

The Concept of Responsibilities among 5th Grade Students from Ethnic Minority Groups in Viet Nam

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Received: February 20, 2013 Accepted: April 25, 2013 Online Published: June 28, 2013

doi:10.5539/ass.v9n9p99

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n9p99>

Abstract

This study investigates the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam. A sample group of 300 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups was selected by convenience sampling together with 300 peers from the ethnic majority group. All of them were asked to complete a questionnaire designed for the purposes of the study. The finding shows that the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups initially reaches the basic responsibilities which are society requirements for children. However, it still weaker than that of peer partners from the ethnic majority group. The difference is statistically significant. Results also indicate that there is equal concept of the responsibilities of 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in three dimensions: "Good children in the family", "Good students in school" and "Uncle Ho's good children" ("Good children in society"). The correlations between them are moderate average but have statistically significant.

Keywords: concept, responsibility, children, ethnic minority groups

1. Introduction

1.1 Children's Concepts of Responsibilities

UNICEF (1991) presented some of children's responsibilities that could accompany their rights according to a convention's agreement between countries to obey the same law: If every child, regardless of their sex, ethnic origin, social status, language, age, nationality or religion has these rights, then they also have a responsibility to respect each other in a humane way; if children have a right to be protected from conflict, cruelty, exploitation and neglect, then they also have a responsibility not to bully or harm each other; if children have a right to a clean environment, then they also have a responsibility to do what they can to look after their environment; if children have a right to be educated, then they have the obligation to learn as much as their capabilities allow and, where possible, share their knowledge and experience with others; if all children have a right to a full life, then they should also lend help so the needy, the disadvantaged, and the victims of discrimination also enjoy this right; if children have a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, then they also have the obligation to respect other's thoughts or religious principles.

The international child and youth care network suggested a framework for children's rights and responsibilities, in which along with rights, children have their particular responsibilities: Children's responsibility to listen to others; to take care of themselves; to study and respect their teachers; to show love and caring to others; to be the best people they can be; to respect the origins and beliefs of others; to share in keeping the surroundings neat and clean; to learn from others mistakes; not to waste food (CYC-Online, 2001).

For a long time up to now, the concept of responsibility has been as a salient and controversial theme in public debate, particularly in relation to children and families (Harris, Clark, Rose, & Valasek, 1954; Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009; Serpell, 2011; Stier, 1978); and there are extensive theories about the capacity of children to assume responsibility for themselves or 'self-regulate' their behavior raised by psychologists (Such & Walker, 2004).

Developmental psychologist Schaffer (1996) pointed out the age-based stages or phases of children's

development, in which the acquisition of responsibility is very importance for the transition from childhood to adulthood. The gradual development in children's ability to assume responsibility for themselves is considered as normal development. The presence of empathy or altruism as a sense of responsibility to others also demonstrates the positive development: the progress in 'steps' or the sequences for the normally developing child (Hoffman, 1987).

According to traditional sociological theories of socialization, the conceptualizing of responsibility is learnt by example; socializing helps shape children's morally responsible attitudes and actions and this process is dependent upon the moral guidance of their parents, teachers or others (Parsons, 1974; Parsons & Bales, 1956). The opinion of Stein (1989) is closely allied to socialization theories. He indicated that moral responsibility is an active turning toward the other that begins to take shape in early childhood socialization and then develops as a compassionate capacity. Children learn tasks and "learn to learn" a habitus of responsibility at the same time (Bateson, 1972).

Children define what is 'being responsible' by integrating dominant understandings of childhood such as untrustworthy, naughty, etc. 'Being responsible', doing responsible things and doing things responsibly which children indicate as part of their own and their parents' development criteria. But for them, there is a difference between perceptions of what being responsible constitutes and the way behavior is interpreted. Some children believe that if they fail in interpreting their actions, then their parents will inaccurately deem their behavior irresponsible. Children seem to speak about 'being responsible' by emphasizing two core values: honesty and fairness, especially, when they discuss risk-taking, accidents, ect. So, being honest or not lying is considered as evidence for responsible action and attitudes. Furthermore, children demonstrate responsibility and moral agency while talking about taking the blame for 'wrong' acts, accidents or the consequences of risky behaviors. Owning up to things means that children seem to understand what constitutes as responsible behavior, being honest and fair to others, fairness and justice. If not, children will suffer from feelings of guilt. For children, there are several ways of 'being responsible' and it becomes implicated in the construction of different identities in different contexts. Consequently, in the context of child-adult relations, children's constructions of responsibility will operate (Such & Walker, 2004).

There are only a few studies on the concept of responsibilities among children in Viet Nam (Hao, 2008, 2009). In fact, there is no research conducted to explore the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam.

1.2 Children's Responsibilities in Viet Nam

Hao (1992) suggested contents that school should form in the primary school students in lifestyle education, value education, value orientation education, such as characteristics and behaviors for students in modern society: 1) Innocence, goodness, humanity: Which help students know how about love and hate, good and evil, as well as know how to deal with society and nature. 2) Study hard. 3) Discipline and saving.

Hoan (2006) also said that: "In Vietnam: Use 5 rules that Uncle Ho taught children as values in value education for youth and children". We also could read the contents of children's education set by the Ho Chi Minh Youth Organization (2011): 1) Loving Uncle Ho: Knowing well five rules Uncle Ho taught children, remembering stories, songs, poems about Uncle Ho; Knowing some key features in Uncle Ho's biography, remembering names and the meaning of some anniversaries, such as: Viet Nam Communist Party Establishment Day, International Women's Day, International Children's Day, Independence Day, Teacher's Day, Viet Nam Army Day; knowing Lenin, Ho Chi Minh and stories, poems about Lenin, Ho Chi Minh. 2) Good children in the family: Loving, respecting grandparents, parents, relatives and other people; helping families with appropriate work; knowing well about parents and home address. 3) Good students in school: Implementing academic requirements such as attendance, punctuality, reciting the lessons, completing homework, keeping a clean calligraphy notebook; respecting, obeying teachers or seniors in charge, implementing school rules; achieving better learning results. 4) Hygiene and cleanliness: Maintaining good hygiene, keeping hygiene in house and public places, practicing good children's exercises. 5) Loving Children Star Team and TNTP Ho Chi Minh Team: Remembering Star Team's name and meaning, joining Star Team regularly, obeying and respecting seniors in charge of the Star Teams; knowing some songs, dances, and games of children; knowing how to queue the double row and the single long row; knowing formal movements in teams such as greeting, turn left, turn right, turn back and can tie or remove the red scarf. 6) Knowing suitable behaviors when going out: Knowing well how to go on the right way, following traffic laws; playing in the right places, avoiding play in dangerous and unsanitary places; being polite with the elderly, children, the disabled, foreigners; knowing some names of streets, alleys and locations such as medical stations, the police stations, local stores. 7) Learning from examples

of goodness: Knowing some examples of goodness in folktales, fables, heroic soldiers, good workers; loving and being helpful to friends, especially for those in trouble; learning from good friends; daily doing good behaviors daily, avoiding bad behaviors.

According to Viet Nam Law of protection, caring and education for children and the documents guiding the implementation of this Law (Long, Anh, & Hien, 2007), as stipulated in Rule 21, children have the following duties: Loving, respecting and being filial to grandparents and parents, teachers, older people, loving younger children, solidarity with friends, being helpful to the elderly and the disabled or people who is in difficult situations; studying hard, keeping hygiene, doing physical exercises, keeping safety in public and traffic, protecting and respecting properties of the public and others, protecting the environment; loving to work, helping family to do appropriate things; being modest, honest and ethical, respecting the law, complying with school rules, having civilized life, civilized family, respecting and preserving the nation's cultural identities; loving the country, people, relatives, protecting a socialist Vietnam nation and maintaining international solidarity. "

In this research, we based and combined the main points in the literature reviews with the results obtained from the pilot study to construct the questionnaires. Consequently, the values of "good children in the family", "good students in school", "Uncle Ho's good children" will include the following responsibilities:

	Values	Responsibilities
1	Good children in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loving, respecting, being filial to grandparents, parents, relatives and other people. - Respecting older people, loving younger children. - Helping families with appropriate work.
2	Good students in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting, obeying teachers, uniting with friends. - Studying hard, implementing academic requirements such as attendance, punctuality, reciting the lessons, completing homework, keeping clean calligraphy notebooks. - Following the rules of the school and class; keeping public and traffic safety; protecting and respecting public and other people's properties; protecting the environment.
3	Uncle Ho's good children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loving the country, people, relatives; protecting a socialist Vietnam nation and maintaining international solidarity. - Loving to work, being helpful to the elderly and the disabled or people in difficult situations. - Being modest, honest and ethical; respecting the law; complying with school rules; having civilized life and family; respecting and preserving the nation's cultural identities. - Maintaining public hygiene, doing physical exercises.

Figure 1. Responsibilities in value orientation education for primary school student

2. Research Method

2.1 Participants

The participants were selected by using non-probability and convenience sampling. A total of 300 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups from primary schools in Viet Nam took part in answering the questionnaire along with 300 peers from the majority group. The age of the respondents was 11 and slightly more than half of them (53.3%) were girls.

2.2 Measurement

Making it appropriate for psychological characteristics of 5th grade students on their thinking and attention abilities, we built a set of questionnaires that had three dimensions: "Good children in the family", "Good students in school", "Uncle Ho's good children" ("Good children in society"). Each dimension had questions designed in the form of situations so that children could easily answer in order to naturally express and reveal their concept of responsibilities in their value orientation, such as: "If your grandparent or parent at home is sick, what do you do?". For this question, there were three options "Try to take care of them by yourself", "Keep quiet so that others easily take care of the ill", "Try to do everything you want because of the less attention of them paid to you". Students were asked to choose the option which reflected the actual action they did in real life.

- Dimension 1 "Good children in the family": Loving, respecting, being filial grandparents, parents, relatives and other people: Question 1; Obeying grandparents, parents: Question 2; Loving younger children: Question 3; Respecting and being polite with older people: Question 4; Helping family to do appropriate work: Question 5;

- Dimension 2 "Good students in school": Honesty in studying: Question 1; Independent in studying: Question 2; Serious during lessons: Question 3; Respecting teachers: Question 4; Being in solidarity with friends: Question 5; Following the rules of the school and class, maintaining public and traffic safety; protecting and respecting public and other people's properties; protecting the environment: Question 6.

- Dimension 3 "Uncle Ho's good children" ("Good children in society"): Loving the country, people, relatives; protecting a socialist Vietnam nation and maintaining international solidarity: Question 1; Maintaining public hygiene, protecting the environment: Question 2; Loving people, being helpful to the elderly and the disabled or people in difficult situations: Question 3; Loving working: Question 4; Being modest, honest, brave and virtuous, respecting the law, complying with school rules, having civilized life and family, respecting and preserving the nations cultural identities: Question 5; Doing physical exercise, keeping personal hygiene: Question 6.

These dimensions had acceptable reliability coefficients: $\alpha = 0.76$ (Good children in the family), $\alpha = 0.74$ (Good students in school) and $\alpha = 0.77$ (Uncle Ho's good children).

Each situation or question was given 3 choices, corresponding to the three levels: Weak - 1, Medium - 2, Good - 3. The option "other comments" was treated as an alternate value (Missing value) - the intangible value for the statistical calculations.

The data were evaluated as follows: For the average degree of orientation for the group of values, the values can be classified according to the following: Mean < 1.50 - Level "Weak"; $1.50 \leq \text{Mean} \leq 2.50$ - Level "Medium"; Mean > 2.50 - Level "Good". Results compare two average independent samples by using t test (t-test) and Pearson correlation test with the probability level chosen is $\alpha = 0.05$, Sig (2-tailed) < 0.05: Having significant mean difference or correlation statistical significant; Sig (2-tailed) ≥ 0.05 : There is no significant mean difference or correlation statistical significant.

3. Results

3.1 Concept of Responsibilities about "Good Children in the Family"

Table 1 shows the data for the concept of responsibilities about "Good children in the family" among 5th grade students of ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam.

Table 1. Concept of responsibilities about "good children in the family"

Responsibilities			Weak N (%)	Medium N (%)	Good N (%)	Mean (SD)	P
Being filial	Sex	Male	3 (2.2)	23 (16.5)	113 (81.3)	2.79 (0.458)	0.005*
		Female	0 (0.0)	13 (8.2)	146 (91.8)	2.92 (0.287)	
	Overall	3 (1.0)	36 (12.1)	259 (86.9)	2.86 (0.382)		
Being obedient	Sex	Male	2 (1.4)	13 (9.3)	125 (89.3)	2.88 (0.369)	0.053
		Female	1 (0.6)	6 (3.8)	153 (95.6)	2.95 (0.246)	
	Overall	3 (1.0)	19 (6.3)	278 (92.7)	2.92 (0.311)		
Love other younger children	Sex	Male	23 (16.4)	10 (7.1)	107 (76.4)	2.60 (0.757)	0.281
		Female	23 (14.5)	3 (1.9)	133 (83.6)	2.69 (0.716)	
	Overall	46 (15.4)	13 (4.3)	240 (80.3)	2.65 (0.736)		
Respecting and being polite	Sex	Male	3 (2.1)	26 (18.6)	111 (79.3)	2.77 (0.470)	0.000*
		Female	2 (1.3)	6 (3.8)	152 (95.0)	2.94 (0.290)	
	Overall	5 (1.7)	32 (10.7)	263 (87.7)	2.86 (0.393)		
Helping family	Sex	Male	3 (2.1)	9 (6.4)	128 (91.4)	2.89 (0.374)	0.345
		Female	3 (1.9)	5 (3.1)	151 (95.0)	2.93 (0.321)	
	Overall	6 (2.0)	14 (4.7)	279 (93.3)	2.91 (0.346)		
Dimension mean						2.84 (0.240)	

(*): significant mean difference.

The data in Table 1 shows that 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam has a high level of responsibilities in the dimension "Good children in the family", with an overall mean of 2.84. However, their concept of each duty in this dimension was unequal. They are very well oriented in the duties "Being obey" and "Helping family", followed by the second orientation obligation "Respecting and being polite" and "Being filial". On the other hand, they scored the lowest compared to the other duties, which is "Love other younger children". To compare between genders, the data in Table 1 also indicates that for all the responsibilities of dimension "Good child in the family", the Mean of boys is lower than the girls. The Independent-samples T-test indicates that there are significant mean differences between these two genders in the two categories of responsibilities: "Being filial" ($P = 0.005$) and "Being obey" ($P < 0.001$), while other responsibilities do not have significant mean differences.

The concept of responsibilities among 5th minority ethnic students on each specific responsibility in dimension "Good children in the family" is lower (Mean = 2.84) as well as un-equal than the peers from the ethnic majority group (Mean = 2.91). Test T-test with $\alpha = 0.05$ confirmed that this difference is statistically significant of mean difference ($P < 0.001$).

3.2 Concept of Responsibilities about "Good Students in School"

It can be seen from the data in Table 2 that the concept of responsibilities about "Good students in school" among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam is achieved at the level of "good" (Mean = 2.72). Not all of their concepts about each specific responsibility in this dimension reached the level of "good". Their concept about responsibility "Honesty in studying" only achieved the higher border of the level "medium" instead the level of "good". Another responsibility – "Being solidarity with friends" is at the level of "good". For four other remaining responsibilities, most of them are passive responsibilities, the concept of these responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam reached level "good".

Table 2. Concept of responsibilities about "good students in school"

Responsibilities				Weak	Medium	Good	Mean (SD)	P
				N (%)	N (%)	N (%)		
Honesty studying	in	Sex	Male	36 (28.1)	32 (25.0)	60 (46.9)	2.19 (0.958)	0.001*
			Female	16 (11.3)	36 (25.5)	89 (63.1)	2.52 (0.809)	
			Overall	52 (19.3)	68 (25.3)	149 (55.4)	2.36 (0.787)	
Independent studying	in	Sex	Male	10 (7.2)	4 (2.9)	125 (89.9)	2.83 (0.537)	0.025*
			Female	3 (1.9)	3 (1.9)	154 (96.3)	2.94 (0.302)	
			Overall	13 (4.3)	7 (2.3)	279 (93.3)	2.89 (0.431)	
Seriously joining lectures	when	Sex	Male	3 (2.1)	10 (7.1)	127 (90.7)	2.89 (0.381)	0.023*
			Female	1 (0.6)	3 (1.9)	156 (97.5)	2.97 (0.207)	
			Overall	4 (1.3)	13 (4.3)	283 (94.3)	2.93 (0.303)	
Respecting teachers		Sex	Male	23 (16.4)	3 (2.1)	114 (81.4)	2.65 (0.748)	0.001*
			Female	7 (4.4)	2 (1.3)	151 (94.4)	2.90 (0.423)	
			Overall	30 (10)	5 (1.7)	265 (88.3)	2.78 (0.609)	
Being solidarity with friends		Sex	Male	29 (20.7)	25 (17.9)	86 (61.4)	2.41 (0.813)	0.000*
			Female	14 (8.8)	14 (8.8)	131 (82.4)	2.74 (0.611)	
			Overall	43 (14.4)	39 (13.0)	217 (72.6)	2.58 (0.730)	
Following the rules of school, class		Sex	Male	7 (5.0)	17 (12.1)	116 (82.9)	2.78 (0.524)	0.054
			Female	6 (3.8)	6 (3.8)	146 (92.4)	2.89 (0.430)	
			Overall	13 (4.4)	23 (7.7)	262 (87.9)	2.84 (0.475)	
Dimension mean							2.72 (0.327)	

(*): significant mean difference.

Comparison by gender, concept of responsibilities about “Good students in school” among 5th grade ethnic minority students is statistically different between male and female. The Mean of the boys is smaller than that of girls for all 6 responsibilities while the t-test results only show significant mean differences on 5 responsibilities, except for the responsibility of “Following the rules of the school, class”.

In overall, when comparing the level achievement of concept of responsibilities about “Good students in school” among 5th grade ethnic minority students and the peers from the ethnic majority group, the former presented a lower level (Mean = 2.72) than the later (Mean = 2.93). This difference is statistically significant, with the t - test result $P < 0.001$. By comparing among concepts about each of specific responsibility in this dimension, the data also shows a lower level of students from ethnic minority groups than that of peers from the ethnic majority group.

3.3 Concept of Responsibilities about “Uncle Ho’s Good Children” (“Good Children in Society”)

Concept of responsibilities about “Uncle Ho’s good children” (“Good children in society”) among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam was rather good (Mean = 2.76) but there are inequality of achievements among these responsibilities. There are five responsibilities which they scored at the level of “good”: “Loving country”, “Being modest, honest, brave and virtuous”, “Keeping personal hygiene”, “Loving to work”, “Protecting the environment”, respectively. Only one responsibility is achieved at the level of “medium” is “Loving people” (Mean = 2.44).

Table 3. Concept of responsibilities about “uncle ho’s good children”

Responsibilities			Weak	Medium	Good	Mean (SD)	P
			N (%)	N (%)	N (%)		
Loving country	Sex	Male	13 (9.3)	8 (5.7)	119 (85.0)	2.76 (0.610)	0.000*
		Female	2 (1.3)	3 (1.9)	153 (96.8)	2.96 (0.261)	
	Overall	15 (5.0)	11 (3.7)	272 (91.3)	2.86 (0.469)		
Protecting the environment	Sex	Male	13 (9.4)	18 (12.9)	108 (77.7)	2.69 (0.645)	0.003*
		Female	8 (5.0)	3 (1.9)	148 (93.1)	2.88 (0.455)	
	Overall	21 (7.0)	21 (7.0)	256 (85.9)	2.79 (0.559)		
Loving people	Sex	Male	8 (5.7)	71 (50.7)	61 (43.6)	2.38 (0.593)	0.069
		Female	2 (1.3)	76 (47.8)	81 (50.9)	2.50 (0.526)	
	Overall	10 (3.3)	147 (49.2)	142 (47.5)	2.44 (0.561)		
Loving to work	Sex	Male	11 (7.9)	16 (11.5)	112 (80.6)	2.73 (0.600)	0.002*
		Female	2 (1.3)	11 (6.9)	147 (91.9)	2.91 (0.333)	
	Overall	13 (4.3)	27 (9.0)	259 (86.6)	2.82 (0.483)		
Being modest, honest, brave and virtuous	Sex	Male	8 (5.8)	10 (7.3)	119 (86.9)	2.81 (0.522)	0.222
		Female	6 (3.8)	7 (4.5)	144 (91.7)	2.89 (0.444)	
	Overall	14 (4.8)	17 (5.8)	263 (89.5)	2.85 (0.483)		
Keeping personal hygiene	Sex	Male	3 (2.2)	22 (16.2)	111 (81.6)	2.81 (0.476)	0.150
		Female	1 (0.6)	19 (12.3)	135 (87.1)	2.89 (0.399)	
	Overall	4 (1.3)	41 (14.1)	246 (84.5)	2.86 (0.438)		
Dimension mean						2.76 (0.286)	

(*): significant mean difference.

Comparing the level of concept of responsibilities about “Uncle Ho’s good children” (“Good children in society”) among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups by gender, the findings show female students always demonstrated the achievement in each of specific responsibilities better than the male students. However, when computing the data into t – test, the result only shows 3 out of 6 responsibilities have statistical significance.

In terms of the level for each concept on responsibilities about “Uncle Ho’s good children” (“Good children in society”), 5th grade students from ethnic minority group

Scored lower (Mean = 2.76) than peers who come from the ethnic majority groups (Mean = 2.91) as well as in each specific responsibility. $P < 0.001$ from t-test helped to consolidate this comment.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

To get an overview of the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam, we synthesize the data from three main dimensions "Good children in the family", "Good students in school", "Uncle Ho’s good children" (“Good children in society”) into Table 4.

Table 4. Concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in viet nam in overall

Dimensions	Mean (SD)
Good Children in the Family	2.84 (0.241)
Good Students in School	2.72 (0.327)
Uncle Ho’s Good Children (Good children in society)	2.76 (0.286)
Overall	2.78 (0.226)

In general, the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam is relatively good (Mean = 2.78). This means although their concept of responsibilities had initially reached the necessary requirements from society for pediatric children, but if there are appropriate educational affects, they definitely can improve further. It can be seen from the data, that the achievement level of their concept of the three specific dimensions is relatively equal. Pearson correlation test showed an average correlation between these three dimensions but this correlation was statistically significant (see Table 5).

Table 5. Pearson correlation between three dimensions: “good children in the family”, “good students in school” and “uncle ho’s good children”

Session	r	P
“Good Children in the Family” - “Good Students in School”	0.391	0.000*
“Good Children in the Family” - “Uncle Ho’s Good Children”	0.389	0.000*
“Uncle Ho’s Good Children” - “Good Students in School”	0.483	0.000*

(*): The correlation has statistically significant.

Meanwhile, the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from the ethnic majority groups in Viet Nam in overall is very good (Mean = 2.91) and somewhat more equal between each dimension compared with peers from ethnic minority groups. So, the concept of responsibilities among 5th grade students from the ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam had reached to the level of initially good but still weaker than peers from the ethnic majority and this difference has statistical significance. Therefore it can be improved by appropriate educational affects.

To improve the concept of responsibilities among 5th minority ethnic students, government should pay more attention to economic, cultural, social characteristic, educational environment and psychological - culture of ethnic minority groups when planning educational courses for 5th grade minority ethnic students. The diversity in the form of educational activities like entertainment, sports, and other activities which appropriate to the psychological characteristics of 5th ethnic minority students in primary school should be encouraged. It also means that school environment will become friendlier as if the real life takes place very naturally for the children.

For further research, researchers should pay more attention in exploring the causes that contribute to the statement of the concept of responsibilities among 5th ethnic minority students in Viet Nam nowadays, as well as trying to find effective strategies to improve the concept of responsibilities among responsibilities level of peers from the ethnic majority groups.

Acknowledgements

This research is supported by the USM-VIED Fellowship to the first author from the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Malaysia.

We are indebted to all students, headmasters and teachers from 6 primary schools in Viet Nam who cooperated with the research and to Phan Van Vinh for his big support.

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