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### **OVERVIEW OF VICTIMOLOGY AND VICTIMOLOGY RESEARCH IN VIETNAM**

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#### **Abstract**

Victimology is an interdisciplinary field of study of victims of Crime or other trauma. Victimology appeared in the world in the mid-twentieth century, when researchers became interested in the victim aspects and Victimization of crime research. In the world, Victimology is very interesting in research, but in Vietnam, this field is still relatively fresh and has not been paid attention to its deserving importance. The article introduces an overview of the history, direction, and object of research in Victimology, as well as a brief overview of the current situation of anthropology research in Vietnam. On that basis, the author gives suggestions for the future study of Victimology in Vietnam.

#### **Keywords**

Overview, Victimology, Victimology Research, Vietnam

#### **1. Introduction**

Crime is a negative phenomenon that exists in social stratification. At the same time, it is also the object of research in many different scientific disciplines to prevent and reduce Crime. However, in the criminal justice system, researchers and justice agencies seem to focus on the offender and forget that the victim is also a part of the Crime. The consequence of this view is that society and the judiciary focus on protecting the rights of the accused. At the same time, the victim of Crime participates as an auxiliary component of the proceedings (Nguyen, 2018). This view also shows the shift of the legal process from victim justice to criminal justice in judicial systems and raises the question, is it necessary to research victims of Crime? How will the study of crime victims help in actual crime prevention and control? In addition, there is ample evidence that enhancing socio-economic conditions does not at the same time reduce Crime in traditional criminology

(Cohen & Felson, 1979). This leads to doubt that the theoretical basis for crime prevention and control by reasonable socio-economic measures is defective and is also the driving force to explain Crime in other respects (Tien, 2017). The above commentaries show the necessary to make enquiries about Crime from the victim's perspective and this is a potential area of crime research, recognizing the problem on theorists such as Han von Hentig (1887) - 1974), Benjamin Mendelsohn (1900 - 1998), Marvin Engine Wolfgang (1924 - 1998), Stephen Schafer (1911 - 1976) ... has built and laid the foundation for the scientific formation of victim research.

In the world, Victimology has appeared and developed since the 1940s; until now, great achievements have been achieved with the appearance of many victim research centers, communities, and programs to support Crime victims. Victims of Crime, Victim research associations at the national and international level. There is even a system to help victims of Crime in the US with a certificate of professional training from California State University, Fresno (Dussich, 2006). However, at the opposite extreme, Victimology in Vietnam is still an open field, not interested in research and application in crime prevention. This study was conducted to introduce an overview of Victimology, an overview of the situation of Victimology research in Vietnam, and propose some suggestions for research in this field in Vietnam shortly.

## **2. Research Methods**

The research is conducted based on general legal and scientific methods (analysis, research, synthesis of documents). In addition, the author also uses the legal history method and comparative method to answer the research question posed.

To answer the research questions, the author read several publications on Victimology by Ezzat A. Fattah (1981, 2000), Andrew Karmen (2007), Basia Spalek (2006), Claire Ferguson & Brent E. Turvey (2009), John P. J. Dussich (2006)... these are publications referring to the history of formation and development, the main schools of thought and research directions of Victimology in the past, present, future research directions. For publications in Vietnam, the author has studied the publications of Nguyen Khac Hai (2018), Tran Huu Trang, Nguyen Xuan Nghia (1999), and Duong Tuyet Mien ... to evaluate the true worth of the situation of research on victims, achievements, and limitations in research on victims in Vietnam today.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **3.1 History of the research issues**

From a historical perspective, the term Victimology is derived from the Latin word meaning that an object or person is sacrificed to a god (Victima). This term only connotes the meaning of sacrifice, which does not necessarily include the pain and loss of the sacrifice (Spalek, 2006; Arrieta, 2020). In the nineteenth century, the term victim (Victim) appeared based on an adaptation of the term sacrifice

(Victima). At the same time, it was associated with loss and damage in general (Ferguson & Turvey, 2009). Victimology appeared in the 1940s - 1950s; semantically, Victimism is a compound word of two Greek words Victim (Victim) and Science (Logos).

According to Ezzat A. Fattah (2000), the first notion of Victimology came not from researchers but from poets, writers, and novelists such as The Marquis de Sade Franz Werfel, Aldous Huxley, Thomas de Quincey, Khalil Gibran (Fattah, 2000). In 1941, Han von Hentig published his first research paper related to crime victims with the title "Remarks on the Interaction of the Crime of the Perpetrator and the Victim" 1948, he continued to publish the book "Criminal and His Victim," which devoted a chapter to the victim of Crime (Van Dijk, 1999). However, the term Victimology has not yet been introduced into use at this time. In 1947, Benjamin Mendelsohn first coined the term Victimology in a presentation to the Romanian Psychotherapy Association (Landau & Freeman-Longo, 1990; Aymerich & Herce, 2020). However, the term Victimology had not yet been formally proposed.

In another study, Andrew Karmen (2007) claimed that the term victimology appeared in 1949 in a book about murderers by forensic psychiatrist Fredric Wertham; at that time, Victimology was used to describe the victims of the Crime of murder (Karmen, 2007, pp.18). Then in 1956, Benjamin Mendelsohn officially proposed the term Victimology in his article "A New Branch of Bio-Psychology-Social Sciences, Victims" -Psycho-Social Science, Victimology). In this article, Mendelsohn suggested the creation of an international community for the research of Victimology, which is now known as The World Society of Victimology, and the creation of several Institutes of Victimology; nowadays, it is known as the World Society of Victimology, established several Institutes of Victimology and published a specialized journal on Victimology (Dussich, 2006, p. 03). With his merits and contributions to the development of Victimology, Mendelsohn is considered the "Father of Victimology" (Dussich, 2006, p. 01). Today, Victimology generally refers to the scientific study of victims, Victimization, including the relationship between victims and perpetrators of crimes, the criminal investigation process, and other social problems related to the victim (Karmen, 2007; Delbianco, 2020).

From the 1940s to the present, Victimology has dramatically developed with establishing the World Association of Victims in 1979 in Munich (Germany). The association organizes annual worldwide Victimization Workshops that study different aspects of victims. At the same time, the World Association of Victims acts as a special consultant to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Council of Europe. In addition, victimology research facilities were established at universities, and the international academic publication on Victimology was established in 1989 (The International Review of Victimology - SAGE Publishing House). It is now regarded as the leading publication in the study of Victims. Significant milestones in the development of Victims around the world are summarized in Table 1

Table 1. Summary of key facts about the development of Victimology

Year	Event
1924	Edwin Sutherland dedicates a chapter of his Criminology textbook to present victims of Crime
1937	Benjamin Mendelsohn publishes research on rapists and their victims
1941	Hans von Hentig publishes research on victims and criminals
1947	Benjamin Mendelsohn suggested using the term Victimism in his journal article
1948	Hans von Hentig publishes the book Crime and His Victim.
1958	Marvin Wolfgang publishes the first experimental study of Victims titled "Patterns in Criminal Homicide" and introduces the concept of "victim precipitation" )
1963	New Zealand enacts the Criminal Compensation Act
1966	The US carries out the first investigation into the victim of a crime but does not report it
1968	Stephan Schafer publishes the first textbook on Victims under the title "The Victim and His Criminal".
1972	The first three victim assistance programs were launched in St. Louis, Missouri, San Francisco, California and Washington, D. C. The same year the United States conducted the first national criminal victimization investigation (National Criminal Victimization Survey)
1973	First International Conference on Victims to take place in Jerusalem (Israel)
1976	Emilio Viano founded Victimology - An International Journal (no longer active)
1979	HWorld Association of Victims established in Munich (Germany)
1981	US President Ronald Reagan announced the organization of National Crime Victims' Rights Week every April.
1989	Born the International Review of Victimology (Q1-Scopus) and is now the leading journal of Victimology.
2003	The American Society of Victimology is established
2005	Japan codifies the United Nations Basic Principles of Justice on Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power.

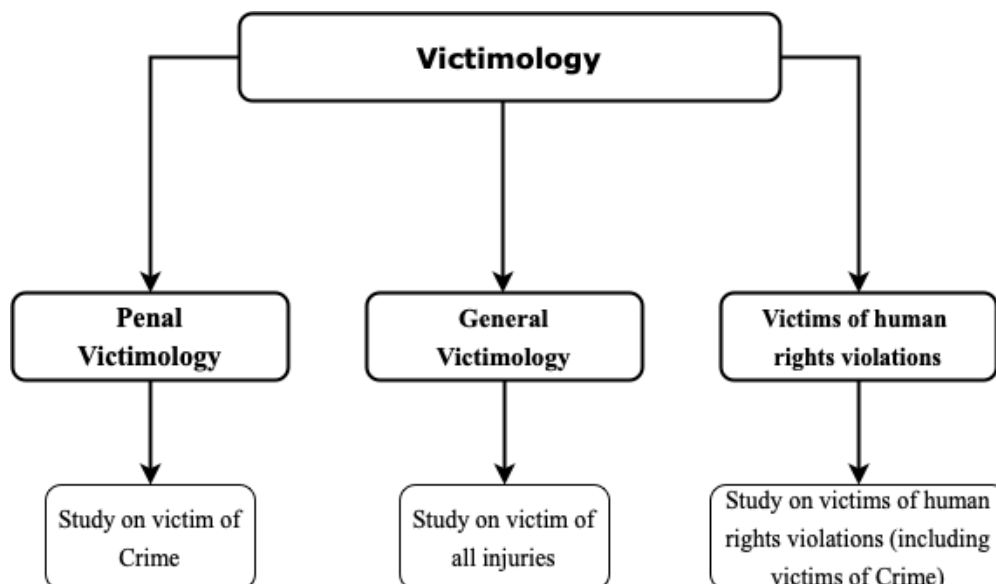
Sources: John P. J. Dussich (2006); Andrew Karmen (2012:14); Md.Atiqur Rahman (2013).

In Vietnam, Victimology seems to be an area of little interest. Until now, no researchers are specializing in Victimology; most researchers in criminology are also criminologists (of which Victimology is still secondary). When referring to the preliminary works for the study of Victims in Vietnam, it is possible to mention the publication titled *Some issues about victims in Criminology research* published by Tran Huu Trang in 1997; For experimental research of the nature of Victimology, it is possible to refer to the work of author Nguyen Xuan Nghia (1999) titled *Preliminary investigation of children being sexually abused in Ho Chi Minh City*. So

far, the works or events marking the development of Victims in Vietnam are limited. From the above commentary, it can be seen that Victimology is still a very potential field for research in both theory and practice in Vietnam.

### 3.2 The primary schools and research directions of Victimology

As mentioned in the previous section, Victimology is the science that studies victims, Victimization, the relationship between victims and perpetrators, and social issues about victims...; in which the center of Victimology is the issue of the harm to the victims. Different theorists' approaches have led to different schools in the study of Victims. According to Hans von Hentig, Victimology is a branch of Criminology; therefore, the study of Victims should focus on a type of victim that is the victim of Crime; this research direction is called Penal Victimology; In criminal Victimology, researchers focus on the relationship between victims and criminals to explain the phenomenon of Crime (Kostić, 2010). Besides, there is also another research direction is General Victimology, the pioneer of this research direction is Benjamin Mendelsohn, Who believes that research on victims should not be limited to victims of Crime. However, all types of victims (including victims of Crime, social and natural environment, etc.) also need to be considered. research center (Van Dijk, 1999). In addition to the two schools mentioned above, there is currently another school of research that is on Victims of human rights violations (including victims of Crime) (Kirchhoff, 2005)). Representing this line of research are Separovic (1969-1985), Elias Neuman (1985), and Robert Elias (1986), who jointly contributed to the widely used definition of a victim of human rights violations today. The author describes this content through the diagram in Figure 1.



The reason for forming three schools of Victimology is not merely the choice of research subjects but also related to the relationship between Victimology and Criminology. Since most criminology theorists are criminologists, there are

differences of opinion about whether Victimology is independent or part of criminology (Asli, 2013). Therefore, when referring to the object and research school of Victimology, it is necessary to pay attention to the correlation of this discipline with the science of Criminology, which the author presents in Figure 2.

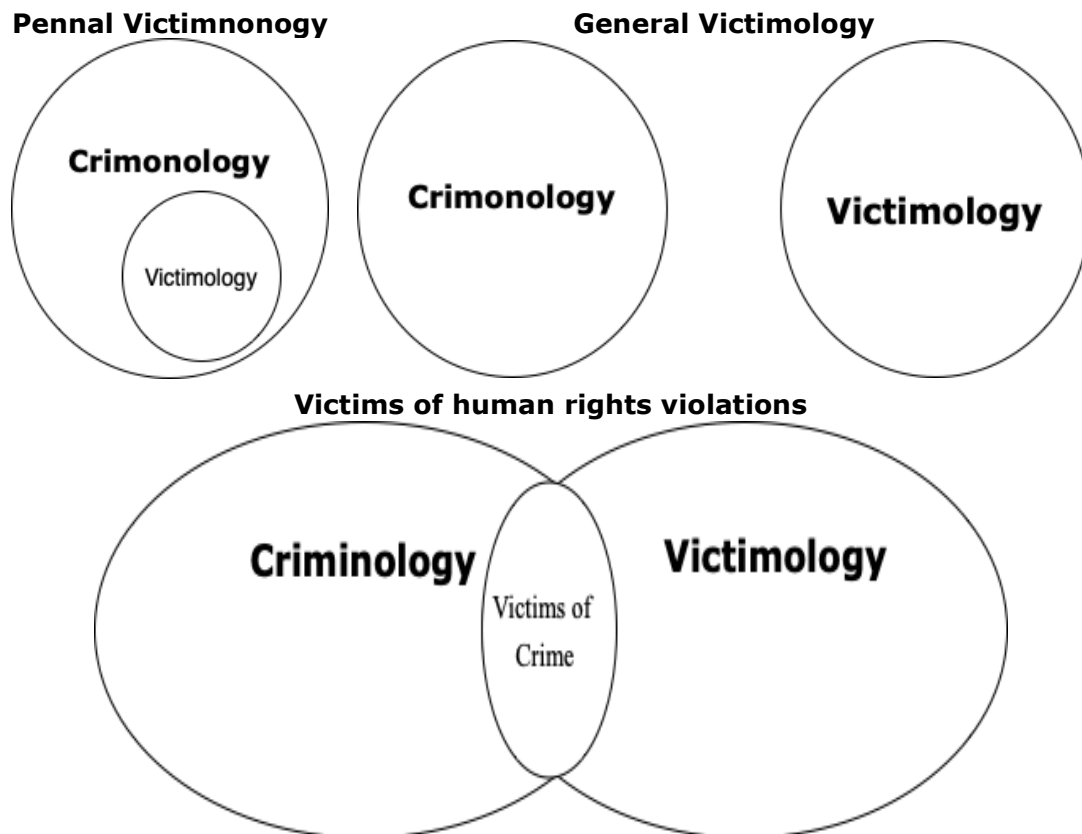


Figure 2. Correlation between the Schools of Victimology and Criminology  
Sources: Gerd Ferdinand Kirchhoff (2009)

From the above presentation, it can be seen that there are many different schools of Victimism, and within each school, there are differences in approaches and classification of victims. Criminal victim theorist Hans Von Hentig developed a catalog of 13 types of crime victims; in his publication "Crime and Victims: A Sociobiological Study The Criminal and His Victim: Studies in the Sociobiology of Crime, published in 1948, he classified victims of Crime according to demographic and biological criteria (e.g., victims of Crime). individuals are young people, women, the elderly, immigrants, people with mental illnesses, minorities, and people with retardation); And psychological criteria (Example: Sad People, people who suffer, free people, lonely people). In addition, in this same publication, he devotes a chapter (pages 404 to 438) to discussing the theoretical basis related to the victim's contribution to the criminal process and the basis for classifying victims into 13 types he mentioned (Daigle, 2018).

Meanwhile, Mendelsohn, representing the school of Universal Victims, proposed six types of victims based on the victim's role in the damage (including damage caused by the Crime): (1) Victims Completely innocent victims; (2) Victims

due to ignorance; (3) Voluntary victim; (3) Victim more guilty than the offender; Most guilty victim; (6) Simulating or imaginary victim (Meadows, 2007, p. 22). Besides, some other classifications, such as Stephen Schafer's classification (seven types) based on the theory of Victim precipitation and the responsibility of the victim for the crime or Marvin E. Wolfgang again classified victims into primary victims, secondary victims, and third victims, and mutual victims. Nevertheless, regardless of how different classifications and approaches are, victimologists also revolve around three main groups of research subjects: The process of Victimization, Victims; Victims in the justice system. The target groups of study victims are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Three main target groups of the Victimology study

<b>Victimization</b>	<b>Victim</b>	<b>Victims in justice system</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The process of becoming a victim;</li> <li>- Models;</li> <li>- Frequency;</li> <li>- Trend;</li> <li>- The response to the risk of Victimization;</li> <li>- Consequences of Victimization;</li> <li>- Fear of becoming a victim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selectivity;</li> <li>- The characteristics of the victim;</li> <li>- Types (Typology);</li> <li>- The relationship between the victim - the perpetrator;</li> <li>- The victim's role in the Crime;</li> <li>- Perceptions and attitudes of the victim;</li> <li>- Repeatedly the victim (repetition)</li> <li>- The transformation from victim to perpetrator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Victims' perceptions of the justice system;</li> <li>- The role of the victim in the justice system;</li> <li>- The role of victims in crime prevention and control;</li> <li>- Victim relationships and elements of the justice system;</li> <li>- The rights and obligations of the victim;</li> <li>- Victim assistance services;</li> <li>- Compensation for the victim</li> </ul>

Sources: Ezzat A.Fattah (1981), Mehrdad Rayejian Asli (2013)

### **3.3. Research on victims in Vietnam and some recommendations**

As the author has stated, Victimology is an open field in Vietnam. To evaluate the research situation in Vietnam, the author has checked the information in the electronic libraries of major law training centers (Hanoi Law University, Faculty of Law - VNU, University of Law). - Hue University and Ho Chi Minh City University of Law). In addition, the author also searched some legal journals for research articles on Victimology. The results of the search are shown in Table 3. In this part, the author only mentions publications on the character of Victimology (from the basis that this is a discipline of the legal science branch).

Table 3. Victimology Studies in Vietnam

<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Type of Publication</b>
1997	Tran Huu Trang	Some problems about victims in Criminology research	Article
1999	Nguyen Xuan Nghia	Preliminary study of children being sexually abused in Ho Chi Minh City	Science Topic
2000	Tran Huu Trang	Victims study in Vietnamese Criminology - Some theoretical and practical issues	Article
2005	Duong Tuyet Mien	Victims of Crime from a criminological perspective	Article
2010	Tran Huu Trang	Crime victim problem	Article
2010	Hoang Anh Tuan	Some issues about victims of trafficking in women and children under international law	Article
2010	Duong Tuyet Mien	Criminology Textbook - Chapter 8 Victims of Crime	Textbook Chapter
2011	Tran Huu Trang	The risk of becoming a victim of Crime	Article
2011	Tran Huu Trang	Victims of Crime	Article
2012	Tran Huu Trang	Protecting the human rights of victims of Crime	Article
2012	Tran Huu Trang	Protecting and assisting victims of Crime	Article
2014	Phan Văn Thịnh	Domestic violence - from the victim's perspective	Article
2017	Tran Van Thuong	Solutions to prevent child sexual abuse from the victim factor	Article
2018	Nguyen Khac Hai	Victims of Crime	Article
2018	Le Minh Tien	Victimology overview	Article
2019	Le Lan Chi	Ensuring the rights of crime victims and some disadvantaged groups in criminal justice from the provisions of the law to the activities of law practitioners	Article
2019	Duong Tuyet Mien	Monographs of Contemporary Criminology - Chapter VIII Victims of Crime	Textbook Chapter
2020	Trinh Tien Viet - Nguyen Khac Hai	Criminology Textbook - Chapter 6 Victims Study	Textbook Chapter

Sources: Author synthesized



From the results of the author's investigation of scholarly publications in the field of Victimology, the following comments and recommendations can be drawn about the situation of victimology research in Vietnam:

*Firstly*, if comparing the level of development of anthropology research in some countries in the world, in Vietnam, the research on Victimology is still faint and less diverse. The current concept in Vietnam is that Victimology is a part of Criminology. The research trend is mainly in the direction of Criminal Victims, so the remaining two research directions have not been developed or published. This leads to the need to change awareness in the study of victims; first of all, there is a need to have a specialized subject to study victims or victims of Crime from which there will be a change in the perception of researchers, law students, and researchers. In the current context, Criminology has been deeply researched in Vietnam, so it is necessary to have an element to reshape the traditional perception of Crime and crime prevention, according to the author's point of view. Victim research has much potential to do that (This is based on the fact that the growth of criminology around the world has reshaped the traditional view of criminologists).

*Secondly*, most of the studies in Vietnam is nature introducing aspects and issues of Victimology. Currently, Vietnam lacks empirical studies on Victimology; in the studies that the author can check, only the work of Nguyen Xuan Nghia is an experimental work on Victimology. Most of the remaining works discuss the surface of the victim phenomenon at the theoretical level, so the significance in crime prevention is not great. Therefore, in the future, if research on victims is interested in developing in Vietnam, more experimental works will be crucial. To do that requires a combination of Sociology and Criminology researchers, and the interdisciplinary nature of victim research needs to be fully promoted.

*Thirdly*, In Vietnam, there is currently non- existence research center specializing in Victimology. Therefore, Vietnam is not a member of the World Association of Victims. This leads to Vietnam not having an academic journal on Criminology in general and Victimology in particular. At the same time, there is no true victimology researcher in Vietnam. The existence of a Center for Research on Victims is of great significance in terms of both academic and practical aspects. In order to do this, it requires the promotion of legal studies in universities and scientific research institutes. The appearance of a Center for Research on Victims will bring Vietnam out of the low-lying areas of its current state of anthropology. At the same time, it will also help Vietnam connect with the system of research centers and associations on Victimology in the world (Internationalization of Research).

*At last*, In Vietnam, there is no National investigation system for crime victims, which is also one of the significant difficulties for researchers when approaching practice in the field of Victimology. This content obviously cannot be done by one or a group of researchers or a research institution, and it requires the state's participation. The data obtained from the national investigation system will

be a valuable practical basis for conducting nationwide victim studies. Therefore, promoting a national investigation system for victims of Crime in Vietnam is necessary.

From the above analysis, Victimology is a field of little interest in research in Vietnam at present and has not formed a theoretical system of research on victims; existing studies are not going into depth but studying the surface of the phenomenon of Victimization in society. This shows that this is an open but promising research area in both theoretical and practical aspects in Vietnam in the future.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Victimology is an area of great potential, as leading victim researcher Ezzat A. Fattah observed that research about victims and Victimization has the potential to reshape the entire perception of Crime. Nowadays, it may be the long-awaited paradigm shift of Criminology when the traditional model has failed to find the causes of Crime, prevent and prevent Crime... (Fattah, 2000). In the world, Victimology has had a brilliant development, but in Vietnam, this field is still open and has much potential for researchers. Therefore, victim studies need to pay attention to and promoted in Vietnam. The development of Victimology can complement the theoretical and practical gaps that Criminology itself cannot solve, and this will certainly positively impact crime prevention. Crime, the more significant the policy impact on reducing Victimization in society.

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