

Educating students at Thai Nguyen University of Education, Vietnam, on traditional cultural values in the context of globalization

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Abstract - In the context of digital transformation and international integration, educating pre-service teachers on traditional cultural values is crucial for preserving national cultural identity and improving the quality of teacher training. This study aims to assess the current status of education on traditional cultural values for students at Thai Nguyen University of Education, analyze influencing factors, and propose solutions to improve the effectiveness of this education. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining a questionnaire survey of 162 students with observation and document analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics and tests to assess differences between groups. The results indicate that students highly value concepts such as patriotism, a spirit of diligence in learning, and respect for teachers and tradition; however, their awareness of cultural heritage preservation and the cultural diversity of ethnic groups remains limited. At the same time, the study identified the digital environment, schools, families, and the process of international integration as factors that significantly influence educational effectiveness. Based on these findings, the study proposes innovating educational activities toward digital transformation, enhancing practical experiences, and developing an educational roadmap tailored to each academic year to improve the effectiveness of teaching traditional cultural values to teacher education students.

Key words: education in traditional cultural values; teacher education students; international integration; cultural identity; Thai Nguyen University of Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of digital transformation and globalization, cultural exchange and assimilation among nations are becoming increasingly intense, creating both opportunities and challenges for each country (Knight, 2004; Nederveen Pieterse, 2019). As a nation deeply engaged in international integration, Vietnam has achieved significant accomplishments in economic development, education, science, and technology. However, alongside these opportunities come significant impacts on the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values. In this context,

students- the nation's young intellectuals and high-quality human resources-are the group directly affected by global cultural trends. The process of engaging with new cultural values has helped broaden the thinking and horizons of the younger generation, but it also raises the need to preserve and promote national cultural identity (Nederveen Pieterse, 2019).

Practical experience shows that the awareness and acceptance of traditional cultural values among a segment of students are undergoing notable changes. Certain core values—such as patriotism, a spirit of solidarity, the moral principle of “remembering one’s roots,” and cultural values expressed through customs, traditions, festivals, and cultural heritage—have not yet received the attention they deserve. In addition, the influence of the digital environment and international cultural trends is also altering the perspectives, lifestyles, and value systems of young people (Van Dijck, 2013). This necessitates strengthening education in traditional culture to help students develop a sound understanding, selectively absorb new cultural values, and promote national cultural identity in the context of globalization (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

In Vietnam's higher education system, teacher training universities play a vital role in training future teachers. These institutions not only equip students with specialized knowledge and pedagogical skills but also bear the responsibility of fostering political integrity, professional ethics, and a commitment to preserving national cultural values among their students. As the future educators of the younger generation, teacher education students need to be equipped with a solid cultural foundation so they can convey, promote, and foster traditional cultural values in their professional practice (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Thai Nguyen University of Education was selected as the research site because it is a key teacher-training institution for the northern midlands and mountainous regions. The university is responsible for training teaching personnel for many localities with diverse economic, social, and cultural conditions, particularly in areas with large ethnic minority populations. Therefore, educating students about traditional cultural values not only helps improve the quality of teacher training but also plays a significant role in preserving and promoting the cultural identities of Vietnam's ethnic groups.

Based on these requirements, this study was conducted to assess the current state of education on traditional cultural

values for students at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University. Based on an analysis of influencing factors in the context of international integration, the study proposes several solutions to enhance the effectiveness of traditional cultural education, thereby contributing to the training of future teachers who possess professional competence, professional integrity, and a commitment to preserving and promoting the nation's cultural identity.

To achieve the research objectives, this paper focuses on answering the following questions: (i) What are the current perceptions of students at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University regarding Vietnam's traditional cultural values? (ii) What educational content and methods is the university currently implementing to educate students about and promote traditional cultural values? (iii) What measures are needed to enhance the effectiveness of educating students at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University on traditional cultural values in the context of international integration?

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. Key concepts

2.1.1. Cultural values

Cultural values are a system of concepts, norms, beliefs, and ideals formed, shared, and accumulated by a community throughout its historical development. According to UNESCO, culture and cultural values form the foundation of individual and community identity, helping to shape the way people think, behave, and interact with society (UNESCO, 2001). From a values research perspective, Schwartz (2012) argues that values are guiding beliefs that influence human behavior and choices in various contexts. Furthermore, Hofstede (2001) asserts that cultural values are not static elements but can change under the influence of the social environment, while still maintaining the core characteristics of each culture.

2.1.2. Traditional cultural values

Traditional cultural values are tangible and intangible values that have been shaped over the course of history and are preserved, inherited, and passed down by the community across many generations. They form the foundation of a community's cultural identity and cohesion (UNESCO, 2001). According to Inglehart and Baker (2000), although the processes of modernization and globalization have altered many aspects of social life, traditional values remain capable of enduring and adapting to new historical conditions. For Vietnam, values such as patriotism, a spirit of solidarity, compassion, a sense of community, and a tradition of valuing education are important components of the nation's cultural identity.

2.1.3. Education in traditional cultural values

Education in traditional cultural values is a purposeful educational process with specific objectives, content, and methods designed to help learners develop awareness, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the nation's

cultural values. In higher education, this activity goes beyond merely imparting knowledge about history and culture; it also aims to develop the ability to apply, preserve, and promote cultural values in practice (Banks, 2015). At the same time, education in traditional cultural values must be linked to the development of intercultural competence so that learners are able to selectively assimilate universal human values in the context of globalization (Barrett, 2018).

2.1.4. International integration

International integration is the process by which nations actively engage in cooperative relationships and partnerships in the economic, political, cultural, educational, and scientific spheres, based on shared interests and adherence to common standards (Knight, 2004). In the cultural sphere, international integration promotes exchange, assimilation, and the formation of hybrid cultural forms (cultural hybridization), creating conditions for nations to adopt the progressive values of humanity (Nederveen Pieterse, 2019). However, this process also places demands on each nation to preserve its cultural identity, strengthen its traditional values, and enhance its capacity to adapt in a global environment.

2.2. Content of education on traditional cultural values for students

The content of education on traditional cultural values for students- particularly teacher education students- is based on the core values of the national culture and the need to develop learners' competencies in the context of international integration (Banks, 2015; Barrett, 2018), including:

Patriotism: This is the supreme value in the traditional Vietnamese value system. Educating students in patriotism goes beyond mere pride in the nation's history; it is realized through civic responsibility and a spirit of readiness to contribute to the nation's development and defend national sovereignty in the era of integration.

Spirit of community solidarity: This value helps foster students' sense of collective responsibility, as well as their ability to cooperate and work in teams. In the context of globalization, maintaining community values is crucial for the sustainable development of society (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

A Love of learning and respect for teachers: For student teachers, these values are integral to their professional identity. Fostering a love of learning helps develop the capacity for lifelong learning, while the tradition of respecting teachers serves as a crucial foundation for professional ethics (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Compassion and empathy: This content aims to cultivate compassion, empathy, and a sense of responsibility toward the community. These are also essential qualities for teachers in the process of educating and developing learners (Barrett, 2018).

Cultural identity of Vietnam's ethnic groups: Vietnam is a multi-ethnic nation comprising 54 ethnic groups. This content equips students with the ability to understand, respect, and value cultural diversity. Particularly in strategic regions such as the Northern Uplands and Mountains, a thorough understanding of ethnic cultural identity is a mandatory professional requirement for future teachers.

Responsibility for Cultural Heritage Preservation: This content helps students recognize the value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, thereby fostering an awareness of the need to preserve, promote, and utilize the achievements of digital transformation to promote national cultural values in the context of globalization (UNESCO, 2001; Nederveen Pieterse, 2019).

2.3. Factors affecting educational effectiveness

The effectiveness of educating students on traditional cultural values is influenced by a multifaceted system of factors that make up the educational ecosystem, including:

Family: The family is the primary educational environment, contributing to the formation of each individual's value system and behavioral norms. The values formed within the family have a lasting impact on learners' perceptions and behaviors (Schwartz, 2012).

School: Schools play a guiding role in organizing educational activities focused on cultural values through curricula, teaching methods, faculty, and experiential activities. For teacher-training institutions, developing professional qualities and the ability to educate on cultural values is a critical requirement (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Digital media and social media: The digital environment and social media platforms have become the primary channels through which students receive information. While this environment facilitates expanded access to knowledge and cultural exchange, it also poses numerous challenges in shaping students' value systems and perceptions (Van Dijk, 2013).

Social environment: Social norms, cultural policies, the community environment, and social relationships have a significant influence on the formation and development of students' cultural values (UNESCO, 2001).

The Process of International Integration: International integration promotes cultural exchange and assimilation, enabling students to access global values and norms. At the same time, this process also requires students to selectively absorb new influences, preserve their national cultural identity, and develop intercultural competence in a diverse environment (Knight, 2004; Nederveen Pieterse, 2019).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Subject and Object

Research subject: The current status and solutions for enhancing the effectiveness of education on traditional

cultural values for students at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University in the context of globalization.

Research population: The study was conducted on a survey sample consisting of N = 162 full-time students currently enrolled at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam. To ensure the representativeness and comprehensiveness of the data, the sample structure was specifically stratified by academic year, gender, and field of study (Table 1).

Table -1: Survey questionnaire structure (N = 162)

Stratification criteria	Attribute classification	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
School year	Freshman	42	25.9%
	Sophomore	40	24.7%
	Junior	40	24.7%
	Senior	40	24.7%
Field of study	Natural sciences division	75	46.3%
	Social sciences & Humanities division	87	53.7%
Gender	Male	38	23.5%
	Female	124	76.5%

3.2. Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively explore the research phenomenon while enhancing the reliability and testability of the research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The quantitative questionnaire survey served as the primary quantitative approach. The structured questionnaire was designed to consist of three main sections: (1) Demographic information; (2) Students' perceptions and attitudes toward the six dimensions of traditional cultural values identified in Section 2.2; (3) Assessment of effectiveness levels and influencing factors. The questionnaire was distributed online (via Google Forms) to 162 students in the selected sample.

The research team conducted direct and indirect observations of students' behaviors and attitudes in school cultural spaces, civic activities, and ethnic cultural festivals organized by the university, as well as students' interactions on social media forums managed by the university.

Document analysis was used to examine administrative documents, curriculum, and course syllabi from Thai Nguyen University of Education (University of Education, 2025) to assess the extent to which traditional cultural values are integrated into the curriculum.

3.3. Research instruments and data analysis

The research variables regarding students' perceptions, attitudes, and levels of implementation were measured using a three-point Likert scale, which was appropriate for the survey's objectives and the characteristics of the study population.

Depending on the nature of each set of questions, the response options were defined as follows:

Awareness/Attitude Measurement Model: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Undecided/Neutral; 3 = Agree.

Frequency/Behavior Measurement Model: 1 = Never/Rarely; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Often.

Effectiveness/Status Assessment Scale: 1 = Poor/Ineffective; 2 = Average/Satisfactory; 3 = Good/Effective.

To interpret the mean value of a three-point scale, the interval between levels is determined using the following formula:

$$\text{Difference} = \frac{\max - \min}{3} = \frac{3 - 1}{3} = 0.67$$

Based on this, the mean scores were classified as follows (Hair et al., 2019):

1.00 ≤ M ≤ 1.67: Low / Poor / Disagree.

1.68 ≤ M ≤ 2.34: Moderate / Occasionally / Neutral.

2.35 ≤ M ≤ 3.00: High Level / Frequent / Agree.

Quantitative data were coded, entered, and processed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistical measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the data. In addition, the study employed appropriate statistical tests to analyze differences among participant groups and assess the impact of the study variables (Hair et al., 2019).

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Students' perception of traditional cultural values

4.1.1. Level of Understanding

Quantitative survey data from 162 students show that the overall level of understanding among students at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University regarding traditional cultural values is in the high-average range (M = 2.25; SD = 0.64). According to the 3-point scale, this result indicates that the vast majority of students have a clear understanding of the importance of national culture (Table 2).

Table-2: Level of understanding of traditional cultural values by school year (N = 162)

Academic year	Number (n)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
First year	42	14	20	8	1.86	0.72
Second year	40	8	21	11	2.08	0.69
Third year	40	3	18	19	2.40	0.63
Fourth year	40	1	12	27	2.65	0.53
Total	162	26	71	65	2.25	0.64

However, there was a marked difference in the level of understanding between first-year and fourth-year students. First-year students had the lowest cognitive scores (M = 1.86; SD = 0.72), reflecting the early stages of college, when they are easily distracted by new cultural influences and

audiovisual content on social media. In contrast, fourth-year students achieved the highest awareness scores (M = 2.65; SD = 0.53). These results demonstrate that the educational program at Thai Nguyen University of Education has been effective in fostering students' sense of national cultural identity. Through specialized courses in Education, Political Theory, and hands-on teaching experiences in local communities, students gradually come to realize that, to become educators in a globalized context, professional competence must always go hand in hand with a solid foundation in national culture.

4.1.2. Values Valued by Students

To clarify the cognitive structure, the study measured the extent to which students value six core value dimensions. The descriptive statistical results are detailed in Table 3.

Table- 3: Students' evaluations of traditional cultural value dimensions (n = 162)

No.	Traditional cultural values	Level			Average score	Rank
		M3	M2	M1		
1	A love of learning and respect for teachers	138	19	5	2.82	1
2	Patriotism	126	30	6	2.74	2
3	Compassion and loyalty	102	47	13	2.55	3
4	A spirit of community solidarity	88	52	22	2.41	4
5	The cultural identities of Vietnam's ethnic groups	45	91	26	2.12	5
6	The responsibility to preserve cultural heritage	28	86	48	1.88	6
Average value		88	54	20	2.42	

Looking at the specific frequency distribution table, the divergence in the perceptions of student teachers is clearly evident in the empirical data. On the "Dedication to Learning and Respect for Teachers" value axis, as many as 138 students (85.2%) strongly agreed or selected the highest response level, demonstrating the very strong professional commitment of these future educators.

However, on the "Responsibility for Preserving Cultural Heritage" axis, the percentage of students responding at Level 1 (Disagree/Rarely Practice) accounted for as much as 29.6% (48 students), while only 28 students (17.3%) selected Level 3. This figure serves as strong quantitative evidence of the significant gap between students' "theoretical understanding" and their "actual actions." Students may possess a general sense of patriotism and national pride on a macro level, but when it comes to specific actions involving personal responsibility toward intangible cultural heritage or the ethnic identities of regional groups, their level of willingness and frequency of participation decline significantly.

4.2. Current Status of traditional cultural value education activities at the university

To assess the current situation, this study surveyed the extent of implementation and the effectiveness of the various forms of traditional cultural values education currently being applied at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University. Quantitative data collected from 162 students are presented in Table 4.

Table -4: Students' evaluations of educational methods at the university (n = 162)

No.	Forms of education on traditional cultural values	Level			Average score	Rank
		M3	M2	M1		
1	Integration into regular coursework	124	32	6	2.73	1
2	Extracurricular movements and activities organized by the youth union and the student association	98	49	15	2.51	2
3	Hands-on experiential activities and teaching internships in remote mountainous areas	52	28	82	1.81	4
4	Education through digital platforms, the school's facebook page, and online media channels	31	78	53	1.86	3
Average value		76	60	26	2.23	

The data above reflects a multifaceted picture of educational activities at the university. The approach of "integration into regular coursework" ranked highest (M = 2.73), with 124 students (76.5%) reporting that it occurs frequently and is of high quality. This indicates that the university has effectively leveraged the central role of the classroom in conveying cultural knowledge through courses such as: Cultures of the Vietnamese Ethnic Groups, Fundamentals of Vietnamese Culture...

In addition, activities organized by the Youth Union and the Student Association (M = 2.51) serve as effective channels, helping to bring cultural values and norms closer to students. Competitions, clubs, and volunteer campaigns have created a dynamic interactive environment, helping to transform theoretical lessons into a spirit of solidarity and a sense of practical community responsibility among students.

The "Hands-on Field Experiences in Highland Communities" component scored only an average rating (M = 2.15), with 82 students (51%) rating it as "occasional" at best. In-depth interviews with several veteran faculty members shed light on this issue: "Due to limited funding and a packed training schedule, cultural field trips have not yet been organized on a large scale for all students but have been prioritized for majors such as History and Geography, or for some students participating in the 'Green Summer' volunteer program." This shortfall inadvertently reduces opportunities for the majority of students to gain a deep understanding of the cultural diversity and identities of ethnic groups in the northern mountainous region—a critical professional requirement highlighted in the university's regional development strategy.

The "Education through Digital Spaces and Online Communication" format was rated as ineffective by 53 students (33%). This is an alarming paradox in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. While social media (TikTok, Facebook) serves as students' daily communication channels, the university's online communication system has yet to keep pace with current trends. The content on the fanpage regarding traditional cultural education remains bureaucratic and dry, lacking visual formats (short videos, infographics) that appeal to young people. This undermines the effectiveness of traditional educational efforts in the classroom.

4.3. Solutions to Enhance the Effectiveness of Education on Traditional Cultural Values

Based on the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the current situation at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University, this study proposes a comprehensive set of solutions aimed at optimizing the effectiveness of education on traditional cultural values for students in the context of international integration:

First, strengthen regional field experiences

The university should explore incorporating the content "Culture of Ethnic Groups in the Northern Uplands and Mountains" or "Heritage Education" as elective courses for all teacher education programs, rather than limiting them to only certain majors. Establish collaboration mechanisms to expand teacher-training internship programs that integrate cultural immersion at schools in highland areas of Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, and other provinces. This process enables students- future teachers- to directly experience and gain a deep understanding of the cultural diversity of ethnic groups. Consequently, it fosters a sense of responsibility for heritage preservation, which is currently at a low level in their awareness.

Second, modernizing educational methods through digital platforms and multimedia

Instead of relying solely on administrative documents, the Youth Union and the school's communications department should innovate their outreach methods by developing cultural communication campaigns through short videos on TikTok and YouTube, as well as visually engaging illustrations. The content should focus on introducing and promoting traditional cultural values, intangible cultural heritage, stories about the nation's history, and the cultural identities of Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups in formats suitable for the digital environment. Conveying cultural values through methods that align with students' information-consumption habits will help foster healthy aesthetic tastes while enhancing their ability to recognize, filter, and respond appropriately to harmful and toxic content online.

Third, Establish an Appropriate Educational Roadmap for Each Academic Year

Education on traditional culture should be designed to suit the characteristics and needs of each stage of learning, rather than applying the same content and teaching methods to all students.

For first- and second-year students, the school should focus on orientation activities and fostering an initial understanding of traditional culture through the orientation week at the start of the academic year, cultural arts competitions, ethnic cultural festivals, and experiential activities. The goal is to help students quickly integrate into the learning environment, foster pride in their national cultural identity, and build a sound foundation of understanding in the context of international integration.

For third- and fourth-year students, the focus should shift from imparting knowledge to developing the ability to apply that knowledge in professional practice. The university can strengthen scientific research activities, design lesson plans that integrate traditional cultural content, and organize teaching practice activities linked to cultural values education. Through these efforts, students will gradually develop the ability to convey, promote, and educate students on traditional cultural values during their professional careers after graduation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This empirical study, conducted on a sample of N = 162 students at the University of Education – Thai Nguyen University, confirmed a positive yet challenging trend in students' perception of traditional cultural values in the context of globalization. The university's students demonstrate strong professional integrity by prioritizing the values of "a love of learning, respect for teachers, and adherence to moral principles" and "patriotism." However, a significant gap remains in their awareness of heritage preservation and their deep understanding of regional cultural diversity, primarily due to the influence of audiovisual trends on social media and a lack of field experience programs.

To realize the goal of training a future generation of teachers who possess both a global mindset and a deep sense of national identity, Thai Nguyen University of Education must implement a comprehensive reform. The digital transformation of communication methods, the diversification of hands-on experiences in mountainous regions, and the adoption of a tiered educational curriculum organized by academic year are the key elements. These solutions will not only enhance the university's overall educational quality but also provide a useful theoretical model for the network of teacher training universities in Vietnam in their efforts to preserve national cultural sovereignty amid the tide of globalization.

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