



The Real Situation of the Sustainable Development of Semi-Boarding Ethnic Schools in Vietnam

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Received: September 10, 2022 ▪ Reviewed: November 12, 2022

▪ Accepted: December 18, 2022 ▪ Published: February 15, 2023

Abstract:

Semi-boarding ethnic schools are specialized schools under the national education system affirmed in Article 61, 2019 Education Law. Faced with the educational renovation requirements along with the development of the country in general and the ethnic minority areas in particular, the system of semi-boarding ethnic schools plays a vital role in creating a student source for boarding ethnic schools and ethnic human resources with high-quality for the future. The study focuses on exploring the real situation of sustainable development of semi-boarding ethnic schools in Vietnam through mixed research methods, including quantitative and qualitative methods. The used data sources include both primary and secondary data. The secondary data are obtained from internal documents of schools, management reports from the Ministry of Education and Training, and related studies. The primary data are obtained from interviews, group discussions, surveys, and other activities. The study uses the 7-point Likert-type scale to explore the development of a semi-boarding ethnic school, the 5-point Likert scale to determine the factors influencing, and the two-choice question to show the appropriateness of the solutions. SPSS and IF software is used to process and analyze the data, with the main method being descriptive statistics and T-test. The research results show the tasks/contents and criteria in each component of the model to meet the current requirements (educational renovation requirements) without affecting its future. It is also the current trend in the context of being international and domestic in general, Vietnam's education sector in particular, which has been implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals in all social life areas, especially in education and training in ethnic minority and mountainous areas.

Keywords: sustainable development, model, semi-boarding ethnic schools.

越南半寄宿民族学校可持续发展的真实情况

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摘要:

半寄宿制民族学校是 2019 年教育法第六十一条所确认的国民教育体系下的专门学校。面对国家特别是少数民族地区发展对教育改革的要求，半寄宿民族学校制度对于打造寄宿制民族学校生源和高水平民族人才资源具有重要作用。-未来的质量。本研究的重点是通过混合研究方法，包括定量和定性方法，探索越南半寄宿民族学校可持续发展的真实情况。使用的数据源包括一手数据和二手数据。二手数据来自学校内部文件、教育和培训部的管理报告以及相关研究。主要数据来自访谈、小组讨论、调查和其他活动。本研究采用 7 点李克特量表探讨半寄宿民族学校的发展，采用 5 点李克特量表确定影响因素，并采用双选题来说明解决方案的适当性。采用 SPSS 和如果软件对数据进行处理和分析，主要方法为描述性统计和吨检验。研究结果显示了模型每个组成部分的任务/内容和标准，以满足当前要求（教育改造要求）而不影响其未来。这也是在国际和国内普遍的背景下，特别是越南教育部门的当前趋势，它一直在所有社会生活领域实施千年发展目标和可持续发展目标，特别是在少数民族的教育和培训方面 和山区。

关键词: 可持续发展、模范、半寄宿民族学校。

1. Introduction

The formation of semi-boarding ethnic schools (SBES) plays a vital role in achieving the universal primary and lower secondary goals and maintaining those results in ethnic minority and mountainous areas. In particular, it has promoted the implementation of the rights of ethnic minority children, which creates equal opportunities in learning, improves and enhances the education quality of ethnic minority areas. Simultaneously, SBES also brings a quality student source for enrolling in boarding ethnic schools (BES). In the context of educational renovation, because of the significant role of education development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas, the SBES continues to be affirmed in Article 61, 2019 Education Law (National Assembly, 2019).

Recently, with implementing the new general education curriculum and developing the socio-economy of the country, SBES has also faced shortcomings and difficulties in ensuring sustainable development in terms of: (1) Organization and operation: Educational renovation is a major challenge for SBES; (2) Number of students in SBES: It declines partly influenced by the policy; (3) Implementation of educational goals: Most schools have only achieved general education goals but not other goals, such as specific educational objectives, life skills education, career guidance, etc. Therefore, many SBES without meeting the regulatory requirements must be dissolved and returned to high schools.

Faced with responding to the requirement of supplying human resources for training on-site, first of all for BES, maintaining the SBES model is a practical need in ethnic minorities and mountainous areas. Therefore, the real status of the SBES sustainable development needs to be further studied to identify the strengths to promote and the limitations or non-conformities and their causes to propose appropriate and feasible solutions to satisfy educational innovation requirements.

The current study explores the real situation of the

SBES sustainable development in Vietnam by using qualitative and quantitative research methods. The following research questions need to be clarified:

RQ1: How does the SBES in Vietnam develop?

RQ2: What factors affect the SBES sustainable development, and what solutions are appropriate for the SBES sustainable development in Vietnam to satisfy the educational renovation requirements?

2. Literature Review

SBES have been discussed in many studies from different perspectives.

2.1. Researching the School's Regulations, Organization, Activities, and Educational Programs

Grant and Sleeter (2010) gave five approaches for ethnic minority students to access educational programs in a multicultural environment, including: (i) Teaching the Exceptional and the Culturally Different; (ii) Human Relations Approach; (iii) Single-Group; (iv) Multicultural Education Approach; (v) Multicultural Social Justice Education.

The ADB report also pointed to Cambodia's experience in supporting ethnic minority students' access to quality education. Accordingly, some ethnic languages, such as Brao, Bu nong, Kavet, Krung, and Tampa, were taught in the mountain regions of western Cambodia. Students learn both the local and the Khmer languages. The result shows that the education quality has significantly improved. It is one of the vital factors for sustainable education development.

In Vietnam, the SBES developed from the semi-boarding school model. Accordingly, many studies have been conducted to perfect and develop this type of school. Studies have focused on clarifying its scientific and practical basis, exploring difficulties, and proposing appropriate content and methods to improve educational quality (Xuyen, 2006; Yen, 2015a, 2015b, 2019). However, the research results are the scientific basis for the Ministry of Education and Training to address the organization and operation regulations of the SBES,

such as Circular No. 30 (Minister of Education and Training, 2015), etc.

2.2. Researching the School Models

Various school models have been studied, such as the ethnic minority primary school model in the Northern mountainous region during a fundamental and comprehensive educational renovation in Vietnam (Da, 2013), the children's school model implemented from 2001 to 2010 in 17 provinces in ethnic minority areas with the cooperation between the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training and UNICEF, primary school model with twice a day, native language-based bilingual education model as a new initiative on educational approaches for ethnic minority children, Columbia's Escuela Nueva school model, etc. Accordingly, studies clarified the elements of school/class models as well as mentioned the factors affecting their development.

2.3. Researching the Sustainable Education Development

Studies on sustainable education development in ethnic minority areas, according to our research, are not many. The goal of sustainable development of education in general and education in ethnic minority areas in particular has been mentioned in the latest Agenda of the United Nations General Assembly, namely the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030, adopted boldly by the leaders of 154 member countries with much ambition during the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly held from September 25–27, 2015, in New York (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

In Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training issued the Implement plan of Sustainable Development Goals in ethnic minority areas in the period of 2021–2025, vision to 2030 (with Decision No. 3033/QĐ-BGDĐT dated September 30, 2021) (Minister of Education and Training, 2021). It identified 16 monitoring indicators for ethnic minority areas by 2025 and orientation to 2030. Those are the basis for developing a school model ensuring many criteria for the SBES sustainable development.

3. Method

3.1. Subjects and Scope of the Research

The study surveyed some SBES specified in Article 61 of the Education Law 2019 in extremely difficult communes/districts with many ethnic minorities in Ha Giang and Lai Chau provinces - extremely difficult regions in the Northwest of Vietnam. The solutions and recommendations drawn from the results of this research can completely cover other regions with corresponding or more advantageous conditions.

- *Ha Giang province*: a survey of 130 managers, teachers, experts, students' parents and staffs and 290 students in six SBES in Xin Man and Hoang Xu Phi District.

- *Lai Chau province*: a survey of 319 managers,

teachers, experts, students' parents and staffs in 14 SBES in four districts, including Sin Ho, Phong Tho, Muong Te, and Nam Nhun, and 121 students in two SBES in Phong Tho district, including Huoi Luong primary and lower-secondary SBES and No. 2 Ban Lang primary and lower-secondary SBES.

Table 1. The participants' details

Participants	N	%
Ha Giang province		
<i>Manager, teacher, staff, and students' parent</i>	130	100.00
Manager in primary school	2	1.50
Manager in lower-secondary school	11	8.50
Teacher	104	80.00
Staff	7	5.40
Education specialist/expert	1	0.80
Students' parent/community	5	3.80
<i>Student</i>	290	100.00
Grade 7	85	29.31
Grade 8	102	35.17
Grade 9	103	35.52
Lai Chau province		
<i>Manager, teacher, staff, and students' parent</i>	319	100.00
Manager of the Department of Education and Training	4	1.30
Manager in primary school	2	0.60
Manager in lower-secondary school	36	11.30
Teacher	237	74.30
Staff	31	9.70
Students' parent/community	9	2.80
<i>Student</i>	121	100.00
Grade 7	39	32.23
Grade 8	41	33.88
Grade 9	41	33.88

3.2. Research Instrument

The study used a questionnaire and an in-depth interview form to survey six participant groups, including managers, teachers, staff members, experts, students, and students' parents. In-depth interviews were used to clarify some contents obtained from the questionnaire.

3.3. Data Analysis

The SPSS software was used in processing data.

(i) The current situation of the development of the SBES model was measured by five factors, including organization and management, program content, infrastructure, educational environment, and policy and education socialization. We used the 7-point Likert-type scale to evaluate them:

- *Level 1*: Completely not meeting, needing an immediate solution (extremely weak);
- *Level 2*: Not meeting, needing a synchronous solution (weak);
- *Level 3*: Not meeting, needing to improve many contents/criteria to meet the minimum requirements (below average);
- *Level 4*: Partially meeting (average);
- *Level 5*: Meeting (good);
- *Level 6*: Completely meeting (very good);
- *Level 7*: Outstandingly meet (excellent).

With this scale, we analyzed the mean scores and standard deviations of all items. The evaluations of survey participants were determined through mean

scores defined by values $k = (7-1)/7 = 0.86$.

(ii) Factors affecting the sustainable development of SBES models included policy guidelines, program contents, the competence of staff, the educational environment, etc.

We used the 5-point Likert-type scale to evaluate them:

- Level 1: No affecting;
- Level 2: Not yet affecting;
- Level 3: Minor affecting;
- Level 4: Affecting;
- Level 5: Majorly affecting.

With this scale, we analyzed the mean scores and standard deviations of all items. The evaluations of survey participants were determined through mean scores defined by values $k = (5-1)/5 = 0.80$.

The values were determined by formulas as follows:

- Mean:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n * 100\%} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i * f_i$$

where:

x_i - the evaluation level of the survey subjects ($0 \leq x_i \leq 7$ and $0 \leq x_i \leq 5$);

$f(x_i)$ - the frequency of the survey subjects selecting the level x_i ;

n - total number of survey subjects.

- Mean error:

$$m = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

- Variance:

$$S^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 * f_i$$

- Standard deviation indicates the dispersion of the data around the mean.

$$SD = \sqrt{s^2}$$

The smaller the standard deviation is, the less scattered the data is, which means the more concentrated it is around the mean, and vice versa.

With this scale, the reliability value of the scale (Cronbach's alpha) is high (0.977), which indicates the meaning of the scale.

(iii) Regarding the measures for SBES sustainable development, their appropriateness was evaluated by criteria (components and contents) that are relatively consistent with the situational evaluation.

The scale had two options, namely "suitable" and "not suitable." If they are not appropriate, survey participants will add and edit them. With each solution, we will statistic the number and frequency of responses, thereby determining the percentage (frequency) of appropriate and inappropriate opinions.

Additionally, based on the survey results, the study will process the questionnaire and statistics of the obtained data; select and arrange data for analysis, synthesis, and comparison.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Development of SBES

4.1.1. Organizing Activities and Managing the SBES Model

Generally, all items of organizing activities and managing the SBES model, including tasks/requirements of SBES, tasks/requirements of managers in SBES, tasks/requirements of teachers in SBES, tasks/requirements of students in SBES, were evaluated at a low level by most respondents, mainly level three and level four. Some items, but not many, were evaluated at level two, such as: organizing activities toward digitization, training digital transformation skills adapted to new contexts, using foreign languages and information technology, knowing how to use at least one ethnic minority language to communicate with students and the community, and using foreign or ethnic languages, applying information technology, exploiting and using technology equipment in teaching and education. None of the items were evaluated at level one. All evaluations were reliable and statistically significant.

The aspect of the province, participants' evaluations in Ha Giang province were higher than those in Lai Chau province. However, they were generally still low and concentrated on levels such as "not meet" or "partially meet." In particular, none of the items was evaluated as "completely/exceeding meet." It is a significant gap for the SBES sustainable development (Figures 1-8).

Most of the criteria reached level three - not meeting, needing to improve many contents/criteria to meet the minimum requirements. Two contents of the tasks/requirements of the schools and students were evaluated at level three by managers, teachers, staffs, and students in Ha Giang province, but they were evaluated at level four by these subjects in Lai Chau province with low mean scores. Two contents of the tasks/requirements of managers and teachers also reached level three.

In-depth interviews with managers and teachers showed that, in general, managers and teachers are enthusiastic people with competence, qualities, and good expertise. Management activities and tasks of the school ensured the requirement. The management and use of teachers and staff members followed the regulations. Activities were organized under the Charter of the general schools and the organization and operation regulations of SBES. Managing the schools' activities was under the regulations of public administrative units. However, managers and teachers shared quite frankly and expressed their desire to be invested and paid more attention to criteria related to renovation requirements, sustainability, context 4.0, etc. In their opinion, many objective criteria (digital infrastructure) and subjective criteria (using English, ethnic minorities, etc.) do not meet the sustainability and digitalization of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

The study did not collect many comments from students, their parents, and the community. However, students believe that their limitations, such as digital competence, communication skills, and knowledge-sharing skills related to speaking and writing, have not been taught much in schools. Knowledge of gender and gender equality, life skills, and culture were also limited. It was also a gap in implementing the specific/suitable educational goals for specialized environments: raising – teaching in the present and future.

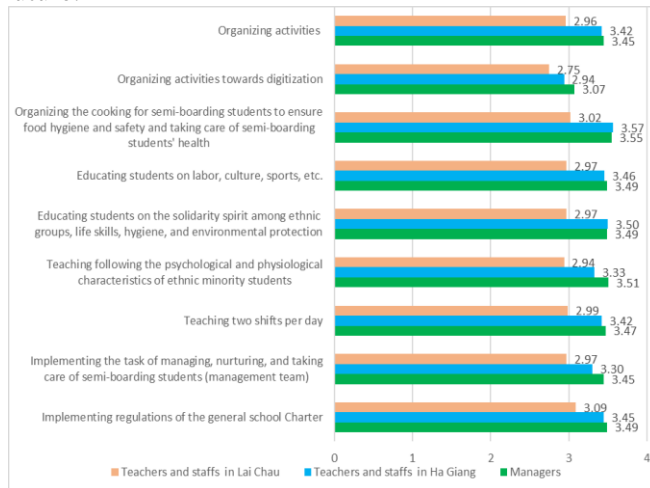


Figure 1. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on organizing activities in SBES (Developed by the authors)

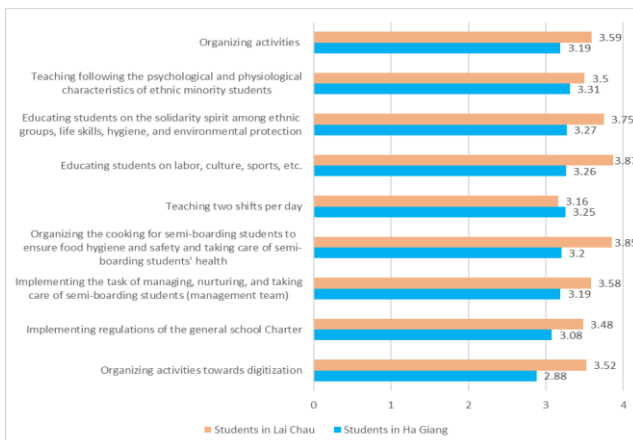


Figure 2. Evaluation of students on organizing activities in SBES (Developed by the authors)

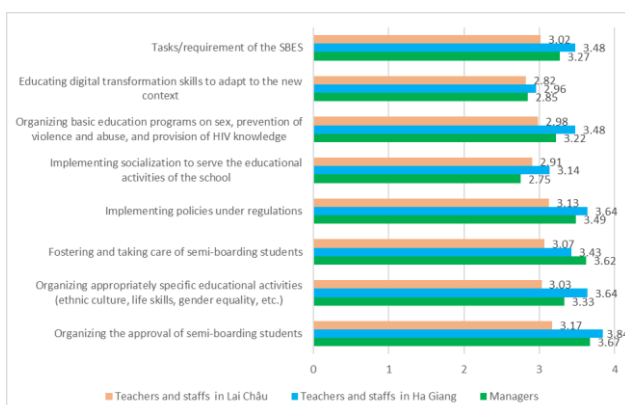


Figure 3. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on tasks/requirements of SBES (Developed by the authors)

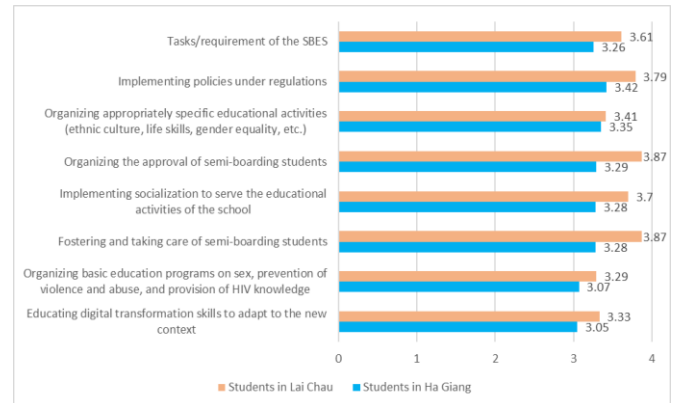


Figure 4. Evaluation of students on tasks/requirements of SBES (Developed by the authors)



Figure 5. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on tasks/requirements of managers (Developed by the authors)

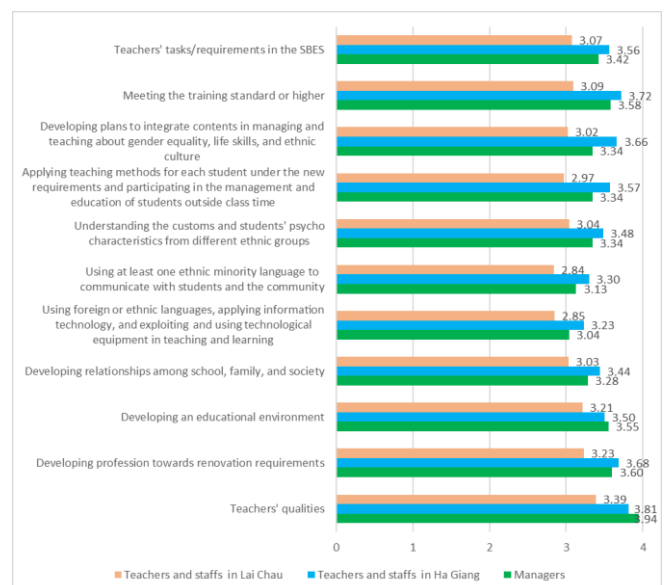


Figure 6. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on tasks/requirements of teachers (Developed by the authors)

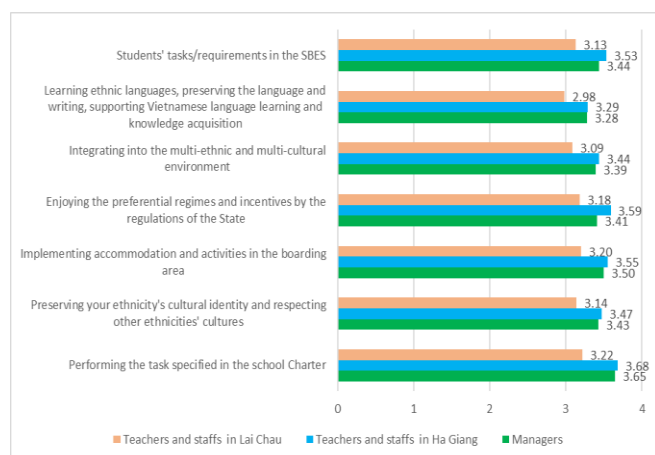


Figure 7. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on tasks/requirements of students (Developed by the authors)

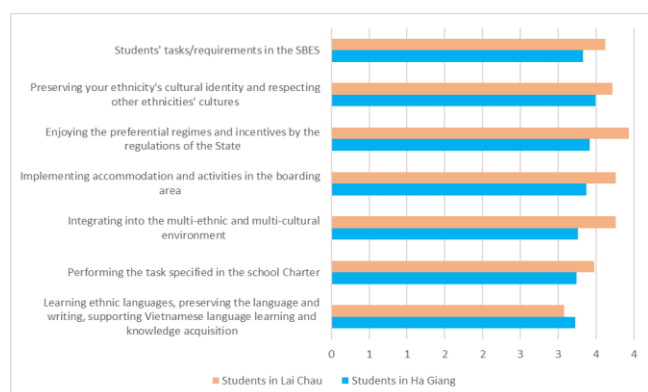


Figure 8. Evaluation of students on tasks/requirements of students (Developed by the authors)

4.1.2. Program Contents of the SBED Model

Generally, all items of program contents were evaluated at levels three or four. In particular, two contents with the lowest level were “Implementation of bilingual textbook according to Decision No. 404/QD-TTg” and “Implementation of specific educational programs and materials.” All evaluations were reliable and statistically significant.

The aspect of the province, participants' evaluations in Lai Chau were lower than those in Ha Giang. Two criteria, including “Implementation of bilingual textbook according to Decision No. 404/QD-TTg” and “Implementation of specific educational programs and materials,” were evaluated at level three by participants in Lai Chau province but at level four by participants in Ha Giang province. Although the criteria reached level four, they must be at least level five to meet the requirements of renovation and sustainable development (Figures 9 and 10).

According to the evaluations of administrators, teachers, and staff (Figure 9), the criteria of program content reached only level three, with mean ranging from 2.88 to 3.72. The two contents evaluated at the lowest level are “Implementing the bilingual textbooks by Decision No. 404/QD-TTg” and “Implementing the specific curriculum and materials.” The evaluations of managers, teachers, and staff in the two provinces on these two criteria were not different (p -value > 0.05).

Students' evaluations of the abovementioned two

criteria also were different (Figure 10). If the students' assessments in Ha Giang province were similar to managers, teachers, and staff - level 3 (respectively, mean = 3.04 and mean = 3.14), these of students in Lai Chau province were different. According to them, “Implement bilingual textbooks according to Decision 404/QD-TTg” reached level four - partially met (mean = 3.98). Although the criterion “Implementation of specific educational programs and materials” also was level three, its value was higher (mean = 3.39). With the two criteria above, the student's evaluations had a statistically significant difference (p -value < 0.05).

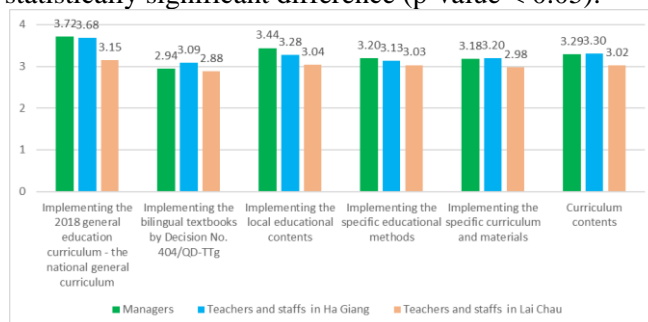


Figure 9. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on program contents (Developed by the authors)

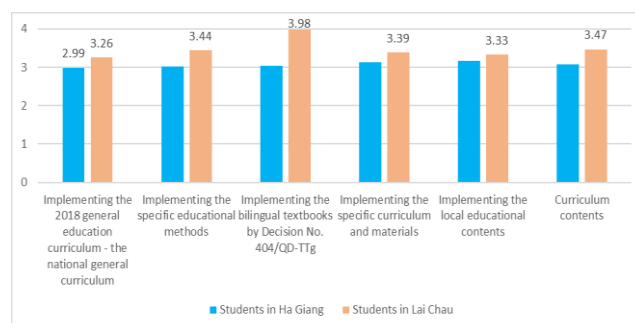


Figure 10. Evaluation of students on program contents (Developed by the authors)

According to some managers and teachers, in the school year 2021–2022, programs in grades 1, 2, and 6 followed the new general education program (2018), while that in grades 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 followed the current program (2006). The local education program was integrated with subjects and educational activities. At some schools in Ha Giang province, a local education program in Grade 6 was implemented according to the Documents of the Provincial Committee's Propaganda Committee within specific periods and weeks for each content of the topic. Local education programs of the other classes followed the program contents of the Provincial Committee's Propaganda Committee and were integrated into subjects to be suitable for the locality. However, it is necessary to implement the content of the local education program in SBES under the 2018 general education program to ensure general consistency and regional specificity.

Managers and teachers also reported that specific educational methods and materials are lacking and weak. The lack of materials was due to the absence or insufficient and unorthodox. Specific or appropriate educational methods were weak due to various students

(many ethnic groups, multicultural environment, nurturing environment). Therefore, activities related to teaching Vietnamese as a 2nd language, bilingual (primary school), ethnic languages (primary and lower secondary school) and educating culture, life skills, gender, school violence, HIV knowledge, etc., and other skills such as technology, digitization, etc. faced many difficulties. It showed a big gap in the sustainable development of the SBES that desperately need intervention/support solutions.

4.1.3. Infrastructure of the SBES Model

Evaluations on infrastructure were lower than those on program content and activities organization and management. They were evaluated mainly at levels two and three, without level four or higher. In particular, “digital technology of infrastructure and teaching equipment” was evaluated the lowest by managers, teachers, staff members, and students.

The aspects of the province, although having differences, evaluations are generally low. The items evaluated higher by students were in both provinces and mainly at level three instead of level two by managers, teachers, and staff. Although the mean scores of items in Lai Chau Province were higher than those in Ha Giang province, they were only average or below average. It showed that paying attention to and improving the infrastructure was essential (Figures 11 and 12).

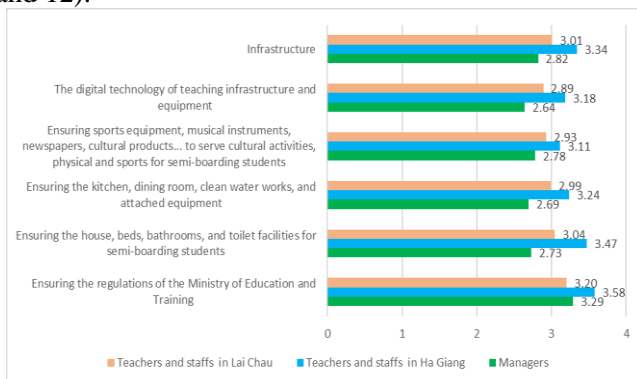


Figure 11. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on infrastructure (Developed by the authors)

According to the evaluations of managers, teachers, and staff (Figure 11), the criteria for infrastructure were only average and weak (mean < 3.60). In particular, the managers' assessment was the lowest (mean = 2.82). The digital technology of teaching infrastructure and equipment was rated at the lowest level by managers, teachers, and staffs in both provinces, and these evaluations were quite similar (p -value > 0.05). It showed that sustainable development in the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 still faced many shortcomings, needing to be invested in and supplemented.

Students' evaluations were similar to those of managers, teachers, and staff (mean = 3.04) (Figure 12). However, the students' evaluations in the two provinces on the digital technology of teaching infrastructure and equipment were different (p -value < 0.05), in which

those of students in Lai Chau province (mean = 3.53) were higher than those of students in Ha Giang province (mean = 3.04).

According to the evaluations of some managers and teachers, schools have met the infrastructure, especially national standards schools. However, the teachers' needs were still not met, such as no television, no projector, no laptop, weak/lack of network connection, electricity without regularly guaranteed, and functional rooms without investing in equipment, such as computers, foreign languages, and music rooms. These caused many difficulties in teaching. The accommodation was not large enough for students to participate in activities. The playground was unfriendly and narrow, without meeting the minimum requirements. Toilets lacked water, etc. Managers and teachers in some schools candidly said that the infrastructure, with many difficulties and shortages, did not meet the requirements. Most students, parents, and communities did not comment. Students preferred going to school to staying at home, while their parents and communities only desired their children to be studied and cared for by teachers.

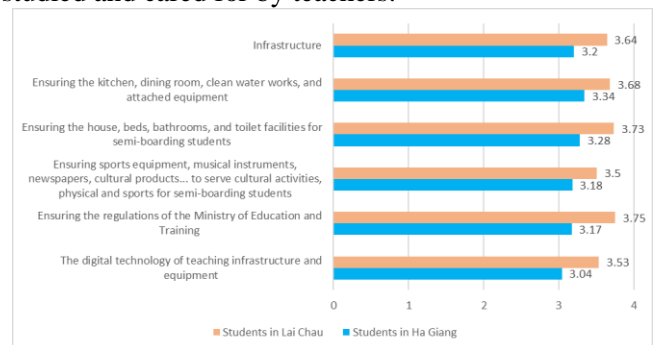


Figure 12. Evaluation of students on infrastructure (Developed by the authors)

4.1.4. Educational Environment of the SBES Model

The educational environment (EE) included eight items:

- *EE1*: Educating in a general environment (general and special schools);
- *EE2*: Developing a solidarity environment among ethnic groups (multicultural environment);
- *EE3*: Developing an environment for educating students in complying with general regulations (school regulations, rules of boarding area and living room, rules of cultural conduct in schools and boarding area, eating and drinking in the boarding area and living room...);
- *EE4*: Developing an environment for educating students to help each other in learning (organizing group study, sharing learning methods, materials, and information; reminding, protecting, and tutoring weak classmates; building and implementing together self-study plan...);
- *EE5*: Developing an environment for educating students to know to take care of themselves and guide others (personal hygiene, washing, drying, and folding blankets and clothes drapes; using and maintaining tools and equipment in the boarding area and living

room; taking care of yourself and preventing disease; preventing the social evils...);

- *EE6*: Developing an environment for educating students to know to take care of and encourage their friends or family, visit and take care of their friends when they are sick, hospitalized for treatment...;

- *EE7*: Developing an environment for educating students to enjoy cultural, artistic, and sports activities, student clubs, and Ethnic New Year's Day, explore ethnic cultures, read books and newspapers, and watch television together...;

- *EE8*: Developing an environment for educating students to join together in social, community, and gratitude activities, labor for life such as self-service labor, production labor to improve life, and labor to create environmental landscapes...

Two items with the highest level (Level 4) were "developing an educational environment for students to participate in social and public utility activities, giving back, and when drinking water, think of its source" and "work for life: self-service work, production work to improve life, and work to create environmental landscapes." The other items were evaluated mainly at levels two and three.

By province, although having a difference, items were generally evaluated as low. Although the evaluations of managers and teachers in Ha Giang province were higher than those in Lai Chau province, students' evaluations in Ha Giang province were lower than those in Lai Chau province. However, the mean scores only were mainly at level two or three, not much at level four, without levels five, six, and seven. Therefore, it was necessary to have solutions to ensure the sustainable development of the SBES (Figures 13 and 14).

According to the evaluation of managers, the educational environment was only at level three - below average (mean = 3.13). "Developing an environment for educating students to know to take care of themselves and guide others" and "educating in the general environment" were evaluated at the lowest level. Developing an environment for educating students to join society, community, etc. was evaluated at the highest but still at a low level (mean = 3.24).

According to teachers and staff in Ha Giang province, developing an environment for educating students to know to take care of themselves and guide others and developing an environment for educating students to join together in social, community, etc., reached level four - partially meet (mean > 3.61). However, according to teachers and staff in Lai Chau province, the above two criteria are only at level three - not meeting, needing to improve many contents/criteria to meet the minimum requirements. The test results showed a statistically significant difference between the teacher's assessment in the two provinces (p-value < 0.05), in which the evaluation of teachers and staff in Ha Giang province is higher. With other criteria, they also rated at level two - weak. The T-test results showed a statistically significant difference between the

teacher's assessment in the two provinces (p-value < 0.05), in which the evaluation of teachers and staff in Ha Giang province is higher.

The evaluation of students in the two provinces of the educational environment had a statistically significant difference (p-value = 0.000), in which the evaluation of students in Ha Giang province (mean = 3.32) was lower than that of students in the Lai Chau province (mean = 3.70) (Figure 14). Students in Ha Giang province evaluated the criteria at a below average level, with the mean ranging from 3.20 to 3.40. However, students in Lai Chau province evaluated most of them at an average level.

According to them, developing an environment for educating students to join together in social, community, and gratitude activities, etc., reached the highest level (mean = 3.84), while developing an environment for educating students to help each other in learning reached the lowest level (mean = 3.60). For each criterion, the T-test results also showed a statistically significant difference between the student's evaluation (p-value < 0.05), in which that of the students in Lai Chau was higher.

Although having various ethnic student groups, schools actively organized teams and extracurricular activities led by teachers. Therefore, the class sizes and educational activities inside and outside schools, such as life skills and cultural values education for students, were still maintained. However, according to teachers, specific activities to develop students' habits, such as complying with general regulations, knowing how to help each other in learning, knowing and guiding other students to take care of themselves, and participating in cultural and sports activities, etc., were limited, especially primary students. These habits were also affected by their families and communities. They took some grades (primary school) half a school year to stabilize. No comments were added by students, parents, and communities.

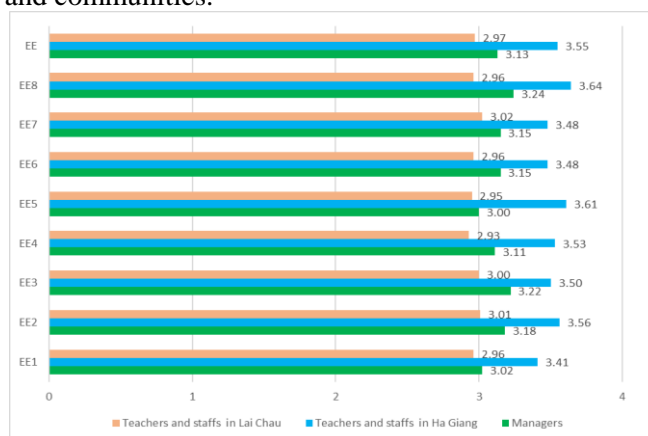


Figure 13. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on educational environment (Developed by the authors)

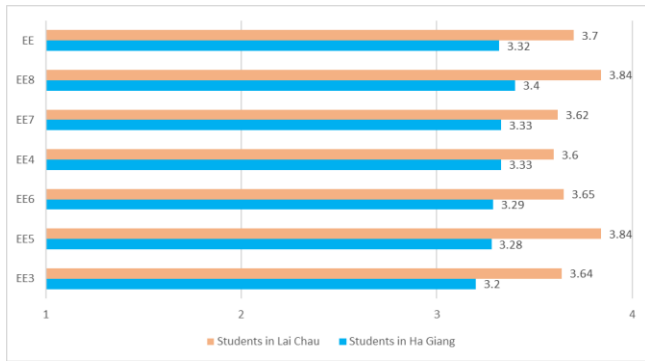


Figure 14. Evaluation of students on educational environment (Developed by the authors)

4.1.5. Policies and Education Socialization

Overall, items were evaluated at low levels, mostly level three, not much level four, without level five or higher.

By province, although evaluations were different, they were still low (levels three and four). Two items were evaluated by both places at the lowest level, including “Socialization always combined schools, families, and society” and “SBES were supported by the state to invest in infrastructure and equipment to ensure the care, nurturing, and education of students.” In Ha Giang province, the item evaluated at the highest level was “Semi-boarding students in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions were entitled to priority policies under the regulations of the state.” However, it still did not reach level five. Therefore, it was necessary to adjust and improve policy and education socialization (Figures 15 and 16).

Some managers and teachers said that teachers and students are fully entitled to policy regimes by the State's regulations. However, some schools still faced difficulties because of the influence of policy. The manager of Bán Ngõ lower secondary school SBES, Xín Mần district, Ha Giang province, said, “Schools belong to poor communes with over 98 percent of students being ethnic minorities. Poor households account for a high proportion. Decision No. 861/TTg-2021 has caused difficulties for students and their parents at communes in Region 1.” Some schools also agreed that it greatly affected the maintenance of class sizes, leading to high dropout status.

Due to the difficult economy, parents mainly contributed the education socialization through their labor. Schools focused on calling on philanthropists to support necessary educational activities, such as building semi-boarding stilt houses for students, remodeling waterways, and building water tanks. Currently, these activities are still maintained and well implemented. However, the socialization combined three environments, including the school, family, and society, sometimes not specified in the school plan. It was still fragmented and small.

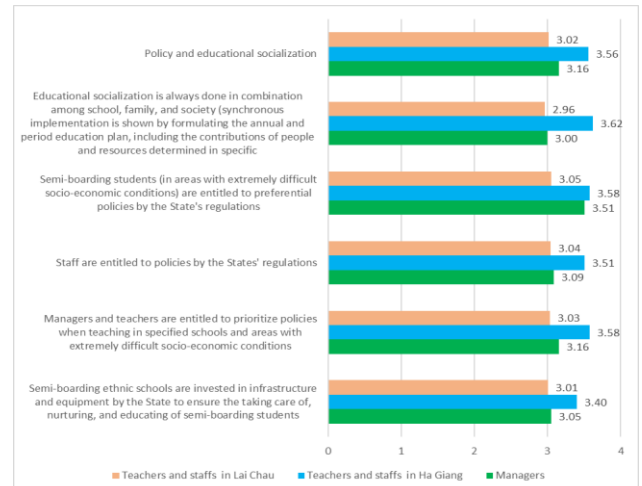


Figure 15. Evaluation of managers, teachers, and staffs on policies and education socialization (Developed by the authors)

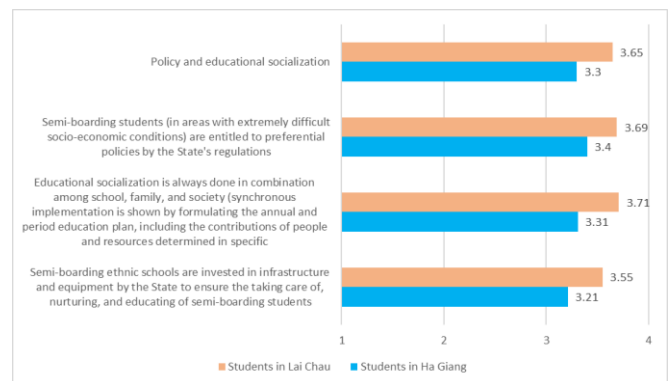


Figure 16. Evaluation of students on policies and education socialization (Developed by the authors)

4.2. Factors Affecting and Solutions to the SBES Sustainable Development to Meet the Educational Renovation Requirements

Overall, all factors affected the SBES sustainable development, with their means ranging from 3.40 to 4.16 < 4.20. Two factors with the most influence were the organization and operation of the SBES system (Circular No. 24/2010/TT-BGDDT and Circular No. 30/2015/TT-BGDDT) and the policies (socio-economic development of ethnic minority and mountainous areas - Decision No. 861/2021/QĐ-TTg and Decree No. 116/2016/ND-CP). The inappropriateness of policies has caused many disadvantages for localities, especially in the context of amending the Education Law and requiring practice changes. Decision No. 861/2021/QĐ-TTg puts the schools at risk of being wiped out, leading to students' dropouts because of difficult travel conditions and lack of livelihood needs (Figures 17 and 18).



Figure 17. Evaluation of managers on factors affecting the SBES sustainable development (Developed by the authors)



Figure 18. Evaluation of teachers and staffs on factors affecting the SBES sustainable development (Developed by the authors)

Related to solutions, the solution system, including five factors with five contents/tasks and 68 items, was used to survey the suitability or non-suitability and the addition of items for contents/tasks. The results showed that, in general, they were evaluated as suitability, accounting for from 81.82 to 98.18 percent, and without adding items.

Participants' responses focused on the following solutions:

- Investing infrastructure to meet Circular No. 13/2020/TT-BGDDT: supplementing the teaching infrastructure and equipment (computer room, foreign languages room, subject room, and projector) and investing infrastructure for accommodation and living for semi-boarding students;
- Improving staff's professional qualifications to meet the educational renovation requirements; having a policy to support funding for teachers and staff members;
- Building lodgings for students and teachers; investing in information infrastructure (networks,

computers, multi-purpose rooms, etc.); and ensuring staff by job position;

- Having suitable policies, such as the allowance, for teachers teaching at semi-boarding schools in the mountainous, border, and island areas. Increasing the allowance (currently, it is too low) or staffing for staff at semi-boarding schools;

- Developing and expanding the SBES model and amending the operating regulations for SBES in new rural communes.

4.3. Some Comments and Suggestions

4.3.1. Continuing to Promote the Achievement of the SBES Sustainable Development

- The SBES system plays a vital role in education in ethnic minority and mountain areas: the increasing mobilization rate of ethnic minority students of school age and the decreasing number of ethnic minority students dropping out. The learning environment in the SBES has promoted ethnic minority students' access to Vietnamese faster. The quality of comprehensive education has changed markedly. The universalization of primary education was at the right age and that of secondary education was quality and stable development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas. Simultaneously, SBES has also supplied quality students for BES (districts, provinces, and central governments), creating high-quality human resources being ethnic minorities in the future to build and develop socio-economic in ethnic minorities and mountain areas.

- The organization and management of educational activities of schools are concerned and prioritized. The staff has much experience in teaching organization and managing the boarding students. Overall, all managers and teachers meet professional training standards, and some even exceed standards. The staff has a solidarity spirit, overcomes all difficulties, and readies to receive and complete all assigned tasks. The awareness of ethnic minority students about the study rights and obligations in SBES changes positively. Learning and living in the SBES make students excited and motivated to study with friends from various localities in a multicultural environment. It is also advantageous for students to learn, explore, and practice at a specialized school.

- Overall, the invested infrastructure and teaching equipment meet the basic teaching requirements. The SBES is immediately directed by committees and local authorities and coordinated by departments, mass organizations, parents, and communities in the locality. The strengthened education socialization creates advantages for the schools to implement better their school year tasks. A part of parents is already interested in their children's studies.

- Support policies have reduced material difficulties and improved the lives of managers and teachers teaching in specialized schools and areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions, helping

staff feel secure in their work and complete their assigned tasks. Policies for ethnic minority students in SBES in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions have encouraged them to participate in learning.

- Solutions to the SBES development have always been paid attention by the party and state, from the 2019 Education Law to the documents under the law, toward amending, supplementing, or replacing documents no longer suitable by the law and practice (Circulars No. 24 and 30). They are a vital basis to be able to implement sustainable development solutions for EBES more conveniently.

4.3.2. Necessity to Have Solutions to Overcome and Remove Limitations and Inadequacies Affecting the SBES Sustainable Development

The limitations and inadequacies need to be overcome, including:

- The activity organization and management are not effective in some schools. The quality of teaching and learning remains limited by guaranteed conditions, such as teachers' competence, support equipment, and especially the application of information technology in managing and evaluating students. Organizing and managing specific educational activities are not associated with particular requirements/goals to ensure comprehensive education for students.

- The program content is implemented under the national program. However, due to the specialized nature of the SBES, some contents are still difficult and not suitable for the psychological characteristics and cognitive abilities of ethnic minority students. The program content of the SBES should ensure the regional characteristics and specificity, including specific educational content/method and local educational content. Currently, the schools often actively implement without specific documents and guidelines to ensure consistency. Therefore, the implementation is fragmented because some schools do and others do not. However, Decision No. 404/QĐ-TTĐ has not been implemented, that requires a bilingual textbook (Vietnamese – ethnic languages) in primary schools to ensure the specificity of ethnic minority students with access to Vietnamese, which is not the native language but is the national language and used in educational institutions.

- Infrastructure has not met the needs of scale development and requirements for general educational renovation with many semi-permanent and temporary classrooms. Building functional rooms, libraries, laboratories, houses for students, public houses for teachers, playgrounds, training grounds, sanitation, water and kitchen system, cafeterias for students, and other auxiliary items have not met the needs of teaching and learning. Most SBES still lack classrooms and living rooms or have without ensuring the minimum area and meeting the needs of teaching two sessions per day.

- The teaching and raising in the multi-ethnic

educational environment with the unguaranteed infrastructure and policies that are not suitable to the actual situation of each region/subregion, such as shrinking/consolidating SBES in poor districts, causes many difficulties for schools. Moving school points to the main school is still mechanical (when not meeting the conditions to ensure the teaching and nurturing of the boarding students). Regulations on job positions and the number of people working are not suitable for the specifics of the SBES. Funding for meals and accommodation for students is allocated slowly compared to the time when students enroll in school.

- The participation of parents and community is not much or no. Students still lack the encouragement of parents and community in learning and training. Because most of their lives are still extremely difficult, the limited participation in educating their children is understandable. Connecting three environments, including school, family, and society, is not strong and convincing enough.

5. Conclusion and Further Study

Research on the SBES sustainable development with qualitative and quantitative methods and primary and secondary data sources evaluated to be appropriate, based on the content and criteria of elements of the current model and adding criteria to ensure sustainability in the future. Research results are the basis for providing a synchronous solution system for the SBES sustainable development to meet the renovation requirements, from management mechanisms, organization, and operation to program content, infrastructure, educational environment, policy, and education socialization. They are the main factors of the SBES model. This goal is not only educational but also humane for education and training in general, education and training in ethnic minority areas in particular.

The limitation of the study is only to explore the SBES sustainable development in two provinces located in the Northwestern region of Vietnam. Therefore, future studies should expand the scope to obtain a panorama view of the SBES sustainable development in Vietnam.

Acknowledgments

This article is part of the results of a MOET-funded study with code B2022-VKG-15. The authors would like to thank the localities in ethnic minority and mountainous areas and the members participating in this study for supporting and coordinating.

Authors' Contributions

Tran Thi Yen: Writing, editing; Tran Huu Hoan: General revision; Vuong Hong Hanh and Pham Thi Van: Data collection; Vuong Thi Phuong Hanh: Data analysis.

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