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THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR "HANDICRAFT TRADES ARE HUMAN BEINGS" IN VIETNAMESE NEWSPAPER DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the conceptual metaphor model "HANDICRAFTS ARE HUMAN BEINGS" on the basis of conceptual metaphor theory and embodiment theory. The corpus comprises 30 Vietnamese newspaper articles (2019–2026). Through examination, synthesis, and analysis, the study identifies 93 metaphorical expressions, 37 metaphorical vehicles, and 117 occurrences. The attributes of the source domain HUMAN BEINGS comprise human worth, human life, the structure of the physical human body, human behavior and states, and awareness of preserving family relationships. These attributes map onto the target domain HANDICRAFTS, whose corresponding attributes are the value of handicraft trades, the existence of handicraft trades, the structure of handicraft products, the state of production activities in handicraft trades, and awareness of transmitting handicraft trades. The findings show that, within this conceptual metaphor model, handicraft trades are construed as a "living being" possessing vitality, a soul, and intergenerational continuity. This reflects a way of thinking that values affective bonds, emphasizes community and village cohesion, and upholds traditional cultural values rooted in the wet-rice agricultural culture of the Vietnamese people.

Keywords: Handicraft Trades; Conceptual Metaphor; Human Beings; Mapping; Cultural Values

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor in cognitive linguistics is regarded as a mechanism of thought and action; conceptual metaphor reflects how human beings use familiar, concrete experiences to construe and explain abstract concepts. Kövecses (2010, pp. 4, 9) points out that this process takes place through the establishment of mappings between two conceptual domains. It can be seen that human beings use concrete, readily imaginable experiences from one conceptual domain (the source domain) to understand abstract, complex concepts in another conceptual domain (the target domain). Elements or attributes of the source domain are projected onto elements or attributes of the target domain, forming a cognitive model that helps us visualize and comprehend the target domain more clearly.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that conceptual metaphors do not arise arbitrarily but originate in "embodiment." Human cognition does not exist independently of or separately from the body; rather, human beings continually draw

on their own biological structure, bodily states, and the surrounding world. Embodiment theory indicates that cognitive models operate on three principal experiential foundations: experience of the physical body, experience of human interaction with material objects, and experience of human interaction with the sociocultural environment (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, pp. 65–69). On the basis of the corpus analysis, the study shows that the conceptual metaphor model "HANDICRAFTS ARE HUMAN BEINGS" originates primarily in sociocultural embodiment.

The article's corpus was collected from 30 mainstream online newspaper articles about handicraft trades in Vietnam (2019 - 2026). According to Article 3 of Decree 43/2024/NĐ-CP, handicraft trades constitute a field of traditional production deeply imbued with Vietnamese cultural identity and folk conceptions. In this study, the "handicraft domain" is the domain of human knowledge and experience acquired from production activities, product characteristics, crafting processes, and the development of handicraft trades. Within the "cradle" of wet-rice agricultural culture, handicraft trades in Vietnam have always been closely connected with and have existed alongside agriculture. Consequently, craft culture is also strongly characterized by the agricultural culture of local inhabitants. Through handicraft products, national identity is vividly expressed, and traditional cultural values are preserved in a distinctive and enduring manner (Institute for Cultural Studies, 2012, p. 8).

Within the scope of this article, we investigate the conceptual metaphor model "HANDICRAFT TRADES ARE HUMAN BEINGS." The article focuses on constructing and analyzing mapping models from the source domain HUMAN BEINGS through the following attributes: human worth, human life, the structure of the physical human body, human behavior and states, and awareness of preserving family relationships. These attributes map onto the target domain HANDICRAFTS through the attributes of the value of handicraft trades, the existence of handicraft trades, the structure of handicraft products, the state of production activities in handicraft trades, and awareness of transmitting handicraft trades. At the same time, the article seeks to decipher the motivations underlying the formation of these mappings, thereby clarifying the cognitive and cultural characteristics of Vietnamese people in the relationship between HUMAN BEINGS and HANDICRAFT TRADES as manifested in Vietnamese newspaper discourse (2019–2026).

In this study, the domain HANDICRAFTS is identified as the target domain. Through the findings, we hope, at the theoretical level, to make a modest contribution to affirming the applicability of conceptual metaphor theory and its embodied foundations to the HANDICRAFTS domain. This target domain bears a strong cultural imprint but has received relatively little attention in previous studies. At the practical level, the study contributes to clarifying how Vietnamese people conceptualize the handicraft domain through the source domain of human beings. This mode of construal reflects a way of thinking that values affective bonds and village-community cohesion, rooted in wet-rice agricultural culture. The article also contributes to establishing a cognitive basis for understanding the cultural value of handicraft villages, thereby fostering and strengthening awareness of the need to preserve and promote traditional craft heritage and national cultural identity.

2 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In cognitive linguistics, across many of the world's languages, HUMAN BEINGS is the most fundamental and familiar source domain used to conceptualize abstract conceptual domains. In *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), G. Lakoff and M. Johnson argue that the human conceptual system is inherently embodied, because many abstract concepts are formed through concrete bodily experiences and the interaction between human beings and the objective world. Direct experiences of the physical body, human life and worth, and family and social relationships have become the basis on which Vietnamese people use the source domain HUMAN BEINGS to conceptualize numerous areas of social life. In newspaper discourse, the source domain HUMAN BEINGS is used to conceptualize the value, existence, awareness of transmission across generations, and other aspects of handicraft trades.

For the source–target domain pairing HUMAN BEINGS – HANDICRAFT TRADES, five source subdomains have been established: human worth; human life; the structure of the physical human body; human behavior and states; and awareness of preserving family relationships. Five target subdomains have also been established: the value of handicraft trades; the existence of handicraft trades; the structure of handicraft products; the state of production activities in handicraft trades; and awareness of transmitting handicraft trades. From the corpus examined, comprising 93 metaphorical expressions, 37 metaphorical vehicles, and 117 occurrences, we identify the attributes (elements) of the source domain HUMAN BEINGS that can be activated (activate) to connect with attributes in the handicraft target domain, thereby forming the following mappings:

Table 1. Mapping between language domains

Source domain	Maps onto	Target domain
(1) Human worth	→	The value of handicraft trades
(2) Human life	→	The existence of handicraft trades
(3) The structure of the physical human body	→	The structure of handicraft products
(4) Human behavior and states	→	The state of production activities in handicraft trades
(5) Awareness of preserving family relationships	→	Awareness of transmitting handicraft trades

2.1 First, the mapping "Human worth → The value of handicraft trades."

The value of handicraft trades is construed through human worth, with groups of metaphorical vehicles found in the following metaphorical expressions:

2.1.1 The group *hồn cốt* ("soul and core"), *linh hồn* ("soul"), *thần thái* ("demeanor"), etc.

- Vạn Phúc silk-weaving village has affirmed its standing on the world cultural map. This provides an opportunity for the craft village to promote its image and products to the world and lays the groundwork for artisans to enhance their competitiveness and create products that meet global consumer demand while retaining their **soul and core** (hồn cốt) and indigenous culture (Capital Labor newspaper, 2025).
- Whereas Vạn Phúc is associated with the Nhuệ River, Bát Tràng lies on the banks of the Red River. Known as the cradle of Vietnamese pottery and porcelain production, Bát Tràng carries within itself a long history. Here, the village's artisans not only make pottery but also pass on the **soul** (linh hồn) of the nation through every layer of earth and every flame (Labor newspaper, 2025).
- After the Thăng Bình stoneware and porcelain enterprise was dissolved, he returned to his hometown in 1990 and rebuilt his family's pottery kiln from nothing. Eschewing industrial molds and chemical glazes, he chose the handcrafted approach, using only local clay and firing it at low temperatures (900–1,000 °C) to produce unglazed pottery with natural colors and a distinctive **demeanor** (thần thái).

2.1.2 The group *ghi danh vào…* ("inscribe on…"), *khẳng định vị thế* ("affirm one's standing"), etc.

- On 19 February, UNESCO's **inscription** (ghi danh) of Đông Hồ folk painting craftsmanship on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding was not only an honor but also a reminder to safeguard traditional values handed down from earlier times (People newspaper, 2025).
- Craft villages are increasingly **affirming their standing** (khẳng định được vị thế) as they have actively contributed, and continue to contribute, to economic restructuring and rural economic development, laying the groundwork for the successful implementation of the One Commune One Product (OCOP) program and the development of new-style rural areas in the capital. Through the interplay of tradition and modernity, Hanoi's craft villages are gradually **affirming a firm standing** (khẳng định vị thế vững chắc) in the international market (Vietnamplus newspaper, 2025).
- Vạn Phúc silk-weaving village has **affirmed its standing** (khẳng định vị thế) on the world cultural map. This provides an opportunity for the craft village to promote its image and products to the world and lays the groundwork for artisans to enhance their competitiveness and create products that meet global consumer demand while retaining their soul and core and indigenous culture (Capital Labor newspaper, 2025).

2.1.3 The group *trụ cột* ("pillar"), etc.

- Handicrafts are not merely a brilliant splash of color in Vietnam's traditional heritage; properly harnessed, they are indeed a **pillar** (trụ cột) that helps the cultural industries flourish (People's Deputy newspaper, 2026).

2.1.4 The group *tổ nghề* ("craft progenitor"), *cái nôi* ("cradle"), etc.

- Đông Cứu is a village in the former Ngũ Xã area, comprising the hamlets of Đông Giai, Đông Cứu, Bình Lăng, and Quất Động, now part of Dũng Tiến Commune, Thường Tín District, Hanoi. They all share the same **progenitor of the embroidery craft** (ông tổ nghề thêu), Lê Công Hành (whose real name was Bùi Công Hành) (Department of Cultural Heritage newspaper, 2026).

- Whereas Vạn Phúc is associated with the Nhuệ River, Bát Tràng lies on the banks of the Red River. Known as the **cradle** (cái nôi) of Vietnamese pottery and porcelain production, Bát Tràng carries within itself a long history. Here, the village's artisans not only make pottery but also pass on the soul of the nation through every layer of earth and every flame (Lao động newspaper, 2025).
- The most prominent example is Bát Tràng pottery and porcelain village. Bát Tràng is not only the **cradle** (cái nôi) of Vietnamese pottery and porcelain production but also a symbol of ceaseless creativity. Bát Tràng was already renowned for pottery production more than 500 years ago. Drawing on their extensive experience and creativity, its pottery artisans have revived ceramic designs from distant periods, including the Lý, Trần, Lê, and Mạc dynasties, among others (Vietnamplus newspaper, 2025).

The *Vietnamese Dictionary* defines "human being" as follows: "A human being is a living entity with a physical and spiritual life, capable of language, thought, work, and creativity, while also existing within social relationships and possessing particular qualities, values, roles, and standing" (Hoàng Phê, p. 883). In the process of understanding the world, human experiences in spiritual and social life become an important source domain for construing and expressing more abstract conceptual domains. In the conceptual metaphor (CM) model "HANDICRAFTS ARE HUMAN BEINGS," target subdomains such as the value of handicraft trades, the existence of handicraft trades, the structure of handicraft products, the state of production activities in handicraft trades, and awareness of transmitting handicraft trades are construed as entities possessing human characteristics. Accordingly, attributes of the source domain HUMAN BEINGS, such as human worth, human life, the structure of the physical human body, human behavior and states, and awareness of preserving family relationships, are transferred to the target domain HANDICRAFTS. These mappings help present handicrafts as a living entity with a spiritual life, value, and standing in sociocultural life.

First, the expressions in group (i), *hồn cốt* ("soul and core"), *linh hồn* ("soul"), and *thần thái* ("demeanor"), all serve to portray the value of handicraft trades. *Hồn* ("soul") is the immaterial, spiritual part of a human being, whereas *cốt* ("bones") is the skeletal part that forms the framework and shape of the body (Hoàng Phê, pp. 583, 268). The combination of the tangible element (*cốt*) and the intangible element (*hồn*) produces the concept *hồn cốt*, which denotes the essential, defining core of a person's identity. In the source domain HUMAN BEINGS, *cốt* is a tangible, visible component; when mapped onto the handicraft target domain, *cốt* corresponds to tangible values such as products, techniques, and crafting processes. *Hồn* is an intangible, invisible element that nevertheless determines a person's identity and vitality; when mapped onto the target domain, *hồn* corresponds to the cultural and spiritual values, craft knowledge, and traditional identity that handicraft trades preserve and transmit across generations.

Linh hồn ("soul") denotes the spiritual element that constitutes human life and essence (Hoàng Phê, p. 721). In metaphorical vehicles such as *hồn cốt* ("soul and core") and *linh hồn* ("soul"), *hồn* is intangible yet plays a role in constituting human life and essence. Handicraft trades not only produce everyday objects for human life; their products also express the nation's aesthetic thinking and culture. Whereas handicraft products are tangible elements, the nation's thinking and identity expressed through those products are intangible elements that nonetheless constitute the spiritual value of handicraft trades. Therefore, the attribute of soul in the human source domain is activated and mapped onto the attributes of cultural and spiritual value and identity in the target domain of handicraft trades.

Thần thái ("demeanor") is the outward appearance that reflects temperament, bearing, and spiritual life (Hoàng Phê, p. 1171). The salient characteristic of *thần thái* in the source domain HUMAN BEINGS is the outward manifestation of inner qualities and spiritual values, which gives each person a distinctive character. This attribute bears a similarity to the handicraft target domain, because a trade's inherently intangible cultural and spiritual values and identity are also manifested outwardly through its products, particularly their shapes, colors, patterns, and styles of craftsmanship. On this basis, the human attribute of *thần thái* is mapped onto the outward manifestation of the cultural and spiritual values and identity of handicraft trades through their products.

Whereas the preceding group of metaphorical vehicles activates the spiritual dimension of the human source domain, the vehicles in group (ii), *ghi danh* ("inscribe") and *khẳng định vị thế* ("affirm one's standing"), in expressions such as "inscribe on the world handicraft map" and "inscribe as intangible cultural heritage," activate the social dimension of human beings. *Ghi danh* means "to record someone's name and contributions or achievements" (Hoàng Phê, p. 613). Thus, a person whose name is recorded is someone with a reputation and achievements who can affirm their worth and standing within the community. Through their cultural, artistic, and technical values or accomplishments, handicraft products or handicraft trades likewise leave their mark and receive recognition from the community and society. Accordingly, the vehicle *ghi danh* shows that a handicraft trade is construed as a human being whose worth is recognized. The recognition of human worth in the source domain is mapped onto recognition of the value and achievements of handicrafts in the target domain.

Vị thế ("standing") is understood as position or status within social relationships (Hoàng Phê, p. 1413). In society, each individual holds a particular position within the community, associated with their role, worth, and degree of recognition in relation to others. Therefore, *khẳng định vị thế* ("affirm one's standing") means having a person's position, role, and

worth established and recognized. "Throughout their thousands of years of existence, Vietnamese handicraft trades have not only bequeathed invaluable material and spiritual products to later generations but have also supplied essential objects, contributing to the development and enhancement of the value of other forms of folk art" (Institute for Cultural Studies, 2012, p. 7). It can be said that handicraft trades hold an important position, role, and value in social life and in the nation's cultural heritage. Consequently, the position and role of human beings in society in the source domain are transferred to the establishment of the position, role, and value of handicrafts in sociocultural life in the target domain.

Trụ cột ("pillar") in group (iii) is defined as a person or force that provides the principal, firm support (Hoàng Phê, p. 1327). Thus, *trụ cột* refers to someone who holds an important position in a family or collective. When projected onto the handicraft target domain, this metaphorical vehicle reflects the community's recognition of the trade's foundational role in sustaining livelihoods, preserving culture, and promoting local economic development.

Tổ ("ancestor") and *nôi* ("cradle") in the group (iv) vehicles *tổ nghề* ("craft progenitor") and *cái nôi* ("cradle"), among others, reveal another human spiritual value: one's origins. According to the *Vietnamese Dictionary*, *tổ* is "the first person who establishes a lineage" (Hoàng Phê, p. 1276). *Tổ nghề* is the person who establishes and builds up a craft. Just as human beings have ancestors, a craft village also has a time when its craft and enterprise were founded. In this model, the human attribute of revering one's origins is activated and mapped onto the honoring of the history of the formation of handicraft trades. *Cái nôi* originally denotes an object in which a small child sleeps (Hoàng Phê, p. 933), an object associated with support and protection during the early stages of human life. The cradle's supportive value, associated with human infancy, is activated and transferred to the value of safeguarding the formation of handicraft trades. Thus, *tổ nghề* and *nôi* both belong to the source subdomain concerning the human spiritual value of remaining oriented toward one's origins. The attributes of this source subdomain are projected onto the values of honoring, nurturing, and preserving the history of the formation of handicraft villages.

Therefore, in the mapping "Human worth → The value of handicraft trades," the use of the vehicle groups (i) *hồn cốt*, *linh hồn*, and *thần thái* ("soul and core," "soul," and "demeanor"); (ii) *ghi danh* and *khẳng định vị thế* ("inscribe" and "affirm one's standing"); (iii) *trụ cột* ("pillar"); and (iv) *tổ nghề* and *cái nôi* ("craft progenitor" and "cradle"), among others, to express the values of handicraft trades highlights their cultural, social, and historical attributes. This shows that, in Vietnamese thinking, handicraft trades are living bodies possessing a soul, connections with other individuals, and ancestral origins. In this correspondence, the cultural value of a trade is a human being's soul or spirit; the trade's achievements and distinctive contributions are a person's role in society; and the history of its formation is a person's roots and origins. Thus, it can be said that Vietnamese people construe the value of handicraft trades as the spiritual life of a human being.

2.2 Second, the mapping "Human life → The existence of handicraft trades."

On the basis of the metaphorical expressions examined, the mapping projected from the source domain of human life onto the target domain of the existence of handicraft trades can be summarized as follows:

Table 2: Mapping model of the conceptual metaphor "HANDICRAFT TRADES ARE HUMAN BEINGS"

SOURCE DOMAIN: "HUMAN BEINGS"	**Human birth**	**→**	**Human maturation**	**→**	**Human existence**
↓	↓		↓		↓
TARGET DOMAIN: "HANDICRAFT TRADES"	The inception of the trade	→	The existence and development of the trade	→	The recovery and continuation of the trade

Metaphorical vehicles such as *phôi* ("embryo"), *ra đời* ("be born"), *tuổi* ("age"), *sức sống* ("vitality"), *nuôi dưỡng* ("nurture"), *thành viên* ("member"), *phục hồi* ("recover"), *tái sinh* ("be reborn"), and *sống lại* ("come back to life"), among others, all relate to human life. Within these, group (i), *phôi* and *ra đời*, is associated with the beginning of human life; group (ii), *tuổi*, *sức sống*, *nuôi dưỡng*, and *thành viên*, is associated with human maturation; and group (iii), *không sống nổi* ("unable to survive"), *phục hồi*, *tái sinh*, *sống lại*, and *sống dậy* ("return to life"), is associated with human existence. Thus, from the perspective of human thought, these vehicles do not exist in isolation but converge within a unified cognitive structure: the human life cycle.

The existence of handicraft trades is construed through human life, with groups of metaphorical vehicles found in the following metaphorical expressions:

2.2.1 The group *phôi* ("embryo"), *ra đời* ("be born"), etc.

- Once the plane and the points have been identified, the stoneworker sketches the design on paper and then draws it on the stone surface or prints it directly onto the block of stone. For complex products of high artistic value, the artisan must first draw a sketch and make a clay **model** (phôi); only when it meets the requirements do they proceed to make the actual piece. Following the sketch, the artisan chisels the **blank** (phôi) to shape the product (Department of Cultural Heritage newspaper, 2026).
- "Despite countless ups and downs, Hanoi's craft villages have retained their own distinctive beauty. With their long histories and the meaningful stories hidden in each product, these villages, which have developed tenaciously over time, have become deeply etched in the hearts of everyone from Hanoi. From the skillful hands of artisans, countless exquisite handicraft products have **been born** (ra đời), enduring through time to survive and develop to this day," Mr. Nguyễn Mạnh Quyền said (Vietnamplus newspaper, 2025).

According to the *Vietnamese Dictionary*, *phôi* ("embryo") denotes the initial state of a living organism, while *ra đời* ("be born") marks the moment when an individual begins to exist and is born into the world (Hoàng Phê, pp. 994, 1035). *Ra đời* refers to an individual being born and beginning life (Hoàng Phê, p. 1035). Both metaphorical vehicles reflect the initial stage of human life. Similarly, handicraft trades also undergo a process of inception, formation, and development. On the basis of this similarity, the birth of human life in the source domain is transferred to the formation and emergence of handicraft trades in the target domain. Thus, handicraft trades can be seen to be conceptualized as living entities with a moment of birth, from which they begin a new life.

2.2.2 The group *tuổi* ("age"), *sức sống* ("vitality"), *nuôi dưỡng* ("nurture"), *thành viên* ("member"), etc.

- Vạn Phúc is not merely the name of a village but the soul of a handicraft trade that is more than a thousand years **old** (tuổi), carrying the vigorous **vitality** (sức sống) of a proud culture (Lao động newspaper, 2025).
- Alongside the efforts of artisan families, the preservation and promotion of the value of Đông Hồ paintings are also being systematically undertaken at the Đông Hồ Folk Painting Conservation Center. Here, experiential activities and workshops for school and university students are held regularly, enabling them to learn directly about the painting-making process and print pictures with their own hands, thereby **nurturing** (nuôi dưỡng) their love for heritage and awareness of its preservation (VTV newspaper, 2025).
- Bát Tràng pottery and porcelain village and Vạn Phúc silk-weaving village are the first two traditional craft villages in Vietnam to be approved as **members** (thành viên) of the global network of creative craft cities (Vietnamplus newspaper, 2025).

Tuổi ("age") is the period of existence from birth to a particular point in time (Hoàng Phê, p. 1350); *sức sống* ("vitality") is the capacity to exist and develop as manifested vigorously (Hoàng Phê, p. 1111); *nuôi dưỡng* ("nurture") is the process of providing food, drink, and care to sustain and develop life (Hoàng Phê, p. 941); and *thành viên* ("member") is a person or unit that forms part of an organization or collective (Hoàng Phê, p. 1159). These concepts reflect different aspects of human existence: human beings have an age, that is, a period of existence measured from birth; they possess vitality, that is, the ability to sustain and develop life; they need to be nurtured through care and the provision of the conditions necessary for sustenance and development; and they may also hold membership, thereby establishing their place within a particular collective or organization. These attributes bear similarities to the handicraft target domain: each trade likewise has a period of existence measured from its formation and a capacity for sustenance and development; it requires supportive conditions and resources to continue existing; and it may also acquire membership in a particular community, organization, or occupational system. Thus, similarities in duration of existence, capacity for sustenance and development, the need for support to maintain existence, and status and relationships as part of a larger whole motivate the transfer from the source domain HUMAN BEINGS to the handicraft target domain.

2.2.3 The group *không sống nổi* ("unable to survive"), *phục hồi* ("recover"), *tái sinh* ("be reborn"), *sống lại* ("come back to life"), *sống dậy* ("return to life"), etc.

- After returning home from military service, many of his friends changed occupations, but he steadfastly stayed with the wooden frame, needle, and thread. "Back then, everyone said the embroidery trade **could not survive** (không sống nổi). But I was captivated by the speaking eyes in the pictures. Once you embroider eyes with a soul, the whole picture seems to **return to life** (sống dậy)," he confided (Văn hoá, Thể thao và Du lịch newspaper, 2025).
- According to artisan Nguyễn Đăng Tâm, his early years in the trade were the most difficult, from searching for and **restoring** (phục hồi) sources of raw materials and relearning traditional techniques to finding markets for the products. Although every stage, from production to sales, was demanding, those remain unforgettable memories that further forged his confidence and attachment to the trade. In addition to quietly preserving the craft, Mr. Tâm also teaches each stage to his son, Mr. Nguyễn Đăng Hiếu, from carving wooden printing blocks and mixing natural colors to printing pictures in a way that fully preserves every traditional line and detail (VTV newspaper, 2025).

- Distilling the essence of earth and fire, artisan Lê Đức Hạ is among the few people who have successfully recreated the technique of making Cham bricks, the material used to build the royal citadel of Trà Kiệu, the Mỹ Sơn sanctuary, and the Đồng Dương and Chiên Đàn towers, among others. Using clay from the lower reaches of the Thu Bồn River, he has given **rebirth** (tái sinh) to a line of products bearing the soul of indigenous culture, bringing history **back to life** (sống lại) through every grain of earth (Văn hoá newspaper, 2026).

Although *không sống nổi* ("unable to survive") is not recorded as an independent dictionary entry, the meaning of the combination can be established from its two components, *sống* and *nổi*. Here, *sống* ("live") denotes the existence of a living organism, while *nổi*, when placed after a verb, expresses the ability to perform the stated activity (Hoàng Phê, pp. 934, 1097). Accordingly, *không sống nổi* denotes a state of being unable, or lacking the necessary conditions, to continue sustaining life. When mapped onto the handicraft target domain, this attribute expresses a situation in which a trade lacks sufficient conditions, resources, or capacity to maintain its existence and operations.

Phục hồi ("recover" or "restore") denotes the restoration of what has been lost; *tái sinh* ("be reborn") denotes being born once again and regaining life or acquiring new vitality; and *sống lại* ("come back to life") and *sống dậy* ("return to life") mean returning to a living state after death (Hoàng Phê, pp. 1001, 1120). These metaphorical vehicles all reflect the possibility of changes in the state of human existence: from a weakened state, one may recover; after life has been lost, one may be reborn or come back to life and continue to exist. This attribute bears a similarity to the handicraft domain: after a period of decline, erosion, or apparent disappearance, a trade may likewise be restored, regain vitality, and continue to develop. Thus, the transition from a state of decline or loss of life to a restored state of continuing existence provides the basis for mapping the attributes of recovery, rebirth, and coming back to life from the source domain HUMAN BEINGS onto the handicraft target domain.

Therefore, in the mapping "Human life → The existence of handicraft trades," the use of the above groups of metaphorical vehicles to describe the course of existence of handicraft trades highlights the similarities between the source and target domains. In the source domain HUMAN BEINGS, when life weakens, is interrupted, or seems to have ended, human beings may recover and dream of rebirth or a return to life. Correspondingly, in the target domain, handicraft trades also have a moment of formation, a long history of existence, and the capacity for sustenance and development, and they require supportive conditions and resources to continue existing. When a trade declines, fades away, or faces the risk of disappearance, it may also be restored, regain vitality, and continue to develop. Thus, the similarity between the processes of the inception, sustenance, development, and restoration of life in the source domain and the formation, existence, development, and recovery of a trade in the target domain motivates the transfer from the source domain "Human life" to the target domain "The existence of handicraft trades."

2.3 Third, the mapping "The structure of the physical human body → The structure of handicraft products."

The structure of handicraft products is construed through the structure of the physical human body, with metaphorical vehicles found in the following metaphorical expressions:

- The characteristic forms of these products include jars with flared **mouths** (miệng), narrow **necks** (cổ), **shoulders** (vai), tapering bases, and flat undersides; cooking pots, small earthenware pots, pans, and ceramic kettles, among others, share flared mouths with rounded rims, short, narrow necks, swollen **bellies** (bụng), and rounded bases. The pottery and stoneware are unglazed, with glossy or rough **skin** (da) and a fine-grained ceramic body (xương, "bone"). Most have no decorative patterns, although a few types of stoneware jars are decorated with raised sawtooth borders and wavy patterns on their necks and shoulders (cục si sản văn hoá newspaper, 2026).
- Vạn Phúc village lies on the banks of the Nhuệ River, where winding roads, like rivers of time, lead me into a different world. It is a world where every strand of silk **carries within itself** (mang trong mình) the stories of generations of artisans, people who have devoted their entire lives to preserving and developing the traditional art of silk weaving (lao động newspaper, 2025).

The above metaphorical vehicles all belong to the source domain of the parts of the physical human body. In fact, human beings are extremely familiar with the structure, shapes, and functions of their own body parts. These body parts are mapped onto the target domain of the structure of handicraft products on the basis of similarities in shape, position, and structural characteristics. Specifically, *miệng* ("mouth"), *cổ* ("neck"), *vai* ("shoulder"), and *bụng* ("belly") are used to name the corresponding parts of pottery because their forms and positions closely resemble those of human body parts; *da* ("skin") denotes a product's outer surface, with characteristics such as glossiness, roughness, or smoothness; and *xương* ("bone") denotes the body material or internal structure that determines the product's durability, solidity, and quality. The use of these terms shows that human beings take the structure of their own bodies as a cognitive template for identifying and describing the structure of handicraft products. In addition, the vehicle *mang trong mình* ("carry within oneself") reflects an extension from the overall function of the human body to the ability of handicraft products to contain and convey values. In expressions such as "every strand of silk carries within itself the stories of generations

of artisans," the product is conceptualized as an entity capable of preserving, carrying, and transmitting cultural and historical values and collective memories.

Thus, the mapping model "The structure of the physical human body → The structure of handicraft products" shows that, in Vietnamese thinking, a handicraft product is a complete living body in which each constituent part not only has its own shape, position, and structural characteristics but also performs particular functions. These parts are closely interconnected, just as the parts of the human body are connected. This reflects the Vietnamese conception of *dĩ nhân vi trung* ("taking human beings as the center") in the process of construing and conceptualizing the surrounding world: an inanimate entity, namely a handicraft product, is conceptualized as an animate entity, namely the physical human body.

2.4 Fourth, the mapping "Human behavior and states → The state of production activities in handicraft trades."

The state of production activities in handicraft trades is construed through human behavior and states, with groups of metaphorical vehicles in the following metaphorical expressions:

- *As I entered the village, the atmosphere seemed imbued with something deeply sacred. Along the narrow alleys and simple houses, the silk looms **stood upright** (đứng thẳng) and **silent** (lặng lẽ), like soldiers guarding a treasury of heritage. Every soft strand of silk seemed imbued with the dedication, perseverance, and endurance of the artisans here. And on each loom, as the morning light fell upon the silk fabrics gradually taking shape, I sensed a refinement that left me astonished (Lao động newspaper, 2025).*
- *Thêu quắn (twisted-thread embroidery) uses 2 threads, one thick and one thin, called the mother thread and the child thread. The artisan twists the 2 threads together: the mother thread **embraces** (ôm) the child thread, winding around it in perfectly regular, sesame-seed-like coils. Thêu quắn is used to form cloud, dragon, sun, and coral motifs or to create a particular accent. The twists must be worked evenly for the embroidery to be beautiful. Not everyone can master this technique; in fact, it is on the verge of disappearing (Cục Di sản Văn hoá newspaper, 2026).*
- *It can be said that the efforts of the city authorities, departments, committees, sectoral agencies, and local authorities, through craft-village conservation projects; programs for vocational training, craft transmission, and the introduction of crafts into new localities; policies to promote rural industry; support for innovation in production technology, environmental treatment, and the completion of technical infrastructure to turn traditional craft villages into attractive tourist destinations, among other measures, have helped **awaken** (đánh thức) the "quintessence" of the capital's craft villages. These efforts help craft villages join the flow of Hanoi's cultural industries in accordance with the general orientation of the Government and the specific orientation of the city (Người Hà Nội magazine, 2024).*
- *Article title: "When Craft Villages **Wake Up** (thức giấc)" (Khuyến nông Đắk Lắk newspaper).*
- *It is a fact that some craft villages in Hanoi once faced the risk of decline and fading away. Yet through bold new directions, continual product innovation, and close connections with tourism, many craft villages have gained the impetus to **stir and transform themselves** (trở mình) into centers of cultural tourism (Lao động newspaper, 2024).*

2.4.1 The group of human behaviors, with the vehicles *đứng thẳng* ("stand upright"), *lặng lẽ* ("remain silent"), *ôm* ("embrace"), etc.

For the vehicles *thẳng đứng* ("upright") and *lặng lẽ* ("silent"), *đứng thẳng* ("stand upright") denotes an upright posture without leaning or swaying, while *lặng lẽ* denotes a quiet state in which little or no sound is produced and no attention is drawn (Hoàng Phê, p. 696). *Đứng thẳng* and *lặng lẽ* originally denote human postures and states. In this mapping model, the loom's inactive state is conceptualized as the human posture and state of standing upright and remaining silent.

For the vehicle *ôm* ("embrace"), the word means using one's arms to hold tightly or encircle an object or a person (Hoàng Phê, p. 956). In the *thêu quắn* embroidery technique, the mother thread surrounds, supports, and binds closely to the child threads, resembling the human action of holding something tightly in one's arms.

It can be seen that the above metaphorical vehicles are all construed from actions and states characteristic of human beings. This reflects how everyday experiences of human actions and states in interaction with the surrounding world are mapped onto the states of products and tools and the crafting processes of handicraft trades.

2.4.2 The group of human states, with the vehicles *thức giấc* ("wake up"), *đánh thức* ("awaken"), *trở mình* ("turn over"), etc.

Expressions containing the vehicles *thức giấc* ("wake up"), *đánh thức* ("awaken"), and *trở mình* ("turn over"), among others, show that the state of production activities in handicraft trades is conceptualized through human behaviors and states.

Regarding the vehicles *thức giấc*, *đánh thức*, and *trở mình*, among others, *thức giấc* ("wake up") means changing from a sleeping state to a waking state (Hoàng Phê, p. 1232); *đánh thức* ("awaken") means causing a sleeping person or creature to wake up (Hoàng Phê, p. 363); and *trở mình* ("turn over") means moving or changing the body's position while lying down or resting (Hoàng Phê, p. 1324). When projected onto the target domain of handicraft trades, these expressions no longer carry their original meanings concerning human physiological activities but instead express the recovery, transformation, and renewed movement of production activities. Specifically, production activities in handicraft villages recover after a period of stagnation and quietness, just as human beings are awakened and wake up after a long sleep.

Thus, in this mapping model, handicraft trades are construed as living human bodies capable of moving from static states, such as standing still and remaining silent, to dynamic states, such as awakening, waking up, and turning over. Here, the states of products, tools, and crafting operations in handicraft trades are construed through human actions and states.

2.5 Fifth, the mapping "Awareness of preserving family relationships → Awareness of transmitting handicraft trades."

Awareness of preserving handicraft trades is construed through awareness of preserving family relationships, with groups of metaphorical vehicles in the following metaphorical expressions:

- *Both were born into traditional families and have **remained attached to their craft villages throughout their lives** (gắn bó trọn đời), not only contributing to the preservation of ancestral craftsmanship but also pioneering innovation and training the next generation. They are living testimony to the journey of preserving cultural identity through skillful hands and passionate hearts, contributing to the revival and sustainable development of traditional craft villages in the Quảng region within the flow of contemporary culture (Văn hoá newspaper, 2025).*
- *After returning home from military service, many of his friends changed occupations, but he steadfastly **stayed with** (ở lại) the wooden frame, needle, and thread. "Back then, everyone said the embroidery trade could not survive. But I was captivated by the speaking eyes in the pictures. Once you embroider eyes with a soul, the whole picture seems to return to life," he confided (Văn hoá newspaper, 2026).*
- *Đông Hồ painting craftsmanship today has a "frail" existence, sustained by only a few remaining families. According to recent statistics, there are now only 3 artisans and approximately 20 practitioners, while only 2 artisans remain capable of **passing on their skills through teaching** (truyền dạy), Mr. Nguyễn Hữu Sam and Mr. Nguyễn Đăng Chế, both of whom are elderly (Cục Di sản Văn hoá newspaper, 2026).*
- *According to artisan Nguyễn Đăng Tâm, his early years **pursuing the trade** (theo nghề) were the most difficult, from searching for and restoring sources of raw materials and relearning traditional techniques to finding markets for the products. Although every stage, from production to sales, was demanding, those remain unforgettable memories that further forged his confidence and attachment to the trade (VTV newspaper, 2025).*

2.5.1 Awareness of remaining faithful to the trade, including the vehicles *gắn bó trọn đời* ("remain attached throughout one's life"), *ở lại* ("stay"), etc.

Regarding the vehicles *gắn bó trọn đời* ("remain attached throughout one's life") and *ở lại* ("stay"), *gắn bó* means being closely connected through affection or responsibility, having or establishing a spiritual or emotional relationship that is difficult to sever (Hoàng Phê, p. 472); *ở lại* means not leaving and continuing to remain in a particular place or situation. Behaviors such as *gắn bó* and *ở lại* originally reflect the bonds among family members. Each craft village has its own forms of organization and division of labor, and craft secrets are passed down from one generation to the next (Institute for Cultural Studies, 2012, p. 9). Members of a craft village are attached to one another and preserve the trade's traditional values, just as members of a clan are attached to one another and preserve the traditions of their family and lineage.

2.5.2 Awareness of transmitting handicraft trades, with the vehicles *truyền dạy* ("pass on knowledge and skills through teaching"), *theo nghề* ("pursue the trade"), etc.

Regarding the vehicles *truyền dạy* and *theo nghề*, *truyền dạy* means passing on knowledge, experience, or skills to others, while *theo nghề* means continuing to practice a particular trade over a long period. *Truyền dạy* reflects the process of transferring occupational knowledge, skills, and experience from the preceding generation to the next. Through this mapping, a handicraft trade is construed as a family member or a traditional value that needs to be preserved, inherited,

and continued. This reflects not only the activity of craft conservation but also a Vietnamese cultural conception in which preserving a trade is itself a way of preserving the traditions of the family and lineage and the cultural identity of the community.

These metaphorical vehicles all originate in behaviors that maintain and preserve family relationships and are used to conceptualize the preservation of handicraft trades. In Vietnamese culture, the family is not only a setting in which blood ties are maintained but also a space for preserving and transmitting cultural values across generations. For many traditional craft villages, the pattern of transmission from father to child and the bonds among members of the family and lineage form an important foundation for preserving and developing the trade over time.

It can be seen that, in the conceptual metaphor model "HANDICRAFT TRADES ARE HUMAN BEINGS," the attributes of human worth, human life, the structure of the physical human body, human behavior and states, and human awareness of preserving family relationships are transferred to the following target subdomains: (1) the value of handicraft trades; (2) the existence of handicraft trades; (3) the structure of handicraft products; (4) the state of production activities in handicraft trades; and (5) awareness of transmitting handicraft trades.

Through analysis of the above mapping model, we find that human psychological and emotional attributes such as joy, sadness, anger, and resentment are not activated. This can be explained by the principle that metaphorical mappings projected from the source domain must remain consistent with the intrinsic cognitive structure of the target domain (George Lakoff, 1993, p. 215). That is, the target domain is not a "blank sheet of paper" onto which the source domain can project all its attributes; rather, the target domain already possesses a particular logic of cognitive structure. Therefore, source-domain attributes that are incompatible with or conflict with the target domain's cognitive structure are not activated. Here, in terms of cognitive logic, the handicraft target domain is a sociocultural reality with a history of formation, cultural value, product structures, and other features. However, emotions such as joy, sadness, suffering, and happiness still belong to the artisan or the person appreciating the product, rather than being intrinsic to the handicraft trade itself. Were internal psychological states such as anguish, joy, sadness, and suffering projected from the human source domain onto the handicraft target domain, the mapping would violate the ontological structure of the target domain, leading to incompatibility in cognitive logic. Consequently, the psychological attributes of the human source domain are not activated in this conceptual metaphor model.

In this model, Vietnamese people construe handicraft trades as human beings possessing a physical body, a soul, behaviors, states, relationships, and roles in social life. The cultural value of a trade is a human being's soul or spirit; the trade's achievements and distinctive contributions are a person's role in society; the history of its formation is a person's roots and origins; and the stages of a craft village's formation, existence, development, and recovery are stages in a human life cycle, from birth to maturation, the sustenance of life, and the hope of rebirth. Whereas the cultural value of a trade is an intangible element, namely the human soul, handicraft products are tangible elements whose constituent parts resemble the parts of the physical human body. During the crafting process, the products and tools of handicraft trades exist in different states. They may be still or in motion, like human actions and states that alternate between quietness and activity. Each craft village has its own forms of organization and division of labor. Craft secrets are passed down from one generation to the next; members of the craft village are attached to one another and preserve the trade's traditional values, just as members of a clan are attached to one another and preserve the traditions of their family and lineage.

Analysis of the above mapping model shows that, when conceptualizing handicraft trades through the source domain HUMAN BEINGS, Vietnamese people do not attend to human psychological and emotional attributes such as joy, sadness, anger, and resentment. Instead, they attend only to human beings as possessing a physical body, a soul, behaviors, states, relationships, and roles in family and social life. This metaphor is formed on the basis of *dĩ nhân vi trung*, the conception held by the inhabitants of wet-rice civilization that human beings are the center of the universe.

3 CONCLUSION

- The source domain HUMAN BEINGS in the conceptual metaphor model "HANDICRAFTS ARE HUMAN BEINGS" comprises 4 source subdomains: human worth, human life, the structure of the physical human body, human behavior and states, and awareness of preserving family relationships. These are transferred to the corresponding attributes in the target domain HANDICRAFTS: the value of handicraft trades, the existence of handicraft trades, the structure of handicraft products, the state of production activities in handicraft trades, and awareness of transmitting handicraft trades. Thus, Vietnamese people conceptualize handicraft trades as human beings possessing a physical body, a soul, behaviors, states, relationships, and roles in family and social life. Above all, this clearly reflects the universal principle of embodiment, *dĩ nhân vi trung* ("taking human beings as the center"): human beings always take themselves as the basis for construing and structuring the surrounding real world. Here, only attributes associated with the life cycle, social value, and external bodily structure of the human source

domain are activated and mapped onto the target subdomains of handicraft trades, highlighting the most important aspects of handicrafts: their cultural and artistic value, existence over time, product form, crafting processes, and succession across generations.

- However, projection from the human source domain onto the target domain of handicraft trades does not occur in its entirety; rather, it is selective, following the principle of compatibility with the intrinsic cognitive structure of the target domain (George Lakoff, 1993, p. 215). Specifically, internal human psychological and emotional attributes, such as joy, sadness, anger, resentment, and suffering, are hardly ever found to be activated in this metaphor model. This is based on cognitive logic: the target domain of handicraft trades is inherently a sociocultural reality rather than a subject possessing independent subjective emotions; those psychological responses belong to the artisan or the appreciator. This principled selectivity shows that the conceptual metaphor model "HANDICRAFT TRADES ARE HUMAN BEINGS" both conforms to the universal principle of embodiment and satisfies the logic of ontological cognition in the target domain, thereby highlighting the subtle and profound understanding that Vietnamese people have of handicraft trades.
- Human beings constitute a concrete, directly perceptible, and experientially rich source domain. In Vietnamese culture, traditional handicraft trades are often closely associated with family, lineage, and village structures. Conceptualizing handicraft trades as a "living being" possessing vitality, a soul, and intergenerational continuity reveals a way of thinking that values affective bonds, emphasizes community and village cohesion, and upholds the traditional cultural values of Vietnamese people, the inhabitants of a wet-rice agricultural culture.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

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