



## Educators' and students' perspectives on the education of national cultural identity for high school students in Vietnam

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### ABSTRACT

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The preservation and promotion of national cultural identity hold immense significance in fostering a sense of heritage and unity among the populace. Educating high school students about their national cultural identity in Vietnam plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's future generation and providing them with a profound understanding of their cultural heritage. This research aims to investigate the perceptions of educators and students towards the education of national cultural identity, specifically examining the content and methodologies employed in imparting this vital knowledge. The study will employ a quantitative research design, namely a cross-sectional approach, to gather data from a sample of 65 instructors, administrators, and 150 high school students. The data will be obtained through the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire, divided into two parts, will assess the content and form of cultural education for high school students using a 5-level Likert scale. The results of the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and students about (1) the content of ethnic cultural identity education for students in high schools, with a mean of 3.62 for teachers and administrators and a mean of 3.40 for students; and (2) the mean score for all forms of education was higher for teachers and administrators than for students. The study's results will enhance comprehension of cultural appreciation and nationalistic sentiment among Vietnam's youth, influencing educational policies and practices that successfully safeguard and advance the national cultural identity of high school students.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study advances Vietnamese high school national cultural identity education theory and practice. This study should provide instructors', administrators', and students' views on cultural education's content and forms. This study guides high school educational policies and practices to protect and promote national cultural identity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam boasts a rich cultural tapestry woven with diverse traditions, customs, and ethnic groups that span the length and breadth of the nation. From the vibrant floating markets of the Mekong Delta to the ancient temples of Hanoi, each region of Vietnam offers a unique glimpse into its history and heritage. The country's cultural diversity is also reflected in its delectable cuisine, with dishes like pho and banh mi gaining international acclaim for their bold flavors and fresh ingredients. The education of national cultural identity serves as a cornerstone for instilling a

deep appreciation for the country's cultural heritage among high school students. By learning about the rich history and heritage of Vietnam, high school students are able to develop a stronger sense of national pride and identity. This education not only fosters a deeper understanding of their own culture but also promotes unity and respect for the diverse traditions and customs found throughout the country. By imparting knowledge about their collective history, language, art, and customs, educators' endeavor is to cultivate a sense of pride and belonging among the younger generation. Through the study of Vietnam's cultural identity, high school students not only gain a deeper understanding of their roots but also develop a strong sense of cultural preservation. This education equips them with the tools to contribute to the preservation and promotion of their heritage, ensuring its longevity for future generations.

Cultural identity is a distinctive feature with high value, including material and spiritual values accumulated and developed during the ascent of a national social aspect of a nation. Cultural identity encompasses the unique customs, traditions, language, and art forms that shape a community's way of life. It serves as a source of pride and belonging for individuals, fostering a sense of unity and shared heritage within a nation. Additionally, cultural identity plays a crucial role in preserving historical narratives, promoting diversity, and enriching the tapestry of human civilization. Those values can be found in all ethnic groups, but in ethnic groups, their cultural identity is expressed more boldly, deeply, and specifically. This is because ethnic groups often have distinct traditions, customs, and practices that are passed down through generations. These unique cultural expressions contribute to the overall diversity and richness of a society, allowing for a deeper understanding and appreciation of different ways of life. Furthermore, embracing and celebrating cultural identity within ethnic groups can also foster a sense of empowerment and self-confidence among individuals, as they are able to connect with their roots and contribute to the preservation of their heritage. The objective of ethnic cultural identity education in high schools is to impart students with fundamental knowledge and comprehension of the indigenous traditional culture. Simultaneously, it aims to cultivate and enhance their ability to engage with and utilize traditional cultural knowledge of the nation. This education seeks to foster a sense of national consciousness, instill an attitude of reverence towards the national cultural heritage, and cultivate a sense of responsibility for preserving and promoting national cultural values within the community. This education also plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and inclusivity by fostering a sense of belonging and pride among students from diverse backgrounds. By equipping them with the tools to appreciate and engage with their cultural heritage, it encourages mutual understanding and respect among different ethnic groups within the community.

The high school phase represents a critical stage in students' academic and personal development, where they form a distinct understanding of their cultural identity and its connection to the larger Vietnamese society (Tran & Walter, 2010). The education of national cultural identity offers a unique opportunity to foster a cohesive national identity and a shared sense of belonging among students, transcending regional, ethnic, and linguistic differences.

The education of national cultural identity in high schools has garnered increasing attention as a vital aspect of cultural preservation and national unity (Mitchell, 2003; Nieto, 2001; Tran & Walter, 2010). Scholars emphasize that cultural education is instrumental in shaping students' values, beliefs, and social identities (Korostelina, 2013; Schachter & Rich, 2011). By integrating cultural awareness into the curriculum, educators aim to instill in students a sense of pride and belonging, reinforcing their role as active participants in the preservation of their cultural heritage (Association, 2020; Barry & Lechner, 1995).

Various facets of national cultural identity education have been explored in the literature. Researchers have investigated the incorporation of diverse cultural elements, such as cuisine, traditional costumes, ethnic art, customs, and beliefs, to foster a comprehensive understanding of the nation's cultural mosaic (Bang, Medin, & Atran, 2007; Chao & Moon, 2005). Additionally, Gilman (2020) highlights the significance of organizing cultural and artistic activities that showcase the traditional arts and practices of different ethnic groups. Such activities

provide students with immersive learning experiences that not only enhance cultural appreciation but also promote cross-cultural understanding and respect (Ferreira, Savoy, & Markey, 2020).

The methodologies used in high schools further complement the content of national cultural identity education. Yamin (2017) suggests that integrating cultural education into homeroom activities and school assemblies under the flag provides students with collective experiences of celebrating national identity. Furthermore, activities that involve students in propagating information about volunteer programmes can foster a sense of environmental stewardship and cultural preservation (Kiss et al., 2022; McKinley et al., 2017). Despite the growing emphasis on cultural education, challenges exist in effectively implementing national cultural identity education in Vietnamese high schools. The importance of understanding educators' perceptions and experiences as they play a pivotal role in the delivery of cultural education (Phoon, Abdullah, & Abdullah, 2013; Redding, 2019; Zimmerman, 2006). The attitudes of educators towards cultural identity education can influence the quality and effectiveness of the learning experience for students (Gay & Howard, 2000; Ismael & Al-Abdullatif, 2016). Moreover, student perspectives are equally significant in shaping the success of cultural education efforts. Students' receptivity and engagement with cultural content directly impact the outcomes of cultural identity education (Gewin & Hoffman, 2016; Hammond, 2014). As cultural education seeks to create a meaningful connection between students and their cultural heritage (Barghi, Zakaria, Hamzah, & Hashim, 2017; Ford & Quinn, 2010), understanding students' experiences and perspectives becomes crucial in designing culturally responsive pedagogies.

While the subject of national cultural identity education has gained increasing attention from educators, policymakers, and researchers, there is still a need for comprehensive insights into the perceptions of both educators and students (Harrison & Peacock, 2009). Existing literature highlights the importance of cultural education and its potential impact on shaping national identity and promoting social cohesion (Faas, Hajisoteriou, & Angelides, 2014; Kaur, Awang-Hashim, & Noman, 2017; Nordgren, 2017). However, limited research exists that delves into the specific perceptions and experiences of educators and students regarding the content and methodologies employed in this process. This research article seeks to bridge this research gap by conducting a thorough investigation into the perceptions of educators and students about the education of national cultural identity in Vietnamese high schools. The study aims to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and best practices for promoting cultural awareness and pride among high school students. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature on cultural education in Vietnamese high schools and provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators. Additionally, the research will shed light on the potential impact of incorporating national cultural identity education into the curriculum, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and cultural appreciation among students. The education of national cultural identity for high school students in Vietnam is a dynamic and multifaceted process that necessitates a holistic understanding of educators' and students' perceptions and experiences. This research article aims to investigate and analyze the perceptions of educators and students towards the education of national cultural identity in Vietnam, specifically examining the content and methodologies employed to impart this vital knowledge. By gaining insights into the challenges and opportunities, this study endeavors to inform educational policymakers and stakeholders on effective strategies for fostering cultural appreciation, pride, and unity among high school students in Vietnam. Through collaborative efforts and evidence-based practices, the nation can build a culturally enriched educational environment that nurtures a strong sense of national identity and cohesion among the younger generation.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Participants

Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed as the method for participant selection in this research. This sampling approach involves selecting individuals based on their easy accessibility and availability, making it a practical choice for studies with limited time and resources. In the context of this study,

the researchers opted to include participants from two specific high schools situated in Thach A district, Cao Bang province, Vietnam. The sample size for this study was carefully determined to ensure an adequate representation of the target population. Among the participants, 65 teachers and administrators were included, representing the educational staff within the selected high schools. Additionally, 150 students were recruited, representing the student body of the same high schools. By incorporating both teachers, administrators, and students, the study sought to capture a holistic perspective on the education of national cultural identity within the high school context.

The choice of convenience sampling was particularly fitting for this study's focus on local educational settings, as it allowed for a practical and efficient data collection process. While convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population, it serves as a viable approach to examine the specific schools' perceptions and practices regarding the education of national cultural identity. By engaging with participants from these two high schools, the study aimed to gain valuable insights into the content and form of educational practices, contributing to a better understanding of how national cultural identity is integrated into high school curricula.

## 2.2. Measurement

The research design incorporated a carefully crafted questionnaire, comprising 17 questions, which were thoughtfully categorized into two distinct parts. Part 1 encompassed 7 questions that focused on examining the content of education related to national cultural identity for high school students. This segment of the questionnaire aimed to delve into the specific topics, themes, and cultural aspects that were being taught to the students in order to promote a stronger sense of national identity. On the other hand, Part 2 of the questionnaire comprised 10 questions that delved into the various forms and approaches employed in the education of national cultural identity for students in high schools. This section sought to explore the diverse methodologies, activities, and strategies adopted by educational institutions to foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of the nation's cultural heritage among the student population. The survey questionnaire was meticulously designed, utilizing a 5-level Likert scale to assess the respondents' perceptions and opinions. The Likert scale provided a structured format that facilitated the systematic collection of quantitative data, enabling the researchers to gauge the level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements related to the education of national cultural identity.

## 2.3. Procedure

For this study on "Perceptions of Educators and Students on the Education of National Cultural Identity for High School Students in Vietnam", a quantitative research design will be employed to collect and analyze data. The study will utilize a cross-sectional research design, wherein data will be collected at a single point in time. This design will allow the researchers to accurately capture the perceptions of educators and students about cultural education in high schools. Convenience sampling will be used to select the participants for the study. Two high schools in Thach A district, Cao Bang province, Vietnam, will be chosen as the research sites. The sample will include 65 teachers and administrators and 150 high school students from these schools. A structured questionnaire will be designed to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire will be divided into two parts. Part 1 will focus on the content of education on national cultural identity for high school students, and Part 2 will explore the form of education used in high schools to impart national cultural identity. The questionnaire will be constructed using a 5-level Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Participants will be asked to rate their perceptions and attitudes towards cultural education on each item. Data collection will be carried out through self-administered questionnaires distributed to the participants at the selected high schools. The researchers will provide clear instructions and ensure that participants have sufficient time to complete the questionnaires. The research findings will be presented in a well-organized manner, utilizing tables, charts, and graphs to effectively visualize the results. The key insights and implications of the research will be discussed based on quantitative data

analysis. The research procedure will also include a discussion of the study's limitations and suggestions for future research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic and potential areas for further investigation.

#### 2.4. Data Analysis

Once the data collection is complete, the gathered quantitative data will be subjected to comprehensive analysis using statistical software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics will be employed to summarize the participants' perceptions regarding the content and form of cultural education. Specifically, measures like means will be calculated to identify the average scores of respondents on various items related to cultural education. Standard deviations will be computed to determine the degree of variability in the data, providing insights into the dispersion of perceptions among the participants. These descriptive measures will offer a clear and concise overview of the dataset, facilitating the exploration of trends and patterns in the responses from educators and students.

### 3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and students about the content of ethnic cultural identity education for students in high schools, with a mean of 3.62 for teachers and administrators and 3.40 for students.

**Table 1.** About the content of educating national cultural identity for high school students.

No.	Content	Mean of teachers, administrators (n=65)	Mean of students (n=150)
1	Cultural education in the cuisine of the Tay and Nung ethnic groups	4.06	3.71
2	Educating national culture through national costumes	4.00	3.69
3	Educating cultural features in ethnic art (Such as folk songs, ethnic songs such as sli singing, luon singing, Khen dance ...)	3.75	3.56
4	Educating the national culture about the customs and traditions of the ethnic groups living in the locality	3.81	3.58
5	Education about cultural features in daily life and ethnic beliefs	3.06	2.92
6	Educating cultural values on knowledge and concepts of behavior in daily life and educating children in the family	3.09	2.96
7	Ethnic language education	2.07	2.21
Mean		3.62	3.40

The results presented in Table 1 provide insights into the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the content of educating national cultural identity for high school students in Vietnam. The mean scores for each content category were calculated based on responses from 65 teachers, administrators, and 150 students. The highest-rated aspect, according to both teachers and students, was "Cultural education in the cuisine of the Tay and Nung ethnic groups", with mean scores of 4.06 and 3.71, respectively. Similarly, "Educating national culture through national costumes" received high ratings from both groups, with mean scores of 4.00 and 3.69 for teachers and students, respectively. The next category, "Educating cultural features in ethnic art", which includes folk songs and ethnic songs such as sli singing, luon singing, and Khen dance, also received positive responses from both teachers and students, with mean scores of 3.75 and 3.56, respectively. Similarly, "Educating the national culture in the customs and traditions of the ethnic groups living in the locality" was well-received by both groups, obtaining mean scores of 3.81 for teachers and 3.58 for students.

Regarding "Education about cultural features in daily life and ethnic beliefs", the responses from both teachers and students showed a slightly lower level of agreement, with mean scores of 3.06 and 2.92, respectively. The category of "Educating cultural values on knowledge and concepts of behavior in daily life and educating children in the family" also received relatively lower ratings, with mean scores of 3.09 for teachers and 2.96 for students.

The last category, “Ethnic language education”, received the lowest ratings from both teachers and students, with mean scores of 2.07 and 2.21, respectively.

Overall, the mean score for all content categories was higher for teachers ( $M = 3.62$ ) than for students ( $M = 3.40$ ). These findings provide valuable insights into the perceptions of educators and students towards the education of national cultural identity for high school students in Vietnam, highlighting the aspects that are most highly valued and areas that may require further attention and improvement.

Table 2 provides information on how 150 students, 65 teachers, and administrators in Ho Chi Minh City perceive the national cultural identity education system. The mean score for all forms of education was higher for teachers and administrators ( $M = 3.31$ ) than for students ( $M = 3.23$ ).

**Table 2.** Form of education of national cultural identity for students in high schools.

No.	Content	Mean of teachers, administrators (n=65)	Mean of students (n=150)
1	Educating national cultural identity through homeroom activities and school assemblies under the flag.	3.60	3.49
2	Integrating knowledge about ethnic culture in teaching local education	3.55	3.49
3	Organizing experiential and career-oriented activities to educate students' national cultural identity	3.09	2.93
4	Organizing cultural and artistic activities for students, such as singing contests for Dao, Mong, Tay, Nung ethnic groups, etc.	3.00	2.89
5	Organize extra-curricular activities to propagate the UNESCO Global Geopark of Cao Bang Non-Nuoc	3.45	3.42
6	Organizing competitions to perform ethnic costumes, displaying booths, and introducing food and typical culture of regions in the province	3.48	3.44
7	Building columns on education of local ethnic cultural identity in the ethnic culture radio bulletin of the High School union	3.51	3.49
8	Participating in creative science and technology activities for high school students with research projects on local ethnic cultural values	2.89	2.83
9	Educating ethnic culture identity through landscape and space arrangements on the school campus, such as posters to educate, introduce, and promote local ethnic cultural values to students.	2.95	2.85
10	Equipped with a cultural bookcase (Introducing a variety of knowledge about local culture, the history of formation and development of local ethnic minorities, the product of students' research projects on local culture, etc.) in schools	3.57	3.46
Mean		3.31	3.23

The mean scores for each form of education were calculated based on their responses. The highest-rated forms of education, according to both teachers and students, were “Educating national cultural identity through homeroom activities and school assembly under the flag” and “Integrating knowledge about ethnic culture in teaching local education”, with mean scores of 3.60 and 3.49, respectively.

Next, “Organizing experiential and career-oriented activities to educate students' national cultural identity” and “Organizing cultural and artistic activities for students, such as singing contests of Dao, Mong, Tay, Nung ethnic groups”, received relatively positive responses, with mean scores of 3.09 and 3.00 for teachers and 2.93 and 2.89 for students, respectively.

The form of “Organizing extra-curricular activities to propagate about the UNESCO Global Geopark of Cao Bang Non-Nuoc” was also well-received, with mean scores of 3.45 and 3.42 from teachers and students, respectively. Similarly, “Organizing competitions to perform ethnic costumes and displaying booths introducing food and typical culture of regions in the province” received favorable ratings, with mean scores of 3.48 and 3.44 from teachers and students, respectively.

Other forms of education, such as “Building columns on education of local ethnic cultural identity in the ethnic culture radio bulletin of the High School Union” and “Participating in creative science and technology activities for

high school students with research projects on local ethnic cultural values”, were rated slightly lower, with mean scores of 3.51 and 2.89 from teachers and 3.49 and 2.83 from students, respectively.

The form of “Educating ethnic culture identity through landscape and space arrangement in the school campus, such as posters to educate, introduce, and promote local ethnic cultural values to students” received mean scores of 2.95 from teachers and 2.85 from students. Lastly, “Equipped with a cultural bookcase in schools, introducing a variety of knowledge about local culture, the history of formation and development of local ethnic minorities, and the product of students’ research projects on local culture” was rated positively, with mean scores of 3.57 and 3.46 from teachers and students, respectively.

These findings provide valuable insights into the perceptions of educators and students regarding the form of education of national cultural identity for high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, emphasizing the preferred approaches and areas that may require further attention and enhancement.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The findings from this research shed light on the perceptions of educators and students regarding the education of national cultural identity for high school students in Vietnam. The research revealed that educators in Vietnam place a strong emphasis on teaching national cultural identity to high school students, considering it an essential component of their education. However, the perceptions of students varied, with some expressing a deep appreciation for learning about their cultural heritage, while others felt that it was not as relevant to their daily lives. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of understanding the perspectives of both educators and students in shaping effective strategies for teaching national cultural identity in Vietnamese high schools. The study explored both the content and methodologies employed in cultural education and delved into the perspectives of educators and students, providing valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of cultural identity education. By understanding the perspectives of both educators and students, policymakers can develop more inclusive and engaging curricula that resonate with students' daily experiences. Additionally, these insights can inform the implementation of innovative teaching methods that foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of national cultural identity among Vietnamese high school students.

The results regarding the content of education on national cultural identity for high school students indicate that educators and students place substantial importance on various cultural facets. The emphasis on cultural education in the cuisine of the Tay and Nung ethnic groups and educating national culture through national costumes reflects the significance of tangible cultural elements in shaping students’ cultural perspectives (Tran, 2006). Additionally, the attention given to educating cultural features in ethnic art, customs, and traditions highlights the need to expose students to the intangible aspects of cultural heritage, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse cultural tapestries (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012).

However, it is noteworthy that some aspects of cultural education, such as educating about cultural features in daily life and ethnic beliefs, received relatively lower mean scores from both educators and students. This suggests that there may be opportunities for further enriching the content of cultural education to encompass more aspects of students' daily lives and beliefs, making the educational experience more relevant and relatable (Gay, 1994, 2013).

In terms of the form of education employed in high schools, the results indicate a focus on a range of activities aimed at engaging students with their cultural heritage. Activities such as integrating knowledge about ethnic culture into local education and organizing experiential and career-oriented activities underscore the multifaceted approach taken to foster cultural appreciation among students (Lopez-Littleton & Blessett, 2015). Moreover, the organization of cultural and artistic activities, including singing contests and displaying booths introducing regional culture, contributes to students' exposure to the rich cultural diversity within the country (Bennett, Gunn, Gayle-Evans, Barrera, & Leung, 2018). The lower mean scores for certain aspects of education, such as ethnic language education and participation in creative science and technology activities, present an opportunity to explore

innovative approaches to integrating cultural education into diverse areas of high school education (Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017). This may involve collaborations with local cultural experts, artists, and scientists to create engaging and interactive learning experiences that inspire students to explore their cultural heritage through various lenses. Overall, the findings from this research highlight the significance of cultural education in high schools in Vietnam. The attention given to various cultural facets and the diverse range of activities employed to engage students demonstrate a collective effort to instill a strong sense of cultural appreciation and national pride (Gay, 2018; Harrison & Peacock, 2009). These efforts not only enhance students' understanding of their own cultural heritage but also foster a sense of unity and belonging among different ethnic groups in Vietnam. Furthermore, cultural education in high schools can also contribute to the preservation and promotion of traditional arts and customs, ensuring their continuity for future generations. However, there remains room for improvement in certain aspects of cultural education, which can be addressed through collaboration between educational policymakers, teachers, students, and cultural experts. Collaboration between these stakeholders can lead to the development of comprehensive and inclusive curricula that incorporate a wide range of cultural perspectives and practices. Additionally, increased funding and resources can be allocated towards cultural education programs, allowing for the implementation of more interactive and experiential learning opportunities that actively engage students in their cultural heritage.

The research findings provide valuable guidance for educational policymakers and stakeholders in designing culturally responsive pedagogical approaches that resonate with students and foster a profound understanding of their cultural heritage (Simpkins, Riggs, Ngo, Vest Ettekal, & Okamoto, 2017; Stembridge, 2019). By incorporating diverse cultural elements into the curriculum and offering immersive learning experiences, high school students in Vietnam can develop a deeper connection with their cultural roots and contribute to the preservation and promotion of national cultural identity. This approach can also enhance students' sense of belonging and pride in their cultural heritage, leading to increased motivation and engagement in their education. Furthermore, by valuing and incorporating diverse cultural perspectives, educators can help students develop critical thinking skills and a broader worldview, preparing them for success in an increasingly globalized society. Moreover, the insights gained from educators and students can inform the development of evidence-based practices that address the challenges and opportunities in cultural education, ultimately cultivating a harmonious and culturally enriched educational environment in Vietnam. This harmonious and culturally enriched educational environment can foster a sense of belonging and acceptance among students, promoting inclusivity and reducing instances of discrimination or prejudice. Additionally, by embracing cultural diversity, educators can also foster creativity and innovation among students, as exposure to different perspectives can lead to new ideas and approaches to problem-solving.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the perceptions of educators and students about the education of national cultural identity for high school students in Vietnam. The study highlighted the significance of cultural education in shaping students' cultural perspectives and fostering a strong sense of national pride. The findings underscored the importance of a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to cultural education, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage. By integrating diverse cultural elements into the curriculum and offering engaging learning experiences, high schools in Vietnam can nurture a deeper understanding of cultural identity among students. This research has important implications for educational practice. It highlights the importance of collaboration between policymakers, instructors, students, and cultural specialists to improve the effectiveness of cultural education. This collaboration will contribute to creating a society that is harmonious and culturally enriched.

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**Transparency:** The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Authors' Contributions:** All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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