ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Stakeholder Engagement in the Development of the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature in Vietnam (2022-2025)

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum development is a complex process that requires the coordinated participation of various stakeholders both inside and outside of the school. Based on this reality, Kettunen (2015) proposes a stakeholder map for curriculum development, distinguishing between internal and external stakeholders. Drawing on local and international research regarding stakeholder involvement in curriculum development in general, as well as the practice of developing the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature from 2022 to 2025 (corresponding to the three school years of implementing the 2018 General Curriculum: 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025) in Vietnam, this article analyzes the extent of stakeholder participation in the curriculum development process, specially focus on the Needs Analysis phase within the ADDIE model. Therefore, this article provides several recommendations for effectively mobilizing stakeholder participation in the development of the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary school level in the future.

1. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum development is a dynamic and evolving concept that requires continuous revision to meet the demands of practice. It is also a complex process that necessitates the participation of diverse stakeholders. Historically, curriculum design has followed a centralized model, in which the authority for planning and organization rested with central agencies. However, the rapid advancement of science and technology in recent decades has generated multifaceted requirements across sectors, giving rise to a trend of democratization in education. In line with this trend, a decentralized approach to curriculum development has increasingly been adopted.

Following Guideline 791/HD/BGDĐT issued by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (2013), the task of curriculum development was first introduced and piloted at six educational institutions nationwide. A significant milestone was the promulgation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, characterized by an open orientation, which established curriculum development as a comprehensive and urgent requirement for the entire education system. In this new context, local authorities and schools have been empowered to develop curricula tailored to their specific needs, while still aligning with the frameworks established in the national curriculum.

Consequently, the role of stakeholders in school-based curriculum development has emerged as both a novel and practical issue. Although numerous studies at home and abroad have examined this topic, much of the existing research remains theoretical, with limited empirical attention to stakeholder participation in the practical context of school-level curriculum design. Particularly, in-depth analyses of stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature are still insufficient in Vietnam.

The notion of "curriculum development" was first introduced in 1820, but only began to be used professionally in the mid-20th century in countries with advanced education systems. The acceleration of global educational reforms has positioned curriculum development as a central concern in the field of academic science. Richards (2001) emphasizes that key questions and core elements in curriculum design must guide language curriculum development. Similarly, Do (2011) noted the need for continuous adjustment and supplementation in his study of the Literature Curriculum in Vietnamese secondary schools, to ensure that curricula remain relevant in new national and international contexts.

In international scholarship, Lewy (1991) categorizes stakeholders in curriculum development into legal and non-legal factors, all of which are oriented toward meeting the needs of the community and learners. Simms and Chapleo (2010) distinguish between internal and external stakeholders in higher education curriculum design, whereas Kettunen (2015) proposes a circular stakeholder framework that highlights the interaction between internal stakeholders at the center and external forces at the periphery. Lidsten et al. (2015) identify teachers as the pivotal stakeholders bridging students and society, and Matkovic et al. (2015) stress the role of stakeholders in the analysis phase of the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation). In the Vietnamese context, Vu (2023) clarifies the distinct contributions of local authorities, principals, teachers, students, and other actors in curriculum development. Likewise, Nguyen (2023) surveyed the degree of participation from various educational forces in Hanoi's secondary schools and highlighted the importance of strengthening stakeholder engagement in practice.

Building upon these foundations and recognizing the current research gap, this study focuses on the perspectives, objectives, teaching content, and learning topics of the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary school level. Specifically, it seeks to accurately identify internal and external stakeholders involved in implementing this curriculum. By doing so, the study aims to provide insights into how stakeholder participation can be effectively mobilized during the initial years of the 2018 Curriculum implementation, thereby contributing to the enhancement of curriculum reform in Vietnam.

Given this background, it is essential to situate the study within existing theoretical and empirical scholarship. A comprehensive review of the literature not only clarifies how curriculum development has been conceptualized and operationalized across contexts, but also identifies gaps in research on stakeholder engagement in Vietnam. The following section, therefore, examines two key areas: (1) Theoretical perspectives on curriculum development, including international and Vietnamese contributions; (2) Stakeholder theory as applied to education and curriculum design. By analyzing these strands of scholarship, the study establishes a foundation for understanding the specific challenges and opportunities surrounding the development of the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. School Curriculum Development Research

The notion of curriculum development can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. Still, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the term became firmly established in professional education discourse. Richards (2001) proposes a systematic framework for language curriculum development, emphasizing the importance of addressing a set of guiding questions and core elements during the design process. In the Vietnamese context, Do (2011) underscores curriculum development as both an opportunity and a necessity to regularly review, update, and align educational content with the demands of national renewal and international integration.

The school-based approach to curriculum development gained prominence with Taba's (1962) "Inverted Model" which places teachers at the center of the design process. Subsequent Vietnamese scholars reinforced this perspective. Nguyen (2013) emphasizes that curriculum development must be understood as a continuous and cyclical process closely tied to educational reform. Similarly, Nguyen (2017) argues that curriculum development is essentially the process of concretizing the national framework so that it can effectively fit the particular context of each educational institution. Taken together, these studies affirm that curriculum development should simultaneously guarantee national coherence while allowing schools to exercise autonomy in adapting to their distinctive teaching and learning conditions.

2.2. Stakeholder Theory in Education

The concept of stakeholders was introduced by Freeman (1984), who defines them as any individuals or groups that can affect or are affected by an organization's objectives. Bryson (2004) advances specific techniques for identifying and analyzing stakeholders, while Eden and Ackermann (1998) highlight their capacity to shape an organization's future trajectory. Within education, Bush and Heystek (2003) stress that stakeholders are essential actors with legitimate interests in the effectiveness and long-term success of schools.

International research has yielded diverse models of stakeholder categorization in curriculum development. Lewy (1991) distinguishes between legal and non-legal influences. Simms and Chapleo (2010) classify stakeholders into two groups: internal and external. Kettunen (2015) proposes a concentric model, positioning internal stakeholders at the center while external partners and broader socio-economic actors form the outer layers of influence. Lidsten et al. (2015) underscore the teacher's role as a mediator bridging students with societal forces. In contrast, Matkovic et al. (2015) draw attention to stakeholder engagement in the "Analyze" phase of the ADDIE model, stressing the importance of identifying both stakeholder groups and their requirements at the outset of curriculum design.

Within Vietnam, studies by Vu (2023) and Nguyen (2023) explore the significance of involving administrators, teachers, students, experts, and donors at the school level. However, these works remain relatively general, leaving open questions about how stakeholders contribute in subject-specific contexts, particularly within the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature under the 2018 reform framework.

Although both international and Vietnamese research has highlighted the theoretical and practical importance of stakeholder participation, there remains limited empirical investigation into how stakeholders are engaged in specific subjects. In particular, little attention has been devoted to the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary school level under the 2018 General Education reform. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing stakeholder involvement - both internal and external - during the Needs Analysis phase of the ADDIE model, with a focus on curriculum design and implementation for Language Arts and Literature.

2.3. Stakeholder Participation in School Curriculum Development

School-based curriculum development, which entrusts teachers with the responsibility of designing and implementing curricula, has become a widely adopted trend since Taba (1962) introduced her Inverted Model. Nguyen (2013) emphasizes that "curriculum development is a regular and continuous process that aims to improve curriculum over time; in essence, it consists of educational reforms to innovate and adjust curriculum. Curriculum development must be a closed and continuous process." Similarly, Nguyen (2017) notes that "curriculum development is the process whereby schools concretize the national education curriculum, making it appropriately aligned with the realities of educational institutions." These perspectives highlight the dual nature of school-based curriculum development. On the one hand, schools must comply with the requirements of the national curriculum, including prescribed content, mandatory learning outcomes, and official guidelines for pedagogy and assessment. On the other hand, they are granted autonomy to select, design, and implement teaching approaches suited to their specific conditions. Consequently, curriculum development simultaneously guarantees national coherence while allowing institutions to adapt and innovate in accordance with local contexts.

Within the framework of stakeholder theory, Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as individuals or groups that are affected by an organization or have the capacity to influence its objectives. Eden and Ackermann (1998), further elaborated by Bryson (2004), describe stakeholders as actors possessing the power to shape the future of an organization. Bush and Heystek (2003a) argue that stakeholders encompass all individuals who have a legitimate interest in the effectiveness and sustainability of an institution. In the Vietnamese context, Vu (2023) observes that stakeholders in curriculum development are "individuals with experience in this field, participating formally in the program's decision-making group and making significant contributions to the outcomes of the school curriculum development process." These definitions converge on the understanding that successful curriculum design and implementation require coordination among diverse actors and social forces. Stakeholder participation, therefore, is not incidental but an essential requirement that must be pursued actively and systematically.

The role of stakeholders is particularly evident in the Needs Analysis phase of the ADDIE model, where the identification of participants and their requirements ensures that the curriculum reflects the needs of learners, academic objectives, and societal expectations (Matkovic et al., 2015). This process is illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts the overall curriculum development model, and further detailed in Figure 2, which outlines the activities of

the analysis sub-process. Together, these diagrams underscore that recognizing stakeholders and clarifying requirements provides the structural foundation for designing curricula that are both relevant and sustainable.
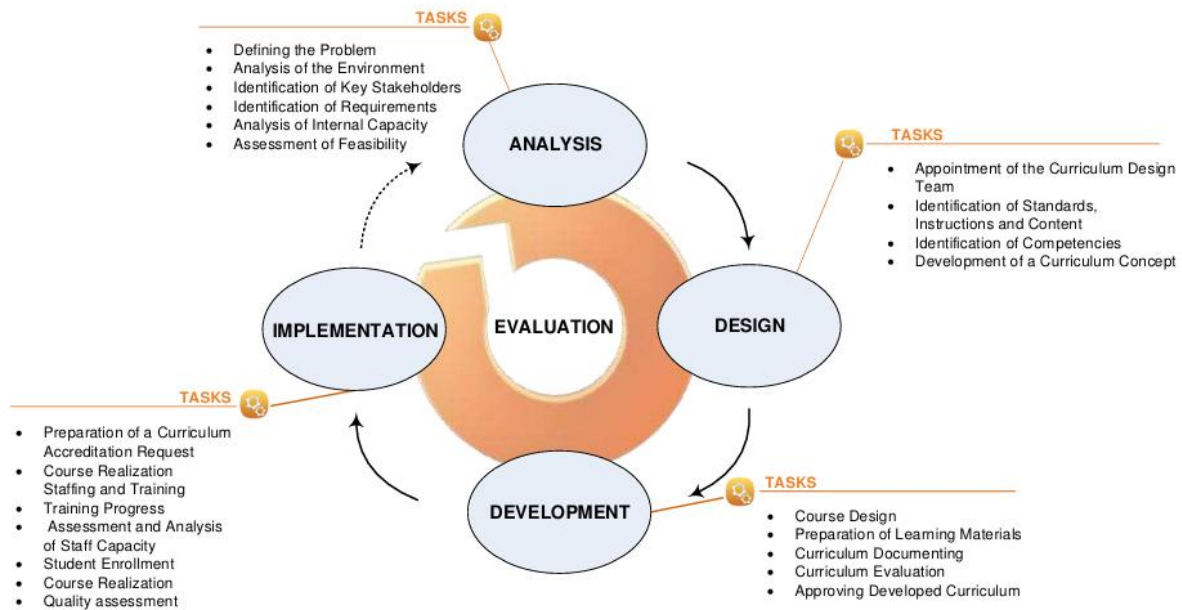

Figure 1. Curriculum development process model (Matkovic et al., 2014)

Figure 1 presents the curriculum development process model proposed by Matkovic et al. (2014), which highlights the interrelated stages of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. During the analysis phase, curriculum developers are required to identify relevant legal regulations, understand learner needs, and define key stakeholders, assessing both their potential contributions and level of involvement.

According to Matkovic (2014), two operations are especially critical in this phase: "Identification of Key Stakeholders" and "Identification of Requirements." Identifying key stakeholders involves selecting experts and practitioners with expertise related to the curriculum, particularly those from organizations outside the school. These individuals not only provide essential information but also play a pivotal role in broadening the stakeholder network, thereby establishing a collaborative social force for education. The identification of requirements, in turn, ensures that inputs from stakeholders are systematically integrated, creating the highest possible alignment between scientific knowledge, learner needs, and societal expectations. Together, these two operations form the structural foundation for a curriculum that is both contextually relevant and educationally sustainable.
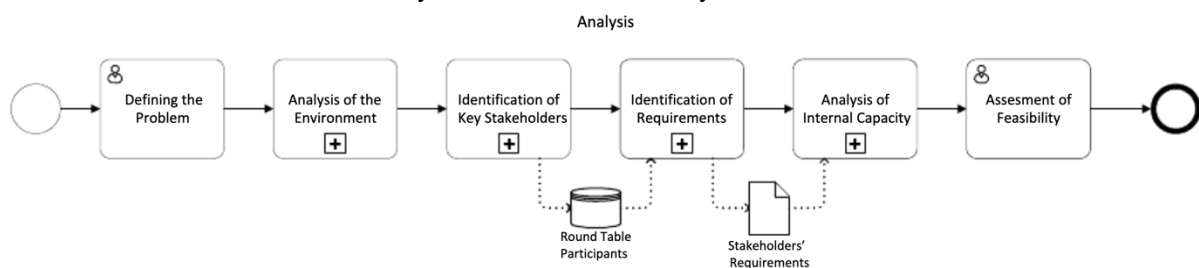

Figure 2. Activities of the analysis sub-process (Matkovic et al., 2015)

Figure 2 illustrates the activities of the analysis sub-process as outlined by Matkovic et al. (2015). The diagram specifies the sequential steps of defining the problem, analyzing the environment, identifying key stakeholders, clarifying requirements, assessing internal capacity, and evaluating feasibility. This model highlights that curriculum analysis is not a single task but a structured sequence of interrelated activities that together create the foundation for coherent curriculum design.

In Vietnam, curriculum development has historically been approached in a highly centralized manner, with decision-making authority concentrated at the ministerial level. As a result, teachers, students, schools (internal stakeholders), and social organizations (external stakeholders) had limited participation in shaping the curriculum. However, the democratization of education, coupled with rapid advances in science, technology, and labor market demands, has generated increasing societal expectations for more responsive curricula. A framework that remains static and uniformly applied across institutions risks becoming either excessive or outdated, thereby limiting its relevance.

Placing students, teachers, and schools at the center of curriculum development is therefore indispensable, as they are directly responsible for implementation and outcomes. At the same time, curriculum design should actively engage external organizations, ensuring that learning extends beyond the boundaries of schools and connects with the wider social, cultural, and economic environment. This approach ensures that curricula are continuously updated, flexible, and aligned with contemporary realities. Moreover, it facilitates the integration of practical, differentiated, and career-oriented components, supporting the development of learners who are not only knowledgeable but also capable of critical action and effective participation in society.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research Framework

This study is grounded in the ADDIE instructional design model. Originally formulated in the 1970s as a systematic approach to instructional design, the ADDIE framework has since become one of the most widely applied models in curriculum development (Matkovic et al., 2015). Each phase of the model serves a distinct but interrelated function. The Analysis stage identifies legal regulations, learners' needs, and stakeholder roles. The Design phase translates these requirements into learning objectives, assessment strategies, and instructional blueprints. Development focuses on producing and refining learning materials, while Implementation involves delivering the curriculum through instructional activities and educational technologies. Finally, Evaluation provides both formative and summative feedback to ensure the curriculum's effectiveness and sustainability. Within this study, particular emphasis is placed on the Needs Analysis phase, which, as Matkovic et al. (2015) argue, is the cornerstone of curriculum development. This phase involves identifying key stakeholders and determining their level of involvement, ensuring that the curriculum remains responsive to learners' needs, institutional conditions, and broader societal demands. By adopting the ADDIE model, the research ensures that the process of curriculum development for General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level is systematic, evidence-based, and adaptable to dynamic contexts in Vietnam.

3.2. Scope and Context

The research focuses on the development of the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level from 2022 to 2025 in Vietnam. This timeframe aligns with the initial three academic years of implementing the 2018 General Curriculum, which is marked by the translation of national standards into school-based practices. By concentrating on this crucial phase, the study aims to understand the dynamics of stakeholder participation during the early stages of curriculum implementation, when policies are being tested and adapted to local contexts.

3.3. Data Sources

The study relies on three interconnected sources of data. First, a document analysis was conducted on official curriculum guidelines, including the General Education Curriculum and the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature (Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, 2018a, 2018b), as well as relevant policy directives that inform curriculum development. These documents provided the regulatory and pedagogical foundations for examining stakeholder roles. Second, case studies were carried out in two representative institutions: Nguyen Tat Thanh High School in Hanoi and Tran Phu Gifted High School in Hai Phong. Both schools actively involve various stakeholders in curriculum-related activities and were chosen for their distinctive practices that exemplify stakeholder participation in real-world educational settings. Lastly, observation and analysis of activities were conducted on specific projects that highlight stakeholder involvement. Examples include the "Folk Theatrical Performances" project at Nguyen Tat Thanh High School and the collaborative film screening and discussion of "Children of the Mist" at Tran Phu Gifted High School. These activities offered concrete insights into how both

internal and external stakeholders contribute to enhancing the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature.

3.4. Methodological Approach

The research adopts a qualitative design that integrates several complementary methods. A content analysis of curriculum documents was carried out to identify explicit references to stakeholder roles and curriculum requirements. This was followed by a thematic analysis of stakeholder participation in school activities, which enabled the identification of recurring patterns and practices across different contexts. Finally, a comparative case study approach was employed to analyze the similarities and differences between the two selected schools, providing a deeper understanding of how stakeholder involvement varies while still contributing to the shared goals of the 2018 General Education Curriculum.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Stakeholder Participation in the Development of the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the Upper Secondary School Level in Vietnam

4.1.1. The Requirements of Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the Upper Secondary School Level

Table 1 below aligns the requirements of the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the Upper Secondary Level with the activities of both internal and external stakeholders across Grades 10, 11, and 12. The table highlights how diverse forms of stakeholder engagement contribute to the achievement of curriculum objectives.

Table 1. Stakeholder Activities in Response to the Requirements of Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the Upper Secondary Level

Grade	Skill	Requirements	Activities of Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
10	1.1. Reading	1.1.1. Identifying and analyzing certain elements of Cheo or Tuong folk plays.	- Developing teaching topics. - Determining duration, schedule, and location; organising study activities. - Surveying needs regarding learning forms and methods. - Collecting and introducing resources (including external stakeholders)	Drama theaters, folk artists
		1.1.2. Acquire foundational knowledge about the author Nguyen Trai and apply it to reading comprehension several of his representative works - Nguyen Trai		Historical sites, publishers, museums
		1.1.3. Analyzing and evaluating the reporting style and viewpoints presented in a news item.		Television stations
	1.2. Writing	1.2.1. Writing a set of rules or public instructions.		Historical sites, museums
		1.2.2. Writing a research report on a specific issue, using proper citations, footnotes, and supporting materials.		Publishers
	1.3. Learning Project	1.3.1. Practicing researching and writing a report on a topic in folklore.		Publishers, drama theaters, folk artists

		1.3.2. Dramatizing a literary work.	Drama theaters, folk artists
11	2.1. Reading	2.1.1. Acquire foundational knowledge about the author Nguyen Du and apply it to reading comprehension several of his representative works - Nguyen Du	Historical sites, publishers, museums
	2.2. Writing	2.2.1. Writing an argumentative essay on a literary work, a film, a song, a painting, or a sculpture.	Museums, publishers, historical sites, television stations
	2.3. Speaking and Listening	2.3.1. Introducing an artwork of personal choice.	Museums, publishers, historical sites, television stations
	2.4. Learning Project	2.4.1. Researching and writing a report on a topic in classical Vietnamese literature.	Publishers
		2.4.2. Reading, writing, and presenting about a literary author.	Historical sites, publishers, museums
12	3.1. Reading	3.1.1. Acquire foundational knowledge about the author Ho Chi Minh and apply it to reading comprehension several of his representative works.	Historical sites, publishers, museums
		3.1.2. Identifying and analyzing elements of reportage, diaries, or memoirs: Non-fictional nature and several literary techniques such as description and narration; the integration of realistic details and events with the writer's personal experiences, attitudes, and evaluations, etc.	Television stations, publishers
	3.2. Writing	3.2.1. Writing a report on a project task or research findings related to a natural or social issue.	Publishers
	3.3. Learning Project	3.3.1. Practicing researching and writing a report on a topic in modern or postmodern literature.	Publishers
		3.3.2. Exploring an artwork adapted from a literary work.	Drama theaters, television stations

Table 1 demonstrates that the requirements of the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level - spanning reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as project-based learning - necessitate the involvement of multiple stakeholders. This involvement is not restricted to classroom-based practices but extends into broader cultural, historical, and technological domains. By integrating contributions from

theaters, folk artists, publishers, television stations, museums, and technology experts, schools can enrich learning activities, foster authentic connections with real-world issues, and promote interdisciplinary perspectives.

The most pronounced role of stakeholders emerges within project-based learning, where their active participation creates opportunities for differentiated instruction and supports career-oriented competencies. For example, dramatizing folk plays, conducting research on classical or modern literature, and analyzing artistic adaptations of literary works all require the engagement of cultural institutions and creative industries. Such integration illustrates how curriculum design, when supported by a broad network of social actors, bridges academic objectives with real-life applications.

Ultimately, the findings in Table 1 reinforce the central argument of this study: stakeholder engagement is indispensable for ensuring that the Language Arts and Literature curriculum remains contextually relevant, socially responsive, and educationally transformative. By incorporating external contributions into the learning process, the curriculum transcends the limitations of static content delivery. It evolves into a dynamic framework that equips students to think critically, act creatively, and adapt effectively to the challenges of the contemporary world.

4.1.2. The Roles of Stakeholders in the Development of of Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the Upper Secondary Level

Table 2 below outlines the diverse roles of internal and external stakeholders in the design and implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level in Vietnam.

Table 2. Roles of Stakeholders in the Development of Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the Upper Secondary Level

Stakeholders	Roles
1. Internal Stakeholders	
1.1. Schools	- Effectively and synchronously implementing the core requirements and orientations of the national general curriculum. - Based on specific factors such as educational orientation, strategic vision, mission, facilities, and human resources,… schools implement the national curriculum to develop a school-based curriculum suited to local realities.
1.2. Teachers	- Directly implementing the school-based curriculum by translating it into detailed teaching plans and learning activities. - Making the connection between other stakeholders (national institutions, schools, social organizations, etc.) and students.
1.3. Students	- Serving as the central subjects of the educational process and the ultimate recipients of the stakeholders' efforts. - Students' learning needs, cognitive levels, and psychological characteristics constitute the foundation for curriculum development. Student learning outcomes and the extent that they meet requirements are key indicators for evaluating the curriculum's effectiveness.
2. External Stakeholders	
2.1. Theaters, Traditional Folk Artists, Folk Performers	- Proposing contents and programs that can support schools in implementing teaching materials. - Providing stage performance to offer students experiential learning opportunities with folk literacy, aiding in the identification and analysis of elements from Cheo or Tuong (Requirement 1.1.1) - Through performances and discussions, providing students with knowledge and inspiration for researching and writing reports on folk literature (Requirement 1.3.1)

	- Demonstrating how to dramatize literary texts, helping students understand the dramatization process, role-playing, and the distinctions between literary and multimodal theatrical language (Requirement 1.3.2) - Offering comparative perspectives for students when analyzing artistic adaptations of literary works (Requirement 3.3.2)
2.2. Publishers	- Providing valuable materials and collections of works by Nguyen Trai, Nguyen Du and Ho Chi Minh, along with critical essays on these authors (Requirement 1.1.2; 2.1.1; 3.1.1). - Helping students to research information sources and understand how to write research reports (Requirement 1.2.2; 1.3.1; 2.4.1; 3.2.1; 3.3.1). - Supporting the publication of outstanding student research (Requirement 1.2.2; 1.3.1; 2.4.1; 3.2.1; 3.3.1).
2.3. Television Station	- Providing and analyzing news items to help students identify, analyze, and evaluate reporting techniques and the perspectives of news writers (Requirement 1.1.3). - Offering documentaries to help students analyze this genre's characteristics (Requirement 3.1.2). - Equipping students with materials that inspire personal reflection and artistic appreciation (Requirement 2.2.1; 2.3.1). - Providing adapted literary works (films, music, documentaries, etc.) for analysis and evaluation (Requirement 3.3.2).
2.4. Museums and Historical Sites	- Through trips, equipping students with practical knowledge for writing rules or directions (Requirement 1.2.1). - Providing materials, artifacts, and manuscripts related to Nguyen Trai, Nguyen Du and Ho Chi Minh (Requirement 1.1.2; 2.1.1; 3.1.1). - Providing knowledge and inspiration for students to introduce and express their appreciation of artistic works (films, songs, sculptures, paintings, etc.) (Requirement 2.2.1; 2.3.1). - Helping students develop an overview of literary authors, supporting their ability to read, write, and present about specific literary authors (Requirement 2.4.2).
2.5. Technology Experts	- Proposing programs, methods and tools to support schools in implementing teaching content. - Providing technological tools and platforms that facilitate curriculum implementation, such as research databases, e-learning tools, information platforms, and educational management systems,… (Requirement 1.2.2; 1.3.1; 2.4.1).

As indicated in Table 2, the active participation of both internal and external stakeholders is decisive for shaping the General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level. Internal stakeholders, including schools, teachers, and students, play a central role throughout all phases of curriculum development. Schools are tasked with aligning national requirements with local conditions by translating the general framework into programs that suit their strategic missions, institutional capacities, and community needs. Teachers act as pivotal mediators, transforming curriculum goals into lesson plans, classroom activities, and assessments, while also connecting students with external partners to broaden their learning experiences. Students remain at the heart of the process; their characteristics, needs, and outcomes provide both the foundation for curriculum design and the criteria for evaluating its success.

In parallel, external stakeholders play complementary roles that extend the curriculum beyond the school environment. Cultural institutions such as theaters, folk artists, and performers create experiential opportunities that immerse students in Vietnam's literary and artistic traditions. Publishers provide canonical texts, critical essays, and research materials while supporting the dissemination of outstanding student work. Television stations introduce authentic media content and artistic adaptations that allow for comparative analysis and critical engagement. Museums and historical sites contribute contextual depth, offering artifacts and historical perspectives that foster a tangible connection with national literary heritage. Technology experts, by contrast, bring innovation into the

classroom through digital platforms, databases, and e-learning tools, ensuring that the curriculum remains responsive to the demands of the digital age.

Taken together, these diverse contributions highlight the complementarity between internal and external actors. Internal stakeholders secure the coherence, continuity, and pedagogical integrity of the curriculum, while external partners infuse it with cultural richness, social relevance, and technological innovation. In the context of accelerating globalization and digital transformation, such collaboration is indispensable. It not only enhances project-based and interdisciplinary approaches but also nurtures a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of Literature. More importantly, the synergy from stakeholders underscores the central claim of this study: effective curriculum development cannot be achieved in isolation but depends on dynamic partnerships that bridge schools with the broader cultural, social, and technological ecosystems in which they operate.

4.2. Several examples of Stakeholder Engagement

A concrete example of stakeholder integration is found within lessons on the topic "Nguyen Trai - A Shining Star in the Sky of Classical Vietnamese Literature," which was designed for Grade 11 students. With the support of publishers, museums, and historical sites, the students participated in various learning activities. These activities included intensive reading of Nguyen Trai's poetry and prose, drafting public regulations or guidelines for displays in cultural spaces, and conducting research on selected issues in classical Vietnamese literature. Through these experiences, the executed curriculum connected literary knowledge with practical applications in cultural and historical contexts.

In addition to project-specific assignments, cross-grade themes were developed to promote continuity across different grades of upper secondary education. One such theme is "From Page to Stage," which was implemented through collaboration with theaters, folk artists, and television stations. This project was tailored to the needs of each grade: dramatizing literary works in Grade 10, presenting artwork of personal interest in Grade 11, and exploring artistic adaptations of literary texts in Grade 12. By linking multiple grade levels, this initiative exemplifies how stakeholder participation fosters sustained and progressive learning experiences.

The trend of mobilizing stakeholders in school-based curriculum development has become increasingly prominent during the 2022-2025 period. These projects extend students' learning environments, enabling them to acquire knowledge not only from textbooks but also through authentic cultural practices and diverse social interactions. Within this study, two institutions - Nguyen Tat Thanh High School in Hanoi and Tran Phu Gifted High School in Hai Phong - serve as representative examples.

At Nguyen Tat Thanh High School, a Grade 10 project titled "Folk Theatrical Performances" was conducted during the 2022-2023 academic year. Students designed exhibition booths showcasing traditional cultural products, books, photographs, and performance props, which they then presented to their peers. Digital tools such as Canva and the virtual museum Artsteps were also used to enhance the exhibition experience. A highlight of the project was the collaboration with the Folk Theatre, which staged a live Tuong performance of "Ngheu, So, Oc, Hen." This activity provided students with firsthand exposure to folk performance traditions and deepened their understanding of Vietnamese theatrical genres, fulfilling specific curricular requirements.

Another illustrative case comes from Tran Phu Gifted High School, where, on April 15, 2023, students in the Literature Gifted Program organized a film screening and discussion in collaboration with the production team of "Children of the Mist" the first Vietnamese documentary to be shortlisted for the Oscars. This event provided students with the opportunity to engage directly with filmmakers, gaining valuable insights into cinematic techniques and narrative interpretation. This collaborative learning experience expanded students' appreciation of diverse artistic genres while also aligning with competencies outlined in the 2018 curriculum, such as presenting an artwork of personal choice (Requirement 2.3.1) and analyzing artistic adaptations of literary works (Requirement 3.3.2).

Collectively, these case studies illustrate the transformative potential of stakeholder participation in curriculum implementation. By linking schools with cultural institutions, creative industries, and technological platforms, they demonstrate how collaborative efforts enrich the Language Arts and Literature curriculum and reinforce its broader goal: cultivating learners who are capable of critical engagement with both national traditions and contemporary cultural practices.

4.3. Discussion

The findings from the curriculum requirements, stakeholder role mapping, and case studies collectively highlight the centrality of stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature at the upper secondary level. Several key issues emerge from this analysis that warrant further discussion.

First, the data reaffirm the critical role of internal stakeholders - schools, teachers, and students - in ensuring both coherence and sustainability of the curriculum. Schools provide the organizational framework and resources that allow the national curriculum to be adapted to local contexts. Teachers act as mediators, translating policy into pedagogical practice and establishing the crucial link between students and broader social actors. Students, meanwhile, remain the ultimate focus of curriculum development, as their learning needs and outcomes constitute the most direct measure of educational effectiveness. These findings are consistent with earlier arguments by Taba (1962) and Nguyen (2013), which stressed the continuous and cyclical nature of curriculum reform where educators and learners are central participants.

Second, the research underscores the complementary contribution of external stakeholders. The involvement of cultural institutions, such as museums, theatres, and historical sites, provides students with experiential learning that connects literature to tangible cultural heritage. Publishers and media organizations enrich the curriculum by supplying authentic materials and offering opportunities for critical analysis of diverse textual and artistic forms. Technology experts introduce digital tools and platforms that enhance research and project-based learning, reflecting the increasing importance of technological literacy in modern education. These roles align with international scholarship, such as Lewy's (1991) emphasis on legal and non-legal influences and Kettunen's (2015) concentric model of stakeholder relationships, which positions external actors as essential sources of contextual enrichment.

Third, the case studies offer practical evidence of how stakeholder participation contributes to innovative and meaningful learning experiences. At Nguyen Tat Thanh High School, the integration of live theatrical performance and digital platforms into a Grade 10 project enabled students to move beyond textbook learning and engage directly with cultural practices. At Tran Phu Gifted High School, collaboration with a professional film production team allows students to engage with contemporary artistic processes, thereby expanding the scope of Language Arts and Literature education into the creative industries domain. Both examples illustrate how the curriculum's goals of differentiation and career orientation can be operationalized through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Fourth, the Vietnamese experience reflects broader global trends in curriculum democratization. The transition from a centralized to a more decentralized approach resonates with international movements advocating for participatory curriculum development (Richards, 2001; Matkovic et al., 2015). Stakeholder engagement ensures that the curriculum remains responsive to rapid social and technological change while preserving cultural identity. By involving local communities and professional sectors, the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature moves closer to bridging the traditional divide between academic learning and real-world application.

Ultimately, the analysis yields several implications for educational practice and policy. For curriculum development to be effective, schools must actively cultivate partnerships with external stakeholders, embedding collaborative projects into the regular learning process rather than treating them as supplementary activities. Teachers should be empowered with professional development opportunities that enhance their capacity to manage stakeholder relations and integrate external resources into classroom practice. Moreover, mechanisms for evaluating stakeholder contributions - particularly in terms of student learning outcomes - need to be established to ensure that collaboration is not only symbolic but also substantively beneficial.

In summary, the discussion emphasizes that stakeholder engagement is not an optional add-on, but a structural requirement for curriculum relevance and sustainability. The 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature demonstrates that when internal and external actors collaborate effectively, students benefit from richer, more contextualized, and more future-oriented learning experiences. This reinforces the broader significance of the study: stakeholder participation is a decisive factor in aligning national educational reforms with the realities of contemporary society and the demands of twenty-first-century learning.

5. CONCLUSION

The involvement of stakeholders in curriculum development is indispensable. Their participation transforms the curriculum into an integrated framework that connects classroom instruction with the wider social and cultural

environment, thereby enriching pedagogical practices with authentic and diverse learning experiences. This role becomes particularly significant at the upper secondary level, where differentiation and career orientation are central priorities. Education, therefore, should not be limited to routine academic tasks; instead, it must broaden its scope to empower students to apply knowledge in addressing real-world issues. In this way, the learning process evolves into a dynamic network of interactions among stakeholders, with students placed at the center.

Ensuring the effectiveness of this process requires curricular flexibility that accommodates not only the general requirements of the national framework but also the specific conditions of individual institutions and the varied demands of contemporary life. Schools should raise awareness among teachers and students about the importance of external stakeholders in the curriculum design and implementation process. At the same time, efforts must be made to institutionalize the integration of themes, projects, and interdisciplinary activities that bring together both internal and external stakeholders. Such a comprehensive network positions teachers and students as central agents, while social partners share responsibility for ensuring that the curriculum remains adaptive to national standards and responsive to the complexities of everyday realities.

This study also opens up new avenues for further inquiry. Future research may investigate the distinct role of teachers as mediators between internal and external stakeholders, as well as the mechanisms and conditions that facilitate meaningful stakeholder participation. Comparative studies across subjects, regions, and educational levels would provide additional insights into the ways stakeholder collaboration can be strengthened.

In conclusion, the analysis presented affirms that mobilizing stakeholder participation is not only a practical necessity but also a strategic approach to making the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Language Arts and Literature more relevant, responsive, and transformative in preparing learners for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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