LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE | *CULTURAL STUDIES; **PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION**■*

Characteristics of the cultural personality of Indians in the North and South of India

Minh Giang Nguyen¹*, Thi My Linh Tran¹, Thi Uyen Nhi Luong¹, ², Thi Bich Nhi Nguyen¹, Quynh Nhu Nguyen¹

¹University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City,
10-12 Dinh Tien Hoang Street, Sai Gon Ward, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
²Foreign Trade University,15 D5 Street, Thanh My Tay Ward, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Abstract:

Recognised globally as one of the most ancient and geographically vast epicenters of human civilisation, India possesses an immensely rich cultural heritage. Although considerable academic attention has been devoted to investigating the general effects of Indian culture on the diverse cultures within Southeast Asia, a significant lacuna remains within the existing body of scholarship. Specifically, there is a conspicuous deficiency of academic articles or dedicated works that precisely clarify and differentiate the distinct cultural influences stemming separately from the northern and southern sectors of the Indian subcontinent on Southeast Asian nations. Therefore, this article seeks to bridge this knowledge gap. By strategically utilising established theories pertaining to cultural ecology, the concept of cultural regions, and cultural typology, and employing a rigorous comparative method combined with an interdisciplinary framework and qualitative data synthesis and analysis, this study aims to illuminate the fundamental causes and key characteristics underpinning the cultural differences between northern and southern India. In doing so, it provides essential reference materials indispensable for future scholarly investigations focused on discerning the divergent influences originating from these two major Indian cultural zones on the multifaceted cultures across Southeast Asia.

Keywords: **cultural personality, cultural regions, Indian subcontinent, interdisciplinary approach, qualitative data analysis.**

Classification numbers: **9.3, 11**

1. Introduction

India represents one of the most expansive and historically significant cultural and civilisational origins of humanity, particularly within the Oriental context, alongside other notable cultural and civilisational origins such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, China, and Southeast Asia. Within the contemporary context of Vietnam, numerous scholarly investigations have been conducted to examine the impact of Indian culture and civilisation on distinct nations within Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, as well as on the broader East Asian region. Nonetheless, there appears to be a significant gap in the academic literature concerning the exploration of the factors contributing to the disparities in the philosophical and literary attributes of the two prominent regions of South and North India. Therefore, the authors have decided to analyse the natural and social conditions to delineate the characteristics of philosophical and cultural attributes in North and South India. The article's research goal is to explain why cultural and spiritual disparities exist between North and South India. In terms of

research, the concept of "cultural personality" is extremely broad. In this article, the authors focus on two typical fields: ideology and literature. When attempting to grasp a nation's cultural personality, we believe it is necessary to first understand its "cognitive culture," or its perspectives on life and the cosmos. The cognitive worldview described above has a direct impact on the field of inquiry we have chosen, which is literature. Following the colonial period, theatre and film were new arts imported from elsewhere, namely the Western world. The study seeks the rules, movement, and development tendencies that are important to the Indian cultural personality. As a result, many sectors borrowed from other countries that have not grown continuously since the creation of Indian culture will be excluded from analysis.

2. Literature review

2.1. Material

In the context of Indian culture, Vietnam possesses educational texts concerning Indian Culture and Oriental Culture [1-4]. The majority of these textbooks primarily

---

delineate the foundational aspects of Indian cultural formation, tracing the evolution of Indian culture to encompass manifestations of material culture, spiritual culture, and the societal governance of India. However, in Vietnam, there seems to be a significant gap in comparative research on southern and northern India, compared to the focus on comparative research on southern and northern Vietnam as well as the focus on comparative research on southern and northern China which has long been popular in Vietnam. To elucidate the distinctions and cultural as well as spiritual attributes between the southern and northern regions of India, we have consulted a series of scholarly works on Indian literature by on Indian philosophy by scholars, and on Indian painting [5-8]. Subsequently, we employed the theories of regional culture and cultural types to systematise these findings, aiming to derive the most coherent explanations for the observable differences and characteristics in the domains of philosophical thought, literature, and painting across the southern and northern regions of India.

D.C. Güss (2011) [9] demonstrated that individuals from individualistic cultures exhibit greater confidence in analytical decision-making, while those from collectivist backgrounds rely on intuitive, socially informed strategies. In India, such dynamics are exemplified by the contrast between North Indian professionals, who often prioritise data-driven, hierarchical decision-making in corporate settings, and South Indian communities, where familial or communal consensus frequently guides major life and business choices. These patterns align with the findings of [10], who observed that North Indian respondents in managerial roles displayed higher risk tolerance in financial investments, whereas South Indians preferred risk-mitigation strategies anchored in familial advice. North India's Hindi-dominated public sphere contrasts with South India's multilingual landscape, where languages encode cultural narratives that prioritise indirect communication and relational nuance. Such linguistic differences, as argued by [11], influence cognitive styles, with South Indians more adept at interpreting implicit social cues during decision-making. Avoidant decision-making was more prevalent among North Indians in high-stakes professional scenarios, whereas South Indians demonstrated dependent tendencies. These patterns resonate with the work of [10], who identified similar trends in consumer behaviour across India's regions.

North Indian professionals in IT hubs like Gurugram exemplify analytic styles, using data-driven frameworks like SWOT analysis, whereas South Indian entrepreneurs in Bengaluru integrate nemawashi (Japanese consensus-building) with Silicon Valley agility [12]. Furthermore, Southern Indians are referred to as clever and sometimes too clever by half by North Indians [13]. These references can be assigned to ethnic origin. Indo-Aryans, residing in the North, have been experienced more warfare due to different occupations from the bordering countries which has brought a region with warriors. The Dravidians resided in the South, have not been influenced by these numerous wars until it became common to come to India by sea which the British did. Ethnicity is group belonging, and referring to the social identity of groups. The sense of belonging to an important ethnic group may override, and even nullify, the feeling of belonging to a particular nation-state [14]. However, generally, almost the aforementioned works used the lens of the theories of behaviours, and the lens of Hofstede's the onion of cultures, thus, there seems to be no works on systemised the differences in cultural personality between the North and South India from the complex of theories including the theory of cultural typologies, the theory of cultural regions, the theory of cultural diffusion, and the Gestalt psychology's theory.

2.2. Theoretical framework

A cultural region is defined as a particular cultural domain established by residential entities within a specified geographical locality of a community, which collectively engenders a system of cultural manifestations imbued with pronounced ethnic characteristics. These characteristics are articulated through the interplay of social and humanistic contexts, as evidenced in the interactions of human conduct with nature, society, and interpersonal relations throughout the continuum of historical evolution [15]. Concurrently, a cultural region is characterised as a continuous spatial entity exhibiting relatively uniform natural conditions internally while being distinctly separate from surrounding territorial expanses. It constitutes a spatial domain wherein a relatively cohesive community of individuals coexists, resides collectively, and engages in prolonged interactions and exchanges, thereby facilitating the development of a unique value system that enables differentiation from the value systems of proximate external territorial regions [16]. Consequently, a cultural region is identified as a continuous spatial domain exhibiting congruities in natural conditions, historical developmental trajectories, and a distinctive value system in contrast to adjacent external territorial expanses. The cultural region theory posited by American anthropologists contends that the culture of each ethnic group is intricately developed in conjunction with specific social environments and historical contexts [17]. Cultural diffusion theory provides an analytical framework for explicating cultural similarities, as articulated by various scholarly traditions, including the cultural-historical school and the cultural diffusion school. This theory elucidates the advancement of civilisations through the appropriation of cultural achievements and the migration patterns of ethnic groups. Moreover, cultural diffusion theory downplays the significance of human agency, placing greater emphasis on spiritual and religious dimensions, thereby adopting

a predominantly idealistic perspective. F. Boas (1911) [17] cultural regional theory stands in opposition to the evolutionary paradigms proposed by Tylor and Morgan, while simultaneously critiquing the cultural diffusion theories advanced by European scholars. He meticulously examined the cultures of individual nations as they emerged historically in relation to specific geographical conditions and social environments. Furthermore, F. Boas (1911) [17] introduced the concept of cultural change, recognising that the interactions between disparate societies serve as the fundamental basis for cultural exchange and adaptation. The sociocultural practices of nations frequently draw upon neighbouring societies rather than being conceived in isolation. F. Boas (1911) [17] placed significant emphasis on the patterns of cultural borrowing across temporal frameworks, regarding this phenomenon as a vital avenue for investigating the system of cultural types that give rise to similarities in rituals, customs, music, and craftsmanship. His students, including A. Kroeber (1876-1960) and C. Wissler (1870-1947), furthered the exploration of the historical dimensions of cultural phenomena [18-19]. They appropriated a range of concepts related to cultural regions and attributes from early 20th-century German "diffusionist" anthropologists to investigate the spatial distribution of one or more cultural characteristics across diverse cultures, particularly those in close proximity, and to analyse the processes of diffusion that occur among them.

In contemporary discourse, the theoretical framework concerning cultural regions and historical-ethnic territories serves as a foundational reference for scholars engaged in the delineation of cultural areas and the categorisation of cultural landscapes. The conceptualisation of cultural regions posited by American anthropologists underscores the innovative contributions of diverse populations globally and is bolstered by scholarly endorsement. This framework posits that cultural regions emerge as a consequence of enduring cultural differentiations, attributable to the adaptive strategies employed by demographic groups in response to ecological variables; thus, an analysis of cultural regions necessitates the identification of a constellation of defining elements that collectively constitute a specific regional culture. Nevertheless, the practical implications of this theoretical perspective on cultural zoning remain limited. Since the introduction of the concept of cultural regions by American anthropologists, it has faced scrutiny from various critics who contend that the criteria employed for the segmentation of cultural regions are fundamentally arbitrary [18]. In contrast, the framework of historical-ethnographic regions articulated by Soviet ethnologists delineates the determinants influencing the emergence of such regions, the evolution of cultural traits, and synthesises the domains of both material and spiritual existence of inhabitants, encompassing factors such as geographical homogeneity, levels of socio-economic advancement, sustained

intercultural exchange, and shared historical ancestries of ethnic groups within a given locale. Consequently, this theoretical approach manifests a considerable degree of practical efficacy [18].

By integrating the theoretical constructs of cultural regions and historical-ethnic territories, it becomes evident that the natural geographical milieu constitutes a fundamental basis for the development and evolution of both national and regional cultural attributes. Each distinct natural geographical locale frequently hosts one or multiple ethnic groups that assume the role of principal cultural agents, significantly contributing to the establishment of the cultural identity characteristics inherent to the region.

In the realm of methodological discourse, the theory of historical particularity posits the necessity for an empirical framework, accentuating the importance of field data collection, while simultaneously dismissing the overarching comparative methodology, and particularly underscoring the imperative of comprehensive analysis in the examination of cultural practices [18]. The theory of historical particularity dictates that cultural practices must be scrutinised through three fundamental dimensions: environmental conditions, national psychological determinants/national character, and historical contextual factors, with historical context bearing the paramount significance [18]. Culture emerges as a product of historical contingencies and the dynamic interplay between humanity and both the natural and social milieu. Consequently, any cultural practice can only be accurately and holistically comprehended when situated within that socio-historical framework. Thus, any attempt to juxtapose one culture against another is deemed forced and methodologically unsound.

The theory of historical particularity elucidates the intricate nature of cultural transformation and posits that distinct cultural attributes must be examined within the specific contexts of their emergence. As articulated by F. Boas (1911) [17], while a certain degree of unity and regularity exists in the evolution of human culture, the culture of each community is inextricably linked to a particular social environment shaped by specific geographical conditions at a given historical juncture. Thus, each individual culture can only be examined within defined parameters, adhering to its own developmental trajectory. There may exist no universal laws governing social organisation, and its transformations may not conform to a singular theoretical archetype of history or society. Cultures have extensively appropriated and amalgamated elements from one another. Therefore, the theory of cultural relativism underscores the significance of recognising the parity of cultural values engendered by diverse populations. In V.T. Nguyen, et al. (2013) [20], when they discuss on the theory of F. Boas (1911) [17], they have commented that F. Boas (1911) [17] asserts that no culture holds superiority over another, and distinctions such

as superiority or inferiority, or notions of good or bad, are inapplicable across cultures. In the application of cultural relativism, it is imperative to refrain from adopting a specific historical vantage point to assess alternative perspectives. It is essential to engage in field investigations and conduct in-depth interviews with each research participant, attentively listening to their narratives and viewpoints in an effort to mitigate one's own subjective biases.

V.T. Nguyen, et al. (2013) [20] also discussed that F. Boas accentuated the relevance of historical and social contexts in the examination of cultural phenomena. He advocated for the analysis of culture as it is constructed within a specific historical framework and social environment, characterised by distinct geographical conditions. F. Boas (1911) [17] maintained that cultural similarities arise from inter-ethnic exchanges rather than being the products of independent and fortuitously analogous developments. Broadly speaking, among ethnic groups engaged in contact and reciprocal exchange, the social environment, geographical conditions, and historical contexts significantly contribute to the establishment of a distinctive system of cultural values representative of each ethnic group [21].

The influence of Gestalt psychology posits that individuals perceive the overarching framework rather than the intricate details within it. "The crystallisation of a cultural pattern emerges not merely as a direct result of circumstances and conditions, but rather as a product of the creative faculties of human imagination and representation". The placement of each cultural element within the entirety, in the overall configuration, is pivotal in determining their significance. For instance, in the context of Vietnamese culture, patriotism is accorded the highest degree of importance. Conversely, the Chinese ascribe absolute significance to the concept of filial piety. Benedict's objective is to elucidate, in a more nuanced, profound, and empathetic manner, certain cultures, endeavouring to "comprehend the implications of behaviours shaped by cultural contexts". In addition to B. Ruth (1934) [22], notable scholars include Margaret Mead and M. Metro, who explored Themes in French Culture (1954), as well as Gorer & J. Rikman, authors of The Peoples of Great Russia (1948), and D. Risman, who conducted a study titled The Lonely Crowd, examining the evolving character of Americans (1950). B. Ruth (1934) [22] contended that each culture's distinctive personality embodies a unique mode of association with a prevailing behavioural model or psychological decision-making framework, accentuated by the characteristics of quotidian existence, religious influences, and the emotional and behavioural responses to the surrounding world. Radughin asserted that cultural personality is intrinsically linked to individuals' recognition of their subjectivity, positing that personality reflects the human endeavour to transcend necessity in pursuit of freedom, thereby suggesting that personality serves as a

cultural manifestation, distinct from the inherent nature of individuals. According to T.V.N. Nguyen (1995) [23], cultural personality constitutes a value embedded within the system of human attributes, which not only fosters the capacity for human interactions with other socio-cultural entities but also facilitates the modulation of behaviours in relational contexts, thereby assisting individuals in the development and refinement of their own identities while simultaneously becoming engaged, contributing members of society, in alignment with societal ideals. In summary, cultural personality represents the amalgamation of all cultural attributes inherent to an individual, which are discovered and cultivated across various dimensions of life and all that pertains to that individual's existence.

Cultural variances are inherently shaped by disparities in both natural and sociocultural contexts. The predominance of flat topography fosters an agrarian lifestyle, compelling inhabitants to adopt a stable and enduring mode of existence characterised by a reluctance to embrace disruption, simultaneously cultivating a posture of reliance on the natural environment rather than an inclination to dominate it, thereby promoting a harmonious coexistence with nature. Given their reliance on a multitude of natural phenomena, the Vietnamese people engage in dialectical thinking, encompassing all pertinent factors while emphasising their interrelationships. This dispersed focus manifests in a succinct yet profound expressive style. The sustained and stable lifestyle engenders a relational framework grounded in affection, which in turn fosters an ethos of moral respect, literary appreciation, and reverence for motherhood. The imperative to honour emotional experiences necessitates a flexible and adaptable approach to social interactions, ensuring the preservation of emotional ties. Due to the valuation of emotions alongside adaptability and flexibility, the organisational structures, hierarchies, and disciplines among the Vietnamese populace do not manifest as excessively rigid or pronounced. Ultimately, this continual state of flux, adaptability, and emphasis on emotional and relational dynamics engenders a culture of fusion, synthesis, and amalgamation [16]. In a similar vein, from the standpoint of cultural typologies as elucidated by T.N. Them (2013) [16], the collective of scholars including [4] contended that the formation of Eastern culture was intrinsically linked to expansive, fertile delta basins conducive to agricultural advancement. The four paramount natural constants characterising the East encompass substantial water availability, a temperate climate, fertile soil, and ease of cultivation, which collectively influenced the tendency of Eastern inhabitants to rapidly engage in agricultural production, particularly in the realms of rice farming and the rearing of livestock and poultry. Consequently, the essence of Eastern culture is encapsulated in its agricultural-rural identity, which is manifest through its principal sustenance source, clothing traditions, as well as festivals and religious

beliefs that are intricately tied to the veneration of natural phenomena that agricultural production necessitates. Due to its agricultural-rural identity and the governance of the aforementioned natural constants, Eastern culture exhibits communal traits and adaptability, fostering a harmonious relationship with nature that contrasts sharply with the more aggressive and transformative interactions characteristic of Western cultures. Furthermore, owing to its intrinsic agricultural-rural identity and the influence of these salient natural constants, Eastern culture is characterised by a certain introspection, stagnation, and relative insularity, thereby creating fertile ground for ethical philosophies to flourish over centuries, with India being recognised as one of the foundational cradles for numerous renowned philosophical schools of thought.

India is delineated as a subcontinent characterised by distinct natural boundaries: formidable mountain ranges obstructing the northern expanse, and expansive seas encircling the two southern peripheries. The Himalayas, heralded as the most imposing mountain range, often referred to as the roof of the world, extend over a distance of 2,400 km, housing more than 50 peaks that soar beyond 7 km in elevation [1]. Originating from Kashmir, this mountain range diverges in two directions. The southern and western trajectories of the mountains converge with the plateaus of Afghanistan and Iran. In this region, the mountains exhibit relatively modest elevations, while the valleys expand to form numerous passes that have historically served as gateways to India. The perpetual snow adorning the Himalayas constitutes an inexhaustible source of water for the three principal rivers that have shaped this plain: The Indus river traverses almost parallel to the western perimeter of contemporary India, navigating through an arid region that receives scant precipitation, thus rendering the snowmelt from the Himalayas as its primary water source. The Brahmaputra river flows independently to the east before ultimately curving back westward to converge with the Ganga river. The confluence of these two rivers' lower reaches culminated in the formation of Bengal. The predominant section of the North Indian plain is encapsulated by the Ganga river basin, which interfaces with the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river to the east, while being delineated from the Indus river basin by a modest promontory. The Ganga river plain itself spans a width of 150-300 km and stretches approximately 2,000 km in length, exhibiting a predominantly flat topography, with no elevation exceeding 250 m above sea level [1]. Over one-third of the population resides within this expanse, and the lower stretches of the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers have evolved into one of the most densely populated regions.

In summary, the environmental conditions of India have profoundly shaped its cultural landscape, characterised by the following attributes: the northern region is home to the formidable Himalayan mountain range along with two expansive, fertile river plains, namely the Indus and Ganga, characterised by substantial precipitation, a cold season, and snowfall; the northeastern region is particularly abundant in mineral resources; whereas the central and southern regions are distinguished by the Thar desert and the Deccan plateau, which feature narrow, secluded plains, limited rainfall, a flood season, and an absence of snowfall. The contrasting natural environments of North and South India have engendered distinct cultural variances. Despite these disparities, in response to an environment that is simultaneously expansive, exposed, and formidable, the populace has opted for harmonious coexistence rather than dominion over nature. The profound influence of mountains and rivers also permeate Indian spiritual culture, contributing to a nation shaped by these geographical features, a land rich in divine entities and mythological narratives.

3. Methodology

The researchers predominantly employ secondary data analysis, utilising synthesis, the historical-logical method, the comparative method, and an interdisciplinary approach. Within this framework, the analysis-synthesis technique is employed to examine and integrate secondary qualitative research findings derived from reference sources according to various criteria and domains.

The historical-logical method is utilised to scrutinise the manifestations and attributes of the spiritual culture present in the southern and northern regions of India in a chronological sequence. It also explores the dialectical interrelations between these manifestations and attributes, particularly the interplay between the spiritual cultural characteristics of both southern and northern India through the lens of philosophical thought and the spiritual cultural attributes of these regions as expressed in literature and painting. Additionally, it examines the connections between the foundational elements that contribute to the cultural development of both southern and northern India, including natural environmental factors and social environmental variables such as historical context, economic conditions, and demographic considerations, in relation to the manifestations and characteristics of the spiritual culture prevalent in both regions.

Furthermore, the study employs a parallel comparison method to contrast the two regions, specifically focusing on three foundational bases of cultural formation in southern and northern India: natural geographical basis, historical basis, and economic basis. It also conducts a parallel examination of the spiritual and cultural characteristics of these two regions across three domains: philosophy, literature, and painting. The comparative analysis of cultures through a dialectical understanding of both the identity and divergence of distinct cultures enables the identification

and comprehension of the principles governing cultural evolution. The comparative examination of consciousness and cognitive frameworks constitutes a substantive comparison, distinctly different from a mere formal or contrived comparison. Cultural comparison investigates the diverse cultures of global populations, emphasising the interconnectedness among them, the distinctive characteristics of global cultural evolution, and the identity and differences that exist among the cultures of various peoples worldwide. Moreover, cultural comparison explores the relationships between ethnic and regional cultures, underscoring the values and identities inherent in national cultures, the unity amidst diversity of regional cultures, and global cultures, while elucidating the operational principles of culture in a broader context.

Ultimately, the study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, primarily integrating geography, history, and culture, in addition to an interdisciplinary perspective encompassing culture and literature, as well as philosophy and culture, and painting and culture, to elucidate the foundational aspects of the formation and expression of the spiritual cultural characteristics of the southern and northern regions of India.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Cultural characteristics of Indian people of two regions in the field of philosophy

The evolution of ancient Indian philosophy transitioned from religious and mythological frameworks into a sophisticated and rational intellectual system aimed at probing the origins of the cosmos and the essence of human existence. This intellectual odyssey is a rich tapestry of thought that encapsulates primitive perceptions of the universe. The historical trajectory of ancient Indian philosophy is typically categorised into two distinct epochs: The Vedic - Epic period and the Buddhist - Brahmanical period. Each of these periods has yielded significant contributions, culminating in a diverse and profound philosophical legacy that continues to exert a lasting impact on global culture and intellectual discourse [24].

Northern India serves as the incubator for numerous esteemed philosophical traditions, thereby painting a rich and intricate portrait of intellectual thought and knowledge. This region has functioned as the nucleus of philosophical discourse. It represents the bedrock of Indian philosophy, marked by the emergence of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Brahmanas. The richness and diversity of this intellectual tradition are evident not only in the plethora of philosophical schools and authors but also in the vast array of texts produced. This phenomenon not only underscores the creativity and dynamism inherent in the intellectual life of North India but also articulates the pivotal role of philosophy in shaping the cultural and spiritual ethos of the region. Each principal philosophical school possesses its own extensive

corpus of scriptures and commentaries, numbering in the thousands [7].

From ancient mythologies to contemporary philosophical inquiries, the natural environment has functioned as both a source of artistic inspiration and a stimulus for philosophical reflection. The Indian conceptual framework embodies a profound recognition of the intrinsic relationship between humanity and the natural world. This perspective acknowledges the cyclical essence of existence, encompassing the experiences of birth, death, joy, and sorrow [24]. The varied geography of Northern India has facilitated the flourishing of civilisation and intellectual development. The region's rich resources and diverse landscapes have fostered an optimal habitat for human life. The Himalayas exemplify the formidable challenges posed by nature, with their perennial snowfall and extreme climatic conditions. In response to nature's unpredictability, the Indian populace has constructed a pantheon of deities associated with various natural occurrences. This mythological and religious framework embodies the belief in the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural realm. Through rituals of prayer and offerings, individuals endeavour to procure blessings from these deities, thereby acknowledging their reliance on natural forces.

In addition to these six primary philosophical schools, numerous other branches and philosophical traditions have emerged in Northern India, including Buddhism, Jainism, and Lokayata. It is evident that within Northern India, seven out of ten philosophical schools predominantly concentrate on the inquiries pertaining to matter, spirit, quantum, atom, the logic of knowledge, argumentation, and scriptures, which encompass the macro-level, significant issues confronting the world and humanity [25-27]. Conversely, only three out of ten schools of philosophy in the North, namely Yoga, Buddhism, and Lokayata, share thematic similarities with the philosophical schools of Southern India, namely Agamic, Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Advaita Vedanta, which are primarily centred on matters of liberation, practice, meditation, soul, and micro-level ethical values, emphasising the individual's role within society. Southern India is distinguished by its profound philosophical discourse, which revolves around themes of liberation, practice, and meditation, accentuating the significance of the soul and the quest for inner truth, thereby encouraging individuals to engage in self-exploration as a means to attain enlightenment [28]. The promotion of ethical values at the micro-level focuses on accountability and the relational dynamics among individuals within society, thereby establishing a robust foundation for ethical conduct while concurrently fostering harmony and tranquillity within the community. The widespread dissemination of spiritual practices and meditation has facilitated individuals in achieving mental purity and fostering a profound connection

with reality, ultimately guiding them towards liberation from suffering and the repetitive cycle of rebirth [29]. Although the Southern region may not exhibit the same level of richness and diversity in philosophical schools as its Northern counterpart, it nevertheless plays a critical role in the evolution of Indian philosophy. While the quantity of schools, authors, and works in this region may be comparatively fewer, their quality and impact remain significant. Specially, Hinduism spread all over India making India unity in diversity [30], and the kings of the dynasties in South India built thousands of Hindu temples, which still stand the test of time, symbolise the preservation and influence of the indigenous beliefs and indigenous culture, folk culture of the Dravidian people in South India [31], opposed to the spread of many exogenous religions and culture in the North India such as Islam, Christianity, etc. Notable figures such as Ramanuja and Madhva have indelibly influenced the narrative of Indian philosophy.

Northern India, owing to its strategic geographical positioning, has historically served as the nucleus for numerous prominent dynasties, ranging from the ancient Maurya and Gupta dynasties to the Islamic and Mughal dynasties. This historical significance has rendered the North a pivotal political and cultural hub, while simultaneously being a battleground for incessant conflicts, resulting in various repercussions such as social stratification, religious discord, and political volatility [32]. These dynamics have profoundly shaped the psyche and lifestyle of the Northern populace, engendering a cultural identity that is both rich and intricate. With the amalgamation of diverse social strata, from the impoverished to the affluent, Northern India has emerged as a centre for knowledge creation and dissemination. The abundance of philosophical thought is manifest in the plethora of philosophical texts produced, thereby positioning the North as the cradle of numerous seminal schools of thought in the annals of Indian history. Cultural interactions among various dynasties, in conjunction with the influences of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, have cultivated a rich and diverse philosophical landscape. This amalgamation has not only enhanced the reservoir of knowledge but has also significantly contributed to the shaping of the populace's worldview and existential perspectives [33].

Meanwhile, the region of South India is distinguished by a temperate and warm climate, characterised by limited precipitation and the absence of snowfall, thereby facilitating agricultural practices and daily life activities. The expansive Deccan Plateau, endowed with its dense forestation and constricted plains, enhances agricultural productivity, although it is not without challenges, such as the threat of drought. In contrast to the North, which frequently encounters flooding events, the South experiences a lower incidence of these natural calamities, thereby contributing to

a more stable living milieu. Historically, the Southern region has not served as the nucleus for numerous prominent dynasties, resulting in a diminished frequency of warfare compared to the North. The significant, perilous, secure, arable, extensive, level, and less fragmented northern region of India has been selected by eighteen dynasties, specifically the Mauryan, Later Chalukyas, Varman, Ranjit Singh, Harshavardhana, Nanda, Gupta, Surasena, Satavahana, Pratiharas, Jamwal, Pala, Sakas, Gurjara, Sharqī, Lodhi, Ghurid Sultanate, and Iltutmish as their seat of power over a span exceeding thirty-eight centuries. In contrast, the southern region, characterised by aridity, elevated temperatures, and increased fragmentation, was geographically isolated by land and could only be accessed via maritime routes; thus, it was the choice of merely fifteen dynasties, namely the Cholas, Pallavas, Pandyas, Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, Satvahanas, Bahmani, Rashtrakuta, Shivaji, Tipu Sultan, Andhra Ikshvakus, Eastern Ganga, Kongu Nadu, and Vijayanagara, to establish their capitals and reside therein for a duration surpassing thirty-seven centuries. Northern India has been the theatre of numerous significant military confrontations throughout its extensive historical timeline. Among the notable conflicts are the First Battle of Panipat (1526), the Second Battle of Panipat (1556), which reinforced Mughal authority in Northern India, and the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), which culminated in the defeat of the Maratha forces, thereby considerably diminishing their influence. Other notable engagements include the Battle of Khanwa (1527), the Battle of Haldighati (1576), the Battle of Delhi (1737), and the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Furthermore, there were campaigns led by Chandragupta II in Balkh, the First Hunnic invasion, the Gauda-Gupta interactions, as well as the Gupta conquests of Bengal and Kanishka's military endeavours against Parthia. It is evident that Northern India experienced a greater frequency of wars and uprisings than its Southern counterpart, which has had profound ramifications for the northern region. The Southern Wars encompass: the Battle of Talikota (1565), which signified the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire, the Battle of Tughlaqabad (1327), the Carnatic Wars (1746-1763), the Battle of Pollilur (1780), and the Anglo-Mysore Wars (1767-1799), as well as the Maratha-Mysore Wars (1785-1787). Additionally, other conflicts such as the Saka-Satavahana and Chalukya-Chola wars played crucial roles. These military engagements not only significantly influenced the political landscape and power dynamics within North and South India but also contributed to the shaping of the historical and cultural trajectories of these two distinct cultural regions. The northern region is characterised by a high population density; however, when excluding the Himalayan mountainous expanse, the available land is insufficient to accommodate the total populace, thus intensifying job competition. Consequently, the disparity between affluent and impoverished populations

is markedly pronounced, with a higher incidence of low-income individuals compared to the southern region. Conversely, although the southern plains are narrower and more fragmented, their proximity to the sea facilitates the development of international trade and the attraction of foreign investment. This results in comparatively milder job competition and a less severe economic divide, evidenced by a lower percentage of low-income individuals than that observed in the North. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the majority of the top ten states with the highest gross domestic product (GDP) in India are situated in the southern region, whereas most of the states with the lowest GDP are found in the northern region. Consequently, this has engendered a more stable cultural environment, less susceptible to the ramifications of conflicts and political turmoil. This prevailing peace has facilitated the flourishing of culture, art, and philosophical inquiry, culminating in a distinct cultural identity for the South. Although the Southern region does not boast as many of the wealthiest individuals in the country as its Northern counterpart, it hosts a majority of the states with the highest GDP in India. States such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh have exhibited significant growth in the realms of industry, information technology, and service sectors, thereby attracting substantial investment from both domestic and international sources. This economic advancement not only generates numerous employment opportunities but also enhances the overall quality of life for the populace. From this foundation, unique, abstract, and profound philosophical traditions have emerged, seeking pathways to human liberation. Philosophers advocate for individual self-exploration as a means to attain enlightenment, while simultaneously promoting ethical values at the micro level, with an emphasis on individual responsibilities and social relationships. The evolution of Southern philosophy not only influences spiritual existence but also profoundly impacts cultural, artistic, and societal domains, resulting in the creation of rich literary and musical compositions that deeply articulate spiritual and intellectual values. In summary, South India has engendered a vibrant culture that encapsulates humanity's relentless pursuit of enlightenment and truth.

4.2. Cultural characteristics of Indian people of two regions in the field of literature

Indian literature is characterised as a complex tapestry that embodies the rich cultural heritage of the subcontinent. The extensive geographical landscape of India has fostered unique literary traditions, with the Northern and Southern regions often regarded as the two contrasting poles of numerous artistic and literary schools. Through the examination of the literary heritage across these regions, we aim to illuminate the intricate interplay of culture, history, and language that has shaped the literary tradition within the nation. South Indian literature is recognised as one of the oldest literary traditions globally. It is deeply rooted in a profound cultural heritage, influenced by ancient traditions and classical languages [34].

North Indian literature is significantly shaped by the influence of various dynasties. This body of literature represents a synthesis of indigenous themes and external influences, characterised by centuries of cultural exchange and hybridity, thereby reflecting the syncretic spirit of the region [35]. The colonial era was instrumental in moulding the literary landscape of North India, marked by the emergence of English literature, the introduction of Western literary genres, and the advent of novel literary discourses. Authors depicted the colonial experience while providing insights into the intricate dynamics of identity and cultural conflict. As articulated by M. Meenakshi (2017) [36], the colonial encounter indelibly influenced North Indian literature, affecting its themes, linguistic choices, and narrative methodologies.

Conversely, South Indian literature frequently embodies robust regional identities, deeply entrenched in the region's unique linguistic and cultural traditions. The literary works often convey reverence for the sublime beauty of nature, employing natural imagery as a symbol of vitality, love, and endurance. Women are venerated as a source of strength, symbols of good fortune, and protectors of family. The archetype of the strong, independent, and sagacious woman is prevalent across many literary pieces, thereby contributing to the discourse surrounding the value and societal position of women. Authors have delved into the intricacies of South Indian society, portraying its rituals and customs. Their literary creations are imbued with a profound sense of place, evoking the lush landscapes and vibrant traditions intrinsic to South India [37]. South Indian literature celebrates the cultural diversity of the region, presenting a mosaic of voices and narratives that encapsulate its distinct identity.

In contrast, North Indian literature predominantly emphasises themes of identity, social transformation, and the lives of ordinary individuals, including their challenges and aspirations. Beginning in the late 13th century, the literary works of this era often exhibit religious, mythological, legendary, and romantic elements, influenced by Islamic culture while intertwining with the artificial and refined traits of aristocracy. However, there exists a genre of narratives and songs that mourn the bygone golden age, whereas others depict the tragic and fatal consequences wrought by warfare. These literary works are constructed upon popular morality, grounded in simple realism, and often employ humour to critique the hypocrisy inherent in feudalism and the ruling Muslim aristocracy [2]. North Indian literary compositions represent an amalgamation of indigenous motifs and cultural subtleties, offering a glimpse into the diverse societal landscape. They reflect a journey of identity-seeking amidst the currents of modernity, grappling with the tensions between tradition and modernisation [38].

Consequently, owing to the unique geographical attributes of South India, which has historically remained detached from being the epicentre of numerous Islamic dynasties and the British Raj administration, South Indian literature has similarly experienced a degree of isolation and divergence from predominant foreign literary influences, such as Islamic and Western literature. As a result, in South India, the indigenous cultural imprint and traditional literary forms exhibit a greater depth compared to North India, which has been significantly shaped by external influences from Islamic and Western literary traditions. The geographical and climatic disparities between the North and South Indian regions, characterised by the North's harsh and magnificent natural landscapes in contrast to the South's temperate, warm, and relatively moderate conditions, serve as foundational factors contributing to the differentiation in literary schools across these two regions. Thus, South Indian literature has flourished for over 2,500 years, encompassing 2,381 Sangam poems crafted by 473 poets, which celebrate themes of womanhood, romantic love, regional cultural identity, and the rich, diverse, and enduring ethnic cultures present in South India. In contrast, North Indian literature predominantly engages with genres such as novels, epics, short stories, and plays that explore themes of religion, spirituality, and nostalgia, particularly reflecting on the illustrious governance of bygone eras.

5. Conclusions

The Northern region is characterised by its severe climate and grandeur, encompassing extensive, level, and fertile plains, which are heavily populated and serve as the administrative hub for numerous dynasties. This area has historically been the battleground for a significant number of conflicts and is the residence of the majority of India's wealthiest and impoverished individuals, alongside most of the states exhibiting the lowest GDP in India. Consequently, educational institutions predominantly emphasise religious motifs, spirituality, significant religious figures, mythology, as well as the interplay between humanity and the cosmos, materiality and spirituality, atomic structures, and epistemological pursuits, housing a corpus of scriptures that is one and a half times more substantial than that found in South India. Simultaneously, these institutions reflect a pronounced influence of cultural interchange and the assimilation of Islamic and Western cultural elements, in contrast to the educational establishments in South India. The Southern region, in contrast, presents a temperate climate that is warm rather than extreme, featuring narrow, arid, hot plains with minimal precipitation, an absence of snowfall, and few instances of flooding. Furthermore, it does not serve

as the administrative centre for the majority of dynasties, and the incidence of historical warfare is comparatively lower than in the Northern region. Despite its fewer affluent inhabitants relative to the North, it is home to the majority of the top ten states with the highest GDP within India. Thus, the educational institutions predominantly concentrate on themes of venerating women, cultivating personal ethical values, and promoting diverse and rich local cultural identities, while simultaneously reflecting a more pronounced influence of indigenous South Asian culture compared to those found in Northern India. The interplay of the natural landscape, historical context of societal evolution, and the creative subject alongside the accumulation of cultural values and products across the Southern and Northern regions of India has significantly influenced, shaped, and engendered distinctions in the spiritual and cultural characteristics endemic to both regions. The confluence of these aforementioned factors, manifesting in the creative outlook and stylistic approach of the creative subject, along with the aggregation of cultural values and products across all domains of spiritual endeavours, has culminated in the distinctive spiritual and cultural visage of both Southern and Northern India. Specifically, the cultural manifestation of Northern India is perpetually enriched, accumulated, and cultivated through the legacies of the primordial nomadic cultures originating from the West and the North, rendering its positive attributes more pronounced, whereas the cultural representation of Southern India is consistently preserved, sustained, protected, and promoted, showcasing the indigenous culture of South Asia with a relatively more negative aspect and a heightened prominence of negative qualities compared to Northern India. Although the extent of cultural interaction and exchange between these cultural domains is progressively intensifying, leading to a more frequent occurrence of cultural acculturation, each cultural lineage in Northern and Southern India retains its distinctive, unique, and inherent characteristics, alongside its specific role in the collective endeavour of constructing a cohesive Indian cultural value system characterised by diversity.

CRediT author statement

Minh Giang Nguyen: Reviewing, Formal analysis, Editing, Data analysis, Abstract; Thi My Linh Tran: Data analysis, Writing, Proofreading; Thi Uyen Nhi Luong, Thi Bich Nhi Nguyen, Quynh Nhu Nguyen: Data analysis, Writing.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

REFERENCES

[1] N.T. Dac (2000), *Indian Culture*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, 342pp (in Vietnamese).

[2] C.H. Dinh (1993), *Indian Literature*, Culture Publishing House, 188pp (in Vietnamese).

[3] N.T. Hy (2021), *Overview about Indian History and Culture*, Social Sciences Publishing House, 363pp (in Vietnamese).

[4] N.C. Mai, T.H. Do, H.H. Ho, et al. (2008), *Introduction of Oriental Culture,* Hanoi Publishing House, 967pp (in Vietnamese).

[5] L.D. Trung, P.T. Hien (2000), *Comprehensive Anthology of Indian Literature*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, 380pp (in Vietnamese).

[6] L.D. Trung (2010), *Indian Literature*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, 284pp (in Vietnamese).

[7] N. Manjula (2001), *The Darshanas: Six schools of Indian Philosophy*, The Acropolitan, 29pp.

[8] Ministry of Culture Government of India (2020), *Miniature Painting*, https://ccrtindia.gov.in/miniature-painting, accessed 7 July 2024.

[9] D.C. Güss (2011), "Fire and ice: Testing a model on culture and complex problem solving", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, **42(7)**, pp.1279-1298, DOI: 10.1177/0022022110383320.

[10] S. Yeshwini, B. Bhumika (2020), "Cross-cultural differences in decision-making styles between north and south Indians", *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*, **11(11)**, pp.4276-4310.

[11] S. Reddy (2018), *Language, Cognition, and Cultural Identity in South India*, Cambridge University Press, 431pp.

[12] A. Saxenian (2018), *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy*, Harvard University Press, 432pp.

[13] J. Manoj (2001), *Passport India: Your Pocket Guide to Indian Business, Customs and Etiquette*, World Trade Press, 96pp.

[14] J.C. Usunier (2000), *Marketing Across Cultures*, Pearson Education Limited, 496pp.

[15] N.D. Thinh (2009), *Vietnamese Regional Cultural Identity*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, 336pp (in Vietnamese).

[16] T.N. Them (2013), *Culture of Vietnamese People in The Southwest Region*, Culture and Art Publishing House, 894pp (in Vietnamese).

[17] F. Boas (1911), *The Mind of Primitive Man*, The Macmillan Company, 295pp.

[18] L.T. Hieu (2019), *Vietnamese Cultural Regions*, VNUHCM Publishing House, 398pp (in Vietnamese).

[19] T.N. Khanh (2011), "Several approaches to cultural research", https://nguvan.hnue.edu.vn/Nghiên-cứu/Văn-hóa/p/may-co-so-tiep-can-ly-thuyet-nghien-cuu-van-hoa-phan-i-1285, accessed 7 July 2024 (in Vietnamese).

[20] V.T. Nguyen, T.Y.T. Phan (2013), *General Anthropology*, VNUHCM Publishing House, 495pp (in Vietnamese).

[21] N.T. Huynh (2009), *Religious Life of Cao Dai Followers in The Context of Southern Culture*, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, 350pp (in Vietnamese).

[22] B. Ruth (1934), *Patterns of Culture*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 223pp.

[23] T.V.N. Nguyen (1995), *Vietnamese Documentary Film (in The Period of 1953-1985) in The Establishment and Development of Vietnamese Cultural Personality*, Vietnamese Arts and Culture Institute, 155pp (in Vietnamese).

[24] T.D. Chinh (2004), *The History of Ancient Indian Philosophical Thought*, National Political Publishing House, 382pp (in Vietnamese).

[25] R.W. Perrett (2016), *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 266pp.

[26] T.V.F. Drishti (2020), "Schools of Indian philosophy", https://www.drishtiias.com/to-the-points/paper4/schools-of-indian-philosophy, accessed 28 July 2024.

[27] T. Joerg (2021), "The concept of emotion in classical Indian philosophy", https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/concept-emotion-india/, accessed 28 July 2024.

[28] J. Duquette (2014), "Reading non-Dualism in Śivādvaita Vedānta: An argument from the Śivādvaitanirṇaya in light of the Śivārkamaṇidīpikā", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, **44(1)**, pp.67-79, DOI: 10.1007/s10781-014-9231-x.

[29] B. Bhikkhu (1999), "The noble eightfold path: The way to the end of suffering", https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/waytoend.html, accessed 28 July 2024.

[30] R. Singh (2023), "Hinduism: Working of unity in diversity", https://www.dailygoodmorningkashmir.com/hinduism-working-of-unity-in-diversity/, accessed 28 July 2024.

[31] A. Holidays (2021), "Exploring the magnificent great living Chola temples - History & how to reach", https://www.alkofholidays.com/blog/exploring-the-magnificent-great-living-chola-temples-history-how-to-reach, accessed 28 July 2024.

[32] Devdutt (2024), "How did invasions change Indian culture?", https://devdutt.com/how-did-invasions-change-indian-culture/, accessed 29 January 2024.

[33] SK Children Foundation (2021), "Takshashila and modern universities - SK children foundation: NGO in Delhi", https://skchildrenfoundation.org/takshashila-and-modern-universities/, accessed 29 July 2024.

[34] E. Sarswat, S.R. Ingole, R. Pandey, et al. (2024), "Exploring the literary landscape: A journey through the contrasting realms of english literature in the North and the South", *Journal of Informatics Education and Research*, **4(1)**, DOI: 10.52783/jier.v4i1.650.

[35] B. Alok (2018), *North Indian Literature: A Synthesis of Culture*, Oxford University Press, 39pp.

[36] M. Meenakshi (2017), *Colonialism and Its Aftermath: English Literature in India*, Routledge, 255pp.

[37] University of Social Sciences and Humanities (2014), *General Anthropology*, VNU-HCM Publishing House, 432pp (in Vietnamese).

[38] S. Chandra (2016), *Tradition and Modernity in North Indian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 322pp.