

Writing before Y2K

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In less than a week from now, we will enter the new year of 2021. Everybody has his/her own thought and reflection whenever a new year arrives. For me, the coming year marks 25 years of writing. (Believe me or not, but 25 years means a quarter of a century!)

I did my first writing in 1993. It was about my observations and thinking, about the then-new law draft on the value-added tax, now very familiar with consumers and businesses in Vietnam and usually referred to as VAT. The paper was written in Vietnamese and intended for a domestic magazine. But the publication never happened.

Then, I had to wait until 1996 to see my first writing in print at Hanoi-based National Economics University, *Tạp chí Kinh tế & Phát triển*. This first article was in Vietnamese, writing about what Vietnam could learn from Japanese real estate and financial turmoil in the mid-1990s. Nobody really read the paper, and I also forgot it cleanly. But as of today, it has some meaning, when I counted how long it has been since my first writing appeared in print: 25 years, a quarter of a century!

The rest of the references list below contains only English-language articles that I wrote during 1997-1999 [2-8]. Most of them appeared in popular newspapers or hybrid magazines (*Vietnam Business Journal* and *Vietnam Economic Times*).

Although today's ISI Web of Science and Scopus indexes receive much fanfare in Vietnam, before 2000, nobody cared about bibliographical indexes. Worthwhile writings would need to be printed and read by readers; that's all an author thought then.

My first English-language article [2] was written after a quick survey to learn whether Vietnamese entrepreneurs preferred debt to equity during 1996-1997. The editor then decided to pay me an honorarium of VND 800,000 (approx. USD 75). USD 75 was a large amount of money at the time (i.e., early 1997) as it could well be a monthly salary of a central bank clerk.

The remaining articles [3-8] were also written in English during 1997-98. They continued to earn me some money and nurtured the interest in sharing information and thinking with different audiences, well before I seriously embarked on the academic career.

Although these articles are ages-old by now, not all of them were forgotten by newer authors. They were somewhat useful to many people while completing their doctoral dissertations or master's theses, well into the mid-2010s. Some good examples are dissertations and theses [9-15] in the list of references.

Therefore, I can now say that my writings before Y2K are my assets, old ones but somehow still useful to a limited number of current authors.

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