

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

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**APPLICATION OF LAW IN THE INVESTIGATION
OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL CASES
BY THE POLICE FORCES OF THE
NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM**

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

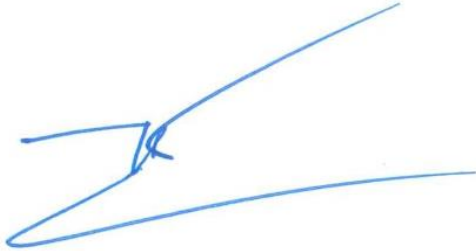
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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale of the Topic

In recent years, under the policy of national renewal (Đổi mới) and through the implementation of various socio-economic development programs, Vietnam in general and the Northwestern provinces in particular have achieved significant accomplishments in economic, cultural, and social development. The people's living standards have been improved, and political security and social order have been fundamentally maintained. However, under the negative impacts of the market economy, the crime situation particularly drug-related crimes has become increasingly complex, with criminal acts exhibiting higher levels of organization, aggression, and danger.

Many criminal groups and transnational drug trafficking networks have operated with increasingly sophisticated and audacious methods. To transport drugs across borders, offenders often exploit ethnic minority residents with limited legal awareness, the region's rugged terrain, or employ advanced technologies for communication, transportation, and money laundering. They also use social media platforms and virtual currencies to conceal their identities, posing serious challenges to investigation work.

Moreover, perceptions of drug addicts have evolved: they are not only victims but also essential links in drug crime networks, acting as consumers, couriers, or even small-scale dealers. Faced with this situation, and in line with the State's broader policy of judicial reform, relevant agencies, especially the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces, have proactively implemented various measures to combat drug-related crimes. Among these measures, the application of law in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases is considered a core operational activity.

The application of law in investigating drug-related criminal cases by the People's Police represents a specific form of law enforcement, in which investigative bodies within the People's Police, based on legal provisions, issue individual legal decisions that give rise to, modify, or terminate criminal procedural relations during the investigation phase of drug-related cases, ensuring that cases are handled strictly and in accordance with the law.

According to data from the Police of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam, between 2015 and 2024, the process of law application in drug-related investigations recorded 1,021 criminal reports and denunciations, of which 783 cases were verified, prosecuted, and investigated following criminal procedural rules, leading to the prosecution of 2,457 offenders. This contributed significantly to improving the effectiveness of drug crime prevention and control in the region. However, several limitations remain, such as procedural errors in the application of law during investigations; insufficient quantity and quality of investigators; outdated facilities and technical equipment; and a relatively low number of cases being fully processed through criminal proceedings. These shortcomings have hindered drug crime control efforts and reduced the quality of law application in drug investigations conducted by the Northwestern provincial police forces.

Meanwhile, theoretical legal research has not yet kept pace with practical demands. Although some scientific works have addressed aspects of law application in drug-related criminal investigations, they have mostly focused on partial or isolated issues. No comprehensive study has yet examined the application of law in drug investigations conducted by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam. Therefore, to improve the effectiveness of law application in this area, it is essential to undertake a systematic and in-depth scientific study.

For these reasons, the doctoral candidate has chosen the topic *“Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-related Criminal Cases by the Police Forces of the Northwestern Provinces of Vietnam”* as the subject of this doctoral dissertation.

2. Research Objectives and Tasks

2.1. Research Objectives

Based on an analysis and clarification of the theoretical foundations of law application in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the People’s Police, and an assessment of its current state in the Northwestern provinces, the dissertation proposes viewpoints and solutions to ensure more effective law application in such investigations in the future.

2.2. Research Tasks

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

- To synthesize and analyze domestic and international research works related to the topic; to assess their findings and identify existing gaps that need further exploration.

- To analyze and clarify the theoretical foundations of law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases conducted by the People’s Police.

- To examine and evaluate the current state of law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam during 2015-2024.

- To propose scientifically and practically grounded viewpoints and solutions to ensure effective law application in the investigation of drug-related crimes by the Northwestern provincial police forces.

3. Research Subjects and Scope

3.1. Research Subjects

- Theoretical issues related to law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases by the People’s Police of Vietnam.

- The practical implementation of law in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam.

3.2. Research Scope

- Content scope: The dissertation focuses on the application of law in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the People's Police; it does not address investigations under the jurisdiction of the People's Army or other agencies.

- Geographical scope: The research covers the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam, including Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Son La, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, and Hoa Binh. However, pursuant to Resolution No. 202/2025/QH15 dated June 12, 2025, effective from July 1, 2025, the Northwestern provinces will be reorganized as follows: Lao Cai and Yen Bai merged into Lao Cai Province, and Hoa Binh merged into Phu Tho Province (comprising Phu Tho, Vinh Phuc, and Hoa Binh).

- Temporal scope: The research examines the period from 2015 to 2024.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Methodological Foundation

The dissertation is based on the dialectical and historical materialism of Marxism-Leninism, as well as the viewpoints of the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam, and the theoretical foundations of the history and theory of the State and law.

4.2. Specific Research Methods

A combination of scientific research methods is employed to clarify the research content, including:

- Documentary research method: Applied mainly in Chapters 1, 2, and parts of Chapter 3. The doctoral candidate collected data from the Department of Drug Crime Investigation (Ministry of Public Security), the Supreme People's Procuracy, the Supreme People's Court, universities in

Hanoi offering law programs, and libraries. Sources include annual reports, case files, scientific projects, articles, conference proceedings, and dissertations related to drug crimes.

- Synthesis, statistical, analytical, and comparative methods: Based on collected data, the candidate synthesized and statistically analyzed information, then compared and contrasted findings to highlight the organization and implementation of law application in drug-related criminal investigations by the People's Police. These methods are mainly employed in Chapters 3 and 4.

- Case study method: The candidate examined 150 case files of drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the Northwestern provincial police to analyze crime patterns and characteristics, ensuring that the evaluation closely reflects practical realities.

- Expert consultation method: The candidate consulted with experts and experienced investigators specializing in drug-related crime to clarify theoretical and practical issues of the dissertation.

- Workshop and seminar method: Through organizing and participating in academic workshops and seminars at faculty and institutional levels, the candidate received valuable insights and feedback from scholars, practitioners, and specialists to refine the dissertation's content.

5. Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Dissertation

- *Theoretical significance*: The dissertation analyzes and clarifies the theoretical understanding of drug crime investigation, contributing to the development and refinement of the theory of law application in drug-related criminal investigations by the People's Police. Its findings may serve as reference material for research, teaching, and study in universities offering law programs.

- *Practical significance*: The proposed system of solutions contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam.

6. New Contributions of the Dissertation

This dissertation is the first comprehensive scientific study on the application of law in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases conducted by the People's Police of Vietnam, making the following contributions:

- Formulates a conceptual framework and clarifies the characteristics, roles, and conditions ensuring the application of law in drug-related criminal investigations by the People's Police.

- Evaluates the current state of law application in drug-related criminal investigations by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces, identifying strengths, limitations, and their underlying causes.

- Provides theoretical justification and proposes solutions to improve the effectiveness of law application in drug-related criminal investigations by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of the following parts: Introduction, Main Content, Conclusion, References, and Appendices. The Main Content section includes four chapters divided into twelve subsections.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH SITUATION

1.1. DOMESTIC RESEARCH RELATED TO THE TOPIC

1.1.1. Group of Studies on the Investigation of Drug-related Criminal Cases

The dissertation reviews a group of studies concerning the investigation of drug-related criminal cases conducted by the People's Police. These include books, textbooks, scientific projects, doctoral dissertations, and academic articles that provide valuable theoretical and empirical foundations relevant to the topic.

1.1.2. Group of Studies on the Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-related Criminal Cases

The dissertation also surveys research works related to the application of law in drug-related criminal investigations carried out by the People's Police. These studies, presented in the form of books, textbooks, scientific projects, doctoral theses, and scholarly articles, offer useful theoretical insights and practical references that serve as a basis for further analysis in this dissertation.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN RESEARCH

1.2.1. Studies on the Application of Law in Drug-related Criminal Investigations

Through the review of international scientific works related to law application in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by police forces, the doctoral candidate recognizes the serious nature of drug-related crimes in global and regional hotspots. From these studies, the candidate has gained additional knowledge about national legal frameworks, as well as how governments in various countries perceive and prioritize responses to drug-related crimes.

1.2.2. Studies on the Application of Law in Drug-related Criminal Investigations

By examining international research on the application of law in the investigation of drug-related offenses, the dissertation identifies valuable perspectives from foreign scholars. These works provide comparative insights into legal systems, enforcement practices, and conceptual approaches that enrich the candidate's understanding of law application in drug crime investigations.

1.3. ASSESSMENT OF THE RESEARCH SITUATION

1.3.1. Issues that Can Be Inherited and Developed

A review of the relevant research shows that previous studies have made important contributions in both theoretical and practical aspects of drug crime prevention, as well as the legal framework governing law application in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the police. These contributions offer a valuable foundation for selective inheritance and further development in this dissertation.

1.3.2. Issues Related to the Topic That Have Not Been Comprehensively Addressed

Although existing studies have explored certain legal provisions and the coordination between investigative police and other relevant forces in handling drug-related cases, such analyses remain fragmented, inconsistent, and mostly appear in journal articles. Furthermore, most research concerning law application in drug-related criminal investigations has approached the issue primarily from criminological or crime-prevention perspectives. To date, there has been no comprehensive or systematic study on the application of law in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases conducted by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam, particularly from the theoretical and historical standpoint of the State and law.

1.3.3. Issues Requiring Further Research

First, theoretical issues related to the application of law in drug-related criminal investigations by the People's Police need to be further analyzed and clarified - including definitions, characteristics, roles, contents, procedural stages, and conditions ensuring lawful application during investigations.

Second, it is necessary to analyze the experience of drug crime investigations in selected countries and extract relevant lessons for Vietnam.

Third, research should examine contextual factors influencing law application - particularly the drug crime situation in the Northwestern provinces - and assess the actual implementation through empirical data, identifying achievements, limitations, and their underlying causes.

Fourth, it is essential to construct coherent and feasible viewpoints and propose systematic solutions to ensure effective law application in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the Northwestern provincial police forces, especially in the context of administrative streamlining, organizational restructuring of the People's Police, and the deepening process of globalization.

1.4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1. Research Hypothesis

The application of law in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the People's Police plays a particularly important role in combating and preventing drug-related crimes. In recent years, this activity has achieved certain positive outcomes in the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam. However, limitations and shortcomings still exist, while the drug crime situation in this region continues to evolve with increasing complexity, severity, and international linkage. Moreover, administrative reforms aimed at streamlining the state apparatus have brought new challenges and requirements. Therefore, in order to enhance the effectiveness of law application in the future, it is necessary to develop comprehensive, practical, and feasible solutions that can improve the

quality of law application in drug-related criminal investigations by the People's Police, meeting the urgent demands of drug crime prevention and control in the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam.

1.4.2. Research Questions

1. What is the nature of law application in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the People's Police? What are its distinguishing characteristics compared to other forms of law application? What are the contents and stages involved in this process?

2. What is the current state of law application in drug-related criminal investigations conducted by the Police Forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam? What limitations and shortcomings exist, and what are their causes?

3. What guiding viewpoints should be adopted in law application during the investigation of drug-related criminal cases in the Northwestern provinces? What solutions should be implemented to ensure the effectiveness of this activity in the future?

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF LAW IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL CASES BY THE PEOPLE'S POLICE

2.1. CONCEPTS, CHARACTERISTICS, ROLES, AND PRINCIPLES OF LAW APPLICATION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL CASES BY THE PEOPLE'S POLICE

2.1.1. The Concept of Drug Crime Investigation and the Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

2.1.1.1. The Concept of Drug Crime Investigation

The investigation of drug-related criminal cases by the People's Police refers to the process by which investigative police agencies at different

levels within the People's Public Security conduct a set of procedural activities, following the provisions and procedures of criminal procedure law. This process involves close coordination and assistance from relevant agencies, utilizing various methods, means, and measures to detect, collect, and verify information, materials, and evidence to fully clarify the facts of a drug-related case. The goal is to ensure that offenders are handled and cases resolved strictly and in accordance with the law.

2.1.1.2. The Concept of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases

The application of law in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases by the People's Police is a form of legal implementation in which investigative police agencies, based on legal provisions, issue specific legal decisions (legal application documents). These decisions create, modify, or terminate legal relationships within the stage of criminal investigation into drug-related offenses, ensuring that cases are handled accurately and in compliance with the law.

2.1.2. Characteristics of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

First, the application of law in drug crime investigation is carried out by specialized investigative units of the People's Police-particularly the Drug Crime Investigation Police Force-which serves as the core unit.

Second, this activity requires the close integration of both substantive and procedural legal applications.

Third, the application of law in drug-related investigations directly affects the fundamental rights of individuals subject to investigation; therefore, it demands carefulness, objectivity, and supervision by the People's Procuracy.

Fourth, drug crime investigation represents a specific form of individualized law application conducted by investigative authorities toward particular criminal cases.

Fifth, this process has distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from law application in the investigation of other types of crimes.

Sixth, the application of law in drug-related criminal investigations often involves transnational and organized crime with highly sophisticated methods, and it may include the use of special investigative measures under unique procedural rules.

2.1.3. The Role of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

First, it serves as the foundation for implementing subsequent stages of criminal proceedings in resolving drug-related cases.

Second, it contributes to protecting the interests of the State, and the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and individuals, while maintaining political security, social order, and legal discipline.

Third, it supports the study, formulation, and improvement of laws related to drug crime prevention and control.

Fourth, it promotes international cooperation and integration in the context of new global developments.

2.1.4. Principles of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

First, there must be legitimate grounds and justifiable reasons.

Second, it must be accurate, lawful, and fair.

Third, it must ensure the principle of legality in law application.

Fourth, It must align with the legislative purposes of the law.

Fifth, must ensure effectiveness in the implementation of legal norms.

2.2. CONTENTS, STAGES, AND CONDITIONS ENSURING LAW APPLICATION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL CASES BY THE PEOPLE'S POLICE

2.2.1. Contents of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

2.2.1.1. Application of law in receiving and handling denunciations, crime reports, and preliminary files on drug-related crimes

2.2.1.2. Application of law in initiating criminal cases and prosecuting offenders for drug-related crimes

2.2.1.3. Application of law in imposing preventive measures against individuals accused of drug-related crimes

2.2.1.4. Application of law in implementing investigative measures to collect and substantiate evidence of drug-related crimes

2.2.1.5. Application of law in concluding the investigation of drug-related criminal cases

2.2.2. Stages of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

2.2.2.1. Analysis of objective circumstances and legal facts in the investigation of drug-related cases

2.2.2.2. Selection of appropriate legal norms and clarification of their content and implications for the case under investigation

2.2.2.3. Issuance of legal decisions in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases

2.2.2.4. Organization and implementation of legal application documents in the investigation of drug-related cases

2.2.3. Conditions Ensuring the Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases by the People's Police

2.2.3.1. Political conditions ensuring effective law application

2.2.3.2. Legal conditions ensuring conformity and clarity of regulations

2.2.3.3. Conditions relating to the competence and qualifications of Heads, Deputy Heads of Investigative Agencies, Investigators, and Investigative Officers

2.2.3.4. Material and technical conditions ensuring adequate facilities and equipment for investigative agencies at all levels

2.2.3.5. Conditions ensuring effective inter-agency coordination in the investigation of drug-related cases by the People's Police

2.3. LAW APPLICATION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL CASES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES AND LESSONS FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S POLICE

2.3.1. Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Criminal Cases in Selected Countries

2.3.1.1. Law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases in the United States

2.3.1.2. Law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases in the Netherlands

2.3.1.3. Law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases in Singapore

2.3.1.4. Law application in the investigation of drug-related criminal cases in China

2.3.2. Lessons and Reference Values for Vietnam

First, the establishment and improvement of a coherent, comprehensive, yet flexible legal system is a foundational factor for enhancing the effectiveness of law application in drug crime investigations.

Second, the active integration of modern scientific and technological achievements into the investigative process is essential, particularly as drug criminals increasingly use high technology to conceal their offenses.

Third, building mechanisms for intersectoral and international cooperation in drug crime investigations is crucial.

Fourth, ensuring the respect and protection of human rights throughout the entire process of investigation, prosecution, and trial must be a priority.

Fifth, investing in the development of a highly qualified corps of investigators and law enforcement officers, well-trained and regularly updated in legal, professional, and technological knowledge, is key.

Sixth, strengthening the supervisory role of procuracies and establishing effective mechanisms for power control in the investigation of drug-related crimes are essential to ensuring legality and accountability.

Chapter 3

FACTORS AFFECTING AND THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LAW APPLICATION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CASES BY THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

3.1. FACTORS AFFECTING THE APPLICATION OF LAW IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CASES BY THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

3.1.1. Factors Related to Natural, Economic, and Social Characteristics

3.1.1.1. Favorable Factors

3.1.1.2. Adverse Factors

3.1.2. Factors Related to the Drug Crime Situation in the Northwestern Provinces

3.1.2.1. Positive Impacts

3.1.2.2. Negative Impacts

3.1.3. Factors Related to Organizational Structure and Competence of Heads, Deputy Heads of Investigation Agencies, Investigators, and Investigation Officers

3.1.3.1. Positive Impacts

3.1.3.2. Negative Impacts

3.2. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LAW APPLICATION IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CASES BY THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

3.2.1. Results of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Cases by the Public Security Forces of the Northwestern Provinces of Vietnam and Their Causes

3.2.1.1. Results of Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Cases by the Public Security Forces of the Northwestern Provinces of Vietnam

- First, regarding the application of law in receiving and handling denunciations and reports of drug-related crimes:

Between 2015 and 2024, the Public Security Forces of the Northwestern provinces received 1,021 denunciations and reports of drug-related crimes. After verification, 783 cases were confirmed as drug-related and processed under criminal procedural law. Among these:

The total number of received denunciations and reports classified as drug-related was 783.

Verified and processed denunciations and reports accounted for 77% (783/1,021).

Non-criminal denunciations or reports amounted to 238/1,021 (23%).

These results demonstrate that the application of law in receiving and handling denunciations and reports of drug-related crimes by the Public Security Forces in the Northwestern provinces has achieved positive outcomes. No serious violations of criminal procedural law have been recorded in this stage.

- Second, concerning the application of law in resolving denunciations, reports, and initiating criminal proceedings:

The Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provinces issued 52 decisions assigning Deputy Heads of Investigation Agencies to handle sources of criminal information; 324 investigators and officers participated in the process; 17 decisions were issued to replace Deputy Heads; 37 decisions to replace investigators and officers; 257 requests for extensions of time limits; 764 reports on the completion of handling sources of criminal information; 584 decisions to initiate criminal cases; 199 decisions not to initiate; 19 decisions to suspend, and 14 decisions to resume proceedings.

- Third, regarding the application of law to ensure the right to defense of arrested persons, suspects, and accused individuals:

The right to defense was established and implemented in accordance with criminal procedural law.

Requests for defense were properly received and processed, even in urgent cases involving detained or arrested suspects in drug-related cases.

The procedures ensuring the right to defense were strictly followed during interrogations, questioning, and other investigative actions.

- Fourth, regarding the application of law in initiating prosecutions and implementing preventive measures:

The Northwestern provincial police thoroughly analyzed the objective circumstances of each case and selected legal provisions accurately, resulting in 2,457 decisions to prosecute suspects in drug-related offenses, including various categories such as illegal production, trafficking, transportation, and organization of drug use. Preventive measures were applied as follows: temporary detention (61.24%), custody (10.98%), bail (25.46%), prohibition from leaving residence (58.50%), travel ban (38.53%), and property bail (0.29%).

- Fifth, regarding the application of law in implementing criminal procedural investigative measures to prove drug-related crimes:

These measures included taking statements, interrogation, confrontation, search and seizure, scene examination, body examination, re-enactment of events, forensic expertise, property valuation, and the use of special investigative techniques.

- Sixth, regarding the application of law in concluding investigations:

Investigations were completed and transferred to the People's Procuracy for prosecution in 674/783 cases (86.08%), involving 1,986/2,457 accused persons (80.83%).

Investigations were terminated in 109/783 cases (13.92%) and 471/2,457 accused persons (19.17%).

3.2.1.2. Causes of the Achieved Results

First, objective causes:

- The Party Committees at all levels have issued sound policies and provided decisive leadership in crime prevention, particularly in drug-related investigations in the Northwestern region.

- Legal frameworks for drug crime investigation have been gradually improved, providing a solid legal foundation for the effective direction and operation of investigative agencies.

- The awareness of suspects has improved after explanation and persuasion by investigators, resulting in better cooperation during investigations.

Second, subjective causes:

- The leadership and operational guidance of the Heads and Deputy Heads of Investigation Agencies have become more efficient.

- Most officers directly involved in investigations possess high professional competence and extensive legal and procedural knowledge.

- Preventive work against drug crimes has been strengthened, identifying the root causes and conditions leading to crime.

- Investigative agencies have ensured procedural compliance from the initial reception of cases through the assignment of investigators.

- Coordination with the People's Procuracy and other agencies in law application has been increasingly effective.

- Party Committees have prioritized professional training, refresher courses, and advanced legal education for investigators and officers.

- The political qualities, legal capacity, and professionalism of investigators have continued to improve.

3.2.2. Limitations in Law Application in the Investigation of Drug-Related Cases by the Public Security Forces of the Northwestern Provinces and Their Causes

3.2.2.1. Limitations

First, there remain certain errors in the application of law in receiving and handling denunciations and reports of drug-related crimes by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces.

Second, in some specific cases, investigators have not correctly identified the criminal charges.

Third, there are still cases in which investigators have not effectively

performed the stage of analyzing and comparing the circumstances of the incident reported by individuals or organizations with the relevant legal normative documents.

Fourth, the coordination between investigators and functional units both within and outside the police sector in receiving denunciations and reports of drug-related crimes is, at times, insufficiently close and effective.

Fifth, there remain limitations and shortcomings in the application of legal measures during the process of handling denunciations, reports of crimes, and initiating criminal proceedings related to drug offenses by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces.

Sixth, there are still limitations and shortcomings in the application of law in the prosecution of defendants and the application of preventive measures against drug-related offenders by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces.

Seventh, the selection of legal provisions for applying investigative measures in certain cases still reflects subjective or emotional judgment; the application of expert examination measures has sometimes not been conducted in a timely manner.

Eighth, there remain some limitations and shortcomings in the application of law during the conclusion of investigations into drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces.

3.2.2.2. Causes of the Limitations and Shortcomings

First, the laws governing the investigation of drug-related cases have revealed several limitations and inconsistencies, creating difficulties in their implementation.

Second, inadequacies exist in the organizational structure and operational mechanisms of the Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provincial police forces.

Third, a segment of officers and soldiers directly involved in the investigation of drug-related cases still lack a full understanding of the role, position, and importance of law application in such investigations; the

competence and qualifications of some Heads, Deputy Heads, Investigators, and Investigative Officers of the Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provincial police have not yet met the requirements and tasks of investigating drug-related cases.

Fourth, in some instances and localities, the leadership and direction of Heads and Deputy Heads of the Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provincial police in drug-related case investigations remain insufficiently decisive and have not fully promoted the responsibility of those in command positions.

Fifth, advisory work in the investigation of drug-related cases lacks specialization, systematic nature, and practical linkage with actual investigative activities.

Sixth, material conditions and institutional policies related to the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces remain limited and inadequate.

Seventh, the coordination mechanism between the police forces of the Northwestern provinces and other relevant agencies and forces still shows numerous shortcomings and constraints.

Chapter 4

FORECASTS ON DRUG-RELATED CRIME SITUATIONS, VIEWPOINTS AND SOLUTIONS TO ENSURE THE APPLICATION OF LAW IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG- RELATED CASES BY THE POLICE FORCES OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

4.1. FORECASTS ON DRUG-RELATED CRIME SITUATIONS IN THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM IN THE COMING PERIOD

4.1.1. Basis for the Forecast

4.1.2. Forecast Contents

4.2. VIEWPOINTS ON ENSURING THE APPLICATION OF LAW IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CASES BY THE POLICE FORCES OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

4.2.1. The application of law in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces must ensure the thorough implementation of the viewpoints and policies of the Party, the State, and the Central Public Security Party Committee regarding criminal investigation in general and drug-related investigations in particular

4.2.2. The application of law in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces must ensure the respect for and protection of human rights and citizens' rights, while enhancing the effectiveness of coordination with agencies, organizations, and local communities

4.2.3. The application of law in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces must be associated with the development and improvement of the current legal system on crime prevention and control

4.2.4. The application of law in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces must be consistent with the specific economic, social, cultural, historical, and geographical characteristics of the Northwestern region

4.2.5. The application of law in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces must be linked to the strengthening of scientific, technical, and technological applications as well as digital transformation

4.3. SOLUTIONS TO ENSURE THE APPLICATION OF LAW IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DRUG-RELATED CASES BY THE POLICE FORCES OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

4.3.1. Continue to improve the legal framework related to the investigation of drug-related cases by the People's Public Security forces

4.3.2. Continue to consolidate the organizational structure and enhance the quality and operational efficiency of the Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provincial police forces

4.3.3. Provide training to improve awareness, professional and legal knowledge; strengthen the capacities of Heads, Deputy Heads, Investigators, and Investigative Officers of the Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provincial police forces

4.3.4. Strengthen leadership and direction by the Heads and Deputy Heads of the Investigation Police Agencies of the Northwestern provincial police forces, ensuring that the responsibility of leaders is closely linked with the effectiveness of law application in investigating drug-related cases in the region

4.3.5. Innovate advisory work for leaders and commanders regarding the implementation of law application in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces

4.3.6. Continue to allocate funding, invest in equipment, and develop specific mechanisms and policies to ensure the investigation of drug-related cases in general, and the application of law in drug investigations in particular, by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces

4.3.7. Strengthen coordination between the Drug Crime Investigation Police forces of the Northwestern provinces and relevant domestic and international agencies and organizations

CONCLUSION

In the context of increasingly complex drug-related crime situations in the Northwestern region of Vietnam - characterized by sophistication, professionalism, inter-provincial and transnational elements, and closely tied to specific geographical and social conditions - enhancing the effectiveness of law application in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam is an objective, urgent, and long-term requirement. Based on a thorough understanding of the Party's directives, the State's legal framework, and the practical demands of the investigative work, it must be affirmed that the application of law is not merely a technical activity but also a concrete manifestation of the rule-of-law mindset, contributing to the safeguarding of justice, social fairness, and the maintenance of security and order in the Northwestern region.

The investigation of drug-related crimes in the Northwestern provinces must be closely aligned with the major policies and orientations of the Party, such as the 13th National Party Congress Resolution, Resolution No. 27-NQ/TW on building and perfecting the socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam, and Resolution No. 12-NQ/TW on strengthening the building of the People's Public Security forces to be truly revolutionary, regular, elite, and modern. At the same time, it is essential to take into account the specific socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, topographical, and infrastructural characteristics of the Northwestern region to ensure that law application in social management in general and in drug-related investigations in particular is consistent with practical conditions, thereby improving the effectiveness of criminal investigation and the fight against drug-related crimes by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam.

The doctoral dissertation titled "Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-Related Cases by the Police Forces of the Northwestern Provinces of Vietnam" has achieved its stated objectives.

Specifically, the key research outcomes of the dissertation can be summarized as follows:

First, the dissertation has developed and refined a theoretical framework on the following issues: narcotics, drug crime investigation, and the application of law in the investigation of drug-related cases by the People's Public Security forces.

Second, the dissertation has studied and assessed the actual situation of law application in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam, thereby identifying strengths, limitations, and their causes as a basis for proposing relevant viewpoints and forecasting related developments.

Third, based on criminological forecasting theory and the actual situation of drug-related investigations conducted by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces, the dissertation has developed scientific forecasts regarding the trends of drug-related crime and the factors influencing law application in such investigations in the coming period.

Fourth, the dissertation has analyzed the viewpoints of the Party, the State, and the Ministry of Public Security on the investigation of drug-related cases, linking them with the specific characteristics of the Northwestern region to establish perspectives on ensuring the application of law in drug-related investigations by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces.

Fifth, based on the proposed forecasts and viewpoints, the dissertation has formulated concrete solutions to enhance the effectiveness of law application in the investigation of drug-related cases by the police forces of the Northwestern provinces in the coming time, meeting the increasing demands and tasks of combating drug-related crimes in the region./.

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

1. Le Huy Hoang (2024), “Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-related Cases in Association with the Improvement of the Legal System on Crime Prevention and Control in Vietnam”, *Journal of Social Science Human Resources*, Academy of Social Sciences, No. 137, October 2024.
2. Le Huy Hoang (2025), “Application of Law in the Investigation of Drug-related Crimes Involving Foreign Elements”, *Journal of State Management*, Academy of Administration and Public Governance, No. 355, August 2024.
3. Le Huy Hoang (2025), “Ensuring the Rights of Juvenile Defendants in the Investigation of Drug-related Cases”, *Procuratorial Science Journal*, University of Prosecutorial Studies, No. 91, July 2025.