

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

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**THE ISSUE OF CULTURAL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE
MEKONG DELTA TODAY**

**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
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INTRODUCTION

1. Urgency of the research topic

In the context of an increasingly severe global environmental crisis and climate change, the protection of the natural environment has become a matter of vital priority for all nations. In Vietnam, the processes of industrialization, modernization, and integration into the international market have exerted considerable pressures on natural resources, resulting in environmental degradation, pollution, and ecological imbalance. The market-oriented economic mindset, driven by profit maximization, has led many actors to excessively exploit natural resources, causing serious consequences such as ecosystem deterioration, pollution, and loss of biodiversity.

In response to this situation, the socio-economic development strategy for the 2021-2030 period set forth by the Party at the 13th National Congress establishes the orientation of “rapid and sustainable development based primarily on science and technology, innovation, and digital transformation,” while emphasizing the need for harmonious development between the economy, culture, society, environmental protection, and climate change adaptation. This perspective reflects an approach to sustainable development grounded in a balanced understanding of the interconnectedness between nature, humanity, and society, requiring a shift in how the human-nature relationship is perceived, both in practical terms and in philosophical reasoning. Within this framework, cultural behavior toward the natural environment plays a critical role, expressing human cognition, values, and actions toward nature. When the human-nature relationship is disrupted by short-term thinking and consumerist lifestyles, the restoration of harmony with nature becomes not only a practical solution but also a moral and humanistic imperative.

The Mekong Delta is a representative region that clearly illustrates this reality. Characterized by a diverse ecosystem, an extensive network of rivers and canals, fertile alluvial soil, and abundant aquatic resources, the region contributes 50% of Vietnam’s rice output and 70% of its seafood export value. The river-based culture and indigenous ecological knowledge have fostered a tradition of harmonious interaction with nature. Local communities have long utilized natural resources in a sustainable manner through traditional ecological production models such as “rice-fish,” “rice-shrimp,” and the “garden-pond-livestock” system, which both sustain livelihoods and preserve ecological balance. In addition, many communities continue to use environmentally friendly materials and engage in voluntary environmental protection activities such as mangrove replantation, waste collection, water conservation, and erosion prevention.

However, the process of modernization and population pressure has led to concerning transformations in human interactions with the natural environment. The overuse of agricultural chemicals, widespread plastic waste, and the lack of systematic waste management have exerted negative impacts on the ecosystem. A portion of the local population still lacks sufficient awareness and skills for proper waste disposal. Illegal sand mining, encroachment along riverbanks, and the decline of indigenous ecological knowledge due to generational discontinuities have collectively weakened what was once a healthy cultural relationship with nature. This issue stems from inadequate awareness

among certain administrative bodies, limitations in environmental education, insufficient ecological-cultural communication, and an underdeveloped sense of community responsibility.

In the face of climate fluctuations and ecosystem degradation, enhancing the cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents has become an urgent necessity. The documents of the 13th National Congress have emphasized the tasks of sustainable resource management and conservation, ensuring ecological security and water security, and highlighted the role of education in raising environmental awareness. For these reasons, the doctoral candidate selected the topic “*The Issue of Cultural Behavior Toward the Natural Environment Among Residents of the Mekong Delta Today*” for the dissertation, as it holds both theoretical significance and practical relevance in the current context.

2. Research aims and tasks

2.1. Research aims

The dissertation analyzes and clarifies both the theoretical issues and the current status of cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta, identifying strengths, limitations, and emerging challenges. Based on this analysis, it proposes several key groups of solutions aimed at enhancing the cultural practices of local communities in interacting with and protecting the natural environment.

2.2. Research tasks

To achieve the research objectives, the dissertation undertakes the following tasks:

First, to review existing studies and research works related to the topic.

Second, to analyze several theoretical issues concerning cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta.

Third, to examine the current status of cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents and identify the challenges arising from this reality.

Fourth, to propose a set of basic solutions aimed at enhancing the cultural behavior of residents in interacting with and protecting the natural environment in the Mekong Delta.

3. Research object and scope

3.1. Research object

The dissertation focuses on studying cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents in the Mekong Delta at present.

3.2. Research scope

Regarding the research scope: The dissertation examines cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta. According to Notice No. 65-TB/ĐU dated June 4, 2025, which reports the conclusions of the Standing Committee of the Government Party Committee on the orientation for adjusting regional divisions and socio-economic planning, the Mekong Delta region includes five provinces and cities: Can Tho, Vinh Long, Dong Thap, An Giang, and Ca Mau.

Regarding the research period: The dissertation investigates cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents from 2013 to 2024.

Regarding the research content: The dissertation specifically examines (1) residents' awareness of rules and norms for interacting with the natural environment; (2) residents' attitudes and behaviors in the sustainable exploitation and use of natural resources; and (3) residents' attitudes and behaviors in protecting and restoring natural resources.

4. Theoretical foundation and research methodology

4.1. Theoretical foundation

The theoretical framework of the dissertation is built upon the foundations of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, along with the perspectives, guidelines, and policies of the Communist Party of Vietnam, as well as the system of state laws and regulations related to cultural behavior toward the natural environment.

4.2. Research methodology

The research methodology of the dissertation applies the principles of dialectical and historical materialism, combined with specific scientific research methods as follows: the historical and logical method, the survey and investigation method, the methods of generalization and abstraction, analysis and synthesis, comparative statistics, and scientific forecasting.

5. New contributions of the dissertation

The dissertation contributes to clarifying several theoretical issues related to cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta at present by examining the content of such cultural behavior in various localities within the region, identifying its significance, and analyzing both the objective and subjective factors that influence its formation and development, encompassing both positive and negative aspects in the life of local communities. It further analyzes the achievements and existing limitations, highlights the current challenges, and proposes a set of basic solutions to enhance and promote cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents.

6. Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Dissertation

Theoretical significance: The dissertation contributes to clarifying theoretical aspects concerning cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta at present.

Practical significance: The dissertation can serve as a reference for scientific research. Its recommendations hold practical value for policy-making, providing management agencies with a basis to develop specific plans and action programs aimed at promoting and implementing cultural behavior toward the natural environment among local communities.

7. Structure of the dissertation

Apart from the introduction, conclusion, list of related scientific works, references, and appendices, the dissertation is structured into four chapters and twelve sections.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

1.1. A REVIEW OF STUDIES ON THEORETICAL ISSUES OF CULTURAL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The dissertation reviews both domestic and international studies related to the theoretical aspects of cultural behavior toward the natural environment. These studies include monographs, reference works, doctoral dissertations, and scientific articles relevant to the dissertation topic, all of which make significant contributions to the scientific foundation of the research.

1.2. RELATED STUDIES ON THE CURRENT STATE OF CULTURAL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA.

The dissertation reviews domestic studies related to the current status of cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents, including scientific projects, monographs and reference works, doctoral dissertations, and scientific articles relevant to the dissertation topic. These works provide a valuable scientific and theoretical foundation, making significant contributions to the research.

1.3. STUDIES RELATED TO SOLUTIONS FOR ENHANCING CULTURAL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT

During the research process, the dissertation reviewed several scientific works related to cultural behavior toward the natural environment, particularly those that propose solutions for improving such behavior among Mekong Delta residents. These studies have high practical value and contribute to the formulation of the basic solutions proposed in the dissertation.

1.4. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE REVIEWED STUDIES RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC AND ISSUES REQUIRING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

1.4.1. Value of the Reviewed Studies Related to the Dissertation Topic

The issue of cultural behavior toward the natural environment is a broad topic that has attracted the attention of many scholars, resulting in a rich and diverse body of research. The aforementioned scientific works possess significant value in both theoretical and practical aspects. At the same time, they provide important insights and guidance for the doctoral candidate during the implementation of the dissertation. The scientific contributions of these works have been adopted and built upon by the dissertation author, focusing on the following aspects:

First, the review of the studies shows that cultural behavior toward the natural environment has been approached from multiple perspectives and levels. These studies have not only contributed to the formation and clarification of key concepts-particularly “cultural behavior toward the natural environment” from philosophical viewpoints-but also provided a foundation for developing the theoretical analytical framework of the dissertation. Conceptually, the research indicates that cultural behavior toward the natural environment constitutes a system of norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors accepted and practiced by the

community to regulate the relationship between humans and nature, ensuring harmony, adaptation, and sustainable development.

Second, regarding the current status, published studies demonstrate that cultural behavior toward the natural environment has been analyzed from multiple angles in the Mekong Delta. In terms of strengths, these studies highlight the sustainability of indigenous knowledge, traditional practices of harmonious interaction with nature, adaptive capacity to climate change, and positive manifestations in production, daily life, and belief systems linked to environmental protection. However, they also point out several limitations: the gradual erosion of traditional behavioral norms, the negative impacts of market economy, industrialization, and urbanization; inconsistent environmental awareness and behavior among different population groups; ineffective enforcement of environmental laws; as well as unsustainable resource exploitation and a decline in community awareness for ecological conservation.

Third, synthesizing the related studies indicates that enhancing cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents requires the coordinated implementation of solutions that are aligned with ecological, socio-economic, and indigenous cultural characteristics. First, environmental culture education and communication should be strengthened, with a focus on ecological ethics and the dissemination of knowledge on resource protection, climate change, and sustainable development, to cultivate environmentally friendly awareness and behavior. Second, mechanisms, policies, and environmental law enforcement should be improved, including monitoring, supervision, and strict sanctions for pollution-causing activities, while integrating cultural aspects into resource management programs, waste treatment, water protection, and biodiversity conservation. Third, the conservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge and traditional practices of harmonious interaction with nature should be encouraged, creatively combined with science and technology to develop sustainable livelihood models that are adaptive to climate change.

1.4.2. Issues That the Dissertation Needs to Further Investigate

Based on the review of existing studies, it is evident that no research has directly and systematically examined cultural behavior toward the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta. Therefore, the dissertation aims to clarify three main issues: the awareness of Mekong Delta residents in forming rules and norms for interacting with the natural environment; their attitudes and behaviors in the sustainable exploitation and use of natural resources; and their attitudes and behaviors in protecting and restoring natural resources.

To evaluate the attitudes and behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in practicing cultural behavior toward the natural environment, the dissertation conducts a field survey. Survey questionnaires were developed and distributed to residents to assess both the strengths and limitations of their environmental cultural behavior. The dissertation identifies and highlights the existing challenges and gaps in implementing cultural behavior toward the natural environment in the region. Based on the analysis of these issues, the dissertation proposes several fundamental solutions to enhance cultural behavior toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents.

Chapter 2

CULTURAL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG MEKONG DELTA RESIDENTS TODAY - SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

2.1. FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

2.1.1. Concepts of Culture and Cultural Behavior

Concept of Culture

Culture is a category that has been formed and developed throughout the history of human thought, reflecting different approaches to the nature and role of culture in social life. Within the scope of this dissertation, the author shares the following understanding of culture: *Culture is the totality of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group; it encompasses not only art and literature, but also ways of life, value systems, traditions, and beliefs-factors that shape and regulate human attitudes and behavior.* This definition of culture was officially adopted by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) at the World Conference on Cultural Policies held in Mexico City in 1982. This definition is regarded as one of the most comprehensive and widely accepted approaches today, as it does not confine culture to the realm of art or spiritual elites, but extends it to encompass the entirety of human social life.

Concept of Cultural Behavior

The concept of cultural behavior has been formed and developed alongside the historical process of human society, reflecting changes in perceptions of behavior, attitudes, and the relationships between humans and humans, humans and nature, and the social community. According to Marxist–Leninist perspectives, culture in general and cultural behavior in particular do not exist independently but rather reflect the relationship between human beings and the conditions of their social existence; behavioral actions are the result of interactions between individuals and their living environment within the framework of cultural, economic, and political institutions. On this basis, the author of the dissertation understands cultural behavior as the totality of attitudes, norms, and behaviors of human beings in the process of interacting with the social environment and the natural environment, formed on the basis of awareness, cultural values, and the level of socio-economic development at specific historical stages, thereby guiding how individuals choose and regulate their behaviors. This concept indicates that cultural behavior is not an isolated or random action but the outcome of a complex process involving the interaction between internal subjective factors and external objective conditions.

2.1.2. Concept of Environment and Natural Environment

Concept of Environment

Firstly, when discussing the concept of environment, there are various approaches and definitions depending on the field of study. Some perspectives consider the

environment as the totality of natural material elements such as soil, water, air, light, and sound, together with the surrounding ecosystems of flora and fauna.

In legal documents, such as the Law on Environmental Protection, the environment is defined as “the combination of natural and artificial material elements closely interrelated, surrounding humans, affecting human life, economy, society, the existence and development of humans, living organisms, and nature,” or as “the material elements constituting the environment include soil, water, air, living organisms, sound, light, and other forms of matter.” Although these approaches are not entirely identical, the environment is generally understood as the totality of natural elements existing outside humans.

This concept does not merely refer to the natural world in general but emphasizes the natural world in its close relationship with human life and its influence on the development of human society. Therefore, the dissertation author understands the concept of environment from the perspective of material elements, as defined in the Law on Environmental Protection, to ensure consistency and alignment with the research objectives.

Concept of Natural Environment

In the narrow sense: The natural environment includes natural factors such as physical, chemical, and biological elements that exist independently of human will, although they are to some extent influenced by human activities. These include environmental light, mountains, rivers, seas, air, flora and fauna, land and water. The natural environment provides air for breathing, land for housing construction, crop cultivation and animal husbandry, and supplies various mineral resources for human production and consumption. In the broad sense: The environment consists of inorganic and organic elements that coexist within a space surrounding humans or other living organisms. These elements are closely interrelated, interact with one another, and exert influences on individual organisms or human beings, thereby enabling their coexistence and development. The combined directions of development of these factors determine the developmental trajectories of individual organisms, ecosystems, and human society.

According to the author of the dissertation: *The natural environment is the totality of material elements that objectively exist outside human beings, including air, water, land, topography, climate, flora and fauna, and various forms of natural resources. It constitutes the living space, the source of resources, and the basic conditions for survival, ensuring the existence and development of humans and other living organisms in specific historical periods.*

2.1.3. Concept of Cultural Behavior Toward the Natural Environment

Although the founders of Marxism-Leninism did not directly discuss cultural behavior toward the natural environment, their perspective addressed the relationship between humans and nature in the process of human labor and production. This two-way interaction reflects a dialectical, inseparable relationship between humans and nature, highlighting the complexity and depth of social development in relation to the natural world. As they stated, “The human essence of nature exists only in relation to

human society, because it is only within society that nature for humans serves as a link between humans... it is only within society that nature appears as the basis for the human existence of the person.”

Marxism-Leninism holds that humans are an integral part of nature; therefore, all human activities must comply with the laws of nature. Violating these laws leads to negative consequences caused by natural reactions. The relationship between humans and nature is a two-way interaction, in which the impact of nature depends on how humans transform the environment. Cultural behavior toward the natural environment plays a fundamental role in shaping this relationship. In production, humans have exploited and transformed nature extensively, extracting increasing amounts of material resources to meet societal needs, especially when combined with the application of modern science and technology. Specifically, with increasingly advanced tools, humans have demonstrated their power in conquering nature, which simultaneously disrupts the inherent balance of the natural environment.

F. Engels emphasized the process of conquering and transforming nature in the course of social production, highlighting the impact of humans on the natural world, rather than nature solely determining human activity. Through labor in production, humans alter nature and even control it to serve their purposes. The distinction lies in that “Animals only reproduce themselves, whereas humans reproduce the whole of nature.”

Based on the above analysis, the author of the dissertation holds that cultural behavior toward the natural environment is the aggregate of human attitudes, norms, and behaviors in the processes of exploiting, utilizing, transforming, and protecting natural elements. This form of culture is formed and regulated on the basis of cognition, emotions, individual value systems, and community cultural norms, aiming to ensure harmony between humans and nature and to promote sustainable development. Such cultural behavior reflects the relationship between humans and the natural environment in terms of exploitation and utilization, as well as awareness and practices of protecting, regenerating, and restoring natural resources, thereby ensuring sustainable development for both humans and ecosystems within specific historical periods. Therefore, when referring to cultural behavior toward the natural environment, emphasis is placed on the cultural dimension of human communities that interact with the natural environment on a daily basis, where repeated and collective actions are carried out systematically and endowed with specific social meanings, shaping and regulating the cognition, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals within the community.

2.2. CULTURAL BEHAVIOR TOWARD THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG MEKONG DELTA RESIDENTS - CONCEPT, CONTENT, AND SIGNIFICANCE

2.2.1. Concept of Cultural Behavior Toward the Natural Environment of Mekong Delta Residents

According to the perspective of historical materialism, culture is a component of the superstructure, reflecting social existence, including the relations of production, the level of development of productive forces, and human living conditions. As a form of

social consciousness, culture is always determined and influenced by the infrastructure, that is, social existence.

The Mekong Delta region comprises five provinces and cities: Can Tho, Vinh Long, Dong Thap, An Giang, and Ca Mau, according to Notification No. 65-TB/ĐU dated June 4, 2025, from the Standing Committee of the Party Committee of the Government regarding the orientation for regional adjustment and socio-economic planning. This region is a key agricultural economic zone of the country, featuring a complex network of rivers, fertile land, and playing a crucial role in national food security.

Firstly, Distinct Natural Conditions of the Mekong Delta Localities

As the largest river delta in southern Vietnam, the Mekong Delta (Mekong Delta Region - MDR) borders Cambodia to the north, the Southeast region to the northeast, the East and South to the East Sea, and the southwest to the Gulf of Thailand. Thanks to its strategic location, the region enjoys well-developed domestic and international trade via both waterways and roads. The terrain is mainly low and flat, with an average elevation ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 meters above sea level, which is favorable for agricultural activities, particularly rice cultivation and aquaculture. A dense network of rivers and canals is a prominent feature of the Mekong Delta, contributing to the region's unique geographical and ecological structure. With natural river systems such as the Tien River and Hau River, alongside thousands of man-made canals, the region's hydrology not only regulates water for agricultural production but also plays a vital role in local life, daily activities, and culture. The dense distribution of rivers and canals also facilitates waterway transportation, fisheries development, and eco-tourism.

Second, Economic Conditions in the Localities of the Mekong Delta

The economic development of this region exhibits distinctive characteristics, summarized as follows:

First, the economic structure of the Mekong Delta has undergone significant changes in recent decades, reflecting the shift toward industrialization and modernization while maintaining the region's agricultural characteristics. Traditionally a key agricultural production area of the country, the Mekong Delta continues to play a leading role in rice production (accounting for approximately 50% of the national output), aquaculture (70% of cultivated seafood output), and fruit production (60% of the national output).

Second, the technical infrastructure and transportation networks in many localities remain underdeveloped and lack synchronization, creating considerable obstacles for attracting investment and expanding economic activities. The poor connectivity of major transportation routes—including roads, waterways, and supporting logistics—raises transportation costs, prolongs goods circulation time, and reduces the competitiveness of localities in forming and developing value chains.

Third, the impacts of climate change, saline intrusion, and land subsidence threaten the sustainability of traditional agricultural economies. Agriculture in the Mekong Delta,

historically built on a stable relationship between the natural environment and humans, is fundamentally affected.

Fourth, the local labor force in the Mekong Delta exhibits several limitations, particularly a shortage of highly skilled workers due to inadequate training and inefficient utilization. This situation not only affects labor productivity but also diminishes the region's competitiveness and attractiveness to investors.

Therefore, despite significant potential and advantages for economic development, the Mekong Delta has not yet optimally utilized its resources in a manner consistent with a culture of responsible interaction with the natural environment to promote economic growth and improve residents' livelihoods.

Third, Socio-Cultural Characteristics and Population of the Mekong Delta Localities

First, the culture of the Mekong Delta, also known as the Southwestern culture, is deeply influenced by the natural environment and specific social conditions, giving rise to two prominent characteristics: the "riverine" nature and the emphasis on loyalty and social bonds.

Second, regarding the population, the Mekong Delta has approximately 17,744,947 residents (2024). The population is relatively young, with about 53% under 20 years old, 24.3% aged 20 to 34, and 22.7% over 35 years old.

Based on these perspectives and the distinctive natural environment of the Mekong Delta localities, the dissertation author defines cultural behavior toward the natural environment of Mekong Delta residents as the totality of principles, values, norms, attitudes, and behaviors of residents toward the natural environment during the process of existence and development. This behavior is formed and regulated based on cognition, emotions, individual value systems, and community cultural norms. It reflects the relationship between residents and the natural environment in terms of resource exploitation, utilization, and conscious protection, restoration, and regeneration, aiming to ensure sustainable development for both humans and ecosystems in specific historical periods.

Thus, the conceptual content of cultural behavior toward the natural environment, as defined in the dissertation, establishes the core focus of the study on the cultural behavior of Mekong Delta residents, which includes: (1) Residents' awareness of rules and norms for interacting with the natural environment; (2) Residents' attitudes and behaviors in exploiting and using natural resources rationally; (3) Residents' attitudes and behaviors in protecting, restoring, and regenerating natural resources.

2.2.2. Content of Cultural Behavior Toward the Natural Environment of Mekong Delta Residents

Firstly, Awareness of Mekong Delta Residents in Forming Rules and Norms for Behavior Toward the Natural Environment

Awareness refers to "the process of reflecting objective reality positively and creatively in the human mind; it is the result of the interaction between the subject and the object through practice." Rules are regulations that everyone must follow in a

common activity. Norms are socially established expectations regarding behaviors considered correct, appropriate, or acceptable within a community, group, or specific society; they indicate what “should” and “should not” be done based on shared values.

Awareness reflects an individual’s capacity to absorb scientific knowledge, critical thinking ability, and level of self-consciousness within the community. In the Mekong Delta, most residents live in rural areas and rely on agriculture, aquaculture, and river-based livelihoods, so educational levels and general knowledge vary across different localities in the region.

Environmental education, especially at the primary and secondary school levels, is a long-term tool to shape values and norms for environmentally friendly behavior. In addition, environmental policies from central to local levels, if implemented consistently, transparently, and in accordance with local conditions, provide a clear legal basis and guide residents’ awareness in the sustainable exploitation and use of natural resources.

Rules and norms in the cultural behavior toward the natural environment of Mekong Delta residents are expressed through laws, traditional village regulations (Hương ước), and community agreements (Quy ước), which crystallize residents’ awareness and actions in relation to nature. The law is the most effective tool for social management, enacted by the State to ensure citizens’ responsibilities, obligations, and rights regarding environmental protection, clearly reflected through the State’s system of policies and legislation.

Second, Attitudes and Behaviors of Residents in Exploiting and Using Natural Resources Rationally in the Mekong Delta Provinces

Exploitation and Use of Land Resources. In the Mekong Delta, where geomorphological conditions are complex, land is classified into several types such as alluvial soil, acid sulfate soil, and saline soil. Each type of land reflects the dialectical relationship between natural conditions and specific human production methods.

Exploitation and Use of Mangrove Forest Resources. Humans act as agents who modify nature through practice, yet at the same time must respect and preserve the natural conditions, which constitute the “inorganic body of humans.” Although mangrove ecosystems in the Mekong Delta occupy a relatively small area, they play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, supporting economic development, and adapting to climate change.

Exploitation and Use of Mineral Resources. From the perspective of historical materialism, the demand for socio-economic development is the driving force behind resource extraction. However, if environmental protection awareness is lacking, such activities can create a conflict between development and conservation.

Exploitation of Natural Landscapes for Tourism. Tourism in the Mekong Delta is currently developing rapidly, encompassing various types such as ecotourism, river-based tourism, garden-tourism, and cultural tourism. Popular destinations, including Can Tho, Vinh Long, Ca Mau, and An Giang, attract large numbers of domestic and international visitors.

Exploitation and Aquaculture in the Natural Environment. The use of unsustainable harvesting methods, such as electric fishing, explosives, and overfishing, has disrupted the ecological balance, reduced fishery yields, and negatively impacted biodiversity.

Third, the Attitudes and Behaviors of Residents in the Mekong Delta in Protecting and Restoring Natural Resources.

Behaviors for Protecting Natural Resources

First, specific behaviors in protecting mangrove forests and Melaleuca forests in some localities of the Mekong Delta. Protection of mangrove and Melaleuca forests refers to conscious actions by residents, carried out individually or collectively, to maintain, preserve, and prevent the degradation of these forests. These actions hold significant meaning within the culture of environmental interaction among residents, reflecting a dialectical relationship between awareness, practice, and social existence. Initially, residents demonstrate their commitment by refraining from unauthorized deforestation for shrimp farming or housing construction, thereby supporting natural resource conservation policies.

Second, behaviors in protecting water and soil resources. From the perspective of social existence, protecting natural resources in the Mekong Delta not only reflects environmental awareness but is also essential for maintaining production methods and stabilizing the livelihoods of local communities, aiming toward sustainable development. Resolution No. 13-NQ/TW (2022) on socio-economic development and ensuring national defense and security in the Mekong Delta until 2030, with a vision toward 2045, emphasizes that water resources are the “core factor” of the region.

Third, controlled aquatic resource harvesting by residents of the Mekong Delta reflects the relationship between production foundations, livelihood needs, and the principles of protecting natural resources. This is not merely a customary practice but also the result of social regulation through legal provisions and community conventions (Hương ước) in local areas. Mekong Delta residents refrain from fishing during the breeding season of species such as young linh fish to safeguard aquatic resources for the future.

Specific Behaviors in the Restoration of Natural Resources

Firstly, the practice of planting mangrove and protective forests by the residents of the Mekong Delta is not only a response to environmental changes but also a form of shaped production practice. These actions not only contribute to greening the natural environment but also affirm the close interconnection between production methods, ecological awareness, and social relations. Thanks to supportive policies, scientific techniques, and community organization mechanisms, these practices have become systematic, effective, and sustainable, marking a transition from mere protection to ecosystem restoration aimed at promoting social development in harmony with the region's natural environment.

Secondly, the practice of restoring degraded agricultural land reflects the reciprocal relationship between awareness and production practice. Residents not only recognize

the urgent need for soil rehabilitation but also apply knowledge and practical experience to achieve dual benefits: restoring the land while gaining socio-ecological and economic advantages. Specifically, the use of microbial preparations combined with crop rotation not only helps loosen the soil and improve its fertility but also contributes to reducing environmental pollution and optimizing the use of local resources.

Thirdly, the actions of local residents in regenerating aquatic resources in the Mekong Delta reflect a harmony between traditional beliefs, community practices, and environmental responsibility. In particular, their participation in activities such as releasing fingerlings and conserving floodplain fish during the high-water season is not merely a spiritual ritual, but also a deliberate biological action aimed at sustaining aquatic resources.

2.2.3. The importance of cultivating a culture of interaction with the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta

First, developing such an environmental interaction culture serves to adjust and orient residents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward the natural environment in the Mekong Delta.

Building a culture of interaction with the natural environment is the process of forming, consolidating, and developing a system of positive values, norms, and behaviors within the community toward the natural environment, thereby achieving harmony between socio-economic development and the protection of natural resources. This is because such a cultural framework plays a crucial role in raising awareness, shaping attitudes, and guiding the behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in the processes of exploiting, utilizing, protecting, and restoring natural resources within their environment.

Second, cultivating a culture of interaction with the natural environment serves to prevent improper perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of residents toward the natural environment in the Mekong Delta.

First, this cultural role helps prevent inappropriate behaviors toward the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents, thereby contributing to the mitigation of deviant practices in environmental interaction.

Second, it prevents distorted perceptions through education, communication, and community norms. In the modern context-where industrialization and climate change have intensified environmentally harmful actions-the regulatory function of culture becomes increasingly essential in preventing misperceptions regarding the natural environment.

Third, an environmental interaction culture helps prevent destructive actions against the natural environment. The dissemination and presence of ecological cultural values within community life play an especially important role in curbing behaviors that cause damage to the natural environment.

Third, a culture of interaction with the natural environment contributes to sustainable development in the Mekong Delta.

First, the culture of interaction with the natural environment functions as a regulatory factor for the perceptions and behaviors of residents in the Mekong Delta. It constitutes a system of values, beliefs, and norms preserved by the community across generations, guiding residents to live in harmony with the natural environment.

Second, traditional environmental interaction culture supports the capacity for adaptation and resource recovery in the context of climate change. Faced with challenges such as climate change, salinity intrusion, and land subsidence, the traditional environmental practices of Mekong Delta residents have become an important cultural resource that enhances adaptability and the restoration of natural resources.

Third, fostering and disseminating an environmentally friendly interaction culture serves as a driving force for sustainable development across the region. In the process of pursuing sustainable development, the cultivation and diffusion of a culture of environmentally responsible interaction holds strategic significance for the Mekong Delta.

2.3. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA

2.3.1. Objective factors

First, the distinctive natural conditions characterized by two seasons (rainy and dry), along with an interwoven freshwater-brackish-saltwater ecosystem, low-lying terrain frequently exposed to flooding from tidal surges, salinity intrusion, erosion, subsidence, and alluvial deposition-combined with a dense canal network-have shaped seasonal cultivation practices and resource exploitation based on natural ecological cycles. These conditions have fostered a way of life that is “nature-attuned,” guided by the principle of “knowing sufficiency,” and characterized by strong community cohesion and high adaptability.

Second, the socio-economic structure has been shifting toward a higher proportion of industry and services; in particular, urbanization and the transition to large-scale commodity production have led to intensive exploitation of land, water, and forest resources for market-oriented purposes.

Third, climate change and global impacts-such as sea-level rise, alterations in the Mekong River’s flow regime, and transboundary pollution-have disrupted the natural environment of the region, especially its ecosystems.

2.3.2. Subjective factors

First, individual and community awareness. Among the various factors influencing the culture of interaction with the natural environment, the awareness held by individuals and society plays a central role, serving as a decisive element in shaping behaviors and social norms.

Second, the customs and habitual practices of production and daily life have been crystallized through long-term adaptation of residents to the region’s unique socio-natural conditions. In the Mekong Delta, seasonal cultivation practices aligned with the flood cycle are closely tied to the rhythm of life and livelihoods of the people-both harnessing the benefits of floodwaters and simultaneously protecting and regenerating natural resources, utilizing silt and floodwater as natural nourishment for the soil.

Third, the orientations and directives of the Party, the State, and local authorities influence the culture of interaction with the natural environment, playing a guiding role in shaping awareness and regulating the environmental behaviors of residents across the Mekong Delta.

Chapter 3

THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA TODAY - CURRENT SITUATION AND EMERGING ISSUES

3.1. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA

3.1.1. Strengths in the Culture of Interaction with the Natural Environment among Residents of the Mekong Delta Today

3.1.1.1. Cognitive strengths among Mekong Delta residents in forming rules and norms of interaction with the natural environment

First, the level of access to and understanding of the concept of “Culture of interaction with the natural environment” among Mekong Delta residents, as reflected through empirical survey results.

Second, the degree of access to information and legal regulatory documents related to environmental interaction culture is considered an objective foundation shaping and orienting residents’ behaviors toward their living environment.

Third, the awareness of Mekong Delta residents regarding the responsibility and origin of the establishment of rules and norms in the culture of interaction with the natural environment clearly reflects a positive shift in social cognition, while also demonstrating an important foundation for developing such environmental culture.

3.1.1.2. Strengths in the attitudes and behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in the rational exploitation and use of natural resources

First, the attitudes and behaviors of residents in the exploitation of natural resources in the Mekong Delta’s environment today.

Second, the attitudes and behaviors of residents in the rational use of natural resources in the natural environment of the Mekong Delta today. The behavior of natural resource use encompasses the purposeful actions of residents in utilizing and allocating natural resource elements such as land, water, forests, wetland ecosystems, and aquatic resources to serve daily life, production activities, and the socio-economic development of the region.

3.1.1.3. Strengths in the attitudes and behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in protecting and restoring natural resources in the environment

First, the attitudes and behaviors of residents in protecting natural resources in the region. The coastal protective forest conservation and development project

in Sóc Trăng Province during 2011-2020, implemented under Decision No. 351/QĐHC of the Provincial People's Committee dated April 24, 2013, has contributed to the expansion of mangrove forest areas in the province.

Second, the attitudes and behaviors of residents in restoring natural resources in the environment. The culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents is clearly reflected through actions aimed at restoring resources following exploitation activities.

3.1.2. Some limitations in the culture of interaction with the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta today

3.1.2.1. Limitations in the awareness of Mekong Delta residents in forming rules and norms of interaction with the natural environment

First, limitations exist in the level of access to and understanding of the concept of “culture of interaction with the natural environment” among Mekong Delta residents.

Second, given the incomplete understanding of this concept among a portion of the population, assessing the extent to which residents grasp relevant legal regulations and directives issued by local authorities becomes particularly essential.

Third, evaluating the limitations in awareness and social responsibility of the community toward the natural environment-and identifying residents' understanding of the key actors responsible for environmental cultural practices-reveals specific shortcomings.

3.1.2.2. Limitations in the attitudes and behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in the rational exploitation and use of natural resources

First, there are limitations in the attitudes and behaviors of residents regarding the exploitation of natural resources in the Mekong Delta today.

Second, there are shortcomings in residents' behaviors in resource utilization for production and daily life. The resource-use practices of Mekong Delta residents often involve uncontrolled and inefficient consumption, both in economic activities and in everyday living.

3.1.2.3. Limitations in the attitudes and behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in protecting and restoring natural resources

First, there are limitations in behaviors related to the protection of natural resources. Survey results indicate a concerning level of indifference and tolerance among a segment of the population toward actions that cause harm to the natural environment.

Second, there are limitations in behaviors regarding the restoration of natural resources. The survey reveals an alarming situation of neglect and weak community engagement in efforts to regenerate mangrove forests and coastal

protective forests-two natural ecosystems that play an especially vital role in environmental protection and climate change adaptation in the Mekong Delta.

3.2. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA

3.2.1. Issues arising from the current state of awareness among Mekong Delta residents in forming cultural rules and norms of interaction with the natural environment

First, the existing rules and norms have not yet adapted to the current context of change. The rules, village conventions, and community agreements related to the protection of the natural environment in many areas of the Mekong Delta continue to serve as behavioral guidelines for local communities.

Second, there remains a gap between the existence of norms and the level of public acceptance. The presence of rules and norms regarding environmental interaction does not necessarily guarantee that they are fully acknowledged or practiced by the community.

Third, issues arising from the legal framework for natural environmental protection. In recent years, the State has issued several important legal documents-such as the Law on Environmental Protection (2020), the Law on Fisheries (2017), and the Land Law (2013, amended 2024), along with related decrees and circulars-in order to provide a solid legal foundation for the management, exploitation, and protection of natural resources in the Mekong Delta.

Fourth, digital transformation in cultural practices and the challenges of community accessibility in Mekong Delta localities. The 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed: Develop the digital economy and digital society, with a focus on removing barriers related to legal frameworks and administrative procedures for scientific and technological innovation... Implement national digital transformation in state governance, national administration, social organization, and the management of national resources.

Fifth, certain local policies lack adaptability to the region's natural environmental characteristics. The Government has approved a long-term integrated regional planning framework for the Mekong Delta to address increasingly complex development challenges. This plan emphasizes the importance of a regional approach and the necessity of cooperation rather than competition among localities... to solve problems in the context of limited resources.

3.2.2. Issues arising from the current attitudes and practices of Mekong Delta residents in the exploitation and use of natural resources.

First, positive awareness of resource protection has not been effectively translated into sustainable exploitation and use. Surveys conducted in multiple localities indicate that, in general, residents of the Mekong Delta demonstrate a positive perception of natural resources and acknowledge their importance in shaping cultural attitudes toward the natural environment.

Second, natural resources are often traded off for immediate livelihood benefits. While the need to improve economic conditions is legitimate and pressing, many residents tend to maximize resource extraction without regard for the regenerative capacity of local ecosystems.

Third, market-driven pressures result in profit outweighing environmental responsibility. Within a market economy, profit maximization often prevails; however, in the Mekong Delta, when such incentives lack regulation by principles of sustainable extraction and environmental protection, they lead to unsustainable exploitation practices.

Fourth, the long-standing tradition of living in harmony with nature contrasts with current resource-use practices. Historically, the Mekong Delta community has maintained a lifestyle closely tied to natural conditions-rivers, mangrove forests, and local ecosystems-yet this cultural embeddedness increasingly conflicts with modern methods of resource utilization.

3.2.3. Issues arising from the current attitudes and behaviors of Mekong Delta residents in the protection and restoration of natural resources

First, the attitudes and behaviors of a segment of the population toward the protection and restoration of natural resources remain misaligned with the goals of sustainable development. Residents of the Mekong Delta are aware of the importance of safeguarding and restoring various types of natural resources-from mangrove forests and fisheries to land and water-but this understanding has not consistently been transformed into sustainable practices.

Second, the traditional culture of harmony with nature has been overshadowed by instrumental forms of exploitation. Historically, Mekong Delta communities lived in symbiosis with the ecosystem, adapting to seasonal flooding, utilizing resources according to seasonal cycles, and relying on indigenous ecological knowledge accumulated across generations.

Third, restoration efforts have not kept pace with the rate of resource exploitation. Although there have been positive developments such as reforestation, fisheries replenishment, and environmental awareness campaigns, these activities remain largely fragmented, sporadic, and insufficient in scale to decelerate environmental degradation.

Fourth, collective environmental protection behaviors are not consistently reflected in everyday personal habits. While many residents willingly participate in communal activities such as environmental cleanup, forest planting, or fish

release campaigns, these actions do not always translate into sustainable individual practices in daily life.

Chapter 4

SOME FUNDAMENTAL SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA TODAY

4.1. PROMOTING EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION TO ENHANCE AWARENESS OF THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA TODAY

4.1.1. Raising Awareness of the Culture of Interaction with the Natural Environment among Mekong Delta Residents through Education and Training Activities

First, for students-the future key actors-environmental education should be integrated into both the formal curriculum and extracurricular activities through hands-on experiences, such as visiting mangrove forests, exploring local ecosystems in different areas, and learning skills in waste sorting and sustainable consumption.

Second, for residents directly involved in the exploitation and use of natural resources, training activities should focus on imparting knowledge to modify behaviors that are inconsistent with the cultural norms of environmental interaction.

Third, raising awareness of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among local officials and community organizations in the Mekong Delta plays a crucial role in promoting and shaping ecological behaviors within the community.

Fourth, for local enterprises, enhancing awareness and responsibility in protecting the natural environment is a key factor in achieving sustainable development.

4.1.2. Raising Awareness of the Culture of Interaction with the Natural Environment among Mekong Delta Residents through Art and Cultural Communication Activities

First, folk and contemporary arts serve as a medium to disseminate messages about the protection of the natural environment. Traditional art forms, such as cải lương, hò, vè, and đờn ca tài tử, have long been closely intertwined with the cultural and spiritual life of Mekong Delta residents.

Second, cultural communication acts as a tool to shape social attitudes and behaviors toward the environment. Communication is not only a means of conveying information but also a process of restructuring awareness, forming community values, and establishing behavioral norms.

4.1.3. Enhancing the Awareness of Cultural Behavior toward the Natural Environment among Mekong Delta Residents through Labor and Production Activities

First, labor and production activities provide a practical environment for forming and shaping awareness. Through direct interaction with the natural environment, people accumulate experience, knowledge, and develop a culturally informed consciousness in their environmental interactions.

Second, the culture of interaction with the natural environment is transmitted through production practices, village conventions, and community agreements. During labor activities, environmentally friendly production customs form part of the cultural approach to environmental interaction, as reflected in traditional practices such as crop rotation, intercropping, the use of organic fertilizers, and the conservation of coastal mangrove forests.

4.2. ESTABLISHING AND PERFECTING MECHANISMS AND POLICIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE MEKONG DELTA TODAY

The mechanisms, policies, and legal frameworks of the State and local authorities play a pivotal role in establishing and enhancing the effectiveness of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents.

Improving these mechanisms, policies, and legal systems should not be limited to the enactment of regulations related to environmental interaction culture in general but should be expanded in a more comprehensive and profound manner.

4.2.1. Developing and Perfecting Mechanisms and Policies Related to the Culture of Interaction with the Natural Environment for Mekong Delta Residents

First, mechanisms and policies related to the culture of interaction with the natural environment play a key role in guiding behaviors, shaping attitudes, and promoting active community participation in the sustainable protection and exploitation of natural resources.

Second, addressing shortcomings and gaps in the system of mechanisms, policies, and legal frameworks related to environmental interaction culture should be considered a critical solution to enhance the economic and social well-being of residents in the Mekong Delta.

Third, it is necessary to supplement and perfect the legal framework related to the culture of interaction with the natural environment, ensuring alignment with the ecological and geographical characteristics of the provinces in the Mekong Delta.

Fourth, the system of sanctions and penalties for violations in the exploitation and use of natural resources in the Mekong Delta should be supplemented and adjusted to strengthen deterrence and ensure the effective enforcement of the law.

Fifth, legal regulations concerning inspection, supervision, and monitoring of compliance with environmental protection and natural resource management should be improved to ensure that organizations and individuals in the Mekong Delta strictly adhere to the law.

Sixth, local village conventions and community agreements in the Mekong Delta should be reviewed and supplemented to raise awareness and maintain a culture of harmonious interaction with the natural environment.

4.2.2. Developing and Perfecting Mechanisms, Policies, and Legal Frameworks for Incentives, Support, and Recognition of Residents Who Actively Participate in and Adhere to the Culture of Interaction with the Natural Environment in the Mekong Delta

First, it is necessary to develop and perfect mechanisms, policies, and legal frameworks that provide practical incentives, rewards, encouragement, and support for residents who actively participate in and adhere to the culture of interaction with the natural environment in the Mekong Delta.

Second, the financial and credit policy system should be improved to encourage enterprises and small production and business households to apply scientific and technological advances in production processes that are linked to environmental protection.

Third, recognition and communication to replicate exemplary models. A timely and appropriate reward system-both material and spiritual-should be established for individuals, communities, and organizations that make positive contributions to the sustainable use of resources and the preservation and restoration of the natural environment in the Mekong Delta.

Fourth, establishing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and transparency of the implementation of environmental interaction culture is a necessary step to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of environmental policies in the Mekong Delta.

Fifth, integrating the culture of interaction with the natural environment into provincial and regional sustainable development strategies is essential to ensure a systematic and long-term effectiveness in managing natural resources and the environment in the Mekong Delta.

4.3. PROMOTING THE ACTIVE AND PROACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF RESIDENTS IN PRACTICING THE CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE MEKONG DELTA

4.3.1. Linking the Protection and Restoration of Natural Resources with the Tangible Benefits for Residents of the Mekong Delta

First, linking environmental protection with residents' livelihoods and income. The protection and restoration of the natural environment should be closely integrated with the specific, both immediate and long-term, livelihood benefits of Mekong Delta residents. Instead of perceiving environmental protection as a burden or isolated responsibility, it should be transformed into an opportunity for sustainable livelihood development.

Second, converting waste into resources to promote a culture of ecological regeneration and circularity in the Mekong Delta. In the context of increasing environmental pressures and climate change, transforming waste into reusable resources

is not only a technical solution but also reflects a positive shift in the cultural approach of residents toward the natural environment.

Third, integrating the objectives of environmental interaction culture into social welfare and rural development programs, approached from the perspective of ecological behavioral culture. In the sustainable development of the Mekong Delta, promoting a culture of interaction with the natural environment among residents should be effectively embedded into social welfare and rural development programs-not merely as a supplementary goal, but as a foundation for long-term livelihoods and community well-being.

Fourth, promoting co-management mechanisms, enhancing community autonomy, and fostering a responsible culture of environmental interaction among Mekong Delta residents. Facing pressures from climate change and unsustainable resource exploitation, strengthening co-management between the State and local communities becomes an important solution, ensuring both the effective management of natural resources and the cultivation of a responsible environmental interaction culture.

4.3.2. Strengthening the Coordination of Local Communities in Promoting Cultural Behavior toward the Natural Environment for the Protection and Restoration of Resources in the Mekong Delta

First, strengthening coordination between management agencies, local authorities, communities, and enterprises in sharing the benefits from activities that protect and restore natural resources-such as minerals, land, fisheries, and mangrove forests-is an urgent requirement to establish a foundation for harmonious interaction between humans and the natural environment.

Second, enhancing inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary coordination mechanisms among leadership and management agencies in implementing the protection and restoration of natural resources is a critical requirement to improve governance effectiveness and promote sustainable environmental interaction.

Third, the Mekong Delta faces serious challenges from climate change and unsustainable exploitation. Close coordination between political and social organizations, led by the Vietnam Fatherland Front at all levels, and local Departments of Natural Resources and Environment becomes an important solution to foster a harmonious and responsible culture of environmental interaction.

Fourth, strengthening cooperation among international organizations, government bodies, and local communities in protecting and restoring natural resources in the Mekong Delta is not only an urgent practical requirement but also reflects a people-centered sustainable development mindset.

4.3.3. Strengthening Resources to Promote Cultural Behavior toward the Natural Environment, Contributing to the Protection and Restoration of Natural Resources in the Mekong Delta

First, financial resources are a fundamental factor that determines the effectiveness of activities aimed at protecting and restoring natural resources in the Mekong Delta. To promote a culture of environmental interaction practically and sustainably, funding must

be ensured for activities such as community education, awareness-raising communication, skill training, supporting the transition to sustainable production models for residents, as well as the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded ecosystems.

Second, human resources play a central role in implementing and disseminating the culture of interaction with the natural environment in the Mekong Delta. People are the direct agents executing policies and programs, as well as driving changes in community awareness and behavior regarding the protection and restoration of natural resources.

Third, knowledge resources are crucial in promoting a culture of interaction with the natural environment. In this context, knowledge encompasses not only modern scientific understanding but also local, indigenous knowledge-accumulated through long-term living and close interaction with the environment by residents.

Fourth, institutional resources provide the structural foundation for the entire system of natural resource protection and restoration. This includes the legal framework, policies, and organizational apparatus that coordinate related activities. Institutions not only guide the process but also ensure the feasibility and effectiveness of programs that promote the culture of environmental interaction in the Mekong Delta.

CONCLUSION

The existence and development of humanity are always closely intertwined with the natural environment, as it provides essential elements for daily life and production. Through socio-economic activities, humans continuously impact the natural environment, from resource exploitation and landscape alteration to waste discharge and pollution.

In the theoretical study of culture and the culture of interaction with the natural environment among residents of the Mekong Delta, this dissertation focuses on clarifying key concepts: culture, culture of interaction, environment, natural environment, and the culture of interaction with the natural environment, as they relate to the issue of environmental interaction culture among Mekong Delta residents (including the concepts, content, and significance of the culture of interaction with the natural environment in the region).

On this basis, the dissertation defines the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents as: the residents' awareness of rules and norms for interacting with the natural environment; their attitudes and behaviors in the sustainable exploitation and use of natural resources; and their attitudes and behaviors in protecting and restoring natural resources. From this perspective, the study highlights the importance of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents in enhancing their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors toward environmental protection, preventing incorrect perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in

environmental interaction, and contributing to the sustainable development of the Mekong Delta region.

In examining the current state of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents, the dissertation analyzes the achieved outcomes in three aspects:

First, regarding residents' awareness of rules and norms for interacting with the natural environment, both positive aspects and limitations are evident, reflecting the complex interplay between cultural traditions, livelihood conditions, and the impacts of modernization. Positively, the majority of Mekong Delta residents still maintain profound local ecological knowledge.

Second, residents' attitudes and behaviors in exploiting and using natural resources reflect a close relationship between indigenous knowledge, livelihood needs, and access to sustainable development standards. On the positive side, most residents demonstrate constructive attitudes toward environmental interaction culture by utilizing natural resources in a prudent and rational manner.

Third, residents' attitudes and behaviors in protecting and restoring natural resources reveal an interplay among community awareness, traditional knowledge, and livelihood pressures in the context of climate change and over-exploitation.

In addition, the dissertation identifies issues arising from the current state of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents, highlighting existing shortcomings: (1) residents' awareness of rules and norms for interacting with the natural environment reveals contradictions in the context of climate change and environmental pollution; (2) the current practices of exploiting and using natural resources demonstrate notable inconsistencies between positive awareness and unsustainable behaviors; (3) residents' attitudes and behaviors in protecting and restoring natural resources exhibit multiple internal contradictions, posing significant challenges within the framework of sustainable development.

Based on the theoretical study and practical survey of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents, as presented in Chapters 2 and 3, the dissertation proposes several fundamental solutions to enhance this culture across localities in the region: (1) Strengthening education and communication to raise awareness of the culture of interaction with the natural environment among residents; (2) Developing and improving mechanisms and policies that contribute to enhancing residents' culture of interaction with the natural environment; (3) Promoting residents' proactive and active engagement in implementing environmental interaction culture. The coordinated implementation of these solutions is expected to significantly enhance the culture of interaction with the natural environment among Mekong Delta residents.

LIST OF THE AUTHOR’S PUBLISHED WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

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2. Le Trong Hung (2025). “Applying the Marxist-Leninist Perspective on the Relationship between Humans and Nature in Building a Culture of Interaction with the Natural Environment,” Political Theory Journal, <http://lyluanchinhtri.vn/>.
3. Le Trong Hung (2023). “Philosophical perspective of Marxism-Leninism on the relationship between behavioral culture and the natural environment” International Journal. European Journal of Political Science Studies, Volume 6, Issue 3, 2023, Mã số ISSN:2601-2766) DoI:10.46827/ejpss.v6i3.1550