



A Review on AI-based Application using Feng Shui Principles for Real Estate to enhance Buyers' Preferences in Vietnam

DANG THI THANH TAM^{1*}

Dang Thi Thanh Tam, Candidate, Doctor of Business Administration, Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California, USA. E-mail: thanhtam2210@hotmail.com

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Abstract: This article discusses a study on the conceptual integration of Feng Shui principles into an AI-based application for real estate sector in Vietnam. Feng Shui, a deeply embedded cultural and spiritual practice, significantly influences property selection and design in Vietnam. A 2018 survey by the Vietnamese Royal Institute of Feng Shui indicated that approximately 98% of buyers consider Feng Shui in real estate purchases, yet only a small fraction receives satisfactory guidance. This gap presents an opportunity for leveraging AI technologies like machine learning and data analytics into traditional Feng Shui practice to modernize and streamline recommendations for real estate sector in Vietnam. This study explores insights into the feasibility and potential impacts of such AI-based Feng Shui application for the real estate industry. Specifically, the study aims to assess how an AI-based Feng Shui application could enhance buyers' preferences by aligning with (1) socio-cultural values (analysis on buyers' perception and acceptance, including buyers' preference factors, cultural resonance of AI-based Feng Shui), (2) technological integration (improving ease of interaction and satisfaction, offering tailored recommendations), and (3) business impact (assess how AI-based Feng Shui contributes to the competitive advantage and business performance).

Keywords: Feng Shui Principles, AI-based Application, Prop-Tech, Real Estate, Buyers' Preferences.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Feng Shui, which literally means wind and water, is an ancient Eastern doctrine involving the arrangement of buildings, objects, and space in an environment to achieve living harmony and balance. In real estate, it is believed that a property or land with good Feng Shui would promote good health, wealth, prosperity, and luck to its owners (Cho, 2020b). Originally, Feng Shui has root in early Chinese Taoist philosophy and remains popularly adopted today, influencing spaces across China, Asia, and even in Western cultures along with the current globalization trends of socio-cultural integration. In the West, Wu (Wu, 2019) emphasizes that Feng Shui practice has been used widely for years by architects, interior designers, and landscape architects as a design guideline for pursuing harmony in living environment. Overall, Feng Shui is highlighted as one of the main determinants of making decisions for real estate purchases, as stated by Gibler and Nelson (Gibler & Nelson, 1998).

Vietnam is not an exception among the use of Feng Shui in real estate. In Vietnamese context, people's habits in lifestyles and real estate purchases are highly impacted by Chinese culture. Taking a step back to historical background, the periods of Chinese conquests and Nguyen dynasty reveal shifts on cultural influences. Lately, despite efforts of the French colonialists disrupting the Vietnam's cultural links with China, Vietnamese mindsets continued to reflect the foundational Chinese philosophical and religious doctrines of Confucianism (appeared in structured layouts with central axes and symmetry), Taoism (Feng Shui), and Buddhism (sense of continuity between life and the afterlife) (Vladimirovna & Chu, 2019). Real estate, a part of living space and environment, is considered spiritual goods market in Vietnam (Nghiem-Phu, 2022), which is influenced by these mindsets.

Cultural and historical context: Feng Shui, a traditional Chinese practice, has been so deeply embedded in Vietnamese culture for centuries that there is high rate of Vietnamese people who continue to adhere to Feng Shui principles when making decisions about property design, construction, and purchase. According to a 2018 Vietnamese Royal Institute of Feng Shui survey, 2,516 of 2,568 real estate buyers showed concern about Feng Shui in their purchasing decisions. This data suggests that Feng Shui holds significant value in the real estate market, with approximately 98% of buyers influenced by it (Truong Thinh, 2020).

Technological context: Emerging AI technologies, such as machine learning, data analytics, and predictive modelling, have the potential to transform traditional practices by providing more precise, efficient, and scalable solutions. Integrating AI with Feng Shui might potentially modernize the practice, making it more accessible and appealing to contemporary buyers, while preserving its cultural significance.

Business context: The real estate market in Vietnam is characterized by rapid urban development and a growing middle class with increasing disposable income. This economic growth has spurred demand for residential, commercial, and industrial properties. However, the market is also highly competitive, with numerous local and international players vying for market share. In this competitive landscape, offering technologically unique and culturally resonant services, such as AI-based Feng Shui, might possibly provide an advantage for enhancing buyers' preferences.

The high percentage of Feng Shui concern underlines the potential for considering an AI-based Feng Shui application to appeal to a broad audience, especially in Vietnam, where cultural and spiritual practices play a substantial role in purchasing behaviors. For this reason, the study is to explore the potential of integrating AI-based Feng Shui into the practices of real estate enterprises in Vietnam, to enhance buyers' preferences.

The significance of the AI-based Feng Shui involves several areas: cultural relevance and appeal, technological innovation, market differentiation, improvement of buyers' decision-making, and business impact.

As Feng Shui holds significant cultural importance in Vietnam, by incorporating AI-based Feng Shui, real estate enterprises could appeal to the cultural beliefs and preferences of Vietnamese buyers, thereby increasing buyer satisfaction and trust.

Leveraging AI to modernize Feng Shui practices represents a fusion of tradition and technology. Such innovation could streamline and enhance the accuracy of Feng Shui assessments, making them more accessible and reliable for both real estate enterprises and buyers.

Real estate companies that adopt AI-based Feng Shui could differentiate themselves from competitors by offering unique, culturally resonant services, that could attract a niche market segment that values traditional Feng Shui principles in property selection and design.

AI-based Feng Shui tools could provide data-driven insights, predictive analytics, and personalized property recommendations, enabling more informed decision-making in property purchasing. This could lead to better alignment of properties with market demand and buyers' preferences, which lead to greater loyalty and word-of-mouth referrals.

By attracting more buyers who value Feng Shui, real estate enterprises could potentially increase sales and profitability. The business impact extends to the broader real estate market, contributing to its growth and dynamism.

The study underscores the importance of aligning the technical aspects of an AI application with the social and cultural environment in which it will operate. In the context of real estate in Vietnam, where Feng Shui plays a critical cultural role, this alignment is crucial for ensuring that the AI application is both effective and culturally appropriate. The integration of AI with Feng Shui, a form of cultural capital, enhances its acceptance and appeal, contributing to the competitive advantage of real estate enterprises.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The context of Feng Shui principles covers the entire range of living environment that impacts on the decision of the land and property selections among large populations in the world (MY Mak, 1998). Especially, when the living standard becomes higher in this modern life, people tend to expect a living place that is not only a "house" for their basic needs, but also a "qualified environment" for bringing good health, comfort, relaxing and enjoyableness. Good Feng Shui is believed to relate to these expectations (Cho, 2020a). For this reason, the integration of Feng Shui principles in nowadays' modern technology such as AI-based application among real estate industry is necessary to help reach end-users' satisfactions when purchasing their land or property.

The literature review themes explored in this study include the concept of Feng Shui, Feng Shui principles, and impacts of Feng Shui on real estate, the concept of AI technologies and its influence in real estate, the approach of AI-based Feng Shui application in real estate, theoretical frameworks, and buyers' preferences employed for the study.

Feng Shui, Feng Shui principles, and its impacts on real estate: Previous researchers have well mentioned the concept of Feng Shui since early times. The idea of Feng Shui is to create a more comfortable living experience for

people by examining how their home is positioned in an environment and how objects are arranged within it (Cho, 2020b). In addition, in the western world, Feng Shui is often translated as Geomancy (Lee, 1986). The key evidence that makes the above concept of Feng Shui well persuadable with a large population of users is the consistence of “six scientific theories and principles that have endured more than two thousand years of tests and experiments” (Sang, 2013). These principles are (1) The Yin/Yang Principles, (2) The Five Elements, (3) The Eight Trigrams, (4) The Directions, (5) The Solar System, and (6) The Environment.

Feng Shui has significant impacts on the real estate area in terms of pricing and interior design. The pricing impact of Feng Shui practice involves the buyers’ willingness to pay higher price for a good Feng Shui living environment (Lin & Chen, 2012). Furthermore, a study of Ahmadnia et al (Ahmadnia et al., 2012) showed that the proper architectural or interior design of the property is essential to the feeling of comfort and safety in the home or workplace.

AI technologies in real estate: Recently, there have been researchers discovering useful findings in AI-based approach in real estate. Conway & Architecture (Conway & Architecture, 2018) attempted to study how AI is applied, and the actionable opportunities for the AI-based application in real estate. Lorenz (Felix Lorenz, 2021) also studied rental pricing of residential market using AI-based methods in their interpretability in real estate. The most recent paper of Baur et al (Baur et al., 2023) had brief concept on AI-based models for valuating automatically based on property descriptions. From the above citations, the adapting of AI has positive impacts on the real estate industry including identifying investment opportunities and valuation.

AI-based application using FS in real estate: AI-based application in real estate based on Feng Shui principles has not been investigated. As proxy literature review, there are several papers not direct but relevant to the topic. For instance, a patent by Wang et al. (Wang et al., 2014) presents a Fengshui evaluation method and system for automatic identification of key house features (gate orientation, bedroom direction, etc.) for residential house types, allowing rapid and scientific calculations based on a house image. Another related study by Leung and Chan (Leung & Chan, 2024) involves adapting ChatGPT to convert I Ching in modern management. The findings show that ChatGPT enhances accessibility, engagement, and interest in learning the I

Ching, bridging ancient wisdom with modern management practices. Both patent and study above show positive insights for the potential to apply similar traditional practice like Feng Shui into modern technology like AI, as being explored in this research. Another application launched in Vietnam in 2024 named Xhero (Phong Thuy Dai Nam, 2024) is an interesting proxy reference. The application, being a technological tool, is more about offering general Feng Shui consulting services and training courses. It is not AI-based, such as machine learning, nor relating to the real estate sector.

Theoretical frameworks of Sociotechnical Systems Theory and Cultural Capital Theory: The combination of Sociotechnical Systems Theory (STS) and Cultural Capital Theory to provide a framework for the effective integration of technology within a cultural context. It posits that the successful implementation of technology, such as AI, requires a harmonious balance between the technical (application) and social (buyers, culture) components while also recognizing the value of cultural assets (Feng Shui). By considering both technological and cultural factors, enterprises could achieve a more comprehensive and socially relevant application of new technologies. The research is grounded in these two theories that are well-described by theory owners Trist (Trist, 1981) & Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1986) in their papers.

Buyers' preference in alignment with cultural values in Vietnam: Nguyen & Vu emphasized the essence of Feng Shui in the context of Vietnamese culture and real estate, that Feng Shui plays a significant role in shaping not just the physical aspects of a home, but also the spiritual and cultural dimensions of dwelling (Nguyen & Vu, 2023). This founds the importance to examine how AI-based Feng Shui application might resonate with Vietnamese buyers, potentially influencing their preferences and decisions in real estate.

Buyers' preference relating to the ease of interaction and satisfaction with the Prop-Tech in Vietnam: According to Le, despite the growth of digital technologies, adoption in Vietnam remains slow among users. In the Vietnamese real estate industry, transactions still heavily rely on paperwork, physical documents, and in-person or phone meetings, unlike in most developed countries where these processes are handled digitally. There is limited information on the use of PropTech in Vietnam to aid in real estate acquisition and portfolio management (Le, 2022). To resolve this, Cao & Nguyen (Cao & Nguyen, 2021) presented a method for building a real estate chatbot automatically to support customers in

Vietnamese. The chatbot is trained with data set collected on Facebook groups and from the famous real estate website in Vietnam.

Buyers' preferences based on more tailored recommendations from AI-based application: There is limitation of specific paper found in Vietnamese context for this point. Typically, websites gather user ratings for recommendations. However, with Ai-based tool approach, the recommendations incorporate historical data and the surrounding environment of a real estate location, making it easier for users to determine which place would be more suitable for them (Barua et al., 2019).

III. GENERALIZATION OF THE MAIN STATEMENT

The Feng Shui Institute survey highlights a clear demand for reliable Feng Shui guidance in real estate, with almost all (98%) buyers showing interest in its influence on their property or land. In another survey result, only 30% of these buyers were consulted in this field, while few received satisfactory advice (1%) (T.R.I., 2024). The traditional practice of visiting Feng Shui masters combining with searching multiple online channels is complicated and time consuming for buyers. This gap suggests several critical insights and opportunities for research on AI-based Feng Shui solutions in real estate to gain high personal impact of Feng Shui for shifting in buyers' preferences and satisfaction.

This exploratory study of the AI-based application in real estate using Feng Shui principles underscores the potential of AI-based Feng Shui to transform real estate practices in Vietnam. By marrying cultural traditions with cutting-edge technology, real estate enterprises could gain buyers' preference and satisfaction, foster sales and profitability for enterprises, and contribute to the sustainable growth of the real estate market.

IV. DISCUSSION

If applicable, this new idea of AI-based application will be an internal advancement of the new integration with the traditional Feng Shui in the real estate sector. The application will provide a new AI-based tool for salespeople who have higher confidence while approaching buyers of Feng Shui concern. for more reliable and persuadable offers. Externally, the application shall be an advanced tool that will potentially increase buyers' preferences and fast

decision-making. It also assists real estate enterprises to explore higher sales transactions efficiently.

Ethical dilemmas and challenges faced in the study might include informed consent, conflict of benefits, cultural sensitivity, and undermining of rich cultural significance. The study needs ensuring that participants fully understand the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits, and obtaining their informed consent to participate. In addition, with Feng Shui stakeholders, there might be a misunderstanding on the potential disruption of traditional approach that affects to Feng Shui stakeholders' profession. The researcher needs to explain clearly that the application is beneficial for them if they could adapt such a tool for their career. Furthermore, due to cultural sensitivity, the researcher needs to be mindful of cultural beliefs and practices related to Feng Shui and respect participants' cultural backgrounds when discussing and interpreting findings. Finally, despite the positive views on the adaptation of Feng Shui into AI-based application, several practitioners mentioned certain challenges. For instance, Zhang (Zhang, 2018) concerned that "Feng Shui, as a locally meaningful heritage, should be cherished and utilized for contemporary heritage conservation. Over-simplification or automation could undermine its rich cultural significance". Therefore, development of AI-based application needs to be broader and deeply investigated to ensure that it covers these aspects of concerns.

V. CONCLUSION

The AI-based Feng Shui application is designed and implemented with a careful balance of technical capabilities and cultural sensitivity. By modernizing Feng Shui practices through AI, the application not only leverages advanced technology but also preserves and enhances its cultural significance in real estate transactions. Such integration helps real estate enterprises in Vietnam appeal to buyers who value cultural practices, thereby increasing their market position and competitive advantage. In addition, the sociotechnical and cultural dimensions work together to create a solution that is technologically advanced, socially relevant, and culturally respectful. Overall, this approach would provide a solid foundation for analysing how AI-based Feng Shui could enhance buyers' preferences in the real estate sector in Vietnam while keeping the research focused and manageable.

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