

## USING TRADITIONAL WATER PUPPETRY IN VISUAL ART ACTIVITIES TO EDUCATE ON VIETNAMESE CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR CHILDREN OF 5-6 YEARS OLD

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**Abstract.** The article presents features of Vietnam's traditional water puppetry and the educational significance of puppet shows. Through Analyzing the importance of cultural heritage for preschool children, the article provides educational orientations on Vietnamese cultural heritage through visual art activities in the kindergarten education program. The main content of the article presents the results of analysis of interviews and questionnaires with preschool teachers about the use of water puppetry in cultural heritage education for preschool children. On that basis, the article proposes ways to use water puppetry in visual art activities to educate children of 5-6 years old about Vietnamese cultural heritage, which are: Preparing the educational force; Choosing the right locations and art spaces; Selecting and integrating the educational topics; Determining content requirements for an introduction to the arts and socio-emotional development; Selecting the methods of organizing art introduction activities; Determining the necessary conditions for the child's receptivity.

**Keywords:** Water puppetry, visual art activities, preschool education, cultural heritage, Vietnamese cultural heritage education.

### 1. Introduction

Culture and heritage reflect beliefs and aspirations, national identity, and ways of life developed by the community and passed on from generation to generation. The discussions on Cultural Heritage would highlight **Culture**, **Values** and **Tradition**. The preservation of cultural heritage is an issue that always needs national attention because it preserves the integrity of the country, ethnic communities, and all of humanity. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which was established in 1954, has adopted international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage [1]. Protecting cultural heritage means not only preserving but also transmitting it to the people, educating the generation of youth the value of heritage to help develop a sense of responsibility, affection, respectful attitudes as well as protective actions. The State of Vietnam, the Vietnam National Committee for UNESCO and the Cultural and Educational Management agencies have always paid attention to protecting and preserving traditions and promoting their values in the national cultural heritage. In the National Assembly's law of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam about CULTURAL HERITAGE (No.: 28/2001/QH10, Hanoi, June 29, 2001), it is stated that Vietnam's cultural heritage is a valuable asset of the Vietnamese ethnic community. The Law on Cultural Heritage is clearly promulgated

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to protect and promote the value of cultural heritage, contributing to the building and development of an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity and contributing to the treasure of cultural heritage. World cultural heritage, raising the responsibility of the people to participate in the protection and promotion of cultural heritage values [2].

In the document *Protecting and promoting the value of cultural heritage treasures to serve the cause of sustainable development in Vietnam*, the cultural researcher - Truong Quoc Binh (2014) has pointed out that directly serving people, contributing to building Vietnamese people's comprehensive development is the goal of cultural activities and cultural heritage preservation, cultural activities. This contributes to raising national awareness and pride, preserving the national cultural identity, and grooming Vietnamese human resources [3].

An important task of pedagogy is to educate children about cultural heritage, help them understand and appreciate the cultural and artistic values of their homeland, and motivate them to consciously preserve and promote those values right from preschool ages. This is a process of purposeful and planned influence to form in children's healthy emotions, positive attitudes in interacting with people and the surrounding nature as well as with themselves. At the age of 5-6 years, cognitive ability and life experience help children become more independent in interacting with peers. At the same time, they can engage more in purposeful relationships with others, control their emotions and adhere to some disciplines, and actively develop their self-image. This is the right age to start educating on Vietnamese cultural heritage through visual art activities.

Traditional water puppetry is a unique art form, derived from nature, from the social and cultural life of the Red River Delta. This art form is recognized as a national cultural heritage, a pride of the Vietnamese nation. It can be said that traditional water puppetry is a type of general performance stage that is very suitable for public perception, the images of puppet characters, the contents and the melodies of water puppet shows have the common cultural background of the Vietnamese people, and are also very diverse and rich, containing a rich treasure of social experiences, human views, standards and practices in the community. The traditional water puppet shows and water puppets preserve in it a lot of information about the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Vietnamese nation that children need to learn from, absorb, and promote. With the characteristics of the 5–6-year-old which are the golden age of aesthetic feelings, artistic activities and imagination, preschool children always have the need to play, learn and especially children are easy to absorb knowledge through art.

Currently, in Vietnam, theoretical and practical research programs for children on Cultural Heritage Education mainly focus on high school students. The current preschool program does not have specific and complete guidelines on cultural heritage education; also, there are no clear regulations on the goals, contents and methods of educating children about cultural heritage. Using art and art products to educate children about life values, environmental protection, skills training, and creativity enhancement that have been interested and implemented by preschools through experience initiatives and contests for good teachers. But the research and application of traditional visual arts products to educate about Vietnamese cultural heritage for preschool children have not been invested at present. Teachers have been using art to educate children about life values, environmental protection, skills training, creativity enhancement. However, research and application of traditional visual arts to educate on Vietnamese cultural heritage for preschool children have not been invested.

This article presents the results of a survey of preschool teachers on the status of heritage education for preschool children of 5-6 years, thereby proposing some measures to implement the education of these topics.

## **2. Content**

### **2.1. The role of visual art activities and traditional visual art products for preschool children**

Visual arts and the related products play an important role in the early childhood education process. Introducing children to visual arts products and participating in activities through visual art products, including traditional visual products, will positively affect the comprehensive development of children. From the socio-historical point of view, on psychological development, Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky – The Soviet psychologist and founder of a theory of human socio-cultural and biological development, pointed out that every human behavior is directly influenced by socio-cultural and historical conditions. Developing Vygotsky's theories, the author Robert Schirrmacher in the study of child development has appreciated the role of art in the development of children socially. He affirmed the position of visual arts as well as the products of visual arts in the process of children learning about culture [4].

In Vietnam, a methodical research program as a foundation for orienting the application of traditional visual arts products in heritage education for preschool children has been carried out, which is scientific research *“The current situation and solutions to help children familiarize themselves with traditional visual arts through decorative shaping activities”*. In this research, a researcher on art education for preschool children - Le Thi Thanh Thuy (2010) asserts: Traditional visual art is considered a popular cultural element and it is a very rustic way for folk artists to convey and share information and social experiences. According to the author, the application of traditional visual arts products in educational activities helps children to come to the roots of the culture in which the child lives and comes to the cultural diversity of people in new lands [5]. Research on the application of traditional visual arts products in early childhood education, author Vu Thanh Van and Le Thi Thanh Thuy had affirmed that Vietnamese traditional visual arts have an important position and are a valuable heritage to help generations of The Vietnamese system is aware of and respects and preserves the past of the nation [6-7].

Thus, it can be said that the study of traditional visual arts products to educate about cultural heritage for preschool children of 5-6 years is necessary and has initially been conducted, but it has not yet been demonstrated clearly the requirements of Cultural Heritage Education.

### **2.2. Traditional water puppetry and the feasibility in educating on Vietnamese cultural heritage for children of 5-6 years old**

#### **2.2.1. Overview of traditional water puppetry**

Traditional water puppetry is a historical art form unique to Vietnam which uses wooden puppets to perform. This is an art form is associated with the rice cultivation in the Red River Delta. The unique thing about traditional water puppetry is the use of water surface as a puppet stage. This art performance method is a close and lively combination of movement with puppets, music, sound and light to create puppet acts. Each water puppet guild has its own distinctive features, but the water puppet shows are quite similar, that is, they are all aimed at expressing the peaceful, rustic and simple working life of farmers in the Red River Delta. Currently, there are 17 water puppetry guilds in the Northern Delta region (in Hanoi, Bac Ninh, Hai Phong, Hai Duong, Thai Binh, and Nam Dinh) and 5 water puppet theaters in the Northern region (The Vietnam National Puppetry Theatre-Hanoi, Thang Long Water Puppet Theatre-Hanoi, Lotus Water Puppet-Hanoi, The Kite Water Puppet Theatre-Hanoi, Hai Phong Puppet Theater-Hai Phong).

Traditional water puppetry is always imbued with national identity with vivid visual images. It has been built and handed down by a team of “peasant artists”, that are: artisans who

create puppets, manufacture and decorate puppets, conductors, puppeteers, folk musicians and singers. In each region, folk artists gather into puppet guilds, where their artistic activities are the ponds or lakes that are very common in the Red River Delta [8].

The soul of traditional water puppet shows is the puppet characters made by folk artisans from fig wood. This wood is light and waterproof, it can float and it is easy to control on the water. Through many stages of the puppet making process, the puppets have the appearance of ancient sculptures on Vietnamese temples and pagodas, and are inspired by artists, creating characters with emotional nuances, qualities, costumes with many different colors represent actions, events, relationships, and legends in folklore. The puppets are installed by the artisans with the string mechanism or the complex pole mechanism which hidden under the water, creating movements of the hands, feet, head and body of the water puppet, conveying vividly the content of the story, ideas and humanistic spirit of the script of water puppet shows. Through the puppets, it is possible to clearly see the talent, love of art, diligence and creativity and even love for the homeland, the attitude of respecting, preserving and preserving the national culture of folk artisans. Harmoniously combining sounds, lyrics, dialogue, flexible movements and the interaction of the puppets, the artists can create an attractive cultural space, linking the audiences in villages to convey messages, historical and social experiences and thereby transmit and preserve the unique cultural identity of the Vietnamese nation.

### **2.2.2. The ability to educate on Vietnamese cultural heritage for children of 5-6 years old through the use of traditional water puppetry in visual art activities**

Education on cultural heritage through the use of traditional visual arts products, specifically water puppets help children feel the truth, the good, the beauty in daily life expressed through art image. Through the humanistic content of art works, children actively learn how to establish and maintain healthy relationships with people. Acquiring the moral values expressed in art works, young children will gain valuable social experiences to develop their personality, become a part of society, be willing to cooperate, sharing, forming compassion and trust with people around them.

According to the psychologist-Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, art cannot be separated from life. Art productions, including works of visual art, have the role of renovating the world and improving people. Therefore, it is necessary to expose children to work of art productions [9, p.18]. The early childhood education expert - Nguyen Anh Tuyet said that “kindergarten is the golden age for art education, this is an extremely sensitive and passionate age for art, through visual arts activities, children are immersed in the magical world and unleash their creativity. Therefore, art education for preschool children is necessary” [10, p.237].

Indeed, arts have a great role in the comprehensive development of children, especially in moral and emotional education, forming social communication skills: Education with artworks and art activities facilitates the development of children's ability to perceive the beauty, educates a love for beauty, and forms and fosters children's ability to create beautiful things and contribute to the improvement of the surrounding environment. By getting acquainted with artworks, children will have the opportunities to enrich their life experience and behavior in society. Traditional arts, including water puppetry, are the means and rich cultural resources for children's education and development. Cultural researcher Tran Ngoc Them in the book *Finding Vietnamese cultural identity* wrote: “From childhood, people need to contact and learn about national art through products of art, traditional works of art” [11, p.28]. Sharing the same view, author Le Thi Thanh Thuy, who researched in fostering teachers' awareness and pedagogical ability in early childhood education through traditional arts, wrote: “The beauty of traditional arts reflects the aesthetic awareness, feelings, identity, and spiritual values of the communities which create an aesthetic cultural environment, a treasure trove of precious historical documents

about the lives of generations of Vietnamese people and is a very attractive cultural medium that should be exploited by teachers and educational administrators” [12].

Through the research work of author Tran Van Khe - a well-known researcher on traditional culture and music in Vietnam, readers may know that the water puppet shows all show aspects of long-standing cultural history, living scenes, cultural beliefs and labor of Vietnamese farmers. In the water puppet shows, the inanimate puppets under the skillful hands of folk artists come to life, as if they have souls and emotions. The mastery of the puppeteer helps the water puppets to perform roles with many educational meanings, conveyed to viewers many different mental states: water puppets like laughing and talking, making jokes, sad, happy, love, hate, know how to plow, herd buffalo, catch fish, etc. The water puppets show qualities such as diligence, courage, and respect. With funny and engaging stories, water puppeteers convey information and images about an idyllic life, expressing the simple aspirations in the life of the inhabitants of the ancient Northern Delta which educate viewers about the moral qualities, traditional communication skills in the community: The water puppet shows show the village love, the industriousness and love of labor, the optimism, the sharing and mutual help of the farmers (*“Spinning weaving”, “Plowing”, “Releasing nets to cast fish”, “Duck herding”, “Keeping buffaloes”, “Frog fishing”, “Fighting buffaloes”, “Swinging rope”, etc.*); Water puppet shows on cultural and religious activities (*“Eight dancing fairies”, “Dragon dance”, “Four spirits dance”, etc.*). There are water puppet shows showing the spirit of cooperation, responsibility, mutual affection, love for the motherland, and dreams of a happy and peaceful life (*“Farm to the field”, “Festival of village”, “The Legend of the Sword Lake”, “The palanquin procession”, etc.*) [13].

Preschool age is a golden period for children to acquire knowledge about life and form social experiences. Creating opportunities for children to be familiar with water puppetry helps them expand their vision of the living environment, gain more understanding and get closer to familiar things, to the simple in the countryside’s life, developed cognitively and socially-emotionally. Through the Waterside Pavilion and the surroundings where water puppets are performed with eye-catching colorful puppet characters, children get acquainted with the beautiful images of Vietnamese villages, the work of farmers, know about traditional festivals, legends, national heroes.

### **2.2.3. Research on traditional visual arts products and the application of traditional visual arts products in educational activities about Vietnamese cultural heritage for children 5-6 years old**

In Vietnamese kindergarten education programs, there are currently no specific and clear guidelines with requirements on the objectives, content and methods of educating children about cultural heritage. However, with age characteristics - the golden age of aesthetic feelings, artistic activities and imagination, preschool children always have the need to play and learn with art. However, as 5-6 years old are the golden age of aesthetic feelings, artistic activities and imagination, preschool children always have the need to play and learn with art. The characteristic of preschool education is that it is mainly a method of education through art, in an aesthetic environment. Therefore, some preschool teachers have launched some initiatives to exploit traditional materials and handicraft products to use in intellectual and aesthetic education activities, forming knowledge and social skills for preschool children. A number of scientific research by lecturers of the Faculty of Early Childhood Education - Hanoi National University of Education related to the use of traditional art forms such as traditional ceramics, folklore paintings, folk toys, brocades, traditional sculpture products, water puppetry, etc. in the practice of educating preschool children which has initially contributed to increasing the knowledge of preschool students about the cultural heritage of Vietnam's regions, forming love for beauty,

affection, respectful attitude and ability to educate children with art products. However, these are only single scientific research, not really deeply explored in cultural heritage education. Therefore, it is necessary to have a combination of preschool education, art culture and socio-cultural management to have research, build highly applicable heritage education programs and plans and towards the following purposes: *Spreading awareness to connect preschool teachers and children with the natural and social environment; Using cultural heritage as an environment for education and building cultural identity, forming values for children; Focus on teaching, learning, providing knowledge and skills to preserve and disseminate Cultural Heritage among students, preschool teachers and young children, helping them learn to understand their own culture, from the past and in the process evolve, change with history; Establish cognitive and emotional relationships of teachers and children with the cultural characteristics of a particular society; Using folk resources such as traditions, languages, objects, art products, performances, exhibitions and cultural heritage spaces as teaching and learning tools and connecting education with social culture.*

Overall, culture and the heritage are the core of development in every country. Education Cultural heritage plays an essential role in society, creating close links between generations and historical periods and they have an important function in building a strong and conserving nation, promote the identity of the nation.

From the urgent requirement of researching, exploiting and using traditional visual arts products in the process of educating preschool children, in teacher training activities and conducting kindergarten education programs in order to form for children's understanding, awareness, affection and ability to preserve and protect Vietnamese cultural heritage.

### **2.3. Perception of preschool teachers in using traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage for children 5-6 years old**

Analysis of the results of interviews and polls by questionnaires of 310 preschool teachers teaching preschool children of 5-6 years in 41 kindergartens in Hanoi, Nam Dinh and Bac Ninh cities (23 kindergartens in Hanoi, 11 kindergartens in Nam Dinh, 7 kindergartens in Bac Ninh) during the period from January 2021 to April 2021 on the use of water puppetry to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage for preschool children, the following observations are made:

On the necessity of education about Vietnamese cultural heritage for preschool children.

**Table 1. Preschool teachers' recognition of the necessity in Cultural heritage education for preschool children of 5-6 years**

Level	Rating	
	Number of votes	Percentage (%)
Very necessary	89	28,7
Necessary	210	67,7
Less necessary	11	3,5
Unnecessary	0	0

Table 1 shows that the majority of teachers surveyed think it is necessary to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage for children of 5-6 years old. The number of ratings saying Less necessary accounted for only 3.5%.

On the role of Vietnamese cultural heritage education for preschool children of 5-6 years and on the advantages of visual activities in Vietnamese cultural heritage education.

The Table 2 shows that the majority of preschool teachers surveyed agree that heritage education for preschool children of 5-6 years will help them develop comprehensive personality, children more understanding and children love their homeland.

**Table 2. Teachers' opinions on the role of Vietnamese cultural heritage education for preschool children of 5-6 years old and the advantages of visual art activities in Vietnamese cultural heritage education**

T	Opinions	Degree of agreement		
		Disagree-ment	Unrest	Agree-ment
11	Education of Vietnamese cultural heritage helps children develop comprehensive personality	2	21	287
22	Educating Vietnamese cultural heritage will help children develop their feelings and emotions for their homelands	0	5	305
33	Educating Vietnamese cultural heritage through visual art activities and visual art products will help preschool children improve their abilities to feel and share emotions with people around them.	0	63	247
44	Education of Vietnamese cultural heritage should be carried out through all the different educational activities in preschools	10	79	214
55	Visual activities have more advantages in educating Vietnamese cultural heritage for children	4	15	291
66	The use of visual art products will increase the effectiveness of the education of Vietnamese cultural heritage for preschool children	9	17	284

The teachers also highly agree with the heritage education for children through visual art activities. In addition, some argue that besides shaping activities is an advantage to help children easily learn about cultural heritage, activities such as: learning about the surrounding environment, festival activities, etc. Activities for children to familiarize themselves with literary works, fun activities also help children learn about cultural heritage.

On the use of traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to educate about Vietnamese cultural heritage for children of 5-6 years old in preschool.

**Table 3. Preschool teachers' opinions on the use of traditional water puppetry in visual activities to educate about Vietnamese cultural heritage for children of 5-6 years at preschool**

Level	Rating	
	Number of votes	Percentage (%)
Very necessary	132	42,6
Necessary	174	56,1
Less necessary	4	1,3
Unnecessary	0	0

Thus, according to the survey results of preschool teachers about the use of water puppetry in visual art activities to educate children 5-6 years about Vietnamese cultural heritage, only 1.3% of the survey opinions are not suitable, the remaining opinions think that it is very suitable and appropriate.

About the visual media that preschool teachers can use to introduce children to traditional

water puppetry in visual art activities thereby educating about Vietnamese cultural heritage for children 5-6 years old in preschool. Most teachers list the following media: Videos of puppet shows, photos (water puppetry characters and water puppet show, water puppeteers, water puppetry artists), let children see water puppetry directly at the Puppet Theater, let children see water puppets so that children can directly feel the puppets.

About the modes of activities that preschool teachers can use traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage for 5-6 years old.

**Table 4. Forming visual art activity modes**

Modes	Usage (%)		
	<i>Unnecessary</i>	<i>Less necessary</i>	<i>Necessary</i>
Watch video	0	0	310
Observe the photo	0	9	301
Conversation, Question - Answer about water puppet characters, about the content of puppet shows	0	0	310
Use songs, poems, and stories to introduce	0	14	296
Observe the real water puppet	0	0	310
Instructions for children to imitate some puppet characters	0	63	247
Emulating “creation” in drawing activities	0	0	310
Emulation of “creation” in the clay-making	0	0	310
Competition for “creation” in the activity of collage activities	0	0	310
Emulate “creation” in the model - making activities	0	0	310
Emulate “creation” in general art activities for children to express their emotional attitudes as they like	0	0	310
Exchange with water puppeteer	0	6	304

The survey results from the above table show that preschool teachers agree with the operational methods that can use traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to educate Vietnamese heritage as listed in Table 4.

On the necessity of preschool teachers' pedagogical abilities in using traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to carry out Vietnamese cultural heritage education for preschool children.

**Table 5. Teachers' opinions on the pedagogical abilities preschool teachers need to use traditional water puppetry in visual art activities for preschool children 5-6 years old in order to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage**

Request	Level		
	<i>Unnecessary</i>	<i>Less necessary</i>	<i>Necessary</i>
<b>1. Requirement of knowledge</b>			
Understanding the cognitive ability of preschool children of 5-6 years old	0	19	291



Understanding of artistic, historical and social values of water puppetry	0	10	300
Understanding how to use visual art activities and art products in education	0	9	301
Understanding how to use traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage for children	0	0	310
<b>2. Skill requirements</b>			
Observation skills and recognition of the value of visual arts activities and creative art products	0	7	303
Skills in visual art activities and applying art products in professional activities	0	5	305
The ability to perceive aesthetics and artistic expression	0	17	293
<b>3. Attitude and affection requirements</b>			
Have a positive aesthetic attitude towards the natural and social environment	0	2	308
Love water puppetry	0	0	310
Respect and love cultural heritage	0	0	310
Respect, consciously preserve social values and traditional cultural identity	0	0	310

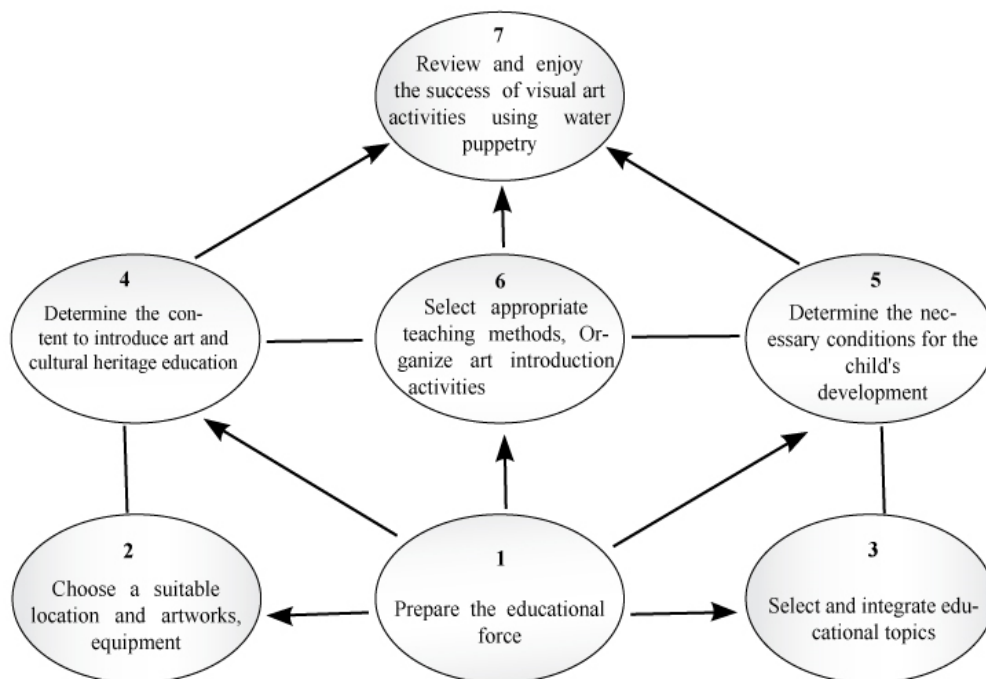
Comparing the rate of choice of preschool teachers, it can be seen that they have attached importance to some basic requirements to be able to carry out cultural heritage education for children of 5-6 years old through the use of traditional water puppetry in visual art activities.

The synergy between the fields of cultural heritage and education is the best way to achieve comprehensive, integrated heritage-based education towards sustainable development. This can only be achieved by starting with education, training, lifelong learning at all levels of education and in society, engaging educators, heritage leaders and local communities' direction. Children need to learn about Cultural Heritage from an early age because of the following benefits: Gain a correct understanding of Culture and Cultural Heritage to appreciate and be proud of the values of the culture; Know how to connect with children's cultures with cultures of regions and connect emotionally and integrate easily; Know how to think about the past, history and also know towards the future development of society; Know how to share and can work together to protect cultural heritage for the development of generations.

#### **2.4. Proposing some solutions and contents to foster preschool teachers the ability to use traditional water puppetry in visual art activities to educate about Vietnamese cultural heritage for children of 5-6 years old**

Contents and methods of fostering for preschool teachers, especially teachers of children 5-6 years old, who are able to use water puppetry in shaping activities to educate children can be done in the regular and extra-curricular classes:

In order to expand the symbolic capital, understanding of Vietnamese cultural heritage through the use of traditional water puppetry in visual art activities and it needs to be carried out with a process that enhances the experience. There are the following steps:



**Figure 1. Expanding preschool children's understanding of cultural heritage through using water puppetry in visual activities**

**• Step 1: Preparing the educational force**

Preschool teachers play a key role, they need to be fostered, improve their understanding of traditional visual arts in general and water puppetry in particular, form a love of art, practice their ability education through the use of traditional visual arts products. Preschool teachers need to know how to encourage the active participation of their children's parents because the family is the most basic organization, participating in the education of children about cultural heritage and preparing children for life in society.

**• Step 2: Choosing a suitable location and space**

For locations and spaces outside the classroom: To operate effectively, it is necessary to learn about the cultural space, the local waterside Pavilion or at the Puppet Theater, the traditional water puppet display area at the Museum. Depending on the characteristics of the region, it is possible to choose the Puppet Theaters, Water Puppet Wards that are close to the distance and the children's understanding and social experiences. A number of cultural and art museums can be selected in provinces and cities where have water puppet shows and documents about this unique cultural heritage. With space in the yard or the kindergarten lobby, you can choose a place large enough to display puppets and arrange a mini water puppet stage.

For classroom space: Classroom corners can be arranged with pictures, photos, water puppets, water puppet theater models and water puppet models created by teachers using scraps in a corner area, preparing videos to introduce to children.

**• Step 3: Selecting and integrating educational topics**

It is possible to integrate the following topics: Family, Self, Traditional Festival of the Motherland, Homeland- Country - Uncle Ho and Occupation which can be expand conditions for introducing children to the traditional water puppetry to educate children about cultural heritage. In order to educate children about heritage, it is necessary to start from the smallest and closest spaces in children's lives such as families, streets, villages, homelands, etc., to form

symbols for children about the wider society such as the country and nations. In order to educate children about heritage, it is necessary to start from the smallest and closest spaces in children's lives such as families, streets, villages, homelands, etc., to form symbols for children about the wider society such as the country and nations. Through the use of traditional water puppetry in visual art activities, children learn about the history of water puppetry, puppet characters, the content of puppet shows associated with working life and know the rules of the process of creating water puppets by the folk artisans, from which children learn to appreciate water puppets, love this art form, love their homeland and be proud of their homeland.

**• *Step 4: Determining requirements for content to introduce art and education about Vietnamese cultural heritage***

It is necessary to select the content of water puppet shows suitable to children's understanding, social experiences and emotional characteristics of children and to the requirements of cultural heritage education for children. The contents of the script must show social relationships and social skills that need to be taught to children. The dialogues, images, movements of water puppets and details in the play should be understandable and specific, stimulating aesthetic emotions for children, forming children's understanding of social and cultural events, history, forming a positive attitude to the people around and to the living environment.

**• *Step 5: Determining the necessary conditions for the child's receptivity***

The effectiveness of the educational process depends on the child's interest and readiness. It is necessary to prepare children for understanding, forming emotions with the content of water puppet shows, creating fun, comfort and cognitive motivation to come to the activity. It is also necessary to pay attention to the health of children to avoid causing fatigue and inhibition.

**• *Step 6: Selecting appropriate methods to organize art introduction activities***

Using water puppetry in visual art activities to educate Vietnamese cultural heritage for preschool children can be directed to two main tasks:

*Task 1:* Organizing for children to approach and become familiar with the art of water puppetry, providing knowledge about water puppetry, about the contents conveyed by the water puppet shows and about the images of the characters which are the images of simple laborers in the countryside, the images of animals that are very close to children such as cats, ducks, buffaloes, etc.

Introducing water puppetry in the classroom through audio-visual means in the stabilizing part of the organization, stimulating children's interest and introducing provocative activities for children to work in visual art activities or to prepare for a crafting lesson. Teachers can organize children to learn about water puppetry by taking them to cultural spaces (art museum, water puppet shows at the Puppet Theater) so that children can be immersed in a fun, friendly atmosphere along with the emotional sharing of the audience.

*Task 2:* Organizing small or large group art activities depending on the teacher's purpose so that children can explore water puppetry and participate in visual art activities such as drawing, printing, clay-making, color blowing activities, etc. or integrated activities, creative experiences. It is possible to combine many art forms, visual art games with puppet performances, theater plays.

**• *Step 7: Reviewing with the children about the success in the process of visual art activities that use water puppetry***

This is the step where teachers evaluate the effectiveness of educating children about Vietnamese cultural heritage. The following expressions can reveal children's understanding of Vietnam's cultural heritage through familiarizing children of 5-6 years with traditional water puppetry in artistic activities: understanding of the choice of descriptive topics and how to express them in the children's and classmates' visual products; Children like to see pictures,

photos, videos about water puppetry and understand the content of water puppet shows; Children know about the role of water puppet characters; Children are excited to share with teacher and classmates the love for water puppet characters, children remember the name of some water puppet characters and the water puppet shows. Children begin to understand the social meaning of artistic images in puppet shows; Know how to use words to express feelings; Actively share ideas, use visual elements (line, shape, color, size, layout, surface texture, etc.) to convey positive emotional states. Children know how to share their feelings after completing the product, know how to appreciate the product then know how to preserve the puppets and love their homeland.

### 3. Conclusions

Education through the use of art products is an educational path that creates favorable conditions for the development of children's personality, nurtures children's souls with cultural and aesthetic values, contributing to the formation of children's abilities to adapt to social life and easily succeed in the future. Art-based educational methods are consistent with early childhood education programs, helping to ensure the healthy development of children in terms of physical, cognitive, creative and emotional abilities.

Exploiting the value of cultural heritage and educational value of water puppetry in visual art activities to educate preschool children of 5-6 years has not been paid enough attention, some preschools have organized a number of activities but have not been active and effective. Therefore, in order to improve the effectiveness of preschool education, search for innovative ways of educating Vietnamese cultural heritage, it is necessary to invest in research and application of art products in general and products of traditional water puppetry in particular widely, expanding the system of cultural means for the educational process. Thus, researching and exploiting traditional cultural and artistic means to create an aesthetic-emotional environment for children's personality formation is an urgent scientific research task, especially in the current stage of social development.

Education of Vietnamese cultural heritage for children is a process of pedagogical influence with a purpose and a plan of educators in order to form and develop children with healthy understandings and emotions and have the right attitude in relationships as well as how to behave with people around, with nature and themselves. On that basis, forming children's respect and love for the art products of folk artists, knowing more about their homeland.

Water puppetry is an inexhaustible resource containing social values that are essential for the development of children's personality. With the synthesis of many inspirational mediums such as water puppetry, color, movement, music, lyrics, light, performance space close to nature and audience, traditional water puppetry can be seen as a cultural vehicle for children's education. The rich content in water puppet shows boldly shows the simple life of the Red River Delta's people and the national spirit of the Vietnamese people. This is a great inspiration for the process of teaching and learning about society and the affection for traditional arts, love for the homeland and the country. Actively using water puppetry in visual activities to educate preschool children will foster aesthetic sensibilities, aesthetic tastes, nurture a pure soul, and help children to receive and perceive the beauty and human values contained in art, thereby, educating children to cherish, preserve and protect the beauties of people, landscapes, and living environment of the homeland. At the same time, helping children connect and integrate into the community and society. Traditional water puppetry, along with traditional art forms, will be the connection between children and the history of national cultural development.

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