**ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION**

Dissertation title: **Local Leader Traits, Local Values and Political participation in Vietnam**

Specialization: **Economics (E-PhD)**  Specialization code: 9310101

PhD candidate: Nguyen Thi Thuy Ngan

Supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Dr. Bui Huy Nhuong; Prof. Dr. Le Quang Canh

Institution: National Economics University

**Original contributions on academic and theoretical aspects**

This dissertation makes several significant theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of political participation and local governance in Vietnam and similar developing, one-party political systems.

*Firstly*, the study integrates career path theory, face-saving theory, and prejudice theory into a unified analytical framework explaining how leadership traits (tenure and gender) and local values (ODA-receiving localities and historical protests) jointly affect citizens’ political participation. This multidimensional approach expands existing research beyond citizen-level factors to include institutional and socio-cultural dimensions of participation.

*Secondly*, the findings provide new evidence that first-term leaders are more likely to mobilize participation, while second-term leaders exhibit reduced motivation and short-termism. Furthermore, gender bias continues to shape perceptions of leadership effectiveness that male leaders tend to achieve higher participation rates, whereas female leaders face persistent stereotypes that limit their influence.

*Thirdly,* this study introduces a novel operationalization of local values by employing ODA-supported districts and protest-active localities as empirical proxies, extending beyond the conventional cultural or attitudinal measures used in prior research. The findings demonstrate that these proxies exert a direct and significant influence on political participation. Moreover, they function as moderating factors that condition the relationship between leadership traits and political participation.

**Recommendations derived from the findings of the dissertation**

The dissertation proposes several policy recommendations to enhance political participation and improve local governance in Vietnam. First, it suggests tenure accountability reform by strengthening evaluation and promotion mechanisms for second-term leaders, linking their performance to citizen satisfaction and governance indicators such as PAPI scores. Second, it highlights the importance of promoting community dialogue by institutionalizing citizen–leader forums, participatory budgeting, and public consultations to improve transparency and responsiveness. Third, it recommends strengthening ODA governance by integrating participatory and monitoring mechanisms into ODA project design to ensure that development aid fosters transparency, accountability, and civic inclusion. Finally, the study advises broader institutional reforms, including enhanced anti-corruption efforts, expanded civic education, and the systematic use of PAPI results as a monitoring and evaluation tool to strengthen local government effectiveness and citizen engagement.

**Supervisor PhD candidate**

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