



Política de lucha contra la corrupción y reforma institucional en Vietnam: Un análisis del XIV Congreso del Partido Comunista

Anti-corruption policy and institutional reform in Vietnam: An analysis of the 14th Congress of the Communist Party

Politique anticorruption et réforme institutionnelle au Vietnam : une analyse du XIVe Congrès du Parti communiste

Política anticorrupção e reforma institucional no Vietnã: uma análise do 14º Congresso do Partido Comunista.

Ph. D. Dung Thi Cao

Senior Lecturer of the Academy of Journalism and Communication, Hanoi, Vietnam. ✉ dungcaobctt@gmail.com

 [0009-0002-4330-0807](https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4330-0807)

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ABSTRACT Anti-corruption is identified as a central and ongoing priority in the building and rectification of the Party and the political system, in line with the spirit of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. This article examines the Congress's key orientations and policy directions, with particular emphasis on power control, institutional refinement, enhanced transparency, and the effectiveness of corruption detection and enforcement. The study adopts a qualitative approach, employing document analysis and qualitative content analysis of Party documents, official reports, and relevant statistical data from

recent years. On this basis, it evaluates the current state of anti-corruption efforts in Vietnam, highlighting major achievements while also identifying key limitations. Building on these findings, the article proposes a set of integrated policy measures aimed at strengthening anti-corruption effectiveness and contributing to the development of a clean and robust socialist rule-of-law state in the new phase. The study is subject to certain limitations, notably its primary reliance on publicly available documents and official statistics. Nevertheless, it contributes to the academic literature by offering a systematic and integrated analysis that elucidates the linkages between political orientations, institutional mechanisms, and implementation effectiveness in anti-corruption governance in Vietnam.

Keywords: Vietnam; Communist Party; anti-corruption; institutional reform; governance; public integrity.

RESUMEN *La lucha contra la corrupción se identifica como una tarea central y permanente en el proceso de construcción y rectificación del Partido y del sistema político, en consonancia con el espíritu del XIV Congreso del Partido Comunista de Vietnam. Este artículo analiza las principales orientaciones y directrices del Congreso, con especial énfasis en el control del poder, el perfeccionamiento institucional, el fortalecimiento de la transparencia y la mejora de la eficacia en la detección y sanción de la corrupción. El estudio adopta un enfoque cualitativo, utilizando métodos de análisis documental y análisis de contenido aplicados a los documentos del Partido, informes oficiales y datos estadísticos relevantes de los últimos años. Sobre esta base, evalúa la situación actual de la lucha contra la corrupción en Vietnam, destacando los principales logros y, al mismo tiempo, identificando sus limitaciones más significativas. A partir de estos hallazgos, el artículo propone un conjunto de soluciones integrales orientadas a mejorar la eficacia de las políticas anticorrupción y a contribuir a la construcción de un Estado de derecho socialista limpio y sólido en la nueva etapa de desarrollo. Entre las principales limitaciones del estudio se encuentra su dependencia predominante de fuentes públicas y datos estadísticos oficiales. No obstante, la investigación contribuye a la literatura académica al ofrecer un análisis sistemático e integrado que esclarece las interrelaciones entre las orientaciones políticas, los mecanismos institucionales y la eficacia de la implementación en la gobernanza anticorrupción en Vietnam.*

Palabras claves: Vietnam; Partido Comunista; lucha contra la corrupción; gobernanza socialista; integridad en la administración pública.

RÉSUMÉ *La lutte contre la corruption est considérée comme une priorité centrale et permanente dans la construction et la réforme du Parti et du système politique, conformément à l'esprit du XIVe Congrès national du Parti communiste vietnamien. Cet article examine les orientations et les orientations politiques clés du Congrès, en mettant l'accent sur le contrôle du pouvoir, le perfectionnement institutionnel, le renforcement de la transparence et l'efficacité de la détection et de la répression de la corruption. L'étude adopte une approche qualitative, s'appuyant sur l'analyse documentaire et l'analyse de contenu qualitative des documents du Parti, des rapports officiels et des données statistiques pertinentes des dernières années. Sur cette base, elle évalue l'état actuel de la lutte contre la corruption au Vietnam, en soulignant les principaux succès tout en identifiant les principales limites. À partir de ces constats, l'article propose un ensemble de mesures politiques intégrées visant à renforcer l'efficacité de la lutte contre la corruption et à contribuer au développement d'un État de droit socialiste intègre et robuste dans cette nouvelle phase. L'étude présente certaines limites, notamment son recours prépondérant aux documents publics et aux statistiques offi-*

cielles. Néanmoins, cet ouvrage enrichit la littérature académique en proposant une analyse systématique et intégrée qui met en lumière les liens entre orientations politiques, mécanismes institutionnels et efficacité de la mise en œuvre de la lutte contre la corruption au Vietnam.

Mots-clés : Vietnam ; Parti communiste ; lutte contre la corruption ; réforme institutionnelle ; gouvernance ; intégrité publique.

RESUMO *O combate à corrupção é identificado como uma prioridade central e contínua na construção e retificação do Partido e do sistema político, em consonância com o espírito do 14º Congresso Nacional do Partido Comunista do Vietnã. Este artigo examina as principais orientações e diretrizes políticas do Congresso, com ênfase particular no controle do poder, no aprimoramento institucional, no aumento da transparência e na eficácia da detecção e repressão à corrupção. O estudo adota uma abordagem qualitativa, empregando análise documental e análise de conteúdo qualitativa de documentos do Partido, relatórios oficiais e dados estatísticos relevantes dos últimos anos. Com base nisso, avalia o estado atual dos esforços anticorrupção no Vietnã, destacando as principais conquistas e identificando as principais limitações. A partir dessas constatações, o artigo propõe um conjunto de medidas políticas integradas destinadas a fortalecer a eficácia do combate à corrupção e contribuir para o desenvolvimento de um Estado de direito socialista limpo e robusto na nova fase. O estudo está sujeito a certas limitações, notadamente sua dependência primária de documentos disponíveis publicamente e estatísticas oficiais. Não obstante, contribui para a literatura acadêmica ao oferecer uma análise sistemática e integrada que elucida as ligações entre orientações políticas, mecanismos institucionais e eficácia da implementação na governança anticorrupção no Vietnã.*

Palavras-chave: Vietnã; Partido Comunista; anticorrupção; reforma institucional; governança; integridade pública.

INTRODUCTION

In the process of building and consolidating a socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam, anti-corruption has consistently been identified as a central and ongoing priority, playing a decisive role in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of national governance as well as in strengthening public trust. In the context of a socialist-oriented market economy and deepening international integration, corruption has become increasingly sophisticated and complex, often associated with vested interests and the exploitation of institutional loopholes and limited transparency in public administration. These dynamics underscore the urgent need to enhance anti-corruption efforts in a comprehensive, systematic, and sustainable manner.

Within the academic literature, corruption has been examined through multiple theoretical lenses, providing a multidimensional analytical foundation for understanding both its causes and control mechanisms. The principal-agent framework, as developed in the works of Susan Rose-Ackerman (1978, 1999) and Robert Klitgaard (1988), posits that corruption arises from information asymmetries between principals and agents, particularly when monitoring mechanisms and enforcement sanctions are weak or ineffective. Klitgaard's well-known formulation (Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability) highlights that corruption is more likely to proliferate in contexts where power is concentrated, discretion is high, and accountability is limited.

Complementing this perspective, the rational choice approach—prominently advanced by Gary Becker

(1968) and institutional economists—conceptualizes corrupt behavior as a calculated decision based on a cost-benefit analysis. Individuals engage in corruption when the expected benefits outweigh the potential costs, including the risk of detection and punishment. From this standpoint, reducing corruption requires not only ethical norms but also robust incentive structures and enforcement mechanisms capable of altering the underlying “equilibrium of interests.”

In addition, institutional theory, as articulated in the works of Douglass North (1990) and Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson (2012), emphasizes the role of both formal and informal institutions in shaping actors’ behavior. From this perspective, corruption is not merely an individual phenomenon but a systemic outcome of the institutional environment, where rules, norms, transparency, and mechanisms of power control are decisive factors. Empirical research in this tradition suggests that countries characterized by inclusive, transparent, and accountable institutions tend to achieve more effective corruption control outcomes.

Building on the aforementioned theoretical frameworks, a substantial body of international scholarship has consistently identified power control, enhanced transparency, and strengthened accountability as core pillars of effective anti-corruption strategies. These elements provide a crucial analytical foundation for examining anti-corruption policies and practices across diverse political systems, including those operating under socialist orientations.

In the case of Vietnam, a growing body of research has approached anti-corruption from multiple perspectives, including institutional analysis, public governance, and Party-building. At the international level, several notable studies have offered in-depth insights into the characteristics and operational dynamics of corruption in Vietnam. For instance, Kobelev and Mazyrin (2021) argue that corruption in Vietnam is closely intertwined with the country’s

economic transition and persistent constraints in power control mechanisms, while also highlighting the increasingly prominent role of disciplinary measures and high-profile prosecutions in recent years. From an institutional perspective, Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) contend that despite strong political commitment to anti-corruption, disparities in the capacity and effectiveness of oversight institutions between central and local levels remain significant. This unevenness in policy implementation constitutes a key factor undermining the overall effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

In addition, some studies adopt a societal and public governance lens. Vu and Cao (2021), for example, examine public perceptions of corruption and anti-corruption initiatives, finding that although the legal framework has been progressively strengthened, its deterrent effect and enforcement effectiveness have yet to meet societal expectations. Similarly, Ta and Nguyen (2021), in their analysis of corruption in public investment, identify the intensity of interactions between businesses and the public sector, coupled with limited transparency in project management, as major drivers of corruption risks.

Other contributions focus on legal and policy dimensions. For example, Vu and Cao (2024) analyze legal provisions governing post-retirement accountability of public officials, revealing shortcomings in the current legal framework and proposing reforms to enhance anti-corruption effectiveness. Collectively, these studies illuminate various dimensions of anti-corruption in Vietnam, ranging from institutional structures and legal frameworks to social perceptions and administrative practices.

Overall, existing research provides important evidence of positive developments in Vietnam’s anti-corruption efforts, particularly in the intensified handling of major cases, the strengthening of Party discipline, and the gradual improvement of the legal system. However, most studies primarily focus on the period preceding or during the 13th National Congress or address isolated aspects such as en-

forcement, financial transparency, or administrative reform. Consequently, there remains a lack of comprehensive and systematic analyses of anti-corruption orientations in the context of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, especially from an integrated perspective that links institutional theory, power control, and policy implementation effectiveness.

Meanwhile, the 14th National Congress reaffirms a consistent and resolute stance on combating corruption and misconduct, emphasizing the integration of power control, institutional refinement, and enhanced law enforcement effectiveness. These orientations reflect both continuity and innovation in the Party's theoretical thinking and practical approach, while also introducing new requirements for anti-corruption efforts in the current development phase. Nevertheless, systematic studies that examine these orientations through a combined theoretical and empirical lens—particularly from institutional and governance perspectives—remain limited.

Accordingly, several key research gaps can be identified: (i) the absence of systematic analyses of anti-corruption aligned with the spirit of the 14th National Congress; (ii) insufficient examination of the relationship between political orientations, institutional mechanisms, and implementation effectiveness; and (iii) the lack of integrated assessments that synthesize achievements, limitations, and policy solutions within a unified analytical framework. Addressing these gaps is not only of academic significance but also of practical relevance for improving policy formulation and implementation in Vietnam's anti-corruption efforts.

Against this backdrop, the article seeks to address the following research questions: (1) What are the main orientations of the Communist Party of Vietnam on anti-corruption? (2) What achievements and limitations characterize Vietnam's recent anti-corruption efforts? and (3) What policy measures are required to enhance anti-corruption effectiveness in the current context?

Accordingly, this study aims to provide a systematic analysis of anti-corruption policy orientations under the 14th National Congress from an institutional and public governance perspective; to comprehensively assess the current state of anti-corruption in Vietnam, with particular attention to power control, transparency, and implementation effectiveness; and to propose policy implications and feasible solutions to strengthen anti-corruption performance in the context of building a socialist rule-of-law state and deepening international integration.

DEVELOPMENT

1. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing document analysis in combination with a case study approach to examine anti-corruption orientations and practices in Vietnam in the context of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate for this research, as it enables in-depth interpretation of political documents and institutional dynamics—dimensions that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods.

Research data are primarily collected through purposive sampling, focusing on authoritative and reliable sources. Specifically, the dataset includes: (i) Party Congress documents, with particular emphasis on the 14th National Congress; (ii) resolutions, directives, and regulations issued by the Party and the State related to anti-corruption; (iii) reports from key oversight and enforcement bodies, such as the Government Inspectorate, the State Audit Office, and judicial institutions; and (iv) statistical data and published studies by both domestic and international scholars. Document selection is guided by criteria of official status, timeliness, and direct relevance to the research objectives.

In terms of temporal scope, the study focuses on the period from the 13th National Congress (2021) to the present, while placing particular emphasis on

the new orientations introduced at the 14th National Congress (2026). This timeframe is selected to capture both continuity and change in Vietnam's anti-corruption policies in recent years.

Based on the collected data, analytical-synthetic methods are employed as the primary approach to systematize key perspectives, policy orientations, and institutional frameworks related to anti-corruption. In addition, qualitative content analysis is applied to unpack the substantive meanings, objectives, and core policy dimensions embedded in relevant documents. A comparative approach is also utilized to juxtapose policy orientations with practical outcomes, thereby assessing their coherence, effectiveness, and alignment with international experiences.

Furthermore, a historical-logical method is employed to trace the evolution of the Party's perceptions and policy orientations on anti-corruption across successive congresses, highlighting both continuity and innovation in policy thinking. Finally, by integrating theoretical analysis with empirical evidence, the study applies logical inference to develop policy implications and propose contextually appropriate solutions for enhancing anti-corruption effectiveness in Vietnam.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Results

General Issues of Anti-Corruption

Anti-corruption constitutes a core component in building a socialist rule-of-law state, closely associated with the requirements of integrity, transparency, and the effectiveness of public administration. In the context of a socialist-oriented market economy and deep international integration, corruption not only undermines development resources but also negatively affects public trust in the Party and the State. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the general issues of anti-corruption is of significant importance both theoretically and practically.

First, in terms of definition, corruption is understood as acts committed by individuals holding positions of authority who abuse their power for personal gain. Under Vietnamese law, corrupt acts include bribery (both giving and receiving), abuse of position and power to appropriate assets, and other forms of misconduct for private benefit. Accordingly, anti-corruption refers to the overall set of measures undertaken by the State and society to prevent, detect, and handle corrupt acts, as well as to remedy the consequences caused by corruption. This is a long-term and complex process that requires the participation of the entire political system and society.

Second, anti-corruption exhibits several fundamental characteristics. The first is its comprehensive and systematic nature, reflected in the simultaneous implementation of preventive, detective, and punitive measures across all sectors of social life. The second is its continuous and long-term nature, as corruption is a pervasive phenomenon that can easily recur if not strictly controlled. The third is its close connection with power, given that corruption arises from the abuse of state power; therefore, anti-corruption must be closely linked with power control. The fourth is its reliance on transparency and accountability, as only through openness and clear accountability mechanisms can corrupt practices be effectively constrained.

Third, the role of anti-corruption has become increasingly prominent. It serves as a crucial condition for ensuring the integrity and strength of the political system, thereby reinforcing the leadership role of the Communist Party of Vietnam. At the same time, anti-corruption contributes to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of state governance by ensuring the proper use of public resources. Moreover, it plays an important role in creating a transparent and healthy business environment, attracting investment, and promoting socio-economic development. More importantly, anti-corruption helps strengthen public trust and social consensus—key factors for political stability and sustainable development.

Fourth, the content of anti-corruption encompasses multiple dimensions. These include prevention through institutional improvement, enhanced transparency, asset and income control, and administrative reform; detection through inspection, audit, and social oversight; enforcement through Party discipline, administrative sanctions, and criminal prosecution; and asset recovery to remedy damage and enhance deterrence. These components are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing, forming a unified framework for anti-corruption efforts.

Fifth, various factors influencing the effectiveness of anti-corruption must be comprehensively identified. The first is the institutional factor, including the legal system and enforcement mechanisms; weak or non-transparent institutions create loopholes for corruption. The second is the human factor, particularly the ethical standards and sense of responsibility of public officials. The third is the effectiveness of power control mechanisms, as unchecked power can easily lead to abuse and corruption. The fourth is the role of society and the media in monitoring, detecting, and exposing corrupt practices. Finally, technological factors—especially the application of digital technologies in enhancing transparency and controlling assets and income—play an increasingly important role.

From the above analysis, it can be affirmed that anti-corruption is a strategic, long-term, and complex task. A comprehensive understanding of these general issues not only enhances the effectiveness of policy-making but also provides a solid foundation for implementing coordinated solutions, thereby contributing to the building of a clean and strong socialist rule-of-law state in the current period.

Current situation of anti-corruption in vietnam in recent years achievements in anti-corruption

First, the detection and handling of corruption have been intensified, with an expanding scale. In recent years, the detection and handling of corruption in Vietnam have shown significant improvements in

terms of scope, coverage, and severity. Competent authorities have become more proactive and active in uncovering, investigating, and prosecuting corruption cases, relying not only on internal sources but also expanding to multiple channels such as inspections, audits, media reports, and public feedback. According to statistics, in 2025, procedural authorities nationwide initiated 3,325 new cases involving 8,516 defendants related to corruption, economic, and official-duty crimes (Khanh Linh, 2025, p.1). This notable figure reflects the increasing number of detected cases and demonstrates strong political determination in combating corruption.

Beyond the increase in quantity, the quality of detection has also improved, with many complex, sophisticated, and organized cases being uncovered. Corrupt practices are no longer limited to minor violations but have extended to sensitive sectors such as finance and banking, land management, public investment, procurement, and healthcare. This development places higher demands on the capacity of competent authorities while also indicating that anti-corruption efforts are becoming more in-depth, addressing difficult and complex areas without avoidance.

Second, Party discipline and the handling of violating officials have been enforced strictly, with no exceptions. Inspection, supervision, and disciplinary enforcement within the Party have been further strengthened with a consistent, resolute, and coordinated approach between Party discipline and administrative and criminal sanctions. In 2025, Party committees and inspection commissions at all levels disciplined more than 330 Party organizations and 9,600 Party members, including many serious violations. Notably, the Central Committee, the Politburo, the Secretariat, and the Central Inspection Commission disciplined 23 officials under central management, including six cases subject to criminal prosecution (Khanh Linh, 2025, p.1). During the tenure of the 13th National Congress, Party committees and inspection bodies at all levels disciplined over 2,380 Party members for corruption and 313 members for

violations related to asset and income declaration (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.369).

A prominent feature is the strict enforcement of discipline without “forbidden zones” or exceptions, regardless of the offender’s position. This demonstrates the Party’s consistent stance on power control and anti-corruption. The strict handling of high-ranking officials carries not only legal significance but also strong political and social impacts, reinforcing discipline and order within the political system. Moreover, such enforcement contributes not only to addressing violations but also to building a disciplined and integrity-based public service environment, thereby creating a foundation for sustainable corruption prevention.

Third, the effectiveness of investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of corruption cases has been significantly enhanced. Alongside strengthened detection, the effectiveness of investigation, prosecution, and trial activities has improved markedly. The Documents of the 14th National Congress affirm that “anti-corruption, negativity prevention, and thrift practices have been strengthened; many large-scale, particularly serious, and long-standing corruption cases have been strictly handled” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.321). Procedural bodies have enhanced coordination, shortened case-processing time, and ensured strict compliance with legal procedures. Many large and complex cases of a typical nature have been brought to public trial, generating strong deterrent effects in society.

Notably, during the 2021–2025 period, inspection and supervisory bodies detected 352 corruption cases involving 531 individuals (Government News, 2025). This indicates that corruption detection is no longer limited to investigative agencies but has increasingly relied on multiple channels, contributing to a multi-dimensional oversight network. The quality of adjudication has also improved, ensuring correct identification of offenders, accurate application of the law, and avoidance of wrongful convictions or missed crimes. Strict and transparent judg-

ments have helped strengthen public trust in justice and the legal system, while enhanced openness in trial proceedings has increased both deterrence and public education effects

Fourth, corruption prevention has been strengthened and increasingly deepened. Alongside the strict handling of corrupt acts, preventive measures have received growing attention through the implementation of comprehensive and practical solutions. Authorities at both central and local levels have promoted transparency and openness in public administration, particularly in sectors prone to corruption such as public investment, land management, and public finance.

At the same time, legal dissemination and education on anti-corruption have been widely implemented. In 2025, many localities issued hundreds of directive documents and organized numerous conferences, workshops, and training sessions with the participation of tens of thousands of officials and civil servants. These activities have contributed to raising awareness, responsibility, and legal compliance among public officials. In addition, the application of digital technologies in state management has played an important role in preventing corruption by enhancing transparency, reducing direct interactions, and strengthening oversight. Online public service systems, national databases, and digital platforms are gradually creating a transparent governance environment, thereby limiting opportunities for corruption.

Fifth, the application of digital technologies in anti-corruption has been promoted, contributing to enhanced transparency and more effective state governance. In recent years, digital transformation has become a key solution for preventing corruption at an early stage and from a distance. Through the development and operation of digital platforms, national databases, and online public service systems, state activities have become increasingly transparent, minimizing subjective interference and reducing opportunities for misconduct. According

to the Ministry of Information and Communications, during the 2024–2025 period, Vietnam has continued to promote digital government development, aiming for at least 80% of administrative procedures to be processed entirely online and approximately 50% of adults to use online public services (Hoang Ha, 2024).

This demonstrates the expanding provision and utilization of online public services, contributing to greater transparency, reduced costs, and time savings for citizens and businesses. These advancements not only improve the effectiveness of state governance but also play a crucial role in controlling power, enhancing transparency, and sustainably preventing corruption in the context of national digital transformation.

These results indicate that corruption prevention efforts are gradually shifting from a reactive to a proactive approach, from post-violation handling to early and remote prevention, thereby contributing to the development of an integrity-based, service-oriented, and sustainable public administration.

Limitations in Anti-Corruption Efforts

First, corruption and negative practices in certain sectors remain complex.

(According to the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.336), corruption continues to evolve in a complicated manner, particularly in sensitive areas. Although the legal framework on anti-corruption has been gradually improved, it still contains gaps, overlaps, and inconsistencies. Some provisions remain general and lack detailed guidance, making them difficult to implement in practice. Notably, power control mechanisms in certain sectors are not yet effective, with situations akin to “self-supervision,” increasing the risk of abuse of power. The delineation of responsibilities among agencies, organizations, and individuals is sometimes unclear, complicating accountability when violations occur. These shortcomings create loopholes that allow co-

rupt practices to emerge and persist, thereby reducing the effectiveness of preventive measures and negatively affecting public trust in the state apparatus.

Second, corruption detection remains insufficient relative to reality.

Although the number of detected corruption cases has increased in recent years, it does not fully reflect the scale and complexity of corruption in society. Detection efforts still rely primarily on internal inspections, audits, and examinations by state agencies, while external channels such as public oversight, media, and civil society have not been fully utilized. Mechanisms to protect whistleblowers remain inadequate, discouraging individuals from reporting corruption. Moreover, many cases are only uncovered after causing serious consequences, sometimes persisting for years, thereby increasing damage and complicating handling processes. This indicates that early and preventive detection mechanisms remain limited, and a proactive, timely detection system has yet to be fully established. Without addressing this limitation, effective power control and anti-corruption efforts will be difficult to achieve.

Third, the effectiveness of corruption asset recovery remains low.

Asset recovery is one of the most critical yet challenging aspects of anti-corruption efforts. In practice, in many cases, corrupt assets are dissipated, concealed through sophisticated means, or transferred abroad, creating significant obstacles for tracing and recovery. Although legal regulations on asset and income declaration and control have been introduced, their enforcement remains limited and has not fully ensured transparency regarding the origin of assets held by public officials. In addition, coordination mechanisms among domestic agencies, as well as international cooperation in asset recovery, are not yet sufficiently effective and lack necessary legal and technical tools. The rate of asset recovery in many major cases remains low compared to the

total damage, reducing the deterrent effect of the law and failing to fully remedy the consequences of corruption. This remains a major challenge that requires priority attention in the coming period.

Fourth, the quality of the public workforce and the culture of integrity in the public sector remain limited. Despite ongoing efforts in Party building and improving the quality of cadres and civil servants, a segment of officials continues to exhibit political, moral, and lifestyle degradation, lack of responsibility, and even abuse of power for personal gain. A culture of integrity has not yet become a widely established norm within the public sector, while mechanisms for controlling public service ethics remain ineffective. The exemplary role of some leaders and managers is not sufficiently evident, and in certain cases, serious violations have occurred, undermining public confidence. Furthermore, training and capacity-building programs on public ethics and anti-corruption skills have not fully met current demands. These limitations indicate that the human factor remains a “weak link” in anti-corruption efforts, necessitating comprehensive solutions to build a truly professional, ethical, and integrity-based public workforce capable of meeting the requirements of the new development stage.

Solutions to Enhance Anti-Corruption in Line with the Spirit of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam

The proposed solutions for anti-corruption in the coming period are grounded in a thorough understanding of the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam at the 14th National Congress, particularly regarding power control, institutional improvement, transparency enhancement, and the promotion of digital transformation. These orientations aim to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of anti-corruption efforts in the new context.

First, raising awareness and continuing to promote resolute, persistent efforts to prevent and combat corruption. In line with the spirit of the 14th National

Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, anti-corruption is not solely the responsibility of competent authorities but must become a shared awareness and voluntary action of the entire political system and society. The Congress emphasizes that the fight against corruption, wastefulness, and negative practices must be conducted in a resolute, persistent, regular, and continuous manner, with strong political determination, great efforts, and decisive, proactive actions from the central to the grassroots level (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.413).

Accordingly, raising awareness of the dangerous, complex, and long-term nature of corruption is a prerequisite. It is necessary to further strengthen political and ideological education, clearly affirming the viewpoint of persistent and resolute anti-corruption efforts, thereby fostering unity in both awareness and action.

At the same time, anti-corruption should be recognized as a long-term process that requires persistence without hesitation. The consistent implementation of preventive, detective, and punitive measures will create a spillover effect, contributing to the formation of a “culture of integrity” in society. In particular, the exemplary role of cadres and Party members, especially leaders, must be emphasized, as it has a direct influence on the behavior and attitudes of the public workforce.

Moreover, it is essential to encourage the participation of citizens, businesses, and the media in monitoring and detecting corruption, considering them as important complementary channels to formal institutions. When awareness is elevated and translated into unified action, anti-corruption efforts will have a solid foundation to effectively prevent and gradually eliminate corruption in practice.

Second, continuing to improve institutions and strengthen power control in state governance. The 14th National Congress underscores the necessity of strictly controlling power and preventing co-

ruption from the stages of institutional design and implementation. It calls for strengthening anti-corruption measures in the formulation of mechanisms, policies, and laws, as well as improving the legal framework to ensure comprehensive, coherent, and effective supervision, inspection, detection, and strict handling of violations with strong deterrent effects (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.414,415).

On this basis, it is necessary to continue reviewing, amending, and supplementing the legal system related to anti-corruption in a consistent, unified, and feasible manner. Priority should be given to improving regulations on public asset management, public investment, land administration, and public finance—areas with a high risk of corruption. At the same time, effective power control mechanisms should be established by clearly defining the functions, tasks, and authority of agencies and individuals, accompanied by specific accountability requirements.

In addition, power control in personnel management must be strengthened, ensuring transparency in recruitment, appointment, and evaluation processes. External oversight mechanisms should also be improved by enhancing the supervisory roles of the National Assembly, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and socio-political organizations. This solution serves as a fundamental measure to prevent corruption at its root by addressing institutional weaknesses and ensuring that power is exercised within a well-regulated and transparent framework.

Third, promoting transparency, openness, and accountability in public administration. The spirit of the 14th National Congress emphasizes the need to enhance transparency and strengthen accountability within state agencies. It calls for the consistent and effective implementation of institutional frameworks to ensure that corruption becomes “impossible,” particularly through improved mechanisms for power control, asset and income supervision, transparency, and accountability in public service, as well as clear responsibilities of Party organiza-

tions, agencies, and leaders (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.414).

Accordingly, it is necessary to expand transparency in high-risk sectors such as public budgeting, public investment, procurement, and land management. Transparency must be substantive and accessible, closely linked with digital technologies to enable effective public and business oversight. At the same time, clear accountability mechanisms should be established, requiring heads of agencies and units to take responsibility for decisions and actions within their authority. Strengthening inspection and supervision of transparency practices and strictly addressing violations are also essential. In addition, the role of the media, communication channels, and society should be further promoted in monitoring public administration. This solution helps limit opportunities for corruption while enhancing public trust in the state apparatus.

Fourth, improving the effectiveness of detecting and handling corruption in association with asset recovery. The 14th National Congress requires intensified efforts in detecting and strictly handling corrupt acts without “forbidden zones” or exceptions. It highlights the need to strengthen anti-corruption measures alongside enhancing internal and external power control mechanisms within the political system (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.181).

On this basis, it is necessary to further strengthen inspection, audit, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication activities, ensuring timeliness, strictness, and compliance with the law. Coordination among competent agencies must be enhanced to avoid overlaps and omissions in handling corruption cases. Particular attention should be paid to improving asset recovery through the refinement of legal mechanisms on asset declaration and control, as well as through strengthened international cooperation in tracing and recovering illicit assets. The strict handling of major, complex, and exemplary cases will create strong deterrent effects in society. This is a crucial solution for reinforcing legal discipline and

improving the overall effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

Fifth, promoting digital transformation, international cooperation, improving the quality of the public workforce, and fostering a culture of integrity in the public sector. In line with the spirit of the 14th National Congress, digital transformation and international integration are identified as key drivers for improving national governance, including anti-corruption. The application of digital technologies in state management should be implemented comprehensively to enhance transparency, strengthen power control, and minimize subjective human interference. National databases, integrated data-sharing platforms, and online public services need to be further developed and effectively operated, thereby reducing direct interaction between officials and citizens—one of the primary sources of corruption.

In the context of globalization, corruption increasingly takes on transnational characteristics, requiring stronger international cooperation in information exchange, investigation support, and asset recovery. Vietnam should continue to actively participate in international cooperation mechanisms, learning from global experiences, particularly in monitoring cross-border financial flows and assets, and in extraditing fugitives involved in corruption cases (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.415).

To enhance anti-corruption effectiveness, building a competent, ethical, and professional public workforce is essential. This includes strengthening training and capacity-building in legal knowledge, financial management, risk governance, and digital technologies for monitoring and controlling power. Regular assessment of both professional competence and ethical standards should be linked to reward and disciplinary mechanisms. Transparency in asset declaration and performance evaluation must be ensured, alongside enhanced social oversight.

Simultaneously, fostering a culture of integrity in the public sector is a fundamental and long-term

solution. The 14th National Congress emphasizes the need to persistently build a culture of integrity, thrift, and non-tolerance of corruption among officials, Party members, and citizens, aiming toward an integrity-based state and society where individuals “do not want” to engage in corruption (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2026, p.416). This requires a combination of ethical education, effective control mechanisms, and the exemplary role of leaders. When digital technologies are effectively applied, international cooperation is strengthened, and a culture of integrity is firmly established, anti-corruption efforts will gain a sustainable foundation to meet the demands of the new development stage.

2.2. Discussion

The achievements in anti-corruption efforts in recent years demonstrate significant progress in terms of awareness, action, and practical effectiveness. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, particularly in line with the spirit of the 14th National Congress, anti-corruption has evolved from handling isolated cases into a comprehensive strategy closely associated with building a socialist rule-of-law state. However, practical implementation also raises several issues that require further discussion to enhance effectiveness in the coming period.

First, it is necessary to reconsider the relationship between “combating” and “preventing” corruption. While recent efforts in detecting and handling violations have yielded notable results, especially through the prosecution of major and complex cases, creating strong deterrent effects and affirming the principle of “no forbidden zones, no exceptions,” an overemphasis on punitive measures without corresponding investment in preventive mechanisms may lead to the recurrence of corruption. Therefore, a strategic shift from a reactive, enforcement-focused approach to a proactive, prevention-oriented one is essential, in which prevention serves as the foundation and enforcement remains a critical complement.

Second, power control continues to be the central issue in anti-corruption. In practice, corruption largely stems from the abuse of power in the absence of effective control mechanisms. Although the institutional framework has been gradually improved, gaps and overlaps persist, particularly in sensitive sectors such as land management, public investment, and finance. This requires further refinement of power control mechanisms toward greater clarity and transparency, ensuring that authority is closely tied to accountability. At the same time, external oversight—especially from citizens and social organizations—must be strengthened to create a multi-layered control system.

Third, the human factor remains decisive in determining the effectiveness of anti-corruption. Even with a well-developed institutional system, corruption can still arise if public officials lack integrity or exhibit moral degradation. This underscores the urgent need to build a contingent of officials who are both politically steadfast and professionally competent, with strong ethical standards. In particular, the exemplary role of leaders is crucial in promoting a culture of integrity and reinforcing public trust. Without such moral leadership, institutional measures alone may not yield the desired outcomes.

Fourth, in the context of digital transformation and international integration, anti-corruption efforts face both opportunities and challenges. The application of digital technologies can enhance transparency, reduce direct interactions, and strengthen oversight, thereby limiting opportunities for corruption. However, without appropriate regulatory frameworks, technology itself may be exploited for corrupt practices. Moreover, the increasingly transnational nature of corruption requires stronger international cooperation, particularly in tracking illicit financial flows and recovering assets across borders.

From these analyses, it can be seen that anti-corruption must be approached comprehensively, with a close combination of institutional improvement, effective power control, human resource develop-

ment, and the application of modern technologies. Only by addressing these factors in a coordinated manner can anti-corruption efforts achieve sustainable effectiveness, meeting the requirements of national development in the new era.

From a comparative perspective, Vietnam's anti-corruption approach reflects both convergence and distinctiveness across different governance models. In highly centralized systems such as China and Singapore, anti-corruption strategies typically rely on strong political leadership, hierarchical control mechanisms, and rigorous enforcement, where political will serves as the primary driver ensuring deterrence and compliance. By contrast, in many OECD countries, anti-corruption frameworks are more highly institutionalized, grounded in checks and balances, independent oversight bodies, judicial autonomy, and legally codified transparency mechanisms designed to constrain abuses of power.

In comparison, Vietnam's approach can be conceptualized as a form of institutional hybridity, combining centralized political leadership with an increasingly institutionalized governance framework. This configuration reflects a dual logic: on the one hand, the consolidation of political authority to ensure coherence and decisiveness in implementation; on the other, the gradual development of rule-based mechanisms to enhance transparency, accountability, and procedural regularity in public administration. Notably, this hybrid structure is not static but adaptive, evolving in response to domestic reform imperatives and external pressures arising from international integration.

A deeper analysis suggests that differences across models extend beyond institutional design to modes of operation. In centralized systems, accountability is predominantly vertical and embedded in political discipline, whereas in OECD contexts it is largely horizontal, institutionalized through independent agencies and legal oversight mechanisms. Vietnam represents an intermediate configuration, where vertical accountability remains dominant but

is increasingly complemented by horizontal oversight and expanding societal participation. This comparative positioning underscores a key analytical implication: the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies does not hinge on any single institutional model, but rather on the alignment between political commitment, institutional capacity, and implementation mechanisms within specific contexts. In this regard, Vietnam's experience illustrates a context-adaptive approach in which the interplay between centralized leadership and progressive institutionalization can generate tangible improvements in corruption control, particularly in transitional and socialist-oriented systems.

These findings are consistent with principal-agent theory, which underscores the role of accountability in constraining the abuse of power, and with institutional theory, which highlights the importance of both formal and informal rules in shaping governance outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Anti-corruption efforts, as articulated in the spirit of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, constitute a central and enduring priority with decisive significance for building a clean and robust socialist rule-of-law state. The achievements recorded in recent years reflect strong political commitment and an increasingly comprehensive approach that integrates both prevention and enforcement. Nevertheless, given the evolving complexity of corruption, it remains imperative to further strengthen institutional frameworks, tighten power control mechanisms, enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement, and promote the role of societal oversight. At the same time, greater emphasis should be placed on advancing digital transformation and fostering a culture of integrity within the public sector. These elements represent key prerequisites for improving anti-corruption effectiveness in the current phase.

Despite these contributions, the study is subject to

several limitations. First, it relies primarily on official documents and secondary data, which may not fully capture informal practices or latent manifestations of corruption in reality. Second, the absence of comparative analysis with countries that share similar political systems—particularly those with socialist orientations—limits the scope for cross-contextual interpretation and generalization. In addition, the lack of quantitative data and empirical surveys means that certain conclusions remain largely qualitative and would benefit from further validation through alternative methodological approaches.

In light of these limitations, future research could be developed along several key directions. First, comparative studies between Vietnam and countries with analogous political systems should be expanded to provide deeper insights into the characteristics and effectiveness of different anti-corruption models. Second, the integration of quantitative methods, sociological surveys, and big data analytics would enhance the robustness and verifiability of research findings. Third, subsequent studies may further explore the role of digital technologies, media, and societal participation in corruption control, particularly in the context of accelerating digital transformation and deepening international integration. Such research avenues would not only contribute to advancing theoretical understanding but also provide valuable empirical evidence for the formulation and implementation of anti-corruption policies in the future.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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