

## Factors Affecting the Learning Attitude of Natural and Social Subjects of Primary School Students in Vietnam



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**ABSTRACTS:** Nature and Society are compulsory subjects in the primary education curriculum in Vietnam. However, this subject has not really attracted the attention and investment of the lecturers and the learners are not really interested in it. This study explores the factors affecting the learning attitude towards the subject of Nature and Society of primary school students in Vietnam. An exploratory factor analysis method was used, with 19 questions designed and sent to primary school students through social channels and with the help of parents. Based on survey results from 101 students and data analyzed through SPSS software, the results of exploratory factor analysis identified four main factors affecting learning attitudes towards the subject of Nature and Society of Vietnamese Primary School Students: Factor 1 - Teacher's pedagogical skills (50.056%); factor 2 - Parental influence (8.799%), factor 3 - the influence of classmates (6,724%) and factor 4 - the belief and interest of learners (5,329%). The results of this study can become a source of reference for other researchers, and also suggest educators in proposing pedagogical measures in teaching subjects with high efficiency.

**KEYWORDS:** attitude, learning, Natural and Social subject, student, elementary school

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The world has changed a lot in recent years, from the change in science and technology to the way we operate and work. The emergence of the covid pandemic and their aftereffects have still left a lot of room in today's society. It can be said that all professions must change to quickly adapt to the "new normal" and the education sector is no exception to this influence, especially primary education (Nguyen, 2022). In the early stages of social distancing, children must learn from home through electronic devices such as computers, phones or tablets. Such online learning on the one hand helps students not to be interrupted in their studies, but on the other hand, many difficulties and challenges arise (Drane et al., 2020). Literature studies show that children often lose concentration when sitting in front of the computer (eg, falling asleep, bored), leading to poor learning outcomes (Maqsood et al., 2021). Even if such a learning situation persists, it can lead to autism in children because at this age, social communication plays an extremely important role in the mental and physical development of children (Maqsood et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2022). Although so far, the number of people infected with covid has decreased significantly because they have been vaccinated and children have been able to go to school, but the impact of covid has had a great impact on children both in terms of personality and learning attitudes (Hill et al., 2020). While most of the children have reintegrated into the classroom and community, some feel alienated from their classroom, friends, teachers and even subjects, especially the subjects of nature and society. Ironically, this is a compulsory subject for 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students in Vietnam since 2018. Moreover, this subject has not really attracted the attention and investment of the lecturers and the learners are not really interested in the subject. Now the question is how to help students learn this compulsory subject well?

To answer the above question, educators have spent a lot of effort and time to improve the quality of education such as constantly updating training programs, textbooks, applying information technology in teaching, and coordinating with students' parents (Merritt et al., 2022). Along with the practical measures, the researchers also explore the factors that influence student learning in many different aspects. For example, C. T. H. Nguyen et al. (2022) explored the factors affecting online teaching for primary school students in Vietnam. Through a survey of 160 primary school teachers, the authors show that there are 6 factors affecting online learning for primary students, including time management and time commitment, technical skills, and attitudes towards online learning, expectations for online classes, interactions with colleagues and online feedback. The study of factors is

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also carried out in the assessment (Dinh & Nguyen, 2022), problem-solving skills (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2002), and many others (Alghasab et al., 2020; Getie, 2020; Kong et al., 2018; N. T. Nguyen et al., 2022).

The examples above show that there are many factors that affect elementary school students' learning. However, there has been no research to find out the factors affecting the learning attitude of natural and social subjects of primary school students in Vietnam. Similar studies are also possible, but the authors suggest that previous research results may no longer be relevant to current social conditions in a "new normal" society (Callo & Yazon, 2020). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill the research gap by finding out what factors influence students' learning attitude towards the subject, namely natural and social subjects. The results of the study will help educators focus on solving problems related to the factor with the highest influence. Researchers can also rely on the results of the analysis as a reference in similar studies.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the research methodology and data collection method. Section 3 presents the experimental results and discussion. The article is concluded in section 4.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Participals

The authors conducted research and developed a series of questionnaires to study the factors influencing primary school children's learning attitudes toward natural and social topics. The question is then created on Google Forms and distributed to teenagers and primary school pupils in grades 1, 2, and 3 using the Zalo and Facebook applications. Because schoolchildren in grades 1 and 2 are still young and have limited reading comprehension skills, parents will mostly read survey students and gather students' self-assessment responses to complete. The survey was conducted from July 12 through July 22, 2022. The author team desired 200 survey participants, however the number of responders to the question was 136 (reaching 68 percent), and the research team excluded 35 incorrect replies due to the unique selection throughout the survey response procedure. As a result, the total number of observations considered in the study is 101 (74.2 percent).

Table 2.1 exhibits information of the subjects participated in the survey: with males accounted for 39.6 percent, while female children responded at a rate of 60.4 percent. Grade 1 pupils were the least likely to engage in the survey, with a minimum of 20 children (19.8 percent), followed by grade 2 students, whose responses are 36 (35.6 percent), with third grade students having the most, with 44 students (44.6 percent). The number of students participating in the poll who live in the city center is the highest, with 52 (51.1 percent), followed by those from rural regions (35.6 percent), and the remainder are from the countryside (5.9 percent), district (4.0 percent).

**Table 2.1. Demographic information of participants**

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	40	39.6
	Females	61	60.4
Grade	1	20	19.8
	2	36	35.6
	3	44	44.6
Area of living	Distance, hilly areas	3	3.0
	Rural	36	35.6
	District	4	4.0
	City	52	51.5
	Countryside	6	5.9
Total		101	100

### 2.2. Survey instruments

The following questions were used for survey

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**Table 2.2. Questionnaires (n = 20)**

Q1	Nature and Society is my favorite subject in all subjects.
Q2	I like to study Nature and Society.
Q3	I enjoy studying Nature and Society since it has taught me a lot about the world.
Q4	I believe that I can do all the assignments in Nature and Society.
Q5	I believe that I can answer all the questions in Nature and Society.
Q6	I enjoy studying Nature and Society because it provides a wealth of information about people, animals, nature, and the world around us.
Q7	I like to study Nature and Society because this class is very interesting.
Q8	I like to study Nature and Society because the teacher/teacher is very fun.
Q9	Teachers use a lot of images and videos when teaching Nature and Social subjects.
Q10	Teachers usually urge me to do well in Nature and Society because it will help me develop a variety of life skills.
Q11	The pictures in the book Nature and Society have always fascinated me.
Q12	I can read and understand the written text found in the book Nature and Society.
Q13	My parents believe that studying Nature and Society is essential.
Q14	My parents encouraged me to excel in both Natural and Social Sciences.
Q15	My parents can explain to me what I don't understand about Nature and Society.
Q16	My parents often ask questions about Nature and Society.
Q17	The students in the class also enjoyed the subject of Nature and Society.
Q18	Students in the class often quiz each other on subjects with Nature and Society.
Q19	My classmates and I often talk to each other about the content in the lesson of Nature and Society.
Q20	My classmates advised me to study Nature and Society because it was very interesting.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

In this study, we used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to analyze the data. From many observed variables, this method helps to group variables into the main factors affecting a certain event or phenomenon (Hair, 2009). Before doing EFA, descriptive statistics were used to assess the adequacy of the measurement for the 19 survey questions. The study team determined the mean of all responses and the standard deviation (SD) for each question using descriptive statistics. If a mean was discovered to be near to 1 or 5, the team eliminated that response from the table since it may reduce the standard of correlation between the remaining items (Kim, 2011).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EFA was carried out on 20 questions with Varimax rotation (with a load factor of 0.55), processed from SPSS software, allowing to extract eigenvalues for each factor. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin verified the adequacy of sampling for analysis with a value of 0.914, which is higher than 0.6 suggested by Kaiser (1974), and (Kim & Mueller, 1978) as 0.5, which is also higher than the range from 0.6 – 0.7 suggested by Netemeyer et al. (2003)

Sig Bartlett's Test = 0.000 < 0.05, thus, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is appropriate. There are 4 factors extracted with the criterion eigenvalue greater than 1 with a cumulative total variance of 70.210%.

However, Hair (2009) proposed that with a sample size of 100, a load factor should be at least 0.55. There is a variable Q8 with a value less than 0.55 in the rotation factor matrix table, which should be eliminated. As a consequence, the research author eliminated the variable Q8 and repeated the factor analysis, yielding the following results:

**Table 3.1. KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.906
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1335.803
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin assessment was 0.906, which met the criteria of the exploratory factor analysis. The Bartlett test yields Sig = 0.000 values which is less than 0.05, indicating that the analytical procedure is appropriate.

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The data in Table 3.2 below shows that there are four main factors formed by 19 questions with eigenvalues greater than 1. These 19 questions explain 70.908% of the main factors affecting attitude for the subject Nature and Society of primary school students, the rest are due to other factors. The percentages explaining the specific influencing factors are as follows: factor 1 (50,056%), factor 2 (8.799%), factor 3 (6,724%) and factor 4 (5,329%).

**Table 3.2. Eigenvalue, Total Variance Explained of factors**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.511	50.056	50.056	9.511	50.056	50.056	4.186	22.031	22.031
2	1.672	8.799	58.855	1.672	8.799	58.855	3.509	18.467	40.499
3	1.278	6.724	65.579	1.278	6.724	65.579	3.026	15.928	56.427
4	1.012	5.329	70.908	1.012	5.329	70.908	2.751	14.481	70.908
5	.887	4.668	75.576						

The load factor of each variable in each factor category is shown in Table 3.3. With a sample size of 101, the load factor in the table is set to be greater than 0.55. It also reveals that factor 1 has seven variables, factor 2 has four variables, factor 3 has four variables, and factor 4 has four variables.

**Table 3.3. Rotated Component Matrix**

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q9	.779			
Q10	.778			
Q11	.731			
Q6	.688			
Q12	.600			
Q7	.576			
Q3	.575			
Q14		.806		
Q15		.780		
Q16		.778		
Q13		.695		
Q18			.828	
Q19			.698	
Q20			.608	
Q17			.597	
Q5				.823
Q4				.785
Q1				.617
Q2				.559

Each factor can be named based on the variable with the highest load factor (Hair, 2009).

**Table 3.4. Naming the factors**

Variables	Loading
Factor 1. Teachers' pedagogical skills	
Q9	Teachers use a lot of images and videos when teaching Nature and Social subjects.
Q10	Teachers usually urge me to do well in Nature and Society because it will help me develop a variety of life skills.
Q11	The pictures in the book Nature and Society have always fascinated me.
Q6	I enjoy studying Nature and Society because it provides a wealth of information about people, animals, nature, and the world around us.

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Q12	I can read and understand the written text found in the book Nature and Society.	.600
Q7	I like to study Nature and Society because this class is very interesting.	.576
Q3	I enjoy studying Nature and Society since it has taught me a lot about the world.	.575
Factor 2. Parental influence		
Q14	My parents encouraged me to excel in both Natural and Social Sciences.	.806
Q15	My parents can explain to me what I don't understand about Nature and Society.	.780
Q16	My parents often ask questions about Nature and Society.	.778
Q13	My parents believe that studying Nature and Society is essential.	.695
Factor 3. The influence of classmates		
Q18	Students in the class often quiz each other on subjects with Nature and Society.	.828
Q19	My classmates and I often talk to each other about the content in the lesson of Nature and Society.	.698
Q20	My classmates advised me to study Nature and Society because it was very interesting.	.608
Q17	The students in the class also enjoyed the subject of Nature and Society.	.597
Factor 4 - The belief and interest of learners		
Q5	I believe that I can answer all the questions in Nature and Society.	.823
Q4	I believe that I can do all the assignments in Nature and Society.	.785
Q1	Nature and Society is my favorite subject in all subjects.	.617
Q2	I like to study Nature and Society.	.559

### 3.3. Discussion

Based on the factors revealed through data analysis, the following recommendations are made to achieve successful teaching: First and foremost, instructors must be well prepared to teach Nature and Society. As a result, teachers may create and organize classes in a scientific, vibrant, and appealing manner, enticing students to engage in the learning process. Second, parents' influence on their children's learning orientation. Parents must be aware of the subject's significance and should not have the attitude of differentiating between major and minor topics, regardless of subjects with few or many hours. What matters is how that topic shapes students' traits and talents, equipping them with crucial life skills in the world. Third, students must have a positive attitude toward the subject, build cooperative communication skills in order to grow together, and discover the fascinating aspects of the scientific world together. Fourth, in order for pupils to have a good attitude toward the subject, they must first create trust and interest in the subject.

### 4. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the factors influencing primary school students' learning attitudes regarding the topic Nature and Society in Vietnam. The 19 questions were created and distributed to primary pupils via social media and with the assistance of their parents. The findings of factor analysis indicated that there are four main factors influencing learning attitudes for the subject Nature and Society of primary school students in Vietnam including: Factor 1 - Teacher's pedagogical skills (50.056%); factor 2 - Parental influence (8.799%), factor 3 - the influence of classmates (6,724%) and factor 4 - the belief and interest of learners (5,329%). The results of this study can become a source of reference for other researchers, and also suggest educators in proposing pedagogical measures in teaching subjects with high efficiency

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