

The Current Situation Of Educating Traditional Cultural Values Through Ancient Literature For Ethnic Minority Students In The Northern Mountainous Area Of Vietnam In The Context Of Integration And Development

Ngo Thi Thu Trang, Tran Thi Ngoc, Doan Minh Nguyet
(University of Education – Thai Nguyen University)

Abstract

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country. The Northern mountainous area of Vietnam has many ethnic minorities living together. Each ethnic group has its own cultural characteristics. The issue of educating traditional cultural values through ancient literature for ethnic minority students in the Northern mountainous areas of Vietnam is very important in the current context of integration and development. To obtain the research results in this paper, the authors used specific and appropriate scientific research methods, such as theoretical research methods (retrospective, documentary, analytical and synthetic, etc...); practical research methods (investigation, survey, statistics, classification, interview and objective observation). It can be seen that teachers and students in the Northern mountainous area have the desire to preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities. However, they still have limited knowledge and resources. Therefore, it is necessary to have timely solutions, such as innovating educational methods, combining theoretical learning in schools with participating in practical activities in the locality, organizing learning topics, organizing seminars and workshops, teaching combined with performing arts activities, creating conditions to help students build a reading culture...

Keywords: *education, traditional culture, students, ethnic minorities, the Northern mountainous area of Vietnam*

Date of Submission: 26-03-2022

Date of Acceptance: 06-04-2022

I. Introduction

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country. According to the survey results of the socio-economic situation in 2015, Vietnam has 53 ethnic minority groups, accounting for about 14.6% of the population of the country. Each group has a unique cultural tradition, contributing to a rich and diverse Vietnamese culture. Besides, ethnic minority groups need to maintain and develop their own culture. In the current context of integration and development, they need to try harder to preserve and promote their cultural identity.

The Northern mountainous area of Vietnam is home to many ethnic minority groups living together with different historical origins, contributing to the formation of distinct cultural characteristics of each ethnic minority group. Ethnic minority groups living in this area are mainly Tay, Nung, Dao, Mong, Thai, Muong... Their traditional cultural values are being preserved and promoted through the restoration of many traditional festivals, organizing regional cultural, art and sports festivals, contests of traditional ethnic costumes; preserving speech and writing... However, more appropriate and active measures are still needed to make this work more effective. There are many solutions to preserving and promoting traditional cultural values of ethnic minority groups. However, educational solutions are still highly appreciated for their effectiveness and long-term effects. For ethnic minority groups in the Northern mountainous areas of Vietnam, ancient literature is considered a valuable spiritual and cultural property. It is a treasure of wisdom, a sentiment, a wish, a desire, etc., which has a great influence on the lives of ethnic minority groups.

The ethnic minority groups in the Northern mountainous areas of Vietnam are rich in cultural traditions. Phan Huu Dat defines cultural traditions as “the accumulated experiences of people in the process of adapting to the natural environment they have been living in, which are the standards of social behavior between individuals and individuals, between individuals and communities, between communities and communities. These are the habits of thinking, the accumulated knowledge, the beliefs and symbols of the spiritual world... All of these have gone through a long historical process, from generation to generation and have created value systems of cultural heritage and identities” [4; p. 270]. The ancient literature of ethnic minority groups in the

Northern mountainous region of Vietnam contains many traditional cultural values such as patriotism, compassion, love, honesty, solidarity, industriousness, creativity and responsibility, etc.

The traditional culture of Vietnam's ethnic minority groups has attracted the attention of many researchers with in-depth works, such as *Some issues on Vietnamese ethnology* by Phan Huu Dat, Hanoi National University Publishing House, 1999 [4]; *Vietnam's Ethnic Communities* by Tran Van Ai, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2010 [1]; *Culture of Vietnam's ethnic minority groups* by Tran Ngoc Binh, Youth Publishing House, Hanoi, 2008 [2]; *A contribution to the study of national culture* by Nguyen Tu Chi, Hanoi National Culture Publishing House, 2003 [3]; *A cultural picture of Vietnam's ethnic minority groups* by Nguyen Van Huy, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1997 [5]; *The historical origin of ethnic minority groups in the Northern border region of Vietnam* by Nguyen Chi Huyen, Hoang Hoa Toan and Luong Van Bao, National Culture Publishing House, Hanoi, 2000 [6]; *Overview of the traditional culture of Vietnam's ethnic minority groups* by Hoang Nam, Ethnic Culture Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011[7]... However, these works mainly focus on researching and providing solutions on cultural values, cultural identity, preservation of cultural values... of ethnic minority groups at a general level. So far, there have been no specific studies on the issue of educating traditional cultural values through ancient literature for ethnic minority students in the Northern mountainous area of Vietnam in the context of integration and development. Therefore, we conduct research on this issue to help come up with an important, meaningful and effective solution in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority groups in the Northern mountainous area of Vietnam.

II. Research Methods

To obtain the research results in this paper, the authors used specific and appropriate scientific research methods, such as theoretical research methods (*retrospective, documentary, analytical and synthetic*); practical research methods (*investigation, survey, statistics, classification, interview and objective observation*).

We have surveyed the current situation of traditional cultural values education through ancient literature for ethnic minority students in the provinces of Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang and Ha Giang. This is an area where many ethnic minorities live. The schools we surveyed have a percentage of students from ethnic minorities accounting for over 90%.

We have conducted a survey of 200 students and 120 Philology teachers in the Northern mountainous area of Vietnam.

We have conducted a survey of teachers on the following topics: Teachers' perceptions of the value of ancient literature of ethnic minority groups; teachers' awareness of the importance of educating traditional cultural values through ancient literature for ethnic minority students; teachers' evaluation on the role of ethnic minority students in preserving and promoting their own cultural values; teachers' comments and assessments on the current situation of traditional cultural value education through ancient literature for ethnic minority students; teachers' assessment on the role and importance of schools in educating traditional cultural values for the younger generation; advantages and disadvantages of educating traditional cultural values through ancient literature for ethnic minority students; solutions to improve the effectiveness of traditional cultural values education through ancient literature for ethnic minority students...

We have also conducted a survey on the opinions of ethnic minority students on the following topics: whether ethnic minority students can speak their own language; students' love and appreciation for their ethnic cultural values; students' understanding and awareness of the value of their own ancient literature; ways and means of accessing ancient literature of ethnic minority students; students' interest in the ancient literature of their community; awareness of their own roles and responsibilities in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values; the current situation, advantages and disadvantages of students in accessing traditional cultural values through ancient literature; students' wishes and aspirations about the inclusion of ancient literature of ethnic minorities in the school curriculum; students' suggestions to improve the effectiveness of traditional cultural values education through ancient literature...

III. Results And Discussion

We use the questionnaire to survey and solicit opinions of teachers and ethnic minority students in the Northern mountainous area. On the basis of survey results, we make statistics, categorize, calculate the percentage of opinions... to have a basis to point out the causes and set out research directions.

Table 1: Survey results of teachers (120 teachers of Philology)

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Do you know any traditional literary works of ethnic minority groups in the locality where you live? |
| 2 | Where do you know the traditional literary works of ethnic minority groups? (through books, performances...) |
| 3 | In your opinion, what are the values of the traditional literature of ethnic minority groups? (cognitive value, educational value, aesthetic value, historical value, religious and philosophical value, cultural value, etc.) |
| 4 | In your opinion, should ethnic minority traditional literature be included in the local literature program at the school you work for? Why? |
| 5 | In your opinion, what role do ethnic minority students play in preserving and promoting their ethnic traditional literary |

| | |
|----|---|
| | values? |
| 6 | What do you think about the role of education in preserving and promoting the cultural values of ethnic minority groups in Vietnam? |
| 7 | In your opinion, what should schools do to attract students' interest in the traditional literature of ethnic minority groups today? |
| 8 | In your opinion, what should the education sector do to contribute to preserving and promoting the traditional literary values of ethnic minority groups? |
| 9 | What is your evaluation of the goal, role and importance of the education of traditional cultural values for ethnic minority students at the school where you work? |
| 10 | In your opinion, what traditional cultural values can be taught through Tay poetry to students? |
| 11 | What is your evaluation of the current situation of integrating traditional cultural value education activities into the subjects of the program? |
| 12 | What is your evaluation of the effectiveness of the following solutions in educating traditional cultural values through Tay poetry for secondary school students? |
| 13 | In the following groups of solutions, what do you think are important groups of solutions that should be prioritized to preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of Tay poetry? |
| 14 | What measures and methods do you think should be taken to educate traditional cultural values through Tay poetry stories for ethnic minority students? |

From the survey results with 120 Philology teachers in 5 Northern mountainous provinces of Vietnam (Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang and Ha Giang), we draw the following results as follows:

- 100% of teachers know about traditional literary works of ethnic minority groups in their locality. However, the number of works teachers know is small (each teacher knows 2-3 works) and they mainly know these works through published books.
- Teachers all believe that traditional literature of ethnic minority groups has cognitive value, educational value, aesthetic value, historical value, religious and philosophical value, cultural values...
- According to teachers, traditional literature of ethnic minority groups should be included in the local literature program at the school where they work because it will help ethnic minority students to have more understanding and awareness of preserving and promoting the unique cultural values of their community.
- Teachers assess that ethnic minority students have a very important role in preserving and promoting their ethnic traditional literary values.
- Teachers believe that education plays an important role in preserving and promoting the cultural values of ethnic minority groups in Vietnam. Schools and the education sector need to do the following things to attract students' interest in traditional literature of ethnic minority groups today: making this part of literature a compulsory content in the curriculum; building a traditional room and a cultural library to display, store and promote traditional literary works of ethnic minority groups; organizing the compilation of valuable documents on traditional literature to teach students; training teachers to help them improve their ability to integrate the contents of the traditional literature of ethnic minority groups into lessons...
- The teachers believe that the goals and roles of educating traditional cultural values for ethnic minority students are to provide knowledge about the beautiful traditional cultural values of ethnic minority groups; to form students' positive attitude to preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of the community; to form students' behavior of preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of their community; to contribute to building an advanced school culture imbued with national identity; to contribute to the comprehensive development of the student's personality; to form students' habits and behaviors in accordance with social standards; to help students prevent and avoid the risk of social evils and school violence.
- The teachers believe that through traditional literature, it is possible to educate ethnic minority students on the values of patriotism, national resilience, love of peace, solidarity, sense of community, kindness, tolerance, respect, affection, studiousness, creation in working, sophistication in behavior, simplicity in lifestyle, family affection, friendship...
- According to the teachers, the current situation of integrating traditional cultural values education activities into the subjects of the program (program content, teaching methods and form of teaching organization, interaction between teachers and students during class time, assessment of teaching results) is average.
- The teachers evaluated the following groups of solutions as having a very important role in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority traditional literature: a group of educational solutions, a group of solutions to preserve language and culture, group of solutions to communication; a group of solutions to preserve the productive environment and nurture the cultural values of ethnic minority groups.
- The teachers highly appreciated the effectiveness of the following solutions and proposed measures and methods in educating traditional cultural values through traditional literature for ethnic minority students: teaching traditional literature in the form of thematic activities, organizing for students to watch films and other art performances about traditional literary works, organizing reading sessions (published books of traditional literary works), extracurricular activities, organizing competitions, teaching through cultural heritage, inviting ethnic minority artisans in the area to sing/tell traditional literary works to students, organizing activities of

collecting and recording traditional literary works of ethnic minority groups, organizing activities to experience, visit, survey and learn about the villages, organizing clubs...

Table 2: Survey results of students (200 students)

| No. | Questions | Yes | | No | |
|-----|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | | Number of votes | Percentage (%) | Number of votes | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Do you know how many students in your class are from ethnic minorities? | 159 | 79.5 | 41 | 20.5 |
| 2 | Can you speak your ethnic language? | 168 | 84 | 32 | 16 |
| 3 | Do you like to participate in the cultural activities of your community? | 188 | 94 | 12 | 6 |
| 4 | Do you want to have a subject at your school that helps you understand the culture of your community? | 178 | 89 | 22 | 11 |
| 5 | Have you ever listened to your grandfather/grandmother/father/mother... tell old stories and sing folk songs of your community? | 153 | 76.5 | 47 | 23.5 |
| 6 | Do you know the old stories of your community? | 109 | 54.5 | 91 | 45.5 |
| 7 | Do you enjoy reading the ancient stories of your community? | 167 | 83.5 | 33 | 16.5 |
| 8 | Do you know any ancient literary genres in your community? | 98 | 49 | 102 | 51 |
| 9 | Do your grandfather/grandmother/father/mother... require you to know about the ancient literature of your community? | 106 | 53 | 94 | 47 |
| 10 | Do you know the values of the ancient literature of your community? | 104 | 52 | 96 | 48 |
| 11 | Do you want to introduce the ancient literature of your community to many people? | 157 | 78.5 | 43 | 21.5 |
| 12 | Do you want to include the ancient literature of your community in the curriculum at your school? | 164 | 82 | 36 | 18 |
| 13 | Do you want to learn about the culture and literature of your community? | 188 | 94 | 12 | 6 |
| 14 | What suggestions do you have to preserve and promote traditional cultural values through the ancient literature of your community? | | | | |

On the basis of the survey results, we found that many ethnic minority students love, respect and desire to learn about their culture and ancient literature. They want to participate and contribute to preserving the cultural values of their community. Although they have to use Kinh language when they go to school, there are still many ethnic minority students who can speak their own language. They have the wish that the ancient literature of their nation be taught in the school. The inclusion of ancient literature of ethnic minority groups in the school curriculum will help more people know about it and have the effect of educating the younger generation on better traditional cultural values. In the cultural environment of the family, many students are still taught about stories, songs, etc. of their community by their grandparents. Those are the favorable factors that facilitate the access to the ancient literature of ethnic minority students. However, the knowledge of ethnic minority students about their own ancient literature is still limited. It can be seen that the students do not have favorable conditions to have much access to the ancient literature of their community (due to few documents, because they have not been included in the curriculum...). This is a limitation that needs to be overcome because ethnic minority students play a very important role in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of their community. Students also believe that in order to preserve and promote traditional cultural values through ancient literature, it is necessary to introduce ancient literature of ethnic minority groups as a compulsory subject in the curriculum. There are many rich and vivid forms to help students access the ancient literature of their community. It is of great importance to teach mother tongue to ethnic minority students to preserve the cultural space of ethnic minority groups.

IV. Conclusion

Educating ethnic minority students in preserving and promoting their traditional cultural and literary values is very necessary and important, especially in the current context of integration and development. It can be seen that teachers and students in the Northern mountainous area have the desire to learn about the literature and traditional culture of ethnic minority groups. However, they have not had the opportunity to approach the ancient literature of ethnic minority groups, so their awareness is still limited. Therefore, it is necessary to have timely solutions in schools to help preserve and promote traditional cultural values through the ancient literature of ethnic minority groups.

The most practical solution is to bring ancient literature of ethnic minority groups into the school curriculum. At the same time, it is essential to implement active teaching forms, combining theory and practice, classroom knowledge and real-life experience, thereby helping students to increase their initiative, self-reliance and interest in learning... It is also possible to organize teaching based on topics where thematic content is ancient literature. Teachers encourage all students to exchange, discuss and share knowledge. An activity that

attracts the attention of many ethnic minority students is that teachers can organize for students to watch movies and participate in art performances about ancient literature of ethnic minority groups. In addition, it is important to provide rich resources and build a reading culture (reading ancient literary works of ethnic minority groups) for students. This is also a measure to help ethnic minority students to be more conscious in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of their community.

Acknowledgment

The article is part of the project “*Educating traditional cultural values through Tay’s Nom poems for students of ethnic minorities in the Northern mountainous area*”, project code CS.2021.10 (Dr. Ngo Thi Thu Trang is the principal investigator; Host organization: University of Education – Thai Nguyen University)

REFERENCES

- [1]. Tran Van Ai, *Vietnam’s Ethnic Communities*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2010.
- [2]. Tran Ngoc Binh, *Culture of Vietnam’s ethnic minority groups*, Youth Publishing House, Hanoi, 2008.
- [3]. Nguyen Tu Chi, *A contribution to the study of national culture*, Hanoi National Culture Publishing House, Hanoi, 2003.
- [4]. Phan Huu Dat, *Some issues on Vietnamese Ethnology*, Hanoi National University Publishing House, 2014.
- [5]. Nguyen Van Huy, *A cultural picture of Vietnam’s ethnic minority groups*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1997.
- [6]. Nguyen Chi Huyen, Hoang Hoa Toan, Luong Van Bao, *The historical origin of ethnic minority groups in the Northern border region of Vietnam*, National Culture Publishing House, Hanoi, 2000.
- [7]. Hoang Nam, *Overview of the traditional culture of Vietnam’s ethnic minority groups*, Ethnic Culture Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011.

Ngo Thi Thu Trang, et. al. "The Current Situation Of Educating Traditional Cultural Values Through Ancient Literature For Ethnic Minority Students In The Northern Mountainous Area Of Vietnam In The Context Of Integration And Development." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 12(02), (2022): pp. 23-27.