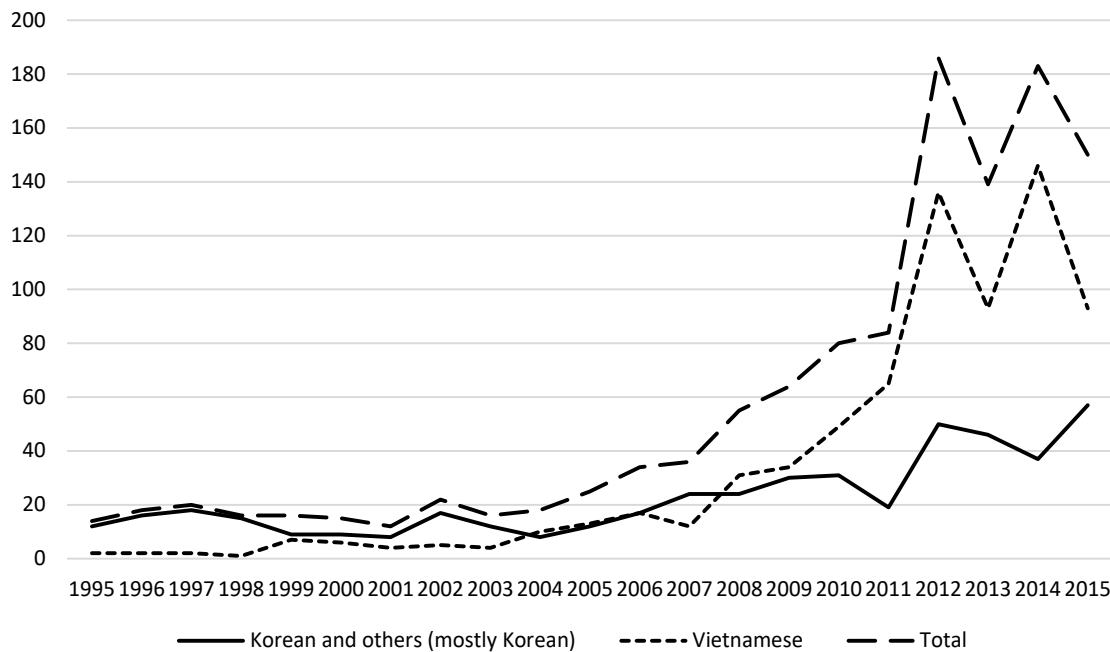
in 1996<sup>1</sup>. It is noteworthy that among the master's and doctoral degree holders on Vietnam, the proportion of Vietnamese accounted for half of the total in the mid-2000s, and has increased significantly since 2010. As shown in Figure 2, the number of Vietnamese authors was less

than the number of authors of Korea and other countries (mostly Korea) until 2003, but the number of two groups was similar during 2004-2006, and Vietnamese authors has outnumbered authors of Korea and other countries since 2008. Since 2010, the number of Vietnamese authors has been much larger than those of Korea and other countries (mostly Korea). This is the result of the increase in the number of Vietnamese students who have studied at graduate schools in Korea since the mid-2000s and the number of degree holders since 2010. Most Vietnamese students are master's degree holders and many of them have written theses on economics, business management or issues related to marriage migration.

<sup>1</sup> The four Vietnamese who received master's degrees with Vietnam-related topics in Korea in 1995 and 1996 are graduate students who completed their master's degrees at Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies with a scholarship supported by Professor Koo Sung-yeal at Yonsei University. Vietnamese may have earned a master's degree in a field other than Vietnamese studies, so it is not clear whether these four graduates were the first Vietnamese graduate students in Korea since December 1992, when South Korea and Vietnam normalized the bilateral relations.



Figure 2. Nationality of Authors of Master's and Doctoral Theses on Vietnam



*Source:* The author's calculation from the Research Information Sharing Service website (<http://www.riss.kr>)

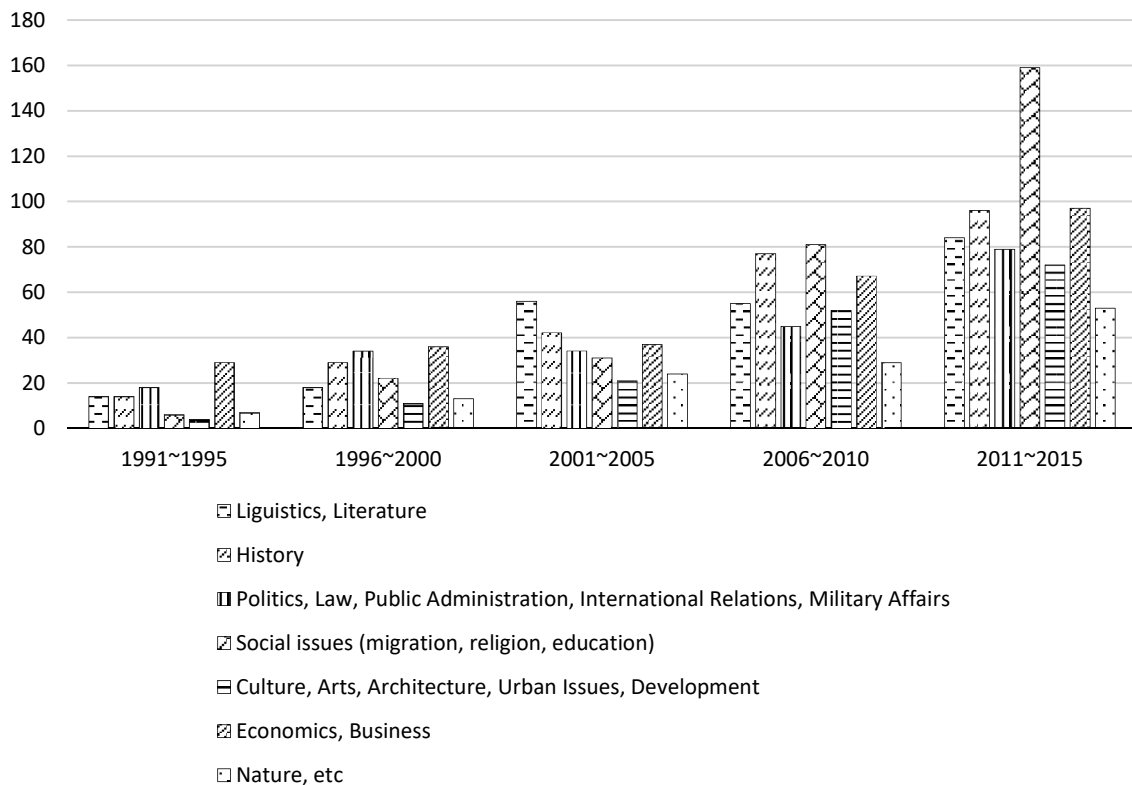
The number of Vietnam-related articles published in academic journals in Korea was less than ten per year in the early 1990s, but it increased to 20-40 per year in the mid-1990s and 40-70 per year in the mid-2000s. The number of journal articles increased to 100-120 per year in 2010-2012, about 130 per year in 2013-2014, and more than 150 in 2015.

As shown in Figure 3, the number of articles by research field from 1991 to 2015 was larger in the order of social issues, economics, business management, and history. During this period, the number of articles on social issues was the largest at 299, while there were 266 articles in economics and business management, and 258 articles in history (including a few philosophical papers). By 2012, the total number of

articles in history was the largest<sup>1</sup>. Recently, as articles related to marriage migration and multiculturalism have soared, the number of articles on the social issues has become the largest. By the field of study, articles in economics showed a sharp increase in 1993 shortly after the establishment of Korea-Vietnam diplomatic relations, and articles of literature and history continuously increased in the 2000s (except in 2008). The number of articles on politics and related issues was about ten per year before the mid-2000s, but it has increased to more than 20 annually in 2014-2015. Since the

<sup>1</sup> The number of papers in history appears to be increased due to the inclusion of researches on the Vietnam War in the field of modern history. Meanwhile, historical papers also ranked first in their number of Vietnamese studies in Japan until the mid-1990s (Shimao & Sakurai, 1999).

Figure 3. Sectoral Proportion of Vietnam-related Articles in Academic Journals in Korea



Source: The author's calculation from the Research Information Sharing Service website (<http://www.riss.kr>)

mid-2000s, the number of articles of social issues has soared, and researches in culture, art, architecture, and civil engineering have also increased. Researches of economics have been increasing especially since the mid-2000s, and researches of business management are gradually increasing. In addition, since the late 2000s, the number of articles in the fields of natural science, agriculture and engineering has been increasing gradually, indicating that the diversification of Vietnamese researches in Korea is expanding.

## 2. Evaluation of research trends

To evaluate the above research trends, we can first concede the quantitative growth of research remarkably. The number of

journal articles published in the 2000s increased from 40-60 per year to 70 in 2007 and more than 100 per year in 2010-2011, indicating the rapid growth of Vietnamese research in Korea. This phenomenon is related to the increase in the number of Vietnam specialists during the late 1990s and the early 2000s, but more importantly, it is the result of many studies by Vietnam observers who have published their researches on Vietnam. In particular, despite the fact that the number of Vietnam specialists in the field of social studies and economics as well as business management has not increased significantly, the large increase in the number of articles in these fields, especially since the mid-2000s,

indicates that many case studies on Vietnam have been published by Vietnam observers. In the field of social issues, researches have been exploding, especially with regard to marriage migrant women. Articles on economics and business management have continued to increase as Korea has expanded its economic cooperation with Vietnam.

The proportion of Vietnam specialists among experts on Southeast Asia in area studies is estimated to be 20%. According to Park Seung-woo's (2013) study, 23% of area specialists on Southeast Asia are experts on Vietnam in Korea. It is possible to estimate the proportion of Vietnamese studies in Southeast Asian studies in general with articles published in the journal *Southeast Asian Studies*, which has been published by the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies, a representative research association on Southeast Asia in Korea. The number of articles related to Vietnam among the articles published in the journal *Southeast Asian Studies* from 1992 to 2015 increased, but the proportion of Vietnamese studies in Southeast Asian studies did not change significantly (16% to 20%) (See Table 3). This is because the journal *Southeast Asian Studies* is one of the main journals in which specialists of Southeast Asian studies present their research results. Therefore, even if the

number of Vietnam specialists increases, its relative proportion in Southeast Asia specialists does not increase rapidly. On the other hand, researchers often publish their articles in the other journals besides the journal *Southeast Asian Studies*. Therefore, there is a limitation in estimating the share of Vietnamese studies in Southeast Asian studies because they cannot be included.

Notably, research papers on Vietnamese economic issues since the mid-1990s, and economic relations between Vietnam and Korea, as well as the business management-related topics of Korean-invested companies in Vietnam have increased since mid-2000s. This has been associated with a surge in economic interests since the diplomatic ties in 1992 and the increase in direct investment into Vietnam by Korean companies. Therefore, in the past, there were many studies on economic issues, but recently, many studies on topics of business management have also been conducted. Another noteworthy point is that the number of researches on social issues in general and marriage migration in particular has increased since the mid-2000s. This is because of the increase in marriage immigrant women from Vietnam to Korea in the 2000s, and the problems of their adaptation to Korean society have become social issues. The practical

**Table 3. Number and proportion of Vietnam-related articles in the journal *Southeast Asian Studies*, 1992-2015**

Year	1992-1995		1996-2000		2001-2005		2006-2010		2011-2015	
Vietnam	9	20%	10	19%	15	16%	15	18%	22	19%
Total	44		52		91		84		118	

*Source:* The author's calculation by information from the website of the journal.

demands of Korean society contributed to the increase of academic research in the fields of economics, business and society. In addition, researches on the Vietnam War, unification, and social integration after the Vietnam's unification have been published steadily, though they have not increased significantly. This was a part of efforts to reconsider the Vietnam War as a participant to the war, and to draw implications from the experience of Vietnam's unification and social integration process. Furthermore, Vietnam-related researches in various fields such as classical literature, modern and contemporary literature, culture, art, architecture, urban construction and natural sciences have increased gradually. This indicates that the diversification of the interest in Vietnam is expanding in various fields.

#### **V. Conclusion**

In contemporary Korea, interest in Vietnam began with political attention from the Korea's deployment of military troops to Vietnam in the mid-1960s. However, the first PhD on Vietnam in Korea was presented in the medical field in 1969-1972. It would be natural that interest in Vietnam became scarce after Vietnam's reunification in 1975. Academic researches on Vietnam restarted in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Since the end of 1986, Vietnam's adoption of the *Doi Moi* reform policy and the normalization of relations between Korea and Vietnam in December 1992 have led to a sharp increase in interest in Vietnam. This interest in Vietnam has led to a boom in Vietnamese studies in Korea, producing many Vietnam

specialists who could be referred as the *Doi Moi* generation during a decade from the second half of the 1990s to the first half of the 2000s. Those specialists are now in the second generation of Vietnam specialists and form the backbone of current Vietnamese studies in Korea. At the same time, deepening of economic cooperation and expansion of human exchange between the two countries have required that practical researches should be carried out to improve the understanding of Vietnamese society. As a result, the researches which were conducted by both Vietnam specialists and Vietnam observers showed a significant increase in the fields of social issues, economics and business management particularly. Vietnamese studies in Korea are also closely related to social environment and change. At the same time, researches conducted by Vietnamese students, studying at graduate schools in Korea, have been increasing.

In the past, researchers on Vietnam have published a number of papers in the economic and social fields, with scholars in political science, history, and anthropology continually presenting their researches. On the other hand, scholars in Korean classical and modern literature as well as contemporary literature have performed comparative studies with Vietnam, and have produced considerable research results. This suggests that practical researches which meet the needs of society are carried out at the same time with other pure academic researches simultaneously.

Despite this quantitative growth, it can be said that there is still not enough depth of

quality of researches on Vietnam and public perception on Vietnam in Korea. Despite the relative short history of Vietnamese studies in Korea, quantitative growth of researches on Vietnam is remarkable, while it is still needed for scholars to improve their quality of researches. Now it is the time to turn to qualitative improvement based on the quantitative growth of researches on Vietnam. In addition, some researchers are already working with the world's academic community, and the future task is also to expand and deepen it □

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