

Culture as an Intervening Variable While Assessing Japanese Influence on Vietnam: 1991-2018

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Abstract : The significance of political and economic factors have barely been neglected while assessing bilateral relations, but the significance of culture as a soft power in Japan-Vietnam relations has largely been understated. While the close ties had their birth ever since the 14th century, this paper sets out with an inductive lens to analyze the role of culture as a variable in bilateral relations. Vietnam, which then had a history of war devastation had taken refuge in Japan and later sought inspiration from Japan's economy with the simultaneous influence of culture since Japan was a developed nation, and Vietnam a third world country. Evidencing facts with illustrations, the paper shows how the twenty-first century has brought a growing bond as well as the onset of stronger ties between the two states based, primarily, on an emerging convergence of interests and culture. The cultural influence of Japan may be seen much in the Vietnamese cities, through evidences like the growing numbers of Japanese items on sale. The variety in cultural influence may be seen through the acceptance of Japanese fashion trends, manga comic, pop music, cuisine, tourism, Japanese studies and language, the translations of Japanese literature which are very much popular at Vietnam. Using secondary sources as well as assessing travel accounts and official websites, this research work will try to find out how much Japanese culture has influenced Vietnam and whether such influences will be strong enough to qualify culture as an intervening variable in the bilateral relations.

Keywords : influence, culture, language, cold war

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