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Evaluation of the Structure and Impact of Life Skills Education Activities for Students in Ethnic Minority Semi-Boarding Primary Schools in Vietnam

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Abstract. Life skills education (LSE) has been introduced in semi-boarding ethnic primary schools in Vietnam; however, concerns remain regarding both LSE's organizational implementation and practical effectiveness. This study evaluates the organizational structure—including program design, delivery mechanisms, and institutional support—and the effectiveness of LSE programs in these schools, referring to actual outcomes and perceived benefits. Specifically, the study answers the research questions of how LSE is currently organized and delivered in semi-boarding ethnic primary schools and to what extent do stakeholders perceive it as effective, and what barriers hinder its success. The research involved 1,768 participants from 26 semi-boarding ethnic primary schools in Dien Bien province, Vietnam, including 45 administrators, 375 teachers, 300 parents, and 300 students. Using mixed-method surveys, the study explored current implementation practices, perceived barriers, and proposed solutions for enhancing LSE. The quantitative findings show that 72.8% of students rated LSE sessions as “useful” or “very useful”, yet only 38.4% of teachers reported receiving formal training in life skills instruction. While LSE is broadly supported by stakeholders, interest levels vary and practical engagement remains limited. Although many students found LSE activities to be clearly structured and valuable, overall institutional commitment and awareness among staff and parents remain low. The study concludes that more consistent program delivery, better resource allocation, and increased inter-stakeholder collaboration are necessary to enhance LSE outcomes. These findings offer both empirical insights and policy implications, especially for educational reforms targeting ethnic minority and rural school contexts.

Keywords: life skills; life skills education; semi-boarding ethnic primary schools; organization; students

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1. Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (1999), one of the essential life skills for primary school students is personal life skills. The critical importance of life skills education lies in the fact that primary school students are still undergoing physical, emotional, and mental development. In other words, they are still in their early stages of development, fragile, and lack the ability to react and respond effectively to negative influences from the external environment.

At this age, children are particularly vulnerable to various challenges, such as emotional difficulties, peer pressure, and unsafe situations. Personal life skills, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, decision-making and problem-solving, are crucial for helping them navigate these challenges. By fostering these skills early, students are better equipped to handle adversity, build resilience and form healthy relationships, thereby laying a solid foundation for their overall well-being and future success.

The World Health Organization (1999) emphasized that personal life skills, such as emotional regulation, problem-solving and self-awareness, are essential for helping children deal with developmental challenges, peer pressure, and unsafe situations. Similarly, UNICEF (2016) highlighted that equipping children with these skills from an early age enhances their resilience, confidence, and ability to make responsible decisions. In Vietnam, semi-boarding ethnic primary schools refer to public schools in remote or ethnic minority areas where students stay during the day and some weekdays but return home on weekends, often due to geographical challenges and limited infrastructure.

Considering these perspectives, promoting life skills education has become a pressing need, especially in Vietnamese semi-boarding primary schools serving ethnic minority communities. Life skills are defined as abilities that are valuable at any stage of an individual's life. Life skills education focuses on developing essential competencies such as communication, self-assertion, decision-making, problem-solving, safety awareness, and creative thinking to cope effectively with life's challenges and dangers.

According to Gim (2021), there are many things' teachers can do to enhance students' life skills, such as guiding them in choosing and consuming school meals, integrating life skills into subject lessons, and fostering a cooperative classroom atmosphere. The World Health Organization (2003), integrating life skills education into subject classes is particularly effective within the school environment. Even in the absence of a formal "Life Skills" program, school education remains closely connected to life skills development. Just as multiple activities contribute to building competencies, various methods—such as physical education, music, reading, computing, storytelling, and mathematics—can be used to cultivate.

According to Curzon et al. (2014), elementary school students are often deeply engaged in learning activities. At times, they may become so absorbed that they lose awareness of their surroundings, forget the passage of time, and even skip

meals. Previous studies suggest that achieving such immersive engagement depends on five key principles: goal setting, clear expectations, personal interest, self-determination, and appropriate challenge. These principles are essential for designing life skills education programs that are both developmentally responsive and pedagogically effective. Botvin et al. (2022) if students learn and apply various essential life skills for everyday life—such as effective communication, resisting peer pressure, refusing drugs and alcohol, cooperating with others, and showing consideration—not only provide lifelong benefits but also enhance one’s ability to lead.

According to Arnett (2007), in the short term, life skills help individuals prevent health risks and successfully achieve their goals. In the long term, they play a crucial role in securing employment and becoming productive members of society. Especially students are increasingly exposed to challenges in school environments, where life skills are becoming more critical. Schools, in particular, have begun to emphasize life skills development more than ever, as they are no longer perceived as entirely safe spaces due to pressing issues such as bullying, school violence, and suicide (Smith et al., 2020). Research has shown that bullying affects a significant proportion of elementary school students, leading to serious emotional, behavioral, and academic consequences. According to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2016), such experiences can cause long-lasting harm if not addressed through early and targeted life skills education programs.

Although numerous programs and methods exist to promote life skills, most of them have been primarily developed in the fields of physical activity and physical education (Jones & Williams, 2017). These programs are important, yet they often fall short in addressing the full spectrum of life skills necessary for navigating complex emotional and social challenges. For instance, while physical education enhances students’ physical well-being, it frequently lacks structured components that foster emotional regulation or interpersonal conflict resolution. As noted by Durlak et al. (2011), effective life skills programs must integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the school curriculum to promote self-awareness, empathy, and responsible decision-making.

According to the life skills framework proposed by the World Health Organization (1999), the core elements of life skills are categorized into self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationships, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, stress management, and emotional regulation. The UNICEF (2016) has reported that a life skills-based educational approach is effective in addressing health issues such as smoking and drug use among adolescents. According to the World Health Organization (1999), LSE is being promoted in schools because it enhances adolescents’ health.

International research provides consistent evidence that life skills education improves academic outcomes, strengthens relationships with family and peers, and reduces the risk of substance misuse and other harmful behaviors. Durlak et

al. (2011) reports that structured social-emotional learning (SEL) programs yield lasting benefits in emotional regulation, school engagement, and behavioral outcomes.

According to Jeong et al. (2020), in the United States, the life skills program, centered around the Life Skills Training Center, is being implemented both online and offline for elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as teachers and parents in each state. With the expansion of online services due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the global shift toward contactless digital transformation has accelerated across various sectors, including politics, economics, society, culture, education, and industry. Moreover, the education system has undergone significant changes. Depending on the spread of the coronavirus, elementary, middle, and high school classes have often been conducted remotely.

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate both the organizational aspects and the perceived effectiveness of life skills education (LSE) programs in semi-boarding ethnic minority primary schools in Vietnam. The research specifically seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How are life skills education programs organized and implemented in these schools? (2) To what extent do students, teachers, parents, and administrators perceive these programs to be effective? (3) What are the main challenges encountered, and what improvements can be proposed to enhance LSE delivery in this context? These questions reflect the study's core objectives: to assess the structure and impact of LSE programs, identify stakeholder perceptions and systemic challenges, and recommend context-sensitive improvements based on empirical findings.

1.1 Challenges and Barriers to Life Skills Education

Bernhardt et al. (2014) noted that despite the numerous positive effects of life skills education (LSE) in reducing psychosocial and behavioral problems among adolescents, challenges in implementation persist. Botvin et al. (2022) reported that the main obstacles include inadequate resources, low commitment from teachers and administrators, poor teacher training, classroom discipline issues, and insufficient time. Similarly, Okech and Role (2015) identified broader systemic barriers such as lack of coordination, insufficient government planning, and low youth participation in policymaking.

Adhiambo (2013) found that implementation at the school level is hindered by inadequate pedagogical knowledge, insufficient LSE teaching time, lack of textbooks, low student interest, and negative teacher attitudes. Kalanda (2010), the Global Education Monitoring Report (2016), and Chirwa (2009) reported comparable challenges in implementing life skills education (LSE) in developing countries such as Bhutan and Malawi. These included insufficient teacher training, a lack of instructional resources, heavy teacher workloads, and the marginalization of LSE due to its status as a non-examinable subject. Furthermore, Chirwa (2009) emphasized that both teacher-related factors (such as work ethic, access to professional development, and personal circumstances) and student-related conditions (including poverty, classroom behavior, and

language barriers) significantly affect curriculum delivery. Structural issues, particularly the roles played by school leaders and district-level education officials, were also identified as critical influences on the success of LSE implementation.

Sherif et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of assessing life skills education (LSE) effectiveness at multiple stages, emphasizing that systematic, stage-based evaluations—particularly follow-ups after intervention—are essential for understanding both immediate and sustained impacts on learners' psychological well-being. Jones and Williams (2017) and Smith et al. (2020) stressed the value of baseline assessments and tailored tools to monitor student progress.

Lenzen, Buyck, and Bouvier (2023) and the World Health Organization (1997) underscore that integrated, age-appropriate assessment strategies are essential for ensuring reliable and consistent monitoring and evaluation of life skills education initiatives. While these studies underline the significance of structured monitoring, few critically examine how context-specific challenges—such as ethnic, linguistic, or geographic disparities—may limit the applicability of standardized tools, particularly in under-resourced or rural settings (Nasheeda et al., 2019a).

Overall, these studies converge on several recurring challenges: limited resources, insufficient teacher preparation, systemic gaps in planning, and contextual barriers within both schools and communities. While these obstacles vary across settings, they collectively highlight the importance of a multi-level approach that includes policy alignment, school leadership, and context-sensitive strategies in the implementation of LSE.

However, much of the existing literature draws on experiences in African or South Asian contexts and less is known about how these barriers manifest in multi-ethnic educational systems such as Vietnam's. Specifically, research on semi-boarding primary schools serving ethnic minority students remains limited, particularly in terms of how cultural norms, language barriers, and infrastructure limitations shape LSE delivery. Moreover, while many studies propose systemic reforms, few critically assess their feasibility in localized settings. This highlights a gap in the literature concerning evidence-based, culturally responsive strategies for delivering LSE in resource-constrained environments.

1.2 Best Practices in Life Skills Education for Primary School Students

UNESCO (2016) emphasized that the design of life skills education must align with both the subject matter and the specific competencies intended, particularly given the sensitive nature of topics involved in adolescent development. Carefully structured interventions are therefore essential to ensure relevance and effectiveness. The World Health Organization (1997) suggested that content should be both contextually relevant and age-appropriate, helping determine which life skills to prioritize and why. It is also essential to identify curriculum-

based and extracurricular activities that enable students to apply life skills practically.

The question remains: which life skills should be taught, and at what age, to maximize their impact? Researchers such as Foxcroft et al. (2012), Smithers et al. (2018), and Nasheeda et al. (2019b) highlight the need for age-appropriate interventions. Several scholars have emphasized that the timing of life skills education is critical for developmental and health outcomes (Avan & Kirkwood, 2010; Immordino-Yang et al., 2019). Ideally, LSE is delivered through interactive and participatory methods (Resnick et al., 2012), particularly in real-life contexts such as substance use, nutrition, violence, and risk behavior (Sancassiani et al., 2015; MacArthur et al., 2018; Singla et al., 2020).

LSE approaches vary by region. In Western countries, the focus is on refusal skills, attitude change, and self-efficacy to mitigate risky behaviors (Peters et al., 2009; Faggiano et al., 2014). Meanwhile, programs in developing regions often incorporate broader social themes, including gender equality, children's rights, and democracy (Munsi & Guha, 2014). These differences reflect the socio-political priorities of each context and align with global education goals (World Health Organization, 2003; UNICEF, 2019a,b). However, few studies compare the long-term outcomes of such contrasting approaches in similar age groups, especially in low- and middle-income countries (Raj et al., 2022).

Adolescents are a common target group for LSE, as this stage involves rapid biological, emotional, and social development (Burrus & Brenneman, 2016; Sameroff, 2010a). However, Hall et al. (2016) emphasized that initiating preventive efforts too late may undermine their effectiveness, particularly given the heightened vulnerability of adolescents to early exposure. In a similar vein, Krone (2019) cautioned that missing formative stages could limit the long-term impact of life skills education.

In summary, best practices in life skills education emphasize age-appropriate, context-specific, and interactive approaches. While regional variations exist, effective programs share a focus on real-life relevance, proactive prevention, and alignment with broader educational and societal goals. Nevertheless, literature lacks a consistent framework for evaluating the scalability and adaptability of these practices across cultural settings.

1.3 The Impact of Life Skills Education on Primary School Students

The acquisition of life skills typically aligns with the start of formal schooling in most cultures (Sameroff, 2010b). During early adolescence, a critical stage of emotional and cognitive development emerges, characterized by heightened sensitivity to social cues such as reward and rejection (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019). This transition influences emotion regulation and reasoning abilities. Formal education facilitates the structuring of thought and reinforces social norms that support cooperation, responsibility, and rational decision-making (Sameroff, 2010a). It also reflects a shift toward autonomous self-regulation (Elder et al., 2006; Zelazo, 2013).

In early childhood, regulation is driven by biological needs, gradually expanding to social behaviors. Parental influence plays a crucial role in shaping children's socio-cognitive development, emotional responses, and well-being (Elder et al., 2006). As children mature, their growing independence and peer relationships increasingly affect their life skills development (Singla et al., 2020). This aligns with broader social expectations for self-regulation and personal responsibility (Sameroff, 2010a).

Learning systems address these needs by offering opportunities for social, emotional, and cognitive development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris., 2006), including through LSE. Development is influenced by both internal changes and external social contexts (Flay et al., 2009; Sameroff, 2010b). Key domains of life skills—communication, interpersonal, coping, self-management, decision-making, and critical thinking—are shaped by individual, social, and biological factors (Flay et al., 2009; Immordino-Yang et al., 2019).

Formal education thus plays a vital role by providing structured, supportive environments in which students can explore their beliefs, identities, and relationships. This process strengthens their confidence and agency (Bandura, 1999, 2001). However, despite the theoretical significance, empirical evidence on the long-term impact of LSE in primary education remains limited, especially in low-resource contexts where implementation fidelity may vary widely. While current research has established strong conceptual frameworks, few studies have systematically measured actual behavioral or attitudinal outcomes in younger students, particularly in ethnic minority regions.

This gap is even more pronounced in Vietnam, where life skills programs are often integrated unevenly across schools, and where ethnic semi-boarding students face additional cultural, linguistic, and social challenges. Limited research exists on whether LSE in such contexts leads to sustained outcomes beyond classroom activities. These realities call for more longitudinal, context-specific studies to assess how LSE contributes to long-term student development in marginalized educational settings. In sum, life skills education contributes directly to students' emotional resilience, social adaptability, and long-term cognitive maturity. Its role in shaping self-regulated, reflective, and socially engaged individuals makes it a core component of holistic primary education.

1.4 The Effectiveness of Life Skills Education in Vietnamese Ethnic Minority Semi-Boarding Primary Schools

According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2021), Vietnam currently has 1,134 ethnic minority semi-boarding schools across 29 provinces, serving approximately 250,795 students. Additionally, there are 2,273 general education schools that provide boarding services for 161,241 students. These figures illustrate the scale and policy prioritization of boarding education, which plays a crucial role in addressing educational equity and social development among ethnic minority populations in remote areas. Thanh (2023) stated that boarding life, with many new relationships, requires students to practice life skills so that every day at school is truly a happy day. In addition to improving infrastructure, schools also promote life skills training, cultural education, career

guidance, and experiential learning, especially for ethnic minority students. The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (2009a) has underscored the urgency of equipping students with both general life skills and self-protection skills.

Recent challenges facing ethnic minority primary boarding schools include school violence, sexual abuse, accidents, and traffic-related injuries. Vietnam the Ministry of Education and Training (2021) reported 35 cases of violence and 12 cases of abuse in 2020 alone. Other issues such as food poisoning, drownings, and traffic accidents also highlight the need for targeted life skills programs (Vietnam News, 2020; Vietnam Traffic Safety Report, 2021). These situations call for systemic life skills interventions to help students avoid harm and enhance their resilience.

In response, the Department of Physical Education, in collaboration with UNICEF, launched a life skills education program in 2015, which was formally reviewed and documented in 2016. The initiative integrates life skills into health education, focusing on equipping students to handle risks related to natural disasters, water safety, animal bites, and hygienic eating practices. The materials were specifically designed for primary school students and adapted to the local context (UNICEF, 2016).

Several domestic and international studies have affirmed the foundational role of life skills education in personal development and social well-being. For instance, Glewwe, Chen, and Katare (2015) highlighted that enhancing life skills, especially among ethnic minority students in Vietnam, significantly contributes to improved learning outcomes. Similarly, Nguyen (2024) emphasized that the integration of culturally responsive life skills training into primary education supports not only language development but also students' overall adaptability and social integration. Loc et al. (2011) highlighted its contribution to student values. According to official reports from the Dien Bien Department of Education and Training (2021, 2022), extracurricular life skills programs have contributed significantly to enhancing students' self-awareness, collaborative capacity, and civic behavior, especially within the context of ethnic minority semi-boarding schools.

Life skills education also aligns with Vietnam's new general education framework, which emphasizes core values (e.g., patriotism, honesty, responsibility) and ten key competencies. Tuyet (2021) and An (2021) noted that LSE supports broader educational movements. This approach contributes to the successful implementation of various educational movements, such as "Good Teaching - Good Learning" and "Building Friendly Schools, Active Students," which improve the quality of teaching and learning at ethnic minority boarding schools in the province (An, 2021).

In summary, life skills education has proven highly relevant and necessary in the context of Vietnamese ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools. Evidence from both official reports and domestic research supports its

effectiveness in improving student safety, social development, academic integration, and readiness to face diverse life challenges. However, much of the current literature tends to emphasize program implementation or describe outcomes in general terms, without offering rigorous evaluation of long-term impact or cultural fit. Furthermore, findings are often localized, making it difficult to generalize success factors or best practices.

Nonetheless, further empirical research is needed to assess the scalability, sustainability, and cultural responsiveness of current life skills education initiatives, particularly in ethnic minority contexts. Recent findings emphasize the importance of contextual adaptation and rigorous evaluation in ensuring the effectiveness of such programs (Zhou & Gao, 2023).

While prior research has acknowledged the general importance of life skills education, most existing studies have focused on urban or mainstream school populations, often overlooking the unique sociocultural and institutional contexts of ethnic minority semi-boarding schools. There remains a notable gap in empirical research that examines how such settings—characterized by linguistic diversity, geographic isolation, and constrained resources—affect the organization and effectiveness of life skills programs. This study addresses this theoretical and contextual gap by investigating life skills education within a less-studied educational model in Vietnam, thereby offering grounded insights into the localized implementation of life skills initiatives.

Building upon this identified gap, the present study offers several novel contributions. Unlike most previous studies that have examined life skills education in general educational settings, this research is among the first to systematically investigate its implementation and effectiveness in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Vietnam. The novelty lies in the combination of a large-scale mixed-method design with a focus on context-specific barriers, stakeholder perspectives, and practical outcomes in under-researched educational environments. By integrating localized evidence with global educational frameworks, the study contributes both empirical insights and theoretical expansion to the field of life skills education.

The theoretical foundation of this study draws primarily from Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory and the capabilities approach, as articulated by Sen (1999) and further developed in comparative and international education by DeJaeghere and Walker (2021). Vygotsky's emphasis on the role of social interaction and cultural tools in learning provides a basis for understanding how collaborative life skills activities support cognitive and social growth among students. The capabilities approach complements this by framing life skills not merely as behavioral competencies, but as essential capabilities that enable individuals—especially those from marginalized communities—to pursue well-being and participate fully in society. Together, these perspectives offer a coherent lens through which the organization, implementation, and outcomes of life skills education can be interpreted in the context of ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

The authors employed a stratified sampling technique to conduct a survey on life skills education programs in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province. Representatives were selected from a number of primary ethnic boarding schools across different administrative units within the province. The sampling process involved choosing schools from various administrative divisions to ensure a comprehensive and geographically representative sample of ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools.

These selected schools were then surveyed to assess the current status of life skills education programs for students. The results of the survey are presented in Table 1, which demonstrates that the research sample is geographically representative of the schools. The survey included four types of participants: administrators, teachers, students, and parents, with a total of 1,768 participants. The sample structure is outlined in the following section.

The selection criteria for the 26 schools included geographic distribution, student population size, and ethnic composition to ensure diversity. Within each school, participants were chosen using purposive sampling: all administrators and available teachers were invited, while students and parents were randomly selected from Grades 4 and 5, which were identified as the most relevant age groups for evaluating life skills education outcomes.

Table 1: Survey sample structure in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools

No.	Name of school	Administrators	Teachers	Students	Parents
1	No. 2 Muong Muon ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
2	No. 2 Na Sang ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
3	Ma Thi Ho ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
4	Sa Long ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
5	Huoi Leng ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
6	Hua Ngai ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
7	Nam He ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
8	No.2 Sa Tong ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
9	Muong Anh ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
10	Nam Nen ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
11	Huoi Mi ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
12	He Muong ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
13	Muong Nha ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
14	Muong Loi ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
15	Leng Su Sin ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
16	No. 1 Chung Chai ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
17	Nam Po ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
18	Nam Vi ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
19	No.1 Muong Toong ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
20	No 2 Nam Ke ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
21	Pa My ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
22	Muong Pon ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
23	He Muong ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
24	Su Lu ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
25	Muong Luan ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
26	Chua Ta ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	3	25	20	20
	<i>Total</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>520</i>	<i>520</i>

2.2 Measurement

The author developed a set of questions specifically designed to evaluate life skills education activities in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools. The questionnaire incorporated a total of 85 items, which were carefully structured

to assess various aspects of the programs. The questions were a mix of both closed and open-ended items, allowing for quantitative data collection as well as qualitative insights. To prepare the questionnaire, we reviewed existing literature and consulted with educational experts to ensure that the questions were relevant and aligned with the goals of the life skills education program. After completing the survey and collecting the responses, the data was processed using mathematical statistical methods. The implementation level of the life skills education activities was then evaluated according to four levels: good, fair, average, and weak. Finally, the data were analyzed based on the percentage of participants for each level.

Before the formal data collection phase, the research team conducted a pilot test of the questionnaire with a small group of administrators, teachers, and parents in two semi-boarding ethnic minority primary schools in Dien Bien province. The aim was to ensure that the items were clear, relevant, and culturally appropriate. Based on feedback from this pilot, minor adjustments were made to improve wording and item order. While the exact Cronbach's alpha coefficient was not computed at that stage, consistency in responses and expert validation supported the instrument's internal reliability. Open-ended responses were categorized thematically through manual coding, allowing the researchers to identify patterns and complement the quantitative findings.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) to summarize responses across the four evaluation levels. Where appropriate, chi-square tests were conducted to compare differences among participant groups. Qualitative responses were categorized and interpreted through thematic content analysis.

For the qualitative data collected from open-ended survey responses, thematic analysis was applied. A coding system was developed inductively, with two researchers independently reading all responses and identifying recurrent themes. Discrepancies in code assignments were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. This process ensured consistency and enhanced the credibility of the qualitative findings.

3. Results

The results of the study on the assessment of the role and importance of life skills education for students further confirmed the level of awareness of managers, teachers, parents, and students on this issue. The results of the study are summarized in Table 2, which shows the level of importance of life skills education activities for primary school students. This study addresses the following research questions:

- a) What is the perceived importance of life skills education activities for primary school students?
- b) How do different stakeholders perceive the importance of life skills education?
- c) What life skills activities are most needed by primary school students to improve their development?

Table 2: Perceived importance of life skills education activities for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		<i>Good</i>		<i>Fair</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Weak</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Life skills education for primary school students promotes personal and social development	1600	90.50	150	8.48	12	0.68	6	0.34
2	Life skills education for primary school students is considered an important criterion in assessing the quality of education in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	1461	82.64	210	11.88	70	3.96	27	1.53
3	Life skills education for primary school students" contributes to the implementation of the comprehensive education goals of ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools	1529	86.48	187	10.58	37	2.09	15	0.85

The data summarized in Table 2 shows that the majority of the subjects surveyed affirmed that life skills education activities for primary school students are very important (with a good rate from 82.64% to 90.5%). Thus, life skills education for ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province plays an important role in realizing the goal of comprehensive education for school students. On the other hand, this educational activity also contributes to developing students' personalities and promoting social development.

This activity was also an important criterion for assessing the quality of education of the school. Thus, life skills education activities for ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province play a very important role, so primary ethnic minority boarding schools need to pay much attention to organizing and implementing this educational activity so that it effectively achieves the set goals.

Table 3: Current life skills proficiency among primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		<i>Good</i>		<i>Fair</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Weak</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Safety skills when playing alone	1552	87.78	144	8.14	48	2.71	24	1.36
2	Skills to avoid some emergency situations and call for help	1339	75.74	301	17.02	87	4.92	41	2.32
3	Skills to avoid physical abuse, sexual harassment	1321	74.72	234	13.24	176	9.95	37	2.09
4	Safety skills when eating	1511	85.46	178	10.07	62	3.51	17	0.96
5	Skills to behave when lost	1432	81.00	234	13.24	87	4.92	15	0.85
6	Traffic participation skills	1478	83.60	219	12.39	47	2.66	24	1.36
7	Skills to adapt in social environments	1321	74.72	323	18.27	71	4.02	53	3.00

The research results were summarized in Table 3, showing that the survey subjects assessed the good level ranging from 74.72% to 87.78%, the current average level reached a maximum of 9.95%, and the weak level ranged from 0.85% to 3.0%. Thus, primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province still have a proportion of students who lack personal life skills. This research result was consistent with the real-life context of students in these schools. Students were still limited in skills 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7.

The results of this study were interesting because, for primary school students in ethnic minority boarding schools in Dien Bien province, these are very important skills. These skills help them protect themselves in the best way, avoid natural disasters, fires, sexual abuse, getting lost, and traffic accidents. Thus, schools need to closely guide the implementation of life skills education through appropriate content, program design, formats, and teaching methods to achieve the best outcomes.

Table 4: Effectiveness of life skills education activities implemented in primary schools

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	The level of life skills education provided through school subjects	1438	81.33	245	13.86	56	3.17	29	1.64
2	The level of life skills education provided through extracurricular activities, field trips, and excursions	1325	74.94	331	18.72	85	4.81	27	1.53
3	The level of life skills education provided through social activities	1511	85.46	198	11.20	35	1.98	24	1.36
4	The level of life skills education provided through school and extracurricular club activities	1487	84.11	221	12.50	49	2.77	11	0.62

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing life skills education activities for primary school students. The items in this survey aim to answer the research question: "What is the level of effectiveness of life skills education activities for primary school students?" The survey content is designed to collect information that reflects the development of key life skills among students, thereby providing an assessment of the success and improvement of life skills education programs in primary schools.

It can be seen that the ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools studied have used a variety of forms to educate life skills for students. However, the average level ranged from 1.98% to 4.81%, while the weak level ranged from 0.62% to 1.64%. Among the four educational forms, Form 3 (social activities) was applied most frequently, with a good level of 85.46%, followed by Form 4 with 84.11%, Form 1 with 81.33%, and Form 2 with the lowest frequency.

This result aligns well with the current reality of life skills education for primary school students in Dien Bien province. Some schools lack the conditions to organize field trips and picnics due to both subjective and objective reasons, which explains why this highly effective activity has not been implemented regularly, despite its clear benefits for primary school students in these areas

Table 5: Implementation methods of life skills education for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		<i>Good</i>		<i>Fair</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Weak</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Life skills education through experience	1491	84.33	258	14.59	15	0.85	4	0.23
2	Life skills education through regular practice	1321	74.72	324	18.33	88	4.98	35	1.98
3	Life skills education through resolving situations	1512	85.52	221	12.50	35	1.98	0	0.00
4	Life skills education through artistic activities (dancing, drawing, singing, storytelling, etc.)	1412	79.86	261	14.76	59	3.34	36	2.04
5	Life skills education through prompt praise	1569	88.74	199	11.26	0	0.00	0	0.00
6	Life skills education through modeling	1342	75.90	291	16.46	89	5.03	46	2.60
7	Life skills education through setting an example	1498	84.73	214	12.10	45	2.55	11	0.62
8	Life skills education through working together	1459	82.52	234	13.24	53	3.00	22	1.24
9	Life skills education through games and conversations	1361	76.98	197	11.14	185	10.46	25	1.41
10	Life skills education through teaching	1510	85.41	176	9.95	69	3.90	13	0.74
11	Life skills education through games	1498	84.73	201	11.37	59	3.34	10	0.57
12	Life skills education through assigning tasks	1395	78.90	297	16.80	59	3.34	17	0.96

This survey aims to assess the level of implementation of life skills education activities for primary school students. The items address the research question: "How effectively are life skills education activities being implemented for primary school students?" These items explore various methods of life skills education, such as through experience, regular practice, problem-solving, artistic activities, modeling, and teamwork, providing insights into the application of life skills education in primary schools.

The study shows that ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools have used various methods to teach life skills. Of the 12 methods, the percentage of good evaluations ranges from 74.72% to 88.74%, with content 5 (praise) being the highest. Content 6 (modeling) had an average evaluation above 5%, while at the

weak level, content 6 was also the highest at 2.6%, followed by content 4 at 2.04%.

Comparing the survey group's assessment of life skills education implementation in Dien Bien province reveals a statistically significant difference between subjects. Teachers rated life skills education through core subjects and social activities significantly higher than managers, with the greatest difference observed in the category of social activities.

Table 6: Implementation level of life skills education methods for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		<i>Good</i>		<i>Fair</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Weak</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Life skills education through practice	1413	79.92	274	15.50	48	2.71	33	1.87
2	Life skills education through role play	1487	84.11	253	14.31	21	1.19	7	0.40
3	Life skills education through solving situations	1496	84.62	211	11.93	42	2.38	19	1.07
4	Life skills education through setting an example	1379	78.00	237	13.40	137	7.75	15	0.85
5	Life skills education through using words	1501	84.90	192	10.86	63	3.56	12	0.68

Table 6 presents the level of implementation of various life skills education methods for primary school students. The items in this table show the answers to the research question: "How effectively are life skills education methods implemented for primary school students?" These methods include practice, role play, solving situations, setting an example, and using words, which provide insight into the application and effectiveness of different teaching approaches in promoting life skills among primary school students.

The survey results reveal that the implementation of life skills education methods in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is generally assessed positively. The percentage of "good" evaluations ranges from 78.00% to 84.90%, while "average" evaluations range from 1.19% to 7.75%. The methods most highly rated by participants include situation solving (84.62%), using words (84.90%), and role playing (84.11%). Alternatively, methods such as practice and setting an example are less frequently used by teachers, with average ratings of 2.71% and 7.75%, respectively.

Despite their lower frequency of use, these methods have the potential to deliver high effectiveness in life skills education for primary school students. Therefore, it is essential for education managers and teachers to focus on incorporating these methods more regularly into their life skills education activities at ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province.

Table 7: Participation of internal and external stakeholders in life skills education activities

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		<i>Good</i>		<i>Fair</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Weak</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Participation of teachers and school staff	1367	77.32	304	17.19	71	4.02	26	1.47
2	Participation of administrators and department heads	1431	80.94	279	15.78	43	2.43	15	0.85
3	Participation of parents' association	1312	74.21	301	17.02	94	5.32	61	3.45
4	Participation of school organizations	1456	82.35	268	15.16	27	1.53	17	0.96
5	Participation of local government and mass organizations	1319	74.60	293	16.57	105	5.94	51	2.88

This table shows the level of participation of various forces both inside and outside the school in life skills education activities. The items in this table answer the research question: "How actively do different groups contribute to life skills education activities for primary school students?" These groups include teachers and school staff, administrators and department heads, parents' associations, school organizations, and local government and mass organizations. By evaluating their involvement, this table provides insight into the collaborative efforts in supporting life skills education in primary schools.

The research findings presented in the table reveal that both internal and external stakeholders participate at a relatively high level in life skills education activities for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province, with participation rates ranging from 74.21% to 82.35%. This indicates that most of the relevant forces are involved in this educational activity.

However, to improve the effectiveness of life skills education, greater involvement from all groups is essential. Notably, local government organizations and parents' associations exhibit lower participation, with weak engagement levels of 2.88% and 3.45%, respectively. Therefore, schools should adopt more effective strategies to foster the regular and active participation of local government organizations in these educational initiatives.

Table 8: Implementation and management effectiveness of life skills education goals for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Develop a plan to implement life skills education content and programs for primary school students	1323	74.83	289	16.35	97	5.49	59	3.34
2	Identify the correct subjects participating in "life skills education activities for primary school students"	1339	75.74	295	16.69	91	5.15	43	2.43
3	Check and classify subjects for participating in LSE activities for primary school students	1497	84.67	206	11.65	50	2.83	15	0.85
4	Information on policies for all participants in LSE activities "for primary school students"	1375	77.77	259	14.65	91	5.15	43	2.43
5	Support and advise primary school students after participating in life skills education	1503	85.01	245	13.86	12	0.68	8	0.45

This table presents the level of implementation and management effectiveness of life skills education goals for primary school students. The items in this table answer the research question: "How effectively are the life skills education goals for primary school students being implemented and managed?" The table shows the extent to which the goals of life skills education are achieved and managed, providing insights into the overall success and challenges in the implementation process.

Table 8 indicates that the implementation of life skills education activity management goals for primary school students is relatively high, with values ranging from 11.65% to 16.69%. However, the implementation of these management goals has been inconsistent. Specifically, the support and counseling for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province after participating in life skills education shows the highest level of implementation, at 85.01%.

Among the five aspects considered in this management content, Aspect 1 received the highest average assessment score, at 5.49%, which highlights the need for more regular execution of this aspect. Correctly identifying the participants in life skills education activities is crucial for determining the appropriate content, methods, and forms of education. As such, management entities should focus on areas with average or weak performance to develop more effective management measures.

Table 9: Implementation and effectiveness of life skills education content and programs for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Develop life skills education content and programs for primary school students	1387	78.45	295	16.69	57	3.22	29	1.64
2	Regularly review, supplement, and adjust the content "of life skills education programs for primary school students"	1392	78.73	250	14.14	95	5.37	31	1.75
3	Periodically compare and contrast the content "and life skills education programs for primary school students with the training goals"	1378	77.94	242	13.69	91	5.15	57	3.22
4	Develop a plan to "develop life skills education content and programs" for primary school students	1494	84.50	182	10.29	71	4.02	21	1.19
5	Organize and implement life skills education content and programs for primary school students with the training goals	1397	79.02	247	13.97	79	4.47	45	2.55
6	Periodically check and evaluate "the implementation of life skills education content and programs for primary school students"	1383	78.22	249	14.08	97	5.49	39	2.21

This table shows the implementation level and effectiveness of content and life skills education programs for primary school students. The items in this table answer the research question: "How effectively are the content and life skills education programs for primary school students being implemented and how effective are they?" The table evaluates the extent to which these programs are implemented and their impact on students' life skills development, providing insight into the strengths and areas for improvement in the life skills education curriculum.

The survey results in the table indicate that the level of implementation of program management and life skills content for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is generally satisfactory, ranging from 77.94% to 84.50%. Among the various components, content 1 achieved a relatively high implementation level, while content 3 was the least implemented, with an average rating of 5.49%. To ensure

more effective implementation of program management and life skills content in these schools, it is crucial for school principals to adopt measures that increase the frequency of its application.

These findings highlight that while the current effectiveness level is deemed acceptable, it falls short of the required standards of effectiveness and does not fully meet the expectations of both leaders and teachers in executing this task. The development of life skills education programs for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province holds significant importance. The content of such programs must align closely with the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education and Training regarding life skills education.

Additionally, the development process must take into account other relevant factors, such as the distinct characteristics of primary school students in these schools, the specific conditions of the schools, and the broader cultural, economic, and political context of the locality. Moreover, the living environment of the students must be carefully considered to ensure that the program content is tailored to meet their needs and adequately equips them to face life's challenges after completing their education.

Table 10: Implementation and management effectiveness of life skills education methods for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Develop a plan to use life skills education methods for primary school students	1507	85.24	148	8.37	74	4.19	39	2.21
2	Implement and direct the use "of life skills education methods for primary school students"	1498	84.73	192	10.86	62	3.51	16	0.90
3	Direct "the training of teachers on life skills education" methods "for primary school students in accordance with the content, form, and learning capacity of primary school students"	1379	78.00	241	13.63	111	6.28	37	2.09
4	Check and evaluate the use of life skills education methods for primary school students	1507	85.24	192	10.86	48	2.71	21	1.19
5	Direct the adjustment "of life skills education methods for primary school students according to the set goals"	1379	78.00	270	15.27	73	4.13	46	2.60
6	Support and advise teachers on "life skills education methods for primary school students"	1343	75.96	283	16.01	117	6.62	25	1.41

Table 10 shows the level of implementation and the effectiveness of managing life skills education methods for primary school students. The items in this table answer the research question: "How effectively are the life skills education methods for primary school students being implemented and managed?" The table evaluates both the execution of life skills education methods, and the management strategies employed, providing insights into the overall effectiveness of these methods in achieving the intended educational outcomes.

In general, the implementation level of life skills education management for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is considered satisfactory, with ratings ranging from 8.37% to 16.01%. Among the various components, content 1 and content 4 received the highest ratings, both achieving 85.24%. Within this management framework, Aspect 6 demonstrated the highest average score at 6.62%. However, these findings suggest that the responsible management entities have not fully and effectively implemented all aspects of life skills education management for students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools.

Table 11: Implementation and effectiveness of teacher management in life skills education for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Directing teachers and specialized staff to master the program distribution and component skills "of life skills for primary school students in" accordance with regulations	1392	78.73	258	14.59	87	4.92	31	1.75
2	Directing teachers and specialized staff to develop "life skills education plans for primary school students in accordance with the" program distribution	1491	84.33	191	10.80	73	4.13	13	0.74
3	Regulating "the quantity and quality of professional records of teachers and specialized staff in life skills education for primary school students"	1346	76.13	249	14.08	125	7.07	48	2.71
4	Developing and announcing a general plan on "life skills education for primary school students"	1504	85.07	236	13.35	21	1.19	7	0.40
5	Approving and checking "life skills education plans for primary school students"	1378	77.94	221	12.50	121	6.84	48	2.71

This table presents the level of implementation and effectiveness of teachers' management of life skills education for primary school students. The items in this table answer the research question: "How effectively do teachers manage the implementation of life skills education for primary school students?" It assesses both the extent to which teachers apply life skills education methods in the classroom and the overall effectiveness of their management strategies in fostering students' life skills development.

The survey results show that the level of teacher management implementation in life skills education activities for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is generally high, ranging from 76.13% to 85.07%. Among the various components, the most frequently implemented content achieved the highest "good" rating of 85.07%, while content 3 recorded the highest "Average" score of 7.07%. These findings suggest that in the future, the management entities overseeing life skills education activities should ensure the regular implementation of this management content to contribute to the success of these educational activities within the schools.

Content 2 ranked second, with a good rating of 84.33%. However, Aspect 3 was assessed with a weak implementation result of 2.71%, similar to content 5. This underscores the critical role of teacher management in the effectiveness of life skills education for primary school students in these schools. Without consistent implementation of this management content, its effectiveness will be compromised. Teachers are directly responsible for carrying out life skills education, and their involvement is crucial in determining the success of this educational activity.

Table 12: Implementation and effectiveness of managing teacher assignments for life skills education in primary schools

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	"Directing the assignment of teachers and specialized staff to carry out the task of life skills education for primary school students according to the capacity of teachers and specialized staff"	1509	85.35	192	10.86	39	2.21	28	1.58
2	"Directing the assignment of teachers and specialized staff to carry out the task of life skills education for primary school students according to the wishes of teachers and experts"	1369	77.43	268	15.16	107	6.05	24	1.36
3	"Directing the assignment of teachers and specialized staff to carry out the task of	1487	84.11	198	11.20	65	3.68	18	1.02

	life skills education for primary school students according to the wishes and needs of students"								
4	"Directing the assignment of teachers and specialized staff to carry out the task of life skills education for primary school students according to the specific characteristics of each primary boarding school for ethnic minorities"	1367	77.32	223	12.61	119	6.73	59	3.34
5	Periodically inspect and evaluate the assignment of teachers and specialized staff to the task of "life skills education for primary school students"	1478	83.60	224	12.67	47	2.66	19	1.07

This table displays the level of implementation and effectiveness of managing the assignment of teachers to life skills education tasks for primary school students. The items in this table answer the research question: "How effectively are teachers assigned and managed to implement life skills education tasks for primary school students?" It evaluates both the process of assigning teachers to these tasks and the overall effectiveness of the management strategies used, providing insights into how well the management of teacher assignments contributes to the success of life skills education.

The survey results indicate that the management of assigning teachers to implement life skills education tasks for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is generally at a good level, with implementation rates ranging from 10.86% to 15.16%. Among the five aspects assessed, the two most crucial components—content 3 and content 5—were implemented at a good level, achieving rates of 84.11% and 83.60%, respectively. However, content 4 was the least implemented, with an average implementation rate of 6.73%.

In terms of effectiveness, the overall results show that the management of assigning life skills education tasks to teachers and specialized staff is at a good level. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these management efforts is not as high as anticipated. Consequently, school principals must take more appropriate and effective measures to improve the implementation and management of life skills education tasks.

Table 13: Implementation and effectiveness of managing learning activities and life skills training for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Creating motivation and attitude towards learning and practicing life skills for primary school students	1505	85.12	179	10.12	71	4.02	13	0.74
2	Fostering learning methods and practicing life skills for primary school students to promote students' positivity and initiative	1489	84.22	201	11.37	65	3.68	13	0.74
3	Developing specific regulations on learning habits and practicing life skills for primary school students	1447	81.84	219	12.39	91	5.15	11	0.62
4	Managing learning habits and practicing life skills of primary school students in class as well as experiential learning hours with the spirit of learning methods and practicing life skills.	1397	79.02	229	12.95	88	4.98	54	3.05
5	Timely rewarding and disciplining the implementation of learning habits and practicing life skills of primary school students	1401	79.24	202	11.43	127	7.18	38	2.15
6	Coordinating forces inside and outside the school to monitor learning habits and practicing life skills of primary school students	1421	80.37	221	12.50	79	4.47	47	2.66

This table shows the level of implementation and effectiveness of managing learning activities and life skills training for primary school students. The items in this table answer the research question: "How effectively are learning activities and life skills training being managed for primary school students?" It evaluates the extent to which these activities are managed and the overall effectiveness of the strategies used in supporting students' learning and life skills development.

The survey results indicate that the level of implementation of learning management and life skills training for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is generally good, ranging from 79.02% to 85.12%. However, there are noticeable differences in the implementation levels across the various aspects of this management content. Specifically, Aspect 3 is the most frequently implemented, alongside contents 2, 4, and 6, with an implementation rate of 12.39%, considered to be at a

fair level. Content 5, alternatively, is the least implemented, with an average implementation rate of 7.18%. The effectiveness of the learning management and life skills training is assessed as being at the weakest level for content 4, with a rate of 3.05%, while content 5 and content 6 are also evaluated at weak levels of 2.15% and 2.66%, respectively.

Table 14: Implementation and effectiveness of managing facilities and equipment life Skills education in primary schools.

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Develop a plan for investment and use of facilities and techniques to serve life skills education activities for primary school students	1453	82.18	203	11.48	75	4.24	37	2.09
2	Deploy and direct the investment and use of facilities and techniques to serve life skills education activities for primary school students	1301	73.59	279	15.78	131	7.41	57	3.22
3	Direct the training of teachers and specialized staff to use facilities and techniques to serve life skills education activities for primary school students	1329	75.17	269	15.21	109	6.17	61	3.45
4	Mobilize social resources to strengthen facilities and techniques to serve life skills education activities for primary school students	1508	85.29	186	10.52	66	3.73	8	0.45
5	Inspect and evaluate the use of facilities and techniques to serve life skills education activities for primary school students	1395	78.90	209	11.82	109	6.17	55	3.11
6	Direct the adjustment of investment and use of facilities and techniques to serve life skills education activities for primary school students	1387	78.45	236	13.35	97	5.49	48	2.71

This table presents the level of implementation and effectiveness of the management of facilities and equipment for life skills education in primary schools. It addresses the research question: "How effectively are facilities and equipment being managed to support life skills education for primary school students?" The table evaluates the extent to which these resources are

implemented and the overall effectiveness of their management in facilitating life skills development for students.

In general, the level of implementation of facilities and techniques management serving life skills education activities for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province was assessed at a good level, ranging from 73.59% to 85.29%. Among all components, content 4 was most frequently implemented, with a good level of 85.29%. Contents 2, 3, and 6 were rated at a fair level, with content 2 ranked first at 15.78% and content 6 third at 13.35%. Regarding effectiveness, the results achieved in managing facilities and techniques for life skills education were evaluated at an average level, ranging from 3.73% to 7.41%. At the weak level, content 3 recorded the highest rate of 3.45%.

Table 15: Implementation and effectiveness of managing and coordinating stakeholders in life skills education for primary school students

No.	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Plan to coordinate educational forces inside and outside the school to participate in life skills education activities for primary school students	1497	84.67	204	11.54	49	2.77	18	1.02
2	Deploy and direct the coordination of educational forces inside and outside the school to participate in life skills education activities for primary school students	1382	78.17	211	11.93	116	6.56	59	3.34
3	Check and evaluate the coordination of educational forces inside and outside the school to participate in life skills education activities for primary school students	1368	77.38	236	13.35	117	6.62	47	2.66
4	Direct and adjust the task of coordinating educational forces inside and outside the school to participate in life skills education activities for primary school students	1312	74.21	227	12.84	142	8.03	87	4.92

Table 15 shows the assessment of the implementation level and effectiveness of managing and coordinating forces involved in life skills education for primary school students. It addresses the research question: "How effectively are the forces participating in life skills education managed and coordinated to support

student development?" The table evaluates the effectiveness of these efforts in enhancing life skills education.

The level of implementation of the management and coordination of educational stakeholders inside and outside the school in life skills education activities for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province was at a good level, ranging from 74.21% to 84.67%. Among the contents, content 1 was implemented the most, with a good rating of 84.67%, while content 4 was the least implemented, with an average rating of 8.03%.

In terms of effectiveness, the overall results achieved from managing the coordination of educational forces in and out of school participating in life skills education activities were still at a weak level, ranging from 1.02% to 4.92%.

Table 16: Implementation and Effectiveness of Inspecting and Assessing Life Skills Education for Primary School Students

No	Review content	Performance Level							
		Good		Fair		Average		Weak	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Develop a plan to inspect and evaluate life skills education activities for primary school students	1320	74.66	213	12.05	139	7.86	96	5.43
2	Clearly identify the purpose and requirements for inspecting and evaluating life skills education activities for primary school students	1523	86.14	231	13.07	11	0.62	3	0.17
3	Develop specific and clear standards and criteria for evaluating life skills education activities for primary school students	1351	76.41	202	11.43	134	7.58	81	4.58
4	Prepare a force to inspect and evaluate "life skills education activities for primary school students"	1472	83.26	236	13.35	33	1.87	27	1.53
5	Prepare an annual plan to inspect and evaluate "life skills education activities for primary school students"	1381	78.11	196	11.09	121	6.84	70	3.96
6	Evaluate and draw lessons, make timely adjustments after evaluation	1512	85.52	158	8.94	71	4.02	27	1.53

Table 16 presents the level of implementation and effectiveness of the inspection and assessment of life skills education for primary school students. It addresses the research question: "How effectively are the inspection and assessment

processes implemented to evaluate life skills education?" The table assesses the effectiveness of these processes in monitoring and improving the quality-of-life skills education.

In general, the level of implementation of inspecting and evaluating life skills education activities for primary school students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Dien Bien province is good, with results ranging from 74.66% to 86.14%. Among the six components, content 2 was rated at the highest level of 86.14%. Content 5 recorded the highest fair rating, at 13.35%. All six components had some average ratings, ranging from 0.62% to 7.86%.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study provide an assessment of the perceptions of staff, teachers, students, and parents at ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools regarding life skills education. The results reveal that while the importance of life skills education is increasingly recognized, its implementation remains inconsistent due to systemic constraints. The management staff primarily focus on cultural education to achieve academic targets, such as excellent student performance and graduation pass rates. As a result, life skills education is not prioritized, with some teachers unaware of its importance, leading to reduced class hours for life skills. Survey data from Table 2 and Table 3 indicate a high percentage of participants rating life skills education as "good," yet this perceived importance is not always reflected in practical implementation.

The current implementation of life skills education in many primary schools remains limited in both content and delivery methods, often resulting in low levels of student engagement. This situation is particularly evident in resource-constrained environments, where educators must balance life skills education with academic demands. Recent research has emphasized that underdeveloped curricular frameworks and insufficient pedagogical support hinder the integration of participatory, context-relevant life skills approaches (Fallah, Birjandi, & Rashidi, 2021; Nathan et al., 2020).

The findings also point to a lack of coordination and inadequate evaluation mechanisms for life skills education, which align with research by Jones (2018), who emphasized the importance of consistent implementation and proper assessment frameworks in achieving effective life skills education. The absence of systematic programs contributes to serious issues, such as school violence, accidents, and health-related problems among students, which are well-documented in recent empirical studies on life skills training and behavioral outcomes (Fallah, Birjandi, & Rashidi, 2021; Nathan et al., 2020).

Parents also expressed concerns regarding the lack of emphasis on life skills education, with many feeling that it plays a critical role in their children's holistic development. However, some parents reported that schools rarely involve them in discussions about life skills education, highlighting the need for greater parental involvement in the planning and implementation of such

programs. This aligns with existing research, which stresses the importance of parental engagement in supporting the effectiveness of life skills training and preventing risky behaviors (Fallah, Birjandi, & Rashidi, 2021).

In light of these findings, the study proposes several management measures to enhance the effectiveness of life skills education. These include increasing the time dedicated to life skills education, integrating life skills into the core curriculum, and providing comprehensive training and incentives for teachers. These recommendations are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory, which underscores the importance of teacher involvement and the social context in learning and development. The study also calls for stronger collaboration between schools, local authorities, parents, and other sectors to ensure effective life skills education for students.

To successfully organize life skills education activities, it is crucial to establish effective coordination between the school and various educational forces inside and outside the school, such as subject teachers, parents, businesses, and government organizations. From a theoretical perspective, Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory highlights the importance of community and social interaction in the learning process, underlining that educational success is enhanced when various social agents collaborate. The findings of this study align with Vygotsky's framework, showing that collaboration among teachers, parents, and external partners is critical to the effective implementation of life skills education.

In practice, the school has developed a detailed life skills educational activity plan for the entire school year, which includes the purpose, objectives, tasks, content, methods of organization, time, location, and budget for these activities. This structured planning approach supports the theoretical perspectives on educational management, which advocate for clear, strategic planning as fundamental for the success of educational programs (Doyle, 2013).

However, despite the existence of this well-defined plan, the study's findings reveal that the pressure of the official curriculum, combined with limited time allocated to life skills education, presents a significant challenge. These practical barriers echo findings from previous research by Jones (2018), which suggests that curriculum overload often results in the marginalization of non-academic subjects, including life skills education.

The study also identifies numerous limitations in the organization and direction of life skills education, including a lack of strictness and coordination, which have hindered the effective implementation of the activities. Inadequate facilities, limited teaching aids, and varying levels of awareness among management staff have further exacerbated these challenges. These findings are consistent with the work of Brown and Lee (2017), who emphasize that the success of educational programs is contingent upon sufficient resources, appropriate teacher training, and clear administrative support. The absence of these essential factors, as revealed in this study, highlights a gap in the current

educational infrastructure that must be addressed to improve life skills education.

To move beyond description and offer more interpretive insight, it is important to consider why certain patterns emerged in the data. For example, the high percentage of favorable evaluations in tables 2 and 3 may reflect a growing recognition of the importance of life skills education in addressing real-life challenges faced by ethnic minority students. Similarly, the strong emphasis on experiential and social activities (tables 4 to 6) may indicate that these methods are culturally congruent and practically effective in the local context, where traditional academic instruction may not fully capture students' needs. Recent findings emphasize that experiential learning not only fosters students' social skills but also contributes to the preservation of their native languages.

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of contextualizing life skills education within the linguistic and cultural realities of ethnic minority communities. For instance, Glewwe, Chen, and Katare (2015) found that disparities in learning outcomes between Kinh and ethnic minority students in Vietnam are significantly influenced by language barriers and the limited cultural relevance of instructional content. Complementing this, Nguyen (2024) demonstrated that culturally responsive Vietnamese language instruction—incorporating ethnic students' native languages—enhanced both comprehension and engagement among primary students in Son La Province. These findings underscore the need for life skills programs to integrate local linguistic elements and culturally grounded practices to improve inclusivity and educational effectiveness in multi-ethnic school contexts.

Given the overlap in tables 4, 5, and 6—all discussing implementation methods—future studies or reports may consider synthesizing these tables into a single comprehensive visualization to streamline presentation and avoid redundancy. Furthermore, to enhance clarity and accessibility, visual aids such as bar charts or graphs could be incorporated to illustrate key patterns, such as stakeholder engagement levels or variations in implementation effectiveness across methods.

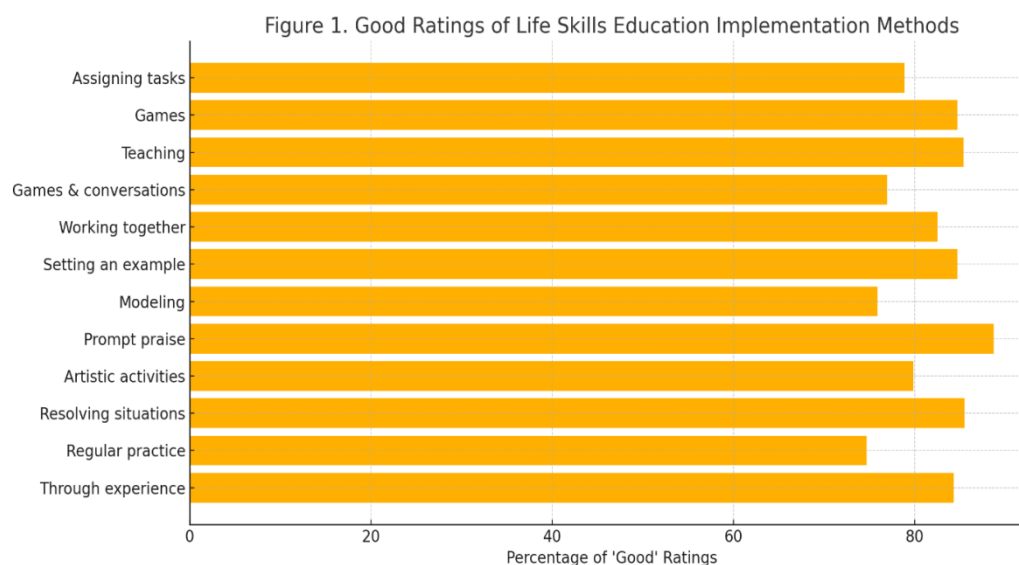


Figure 1: Percentage of 'good' ratings for selected life skills education methods (based on tables 4–6)

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasize the need for a comprehensive system of management measures to improve the quality-of-life skills education for students in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools. From a theoretical perspective, this supports the notion of a coordinated, resource-rich educational environment as outlined by Vygotsky (1978) and later expanded upon in contemporary research (Doyle, 2013). From a practical viewpoint, the study suggests that targeted interventions—such as increasing resource allocation, improving coordination among stakeholders, and enhancing teacher training—are essential to overcoming the barriers identified in this study.

These findings underscore the importance of an integrated approach to life skills education, where the involvement of multiple educational forces and stakeholders is key to fostering a more effective learning environment for students. In addition, the success of life skills education (LSE) activities relies heavily on stronger cooperation between various stakeholders, including teachers, schools, families, and broader societal actors such as businesses and governmental organizations. The findings of this study indicate that there are some prejudices and gaps in the current approach to coordination in life skills education. These challenges have been noted in previous studies, which suggest that the lack of effective collaboration limits the positive impact of life skills programs (UNICEF, 2012).

A growing body of literature emphasizes the importance of integrating life skills education into both formal and informal educational settings. For example, life skills education has been shown to equip young people with essential tools to handle the challenges and risks they face while encouraging active participation in society (DeJaeghere & Murphy-Graham, 2022). This concept aligns with the findings of the current study, which reveals that the integration of life skills into

various aspects of the curriculum and extracurricular activities is key to enhancing its effectiveness. However, despite the potential benefits, social norms and cultural expectations continue to influence the design and execution of LSE programs, as well as their outcomes. These factors often go unaddressed in many life skills programs, as evidenced by past research, which suggests that a more thorough analysis of social norms is needed to improve LSE design (Kurtde-Fidan & Aydođdu, 2018).

The study analyzed responses from 1,768 participants across 26 ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools, including 45 administrators, 375 teachers, 300 parents, and 300 students. Quantitative data revealed that while 72.8% of students found LSE sessions useful or very useful, only 38.4% of teachers had received formal training. Qualitative feedback highlighted inconsistent implementation and limited contextual adaptation. These findings contribute to the existing literature by identifying critical gaps in teacher preparation, stakeholder engagement, and localized program delivery. The study provides empirical evidence to support the need for culturally responsive, community-integrated approaches to life skills education in ethnic minority school contexts.

Moreover, while life skills education has been framed in various theoretical approaches, a capabilities-based approach remains particularly relevant. This perspective prioritizes well-being as the central goal of life skills education, encouraging teachers to focus on developing capabilities that contribute to both individual and societal flourishing (DeJaeghere & Murphy-Graham, 2022). The current study also supports this framework, proposing that life skills education should focus on fostering key capabilities, such as problem-solving, resilience, and social responsibility, which are integral to both personal development and societal engagement.

Within the framework of culturally responsive pedagogy, incorporating students' native languages and cultural backgrounds into classroom practice is viewed as essential to fostering inclusive, participatory learning environments. As Matiso (2024) argued, such pedagogies can enhance student engagement and foster deeper connections in multicultural classrooms, especially in contexts with linguistic diversity and socio-cultural complexity. The practical challenges identified in this study—such as inadequate resources, limited parental involvement, and institutional barriers—are consistent with previous research on life skills education in under-resourced contexts. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive teacher training and stronger engagement with parents and communities to ensure effective implementation (Zhou & Gao, 2023).

According to Nguyen et al. (2023), preservice teachers from pedagogical universities in Vietnam exhibit moderate competence (mean scores between 3.7 and 3.9 on a 5-point Likert scale) in developing culturally responsive curricula. Their study, involving 1,246 participants across nine institutions, highlights the critical need to strengthen teacher education programs with contextualized and culturally attuned curriculum development skills.

Furthermore, as digital platforms continue to play a more prominent role in education, integrating online learning tools into life skills programs presents both opportunities and challenges. This study concurs with previous findings that online platforms can significantly enhance students' learning experiences, provided there is adequate support and guidance to ensure effective engagement. It is crucial that these platforms are designed with clear objectives and structured frameworks to maximize their impact on students' learning outcomes (Sağlam, 2021).

These findings carry important implications for both educational policy and school-level practice. On the policy level, the study highlights the need for targeted training and resource allocation for life skills education, particularly in ethnic minority schools with unique cultural and logistical challenges. At the institutional level, the results underscore the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders—teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners—in co-developing context-specific life skills programs. The data also suggest that more inclusive and participatory methods, such as role-play and situational learning, may enhance student engagement and effectiveness. These implications contribute to ongoing efforts to localize global life skills education frameworks to diverse educational contexts.

5. Conclusion

The findings from this study provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of life skills education activities at ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools in Vietnam, based on the perceptions of leaders, teachers, parents, and students. The results indicate that while life skills education is offered, its delivery is inconsistent, leading to a relatively weak level of life skills among students, which do not meet the required standards. The overall effectiveness of life skills education in the schools studied is assessed as average. Key components, such as safety skills, emergency response, protection from abuse, and safe eating practices, have not been regularly taught.

The use of life skills education methods, such as extracurricular activities, tours, and school clubs, is limited, resulting in only an average level of effectiveness. Additionally, the facilities and technical resources necessary for effective life skills education are inadequate, particularly the lack of suitable classrooms and equipment for life skills instruction.

Although teachers, administrators, and local organizations are involved in life skills education, their participation is not consistent, with local government agencies notably absent in regular and active involvement. The study further reveals a positive correlation between the management components of life skills education—when one aspect is well-implemented, other areas of management tend to improve. This highlights the need for a more coordinated and systematic approach to life skills education to enhance its overall effectiveness in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools.

This study also contributes original insights into the relationship between institutional support and educational outcomes in ethnic minority contexts, a topic that remains underexplored in literature. Limitations of the research include reliance on self-reported data and the constraints of a cross-sectional design, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Nonetheless, the study provides practical implications for school leaders and education policymakers, particularly in enhancing inter-sectoral collaboration and resource allocation to strengthen life skills education in rural and disadvantaged areas.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of life skills education in ethnic minority semi-boarding primary schools. First, the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (2009b) should develop a standardized life skills curriculum adapted to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of ethnic minority regions. Second, schools should receive increased support for teacher training, especially in participatory and experiential learning methods. Third, partnerships with families and local organizations should be institutionalized to strengthen community involvement in life skills education. Finally, further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact and scalability of these interventions in different educational contexts.

In addition to practical applications, the study contributes to the theoretical understanding of life skills education in marginalized settings. By drawing on Vygotsky's social development theory and the capabilities approach, the research illustrates how cultural, institutional, and social factors interact to influence educational outcomes. These findings support the need for context-sensitive frameworks that integrate both global principles and localized practices when designing life skills programs. The study thereby extends existing theories into under-researched school models, offering new directions for future academic inquiry.

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