

**HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS**

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**CULTURAL LIFE OF STUDENTS AT NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY OF LAOS AT THE PRESENT TIME**

**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS**

**MEJOR: CULTURAL STUDIES**

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Counterargument 1:

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## INTRODUCTION

### **1. Reason for choosing the topic**

Culture consists of the material and spiritual values created by humans during practical activities to meet the needs of survival and development. It is manifested in a system of beliefs, ethics, customs, lifestyles, etc., created and voluntarily implemented by the community.

Laos is an ethnic group with a long history and a rich cultural identity. Entering the renewal period, specifically since the 5th Central Committee Congress (1991), the Lao People's Revolutionary Party has determined that: Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, serving both as a goal and a driving force for the country's development. Culture plays a significant role in shaping an individual's personality and creating the unique identity of a nation. In the current context, culture is also seen as a decisive factor in determining the strength and position of each country and nation. Therefore, developing cultural life holds significant strategic importance in the process of building and protecting the homeland. Building cultural life is considered an important part of culture, helping to create an increasingly democratic, peaceful, civilized, and sustainable social environment.

The construction of a cultural life within this specific educational institution is of great significance to the training of human resources for the Lao Party and State, as well as to the development of national culture during the period of international integration.

However, in the context of the downsides of market economic development, globalization, and international integration, many students show signs of deviating from standards in their behavior, pursuing a pragmatic and individualistic lifestyle, distancing themselves from the beautiful traditional values of their communities. Therefore, the training and nurturing of cultural values, especially the spiritual cultural life for students, is extremely important and necessary. Researching and accurately assessing the current state of the cultural life of students, and based on that, discussing recommendations and solutions to further enhance the cultural life of students in the near future is extremely necessary. Therefore, I have chosen to study the topic: “The Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos at the present time” as my doctoral dissertation in Cultural Studies.

### **2. Objectives and research tasks of the thesis**

#### **2.1. Research purpose**

Based on the study and clarification of theoretical issues regarding cultural life, this thesis aims to establish a theoretical framework for analysis; to survey and identify the cultural life of students at the National University

of Laos today, the thesis will specify the issues raised and discuss solutions to enhance the quality of cultural life for students at the National University of Laos in the near future.

## **2.2. Research Tasks**

The dissertation has the following main tasks:

- Overview the current research situation related to cultural life, the cultural life of students, and identify gaps that need further investigation.
- Clarify and systematize theoretical issues regarding cultural life, its structure, characteristics, and the role of cultural life in schools.
- Analyze and evaluate the current state of cultural life of students at the National University of Laos.
- Propose directions and solutions to contribute to building a cultural life for students at the National University of Laos to ensure comprehensive development: intellectual, moral, physical, and aesthetic, in accordance with the educational orientation set by the Party and the State of Laos.

## **3. Research Subjects and Scope of the Thesis**

### **3.1. Research Subjects**

The thesis focuses on studying the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos.

### **3.2. Scope of Research**

+ In terms of space: The survey is conducted at the National University of Laos. The thesis specifically examines the cultural life of full-time, regular students residing in the dormitories of the National University of Laos.

+ Regarding the time: Starting from the implementation of the Resolution of the 9th Conference of the Central Committee of the 11th Party Congress (in 2021) on promoting the distinctive cultural values of the nation and continuously developing the spiritual civilization of society. The survey data was collected during the semester 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024.

## **4. Methodology and Research Methods of the Thesis**

To achieve the set goals and tasks, the author of the thesis employs the methodology of Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Ho Chi Minh, the thought of Cayson Phomvihan, and specific research methods:

- Historical method.
- Method of systematizing relevant materials from reference documents.
- Use interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research methods of cultural studies.
- Use sociological survey methods.

## **5. New contributions of the dissertation**

### **5.1. Theoretical contributions**

The thesis contributes to clarifying, supplementing, and developing the concept and structure of cultural life in general, and the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos in particular.

## **5.2. Practical contributions**

- Contributes to raising awareness of the role of cultural life and clarifying the current state of cultural life among students.
- The research results of the thesis assist relevant authorities in universities and the education system in accurately assessing and, based on that, proposing feasible solutions to further enhance the cultural life of students in line with educational goals and the comprehensive development of individuals, creating a synergistic strength for economic and social development and current international integration.
- The thesis can be used as a reference for students, researchers, and those in the field of cultural studies.

## **6. Structure of the thesis**

The thesis consists of 3 parts: introduction, content, and conclusion. The content section includes 3 chapters:

*Chapter 1:* Overview of the research situation, theoretical basis on the cultural life of students, and an overview of the National University of Laos.

*Chapter 2:* Factors Influencing and the Current State of Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos.

*Chapter 3:* Issues Raised, Trends of Change, and Solutions to Enhance the Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos.

### **Chapter 1**

## **OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH SITUATION, THEORETICAL BASIS ON THE CULTURAL LIFE OF STUDENTS AND AN OUTLINE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAOS**

### **1.1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH SITUATION**

#### **1.1.1. Research project on cultural life**

When discussing cultural issues, the development of spiritual cultural life must include scientific studies such as: A.I. Acnondov (editor) (1984), *The Theoretical Basis of Marxist-Leninist Culture*, Hoàng Vinh - Nguyễn Văn Hy (translators). The book *"Building Cultural Life at the Grassroots"* by author Tran Do (editor) (1984). The book *"Cultural Studies"* by Doan Van Chuc (1997), Culture and Information Publishing House, Hanoi. The book *"Ho Chi Minh Culture"* by the authors Nguyen Huu Dang, Le Ngoc Y, and Tran Thi Hong Thuy (compiled and selected) (2014), published by the National Political Truth Publishing House, Hanoi. The book *"Theoretical and Practical Issues on Cultural Life and Cultural Environment"* by Assoc. Prof., Dr. Dinh Thi Van Chi (editor) (2015), published by the Ethnic Culture Publishing House,

Hanoi. The book "Lao Ethnicity and Lao Culture" by HumPhan LATTANAVONG...

### **1.1.2. Research on the cultural life of students**

Moral education, caring for the lives of generations in general, and building the cultural life of students in particular is a very important task. Therefore, the issue of cultural life is not only of concern to the Party, the State, and society as a whole, but also the subject of many scientists; it can be summarized as: "Some objective factors affecting the social positivity of Vietnamese students during the renewal period" by Trinh Tri Thuc (1994). "The relationship between the subject and the object of cognition in promoting the role of the subject in the learning of Vietnamese students today" by author Nguyen Tien Thu. The book "The Entertainment Needs of Youth" by Dr. Dinh Thi Van Chi, National Political Publishing House (2002). "Receiving the popular culture of students in the context of international integration (through a survey at Hanoi University of Culture, University of Education, and Foreign Trade University)" by Dang Thi Tuyet (2020). "Inheriting the traditional ethical values of the nation in building a new morality for the younger generation" by Ngo Thi Thu Nga, Cultural Thought Journal, No. 11-2002. Nguyen Chi Tue, "Organizing Cultural Activities in Universities," Cultural Thought Journal (12/2002). Nguyen Anh Tuan, Truong Thi Hue, article in issue 6 (12/2020) discussing "Enhancing the Quality of Scientific Research in Universities: International Experiences." Anusannha INTHALANGSY, Journal of Research of the National University of Laos, issue 10/2021; on the topic "Attitudes Toward the Implementation of Regulations by Students of the National University of Laos"...

### **1.1.3. Research studies on the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos.**

Research on the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos includes: Developing a female faculty team at the National University of Laos through a gender equality approach, Vetpany SIVONGXAY (2019). Somphone VANKHAM, Managing the professional training activities of the faculty team at the National University of Laos in the context of educational reform, the Doctoral thesis, Educational Management, Hanoi, 2020. "Developing human resources to meet the requirements of industrialization and modernization in the Lao People's Democratic Republic"; Doctoral thesis in philosophy by Chitsavanh THEPYOTIN (2023).

### **1.1.4. Evaluation of Achievements and Gaps that Require Further Research**

#### ***1.1.4.1. Achievements***

The works and articles published in Vietnam, Laos, and some other countries mentioned by the author have addressed many theoretical and

practical issues related to comprehensive human development, especially for young people of university age. The specific achievements include:

*Firstly*, regarding the theory: Some studies have established a general theoretical framework on cultural life and student cultural life: the concept, the role of student cultural life in human development, especially for the younger generation: personality, qualities, ethics, and knowledge in both material and spiritual aspects; the demands of the industrialization and modernization process in the current stage.

*Secondly*, regarding practical aspects: The studies mainly focus on analyzing the current situation and the impact of the market economy and other factors on students' lives. Some studies have addressed the parameters of quality of life that serve the process of training and learning.

#### ***1.1.4.2. Gaps that need further research in the thesis***

Firstly, there are gaps in theory. Regarding theory, the thesis needs to further clarify the following contents: (1) Elucidating concepts such as: cultural life, student life, and the cultural life of students in a socialist-oriented market economy; (2) Specify the concept and characteristics of students at the National University of Laos; (3) Develop a framework for analyzing the basic contents of the thesis; and (4) The requirements for the cultural life of students in a socialist-oriented market economy.

*Secondly*, the gaps in practice. Through an overview of the research situation related to the dissertation topic "The Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos Today," the author finds that there are currently no updated and systematic studies on the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos. Therefore, there are still many gaps in the research such as: (1) The current state of cultural life among students, especially the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos in recent times; (2) Analyzing the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos in recent times to identify the achievements and existing limitations, as well as to explore the causes of these limitations; (3) Discuss and propose some directions and solutions to enhance the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos, meeting the demand for high-quality human resources for the country's renewal process.

## **1.2. THEORETICAL BASIS OF STUDENTS' CULTURAL LIFE**

### **1.2.1. Concept of students' cultural life**

#### **1.2.1.1. Concept of life**

Regarding the concept of life, according to the Vietnamese dictionary, the term "life" often emphasizes the activities of human beings as the subject. The Vietnamese dictionary defines: "Life is the entirety of all activities in a certain field of human beings and society. Private life. Spiritual life. Cultural life."

### **1.2.1.2. Concept of culture**

Culture encompasses all the prominent material and spiritual values that arise from the intellect of an individual or a group of people. It is both maintained and promoted to ensure stability and development throughout history. Therefore, culture is always evolving and changing in accordance with the economic and social conditions of each country and region.

### **1.2.1.3. Concept of Cultural Life**

"Cultural life" is the process of activities aimed at satisfying the spiritual needs of humans, created by humans over a long period, directed towards truth, goodness, beauty, and social normative values. Cultural life is a complex entity, a part of social life, encompassing both static and dynamic cultural elements, facilitated by institutions, frameworks, cultural products, and various forms of cultural activities to generate positive energy, continuously enhancing the quality of life and happiness of individuals.

### **1.2.1.4. Concept of Students**

The decree on higher education in Laos defines "Students are individuals who are studying and researching at higher education institutions."

### **1.2.1.5. Concept of Students' Cultural Life**

"The cultural life of students" is an active process aimed at satisfying the spiritual needs of students, constructed by students themselves to pursue truth, goodness, beauty, and social value standards. The cultural life of students is a part of social life, encompassing a totality of static and dynamic cultural elements through institutions, systems, social products, and various cultural activities that create the intrinsic spiritual value in cultural products, serving as motivation for students to continuously improve their learning quality and meet the increasingly high demands of students.

## **1.2.2. Characteristics of the Cultural Life of Students**

The National University of Laos is a leading quality university in the country; therefore, the student body of the NUL holds a dual position in the social structure, representing both the youth and the intellectuals. On one hand, they are individuals in the process of developing their personalities and moral character, serving as a social force that is forming and evolving. On the other hand, as students (the young resources of the future), they are a fundamental reserve to supplement the intellectual workforce, the skilled labor force. They are a high-quality human resource and are sensitive to social issues.



### 1.2.3. Structure of students' cultural life

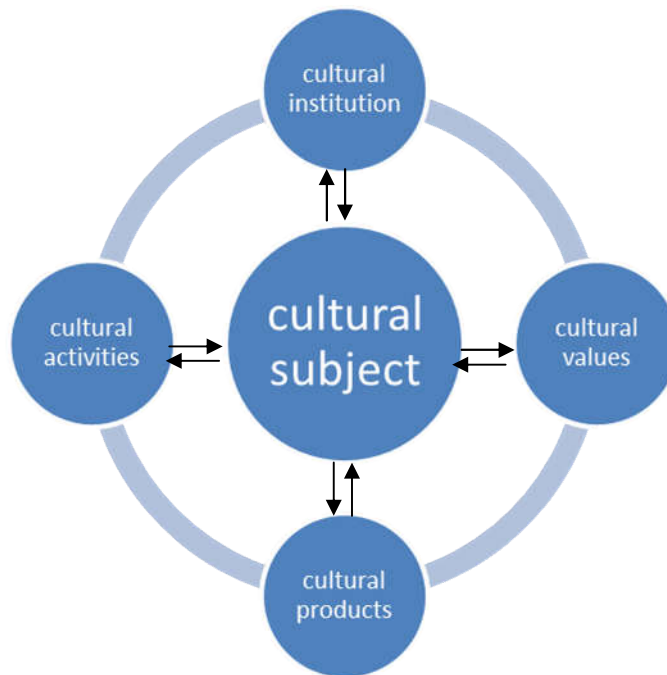
- Subjects of cultural life
- Value system
- Institutional framework and cultural institutions
- Cultural products
- Cultural activities

### 2.4. The role of the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos

- Cultural life contributes to nurturing ideals and forming ethics and a healthy lifestyle
- Cultural life enhances the quality of study and student activities
- Cultural life helps maintain security and order

### 1.2.5. Theoretical Framework Applied in the Thesis

- Activity Theory
- Needs Theory
- Analytical Framework of the Thesis



## 1.3. OVERVIEW OF LAO NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

### 1.3.1. History of Formation and Development of Lao National University

National University of Laos is an educational institution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, located in the capital city of Vientiane, about 9 km north of the city center. LNU is headquartered in Dong Dok Village, Xaythany District, Vientiane; to the north, it borders Noong Vieng Kham Village and Na Thom Village; to the south, it borders Kham Hung Village; to the east, it borders Sa Phang Muk Village, and to the west, it borders Dong Dok Village and Tan My Xay Village. The predecessor of the National

University of Laos was Sy Sa Vang Vong University, established in the 1960s. The establishment of the National University of Laos is an important task to continue developing the education sector of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The National University of Laos (NUOL) is the first regular university of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, established by a decree on June 9, 1995, from the Prime Minister and officially inaugurated for the first time on November 5, 1996. It was formed by the consolidation of 10 previously independent higher education institutions that were under various ministries, under the direction of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

### **1.3.2. Functions, tasks, and roles of the National University of Laos**

From the lessons learned from many countries and practical experiences, it has been demonstrated that: countries with citizens who have a high level of education will experience stronger economic and social development compared to those with lower educational levels, especially in the context where science and technology become direct productive forces and are decisive factors for development. Therefore, the urgent task of the country is to focus on developing and building a high-quality human resource to advance education, and only through training and nurturing can we cultivate knowledgeable individuals and quality resources for national development. For this reason, the Party and the Government have regarded education as a central issue in developing human resources to create Lao people who are good citizens with a high level of education. Having professional skills and good physical and mental health to develop the education system in Laos, aiming for the Lao education system to gradually approach regional and international education standards.

### **1.3.3. Organizational structure and faculty of the National University of Laos**

#### **1.3.3. The organizational structure and faculty team of the National University of Laos.**

*Regarding the organizational structure of the NUOL*

Initially, the National University of Laos consisted of 8 faculties, 7 offices, 1 university, and 1 library center; Currently, the National University of Laos includes 13 faculties, 2 academies, 5 centers, 10 offices, 1 library center, and 1 talent school.

*Regarding the staff and faculty of the National University of Laos.*

The total number of staff and faculty at the National University of Laos is 1,965, including 1,451 lecturers. The faculty team of the university has a proportion of 39.63% with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, while those with bachelor's degrees account for 60.37%. This number indicates that

the professional qualifications of the faculty at the NUOL are still low. However, they are a very important force in training human resources and providing knowledge to students.

#### **1.3.4. About Students of the National University of Laos**

Over 25 years of establishment and development, the National University of Laos has trained a large number of students. Specifically, in the 5 years from 2016 to 2020, the number of graduates was 22,277, including 9,385 females (among them, 22 PhDs, 1,945 master's degrees, 20,073 bachelor's degrees, and 257 associate degrees). The number of enrolled students has shown a gradual increase, from 8,137 students in the 1996-1997 academic year to 40,791 students in the 2009-2010 academic year. The total number of students at the Vietnam National University from the semester 2000-2021 was 22,621 students, including 10,740 females; in the academic year 2021-2022, there were 20,159 students, with 9,880 female students, and in the academic year 2022-2023, there were 24,376 students, of which 11,817 were female. Therefore, the number of students in the academic year 2022-2023 compared to the semester 2021-2022 increased by 4,217 students, representing a percentage increase of 17.29% for the Vietnam National University.

## **Chapter 2**

### **FACTORS AFFECTING AND THE CURRENT STATE OF CULTURAL LIFE OF STUDENTS AT LAO NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

#### **2.1. FACTORS INFLUENCING**

##### **2.1.1. The perspective of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the policies of the State**

In the process of renewal, the market mechanism has made students more perceptive, dynamic, and creative, stimulating their efforts in learning. With the attention of the Party committees and organizations, the facilities of schools have been invested in, and the living conditions in the dormitories have improved. The organizations have made significant efforts to innovate their operational methods, organizing various cultural activities that create healthy and beneficial playgrounds with high educational value, helping students engage in activities that are useful for society and themselves. However, the downsides of the market economy, the difficulties of the economy, and weak social management have posed significant risks and challenges to building a healthy cultural life.

##### **2.1.2. The Development of Vientiane Capital**

Regarding the socio-economic development of Vientiane Capital, in recent years, the economy has been growing quite slowly due to the impact of the COVID pandemic. By the end of 2023, Vientiane's economy is

gradually recovering, with a per capita GDP of \$1,625 and a per capita national income of \$1,534. Vientiane Capital has the advantage of vast land suitable for agricultural development. In addition, the capital Vientiane has strengths in developing the tourism industry, which helps promote businesses related to tourism, creates jobs for the people, and stimulates infrastructure development. The National University of Laos is located right in the heart of Vientiane. The capital Vientiane is closely tied to the national history and revolution, and the existing historical sites are a source of pride for the ethnic groups. Therefore, students at the National University of Laos are very sensitive and easily adopt the cultural lifestyles of various ethnic groups. The National University of Laos is also an environment with many opportunities, where students can choose to enjoy and engage in learning exchanges. However, it is also here that students can be easily influenced and affected by foreign cultures and drawn to harmful cultural products. To have good prevention and resistance against the negative impacts of cultural life, students must be vigilant and aware of every situation, while also determining their ideals to live meaningfully and contribute their talents to the nation.

### **2.1.3. The impact of the process of expanding international cultural exchange.**

Currently, Laos has entered a new stage of development, a period of promoting industrialization, modernization, and intellectual civilization. The people and culture of Laos have been undergoing significant changes. The cultural life of students is no longer confined to classrooms and schools but has expanded to meet cultural needs in new forms such as: Cultural center activities, clubs, stages, enjoying culture, and cultural exchange with the world. However, in the process of expanding international cultural exchange, traditional cultural values are being diminished; many students today are chasing a materialistic lifestyle, prioritizing money, idolizing foreign goods, and adopting mindsets and ways of living that are not in line with national cultural traditions. The cultural consumption needs of students are also significantly influenced by these thoughts. Sometimes, students choose to participate in unhealthy cultural activities that are not aligned with the traditional cultural values of the nation. This is also one of the reasons that lead to legal violations and social evils.

### **2.1.4. The impact of scientific and technological development**

Alongside the development of science and technology, the demand for cultural consumption, enjoyment, and creativity among students is increasing. Through modern technological means, students can buy and sell cultural products, enjoy leisure activities, and experience cultural values right at the National University of Laos. They can also entertain themselves with cultural

products and services while working and studying. Students can also watch television programs, listen to radio shows, and read various types of newspapers on the electronic news site. Currently, the facilities at the National University of Laos meet some of these needs, especially in providing supplementary information that promotes cultural values, as well as activities that enhance the quality of education, learning, and entertainment for students.

#### **2.1.5. The impact of the socialist-oriented market economy development**

Starting from the policy of economic growth alongside cultural development in the strategy and tactics for national development. Thus, it is not necessary to wait until the market economy reveals its negative aspects to consider and propose measures to reconcile them. While building a market economy, we must simultaneously develop cultural life, with the foundation of cultural life being the spirit of modern humanism. Therefore, we must quickly advance the development of cultural life for students at the National University of Laos. This is significant as students will later become officials and staff in agencies and units, responsible for formulating the Party's guidelines, the State's policies, and organizing their implementation for the people, as well as in the private sector and businesses, fostering a healthy lifestyle and ethics that align with the standards and values of the new era.

#### **2.1.6. Psychological Characteristics of Students**

Among the psychological characteristics of students, family cultural traditions play a significant role in influencing students' lives. It can be said that the family occupies a particularly important position; it is the root, the seed, the support, and the cradle that shapes each person's personality. Therefore, the family educational environment affects the cultural life of students in particular. The Lao proverb states: “When choosing an elephant, pay attention to its tail; when choosing a wife, consider her mother.” This highlights the close relationship among family members. A harmonious and loving family, where everyone cares for one another and shares strong emotional bonds, will surely nurture the seeds of growth. A family full of love, warmth, and sharing is one of the factors that influences the cultural life of students. Conversely, a dysfunctional family environment with many complex conflicts will certainly have a negative impact on the development of personality and cultural life for students. In addition, educational institutions at all levels play an important role in equipping students with basic knowledge in various fields and specialties, enabling them to develop the necessary skills. Furthermore, training institutions are also places where students interact with each other, forming networks of relationships,

supporting one another, and sharing assistance in many aspects of life, which in turn contributes to shaping their character in the future.

## **2.2. IDENTIFYING THE CULTURAL LIFE OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAOS STUDENTS**

### **2.2.1. The subject of the cultural life of students**

The consistent viewpoint of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party is to build a prosperous and thriving nation economically, alongside creating spiritual prosperity, with a strong connection between these two aspects to generate overall motivation that ensures sustainable development. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party always prioritizes human issues, considering them the subject for implementing policies. Our Party believes that: "maintaining a sustainable development path, viewing people as a priority goal and a driving force for development, enhancing and building a culture, spiritual civilization, ensuring material living standards, and promoting social values that align with socialist orientation in a solid manner. "The National University of Laos must continuously improve the qualifications and skills of its lecturers and staff to ensure ongoing progress and development of both the teaching staff and students, in terms of both material and spiritual aspects; it emphasizes creating favorable conditions in all aspects to help students become solid in both character and intellect, in line with the overall goal of the National University of Laos, which is:

*First*, to train students to become professionals with ethics, culture, knowledge, morality, talent, and a diverse and rich teaching format that meets the highest national standards and gradually progresses towards regional and international standards.

*Second*, to develop a strong, effective, clean, streamlined, agile, and civilized management system for the Lao National University.

*Third*, Develop the NUOL into a green, clean environment with advanced and modern facilities to serve the educational mission.

The diversity of culture, due to the nature of students at the National University of Laos coming from various regions, different backgrounds, and learning to operate in a multicultural and multi-ethnic environment, as well as from different public and private schools, has created this diversity. Cultural diversity has facilitated the expansion of cultural exchanges, allowing for the absorption of the cultural essence of humanity, enriching and diversifying the national culture; it lays the foundation for building and enhancing the quality of cultural life for students. It shortens the gap between Laotian students and international students as well as the world's cultures.

### **2.2.2. The Cultural Value System of Students**

The cultural value system is clearly evident in how it influences the formation of personality traits, thoughts, psychology, positive emotional

qualities, and habits of thinking in individuals, leading to good actions and behaviors, which in turn contribute to the development of society. Just like cultural traditions that are always inherited from one generation to the next, it becomes deeply rooted in the customs, psychology, and mindset of students.

So, the formation of a new cultural life gradually relies on discipline, with a new lifestyle characterized by elements of pure revolutionary ethics, self-discipline, the ability to struggle against enemies, the internal struggles of students, a love for labor, and diligence in studying; there is discipline and new ethical qualities in all tasks: In terms of eating, living, exercising, resting, sports, cleaning, and maintaining hygiene, as well as in social relationships based on a foundation that is widely loved and honored, this is most clearly reflected in the following points:

*First*, there is an awareness of the importance of comprehensive self-improvement.

*Second*, there is a love for the country.

*Third*, there is a sense of organization and strict discipline.

*Fourth*, there are new ethical qualities in work.

*Fifth*, there is a sense of ethics and responsibility in learning.

### **2.2.3. Institutional System and Cultural Institutions**

Through the survey, the researcher found that students at the National University of Laos were satisfied with the cultural institutions of the NOUL. They affirmed that the school always pays attention to the cultural institutions and systems of the National University of Laos. This is demonstrated by the school's assignment of relevant departments to develop and supplement legal documents. In addition, the university has a cultural management system to support students, providing a foundation for them to be motivated to participate in cultural activities, making the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos increasingly meaningful, allowing them to integrate, adapt, and engage in social and cultural life.

### **2.2.4. Cultural products serving the cultural life of students**

The cultural products of students at the NOUL, are not simple; they are rich, diverse, and multidisciplinary. They create and enjoy according to their needs and tastes that align with their talents, while also supplementing their knowledge and skills for learning and training activities. Moreover, those products are purposeful, well-planned, contain useful content, have an attractive organization format, and provide beneficial effects.

### **2.2.5. Cultural Activities of Students**

The cultural life of students at NOUL is quite diverse, constantly emerging and developing, moving in accordance with the laws of culture, and influenced by both external and internal factors. To implement the

activities, on one hand, the student must acquire the corresponding knowledge, skills, and techniques related to the tools and means; on the other hand, the activities are guided, adjusted, and driven by clear and conscious motives and purposes. These factors are the prerequisites for the operation of the activities, and they are expressed and developed throughout the process. Therefore, the cultural life of students here always contains beautiful values that need to be promoted and to address the limitations, eliminating what is no longer suitable for the general development trends of society and specifically for the Vietnam National University, Laos. The cultural activities of students here are expressed in various forms depending on their needs and desires, creating motivation, behavior, and activities aimed at the highest purpose, It is a progressive civilization through the following activities:

- Educational and propaganda activities to develop personality
- Students' learning activities
- Creative activities for cultural values
- Consumption of cultural products
- Preservation of cultural values
- Promotion and dissemination of cultural values

Based on the current state of the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos, the researcher will identify the issues that arise and seek solutions to enhance the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos. This content will be addressed in Chapter 3.

### **Chapter 3**

## **ISSUES RAISED, TRANSFORMATION TRENDS, AND SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE THE CULTURAL LIFE OF STUDENTS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAOS**

### **3.1. ISSUES RAISED IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF STUDENTS AT LAOS NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

#### **3.1.1. Authority, responsibilities, and participation of students**

The decree on higher education has affirmed: "Each higher education institution must organize student management according to a complete system to fulfill the management and care responsibilities for students in accordance with the discipline of the training institution and the state laws regarding daily life activities and classroom activities." "In the dormitory, extracurricular activities, organization of physical education and sports activities, cultural activities, social and political activities, and activities of collective organizations take place there" (Chapter 7, Article 37 on the organization and management of students). Article 38 has defined the rights and obligations: "Students at higher education institutions have rights and obligations as prescribed by law and must comply with the legal regulations



on education and adhere to the regulations on student management in the country and those of the Ministry of Education and Training." Here, there is an inconsistency. Article 37 clearly states that "students must be managed systematically to ensure they can easily participate in all cultural activities," but Article 38 only refers to education laws and domestic regulations. Article 38 needs to be supplemented with content regarding the role of educational institutions so that students have a clearer understanding that, in addition to the legal codes, there are also subordinate legal documents and internal regulations of their training institutions that they must comply with and strictly adhere to. In addition, the internal regulations issued by the National University of Laos are not uniform and are applied universally to all subjects, even though each faculty has its own specific characteristics. Many decisions are rigid and mandatory.

Another noteworthy decision is in the regulations regarding the student scholarship fund, which is intended for poor students, orphans, those from difficult family circumstances, and those from remote areas. In Article 7 regarding the responsibilities of beneficiaries, paragraph 3 states, "students are obligated to participate in all activities organized by the relevant organization," and in Article 9 it is noted, "if a student fails to participate in activities up to 3 times (without justification), their scholarship will be revoked." Often, students from difficult backgrounds must also strive to secure food, clothing, and other daily expenses... Students have to make a living by working part-time jobs outside of their study hours. Therefore, sometimes the legal regulations do not truly encourage or promote students to fulfill their responsibilities, especially in enhancing their cultural life.

### **3.1.2. The suitability/unsuitability of the institutional system and cultural institutions for students**

The cultural life of students is reflected in their daily activities such as eating, dressing, commuting, studying, and recreational activities. In today's era, it can be observed that most students are less interested in studying. This is largely due to students being heavily influenced by the struggle for survival as well as the impacts from their surrounding environment.

In addition to the achievements and results recorded, in the survey, the graduate students found that the operation of the cultural institution system is revealing some issues, limitations, and shortcomings, causing difficulties for cultural activities of students, especially regarding funding investment. Although there has been a cultural activity fund from the school, from the departments, and from various clubs... However, regardless of the scale of cultural activities, students must incur certain additional expenses. This poses difficulties for a segment of students who lack the means. Furthermore, many

cultural institutions have outdated facilities and technical equipment that do not meet current demands. Some cultural institutions, despite having received significant investment, operate very inefficiently, often remaining unused and wasted. Many recreational areas and sports halls are not used for their intended purposes and have quickly deteriorated due to ineffective operation.

The operational machinery of cultural institutions has not met standards, is inefficient, and both the specialized and management human resources do not meet the task requirements. The compensation policies for the team members, most of whom are students, are inadequate. The guidance and organization of activities are not proactive, lack creativity, and are not professional, which diminishes their appeal to attract student participation as well as investment from sponsors. Some content and forms of activities of cultural institutions have not been regulated by official documents from the National University of Laos. Meanwhile, the issued policies lack coherent integration and do not truly consider the specific characteristics of certain groups and fields of study, such as the Faculty of Sports Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Law, Agriculture, and Forestry.

Some regulations regarding the organization, operation, and criteria of cultural institutions are not suitable for practical realities. This issue causes many institutions to face difficulties and confusion in the process of achieving financial autonomy, mobilizing and allocating resources, and organizing various cultural, artistic, sports, and performance activities.

### **3.1.3. Quantity and Quality of Cultural Products**

The National University of Laos is the leading educational institution in the country; therefore, the quality of cultural products serving student life is a priority issue to consider. In recent years, the guiding trend in the reform of the teaching process has been to enhance the quality of education and training while improving cultural life and preserving and promoting the beautiful traditional values of ethnic groups. To achieve this, it requires placing students at the center. However, each student must be proactive, engaged, and self-reliant during the process. In reality, due to the pressures of the market economy, most students have used their leisure time to earn money and support themselves, sharing financial burdens with their families and relatives. Regarding this issue, it can be observed that the percentage of students using the internet for work is 9.7%, following the reasons for seeking information and communication. So that, it can be concluded that, in the context of a market economy, participation in the production of cultural products serving the cultural life of students depends on the cost level. Meanwhile, this activity is a process involving students, so the quantity and quality of the products are certainly a rather complex contradiction.

### 3.1.4. Forms and content of cultural activities of students

**Table 3.1. Issues raised in the structure of cultural life**

<b>Content</b>	<b>%</b>
The authority, responsibilities, and involvement of students.	8.2
The suitability and unsuitability of the institutional system and cultural institutions for students.	13.9
The quantity and quality of cultural products serving the cultural life of students.	34.4
The form and content of cultural activities of students.	43.6

*Source: Results of the sociological survey by the thesis author, 2023.*

Looking at the results in Table 3.1, we see that form and content are currently pressing issues regarding the cultural life of students. The survey shows that 43.6% of students believe this issue should be addressed. It indicates that the form and content of cultural life activities are not commensurate with the importance of the role of cultural life, and they do not truly serve as a foundation or motivation for students to satisfy their spiritual lives, thereby supporting their learning process.

This is a contradiction between preserving and enhancing the value of traditional cultural and artistic products and harmonizing traditional inventions such as modern traditional dressmaking, dance, songs, and other arts. This shows the conflict between the needs of different generations and organizations regarding content and form. For example, artworks created in earlier periods often focused on love for the homeland and the nation, as well as significant events of the people. In contrast, today's students tend to appreciate art that leans towards personal life, even following Western cultural trends.

## **3.2. TRENDS IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAOS STUDENTS**

### **3.2.1. The trend of diversifying cultural activities**

The process of globalization is having both positive and negative impacts on the cultural life of students. Most notably, this is reflected in the way students consume cultural products and participate in cultural activities. The development of science and technology has led to a new transformation in the quality of the productive forces, changing both the economic structure and the cultural and social aspects of each country and nation worldwide. In the past few decades, globalization and international integration have not only been a global scientific issue but, in practical terms, they have been

influencing and shaping the strategies and policies for economic and cultural development of each nation.

For the cultural and spiritual life of students at the National University of Laos, the impact of the market economy, globalization, and international integration occurs in all areas: ideology, ethics, and lifestyle; the development of education, training, and science and technology; the demand for creativity and appreciation of art; religious and spiritual activities; the development of the national language; the development of cultural services and cultural industries; the import and export of cultural products; and the issue of state management regarding student culture... This impact brings both positive and negative aspects.

On a positive note, through trade liberalization, attracting investment, and expanding markets, globalization has created opportunities for the development of cultural products and various forms of entertainment. While in the past, students only participated in domestic entertainment activities, today many global youth entertainment trends have been introduced and developed in Laos. Globalization facilitates the rapid and increasingly profound dissemination and introduction of modern scientific, technical, and technological achievements, allowing students to access and update themselves with the vast sources of information and knowledge of humanity, thereby significantly enhancing their level of knowledge. This clearly has a positive impact on students' thinking and lifestyle, making them more flexible, dynamic, and sharper in their thinking. The participation of students in cultural activities has also changed. In the past, students only engaged in routine, clichéd, and monotonous cultural activities. Nowadays, students participate in a variety of more modern cultural activities. The impact of globalization has fostered in students a proactive and creative mindset, as well as independence in thought and action. At the same time, this process has also cultivated new values such as a spirit of independence, self-reliance, decisiveness, and the courage to think, act, and take responsibility for their work.

Globalization facilitates the expansion of cultural exchange, allowing for the assimilation of the world's cultural treasures, enriching the national culture, and laying the foundation for building and enhancing the quality of the cultural and spiritual life of students. Through cultural exchanges, the gap between Laotian students and students worldwide, along with global culture, is narrowed, bringing them closer together.

On the negative side, globalization can create the risk of cultural dependency, which in turn leads to a crisis of trust among students in human values, posing a risk of encouraging students to pursue a pragmatic lifestyle, distancing themselves from traditional national values. This is one of the

reasons that give rise to unhealthy and distorted cultural tastes. Currently, a segment of students lives pragmatically, indifferent, fading away from ideals, or lives without purpose and ideals. They fall into a consumer lifestyle, measuring value by money and material possessions. Consequently, this easily leads to a purely hedonistic and pragmatic cultural life, which can also result in negative behaviors in life.

### **3.2.2. The trend of expanding the cultural activity environment.**

Currently, as the Lao People's Democratic Republic enters a new stage of development, a period of promoting industrialization and modernization, the people and culture of Laos are undergoing significant changes. Accordingly, the cultural and social life of students is also evolving and adapting to the general trends of society.

The cultural values of industrial civilization and intellectual civilization have modernized ways of thinking, enriched various forms and conveniences of cultural life, significantly enhancing the material and cultural lives of students. The cultural life of students is no longer confined to a small scale (dorm rooms, classrooms, etc.) but has expanded according to the needs of cultural entertainment in new forms, such as club activities, performances, and enjoying global culture. However, many traditional cultural values in students' cultural activities are being diminished. Many students today follow trendy lifestyles, favor materialism, absolutize money, idolize foreign goods, and carry mindsets and ways of living that are not in line with the national cultural traditions. The demand for cultural enjoyment among students is also significantly influenced by these thoughts. Sometimes, students choose to engage in unhealthy cultural activities that do not align with the traditional cultural values of their nation. This is also one of the reasons leading to legal violations and social evils.

Regarding the current cultural consumption needs of students, it shows that the psychology and consumption habits of students in terms of cultural values have changed significantly compared to the past. The method of interaction through the Internet has broken down all barriers, forming groups of students with shared interests and common concerns.

### **3.2.3. Trends in Participation in Cultural Activities**

Strengthening education and training for students regarding awareness, feelings, love for the country, appreciation for labor, and the development and preservation of the cultural values of ethnic communities and villages is extremely necessary today. Educating students to develop the ability to appreciate, preserve, and promote traditional cultural values through cultural and artistic works, participating in creation and invention, and enjoying the traditional cultural values of the nation is essential. Fostering the nurturing of the soul and love for the country among the younger generation and students

through experiential activities, participation in club activities, sports, literature and arts, and cultural events both inside and outside of school. Promoting library activities linked to digital transformation and enhancing the reading culture in schools. Encouraging students to actively and voluntarily fulfill their rights, obligations, and responsibilities in self-study and training to improve health, develop physical fitness, educate morals, promote a healthy lifestyle, and preserve the identity and cultural traditions of the Lao ethnic groups.

### **3.3. SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE THE CULTURAL LIFE OF STUDENTS AT LAO NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

#### **3.3.1. Solutions to Raise Awareness Among Stakeholders**

##### **3.3.1.1. Solutions to Enhance Students' Awareness**

Students at Lao National University need to be proactive and engaged in their learning process, especially in self-study using useful tools like the Internet, effectively utilizing various websites. Students need to be aware of both the positive aspects and the limitations of the Internet, thereby leveraging and maximizing the positive aspects of the Internet to serve their lives, studies, and knowledge updates.

Solutions regarding usage time: Students should equip themselves with basic knowledge to use the Internet reasonably, seek information online, and exchange information through social networks. Students need to learn about various search tools on the Internet to access information and resources in a rich, accurate, and reliable manner.

##### **3.3.1.2. Solutions to raise awareness among the leadership and management board of the National University of Laos**

- Propagating, educating, and guiding students in the use of the Internet.

- Student management: effectively carrying out student management to prevent students from being exploited, lured, or forming factions against the Party, State, University, teachers, or speaking ill of their peers. Instructors should further develop their Internet usage skills and dedicate time to improving their foreign language and computer skills. In teaching, instructors need to promote the proactive engagement of learners, creating opportunities for students to explore and enhance their knowledge through the Internet.

Giải pháp về cơ sở vật chất: Cần có sự đầu tư, hỗ trợ hơn nữa để tăng cường khả năng và cơ hội sử dụng mạng Internet cho sinh viên, kể cả trong lớp học, tăng cường trang bị cơ sở vật chất tại các phòng máy phục vụ sử dụng Internet cho sinh viên.

##### **3.3.1.3. Solutions for Raising Awareness Among Organizations**

- From the perspective of the Youth Union of the NUOL:

1). Educate young people to have a love for their country, trust in the Party, remain loyal to the Party, and uphold revolutionary and socialist ideals.

2). Youth unions at all levels should focus on preserving the achievements of the revolution and the noble traditions of the nation, the Party, and the youth.

3). Strengthen solidarity and unity to become a great power, overcoming all difficulties and challenges, and successfully completing all tasks assigned by the Party and the State.

4). The youth union must focus on consolidating the organizational structure at all levels, ensuring both quantity and quality.

5). Strive to establish a vibrant and active youth movement by linking it with the Party's slogans about youth, promoting the process of learning, and enhancing the knowledge and capabilities of union members.

6). Strengthen cooperation with the youth of friendly strategic countries, regions, and internationally to develop youth to a new quality.

It is necessary to enhance propaganda and education about the impacts of the Internet on students' lives, helping student union members to have a correct perspective and proper guidance in using the Internet. Regarding student clubs: It is necessary to actively organize extracurricular activities related to cultural, sports, entertainment, and social events; helping students develop skills while also avoiding the negative impacts of the Internet. Solutions from the family side: Guide students towards healthy and engaging study and recreational activities, pay attention to their mental and psychological well-being, create a warm and intimate family atmosphere as a solid support, and direct students towards activities such as: cultural events, sports, excursions, travel, summer camps, charitable activities, and the preservation of cultural identity, customs, and beliefs.

**3.3.2. Solutions for building and strengthening the cultural institution system and facilities to serve students' cultural activities.**

***3.3.2.1. Solutions for building a cultural institution system and facilities to serve the cultural activities of students***

*First*, establish a student cultural center at the NUOL.

*Second*, develop digital infrastructure at the NUOL.

*Third*, enhance the cultural library of the NUOL.

***3.3.2.2. Solutions to strengthen the cultural institution system and facilities serving the cultural activities of students***

*Firstly*, the limitations of facilities and funding will reduce the initiative and enthusiasm of students.

*Secondly*, to strengthen the digital media system serving the promotion of cultural products of students at the National University of Laos, it is essential to focus on building and developing the official website of the

National University of Laos, providing detailed and comprehensive information about cultural events and artistic products of students.

*Third*, repairing the dormitory system and the multipurpose building to serve the cultural activities of students at the National University of Laos.

### **3.3.3. Solutions for mobilizing resources to build the cultural life of students**

#### ***3.3.3.1. Mobilizing resources from the government***

*Firstly*, it is necessary to strengthen the leadership role of the units within the university, as the directive role of the Party Committee and the leadership board regarding the cultural and spiritual life of students is extremely important.

*Secondly*, establish close dialogue between the National University of Laos and government agencies to propose policies for financial support and resources for building the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos in line with the requirements of the new context.

*Thirdly*, propose the establishment of special funding and scholarship programs from the government to support students participating in cultural and artistic activities.

*Fourthly*, call for cooperation between the National University of Laos, the government, and the local community to develop and maintain cultural projects to support students.

#### ***3.3.3.2. Mobilizing resources from domestic enterprises***

*First*, establish a business partnership program with the NOUL.

*Second*, implement a business cooperation and training program. The National University of Laos needs to develop a collaboration program between the school and enterprises to create training and internship opportunities for students in the fields of culture and event management.

*Third*, support the National University of Laos in organizing major cultural events.

*Fourth*, establish a strategic partnership between the National University of Laos and enterprises.

#### **3.3.3.3. Mobilizing resources from abroad**

*First*, mobilizing resources from governments and educational institutions of other countries.

*Second*, mobilizing resources by strengthening cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

*Third*, mobilizing resources from international universities.

*Fourth*, mobilizing resources from foreign entities and businesses.

### **3.3.4. Solutions for Innovating Cultural Activities in Schools**

The form and content are very important issues that interact and complement each other. If the content is good but the form is not suitable, it will not yield the best



results for the audience. Therefore, innovating the forms of cultural activities in schools needs to be given special attention, especially in the context of rapidly advancing science and technology today.

So, how can one balance studying, participating in activities, and working part-time?

*First*, it is essential to clearly define the goals to be achieved.

*Second*, it is necessary to create a plan for oneself for each specific stage.

*Third*, one needs to have effective time management skills.

*Fourth*, it is important to organize and coordinate tasks towards a common goal.

*Fifth*, ensure good health.

### **3.3.5. Solutions for Coordination with Relevant Agencies in Building the Cultural Life of Students**

To propose solutions on this topic, let us examine the survey results in Table 3.2 below:

**Table 3.2. Solutions to Enhance the Cultural Life of Students**

<b>Content</b>	<b>%</b>
Solutions to enhance the awareness of stakeholders.	5.2
Solutions for building and strengthening the cultural institutions and facilities to serve the cultural activities of students.	14.9
Solutions for mobilizing resources to build a cultural life for students.	4.5
Solutions for mobilizing resources to build a cultural life for students.	21.5
Solutions for coordinating with relevant agencies in building the cultural life of students.	54

*Source: Results of the sociological survey by the thesis author, 2023.*

In the group of solutions proposed by the author, 54% of students chose the solution of coordinating with relevant agencies in building cultural life, followed by 21% of students who preferred the solution of innovating cultural activities in schools. This indicates that the relevant organizations should actively fulfill their responsibilities: Firstly, regarding the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, in the coming time, to enhance the cultural life of students at the National University of Laos, it is proposed to send recommendations to the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, thereby contributing to the improvement of the cultural life for students in the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, students at the National University of Laos have a rich and healthy cultural life. Today, students at the NOUL have access to information

from various sources, primarily through the Internet. The emergence of clubs such as the Petanque Club, Arts Club and English Language Club... An attractive, beneficial, and healthy playground has been created for students. In addition, students participate in various cultural and sports activities. Extracurricular activities attract a large number of students, creating a favorable environment for them to interact, learn, and accumulate practical experience. Many competitions such as: the contest for skilled and proficient youth union officials, the contest to understand Marxist-Leninist theory and its application in practice have contributed to nurturing students' scientific worldview and revolutionary outlook on life, helping them remain steadfast and politically stable. Students at the NOUL use various communication devices such as computers and mobile phones... to enjoy and access culture.

However, alongside this, the cultural life of students at the NOUL in recent years has still revealed some limitations and shortcomings. Due to the recent transition to a bachelor's degree program, the number of students is increasing, leading to some of the academy's regulations and rules for students being inadequate and not aligned with reality. A small portion of students still engage in unhealthy behaviors such as drinking and gambling... The awareness of compliance with regulations among this small group of students at the NOUL is not yet satisfactory. The promotion and dissemination of legal education has not yet been implemented vigorously. A portion of students have not yet determined their future, especially their study goals, lacking the determination to strive for improvement in their studies and research, and lacking the "fire" to participate in activities of the Youth Union at the University. Many cultural activities organized for students at the NOUL have not been timely, lack depth, and have only focused on movements without fully demonstrating a fighting spirit. Some content is still not suitable and does not attract all students at the NOUL. In addition, the awareness of some students, and even faculty members at the university, regarding culture and cultural life is still not accurate. This has significantly affected the quality and effectiveness of building a cultural life for students at the NOUL. Therefore, the NOUL needs to implement coordinated and systematic measures to continuously improve the quality of cultural life for its students in the near future.

**LIST OF PUBLISHED WORKS BY THE AUTHOR**  
**RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC**

1. Khamhou VILATHONE (2023), “The Positive Aspects and Limitations in the Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos,” *Journal of Culture and Arts*, (542), pp. 117-120.
2. Khamhou VILATHONE (2023), “Some Issues Regarding the Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos,” *Journal of Culture and Arts*, (551), pp. 117-120.
3. Khamhou VILATHONE (2024), “The Impact of the Internet on the Cultural Life of Students at the National University of Laos Today,” *Journal of Social Science Information*, (494), pp. 45-51.
4. Khamhou VILATHONE (2024), “Enhancing the Cultural and Spiritual Life of Students at the National University of Laos,” *Journal of Culture and Arts*, (581), pp. 116-119.