

***Cultural Values Education for Ethnic Minority High School Students:
A Case Study in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam***

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Abstract

Cultural value education plays a crucial role in shaping the awareness and development of ethnic minority high school students. However, many ethnic minority students still lack a deep understanding of their traditional cultural values and fail to fully recognize the importance of preserving these values. This study aims to provide an overview of the issues related to cultural value education for ethnic minority high school students, evaluate the current state of cultural value education in Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam, and propose effective educational solutions. The research team conducted a survey involving 50 teachers and 147 students. The results indicate that schools have successfully integrated cultural values into daily life and curricula, helping students maintain strong connections with their families and local culture. Based on the analysis, the study proposes several solutions to enhance the effectiveness of cultural value education for ethnic minority high school students. Implementing these solutions has enabled students to gain a deeper understanding of their cultural values, thereby fostering a sense of responsibility in preserving and promoting traditional cultural heritage in international integration.

Keywords: Cultural Value, Ethnic Minority Students, Traditional, Solutions

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Introduction

Cultural value education plays a crucial role in the cognitive development of ethnic minority students in secondary schools. It helps them understand their identity and fosters an awareness of preserving their community's cultural heritage. Through educational activities, students can explore the richness of traditions, customs, languages, and histories, nurturing a sense of pride in their cultural roots. Given the limited understanding of traditional cultural values among young people from ethnic minorities, it is essential to provide cultural value education to these students. This initiative aims to strengthen their confidence and pride in the positive aspects of their traditional culture. By recognizing the unity and diversity of Vietnamese culture, students can confidently integrate into society, contributing to their own, their families, and society's development.

The objective of this study, “Education of Traditional Cultural Values for Ethnic Minority Secondary School Students - A Case Study in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam” is to analyze and assess the current state of cultural value education for ethnic minority secondary school students in Thai Nguyen. The study proposes solutions to enhance students' awareness and sense of responsibility in preserving and promoting traditional cultural values in the context of global integration.

Vietnam, located in Southeast Asia, boasts a rich cultural diversity. With a population of over 99 million people and a history spanning more than 4000 years, Vietnam is home to 54 recognized ethnic groups, making it the 15th most populous country in the world. Each ethnic group contributes to the nation's cultural mosaic. Thai Nguyen province, situated approximately 80 km north of Hanoi, is inhabited by various ethnic minorities such as Tay, Nung, San Diu, Dao, Hmong, and Thai, who significantly enrich the cultural landscape of the province.

This study addresses the following questions: i) What cultural values must be taught to ethnic minority students? ii) What are the focal points of cultural value education in Vietnam, specifically in the case of Thai Nguyen province? iii) Which cultural values should be incorporated into the educational curriculum?

Literature Review

In the current era, intellect has become the most crucial factor in demonstrating the power and strength of a nation. Consequently, countries worldwide recognize that education not only benefits society but also serves as an essential tool for promoting economic development. Cultural values play a pivotal role in shaping the younger generation into a significant resource for national development. Amid the spread of globalization, especially economic globalization, many traditional values have been altered or lost within communities. Thus, the education of cultural values for students, particularly those from ethnic minorities, has become an urgent task. These young individuals bear significant responsibility for preserving and developing their cultural heritage.

Culture encompasses values, traditions, and beliefs passed down from one generation to the next. Education in cultural values helps ethnic minority students understand and appreciate their heritage, thereby contributing to the preservation and promotion of their community's unique cultural values (Avramidis, E. 2006). A profound understanding of their culture aids ethnic minority students in developing a strong personal identity. This not only boosts their

confidence but also helps them feel more connected to their community and traditions. Each ethnic minority brings unique values and traditions, enriching the nation's cultural diversity. Cultural education helps maintain and celebrate this diversity, fostering mutual understanding and respect among communities (Costa, P.T., & McCrae, R.R. 1996).

Understanding cultural values helps students develop critical thinking skills, communication abilities, and social skills. They learn to view issues from multiple perspectives, respect differences, and live harmoniously with others. Culture plays a vital role in sustainable development (Hutchison, L., & McAlister-Shields, L. 2020). Understanding and respecting cultural values instill in students a consciousness of environmental protection, rational resource use, and the maintenance of sustainable practices within their communities. Education in cultural values enriches the curriculum and learning methods. Students gain knowledge not only about basic subjects but also about cultural and social values, providing them with a more comprehensive worldview (Gillate, I., Luna, U., Castrillo, J., & Ibáñez-Etxeberria, A. 2020).

Therefore, education in cultural values not only helps preserve and promote traditional values but also plays a significant role in personal and community development, fostering integration and sustainable development in the current context of globalization. Numerous studies worldwide focus on exploring the relationship and influence of culture in general and the specific traditional values of each country on the formation and expression of the nation's personality traits. (Costa and McCrae. 1996) in their study "Toward a New Generation of Personality Theories: Theoretical Contexts for the Five-Factor Model" highlighted that national personality traits are heavily influenced by cultural values. Jennifer Meléndez-Luces in her research "Engaging Ethnic-Diverse Students: A Research Based on Culturally Responsive Teaching for Roma-Gypsy Students" emphasized the importance of intercultural education in developing inclusive strategies for ethnic minority students (Jennifer Meléndez-Luces. 2021). Her study shows that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) methods are necessary to meet the educational needs of ethnic minority students. The author asserts that the cultural and historical representation of these communities plays a crucial role as gatekeepers in achieving positive outcomes in inclusive education. This case study was also explored at a high school in Western Spain.

Snyder and Fenner (2021) in their book "Culturally Responsive Teaching for Multilingual Learners: Tools for Equity" pointed out that culturally responsive education is key to effectively implementing multicultural education. They emphasized that ethnic minority families are concerned their children might be influenced by Western value systems during their studies (Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2021).

Teaching cultural values to high school students imparts them with "funds of knowledge". Moll et al. in their study "Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and Classroom" demonstrated that culture is not merely a possession but a means to navigate life (Moll et al. (1992). Izzah Mardhiya Mohammad Isa (2022) argued that connecting students' cultural backgrounds with science is essential to strengthening the link between culture and scientific content.

Heritage education and citizenship education are vital school responsibilities. The GIPyPAC-EP research group from the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) in Spain has evaluated heritage education programs in both formal and informal settings. They developed the ARSMULEP project to connect individuals with the environment, using heritage as a

resource for citizenship training and identity building (Gillette et al., 2020). Many case studies on heritage education have also been conducted in various countries. Lee et al. (2020) provided a case study on heritage education in the Central Plains of China, one of the most important cradles of Chinese civilization with a glorious cultural heritage (Handbook of Research on Citizenship and Heritage Education, IGI Global, Hershey, USA, 219-238).

In the process of cultural value education, teachers have actively applied technology in heritage education (Isa, I. M. M. (2022), (Ladson-Billings, B. (1992). Many countries have established educational websites, particularly providing resources on heritage and the environment (Lee, W. O., Hao, N., & Chu, Q. (2020). These websites support comprehensive education for students, such as www.swmlac.org.uk/MLI/muslin.htm and www.mla.gov.uk. In 2004, the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council (MLA) launched the “Inspiring Learning for All” program to help plan and evaluate the educational effectiveness of projects. The literature shows that many researchers and international organizations are concerned with the relationship between people and regional cultural heritage. Traditional and cultural values systems of nations are always closely linked to the field of education, aiming to develop well-rounded individuals in the context of globalization (Meléndez-Luces, J. 2021).

In Vietnam, many authors have focused on the education of cultural values for high school students, yet there has been a lack of in-depth studies specifically addressing ethnic minority students. Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, Director of the Institute for Educational Research and International Exchange, authored the article “Urgent Need for Cultural Value Education for Students” (Nguyen, T. K. N. 2018). This article emphasizes that cultural value education is about transmitting the accumulated values of previous generations to the younger generation, akin to how knowledge education provides students with the knowledge humanity has discovered through the study of nature, humans, and society. Nguyễn Thị Hoàng Yến from the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences conducted the study “Education of Traditional Cultural Values in Vietnamese High Schools” (Project Leader - Code: B2012-37-07NV). This project developed a theoretical framework with a system of traditional cultural values to be integrated into the general education curriculum, proposing objectives, content, and methods for teaching traditional cultural values to students through the post -2015 general education curriculum.

Bùi Thị Như Ngọc also contributed with the article “The Requirement of Value Education in the Context of Integration” (Bui, T. N. N. (2015). This research recognizes that we are living in the 4.0 era, where technological achievements significantly impact the youth. In this context, cultural value education becomes increasingly urgent, as regardless of how much science and technology advance, the cultural values of humanity remain an indispensable foundation in life. Through cultural value education, we not only preserve cultural heritage but also promote the sustainable development of society and individuals. Domestic studies and educational efforts on cultural values are making significant contributions to this goal, particularly in the context of globalization and the rapid development of science and technology.

Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, this paper employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data, aiming for a comprehensive understanding of the education of traditional cultural values for high school students who are ethnic minorities in Thái Nguyên province, Vietnam. The research sample includes 50

teachers and 147 students from high schools in Thái Nguyên province. We use interviews to gather detailed data on the methods of cultural value education, as well as the challenges and opportunities in the process of educating cultural values to students. Additionally, we observe the teaching and learning activities of teachers and students at high schools in Thái Nguyên province.

Results

During the research and practical observation process, we found that some students prefer learning Vietnamese or English over their native languages. Additionally, some students are reluctant to wear traditional attire during school events and do not participate in community cultural events. Many students lack a deep understanding of their own ethnic and cultural values. This is partly due to their lack of awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Moreover, teachers have not sufficiently focused on educating cultural values through integrated teaching hours.

Through our survey, we found that the education of traditional cultural values has been integrated into the curriculum content, teaching methods, and organizational forms of teaching. This integration occurs through interactions between teachers and students during lessons and in the assessment of teaching outcomes.

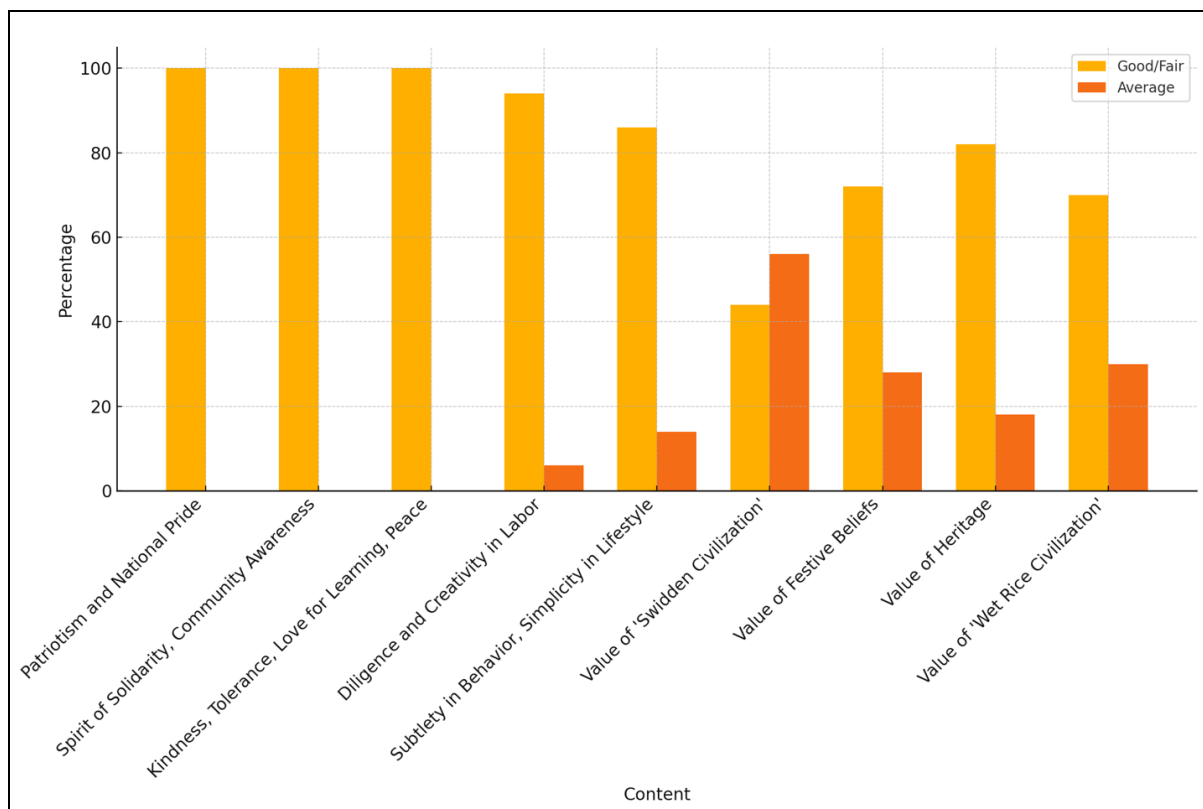


Figure 1: Teacher Evaluation of traditional Cultural Value Education Content

- 1) Highly Valued Contents (100% rated as good and fair): Patriotism and National Resilience.
- 2) Solidarity, community spirit; non-discrimination of ethnic groups; Kindness, tolerance; eagerness for learning, valuing righteousness and peace. This indicates that teachers

highly value and appreciate values related to patriotism, community awareness, and benevolence. These are fundamental values in traditional cultural education.

- 3) Contents with More Diverse Evaluations: Diligence and creativity in labor: Rated as good and fair by 94% of teachers, but 6% rated it as average. Sophistication in behavior, simplicity in lifestyle: Rated as good and fair by 86% of teachers, but 14% rated it as average. This shows that some teachers believe these values need to be emphasized and improved in education.
- 4) Contents with Higher Proportion of Average Ratings: Value of “milpa civilization”: 56% rated as average; Value of festival beliefs: 28% rated as average; Value of heritage: 18% rated as average; Value of “wet rice civilization”: 30% rated as average. These values have a higher proportion of average ratings, indicating some challenges and difficulties in educating and conveying these values to students. The survey results show that teachers in Thai Nguyen highly appreciate and are very concerned about fundamental values such as patriotism, solidarity, and kindness. However, values like “milpa civilization” and festival beliefs need more attention and improvement in the teaching process. Comprehensive and effective education on traditional cultural values is crucial to ensure that students, especially ethnic minority students, can understand and internalize these values.

For the student group, the survey results are as follows:

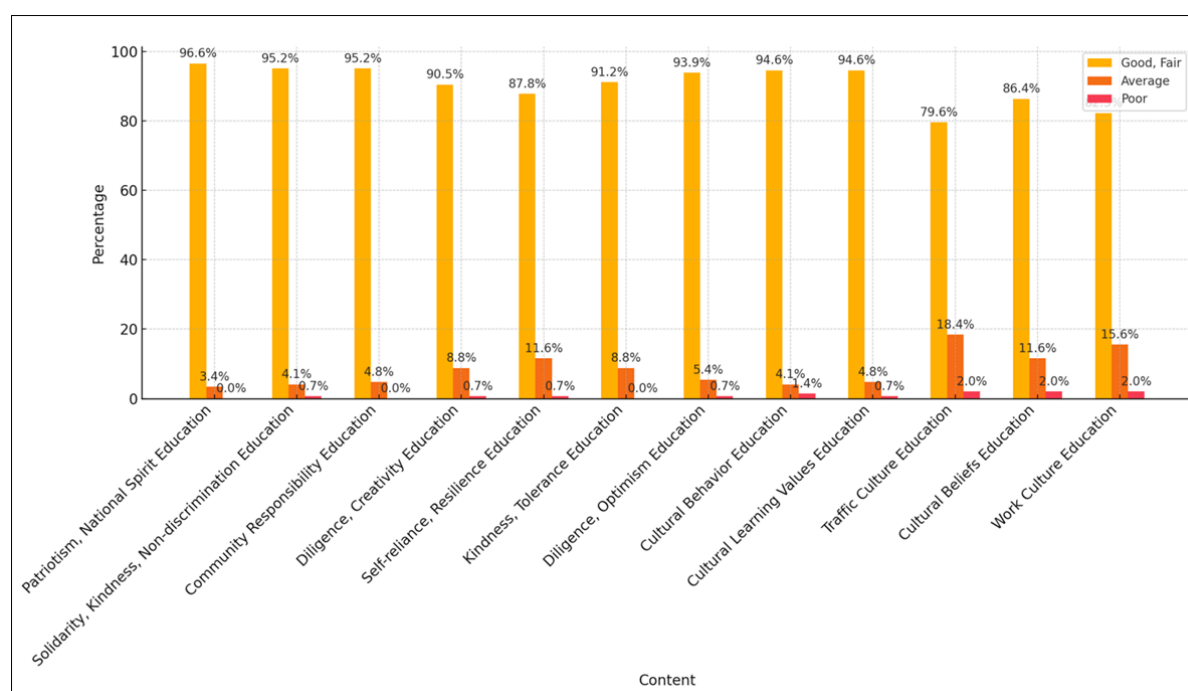


Figure 2: Survey Results of Students on Evaluation of Traditional Cultural Values Education Content

The bar chart provides a visual representation of the survey results on students' evaluation of various educational contents related to traditional cultural values. The categories are evaluated based on three criteria: Good/Fair, Average, and Poor.

- 1) Education of Patriotism and National Spirit: This category has the highest number of students rating it as Good/Fair (142), with only 5 students rating it as Average and none as Poor, resulting in 96.6% positive feedback.

- 2) Education of Solidarity, Kindness, and Non-discrimination: It received 140 Good/Fair ratings, 6 Average, and 1 Poor, translating to 95.2% positive feedback, indicating a strong acceptance among students.
- 3) Education of Community Awareness and Civic Responsibility: Similar to the previous category, it has 140 Good/Fair, 7 Average, and 0 Poor ratings, with 95.2% positive feedback.
- 4) Education of Diligence, Hard Work, and Creativity: This category shows slightly lower Good/Fair ratings (133) compared to others, with 13 Average and 1 Poor, indicating 90.5% positive feedback.
- 5) Education of Self-reliance: With 129 Good/Fair, 17 Average, and 1 Poor rating, this category stands at 87.8% positive feedback, suggesting the need for some improvements.
- 6) Education of Kindness, Tolerance, and Importance of Compassion: It has 134 Good/Fair ratings, 13 Average, and 0 Poor, with 91.2% positive feedback.
- 7) Education of Studiousness, Diligence, and Optimism: This category is rated by 138 students as Good/Fair, 8 as Average, and 1 as Poor, resulting in 93.9% positive feedback.
- 8) Education of Cultural Values in Behavior: It received 139 Good/Fair, 6 Average, and 2 Poor ratings, with 94.6% positive feedback.
- 9) Education of Cultural Values in Study: Similar to the previous category, it has 139 Good/Fair, 7 Average, and 1 Poor ratings, achieving 94.6% positive feedback.
- 10) Education of Cultural Values in Traffic Participation: This category shows the lowest positive feedback with 117 Good/Fair, 27 Average, and 3 Poor ratings, translating to 79.6% positive feedback, indicating a significant area for improvement.
- 11) Education of National Religious Cultural Values: With 127 Good/Fair, 17 Average, and 3 Poor ratings, it has 86.4% positive feedback.
- 12) Education of Cultural Values in Labor Participation: This category received 121 Good/Fair, 23 Average, and 3 Poor ratings, resulting in 82.3% positive feedback.

The survey results reveal a generally positive student reception towards the educational content on traditional cultural values. However, certain areas such as education on cultural values in traffic participation and labor participation show lower positive feedback, indicating the need for targeted improvements in these domains to enhance their effectiveness and acceptance among students.

Discussion

With the slogan: “School is home, classmates are siblings, teachers are like parents”, the school has become a common home for ethnic minority students. Through survey results collected from teachers and students at several general education schools in Thai Nguyen province, we observed that the schools have been implementing various educational programs on traditional cultural values in a multicultural environment. Both teachers and students have a profound understanding of the goals and roles of traditional cultural education for students.

In response to the question: “Evaluate the goals and roles of traditional cultural education for students” (question 1), the majority of teachers and students agreed on three main goals: Educating students on traditional cultural values aims to provide knowledge about good traditional values (98% of teachers, 99.3% of students); to develop in students a positive attitude towards preserving and promoting good values in a modern environment (98% of teachers, 98.6% of students); and to foster in students behaviors that preserve and promote

the good traditional cultural values of their ethnic group (100% of teachers and 93.9% of students agreed).

Most survey participants agreed on the role of traditional cultural values education: contributing to the construction of an advanced school culture rich in national identity (100% of teachers, 89% of students); contributing to the comprehensive development of student character in a multicultural environment (100% of teachers, 89.8% of students); forming habits and behaviors in daily life that conform to student norms (96% of teachers, 91.2% of students); helping students prevent and avoid social evils and school violence (94% of teachers, 81.6% of students); and educating students on traditional culture to integrate with the world without losing their cultural identity (96% of teachers, 87.8% of students). In answering this question, over 90% of students selected the following content: educating patriotism and national spirit; promoting solidarity, kindness, and non-discrimination; fostering community awareness and civic responsibility; teaching diligence, creativity, kindness, tolerance, and valuing relationships; and encouraging a love for learning, diligence, and optimism. Among these, 96.6% emphasized the importance of educating patriotism and national spirit. Most educational content on traditional cultural values in schools focuses on humanistic values: patriotism, kindness, solidarity, a love for learning, etc. Survey results from teachers and students at several general education schools in Thai Nguyen show that schools have been and are implementing many initiatives for traditional cultural education in a multicultural environment. However, there needs to be a stronger focus on educational content closely tied to the unique characteristics of each ethnic group, helping students gain a deeper understanding of their cultural roots. The school emphasizes activities promoting the cultural identity of ethnic minorities. Students wear traditional costumes every Monday, participate in boarding activities every Friday evening, and engage in ethnic sports and games in March and November each year. Biennial campouts and games are also organized in November. Additionally, the school regularly conducts experiential activities across grade levels. Tenth graders study and experience at the Museum of Vietnamese Ethnic Culture in September and October annually; eleventh graders interact culturally with students from other boarding secondary schools in neighboring provinces and experience local minority communities in November and December each year; twelfth graders engage in practical studies of history and traditions in April and May annually. The school utilizes cultural values and products of ethnic minorities to decorate dormitories and classrooms, creating a friendly, open, cohesive, and culturally rich learning environment.

Add experimental solutions and utilize locally available teaching materials in lessons. Implement teacher training programs on cultural values education. Engage community leaders and artisans in the educational process to provide deep insights into local culture. Integrate cultural activities and events into the school curriculum to make learning more engaging. Promote bilingual education to support the preservation of both culture and language. Below is a table of content and methods to guide teachers in educating cultural values to ethnic minority students.

Content	Methods		
	Integration	Experiential	Project
Love your homeland and country; Love your family, neighbors, friends...	√	√	
Solidarity, Diligence, Honesty, Discipline, Responsibility, Courage, Cooperation	√	√	
Culinary culture	√	√	
Clothing culture		√	√
Language and script	√	√	
Traditional festivals		√	√
Social customs		√	√
Production customs		√	√
Traditional crafts	√	√	√
Folk knowledge	√		√
Folk beliefs	√	√	
Folk games; Literature and arts	√	√	√
Folk performing arts		√	√
Historical and cultural relics		√	√

Table 1: Content and Implementation Methods of Traditional Cultural Values Education for Students

When discussing traditional cultural values and education methods for ethnic minority high school students, it is crucial to create an inclusive and diverse environment that respects and honors their cultural heritage. The proposed roadmap includes:

- 1) Developing curriculum: Collaborating with experts, community leaders, and representatives of ethnic minority groups to develop a curriculum that reflects the traditions, values, and history of ethnic minority communities. This curriculum should be integrated into existing subjects such as history, culture, and the arts (Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992).
- 2) Cultural exchange programs: Organizing cultural exchange programs where students from different ethnic backgrounds can share traditions, languages, music, dance, and other cultural aspects, promoting understanding, respect, and appreciation of diversity.
- 3) Guest speakers and community involvement: Inviting guest speakers from ethnic minority communities to share their experiences, stories, and knowledge with students.
- 4) Language preservation: Offering language classes or workshops to teach languages of ethnic minority communities. Language is a crucial aspect of cultural identity, and preserving it helps students maintain a strong connection to their heritage (Avramidis, E. (2006).
- 5) Mentorship programs: Establishing mentorship programs where high school students from ethnic minority backgrounds can connect with successful individuals from their own communities. Mentors provide guidance, share experiences, and serve as role models, encouraging students to embrace their cultural values (Nguyen, Q. H. (2013).
- 6) Celebrations and cultural festivals: Organizing cultural celebrations and festivals throughout the school year to showcase traditions, cuisine, art, and performances of ethnic minority groups. These events provide opportunities for active participation, learning, and appreciation of cultural diversity (Nguyen, T. L. (2016).
- 7) Clubs and multicultural activities: Encouraging the formation of multicultural clubs or student cultural organizations focusing on ethnic minority cultures to promote diversity, integration, and awareness of different cultural backgrounds. These clubs

can organize activities, discussions, and projects to explore and celebrate the traditions and values of ethnic minority communities (Snyder, S., & Fenner, D. S. 2021).

- 8) Parent and community involvement: Engaging a broader community and parents by inviting them to participate in school cultural activities, workshops, or events. Their involvement helps create a strong support network and reinforces the importance of traditional cultural values education. (Trinh, T. T., Hà, T. L., Nguyễn, T. T., & Dương, V. H. 2020).
- 9) Progress assessment: Regularly assessing the effectiveness of cultural values education initiatives by gathering feedback from students, parents, and educators. Using this feedback to improve and refine teaching programs or activities to better meet students' needs (Vuong, T. P. H. (2022).

It is essential to adjust the approach based on specific cultural contexts, needs, and preferences of relevant ethnic minority groups. Collaboration, open communication, and genuine commitment to integration are key to successfully implementing traditional cultural values education for ethnic minority high school students.

Each ethnic minority student represents the culture of a rural area, a small group within a larger community. Therefore, through cultural education content, students experience the traditional cultural values of their own ethnic group and come into contact with the cultural values of other ethnic groups, ensuring the continuous nurturing and growth of cultural flows. The education of traditional cultural values for ethnic minority students in general education needs to clearly define the purpose, significance, and content of this education, while firmly grasping the principles and methods of educating traditional cultural values students.

The traditional culture of ethnic groups is an abundant and endless source of knowledge for lifelong learning. Today, culture is not only regarded as a valuable asset for traditional education and character education for the younger generation but also as a significant resource contributing to the country's economic and social development. Educating traditional cultural values to ethnic minority students in general education aims to develop a foundational basis to expand and enhance cognitive abilities and the flexible adaptability of individuals when changing living environments and participating in social activities.

Therefore, the most important goal of educating the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority students is to help them understand the traditional culture of their own ethnic community. It also aims to enhance cognitive abilities, understanding of cultural perspectives, communication and cooperation skills, sense of equality, respect, cultural tolerance, and social action skills, while avoiding prejudice and combating discrimination against ethnic minority students.

At all educational levels, educating traditional cultural values in a multicultural environment has a significant impact on students, particularly in terms of their thoughts and emotions. Through this, students will recognize the value of culture, leading to appropriate behavior and a conscious effort to preserve, protect, and promote the traditional cultural values of their ethnic group. Introducing the program of educating traditional cultural values of ethnic groups into general education is a correct policy, not only for the sake of imparting knowledge but also for raising students' awareness and understanding of their homeland. Additionally, it contributes to the construction of an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity in the context of a socialist-oriented market economy and international

integration, creating a solid spiritual foundation for the rapid and sustainable development of the country. Preserving and promoting traditional cultural values in alignment with educational innovation is one of the important educational content in Vietnamese schools today. To effectively educate cultural values, teachers need to firmly grasp the theoretical and practical issues of cultural values and ethnic culture, thereby having suitable methods and ways to organize cultural value education activities for different student groups in various regions.

Conclusions

Our study demonstrates that schools have made commendable efforts in integrating the cultural values of ethnic minorities into their curriculum. Teachers have incorporated traditions, while students have engaged in cultural activities that are closely tied to their heritage. Clear educational goals need to be established: Teaching traditional cultural values helps ethnic minority students understand their community's cultural heritage, enhancing cognitive abilities, communication skills, collaboration, equity awareness, cultural respect, and social action skills. We must translate ideas into actions: Educating on traditional cultural values in multicultural environments has significantly influenced students' thoughts and emotions, helping them appreciate cultural values, adopt appropriate attitudes, and develop awareness in preserving and promoting their ethnic cultural heritage. Educating on the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority students is crucial for preserving the rich cultural heritage of these communities. Our study underscores the importance of sustaining and enhancing these educational efforts, especially amid increasing globalization. We hope our findings and recommendations contribute to ongoing efforts in this field.

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