

Integrated Teaching of Local Cultural Education for Primary School Students: A Case Study in Quảng Ninh Province, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study investigates the integration of local cultural education into primary school teaching in Hạ Long City, Quảng Ninh Province. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research surveyed 50 teachers and 100 Grade 4 students, combined with classroom observations and interviews. Findings show that teachers perceive local cultural integration as highly important and beneficial, particularly in fostering love for the homeland, preserving traditional values, and developing students' practical competencies. Students expressed the greatest interest in experiential activities such as visiting heritage sites, playing folk games, and participating in traditional festivals. However, challenges include a lack of standardized teaching resources, difficulties in lesson design, limited facilities, and uneven student engagement. Teachers emphasized the need for official teaching materials, professional training, and stronger school–community collaboration. The paper proposes practical solutions: designing interdisciplinary themes, developing authentic cultural resources, enhancing teacher training, expanding cooperation with local communities, and building comprehensive student assessment tools. These solutions are not only relevant to Quảng Ninh but also provide insights for other regions in Vietnam.

Keywords: integrated teaching, local culture, primary education, teachers, Vietnam

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1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and international integration, preserving and promoting national cultural identity has become an urgent task. Culture is not only the spiritual essence of a community but also an essential foundation and endogenous resource for sustainable development. Recent studies emphasize the close relationship between culture and education: education is both a process of receiving, recreating, and innovating cultural values, and a tool for shaping civic consciousness and behavior in society (Godson, 2000; Sauca Cano, 2010; Mahecha López, 2015).

Globally, many countries have recognized the importance of cultural education in schools, including the integration of local cultural values into curricula (Ivon and Kušćević, 2013; Jinling Tao and Jianjun Yin, 2017; Halimah and Abdillah, 2021; Purwaningrum *et al.*, 2024). Student learning becomes more meaningful when teachers design learning situations connected with real-life contexts. Knowledge is always constructed within social and cultural contexts through students' participation and practice in their communities (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

In Vietnam, the 2018 General Education Curriculum explicitly requires integrating cultural education into school subjects and experiential activities. This not only fosters students' love for their homeland but also develops their adaptability and competencies in the context of globalization. Cultural education should be implemented systematically, combining subject content, experiential learning, the school environment, and cooperation between families and communities (Le Thi Song Huong and Dang Thi Phuong, 2022). Vietnamese scholars also stress that

cultural education both preserves national identity and equips younger generations for international integration and development (N.V., 2017).

Within this framework, Quảng Ninh Province presents a unique case. It is a land with rich cultural heritage: maritime culture, coal-mining culture, and diverse traditions of ethnic minorities such as Dao, Tày, and Sán Diu. Integrating these cultural values into primary education not only helps students understand their roots but also equips them with the capacity to preserve and promote local heritage in the modern context.

Based on this reality, the study pursues three objectives:

1. Analyze current practices of integrating local culture into primary education in Hạ Long.
2. Assess students' interest in integrated activities.
3. Propose solutions to enhance effectiveness.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions: How is integrated local cultural teaching currently implemented in Quảng Ninh? What achievements and limitations exist? Which factors influence its effectiveness? The expected results will provide scientific evidence for educational administrators and teachers to design appropriate teaching models, contributing to the preservation and promotion of Quảng Ninh's distinctive cultural values.

2. Theoretical and Legal Foundations

Culture has long been regarded as a central category in the social sciences and humanities. It constitutes a system of values and norms that shape social behavior, thereby directly influencing human development (Sauca Cano, 2010). Culture is also closely associated with maintaining social order and community development through the concept of *cultura de la legalidad*, which highlights the role of education in fostering attitudes and behaviors that comply with social norms (Godson, 2000). Culture is not merely passively preserved but must be "recreated" through education, enabling younger generations to become active agents in community building (Mahecha López, 2015).

Education and culture share a reciprocal, complementary relationship. On the one hand, education serves as a vehicle to preserve, transmit, and promote cultural values. On the other hand, culture provides the context, goals, and content for educational activities. Culture, as a system of values, shapes social behavior and human development (Sauca Cano, 2010). Within education, culture is an essential tool for shaping cultural awareness, attitudes, and responsibilities, thereby contributing to responsible citizenship and sustainable development (Godson, 2000; Mahecha López, 2015).

As a constituent element of national culture, local culture is understood as the sum of distinctive material and spiritual values that are formed, maintained, and localized within a specific geographic space (village, commune, province). It reflects how communities interact with nature, engage in productive labor, practice beliefs, celebrate festivals, and express lifestyles. Integrating local culture into education not only helps students understand their roots but also fosters pride, responsibility, and the ability to apply cultural knowledge in practice. In this sense, knowledge is always constructed within social and cultural contexts through participation and practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Martínez-Bello, Martínez-Rojas and Lahuerta-Contell, 2020). This demonstrates that local cultural education cannot remain at the level of knowledge transmission but must be situated within real-life community contexts.

Integrated teaching is defined as a learning process in which students mobilize knowledge and skills from one or more subjects in a logical relationship to solve real-life situations (Hang and Thiet, 2022). At the primary level, integrating local cultural education not only provides knowledge but also creates opportunities for students to experience, participate in, and reconstruct cultural values. This approach transforms education into a truly "cultural process," where students learn not only to acquire knowledge but also to live in close connection with their community.

The learning process must therefore be situated within a *community of practice*, where learners engage, interact, and develop through authentic experiences. Applied to local cultural education, this implies that students should

not only absorb knowledge in classrooms but also participate in community-based activities such as visiting heritage sites, experiencing festivals, or learning through traditional games. In Vietnam, cultural value education is required to be implemented systematically through subjects, experiential learning activities, school environments, and collaboration with families and communities (Le Thi Song Huong and Dang Thi Phuong, 2022). Cultural education must pursue dual goals: preserving and promoting national identity while equipping younger generations with the competencies required for global integration (Nguyen Van Loi, 2022).

Alongside theoretical foundations, the legal framework in Vietnam provides important support for integrating local cultural education into teaching. Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on comprehensive educational reform emphasizes the need to “focus on educating traditions, history, ethics, lifestyles, and cultural identity for the younger generation” (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). Based on this, the Vietnamese General Education Curriculum designates local education content as a compulsory component, equipping students with knowledge about the history, culture, socio-economy, and environment of their homeland (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018).

Thus, from both theoretical and legal perspectives, the integration of local cultural education into primary education in Vietnam is affirmed as an inevitable pathway. It not only contributes to preserving and promoting national cultural identity but also enables students to develop civic competence, fostering attachment to their homeland while preparing them for international integration.

3. Research Context

Hà Long City, Quảng Ninh Province, is known as a major tourist center of Vietnam, with unique heritage and scenic landscapes such as Hà Long Bay – a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site, the Yên Tử Historical Complex, Cửa Ông Temple, and a system of traditional craft villages. The city stands out for its diverse cultural features, reflecting the intersection between tradition and modernity as well as the influence of nature and history. This makes Hà Long a fertile environment for integrating local culture into education.

Currently, the city has about 30 primary schools with over 20,000 students, most of which meet national standards. Although these schools benefit from strong investment in infrastructure, safe and green learning environments, and an overall improvement in educational quality, challenges remain in the implementation of local cultural education. Teaching resources are not standardized or systematized, and disparities in facilities and opportunities for cultural experiences persist among schools. These factors affect the effectiveness of integrated teaching activities and raise concerns about equity in students’ access to cultural education.

4. Research Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches with teachers and students in several primary schools in Hà Long City, Quảng Ninh Province. Specifically:

Sample: 50 teachers and 100 grade 4 students from selected primary schools.

Data collection tools: Questionnaires, student surveys, classroom observations.

Data analysis: Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and qualitative cross-analysis.

5. Results

5.1. Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of Integrating Local Cultural Education

We conducted a survey with 50 teachers currently working at primary schools in Hà Long City, Quảng Ninh, focusing on their awareness, perceptions, and evaluation of the role and importance of integrating local cultural education into grade 4 teaching. The results are as follows:

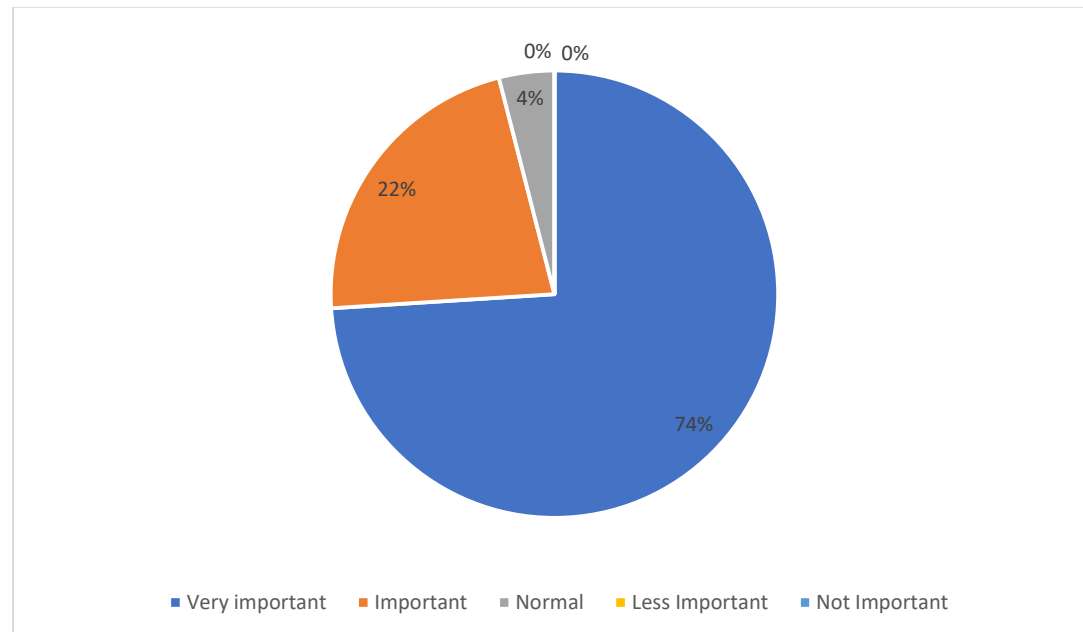


Figure 1. Teachers' Evaluation of the Role of Integrating Local Cultural Education into Grade 4 Teaching

The survey of 50 primary school teachers in Hà Long City revealed that the majority of teachers hold a highly positive and consistent perception of the role of integrating local cultural education into teaching. Specifically, 37 teachers (74%) rated it as “very important” and 11 teachers (22%) considered it “important,” while only 2 teachers (4%) viewed it as of “average importance.” Notably, no teacher selected the options “less important” or “not important.”

This indicates a strong consensus among teachers regarding the importance of embedding local cultural content in teaching, which is in line with the orientation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum that emphasizes linking education with real-life contexts and local realities. Therefore, it can be affirmed that integrating local cultural education is widely recognized by teachers as a necessary requirement, contributing not only to the transmission of knowledge but also to fostering students’ love for their homeland, cultural pride, and sense of responsibility from the primary level.

5.2. Teachers' Evaluation of the Benefits of Integrating Local Cultural Education into Grade 4 Teaching

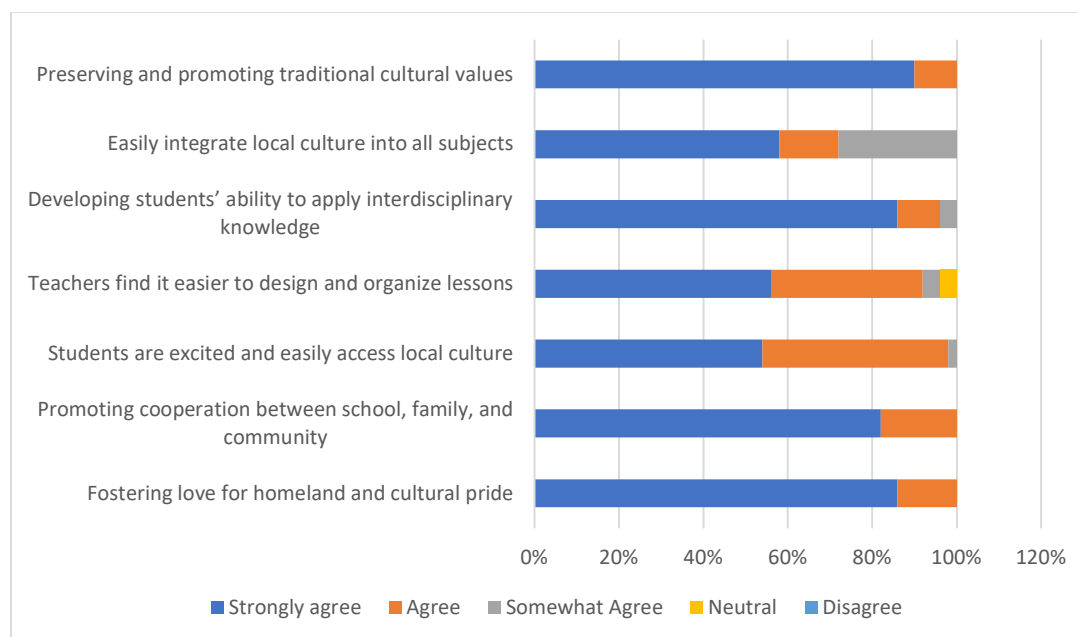


Figure 2. Teachers' Evaluation of the Benefits of Integrating Local Cultural Education into Grade 4 Teaching

The survey results indicate that primary school teachers highly value the practical benefits of integrating local cultural education into teaching. Most prominent is its role in fostering students' love for their homeland and pride in local culture, with 43 teachers (86%) strongly agreeing and 7 teachers (14%) agreeing, and no opposing opinions. Similarly, the benefit of preserving and promoting traditional cultural values achieved unanimous support, as 45 teachers (90%) strongly agreed and 5 teachers (10%) agreed. In addition, as many as 43 teachers (86%) strongly agreed that integrated teaching helps students develop the competence to apply interdisciplinary knowledge to local life practices, clearly highlighting the practical value and applicability of this activity.

However, in some aspects, the level of consensus was lower. For example, only 27 teachers (54%) strongly agreed and 22 teachers (44%) agreed that all students were enthusiastic and easily engaged with local cultural content, while 1 teacher (2%) expressed low agreement. This reflects differences in students' ability to access and engage, which often depend on individual capacity and family conditions. Furthermore, regarding the convenience for teachers in designing and organizing activities, only 28 teachers (56%) strongly agreed, while 2 teachers (4%) disagreed slightly and 2 teachers (4%) were uncertain, indicating real challenges in implementation. Particularly, when asked about the benefit of being easily integrated into all subjects, only 29 teachers (58%) strongly agreed, while 14 teachers (28%) expressed low agreement, highlighting the limited feasibility in natural science subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

Thus, it can be affirmed that primary teachers in Hà Long hold highly positive perceptions of the core benefits of integrating local cultural education, especially in nurturing students' love for their homeland, preserving cultural identity, and developing practical competencies. Nevertheless, concerns remain regarding students' unequal levels of access, the convenience for teachers, and the feasibility of integration across all subjects. These issues call for further support from schools and educational authorities in terms of providing learning resources, professional training, and adjustments in teaching methods.

5.3. Teachers' Evaluation of the Frequency of Using Teaching Methods in Integrating Local Cultural Education

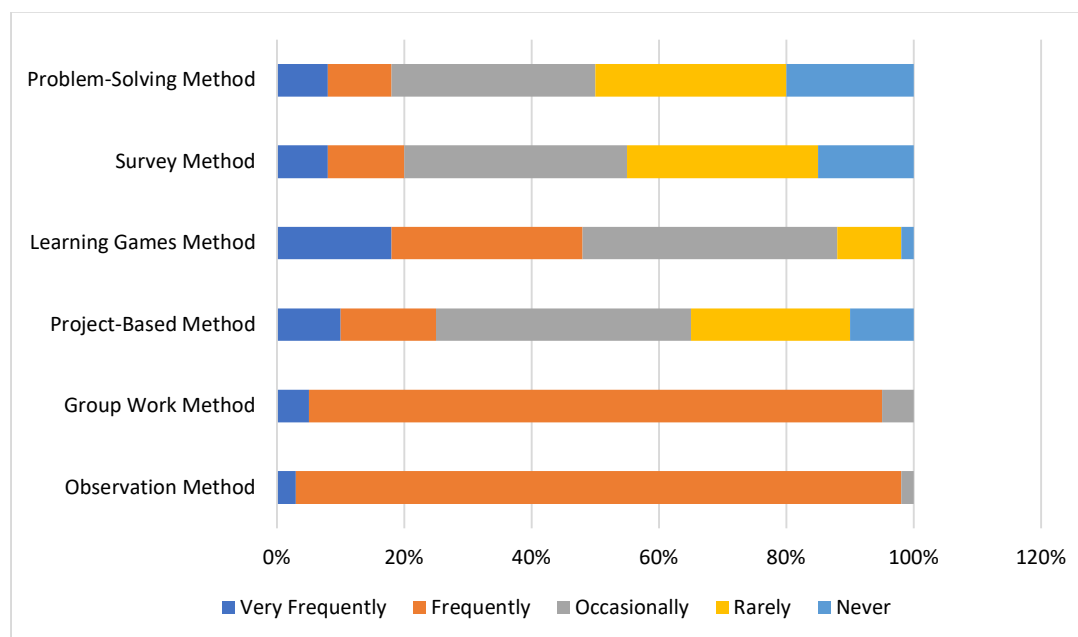


Figure 3. Frequency of Using Teaching Methods in Integrating Local Cultural Education

The survey results (Figure 3) indicate clear differences in the frequency of using teaching methods for integrating local cultural education at the primary level. The most widely applied methods are **Observation** and **Group Work**, with 95% and 90% of teachers, respectively, reporting frequent or very frequent use. These methods are suitable for the cognitive characteristics of primary school students, as they allow learners to engage directly with local cultural artifacts and collaborate effectively in group activities.

In contrast, more complex methods such as **Project-Based Learning**, **Survey**, and **Problem-Solving** are used much less frequently. Only 25% of teachers reported using project-based learning frequently, while 40% applied it occasionally, and 10% admitted they had never used this method. Similarly, the survey and problem-solving approaches had high proportions of “rarely” and “never,” reflecting the challenges teachers face in terms of time allocation, instructional design skills, and the availability of teaching resources.

Meanwhile, the **Learning Games Method** demonstrates a more balanced distribution, with 48% of teachers using it frequently and 40% occasionally. This suggests that playful learning is both engaging and feasible in practice, resonating with the developmental psychology of primary school learners.

Overall, the findings highlight a reliance on conventional and easily implemented methods, while innovative and student-centered approaches that could foster deeper cultural understanding remain underutilized. This underscores the need for further professional development, resource provision, and institutional support to encourage teachers to adopt more diverse and interactive methods in integrating local cultural education.

5.4. Students’ Evaluation of Their Learning Interest in Activities of Integrating Local Cultural Education

In addition to collecting teachers’ perspectives, we also conducted interviews and surveys with students to assess their level of interest when participating in integrated lessons on local cultural education organized by teachers in class. The results are illustrated in the following chart:

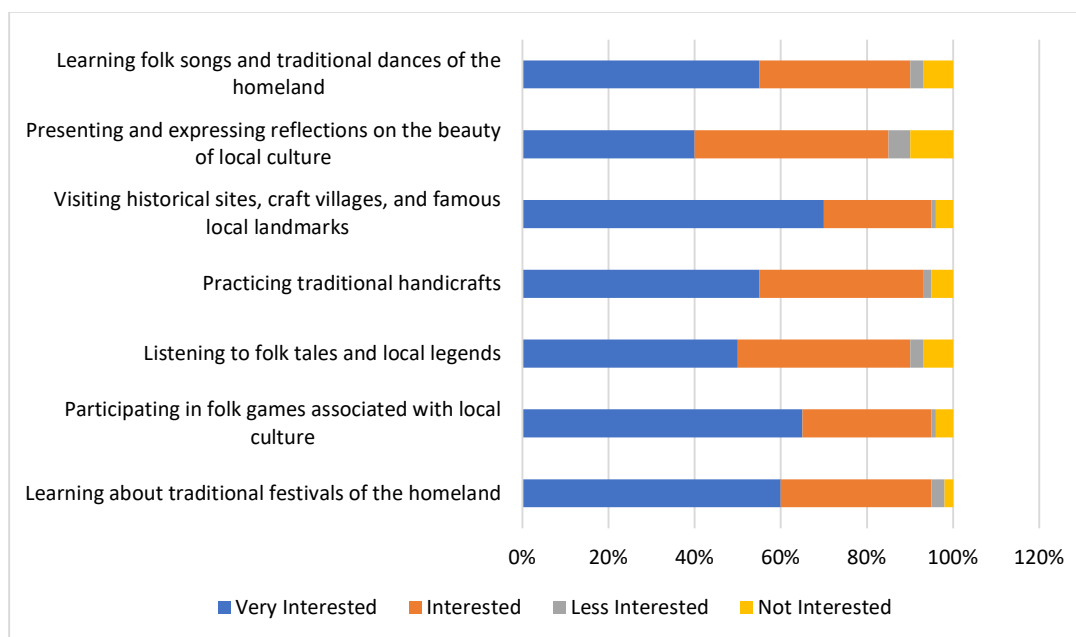


Figure 4. Students' Interest in Activities of Integrating Local Cultural Education

The survey results in **Figure 4** reveal a generally high level of enthusiasm among Grade 4 students toward learning activities that incorporate local cultural elements. However, the degree of interest varies depending on the type of activity, reflecting both the developmental psychology of primary school students and the nature of the activities themselves.

First, activities that provide **direct experiential learning opportunities** received the highest levels of interest. Specifically, *visiting historical sites, craft villages, and famous local landmarks* recorded the strongest engagement, with **70% of students “very interested”** and only **5% not interested**. Similarly, *participating in folk games associated with local culture* reached **65% very interested**, affirming that hands-on, playful, and socially interactive experiences are particularly appealing to children at this age. These results confirm that experiential learning activities not only make cultural content more accessible but also enhance students' emotional attachment to their homeland.

Second, activities involving **traditional artistic and creative practices** also generated considerable excitement. For example, *practicing traditional handicrafts* (55% very interested) and *learning folk songs and traditional dances* (55% very interested) both attracted positive responses. These activities combine creativity, manual engagement, and cultural immersion, making them suitable for the learning style of primary school students. Nevertheless, the proportion of students showing “less interested” (7–10%) suggests that not all children are equally skilled or motivated in artistic and manual tasks, indicating the need for differentiated instruction.

Third, activities related to **storytelling and cultural reflection** received somewhat lower enthusiasm. *Listening to folk tales and local legends* was rated “very interested” by 50% of students, while *presenting and expressing reflections on the beauty of local culture* had the lowest level of “very interested” responses (40%) and the highest proportion of “not interested” (15%). This indicates that tasks requiring individual expression, presentation, or abstract reflection may not align well with the developmental stage of Grade 4 students, who often prefer concrete, visual, and action-oriented experiences.

Overall, the data suggest that while students show **strong intrinsic interest in local cultural education**, the effectiveness of implementation depends greatly on the **type of activity**. Direct, engaging, and community-based experiences are far more motivating than abstract or performative tasks. For teachers, this finding highlights the importance of prioritizing experiential and interactive pedagogies, while gradually scaffolding students toward more reflective and expressive forms of learning.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that integrating local cultural education is highly relevant and appealing to primary students, but instructional design must carefully balance **fun, experience, and reflection** to ensure both engagement and meaningful cultural learning.

The findings from teachers' evaluations (Figure 2) and students' self-reported interests (Figure 4) present a complementary perspective on the integration of local cultural education in primary schools.

On the one hand, teachers strongly emphasized the core benefits of integrating local cultural education. A large majority of teachers believed that such integration fosters students' love for their homeland (86%), contributes to preserving cultural heritage (90%), and supports the development of interdisciplinary application skills (86%). These perceptions reflect a strong consensus among educators that teaching local culture has significant pedagogical and socio-cultural value, aligning with the objectives of the 2018 General Education Curriculum in Vietnam, which stresses competence development and locality-based learning.

On the other hand, students' responses reveal the practical dimension of these benefits, particularly in terms of engagement and motivation. Activities involving direct experience and community connection, such as *visiting historical sites* (70% very interested) and *participating in folk games* (65% very interested), were the most attractive to learners. This indicates that students' love for their homeland, as highlighted by teachers, is best nurtured through concrete, hands-on, and enjoyable experiences rather than abstract lessons. Similarly, activities like *practicing traditional handicrafts* (55% very interested) and *learning folk songs* (55% very interested) resonate with teachers' expectations of cultural preservation. These findings suggest that experiential activities serve as a powerful bridge between teachers' educational goals and students' developmental needs.

However, a clear gap emerges in areas where teachers perceived integration as "beneficial" but students showed lower enthusiasm. For example, while 56% of teachers believed integration made lesson design easier, students expressed relatively low interest in *presenting and expressing reflections on local culture* (only 40% very interested, 15% not interested). This discrepancy highlights the challenge of aligning curricular expectations with students' actual learning preferences and readiness. Tasks requiring higher-order skills such as reflection, oral presentation, and abstract expression may be more demanding for Grade 4 students, who naturally prefer interactive and playful activities.

In summary, the comparison indicates that:

1. Teachers' perceptions of value are confirmed by students' engagement, particularly in cultural preservation and emotional attachment to the homeland.
2. Experiential and interactive activities act as the strongest motivators for students, validating teachers' emphasis on the practical benefits of local cultural integration.
3. A mismatch exists between teachers' expectations for reflective/expressive activities and students' readiness to engage in them, pointing to the need for scaffolding strategies.

This comparative analysis reinforces the idea that successful integration of local cultural education requires harmonizing teachers' educational intentions with students' natural learning interests. To achieve this, schools should emphasize experience-first approaches while gradually building students' reflective and expressive skills through guided practice.

6. Discussion

The survey results indicate that primary school teachers in Ha Long hold highly positive and consistent perceptions of the importance of integrating local cultural education. A total of 74% of teachers rated it as "very important" and 22% as "important," demonstrating strong consensus with the orientation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, which emphasizes linking education with local realities. This provides a favorable foundation for implementing integrated activities that connect school knowledge with community life.

Regarding benefits, the majority of teachers agreed that integrating local culture fosters students' love for their homeland, preserves and promotes traditional cultural values, and develops the ability to apply interdisciplinary

knowledge. The very high level of agreement (over 85%) highlights the sustainable and long-term significance of this approach for the development of students' qualities and competencies at the primary level.

From the students' perspective, the findings show that they were most interested in hands-on experiential activities such as visiting historical sites and craft villages (70% "very interested"), participating in folk games (65%), and learning about traditional festivals (60%). By contrast, activities requiring individual presentation skills, such as giving talks, only attracted 40% "very interested," while 15% expressed disinterest, reflecting age-specific psychological characteristics such as limited communication skills and confidence in public speaking.

Despite positive perceptions and evaluations, a gap remains in practical implementation. Teachers mainly relied on familiar methods such as observation (95%) and group work (90%), while methods requiring more time, skills, and resources, such as project-based learning, surveys, or problem-solving, were less frequently applied. The main reasons stem from a lack of teaching materials, difficulties in lesson design, and constraints in facilities and time.

Teachers also expressed a strong demand for practical support to overcome these challenges, particularly in the form of access to diverse and reliable teaching materials (90%), professional training (84%), and improved facilities and time allocation (80%). These demands highlight the urgency of establishing comprehensive support mechanisms from both the education sector and local authorities to enhance the effectiveness of integrating local cultural education.

Based on these findings, several solutions are proposed. First, interdisciplinary learning themes connected with local culture should be designed for Grade 4, such as "My Hometown Festival" or "Traditional Craft Villages." These themes can link multiple subjects—Vietnamese Language, History and Geography, Experiential Activities, and Arts—thereby combining knowledge acquisition with cultural experience.

Second, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive and official body of teaching resources on Quang Ninh culture. This may include digital archives (photos, videos, folk tales, songs, games) and printed materials. Involving local artisans, museums, and cultural heritage sites in the process of resource development will ensure authenticity and practicality.

Third, teacher training should focus on integrated pedagogies, particularly project-based learning, survey methods, and problem-solving approaches. Training programs should combine theory with practice and create opportunities for teachers to share experiences and best practices.

Fourth, building a strong collaboration mechanism between schools and local communities is essential. Engagement with local authorities, social organizations, museums, heritage sites, and craft villages can expand learning spaces, enhance experiential opportunities, and alleviate pressure on school resources.

Finally, assessment tools should be developed to evaluate students' competencies and qualities in integrated local cultural education. These may include checklists, rubrics for project products, self-assessment, and peer evaluation forms. Such tools will shift assessment beyond knowledge acquisition to emphasize students' attitudes, skills, and cultural competencies.

7. Conclusion

This study has clarified the theoretical, legal, and practical foundations for integrating local cultural education in primary schools, using Ha Long City, Quang Ninh Province as a case study. Findings revealed that teachers hold positive and consistent views of its role and benefits, students show high interest in experiential cultural activities, yet challenges remain in terms of resources, teaching skills, facilities, and community collaboration.




The results confirm that integrating local cultural education is both necessary and appropriate in the current context of educational reform. The study proposes practical solutions such as developing teaching resources, strengthening teacher training, designing interdisciplinary cultural themes, fostering school–community partnerships, and creating student competency assessment tools. These solutions are not only significant for Quang Ninh but also provide references for other regions in Vietnam, contributing to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage while preparing students for global integration.

The study's limitation lies in the small survey sample. Future research should consider quasi-experimental interventions to measure the impact of integrated local cultural education on student competencies, with comparative analysis across different provinces in Vietnam.

Conflict of Interest Statement

We confirm that there are no conflicts of interest in this study. All data and results are presented accurately and honestly, without manipulation or distortion of information. This study was solely for academic purposes and does not involve any commercial intent or personal gain.

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