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## Gender issues in Confucian ethics in contemporary Vietnam\*

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**Abstract.** Confucianism like Taoism is a part of the treasury of the world spiritual culture as created by the “axial age” (K. Jaspers); however, time affects even the most humanistic teachings, many of the provisions of which can be formalized, become obsolete, requiring both a “return to the origins” and clarification or reinterpretation and renewal. These processes of both positive and negative nature affected the norms of Confucian ethics in Vietnam. The article aims at examining the gender content of the Vietnamese Confucian ideals and their impact on the contemporary Vietnamese society. Confucian ethics was introduced in Vietnam during the Chinese colonization and had a great influence on both feudalism in general and on the social perception of the woman and her position in the family, determining gender roles and corresponding gender stereotypes for a millennium. The article identifies both general and special features of the gender issues in the Chinese and Vietnamese traditional Confucian ethics. In addition to many negative aspects (such as restraining women’s personal development and limiting their participation in feudal ceremonies), the Vietnamese Confucian ethics regarding women was changed for the better, contributing to the humanization of gender relations. Confucian gender principles continue to have both beneficial and detrimental influence on the Vietnamese society today. The study of the distribution and dynamics of changes in gender roles in the traditional and contemporary Vietnamese society can provide empirical data for gender sociology, as it is hard to analyze gender relations without considering national traditions and culture in general.

**Key words:** gender roles; gender stereotypes; gender sociology; Axial Age; Confucian ethics; contemporary Vietnamese society; division of labor; domestic violence; social status of women

### Gender relations in the Chinese and Vietnamese Confucian ethics

Gender sociology is the theoretical basis for the study of women’s social status at specific stages of social development; it considers social consequences of gender equality and gender symmetry violations. “Gender sociology studies the way culture and social structure mediate physical differences between men and women” [16. P. 519]. We believe that the analysis of the impact of Confucian ethics

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on gender relations in the Vietnamese society can contribute to gender studies. First, this is an ideology of “respecting a man and neglecting a woman”. Vietnamese Confucian ethics descends from the Chinese one, and the ideology of “respecting a man and neglecting a woman” affects moral foundations of the society, defines gender roles, and shapes gender stereotypes. Ngô Thị Nhậm (1746–1803), the Vietnamese politician and writer of the Trịnh Sâm period, “women do household chores while men do social things” [18. P. 152]. In the feudal times, women were ‘objects’ in Vietnamese families — they were treated like children who needed to be mentored: “The child has to be taught from an early age, and the wife has to be taught right after the wedding”. ‘Teaching a wife’ implied teaching a woman to follow the lifestyle of her husband’s family. The concept ‘teaching a wife’ implies that the wife has a lower family position than her husband. For instance, the Later Lê dynasty code of laws known as the Hong Duc Code (15<sup>th</sup> century) states: “The woman shall obey her husband instead of relying upon her parents’ wealth in opposing her husband and his family. If a woman breaches this provision, she and her parents shall bear the liability” [21. P. 152]. In addition, Vietnamese families and clans traditionally considered the birth of a son more preferable: “It is better to give birth to a single son than to ten daughters”.

Second, this is an ideology of ‘three obediences’. According to the gender stereotypes of feudal Confucianism, the woman is to prove ‘three obediences’: at home, she is to obey her father; in marriage, she is to obey her husband; after her husband’s death, she is to obey her son. While staying at her parents’ home, the daughter was to listen to her father, and for women, most marriages depended on their fathers’ will. Women had no right to choose; their lives were like raindrops or grains of sand. The married woman was to obey her husband, to support him wholeheartedly, and to take care of her husband’s family. As the Vietnamese proverb says, “the boat follows the helm, the woman follows her husband” [11. P. 151]. Article 90 of the Hong Duc Code says: “The wife shall respect her husband’s parents and shall not breach her husband’s requirements” [21. P. 147; 9. P. 55]. After her husband’s death, the woman was to remain in his family, bringing up children and taking care of her husband’s parents. According to the Vietnamese saying, “the proper woman does not get married twice” [11. P. 76]. Most women had to live other people’s lives without having any right to choose.

Third, four virtues are declared a feature of the ideal woman. Vietnamese Confucian ethics pays great attention to four woman’s virtues: morality, speech, visage, and works. Works imply being a good housewife and to be able to cook and embroider. In wealthy and powerful families, women were to have developed skills of playing musical instruments and chess, to know poetry, and to draw. Visage means the beauty of appearance, cleanliness, neatness and naturalness as making a woman look noble and modest. Speech plays an important part of communication in the family and society. It is important to speak with husband and his parents in a polite, gentle, disciplined, accurate, educated, and respectful manner. Morality

means kindness, good manners and actions, especially in relations with parents and husband's parents and siblings.

Vietnamese Confucianism, just like its Chinese version, pays particular attention to 'filial piety' and girls' virginity. According to the Vietnamese writer Nguyễn Đình Thiệu (1822–1888), "a man primarily thinks about his filial piety, and a woman thinks about remaining a virgin until marriage". Women who tried to break free from the shackles of the Confucian living principles were ridiculed by the public opinion and severely punished. Those wives who stayed in their late husbands' families until the end of lives without remarrying were awarded by the authorities a kind of certificate of merit for being a "faithful and highly moral wife". Such a woman was named "liệt nữ" — "a woman who remained faithful and pure". Article 297 of the Hong Duc Code of Laws stated that the officials who did not inform the authorities about such women to be rewarded would be punished. Although such a reward was considered a joy for faithful women, it was a sort of constraint for they were deprived of the right to remarry.

### **Particularities of gender relations in the Vietnamese Confucian ethics**

Despite the great influence of the Chinese Confucian ethics, gender relations in the Vietnamese Confucian ethics have some differences due to the fact that "any culture, any foreign ideas could not substitute local culture, and always had to adapt to it" [22. P. 57]. The Vietnamese Confucian ethics shows democratic and progressive thinking by expressing respect and appreciation for women, which increased the woman's status. The specificity of gender relations in the Vietnamese Confucian ethics can be proved by its key behavior principles. First, the Vietnamese Confucian ethics accepts the woman's important role. Thus, in the Chinese feudal Confucian ethics, a husband plays a paramount role, and a wife plays a secondary role, obeying her husband; in Vietnam, a woman is more independent — women and their husbands make a relatively equal contribution to housekeeping. According to the Vietnamese proverbs, "the husband ploughs, the wife sows", "the husband's wealth is his wife's contribution". It is believed that in everyday life women play an important role or even have more power than their husbands: "a husband's word cannot be compared with a wife's word" [12. P. 98], "the wife is in the first place, and God is in the second one" [12. P. 121]. These ideas of the Vietnamese Confucian ethics contributed to opposing the patriarchal ideology which supported men and belittled women's role in the family.

Thus, women not merely give birth and support the genealogical tree, but also play a paramount part in upbringing children: children's personality, morality and talents basically depend on their mother; therefore, in the Vietnamese society, there are such sayings as "the blessed virtue is gained thanks to the mother", "a child is kind and moral thanks to the mother", and "a silly child is his mother's fault" [13. P. 750]. There are evidences of the Vietnamese women's hard work and self-sacrifice while

they raise their children; therefore, the Vietnamese Confucian ethics places wives above husbands in upbringing children: “A natural father cannot be compared with a mother raising children” [12. P. 37]. The wife is always in charge of preparing for religious ceremonies, cooking and housekeeping, and even when an intruder breaks into the house, the woman is ready to fight: “When the enemy comes to your home, even the women should fight”. A good woman is the one who helps her husband unite the family, bring brothers closer together, and make neighbors more united and friendly. If a woman fails to behave this way, she will lose both happiness in her family and her neighbors’ good attitude. In the Vietnamese society, there is a saying: “an angry daughter-in-law makes you lose your relatives; an angry dog makes you lose your neighbors” [12. P. 61].

According to the Vietnamese Confucian ethics, while creating a family and making a career, a man always needs his wife’s efficient support, and marriage is considered a paramount step in life: “buying a buffalo, getting married, and building a house are the most difficult tasks for the man” [12. P. 140]. Getting married and creating a family raises a man’s status to the ‘head of the family’.

In the feudal society, due to the specificity of agricultural works with multiple stages of back-breaking labor, the wife was an efficient assistant, a friend, a spiritual support and advisor for her husband in many situations, which is confirmed by the following sayings: “when husband and wife agree, they can dry up the East Sea” [12. P. 148]; “to work in the field, you need a buffalo; to get prosperous, you need a wife” [19. P. 231]; “in times of trouble, the family needs a good wife, and in tumultuous years, the country needs a good general” [19. P. 233]. Many wives sacrifice themselves for their husbands’ success, doing various jobs so that their husbands could study well and pass the qualification exams. Moreover, Vietnam often suffered from foreign invasions: when men were forced to go to war, their wives became breadwinners, replacing their husbands and doing all their jobs.

The woman’s high status is also reflected in the filial piety to mothers. According to the Chinese Confucian ethics, “a child should be respectful to his father”, while the Vietnamese Confucian ethics requires that children are respectful to both fathers and mothers. In Vietnam, there is a saying: “The fatherly immense toil is as big as Thai Son mountain; the constant motherly devotion is similar to the stream of water flowing out from a spring”. The Chinese Confucian ethics emphasizes the husband’s supreme role, while the Vietnamese one stresses a greater gender equality [3. P. 36], recommending men to respect women and to live with them faithfully and showing their devotion.

Second, there are gender issues in dividing property and inheritance. When the Emperor Le Loi ascended the throne in 1429, he introduced the “system of equal fields” (regular allocation of village arable lands to community members), according to which even concubines of officials, widows, wives and children of criminals were given arable lands. The Hong Duc Law of 1483 stipulated that daughter and son had equal rights for family property, and after marriage, that part of the wife’s

property could not be transferred to her husband's family. This rule allowed wives to have some freedom in their husbands' families. In the family without sons, the daughter inherits fields, runs a home, and is in charge of the ancestors' cult. Article 391 of the Hong Duc Law says: "Both sons and daughters shall have the right to use their deceased parents' lands. If there are no sons, daughters shall be engaged in the rites of commemorating their parents" [20. P. 232]; "If there is an eldest son in the family, he shall inherit the lands for the cult of ancestors; if there is no son in the family, the lands shall be transferred to the eldest daughter for the cult of ancestors" [15. P. 153]. In his book *Law and Society in 17th and 18th Century Vietnam*, Insun Yu writes: "According to the Vietnamese custom, if a woman gets married, she does not separate from her parents and does not transfer her property and herself into her husband's full possession. Women remain members of their parents' families... Even the property received after marriage is transferred to the wife's family if there are no children in the marriage" [4. P. 167].

Third, in marriage relations, the feudal Vietnamese legislation also stipulated some ways to protect women's rights. Article 322 of the Hong Duc Law says: "A bride shall have the right to refuse to marry before the families' final agreement if the bridegroom gets an incurable illness, commits a crime, or his property is devastated. To do this, the bride must inform the local official about this fact for the final decision and give the dowry or gifts to the bridegroom's family. If the bride commits a crime or gets an incurable illness before the final families' agreement, the dowry shall not be returned to the husband's family. Those who breach the provisions of this article shall be subject to physical punishment by caning and beaten 80 times" [15. P. 130]. In fact, the woman had the right to refuse marriage or could divorce if she considered her bridegroom or husband unworthy. Article 308 of the Hong Duc Law states: "If the husband leaves his wife for five months, the wife shall have the right to divorce, and if the ex-husband attempts to prevent his wife from getting remarried, he shall be punished" [15. P. 127]. These articles show that the legislators accepted the women's important role in the Vietnamese society.

The Chinese Confucian ethics allows a man to divorce his wife for seven reasons: 1) no children; 2) unchastity; 3) disrespect to her mother-in-law; 4) verbosity; 5) theft; 6) jealousy; 7) incurable illness. The Vietnamese ethics decreases the rigidity and severity of gender roles as the Hong Duc Code limits the men's right to divorce [24. P. 113]. Feudal laws also introduced for punishments for those who offended women. The Emperor Gia Long's Code (Article 17, Item 268) declares that anyone who harasses a woman with vulgar and obscene words must be punished. Paragraph 268 of Article 12 adds: if someone utters vulgar and obscene words unintentionally, and a woman is so shocked that kills herself, this someone shall be punished by caning.

The above examples prove the respect for women as ensured by some feudal rules. According to the culturologist Trần Quốc Vương, the feudal Vietnamese society maintained and inherited an understanding of the crucial role of women

in the family and society. Therefore, the Vietnamese Confucian ethics aimed at protecting women's rights, the Vietnamese family, kin and tribal system. Women's position in the traditional Vietnamese society was based on the Chinese Confucian ethical ideas, but in the Vietnamese Confucian ethics they significantly changed: "interpretation of the fundamental moral categories of Confucianism were reconsidered, and a new system of ideas largely differed from the previous structure was introduced" [8. P. 38]. This transformation had a progressive impact and was intended to encourage women's creativity. These changes were not accidental — they were caused by a number of objective factors.

### **Causes of gender humanization of the Vietnamese Confucian ethics**

Although women's positions in the Vietnamese Confucian ethics followed the ideas of Chinese Confucianism, they were somewhat modified in accordance with the Vietnamese national customs: in Vietnam, Confucianism took a shape that "complied with the pragmatic nature of the Vietnamese and their thinking which refused to accept recondite things" [1. P. 51].

Such changes were caused by the following reasons: first, since the ancient times, the Vietnamese had a tradition of respecting women, which is expressed in worshipping the woman-mother as the supreme deity. Every Vietnamese knows the legend of the ancestors' origin, i.e. the mother Au Ko and the father Lạc Long Quân, who were the nation's progenitors. In all the three regions of Vietnam (northern, central and southern), there is a sacred custom of worshipping mothers. Fairy tales, folk songs and proverbs prove respect to the Vietnamese woman. In addition, since the ancient times, Vietnamese women from all social strata have taken an active part in the political, cultural and social life. The national history and culture honors and remembers even the women of plain countryfolk descent, such as Tú Xương, Sương Nguyệt Anh etc., together with such princesses as Hoàng Thiệu Hoa (Hùng Vương epoch), An Tu (Emperor Trần Nhân Tông epoch), Huyền Trân (late 13<sup>th</sup> — early 14<sup>th</sup> century), concubine Nguyễn Thị Bích Thieu (Emperor Trần Duệ Tông epoch), princess Ngọc Hân (1700–1799), etc. Many female generals took part in governing the country and people: for instance, the Empresses Dowagers Dương Vân Nga (924–1000) and Lin Nyan successfully countered enemy raids and were ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of peace. Triệu Thị Trinh (225–248), Bùi Thị Xuân (1752–1802), and many other heroines left their mark in the history of Vietnam and won the hearts of the Vietnamese. Their outstanding talents, virtues and self-sacrifice raised the Vietnamese women's dignity to the level of the saints: they are regarded as symbols of heroism in the history of Vietnam. It was exactly the Vietnamese women's noble beauty that changed the gender concept in the Vietnamese Confucian ethics.

Second, Vietnam went through many wars, and women had to replace men in agricultural works, constructing dams to prevent floods, working with rivers to combat drought, and to raise children, worship ancestors and produce supplies

for the front. According to the saying: “In the sacred mountains and rivers, in the deep bowels of every human soul, mother is the highest value” [3. P. 36–37]. The Vietnamese family structure also differs from the Chinese one: in Vietnam, most large and small peasant families share the same house (from three to four generations under the same roof). Farmers’ families need workforce; therefore, husbands’ and wives’ statuses became equal.

Third, changing the women’s status in the Vietnamese ethics was a way of opposing Chinese Confucianism, since “spreading Confucianism in Vietnam was one of the essential tasks of the Chinese court. It was undertaken to unify the country and to achieve political and ideological assimilation” [14. P. 82]. Confucianism brought to Vietnam was regarded by the aristocratic class as a governing tool. Chinese Confucianism stipulated a social hierarchy, in which the lower social strata was to obey the higher strata, and a wife had to obey her husband. Chinese Confucianism implied the ideas of respect to men and fathers and of neglect of women, while the Vietnamese cultural traditions always implied respect to mothers. However, due to the national character and behavior characterized by complaisance, flexibility and tolerance, the Vietnamese society, on the one hand, accepted the Confucian idea of “respecting men and neglecting women”, and, on the other hand, silently resisted it — did not follow the rule of the wife’s total subordination to her husband, did not follow the concept of ‘three obediences’ as a model for the wife’s family behavior. The Vietnamese found a rational way — the “equal agreement” between husbands and wives [7. P. 214]. Thus, in Vietnam, Confucian ethics “acquired a moderate, relatively free and pragmatic nature, ceasing to be mechanical and dogmatic” [23. P. 10]; its reform aimed at achieving a gender balance.

### **Confucian Ethics in the contemporary Vietnamese society**

Today echoes of Confucian ethics persist in the gender role distribution, customs, traditions and other relations in various spheres of life. This influence can be either positive or negative. Let us first consider the negative impact — on employment and the division of labor. Thus, one of the negative consequences of Confucian ethics for the Vietnamese women is that it still limits women’s chances to take part in public life. In families, women still suffer from the ideology of “respecting men and neglecting women” as “women can only be allowed to do household chores”. Many husbands, regardless of their achievements, are reluctant to let their wives surpass them in education or social status. According to the International Labor Organization’s 2021 Report *Gender and the Labor Market in Vietnam*, women spend twice as many hours doing housework (20.2 hours a week) as men (10.7); almost 20 % of men do not help around the house at all [2].

The role of women is still underestimated, and professional discrimination has not yet been eliminated. In such spheres as mechanics, construction, information technologies, etc., mainly men are employed. Among 200 members of the Central

Committee of the Party of the 13<sup>th</sup> Convocation (2021), there are only 19 female deputies (9.5 %). In the party committees at all levels, the share of women is 20.8 %; at the superior levels — up to 17.4 %; in the government central party committees — 15.73 %. In the elected authorities, the share of female deputies of the National Assembly of the 15<sup>th</sup> Convocation (2021–2026) is 30.26 %; in the People’s Council at the provinces’ level (2021–2026) — 29 %; at the district level — 29.8 %. In the public administration structures at the central and local levels, by late July 2020, the share of ministries, ministerial and state departments headed by women reached 36.6 %. Thereby, Vietnam set the following goal to be reached by 2030: “Female employees shall be included in the standing committees and party organizations at all levels. The share of women among members at all the levels shall range from 20 % to 25 %, and the share of female deputies in the National Assembly and People’s Councils at all the levels shall exceed 35 %” [6. P. 60].

There is also gender imbalance in birth rate and domestic violence. Since 2007, the National Population and Family Planning Program has implemented a campaign under such slogans as “Two children are enough to raise them well” and “It does not matter whether you have a daughter or a son, two is enough”. However, today many families can choose the sex of their children before their birth; therefore, in Vietnam, the birth rate of three or four children is high, especially in families with girls born first. The reason is that the Vietnamese society is still negatively affected by the idea of respecting men and neglecting women: “ten daughters cannot be compared to one son”. Many Vietnamese still believe that the man is the family’s breadwinner, and he is responsible for inheritance and ancestors’ worship. In most clans, the sons’ names are carved in stone (as a sort of a family tree), and some money is paid for this rite. Daughters do not have such a right: according to the tradition, they join their husbands’ families after getting married; therefore, this sacred rite is not for them.

This belief is deeply rooted in the traditional Vietnamese worldview and lifestyle for generations, which is one of the basic reasons for gender imbalance in birth rate. The results of the 2019 Population and Housing Census in Vietnam revealed the birth sex ratio of 111.5 boys per 100 girls; in some provinces, the birth sex ratio reaches 120 boys per 100 girls, while the ‘natural’ ratio is 105 boys per 100 girls. According to the world statistical data, Vietnam ranks third in the birth rate of boys compared to girls after China and India. In 2020, this number reached 112.1 boys per 100 girls. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) State of World Population Report (2020) mentions that Vietnam will miss 45900 newborn girls per year. This fact will not only seriously affect women’s health and work but will also lead to the situation when women would be forced to marry at an early age; in addition, this fact can result in an increase in prostitution and trafficking. The gender inequality can have a serious impact on the social-economic situation in Vietnam.

For years, Vietnam has paid great attention to the struggle against domestic violence, which is stipulated by the Constitution, Law on Marriage and Family, Law on Child Protection, Care and Education, Civil Code, and especially the

Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence adopted in 2007. These documents have brought many positive changes in preventing domestic violence. However, in many regions, especially in the countryside, women still suffer from injustice and inequality. One can ask: if society develops and people's intellectual level improves why do cases of gender violence still take place? Apparently, one of the basic reasons for this extreme gender inequality is an ideology favoring men and neglecting women. One of the features of domestic violence is that many women accept or passively react to violence and discrimination in their families. They are afraid of public opinion, unaware of the laws, and strive to have a peaceful family; thereby, they do not turn to legislation for assistance, feeling too embarrassed to share this problem and believing that patience is the right way. According to the 2021 Vietnam Gender Equality Survey Report, up to 90.4 % of women physically and sexually abused by husbands did not ask the authorities for support.

The negative ideas of Confucian ethics determine a passive and dependent psychology, which prevents the development of modern and fair gender relations. The Confucian ethical thought which emphasizes women's responsibility for the family, elderly parents, husband, children, etc., has its roots in women's consciousness, habits and lifestyle inherited from the previous generations. Many Vietnamese women still have the "works–speech–visage–morality" attitude and do not struggle for their role in the family and society, fearing a more open-minded lifestyle. Women are satisfied with household chores and family care, consider these functions their sacred duties, and see their husbands' and children's success as their own. This is why, at the beginning of their marital life, many women voluntarily quit their jobs to stay at home and to take care of the family. When their family needs to solve a problem, they take time off from work to stay at home. The burdens of family care deprive women of free time, reducing their opportunities for rest, entertainment and even healthcare. As a rule, the husband has one to two hours for lunch and some time to relax in the evening, while the wife spends the lunch break on household chores and on taking care of her children.

The Confucian ethics' idea of respecting men and neglecting women also determines the discrimination of daughters in upbringing, which persists in some families, especially in the countryside, remote and isolated regions with harsh living conditions and limited educational opportunities. Such families sincerely believe that daughters are only for the future marriage — they join the husband's family, while sons will take care of parents in the future. Hence, when rural families have to choose between a son's and a daughter's education, the son is their priority. The limited educational opportunities mean that women have fewer chances for self-improvement, achievements, good jobs and gender balance in the family and society. In today's Vietnamese society, most girls have their fathers' last names, which is regarded as normal; if they take their mothers' last names, the family and society would consider it abnormal and contradicting the religious principles, which can arouse suspicions that the child is not theirs.

However, Confucian ethics has a positive impact on upbringing, family-life patterns and social stability. Women are regarded as “keepers of the family hearth”; therefore, they play an important role in family happiness. The positive aspects of “three obediences and four virtues” lead to the fact that from birth to marriage, parents teach daughters such things as neatness, politeness, etiquette, respect to the elders, etc., which for generations has contributed to creating stable happy families. In addition, Vietnamese women as influenced by the positive aspects of this ethics are faithful, devoted and loving until the end of their days. The image of the Vietnamese woman is described in an outstanding way in the fairy tale *The Life Story of the Vong Phu Stone*, the most touching symbol of the wife’s fidelity to her husband.

Nevertheless, the women’s position in the feudal epoch was humiliating. Yet, despite life hardships, the Vietnamese woman always stayed faithful to her husband and full of gratitude. All women’s thoughts, sentiments and energy aimed at keeping their families happy. Permanent wars for the country’s independence forced Vietnamese men to leave their native lands and go to the frontline. All the household chores, family hardships and keeping up traditions were the burden on the Vietnamese women’s small and fragile shoulders.

It is faithfulness that is the main feature of the relationship between husband and wife as stipulated in the *Criteria for Good Behavior in the Family* introduced by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam. According to the statistical data for 2019, the divorce rate in Vietnam hardly reached 2.1 % despite the negative impact of the market economy, threatening the stability of marriage and family.

In the contemporary Vietnamese society, the woman’s image can be described in four words: confidence — self-esteem — faithfulness — virtue. In addition to maternal duties, women efficiently participate in public life: “she is good in public affairs; she is good in home routines too”. In recent decades, Vietnam has made significant progress in the social-economic development; thereby, we should not ignore the role of women who account for 50.2 % of the population and 47.3 % of the workforce. The survey results show that Vietnam is one of the 20 favorable development markets for female entrepreneurs and has the most effective network of female entrepreneurs in ASEAN. According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment of late September 2019, there were almost 285.7 thousand enterprises owned by women (24 % of enterprises in the country) [10]. The Results of the surveys at the enterprises in 63 provinces and towns in Vietnam show (according to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry) that enterprises owned by women achieve better business results than those headed by men. The rate on return for women-owned businesses is 64 %, for men-owned ones — 63 %. 68.6 % of women on leadership positions have bachelor’s or master’s degree in business administration (71.9 % of men) [17]. In 2020, despite the pandemic consequences, the role of women in the social-economic development of Vietnam was impressive. According to the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2020 (based on the analysis of 26.5 %

of women-owned businesses), Vietnam ranks 9<sup>th</sup> of 58 countries in the number of women on leadership positions [25. P. 54].

Many women were awarded honorary titles in healthcare, education, culture, journalism, sports, etc.; many became role models, especially in education. According to the General Statistical Office, in 2019, the share of the female workforce with the university vocational and technical training was 11.3 % (men — 10.1 %). The number of female scientists keeps growing: in 2015–2020, the number of women awarded the title of associate professor increased by more than 2.6 times, the title of professor — by 1.6 times.

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## Гендерные проблемы конфуцианской этики в современном вьетнамском обществе\*

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**Аннотация.** Конфуцианство, как и даосизм, входит в сокровищницу мировой духовной культуры, порожденной «осевым временем» (К. Ясперс). Однако время накладывает отпечаток даже на самые гуманистические учения, многие положения которых могут постепенно формализовываться, устаревать, требуя как «возвращения к истокам» и очищения, так и реинтерпретации и обновления. Эти процессы в их положительной и отрицательной динамике затронули и положения конфуцианской этики во Вьетнаме. В статье представлены результаты гендерного анализа вьетнамской конфуцианской этики и оценки ее влияния на современное вьетнамское общество. Конфуцианская этика внедрялась во Вьетнаме во время китайской колонизации и оказала большое влияние как на феодализм в целом, так и на отношение общества к женщине и ее положение в семье, на тысячелетие определив гендерные роли и соответствующие стереотипы. В статье обозначены общие и особенные черты гендерной проблематики в китайской и вьетнамской традиционной конфуцианской этике. Признавая множество негативных аспектов вьетнамской конфуцианской этики в отношении женщин (сковывание феодальными нормами и сдерживание личного развития), авторы показывают, что со временем эта этическая концепция была положительным образом преобразована, что способствовало гуманизации гендерных отношений. В настоящее время гендерное содержание конфуцианской этики продолжает оказывать влияние на вьетнамское общество — как положительное, так и отрицательное. Изучение распределения и динамики гендерных ролей в традиционном и современном вьетнамском обществе может предоставить интересный эмпирический материал гендерной социологии, поскольку в гендерном анализе невозможно не учитывать традиции и культуру народа.

**Ключевые слова:** гендерные роли; гендерные стереотипы; гендерная социология; осевое время; конфуцианская этика; современное вьетнамское общество; разделение труда; домашнее насилие, социальное положение женщины

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