

Management Consultants in the Restoration of Dai Viet

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study was to identify management consultants in the restoration of Đại Việt and provide management analysis by associating it with the modern management theories, as well as tracing the practice of management to the early ages. The Vietnamese, which realize the uniqueness of Đại Việt, resist Chinese domination through several revolts in order to restore the independence of Đại Việt. Some of the revolts were supported by abundant consultations, while others are lacking. This qualitative research was using the study of text to identify management consultants in the restoration of Đại Việt and provide such management analysis. This research has shown that the management consultants at that time was Consultant-General, which contribute in each phase to the restoration of Đại Việt. Consultations have a focal role in the restoration of Đại Việt. Consultancies provided to the top management, the resistant leaders, was remarkable. Such management consultants were exalted and honored as majestic heroes.*

Keywords: *management consultants, Đại Việt, study of text, management analysis*

I. INTRODUCTION

During the last two centuries, there has been some resurgence in management consultation, which was popularized by prominent management consultants such as Peter F. Drucker and Michael E. Porter. This was originally initiated by Henri Fayol and Frederick W. Taylor, which marked the beginning of modern managements. Since the 1930s, there has been rapid growth in the number of management consultants in America. In the early 1960s, it reached Europe (McKenna, 1995).

Management consulting is a series of practices of helping the organizations to improve their performance and to support them in achieving the organization's goals. Consultancies may draw up an identification of organizational problems along with suggested solutions, organizational change, management assistance, development strategy, operational improvement services, and suggestions for efficiencies (Tordoir, 1995:140). Management consulting grows in-line with increasing complexity in management. The first formally-registered management consulting firm was Arthur D. Little Inc. It was founded in 1886 (McKenna, 2003: 52). However, the practice of management has been implemented long before the rise of popular management theories (Wren & Bedeian, 2008:15).

It has been written a lot about China's rise, power, and hegemony, yet from a historical perspective. China's domination is nothing new. Historian Wang Gungwu points out three past instances: the Qin-Han unification, the Sui-Tang reunification, and the Ming-Qing dynasties (Wang Gungwu, 2004). The polity that we now know as China was once the most powerful state and regional hegemony in history.

Questioning on national identity of Đại Việt has long plagued historians. Griffin Jr (1976) & Gaspardone (1950) see Đại Việt as a minor appendage to the Chinese Empire. It is argued that the culture and institutions in Đại Việt were heavily influenced by the Chinese Confucianism tradition. Its distinction and uniqueness is often ignored. Of course there are also some historians who reject the former view with continuously searching for evidences, heritage, analysis, and interpretations in order to demonstrate the uniqueness of Đại Việt. The *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo* provides some clues as well a narrative document of great literary with many allusions, a precious legacy with purely historical interest (O'Harrow, 1979). Furthermore, O'Harrow (1979) explains: "It is in the *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo*, this victory proclamation, that Nguyễn Trãi appeals to a sense of Vietnamese national identity, revealing some interesting elements of what apparently composed the educated fifteenth century Vietnamese view of themselves".

This study is focusing on management consultants over the restoration of Đại Việt. This study is expected to contribute to the management analysis. Such research is also expected to promote the current development of management research which focused on historical studies.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Study of Text in Qualitative Research

Kirk and Miller (1986:9) define qualitative research as a unique tradition in the field of social science that in principle is depended on human observations. According to Moleong (2005:7), through qualitative research, researcher could describes the phenomenon thoroughly. This research was the study of text with

theresearcher as a primary research instrument (Moleong, 2005:7). The text used in this research was associated with history, politics, and management. To increase the credibility and the validity of the result (Rothbauer, 2008: 892-894), data triangulation was done in this research. The data used were mostly from international journals, reports, and related researches.

2.2. Management

The definition of management by one of the leading management thinkers, Frederick W. Taylor, one of the first management consultants (The Wall Street Journal, 1997), is described as a productivity-oriented approach which managers should use to explore the resources of men, machines, money, and materials and to emphasize on knowing the job and doing it in a rational way in his definition of management (Taylor, 1948:36-40): “Management is the art of knowing what you want to do and then seeing that it is done in the best and cheapest way”.

Henri Fayol, a founder of modern management methods (Witzel, 2003:96), mentions the function of management for achieving desired results and treats management as a process of planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling in his definition of management (Fayol, 1949:5): “To manage is to forecast and to plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control”.

George R. Terry provides an explanation of the functions of management in his definition of management (Terry, 1968:4): “Management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling performed to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources”.

Peter F. Drucker, a popular American management consultant, which often been described as the founding father of modern management (Forbes, 2014), points out different facets of management with the ultimate analysis in his definition of management. He considers management as a series of practices which concerns the results (Drucker, 1974:x-xiv): “Management is work, and as such it has its own skills, its own tools, its own techniques. Management is a discipline ... management is also people ... management is practice. Its essence is not knowing but doing”.

All above viewpoints regard management as an art and treat it as a science. They are relevant and true as each of these reflects different aspects of management (Prasad & Gulshan, 2011:6). Management is, in part, an art and the remaining part is a science, as pointed out by Peter F. Drucker (Drucker, 1974:x-xiv) that: “Management is also people”. Prasad & Gulshan (2011:14) provide the definition of managers: “Managers are, therefore, people who guide the destiny of an organization ... They get all these things done through others. They make plans, build an organization, help and motivate people to work according to the plans and keep an eye on their performance to get the result”. Managements, in the modern management, consist of several layers of positions in an organization, which Prasad & Gulshan (2011:14) define: “Managers are, therefore, people who guide the destiny of an organization”, was top management.

2.3. Consultant, Consultancy and Management Consultant

A consultant is a qualified person, who provides professional service (Jha, 2000:383). World Book (2000) defines a consultant as a person who gives professional or technical advice. The consultants carry ideas to the public and private bureaucracies, accelerating the process of organizational innovation and dissemination (McKenna, 1995 & Kakabadse, Louchart & Kakabadse, 2006). In summary, a consultant is a qualified person who has expertise in a particular field and provides professional service based on the expertise.

A consultancy is an act of seeking advice from a consultant. It, literally, is an act of consulting. World Book (2000) defines consultancy as work or business of a consultant. A consultant provides services to identify problems. After all the problems have been identified, a consultant should give recommendations with real action plans (Jha, 2000:383). In the modern management, a consultancy provides consulting services to an organization, which is usually a company.

Management consulting is a series of practices that aims to help an organization to improve its performance and to support it in achieving the organization's goal. In a metaphoric way, Lindon (1995) describes: “Management consultants are people who would borrow your watch to tell you what time it is”. Management consultants provide consultancies. Consultancies may draw up an identification of organizational problems along with suggested solutions, organizational change, management assistance, development strategy, operational improvement services, and suggestions for efficiencies (Tordoir, 1995:140). Such definition is confirmed by Greiner and Metzger (1983: 7), which define management consultancy: “As an advisory service contracted for and provided to organizations by specially trained and qualified persons who assist, in an objective and independent manner, the client organization to identify management problems, analyze such problems, recommend solutions to these problems and help when requested in the implementation of solutions”.

The first formally-registered management consulting firm was Arthur D. Little Inc. It was founded in 1886 (McKenna, 2003: 52). However, the practice of management has been implemented long before the rise of popular management theories (Wren & Bedeian, 2008:15). Therefore, it is more precise to be called as the first modern management consulting. The practices of management consulting could be traced back to Moses (c. 1300 BC), an Israelite who was also a prince of Egypt. Moses listened to the advice of Jethro, a priest of Midian (Exodus 18: 24, KJV): “So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said”, thus made Jethro the first identified management consultant.

2.4. **Đại Việt**

Previously, since the rule of King Đinh Tiên Hoàng (924-979, reigned 968-979), the kingdom had been referred as Đại Cồ Việt (Ngô Sĩ Liên, 1993: 59). In 1054, King Lý Thánh Tông (1023-1072, reigned 1054-1072) renamed the kingdom to Đại Việt (Tarling, 2000:139). In 1407, it once again fell to Chinese domination, Ming renamed the kingdom to Giao Chỉ (Wang Yuan-kang, 2012). In 1428, King Lê Lợi liberated Giao Chỉ and restored the kingdom as Đại Việt. The use of term Đại Việt was ended when the Nguyễn dynasty took power, which officially changed in 1804 to Việt Nam by King Gia Long (Woodside, 1971:120).

There were other choices of name that could be used to address the kingdom. The term Annam commonly used by China (Fairbank, 1978:693) and French (Brocheux & Hémerly, 2004:78-89) to mention the kingdom, which has nuanced it as tributary state, not independence state. The widely used term Vietnam (Tønnesson & Antlöv, 1996:117) also considered unsuitable since the precise name was Việt Nam (Woodside, 1971:120), and of course, using diacritics. Contrary to Vietnam or Việt Nam, the term Đại Việt was used during the era which been discussed in this research (Woodside, 1971:120 & Tarling, 2000:139). Based on above rationale, researcher subjectively uses the term Đại Việt in this research.

III. MING DOMINATION

3.1. Annexation (1407-1427)

The early Ming dynasty enjoyed an abundance in economic and military resources. Ming was the most powerful kingdom compare to its surrounding powers. Ming was described as the world’s largest and most diversified kingdom (Fairbank & Goldman, 1992:192). A census of Ming in 1393 recorded a population of 60 million, compared to Portugal one million and England five million in the same time (Dreyer, 2007:8 & Mote, 1999:746).

The overwhelming power leads to pursue of continental and maritime expansions. Expansion, however, does not necessarily mean the acquisition of territory (Gilpin, 1981:23-24). In the reign of Emperor Hongwu of Ming, Đại Việt became a tributary state of Ming and gets the title as Annam (Fairbank, 1978:693).

Not quite satisfied with the tributary system over Đại Việt, Ming invaded and conquered Đại Việt. In 1406, Emperor Yongle of Ming launch 5,000 armies crossing the border of Đại Việt to destroy Lê dynasty. The troops of Lê were no match compared the Ming army resulting the capital and other major towns of the Red River delta fall to Ming. Furthermore, Ming plans to control the whole Đại Việt (Wang Yuan-kang, 2012): “In response to the suggestion of Ming commander Zhang Fu, who argued that Đại Việt had been a part of China since ancient times and sought once more to become Chinese territory, Emperor Yongle annexed Đại Việt as a Chinese province. The new province was named Giao Chỉ, name during the Tang dynasty”.

Đại Việt, however, proved a difficult place to administer. There were several revolts against Ming that could be subdued. Among the people who led the resistance through rebellion were, Trần Ngỗi (Giản Định Đế) and Trần Quý Khoáng (Trùng Quang Đế) which marked as Later Trần dynasty (Whitmore, 1985:100-105).

3.2. Trần Ngỗi

In 1406, a younger son of King Trần Nghệ Tông, Trần Ngỗi, proclaimed himself Giản Định Đế and started a revolt. His base initially was centered in Ninh Bình. He was supported by Trần Triệu Cơ, a bureaucrat under the Trần dynasty. Due to obsolete technology and lack of planning, in his initial resistance, the revolt was defeated. King Trần Ngỗi abandoned Ninh Bình and move to further south area in Thanh Hóa. In Thanh Hóa, King Trần Ngỗi was helped by Đặng Tất, a high-ranking official of Trần dynasty. The popularity of King Trần Ngỗi and Đặng Tất makes easier to gain support from the locals in the Thanh Hóa (Institute of History, 1998:340).

In 1408, King Trần Ngỗi plans to launch an attack to Thăng Long, the capital of Đại Việt which has become the main base of Ming occupations. Đặng Tất stopped him and advised him not to, by judging that his army is still small and need to gather more troops instead of launching the troop to the center of Ming occupation, Thăng Long. In addition, his army does not have enough weaponry and enough supply, therefore, need further preparation and improvement before waging a war. Another advocate with him, Nguyễn Cảnh Chân, a former general under the Trần dynasty, also informs King Trần Ngỗi that Ming had controls other major towns of the Red River delta, making them hard to defeat with the current army that King Trần Ngỗi has. However, King Trần Ngỗi, ignored the advices, continued waging wars with Ming and

launch an attack to Thăng Long. King Trần Ngỗi, along with Đặng Tất and Nguyễn Cảnh Chân was captured by Ming and executed c. 1410 (Institute of History. 1998:341-342).

King Trần Ngỗi' revolts in Thanh Hóa was far better compare to his former revolt in Ninh Bình. His revolts in Thanh Hóa were supported with the advice of Đặng Tất and Nguyễn Cảnh Chân, while his initial effort in Ninh Bình was not. It was noted that his initial effort in Ninh Bình, was lack of planning. His attack to Thăng Long was ignoring his advisors, his consultants. Good planning could not be neglected, especially in war. In the modern management, Henri Fayol has mentioned the importance of planning in his theory (Fayol, 1949:5). Such ideas of planning could be traced back to King Solomon of Israel (reign c. 970 to 931 BC), which already gave comment regarding the importance of planning in the war (Proverbs 20: 18, NAS): "Prepare plans by consultation, and make war by wise guidance".

3.3. Trần Quý Khoáng

Trần Quý Khoáng was the grandson of King Trần Nghệ Tông. After King Trần Ngỗi has been captured by Ming, Trần Quý Khoáng ascend the throne as Trùng Quang Đế and started a revolt with the support from Đặng Dung, son of Đặng Tất and Nguyễn Cảnh Dị, son of Nguyễn Cảnh Chân (Institute of History. 1998:341-342).

In 1410, King Trần Quý Khoáng and Nguyễn Cảnh Dị defeated Giang Hạo of Ming through arson boats of the enemy camp. The hostilities continue in 1411-1413 with several clashes with Ming in Thanh Hóa. Ming's troops, which far greater, King Trần Quý Khoáng cornered in the south of Thanh Hóa, near Lan Xang. In a combat with Ming, Đặng Dung and Nguyễn Cảnh Dị was captured and executed (Institute of History. 1998:341-345).

In 1414 King Trần Quý Khoáng army was in a hard position without advisors, soon, being cleared by Ming. After being captured by Ming, King Trần Quý Khoáng commits suicide. Though such resistance was not succeeding, it provides burning spirit of local leaders to raise further revolts (Institute of History. 1998:346-347).

In the last phase of King Trần Quý Khoáng's revolt, he was cornered in a difficult situation. Ming army was far greater so that he lost much of his army, his primary resources. He also lost Đặng Dung and Nguyễn Cảnh Dị, his people. In the modern management, George R. Terry has mentioned that to accomplish the objectives, it needs resources and the most important, people (Terry, 1968:4) which the people were as management consultants in this case. Such ideas of the importance of management consultants could be traced back to King Solomon of Israel (reign c. 970 to 931 BC), which already gave some comments that the presence of consultation was irreplaceable, even with a good planning (Proverbs 20: 18, ESV): "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed".

IV. RESTORATION OF ĐẠI VIỆT

4.1. Restoration

Lê Lợi is one of the most famous figures throughout the history of Đại Việt. Lê Lợi was the son of an aristocratic nobleman in Lam Sơn. Lam Sơn had been established by Lê Hoi, Lê Lợi's grandfather, c. 1330s. Lam Sơn was positioned in the north of the lowland Red River delta. The topography of Lam Sơn was mountainous with most of them was a forest. Lam Sơn, along with Red River delta and Thanh Hóa, was a newly colonized area by Ming, which turned Lam Sơn as the frontier of Đại Việt (Taylor, 2013:191).

In 1414, after the death of King Trần Quý Khoáng, Ming amplifies its domination in Đại Việt. The Vietnamese was imposed by heavy tax, the locals was being ravaged as being explained by Lê Quý Đôn (2007:38): "Pearls collected by local from the sea ... mining products extracted from the mountains ... the vegetables and spices being planted; all was being plundered". In addition, as a lesson for locals on the existing revolts, the remaining Vietnamese soldiers, the local resistance leader, along with the insurgents and civilians, are brutally slaughtered, as being recorded and explained in detail by Lê Quý Đôn (2007:38): "[The insurgents and civilians was] beheaded ... burned ... to terrorize the Vietnamese". The brutal rule and the harsh behavior done by Ming inflicts Vietnamese resentment (Ngô Sĩ Liên, 1993: 325 & Lê Quý Đôn, 2007:37-38).

Lê Lợi is gaining favor from several local resistance leaders (Lê Quý Đôn, 2007:37 & Taylor, 2013:191). Lê Lợi was supported by prominent families, such the famous Trịnh lords of Thăng Long and Nguyễn lords of Huế. Lê Lợi gathering several local supporters, which mostly anti Ming sentiment in highland areas of Nghệ An and Thanh Hóa, as being documented by (Ngô Thế Long, 1976:37): "These heroes ... such as Lê Văn An, Lê Văn Linh, Bùi Quốc Hưng, Lư Nhân Chú, Trịnh Vô, Vũ Uy, Lê Liễu [and Lê Lôi] ... secretly plot the uprising".

Nguyễn Trãi, an illustrious Confucian scholar, also joined the forces of Lê Lợi. Nguyễn Trãi was from Chi Ngại, Phượng Sơn, Hải Dương, but was born and raised in Thăng Long, the capital of the Trần dynasty (Nguyễn Khắc Viện, 2004:48). He passed the examination held by Hồ dynasty in 1400 then served in the government. Nguyễn Trãi served as the strategist for the movement and being the principal advisor of Lê Lợi (Nguyễn Khắc Viện, 2004:55).

Lê Lợi also ask King Lan Xang of Lan Xang(1375-1428, reigned 1416-1428) in the west of highland areas of Nghệ An and Thanh Hóa, the frontier of Lan Xang. An army of 30,000 with 100 elephant cavalry was dispatched from Lan Xang, but was bribed by Ming to strengthen the Ming domination in the area (Simms & Simms, 1999:47-48 & Stuart-Fox, 2006:20-21), thus marked as the beginning of hostilities between Đại Việt and Lan Xang. Since then, there was continuous clashes between them until Lan Xang become tributary state of Ayudhya(Immanuel, Triyuwono, & Djamhuri, 2015). Several local ethnic minorities also bribed by Ming, which were known collectively as Ai Lao (Lao) (Taylor, 2013:182). The Ai Lao forces was crushed by the army of Lê Lợi that lead by Trịnh Khả (Ngô Thế Long, 1976:37-41). The army of Lê Lợi was able to suppress and defeat Ai Lao by lurking them in the mountains and forests of Thanh Hóa. The revolt enjoyed an initial success with guerrilla war in the mountainous region in Thanh Hóa (Taylor, 2013:182).

In 1417 to 1423, Lê Lợi launched several campaigns from his bases in the mountains, which ably extended his control over the whole of Thanh Hóa. In 1424, by the advice of his general and advisor, Nguyễn Chích, a local leader, Lê Lợi launch an attack to Nghệ An plain. Lê Lợi destroys several Ming forces in that area. In response to the diminishing control in the Đại Việt, Ming sent a series of military reinforcements. When the army of Ming has arrived in the Red River delta, however, Đại Việt forces were able to cut supply lines making Ming army could not transport any ransoms. Đại Việt also has taken over the control of the major towns of the Red River delta, leaving the Chinese army isolated in the capital and nearby citadels which quickly being defeated. In 1425, several other Ming armies were defeated (Nguyễn Khắc Viện, 2004:69).

By 1427, the resistance had spread throughout the territory Đại Việt. Such revolts had sporadically raised and the Ming army of occupation had been destroyed. In response to such situation, the new Ming ruler, Emperor Xuande, dispatched 100,000 troops to Đại Việt (Trần Trọng Kim, 2005:212-213). With the advice of Nguyễn Trãi, Ming army was lured into Thăng Long, where it was surrounded. The lured army was being destroyed in a series of battles which resulting Ming army lost over 90,000 men. Liu Sheng (Liễu Thăng), Ming general, was captured and executed (Trần Trọng Kim, 2005:214-215).

Ming was able to keep the territory from such revolts for two decades. Nevertheless, constant rebellions grew, resulting financial and military burden for Ming. The tactics used by Đại Việt guerrillas, hit-and-run tactics had made Chinese domination increasingly difficult to be further maintained (Wang Yuan-kang, 2012). Đại Việt guerrillas forced Ming forces to withdraw in 1427, followed by Nguyễn Trãi penned a proclamation of victory, *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo* (Nguyễn Khắc Viện, 2004:63).

4.3. Aftermath

In 1427, after the resistance over 10 years, Ming finally acknowledged the independence of Đại Việt. Lê Lợi took the throne with name Lê Thái Tổ, as the founder of the Later Lê dynasty (Chang, 2007:128). After the coronation, King Lê Thái Tổ rebuild the government system. The new established system was based on Confucian system of government. The new government rebuilt the infrastructures, namely roads, bridges and canals. Soldiers contributed to the war being rewarded with a land distribution program. The examination for selecting government administrators was restored. Such exam was held periodically throughout the reign of Lê Lợi to ensure the government gets the best talent for government administrators (Ngô Sĩ Liên, 1993: 361-369).

V. CONCLUSION

Through the study of text, this research has shown that the management consultants act as an important actors in the stage performances in restoration of Đại Việt. Despite management consultant tend to be connoted as a scholar, there were several management consultants at that time that was a Consultant-General, similar term was used by Sukoharsono (1995) for Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the Accountant-General. Being has many Consultant-General, helps the leader to focus on the most necessary matter instead of day-today activities that could be handled by Consultant-General that acts as group ruler. It has been proved in the past by Moses (c. 1300 BC) which records as follows (Exodus 18: 25-26, KJV): “And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves”.

This research has identified several management consultants which noted give contributions in each phase of the restoration of Đại Việt: The contribution of Trần Triệu Cơ, a bureaucrat under the Trần dynasty, Đặng Tất, a high-ranking official of Trần dynasty and Nguyễn Cảnh Chân, a former general under the Trần dynasty who supported King Trần Ngỗi; The contribution of Đặng Dung, son of Đặng Tất and Nguyễn Cảnh Dị, son of Nguyễn Cảnh Chân who supported King Trần Quý Khoáng; The contribution of several generals that some of them was management consultants who contribute to King Lê Thái Tổ, which clearly mentioned by Mạc Bảo Thần (1956:29): “[The military officers ... among others are:] Lê Thạch, Lê Lê, Lê Sát, Lê Văn, Lê Lý, Lê Ngân, [thirty five peoples]; ... Lê Văn Linh, Lê Quốc Hưng ...”, also Nguyễn Chích, and Nguyễn Trãi (Ngô Sĩ Liên, 1993: 334,335,371).

Consultations have a focal role in the restoration of Đại Việt. Consultancies provided to the top management, the resistant leaders, was remarkable. Such management consultants were exalted and honored as majestic heroes. (Lall & Vickers, 2009:147): “New heroes enter the national pantheon, first of all King Lê Lợi and the cultured Nguyễn Trãi who defeated the Chinese in 1427”.

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