

Ho Chi Minh Thought on Economics and Its Application to Tourism Development in Phu Quoc City Today



Hoang Thi My Nhan

University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam Ph.D. Candidate, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on studying President Ho Chi Minh's perspectives on various aspects including: the role and objectives of economics; policies and solutions for economic development. By applying Ho Chi Minh thought, based on analyzing the current state of tourism in Phu Quoc City, the author proposes several solutions to develop the tourism industry in this region.

KEYWORDS: Economics, Ho Chi Minh thought, Phu Quoc, Tourism, Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ho Chi Minh thought on economics holds a special position and significance for Vietnam in general and local regions in particular. Phu Quoc City, with its pristine beauty and immense tourism potential, has become an attractive destination for tourists from around the world. In the current context, applying Ho Chi Minh thought on economics is an effective method to promote sustainable tourism development in Phu Quoc. This article will delve into the contents of President Ho Chi Minh thought on economics and their application to developing Phu Quoc's tourism industry today.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The article is based on the worldview and methodology of Marxism-Leninism, specifically dialectical materialism and historical materialism. At the same time, the article is also based on Ho Chi Minh's significant economic viewpoints. The main research methods employed in this article are historical and logical methods. In addition, the article also uses other methods such as analysis, synthesis, deduction...

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. Ho Chi Minh thought on economics

3.1.1. Roles and objectives of economic development

In Ho Chi Minh thought, economics holds a crucial position and role in nation-building alongside politics, culture and society. Economic development is considered the most important task. This was expressed in his article "Thirty Years of Party Activities" published in "Peace and Socialism Issues" journal. He affirmed that the most significant characteristic of our country during the transition period was progressing directly from a backward agricultural country to socialism without going through the capitalist development stage. "Therefore, our most important task is to build the material and technical foundation of socialism... with modern industry and agriculture, advanced culture and science. In the process of socialist revolution, we must transform the old economy and build a new economy, with building being the key and long-term task" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 12, page 412).

Economics plays such an important role because of its objectives in national development. Stemming from the people-centered ideology, Ho Chi Minh believed that economic development serves the people, specifically improving people's lives. This is both an objective and a measure of the correctness and value of each economic policy and measure. Because when the people are wealthy, the nation is strong. The improvement in people's living standards is the most accurate reflection of national development. In his speech at the Fifth Conference of the 3rd Party Central Executive Committee, he affirmed: "All guidelines, principles and policies... of the Party are aimed at improving people's lives" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 13, page 164). He compared people's living standards and production to boats and water, stating "when water rises, boats rise. Only when our production and economy develop can everyone's life improve" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 10, page 562). He believed that boosting production and developing the economy was to "make the poor have enough to eat. Those who have enough to eat become moderately wealthy. Those who are moderately wealthy become wealthier" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 5, page 81).

Ho Chi Minh Thought on Economics and Its Application to Tourism Development in Phu Quoc City Today

Thus, in Ho Chi Minh thought, economics plays an exceptionally important role in nation-building and development. The objective of economic development is to improve people's lives, aiming for the well-being of the people.

3.1.2. Policies and solutions for economic development

Stemming from the position, role and importance of economics in national development, President Ho Chi Minh proposed numerous policies and solutions to develop the national economy.

Firstly, focusing on construction of a rational economic structure During his lifetime, Ho Chi Minh paid great attention to building the country's economic structure. He emphasized two main economic sectors: agriculture and industry: "Industry and agriculture are two legs of the economy" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 13, page 375). Since Vietnam's starting point was an agricultural country, agriculture needed to be the primary sector in the immediate term. However, agriculture could only develop strongly when we know how to use machinery widely, meaning "we must expand industries that produce machines, iron, steel, coal, oil... That is the path we must take: The path of industrializing our country" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 12, page 445). "When industry develops, agriculture can develop. Therefore, industry and agriculture must help each other and develop together, like two strong legs walking evenly will progress quickly and rapidly reach the goal" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 13, page 376).

Along with agriculture and industry, Ho Chi Minh also affirmed the role of commerce in our country's economic structure: "We must understand clearly that the national economy has three important aspects: agriculture, industry and commerce. These three aspects are closely related. Commerce is the intermediate link closely connecting agriculture with industry. If the commerce link breaks, agriculture cannot be connected with industry and the worker-farmer alliance cannot be consolidated. If commerce activities do not run smoothly, agricultural and industrial activities will become disconnected" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 10, page 335).

Secondly, economic development must implement social justice in production, management and distribution

President Ho Chi Minh once advised: "Don't fear scarcity, only fear inequality; Don't fear poverty, only fear people's unrest" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 15, page 224). He believed that our previous society had injustice between exploiters and the exploited, with that society full of inequality. Therefore, economic development must ensure fairness and equality among social classes and strata. "To advance to socialism means transforming the old society into a new one, a society without exploitation, an equal society where everyone must work and has the right to work, those who work more enjoy more, those who work less enjoy less, those who don't work don't enjoy" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 11, page 241).

Implementing social justice must also focus on wages. This is the measure of labor value that workers contribute. Wages being high or low depends on conditions, qualifications, job positions, and work effectiveness, with no wages for non-workers: "Factory workers, mental and manual laborers all receive wages. Wages follow one's labor power, depending on production levels and quality. Good work, more work: Enjoy more; poor work, less work: Enjoy less, sometimes having to compensate the State. The government does not pay wages to idle people" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 10, page 534).

In order to better implement social justice and improve economic efficiency, Ho Chi Minh pointed out a very necessary tool: product contracting. Product contracting in socio-economic development was one of President Ho Chi Minh's favorite policies. He stated: "The contracting system is a condition of socialism; it encourages workers to always progress, for factories to progress. Contracting benefits both the collective and the individual. Workers producing more fabric, making more effort, enjoy more benefits; good contracting is suitable and fair under our current system. If any worker lacks a sense of responsibility or labor discipline, they might work quickly but not well; this is incorrect, and contracting must increase quantity while always maintaining quality" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 10, pages 537-538).

Thus, social justice in economic development is the driving force to promote the potential and strength of individuals and collectives in labor and production, creating conditions for everyone to continuously improve their living standards and self-affirmation. This is also a decisive factor in the country's economic development effectiveness.

Thirdly, practicing thrift, combating embezzlement and waste in economic development

According to Ho Chi Minh, economic development and increased production must go hand in hand with thrift practice. This includes thrift in production, consumption, materials, time, and labor. "Everything must be economized; increased production without thrift is meaningless. Thrift without increased production leaves nothing to save" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 7, page 432). He affirmed that building socialism requires increased production coupled with thrift: "Production without thrift is like wind entering an empty house" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 13, page 70).

In his article Must Know How to Spend, published in Nhan Dan newspaper, issue 2147, February 3, 1960, he emphasized: "As masters of society, we need to carefully consider and calculate. We must make every effort to reserve capital for expanding production and building industry. Moreover, in production spending, we must know how to concentrate capital on the most important sectors such as: iron, steel, electricity, coal, mechanics... Because only when these sectors expand can other sectors advance.

In order to reserve sufficient capital for national industrialization, each sector and locality must practice utmost thrift in spending. Workers, civil servants, and cadres must continuously innovate, increase labor productivity, save raw materials, maintain

Ho Chi Minh Thought on Economics and Its Application to Tourism Development in Phu Quoc City Today

machinery and equipment... This way, we spend less but produce more, while reserving additional capital for national industrialization" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 12, pages 464-465).

According to him, thrift is the path to building people's happiness. He compared thrift and increased production to the left and right hands of happiness: "Increased production and thrift practice are the path to successfully building socialism and creating happiness for the people. Production increase is the right hand of happiness, thrift is the left hand of happiness" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 14, page 311).

Along with thrift practice, it is necessary to combat corruption, waste, and bureaucracy. According to him, these are "internal enemies," "enemies within," more dangerous than foreign invaders. He stated: "True, the state's spending regime is a 'constraint', but it is a very necessary and beneficial constraint. It constrains those who are wasteful and those who like to show off. It constrains those who only see immediate tasks but not long-term ones, who only see their department's work but not the country's common work. But thanks to this, it breaks chains and adds wings for our economy to advance like a divine horse on the path to socialism. It helps us save every penny to form large capital. It seals holes and gaps, preventing our saved resources from being depleted and scattered. Only this way can we concentrate most of the state's capital on socialist industrialization" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 12, pages 466-467).

He pointed out very specific examples of corruption and embezzlement. "A harmful practice that must be fought is speculation and hoarding. The Party, Government, and trade provide goods to the people, but some goods do not reach the people and are exploited by speculators, such as fabric, Western medicine, etc. There are medicines that trade sells for VND 500 per pill but speculators sell for VND 2,500. They are truly exploiting sick compatriots to get rich, which is very objectionable. To fight speculators, it's not just police, commerce, and trade, but all cadres, workers, and people must fight together, because cadres and people have millions of ears and eyes to ensure goods reach the people" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 10, page 585).

Thus, according to Ho Chi Minh, practicing thrift and combating waste is an important economic driver for the country.

Fourthly, implementing State administrative reform

Administrative reform holds crucial significance in national development, serving as an economic driver and a solution for conserving manpower and material resources. According to Ho Chi Minh, the State administrative system must continuously evolve to meet practical requirements. This administration must ensure a "people-oriented" nature, meaning it should be of the people, by the people, and for the people: "The policies of the Party and Government must take utmost care of people's lives. If people are hungry, the Party and Government are at fault; if people are cold, the Party and Government are at fault; if people are illiterate, the Party and Government are at fault; if people are sick, the Party and Government are at fault" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 9, page 518).

The larger the administrative apparatus grows, the greater burden it places on the State budget. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh argued that administration must be streamlined and effective from central to local levels. In his speech at the First National Army Supply Conference in 1952, he clearly stated: "The supply organization itself is still cumbersome and overstaffed; it must be arranged neatly and rationally, with everyone having practical work. Surplus personnel must be transferred to where they are needed, and those who remain must compete to increase their productivity. This is *tin h gian* (streamlining) - '*tin h*' means productivity increases, work is done quickly and well; '*gian*' means appropriate, not cumbersome, avoiding formality" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 7, page 432). Ho Chi Minh pointed out that this streamlining must be carried out in the whole political system, not only in administrative agencies. In his talk on "Practicing thrift, combating embezzlement, waste and bureaucracy" in March 1952, he affirmed: "Government and social organizations, economic agencies, and committees need to increase productivity and reduce staff numbers (streamlining)... Whatever it takes, ways must be found to reorganize agencies' personnel" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 7, page 367).

The bulkiness of the public apparatus often stems from officials working "without organizational mindset." Therefore, he required: "Organization must be neat. The duties of each department and individual must be clearly defined. Leadership at all levels must provide regular assistance and supervision, and must maintain strict inspection" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 8, page 132). The administrative staff must possess loyalty, revolutionary ethics, qualifications, expertise, and good administrative skills. Moreover, leaders must know how to "use people like using wood," knowing how to remove corrupt officials, place people according to their strengths, and combine different types of officials to complement each other. Only then can a streamlined apparatus still operate effectively.

Fifthly, it is necessary to mobilize domestic and international resources

In order to develop the country in general and the economy in particular, it is necessary to mobilize domestic resources. In particular, mobilizing the strength of the whole people according to Ho Chi Minh is the most important, stemming from the role and importance of the people as both the objective and driving force of the economy: "The people are very skillful, very enthusiastic, very heroic. Therefore, we must learn from the people, must ask the people, must understand the people... When people are united, anything can be accomplished. Without people's support, nothing can succeed" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 5, page 333). Consequently, he demanded: "We must use all the people's strength, talent, and resources for the people... must help our compatriots, plan for our compatriots how to spend less and gain more" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 5, pages 75-76)

Ho Chi Minh Thought on Economics and Its Application to Tourism Development in Phu Quoc City Today

so that everyone can contribute their full talents to society. The state needs to create all conditions to encourage and promote enthusiastic participation of all citizens in the economy, bringing wealth to themselves, their families, and the entire society.

Along with mobilizing domestic strength, Ho Chi Minh placed great emphasis on international cooperation in developing the national economy. In his Appeal to the United Nations in 1946, he stated clearly: "Vietnam welcomes favorable reception of investment from foreign capitalists and technicians in all its industrial sectors. Vietnam is ready to expand its ports, airports, and transportation routes for international trade and transit. Vietnam agrees to participate in all international economic cooperation organizations under the leadership of the United Nations" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 4, page 523). In 1949, when an American journalist asked President Ho Chi Minh whether an independent Vietnam would welcome foreign capital, he affirmed: "Any country (including France) that sincerely wants to bring capital to invest in Vietnam, with the purpose of benefiting both sides, will be very welcome" (Ho Chi Minh: Complete Works, Volume 6, page 145).

Thus, President Ho Chi Minh held very correct economic development viewpoints that were appropriate to Vietnam's social reality. These viewpoints have both theoretical value and practical significance, providing direction for the development of Vietnam's economy during the transition period to socialism.

3.2. Application of Ho Chi Minh Thought on Economics to Tourism Development in Phu Quoc City Today

3.2.1. Current situation of Phu Quoc tourism industry

Phu Quoc's tourism industry has achieved significant progress in recent years, marked by increasing tourist arrivals, improved infrastructure development, diversified tourism products, and growing revenue contribution to the provincial economy...

In 2016, there were only 1.5 million tourist arrivals to Phu Quoc, but by 2022, this number increased to more than 4.7 million visitors, and in 2023, Phu Quoc welcomed 5.4 million tourists for sightseeing, tourism, and recreation... Along with this growth, the proportion of international visitors to Phu Quoc compared to the whole country also increased significantly. In 2016, Phu Quoc received less than 200,000 international visitors (below 2% of the national total), in 2017 it welcomed nearly 319,000 visitors (accounting for 2.47% of the national total), in 2018 it received over 543,000 visitors (accounting for 3.5% of the national total), in 2019 it welcomed nearly 672,000 visitors (accounting for 3.73% of the national total), in 2022 it received 191,000 visitors (accounting for 5.22% of the national total), and in 2023, Phu Quoc welcomed 521,332 visitors.

In recent years, Phu Quoc has attracted investment from many major domestic and international corporations and brands such as: Vingroup, SunGroup, BIM, Sheraton, Movenpick, CEO, Pullman, Wyndham, IHG, Crowne Plaza, Melia, Dusit International... Many tourism projects, world-class entertainment areas have been effectively put into operation, such as: Safari wildlife park, VinWonder park, Grand World sleepless city, An Thoi - Hon Thom cable car, Asia's leading water park 2020 - Aquatopia Water Park... along with a system of high-end resorts.

The number of visitors to Phu Quoc increases year after year, resulting in growing tourism revenue. In 2023, Phu Quoc's total tourism revenue reached over VND 13,928 billion, accounting for more than 85% of Kien Giang province's total tourism-service revenue, increasing 92.5% compared to the previous year, exceeding the plan by 21.1%.

The average annual growth rate from tourism activities of Phu Quoc City in 2011 – 2023 period reached approximately 20-30%, with production value growth rate exceeding 38% per year, six times higher than the national average. Phu Quoc's tourism-service sector accounts for 70% of Phu Quoc's production value structure and provides employment for about 70% of the local population (13).

Besides these outstanding achievements, Phu Quoc's tourism industry has faced certain limitations such as: Low business operation efficiency, inadequate tourism service quality; few long-staying and international guests; although expanded, tourism products remain monotonous; limited quality of human resources for the tourism industry; tourism development hasn't considered sustainable effectiveness; lack of competitive products and insufficient tourist attraction.

Unplanned and excessive investment is causing Phu Quoc to lose its inherent natural beauty, with natural landscapes gradually disappearing. The coastline is enclosed by resorts. There is a shortage of public beaches. Existing residential and tourism areas are mainly spontaneously built, lacking unified regulations; roads and traffic areas are encroached upon and narrow. There are no coastal roads. Wastewater and waste are increasingly widespread.

The qualifications and professional expertise of human resources serving the tourism industry are both insufficient and weak, failing to meet Phu Quoc's tourism development requirements.

The awareness of tourism development among some local residents remains limited. Local service prices are unstable. Tourist harassment and overcharging in restaurants and eateries... still occurs in many places.

Interdisciplinary coordination has not been effective. The roles and responsibilities of various levels and sectors have not been fully promoted. The effectiveness of investment attraction and promotion activities is not high, not commensurate with the potential and advantages. Communication and promotion of Phu Quoc's tourism image to tourists have not achieved high results.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh in his speech at the Conference on reviewing Decision No. 178/2004/QĐ/TTg on the overall development of Phu Quoc Island, Kien Giang province until 2010, with a vision to 2020 on March 31, 2024 affirmed: Phu Quoc has developed remarkably, strongly and become a leading tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors.

Ho Chi Minh Thought on Economics and Its Application to Tourism Development in Phu Quoc City Today

Reassessing Phu Quoc's potential, to date Phu Quoc has many improvements, including: enhanced capabilities, more synchronized strategic infrastructure development; the role, prestige and position of Phu Quoc are also superior to other destinations. Favorable opportunities for Phu Quoc have increased. However, along with that, Phu Quoc still faces many difficulties and challenges such as: development not matching its potential, rapid but unsustainable development in many aspects, untapped potential, limited policy mechanisms, environmental and human resource challenges...

3.2.2. Some solutions to develop the tourism industry in Phu Quoc

Firstly, building infrastructure and technical facilities for tourism development

Regarding infrastructure: Complete the construction of infrastructure in the fields: transportation facilities, electrical systems, clean water supply and environmental sanitation systems, information and communications. Preserve, embellish and promote the value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in service of tourism development.

Regarding technical facilities: Invest in upgrading facilities and tourism service quality, such as hotels, accommodation establishments, entertainment service areas, etc., to attract tourists to Phu Quoc.

Strengthen the promotion of Phu Quoc's tourism image to visitors through media channels and important local events. Establish linkages and cooperation for Phu Quoc tourism development with other tourist destinations in Kien Giang province and other localities in the Mekong Delta region.

Secondly, strengthening the mobilization of investment resources in Phu Quoc

Enhance improvements in the investment environment and business climate, promote attraction of FDI sources and quality private capital for tourism development in Phu Quoc, aligned with leveraging the locality's unique comparative advantages. Reduce costs and shorten processing times for administrative procedures, provide business support services, assist with workforce training for enterprises to improve the investment and business environment, encourage domestic and international organizations and businesses to invest in tourism projects, luxury resorts, high-quality entertainment facilities, etc. "Mobilize investment resources to complete transportation infrastructure connecting key tourist spots and areas to serve visitors' needs and attract strategic investors" (People's Committee of Phu Quoc City, page 15).

Thirdly, investing in human resource development

Training and developing human resources in the tourism industry in Phu Quoc is a top priority. Improve the quality of tourism workforce training in terms of knowledge, attitude, and skills such as foreign language proficiency, understanding of local history, culture, people, and professional conduct, etc. In particular, this workforce must meet the stringent recruitment requirements of foreign investors.

Fourthly, developing tourism associated with environmental protection

Developing tourism while preserving and restoring natural resources, ensuring livelihoods for local people, while maintaining natural beauty and environmental landscapes is a necessary solution for sustainable tourism development in Phu Quoc.

It is necessary to preserve the island's marine ecosystem, as it possesses an extremely rich marine island ecosystem with many beautiful, pristine beaches along the island's coastline such as Dinh Cau beach, Thom beach, Sao beach, ... Additionally, Phu Quoc has a primary forest ecosystem with rich and diverse flora and fauna, including many rare species listed in the Red Book. Phu Quoc needs to focus on prioritizing the development of green tourism products that respect the natural elements characteristic of the locality. Simultaneously, promote education and raise awareness among local people and tourists about environmental protection, such as banning single-use plastic products at tourist sites, ending the direct disposal of waste and fishing gear into the sea from fishing vessels in the island area...

Fifthly, focusing on administrative apparatus reform and improving the contingent of cadres

Recently in Phu Quoc, some officials have experienced moral degradation, failed to fulfill their duties and responsibilities, and there have even been cases of embezzlement and corruption. Therefore, for the tourism industry in Phu Quoc City in particular, and the local socio-economic development in general to grow strongly, the locality needs to focus on building a workforce of officials, civil servants, and public employees who possess both virtue and talent, both quality and capability. Additionally, the locality needs to implement administrative apparatus reforms towards streamlining and efficiency, avoiding creating difficulties for investors and businesses wanting to develop Phu Quoc.

4. CONCLUSION

President Ho Chi Minh's thought on economics is profoundly correct and practical, holding great significance in Vietnam's strategic economic development during the transition period towards socialism. Although time has passed, his perspectives on objectives, driving forces, and economic development solutions maintain both theoretical value and practical significance. Phu Quoc's tourism industry has achieved remarkable accomplishments in recent times, establishing itself as an attractive destination for tourists. However, Phu Quoc's tourism sector still faces limitations and challenges that need to be addressed. Applying Ho Chi Minh thought on economics to Phu Quoc's tourism development will help the region achieve positive results, ensuring sustainable development of the tourism industry and continuously improving the living standards of local residents.

REFERENCES

- 1) Pham Minh Chinh (2024). Speech at the Conference on reviewing Decision No. 178/2004/QD/TTg on the overall development of Phu Quoc Island, Kien Giang province until 2010, with a vision to 2020, March 31, 2024.
- 2) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 5. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 3) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 7. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 4) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 8. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 5) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 9. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 6) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 10. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 7) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 11. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 8) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 12. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 9) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 13. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 10) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 14. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 11) Ho Chi Minh (2011). Complete Works, Volume 15. Hanoi: Su That National Political Publishing House.
- 12) People's Committee of Phu Quoc City (2022). Plan No. 653/KH-UBND on Socio-economic Development of Phu Quoc City in 2023, November 30, 2022.
- 13) Hai Nam (2025). Phu Quoc – An interesting story of the tourism industry. <https://vov.vn/du-lich/phu-quoc-cau-chuyen-thu-vi-cua-nganh-du-lich-post1086257.vov>. Accessed on January 09, 2025.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.