PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

IN VIETNAMESE HIGH SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This research study examines the issue of gender equality in high schools in Vietnam through the lenses of Vietnamese educators and Vietnamese students and compares the situation in that country with measures taken in England to promote gender equality in education. The sample consisted of staff and students in Vietnam and staff in England. In order to achieve the required in-depth analysis of the social experience of students and educators the research approach employed was qualitative and the main research tools were semi-structured interviews. Data was analysed by the combination of grounded theory and narrative analysis.

The main findings of the research were threefold: firstly, dichotomies exist between what Vietnamese educators espouse and what they enact in terms of gender equality, thus revealing a critical disjunction between policy and practice; secondly, embedded gender stereotypes of both educators and students exist in Vietnamese high schools which place women at a disadvantageous position; thirdly, the curriculum operant in Vietnamese high schools is problematic in that it fails to challenge gender stereotypes and reinforces traditional views of girls and women. In addition, the comparative element in the research reveals many similar beliefs about the theories of gender and education in Vietnam and England such as the acknowledgement of the role of education in promoting gender equality and a commitment by both government agencies and schools to guarantee gender equality between boys and girls. Nonetheless, many interesting differences between the two countries emerged in dealing with gender issues attributable to the different culture norms in the two nations.

Recommendations include the suggestions that the Vietnamese government should undertake more significant steps to target gender inequalities by issuing further legislation regarding gender equality in both education and in the wider society in order to close the gap between policy and practice. The researcher also offers the recommendation to improve the training of Vietnamese school leaders and teachers in terms of gender equality, especially in relation to the learning activities provided in schools. In addition, the researcher suggests amending the Vietnamese curriculum in order that it should become more gender neutral. Finally, the researcher suggests that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes in Vietnam should be developed further in order to give greater emphasis to

gender issues in the curriculum and to encourage practical classroom strategies to address such issues in the educational environment.

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Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

MOET	Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GSO	Government Statistic Office of Vietnam
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
TDA	Training and Development Agency
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
CATE	Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
OFSTED	Office For Standards in Educations, Children's Services and Skills
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The research on which this thesis is based focuses on gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools, which is the last stage of the 12-year grade school system in Vietnam. After graduating, students may move into higher education in colleges, move to vocational schools, or stay at home and attempt to earn a living. Thus, this stage of education in Vietnam is highly important to students because it is at this point that they have to decide the direction of their higher education or future careers.

In any discussion of the context of Vietnam, it is important to note the complex social and cultural and history of the nation and this is especially relevant to the topic of the research. During more than one thousand years of being ruled by the Chinese and the long feudal regime, Vietnamese society has been affected by male chauvinism, women have suffered disadvantages in many aspects of life, and this has significantly influenced attitudes to the education of girls and women. This research aims to contribute to gaining gender equality in high schools, which cater for the oldest students in the school system in Vietnam, and the researcher asserts that if the gender equality in high schools is strengthened, each student will gain more opportunities to achieve the most from their education and their career. The researcher wishes to argue that this will push both the academy and the economy of the country to grow faster and more sustainably. The title of the research is thus: *'Promoting Gender Equality in Education in Vietnamese High Schools'*.

With such a title, the research focuses on strategies to encourage fairness between boys and girls in education whilst they are at high schools in Vietnam. The research investigates gender equality in Vietnamese high schools through an examination of attitudes to gender equality in education among head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers and students in two high schools in Vietnam. The research will compare the situation in that country with the measures taken to ensure gender equality in education in England. Moreover, the research will examine the views about gender equality in education based on qualitative data derived from interviews with a vice principal, course leaders and lecturers in a pedagogical university in Vietnam and in a faculty of education in a university in England

to find out what has been done to ensure gender equality in education in those institutions. Recommendations for government agencies and individual institutions about strategies to promote gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools are provided in the conclusion to the thesis.

The researcher's background

The researcher gained a Master's degree in Geography in Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy in 2007 and she was a high school teacher in Vietnam for several years before she started her PhD at Liverpool John Moores University in 2011. She wishes to carry out the research for a number of reasons:

- First, it is her intention to find out the current level of gender equality in Vietnamese high schools through the lenses of educators.
- Second, the researcher has experience as an educator in Vietnam as she was a geography teacher at high schools in Vietnam and she thus has a personal interest in the issue under scrutiny.
- Third, whilst she was a university student and then teaching at high schools she was interested in the impact of teaching pedagogies, the curriculum and the policy to equality in education between boys and girls.

For these reasons, the researcher wishes to study the issue of gender equality in education in high schools and do something to promote the gender equality in high schools education. Last, the researcher believes this research is necessary for the Vietnamese high schools, universities of pedagogy and for the government agencies if they are to address this vital issue fully.

1.2 The historical and cultural background to the study

In order to reveal the full picture of Vietnamese education, the history of the country and its system of education is briefly described below. During the feudal regime, the Vietnam education system was affected strongly by the Confucian approaches imported from China (Bui, 2008: 13). For more than one thousand years, Vietnam was under Chinese domination and it was only in the year 938 that independence was established but with continued Chinese invasion after that point (Bui, 2008: 11). For this reason, the Han (Chinese script) was used officially in schools (Bui, 2008). Only children from official families or some

highly able children could go to schools (Bui, 2008). Other children went to private schools in the villages, which were operated by male teachers. Some dynasties arranged examinations to choose male students who, if successful in passing examinations, were allowed to work for the authorities (Bui, 2008). For a very long time Vietnamese people have been affected by Confucianism which gives prominence to males for their key roles in the families and in the wider society (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006).

In the year 1858, the French invaded Vietnam and they enforced a policy to drive the majority of the population to become ignorant through strict regulation of access to education so that they could control the country more easily (Bui, 2008). In particular, they reduced to a minimum the number of people from the working class going to school with only a small proportion of people from the bourgeois class, rich families or the upper classes allowed to attend the schools or colleges, which were themselves operated by the French (Bui, 2008). For those schools the official curriculum and the language of instruction was French (Bui, 2008).

After 87 years of struggle, in the year 1945, the people of Vietnam liberated the country from the French and Japanese, founding the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and all people were encouraged to go to school (Bui, 2008). The curriculum was amended and Vietnamese script was used officially for the first time (Bui, 2008). Primary education was made compulsory and free access was guaranteed (Bui, 2008). Despite further French invasions in 1946, in 1950 and 1956, further education reformation was conducted (Bui, 2008). In 1954, the French were defeated but the USA then invaded Vietnam causing great distress and destroying much of the infrastructure of the nation, including schools (Bui, 2008). In 1975, independence was established and from then new curricula were published, the quality of teacher training was improved, schools were established, universities were created and other important changes to the education system were put in place (Bui, 2008).

1.3 The educational system in Vietnam

From the year 2000, kindergarten and primary schooling became universal and from the year 2001 secondary schooling became compulsory (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam-Government Web Portal, 2001). In the years of 2009 and 2010 about two thirds of the budget for education came from local sources and one third from the central government (MOET, 2011b). Salaries of teachers and administrators comprise about 80% of the state education

budget but expenditures for education are from the local budget through taxes, levies and contributions or fees (Bernard and Le, 1995: 1061).

It is important to note that the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training is in charge of education policy for the nation but the implementation and administration of any policy is carried out by the local authorities (MOET, 2008). Primary and secondary education is administered by the communes or districts, high school education and some colleges are administered by the provinces and higher education is administered directly by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2011a).

According to MOET (2005), the educational system in Vietnam now consists of four stages, including:

- Pre-primary (five years) includes nurseries and kindergartens. Nurseries are for children from six months to less than three years old and kindergartens are for children from three to five years old. Nurseries are not as popular as kindergartens and are not compulsory.

- Common education (12 years) includes primary schools, secondary schools and high schools. Primary schools (five years) are for pupils from six to 11 years old. Secondary schools (four years) are for pupils from 12 to 15 years old. Primary schools and secondary schools are compulsory. Primary schools are free. High schools (three years) are for students from 16 to 18 years old.

- Vocational education (one to three years) includes intermediate education and vocational education. These schools are for students of sixteen and older. When students graduate secondary schools, they can move on to high schools or go to vocational education.

- Higher education (two to four years) includes colleges and universities. These are normally for students who have graduated high school.

The focus of this study was on high schools in the phase defined above as 'common education' but interviews also took place with representatives of teacher educators in the higher education sector.

1.4 The gendered nature of education in Vietnam

Liberation and independence have brought many benefits but the educational system is still affected by traditional societal norms, which means that the achievement of girls and women in education lags behind that of boys and men. In all regions of the country, men have higher levels of professional knowledge than women (GSO, 2009: 49). Ethnic girls and women encounter far more difficulties in approaching education compared to boys and men (Nguyen and Do, 2010: 7). In addition, there is discrimination against girls in education because of a gender bias, which suggests that boys have greater intelligence than girls; which is a belief that is especially powerful in rural areas (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 170). There has also been a big gap between males and females in education in the provinces (GSO, 2009: 156). For these reasons, one of the goals for educational development set by the Vietnamese government is to ameliorate and eventually to overcome the differentiation between the two genders (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam-Government Web Portal, 2006). In recent years, gender equality in education has seen some improvement and the literacy ratio of women (15-24 years of age) has been increased to 96,4% (GSO, 2011: 22). Moreover, Vietnam is said to be very successful in increasing the ratio of girls learning at primary and secondary schools (UNICEF, 2013). However, the ratio of women learning reduces gradually when moving into higher education (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 170). For those women who do reach that level of education, the majority of female students concentrate on social sciences rather than on professional subjects, science or engineering (Kabeer, Tran and Vu, 2005: 13). Thus, it has been noted that: 'Women and girls are the last to approach educational opportunities' (Tran, Hoang, and Do, 2006: 156). As the consequence of this, in some aspects, girls are at a disadvantage compared with boys.

Female teachers outnumber male teachers in general but they are preponderant in the early phase of education schools such as primary and secondary schools rather than in higher education (MOET, 2011b). In the school year 2010-2011, the percentage of female teachers in primary schools was 77%, in secondary schools it was 67.5%, in high schools it was 59.5%, in colleges it was 51% and in universities it was 45.7% (MOET, 2011b). Thus, as the figures reveal, in the obverse, male teachers are in the majority in colleges and universities, where the academic requirements are higher and the majority of head teachers in schools are men (Kabeer, Tran and Vu, 2005: 5)

Some learning materials, which are edited and introduced from the male viewpoint, ignore or understate the full contribution of females (Ngo, 2007: 203). Gender bias in school textbooks affects the teaching-learning processes, which lead to differentiation in subject choice so that female students tend to study education and social sciences whilst male students tend to study engineering subjects and agronomy (Kabeer, Tran and Vu, 2005: 5). Teachers are not equipped with gender equality knowledge and there has been comparatively little research and publication about how to promote gender equality in education.

Overall, it is appropriate and apposite to state that although Vietnam has made some significant improvements in gender equality in education, gender is still a major area of concern, especially in high schools since this is the key stage for the identification and amelioration of gender issues prior to entering work, higher education or family life (Atthil and Jha, 2009).

1.5 Theoretical underpinnings for the study

There has been a great deal of research on the negative differentiation between the two genders in every stage of schooling and higher education. In the UK, feminists have made some achievements and schools and authorities have paid more attention to girls in schooling than in the past and the ratio of successful girls has been increasing faster than boys (Epstein et al., 1998). Nevertheless, in recent years, evidence from national statistics and other research reveals that masculinists are calling for more focus on their concerns about 'failing boys' or 'poor boys' in education since 'if one group wins, the other loses' (Epstein et al., 1998: 4). However, girls are not necessarily the 'success stories' of reform in education since they often still lack confidence and this failure of assurance remains problematic even among girls gaining the highest academic results (Skelton, 2010: 131). For these reasons, the researcher believes that girls still need to be encouraged to achieve more and this is especially so for girls in Vietnamese high schools.

One of the texts that has influenced the researcher the most in the development of the theoretical underpinnings for this study is *Gender and Schooling: a Study of Sexual Divisions in the Classroom* by Stanworth (1983). Despite its age, the researcher was impressed with this book since it revealed that though learning the same curriculum, staying in the same classes and doing the same tests, girls of that generation graduated with the

understanding that women come second in the world. The research in which the text is based emphasizes the key role of teachers since their behaviour and teaching pedagogies affected students in relation to gender equality in schools. Furthermore, the book concluded that gender 'is a fundamental issue' (Stanworth, 1983: 7) which aligns with the researcher's own views. A further key text was *Gender and the Politics of Schooling*, which, although edited by Arnot and Weiner 27 years ago, still has great resonance with what is happening in Vietnam at the current time. This text equipped the researcher with a clear overview of policy on gender in education in England at the time of writing when England was making efforts to address such issues and, addition to this, it persuaded her of the validity and importance of liberal feminist theory in education which asserts that 'male control of education has shaped the nature of knowledge' (Arnot and Weiner, 1987: 15). In a more recent text, Arnot and Mac An Ghaill (2006) further convinced the researcher of the association between the state, government policy and girls' achievement. It is for this reason that this study aims to provide recommendations to the Vietnamese government on policies to promote gender equality in education.

In terms of theories of gender, the researcher drew heavily on what she considers to be the seminal work of Measor and Sikes (1992) since it was this text that was influential in determining that the main theoretical stance within the research would be that of liberal feminism. Their contention that everybody has a right to autonomy and that individuals should be encouraged to take up their chosen professions and positions in the society (1992: 20) offered a tantalising and inspirational conception of a possible future for Vietnamese girls and women and this idea pushed the researcher to pursue her studies with even greater determination to do something for girls in Vietnam to assert their positions in families and in society.

Over the last three decades, in the UK and in other developed countries there has been considerable research calling for greater concern about boys rather than girls with much research focusing on the failure of boys and blaming feminists for idealising female students whilst seeing boys as problematic (Myhill and Jones, 2006). Nonetheless, the work of Paechter (1998, 2000, 2006c) satisfies the researcher that girls are still seen as 'other' and inferior to boys.

1.6 Methodology and methods

In terms of the development of the research perspective, the researcher has been influenced by a number of key texts. General introductory texts such as the work of Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008) were useful in the initial construction of ideas for the research approach and assisted greatly in the construction of the initial proposal for the study since it offered an approach of 'from teacher to researcher' step by step from identifying the issues to planning and conducting the education research. From this, she decided her main approach would be qualitative and her research tools would be semi-structured interviews.

The researcher employed elements of narrative analysis, grounded theory and cross-cultural research using semi-structured interviews as the main tool. The researcher used one element of grounded theory in order to develop the theory whilst gathering data. As Charmaz (2006:1984) advised, constructivist grounded theory is quite 'congenial with other approaches such as feminist theory, narrative analysis…' (Charmaz, 2006:184), however, since the researcher came from a Southeast Asia country, she was happy with using third person instead of first person in presenting the research. This was because she wanted to maintain a certain distance and by doing so minimise subjectivity.

The reason for the choice of a qualitative approach was its utility in analysing complex 'phenomena such as feelings, thought process and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn through more conventional research method' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 11). To ensure the validity, reliability and trustworthiness, the work employed the appropriate research methods, along with an element of triangulation to ensure the authenticity. The full outline of approach, sample, and methods of analysis will, of course, be presented in the methodology chapter.

1.7 Research questions

The main research questions that were explored in the study were:

- What are the main theories of promoting gender equality in education in England and Vietnam?
- What are the main attitudes to gender equality among ITT course leaders and lecturers, and head teachers, deputy-head teachers and teachers in high schools in Vietnam and England?

- To what extent do government policy and the curriculum in Vietnam increase gender equality in high schools?
- What should be changed in the teaching pedagogies of high school teachers to promote gender equality in education in Vietnam?
- What strategies could be employed to improve the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in high schools in Vietnam?

These five questions were the keys to the research. To answer such questions, the researcher had to review the literature to identify the history of ideas about these issues, decide the appropriate methodology for the research, choose the sample, build questions for interviews based on the five research questions and finally analyse and write up to satisfy the questions. The first question explores the theories of gender equality in education in England and Vietnam, which gives the trends of ideas about gender equality and gender equality in education. The second question examines the views of the managers and teachers about gender equality in society and education; they are the ones who do and run the teaching, who experience the gender equality. The third question evaluates the effects of the government policy and the curriculum of Vietnam in promoting gender equality in education in the real context. The fourth question investigates how Vietnamese teaching pedagogies influence gender equality in education in high schools and changes, which are necessary to promote gender equality in education. The final question recommends strategies to equip trainee teachers with knowledge of gender equality so when they become teachers they have already had both knowledge and awareness of gender equality in education.

1.8 Originality

There has been a considerable number of research studies on gender equality internationally and a small amount of research on gender equality in education in Vietnam. However, there is a scarcity of such research in Vietnam and no research on promoting gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools has been carried out with head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers and students in the specific contexts explored in this study and thus this study is original in nature since it addresses this issue in a comparatively unexplored social context in a new manner.

1.9 Summary of the chapter

In this, the *Introduction Chapter*, the researcher has affirmed the topic and briefly described the picture of Vietnam's educational history and system. She has also explained the reasons why she chose the topic, why it interested her, the methodology she applied for the study and presented the main research questions on which she focused.

The researcher has noted that Vietnam has a 12-year grade school system and that high school is the critical grade in formulating the identity of students and addressing gendered issues (Atthil and Jha, 2009). With the long history of a feudal regime, many wars and more than one thousand years of rule by the Chinese, the Vietnamese people have been strongly affected by Confucianism, which overemphasizes the roles of men whilst ignoring or devaluing women, especially in education. That bias has existed in Vietnamese families and in the society (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006). Recognizing this, the Vietnamese government has set laws and regulations to ameliorate discrimination by gender (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam-Government Web Portal, 2006). As a consequence of this, Vietnam was said to have made excellent progress on gender equality, however, gender differences remain (World Bank, 2011a). In education, the ratio of female teachers is higher than males but the majority of head teachers are men (Kabeer, Tran, and Vu, 2005: 5). In addition, some learning materials are gender stereotyped (Ngo, 2007) and trainee teachers have not been equipped with gender equality knowledge. Females in rural areas are very much inferior to males in all indicators of education from literacy to degrees and professional knowledge (GSO, 2009: 73)

As an experienced educator in Vietnamese high schools, the researcher wished to find out the situation of gender equality in high schools of Vietnam and the impact of teaching pedagogies, the curriculum, and policy on gender equality in education in her native country. Most of all, she wished to provide recommendations to the Vietnamese government to promote gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools. Further, the researcher contends that although there has been some research on gender equality in education in Vietnam there remains a significant need to pursue this topic further and this research is original in nature.

The next chapter is the literature review, which explores the extant research on the issues under scrutiny in this study. The researcher would like to point out that the text is interspersed with her own reflections and interpretations of the theories presented to add

immediacy to the commentary and in order to reflect on the implications of theory for herself as a woman researcher and for the context of her native Vietnam. She analyses theories and research relevant to the study including the applications of gender theories in education for gender equality.

Chapter 2
Literature review

In this chapter, the researcher will review the literature on gender equality in education, which relates closely to the research topic under scrutiny. The main structure of the overall section is outlined as below.

The first section of the chapter is entitled 'Theories of gender and education', which reviews some main theories in relation to gender in the field of education, all of which have had some influence on this study, such as radical feminism, Marxist-socialist feminism, liberal feminism and feminist reproduction theory. The second section focuses on 'Attitudes to gender equality in education' including masculinities, gender identities in education, educational sectors, the influence of families to gender equality in Vietnam and the benefits of gaining gender equality. Then the researcher proceeds to review the literature relating to 'Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education' which includes a review of general government policy and curriculum policy in terms of gender equality in society and education as well as the differences in subject choice for boys and girls. The fourth section relates to 'The impact of teaching pedagogies on gender equality in education' where the researcher reviews the main debates about teaching pedagogies in relation to gender equality in education. She then refers to the improvement strategies of teaching pedagogies, which have been studied mostly in developed countries. The last section is entitled 'Curriculum for ITT about gender equality', where the researcher gives an overview of gender issues in relation to ITT programmes in England and Vietnam. Finally, she reviews the challenges in relation to gender issues in ITT before concentrating on strategies to improve gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers.

2.1 Theories of gender and education

In this section of the thesis, the researcher will introduce some of the major gender theories drawn from Western Europe and Northern America, many of which find their genesis in the feminist movement. The researcher will then present and analyse how theories of gender have been employed in education and relate these to the overall theoretical framework involved in this study. Before doing so, it is useful to look at some definitions relating to

gender theories. Humm believes that: 'gender is a culturally shaped group of attributes and behaviours given to the female or to the male' (Humm, 1992d: 406). To other people, gender refers to the categorization of masculine and feminine in the society (Oakley, 1985). However, in general, feminists state that gender is a cultural construction rather than a biological one (Dillabough, 2001: 12) which is an important statement to differentiate between gender and the biological sex of the individual. Nowadays, feminism tends to be used in the plural form, feminisms and, according to Acker, the term gender theory 'refers to perspective that guides the search for answers to a central series of questions and dilemmas about sex and gender' (Acker, 1994: 43).

Within this somewhat contested ground what is certain is that, for many reasons, women have been, and continue to be, at a disadvantage when compared to men as Taylor asserts: 'all feminists agree that women have suffered and do suffer legal and social disadvantages when compared to men' (Taylor, 1994: 87). Gross (1992: 363) suggests four factors involved in feminist theory: the recognition of misogyny and the patriarchal discourses, the articulation of the role in which silences and masculinist representation play the abatement of femininity and the development of attainment ways of replacing 'phallocentric system of representations'.

Feminism has undergone a series of intellectual developments and may be divided into three waves. First wave feminism evolved in the nineteenth century with the objective of the development of women's social, political interest (Weiner, 2006: 81) calling for the access to education and the emancipation for women (Chantler and Burns, 2011: 70). In the late 1960s, due to the tension between the positions of women at and in the labour force, the liberation of women started marking the second wave (Arnot, 1993). There are some connections between the first wave and the second wave of feminism such as the notion that because the meanings of equality were defined by men women suffer inequalities and that women's oppression comes from their sexuality (Humm, 1992a: 53). However, the second wave focused more on reproduction, working conditions, sexuality and some other factors which affected the positions of women in the home and in society (Weiner, 2006: 81). Then from the 1990s, the third wave feminism was born in the US (Chantler and Burns, 2011: 70) with the main focuses on the difference, identity politics and freedom (Coleman, 2009: 6). Three other main discourses of this wave are postmodernist and poststructuralist feminist theory, feminist post-colonial theory and younger feminist (Coleman, 2009: 6). Since in this

wave, women have more opportunities to access higher education, feminism is seen as more attached to the educational world than the first and second waves (Weiner, 2006). It could be said that research about gender sheds light on the constructed nature of knowledge relating to education through feminisms and gender has a strong influence on 'shaping educational patterns' (Arnot and Mac An Ghaill, 2006: 10). In this way, feminist theories have impacted significantly on theories of education, especially in relation to gender. In order to further the analysis of this issue, in the next section of this document the researcher will further review gender theories and their application to education.

2.1.1 Gender theories in education

It could be said that since the 1970s, the concerns of research on gender and education have gained greater interest (Weiner and Arnot, 1987: 11). Since then, this topic has become progressively more relevant to academic enquiry in many aspects of education and schooling. In the UK, the most popular patterns of study in this field was a concentration on the association between the government, policy and the economy in providing better education for girls as well as the issues of gender in educational practices (Dillabough, 2001). The implementation of features such as the Education Act (1945) or the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) regarding gender encouraged research to focus more on the curriculum, different subject choice, educational system and the gender issues in schools (Weiner and Arnot, 1987: 11). According to Middleton (1989: 54), four initial perspectives of feminisms in education are radical feminism, Socialist feminism, liberal feminism and black feminism. However, the last of these, vitally important though it is, is not relevant to this research topic and so the researcher does not propose to attempt to address this sub-theme. Thus, in this section, she reviews radical feminism, Marxist-socialist feminism, liberal feminism, feminist reproduction theory and other theories, which would be helpful for her research and sets out her standpoint as a feminist.

2.1.2 Radical feminism

Skelton and Francis (2009) consider the four key perspectives used by Western feminists to be liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism and black feminism, all of which they see as global feminisms and they posit that this globalism can be applied to the notion of patriarchy by radical feminists. Two key points of view in radical feminism are the

overarching importance of patriarchy and the statement that: 'the personal is political' (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 27). Radical theory emphasizes that women are oppressed by patriarchy, and that their subordination stems from the dominance of men (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 28). Moreover, it is men who constrain women into oppressed situations and women are in a worse position than men in any system of society (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 27). Further, Beasley explains that it is 'their oppression as women' that is the problem, so the explanation is their sexual oppression (Beasley, 1999: 54). From that standpoint, researchers tend to be concerned about the 'control over women's bodies' (Beasley, 1999: 56). Thus, Abbott, Wallace and Tyler (2005: 28) argue that women in the world must struggle to be released from this control. Even the power relations in capitalism can be thought of as a form of patriarchy since much of capitalism is based on the male dominance of society (Beasley, 1999).

Assessing the radical theory, Abbott, Wallace and Tyler (2005: 5) state that radical feminists see that all connections between men and women are relationships of power, which can never be reformed unless we rip their roots out by abolishing the subordination of women. This should be a good thought but their accounts emphasizing the role of male power whilst failing to acknowledge the various forms of patriarchal relationships in various societies (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 35) that make them get criticised. However, Measor and Sikes (1992: 29) perceive that some radical feminists assume that the female nature is all 'good' and that male nature is primarily bad. The researcher thinks that this assumption makes radical feminism lose points for assuming women are good whilst men are bad does not sound convincing. Turning back to the focus of the radical theory, as Beasley (1999) comments, many aspects of their emphasis on body politics have been supported by other feminism such as psychoanalytic feminism.

In terms of education, radical feminists focus on analysing the way patriarchy spreads and the power relationships between girls and boys in school. In the UK, two main concerns are 'the male monopolization of culture and knowledge' and 'the sexual politics' in schools (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 16). The first concern is reflected in the work of Measor and Sikes (1992: 29) when they state that the general debate is that classrooms are dominated by the fact that boys and girls are left out in the development of the curriculum and are treated unequally by teachers. Moreover, Stanworth (1983) points out the inequalities in education through the lens of a teacher such as boys dominating teachers' time or how they

occupy the space in classrooms. The latter concern is investigated in the work of Spender (1987: 143) which shows that 'patriarchy is the education paradigm'. In many cases, radical feminists use the term 'reproduction' with the emphasis that what is reproduced is the patriarchal social relations, the male domination over women, which prevents girls and women from full access to achievement whereby school is seen as a 'key institution working to perpetuate patriarchy' (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 16).

In short, radical feminism seeks change through 'girls' *treatment in* and *outcome of* education', which is different from the liberal feminism's when they emphasize the access to educational opportunities (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 16). As Acker (1994: 51) emphasizes, the commitment of placing girls at the centre of the concern runs through the work of radical feminists and the strategies of separating sexes such as single-sex classes or single-sex schools are critical to this issue.

2.1.3 Marxist-socialist feminism

There are various approaches in socialist feminism; some may involve the combinations of radical and Marxist feminism and sometimes with psychoanalytic feminism (Beasley, 1999). To Measor and Sikes (1992: 22), the key issue to differentiate between them is how they accept the principles of Marxism since this indicates that the economic, social and political structures in which people live are the reasons for inequality. From this, Marxist-socialist feminists assert that women in the world are oppressed because they are excluded from public production to remain with family and because of the exploitation of the capitalist system (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 28). It is thus argued that capitalist systems produce inequality and women's oppression is a part of this giving rise to Engels suggestion that the development of capitalism causes the obliteration of equality in the society. As the sequence of this, the socialist system must replace capitalism and the oppression of women will be dismissed at the same time (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 23).

According to Abbott, Wallace and Tyler (2005: 28), in the struggle against capitalism, gender emancipation plays an essential role. Humm states that Marxist-socialist feminisms concentrate on the ways in which 'the institution of the family and women's domestic labour are structured by, and 'reproduce', the sexual division of labour' (Humm, 1992b: 87). Moreover, Measor and Sikes (1992: 24) point out that Marxist-socialist feminists show that many women are in the lowest paid, unskilled jobs, therefore the unionization is necessary

to be strengthened to ask for better pay and conditions (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 24). It is notable that feminism broadens the Marxist concept of reproduction including household labour and childcare and contributes to our understanding of the connection between the economy and gender, however, this approach is criticised by liberal feminists and radical feminists for its highly controversial analysis of society and history (Measor and Sikes, 1992). It is obviously not easy at all to challenge the system of a society and therefore to liberal feminists, socialist feminism goes 'too far' (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 24).

In relation to education, Marxist-socialist feminists in the UK illustrate how class and gender division are reproduced in relation to schooling (Skelton and Francis, 2009). Noticeably, Marxist-socialist feminists have a tendency to focus mainly on theoretical arguments and policy analysis whilst radical feminists focus on empirical research in educational institutions (Skelton and Francis, 2009). As Skelton and Francis (2009: 31) confirm, the major question of Marxist-socialists in education is the relationship between education and the sexual division of labour. They argue that gender inequalities and class inequalities are produced by schools (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 25) and critique schools for failing to confront the political neutrality of education (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 31).

The researcher feels it important to note that she finds such theorising to be irrelevant to the context of Vietnam, where her main focus lies, since Vietnam is a one (Communist) Party country and Communism is the party of the working class. In addition, she does not agree that schools' roles are to pass on gender inequalities nor that changes in the operation of capitalism can solve problems. People also criticize Marxist-socialist feminism for focusing on only external forces instead of the practices in schools or local education institutions (Acker, 1994: 50).

2.1.4 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism is grounded on the liberal belief that everybody is the same regardless of their sexes (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 31). Liberal feminism is considered to show the instant forms of discrimination against women and to ask for legal, educational innovations to surmount them (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 28). The aim of liberal feminism is to obtain equal opportunities for females so all constraints, which prevent women from fulfilling their talents, should be abolished (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 32). It wants to put women equally into all public institutions and to extend the inventory

of knowledge in order that women's problems will not be put aside any longer (Humm, 1992c: 181). Not only protecting women, liberal feminism also emphasizes the fact of equal right for all people regardless of gender (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 20). Moreover, liberal feminism holds to the belief that each individual can choose their careers and positions in society based on their own abilities only (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 20) which is a radical idea that aims to give prominence to the abilities and efforts of people regardless of gender. There are many talented girls and women but being entrenched in gender bias, they do not have the same opportunities to approach education or politics as men or to achieve as they should be able to. However, this idea is criticized for overemphasizing the freedom of individuals in society and it may exceed the demand of the community for the rights of individuals should be reconciled with other people in that society (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Nonetheless, we should note that if each person can achieve the most, then such achievement would be a great profit to the community. Liberal feminists are at the same time criticized on their seemingly uncritical acceptance of male values as human values (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 33) and their failure of recognising the patriarchy of men over women in the society by radical feminists (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 21). Nevertheless, the researcher believes that if every woman has chances to attain her best, then patriarchy should automatically become meaningless and thus ideology is more appropriate in explaining and partly solving the issue of male dominance.

In education, liberal feminism's focus is about the equal opportunities for girls and female teachers (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 4). Its strategies are to contribute equal representation of the sexes through the educational hierarchies and to clear away stereotypes of sex roles in schools (Middleton, 1989: 54) with the confidence that education helps the individual to gain the self-fulfilment and develop their capability to the highest level (Measor and Sikes, 1992).

In addition, liberal feminists wish to remove barriers that deflect girls from attaining their full potential (Acker, 1994: 45). They investigate gender issues in education and then call for the changes through the policy of authorities (Middleton, 1987: 78). Further, they encourage females to use all their opportunities in education fully such as girls and boys should have access to all subjects regardless of those that are traditional males' subjects (Middleton, 1989: 54). At this point, the approaches are very different from radical feminism since, for example, liberal feminism argues for strategies to encourage girls to

take up science and technology subjects whilst radical feminism looks for the contributions that females make to such subjects and how and why their contributions have been ignored (Skelton and Francis, 2009). This example is drawn from 'notable contributions' of liberal feminism to the *Girls Into Science and Technology* (GIST) project and the *Women Into Science and Engineering* initiative carried out in the UK (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 15). Not only that, liberal feminism is reflected in national policy in the UK such as EOC (Equal Opportunities Commission), which puts informal pressure on schools (Acker, 1994: 47). Besides, much of liberal educational research is to provide the gender equality statement in schooling in order to make recommendations for authorities (Middleton, 1987: 78). Noticeably, liberal feminism commits to 'the principle of sustained economic growth' and proposes that girls and women adapt to changing economic opportunities whilst men are assisted to 'come to terms with increased family responsibilities' (Arnot, 1993: 195).

However, liberal feminism in education is criticized for emphasizing individual attitudes and effort whilst ignoring changes created by social and political system (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Radical feminism sees that liberal feminism fails to recognize the power that men hold over women in a patriarchal society (Skelton and Francis, 2009) yet the researcher believes that when sex-role stereotypes are cleared out and everybody has the equal, political and social rights - the main aim of liberal feminism - the power of men over women - will be demolished. Marxist-socialist feminism makes the point that liberal feminism does not take into account poverty, which prevents girls from taking opportunities (Skelton and Francis, 2009). The researcher agrees that poverty is a barrier to girls in taking up opportunities but she believes that without legal rights to equality, a country will encounter more difficulties of growth. Another criticism of liberal feminism is that its strategy of using legislation to clear away the gender discrimination in education has skipped the 'invisible, structural or cultural constraints that might defy such practices' (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 33). Although the researcher partly agrees with the critics, she cannot deny the advantages of this theory since it cheers the emancipation of women and encourages girls to develop their ability in education. She definitely thinks that with education and through education that people can change their attitudes about the inferior positions of women and give girls more chance to achieve the most that they can. In addition, it is confirmed that liberal feminism could have been 'the earliest to understand' the issues of different sexes thanks to its emphasis on equality (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 31). Further, one of

the advances of liberal feminism is its commitment to maintain the growth of economy (Arnot, 1993: 195). The main aim of liberal feminism in education fits with the main target of this study, which is to give evidence about gender equality in Vietnamese high schools and then make recommendations to the Vietnamese government. This study applies the ideas of encouraging girls to achieve the most and the wish to change the attitude about girls in education. Furthermore, the commitment of liberal feminism to economic growth and family responsibilities coincide with the desired outcomes of this research. Therefore, liberal feminism should be her main theory to apply to this study, yet she also makes references to other theories.

2.1.5 Feminist reproduction theory

Challenging the liberal approaches by pointing out the fact that in spite of the confirmation of liberal access and equal opportunity in education, white middle-class students continue to dominate in academic achievement and the labour market (Arnot et al, 1998 cited in Dillabough, 2003: 337), feminists socialists of education have developed a theoretical framework to investigate the structural and institutional role of education in reproducing gender inequalities, which is described as feminist reproduction theory (Dillabough, 2006: 49). Many neo-Marxist researchers such as Bourdieu and Althusser in France, Bernstein and Young in England, and Apple in the U.S examine the relationship between schooling and the maintenance of unequal relations (Apple, 1982b: 10) but much of the work in this area is concerned with and draws on the theoretical formulations of Bourdieu (Dillabough, 2006: 56).

In his work *Masculine Domination*, which has had a very strong influence on accounts of the notion of social reproduction (Dillabough, 2006: 57), Bourdieu argues that education is the central ideological site for the reproduction of gender inequality (Bourdieu, 1998 cited in Dillabough, 2003: 376). Key terms in his work are *cultural capital* and *habitus* yet the latter is a particularly contested concept (Reay, 2004: 432). Habitus is:

> *...an objective basis for regular modes of behaviour, and thus for the regularity of modes of practice, and if practice can be predicted...this is because the effect of the habitus is that agents who are equipped with*

it will behave in a certain way in certain circumstances. (Bourdieu, 1990b: 77 cited in Reay, 2004: 433)

Bourdieu uses habitus as a tool to analyse the dominance of groups in society as well as the subordination of other groups (Reay, 2004: 436). The first term, cultural capital refers to:

...a way of thinking and disposition to life where the expected behaviours, expected language competencies, the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic culture required for success in school are all competencies which one class brings them to school (Henry et al, 1988: 233 cited in Mills, 2008: 84)

Moreover, in her research, Dillabough (2004) states that Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural production is a conceptual framework to understand 'how social inequality becomes constant in school' and in society and the term cultural production refers to the socio cultural processes operating as 'naturalized cultural forms in the realm of phenomenological and hermeneutic experience' (page 492) and one of the most influential approaches to gender issues in education is the 'reproduction'.

It can be said that Bourdieu's theory has had a major impact on the gender research in education. At first, feminist reproduction theorists argue that gender differences in education must be understood within the context of society and cultural formations (Dillabough, 2003: 377). The researcher acknowledges that this is a very useful argument since despite her focus on liberal feminism she sees that social and cultural factors are important in shaping the gender issues in education. At this point, perhaps feminist reproduction theory is more able to explain why liberal policy about gender in education has been carried out for a long time in England but the debates about gender in schooling remain with the disadvantages for girls. It also shows that gender differences should not be seen as merely the exercise of the ability of individuals (Dillabough and Arnot, 1999 cited in Dillabough, 2003: 376) but in a more subtle explanation that covers the complex 'interrelationship of culture and structure' (Dillabough, 2004: 492).

Bourdieu points out that masculine domination is embodied in language, texts, knowledge and policies and 'in notion of that which constitute the legitimate political subject'

(Dillabough, 2004: 495). He explains that forms of domination are naturalized so that they are unconscious and unrecognizable (Dillabough, 2004: 495) and thus the problems of gender in education are seen as complex and difficult to resolve since something which is unconscious and unrecognizable in nature is not easy to address. Nonetheless, it alerts us to have put gender in education under scrutiny because gender as sexually characterized habitus is something complex, historical and basically cultural in form (Dillabough, 2004: 496). Secondly, though starting from Marxist perspective, Bourdieu has a more comprehensive account of gender inequality by moving beyond purely economic accounts to a more socio cultural understanding of inequality in education (McLeod, 2004 cited in Dillabough, 2004: 496). Thirdly, it reminds those involved in gender analysis in education about the complex interconnections and the role of media outside schools, the actual social relation and knowledge within schools and the way people respond to the ideological and cultural messages in schools in terms of gender equality (Apple, 1982a: 4). More than that, Bourdieu's work contributes significantly to understanding the role of schools and educational systems in reproducing inequalities through the 'hidden linkages between the scholastic aptitude and cultural heritage' (Bourdieu, 1998 cited in Mills, 2008: 79).

However, feminist reproduction theory is criticized for mechanistic notions of power and domination and the oversimplification of class cultures (Giroux, 1983: 259). Further, it is 'overly constrained by meta-theoretical explanation' of inequalities (Dillabough, 2003: 377). Feminist reproduction theorists still have some obscured analyses of gender equality when trying to develop the theory (Dillabough, 2003: 378). Moreover, as Apple notes, schools are not merely institutions of reproduction as the theory states; they need to be seen in a more complex manner (Apple, 1982b). Apple also criticises the theory for being too simple by neglecting the fact that capitalist social relations 'are contradictory in some very important ways' (Apple, 1982b: 14). For all of the above, the researcher references feminist reproduction theory rather than using it as a method to research. However, the accounts of reproduction theory are still important to her in analysing the data.

2.1.6 Psychoanalytic feminism

Sex and gender are the central issues of psychoanalysis (Chodorow, 1989: 2). Psychoanalytic feminism includes various strands concerning about 'how and where to formulate the problem of cultural construction' (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003: 53).

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Psychoanalytic feminism shows that 'there is a psychological commonality among all women and all men' and the selves of females are different from males' (Chodorow, 1989: 2). It also exposes that the sexuality and women's emotional life are affected by their oppression, which is attached in the emotional psyche so that for women to release themselves, an 'interior' revolution is needed (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 30). The advance of this movement is to point out the oppression that is experienced by each woman and the associated exploration of how such oppression manifests itself both socially and emotionally (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 32). The researcher shares the idea that in order to emancipate, women should solve the problem in their own psyche. From her experience as a female teacher in Vietnam and as a research student in England, the researcher admits that in most cases, the gender stereotypes in the viewpoint of a woman tend to entrench her within a limited sphere bounded by the fact that she herself does not believe she can achieve beyond certain constrained parameters. If women cannot undertake this psychological shift first, the struggle for equalities seems to be more difficult. Nonetheless, Measor and Sikes (1992: 31) show that psychoanalytic feminism receives criticisms for underplaying the crucial roles of economy, society and legal factors to the positions of women in the family as well as in the society.

In terms of education, psychoanalytic theories in education emphasize the issues relating to internality and emotion of students with the indication of the sense that women or girls are powerful enough to change their current rights and access to public life (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 32). In schools, the first concern is sexuality since schools are involved in gender socialization, which supposes that each individual uses symbols of his or her gender identity to differentiate themselves from students of another sex (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 31).

We can see that psychoanalytic feminism shares the legal framework with liberal and socialist feminism; that is to help girls to have equal access to the public sphere but it shifts the internal issues whilst radical and socialist feminisms emphasize external things to bring about equality for girls in education (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 32). The researcher agrees with psychoanalytic feminism in the way they explain about gender identity in schools and it is true that the feeling is very important in guiding individuals' behaviours so it can pull or push girls to achieve in education. This belief could be useful in explaining gender issues in Vietnam.

2.1.7 Social learning and cognitive development theories

Social learning theorists indicate that children learn appropriate attitudes and behaviour from what they observe in families, at schools and in society (Sayers, 1987: 27). These theories involve reinforcement theories which stress the role of rewards and punishment, for instance, children perceive that appropriate behaviour is rewarded, and then reinforced, whilst inappropriate behaviour is punished, and should be avoided and observation theories which emphasize the observation of which children acquire their knowledge and collection of sex-typed behaviours (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 9). Children observe their parents, teachers and other children's sex typing of behaviours or descriptions in books or in school subjects; for example, there is a common belief that boys are naturally good at mathematics (Sayers, 1987: 28).

These theories' main problem lies in assuming that children are passive in agreeing to all that they are told or what they see and sex-role concepts and behaviours of children are not precise models of those close to them (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 10). Yet we should appreciate them for alerting us about reviewing what is presented in picture books, in school subjects and the importance of adults' awareness of gender-appropriate behaviours as they actually affect children in the way they imitate or learn how to behave properly as a boy or a girl. These theories are useful for the researcher as it helps her in having deeper understanding of gender perspectives of books and they imply the necessity of trainee teachers' knowledge about gender as well. In addition, they provide the theoretical ground to explain the different of subject choice of students, which is under debate (Francis, 2000). Cognitive development theories and social learning theories have one thing in common which is that children learn from what they observe but cognitive approaches are different from social learning theories by assuming that children learn and build their concepts actively (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 10). To sum up, social learning theories see society as imposing sex role stereotypes on individuals whilst cognitive development theories see society as presenter of what is masculine and feminine. Children then imitate a cluster of attributes that they acknowledge as masculine or feminine and behave appropriately in those clusters (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 10). We must admit the active role of children in establishing their gender concepts, especially with the assistance of education but at the same time, we cannot deny that what children learn from adults and peers is very important. Thus, the environment has a big influence on the conceptualization of children about gender.

Consequently, providing trainee teachers with gender equality knowledge is necessary and we need to be concerned more about the gender-related content of school textbooks and curriculum.

Though these theories cannot solve all problems about gender in education, they lead to an understandable explanation of different subject choices between boys and girls. The researcher uses this perspective of psychoanalytic feminism in education in dealing with the different results of boys and girls in different subjects that exist in Vietnam.

2.1.8 Masculinism

Masculinists call for more concern with boys in schools because of the slower progress of boys in comparison to girls in GCSE and A level in the Britain (Epstein et al., 1998: 5). Although there has been no research about 'failing boys' in Vietnamese educational context and from her own experience of being a high school teacher, the researcher finds no relevance in applying this perspective of gender into her research as her main focus is in Vietnam. Yet she still does some comparisons with England, so in this part, she reviews the masculinism briefly in order to have a broader picture about the theory of gender and education.

In the debate about the underachievement of boys in the UK, an investigation analyses the reason and solutions to raise boys' achievement in schools (Bleach, 2000), whilst other research presents the debate and assessment on 'failing boys'. Many other authors concentrate on 'poor boys' or 'underachieving boys' because they believe that if one sex gains, the losses of the others are an inevitable consequence (Epstein et al., 1998). However, some feminists argue that the relatively stronger performance of girls is thanks to the gender equality consideration and the statistic of Office For Standards in Educations, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) on GCSE which uncovers the lower positions of boys in relation to girls' achievement in Britain needs to be questioned for its reliability (Reed, 1999: 35). It advises that we should realize the influence of our differential viewpoint through discourse as men and women in education to 'better understand the "wants and needs", the "drives and desires" which inform our action' (Reed, 1999: 43). To the researcher, masculinities are useful in reminding people about the balance of gender in education since this provides a good reference point for a more critical viewpoint about gender issues in education.

This study considers these theories as a reference point to reinforce the objectivity of gender perspectives in education. Among the theories outlined above, the researcher feels that liberal feminism is the most appropriate theory to apply to her study for many reasons. Firstly, through education the researcher believes that sex-role stereotypes can be eliminated which leads to 'personal fulfilment' (Byrne, 1987: 27). Moreover, liberal feminism calls for the removal of sex-role stereotyping from textbooks and in subject choice issues (Middleton, 1989: 54) which are partly the content of this study. Finally, the aim of this research fits well with what liberal feminist educational research seeks to achieve; that is: to provide information, evidence of inequalities within education system, to decision-making authorities, and to press for programmes of affirmative action' (Middleton, 1987: 78). In the context of Vietnam the political line is Socialist, people have trust in the Marxist theory which emphasizes the capitalist system in the oppression of women (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 36) but we must question the relevance of this hegemonic theory since the educational attainment of women and men in different levels of education in some capitalist countries such as Norway and UK are much higher than in socialist countries (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi, 2011: 47-50). However, other theories such as the radical feminism, Marxist-socialist feminism, feminist reproduction theory, cognitive and social learning theories or psychoanalytic theories are also useful sources in explaining the reasons of the inequalities in education.

There has been a great deal of research on gender equality in education and the researcher has had to be circumspect in choosing relevant themes which relate to the topic being researched to present and discuss in the following sections.

2.2 Attitudes to gender equality in education

Interest in gender equality in education originates from the research in the broader field of gender and equality since the Second World War and rose gradually since the second half of the nineteenth century (Arnot and Weiner, 1987: 11). In the early years of development, feminist educational research concentrated on questions connected to equality of opportunities and the studies of representation and recognition. It then focused on the difference and inter-sectionality and there have been a great number of discussions about subjectivity and identity (Dillabough, McLeod and Mills, 2009). The researcher reviews

three themes of attitudes to gender equality in education and reviews the attitudes toward gender issues in Vietnamese society and the benefits of securing gender equality.

2.2.1 Masculinities

Feminism has been developed since the nineteenth century with the main concern being for girls and women (Chantler and Burns, 2011: 70) and it is only in recent years that a concern for boys in education has been developed. Masculinities, as Reay (2001: 153) says, 'appear to be an ever-growing preoccupation within education' in the UK. Boys are shown as 'vulnerable and at risk' (Francis, 2006: 187). This issue does not exist only in England but also emerges in some other developed countries like Australia, the US and Canada (Epstein et al., 1998: 6). The problem has been so serious that Reed (1999: 93) claims that 'everywhere we look we find the apparition of the lost boys'. Boys are presented as 'poor boys', 'failing boys', 'underachievement boys' in education, so the effects on this bad situation have been increased, especially on the difficulties of white working class masculinities in schools (Reay, 2002: 221).

In the 1990s, the statistics showed that girls were doing better than boys in almost all subjects, even in subjects which were traditionally considered subjects for boys (Francis, 2006). Since then, national media has raised a furore around this topic and boys 'at risk' have become the social problem (Francis, 2006: 187). The researcher thinks this furore derives from the stereotypes that boys should be better than girls in education so when the results reveal that girls outperform boys in school, people find it unacceptable. This shows the inequalities in the way people view the gender in education because if they assume that boys and girls are equal in learning, then they do not have such reactions. Obviously, it is biased towards girls. Moreover, based on the neo-liberalism it is not the social problem but the responsibility of individual boys who are considered underachievers? (Francis, 2006: 194). Centrally one must ask why this is the case.

Since the statistics show the outperformance of girls in education, masculinists have concentrated on many aspects of schooling, which are presumed to be disadvantages for boys, such as subjects or pedagogies or educational policies (Francis, 2006: 191). In a research article, Reay asserts that 'Even Shaun [the school boy's name], with his strong commitment to learning, finds most of what he is taught an irrelevance' (Reay, 2002: 232). Even when the schools apply the 'boy-friendly' approaches, they still find they 'let boys

down' (Skelton and Francis, 2011: 458). It could be said that the unsuccessfulness of boys is blamed on schools, even for girls (Francis, 2006: 196). Thus, 'poor boys' are seen as being in need of attention in order to be saved from 'becoming problem boys' (Francis, 2006: 193). More than that, Archer and Yamashita (2003: 115) fear that 'masculinity is in crisis'.

However, feminists have been sceptical of the underachievement of boys for a number of reasons. Firstly, not all girls are successful and not all boys are unsuccessful (Francis, 2006: 188). It is notable that in Britain, there are still middle-class white boys who outperform working-class white girls (Francis, 2006: 188). At the same time, we should note that Reed does advise us to question the validity and reliability of such statistics (Reed, 1999: 95). Secondly, from the viewpoint of liberalism, if there are 'underachieving boys', it is the responsibility of boys to grab the opportunities in schools to achieve, if opportunities are offered but they do not take them up, then the problems stem from the individual boys, what is more, most of the failing boys are from working class, rather than all boys (Reay, 2006: 341). Finally, as Cohen argues, boys' achievement has been attributed to something internal such as their intellect but their failure has been attributed to the external such as schools or girls or pedagogies (Cohen, 1997: 20).

Skelton suggests that in recent research on masculinities in education, although 'boys will be boys' and 'blaming schools' discourses have been less predominant, the 'poor boys' discourse remains powerful (Skelton, 2004 cited in Francis, 2006: 189). The increasing research of poor boys reveals that they are disguising the problems in education that girls have been facing and strengthening the privilege of boys by justifying more concerns on boys (Francis, 2006: 188). Furthermore, Atthil and Jha (2009:176) point out myths about underachievement of boys: at first, we should be committed to address the 'problems' of boys at the same time with continuing to improve girls' education, not concentrating on either boys or girls; another thing is that blaming girls or women teachers for the failure of some boys is not fair, since 'the same socially determined gender roles may impact negatively on both boys and girls and finally, the achievement of boys should be measured with all the students at the same stage of schooling, not with that of girls'.

Though the debate on the failure of boys in schooling has been ongoing for many years in England and other developed countries, the researcher does not find any text about such an issue in Vietnam. Nevertheless, the researcher notes lessons for Vietnam in the process of

promoting gender equality in education. To sum up this section, in the last decades, the work that focuses on boys' underachievement in education has been prevalent. Some masculinists blame the failure of some boys in education for a 'girl friendly' approach or the feminine teaching pedagogies for girls (Francis, 2006: 196). Yet the powerful discourse of the 'boys' underachievement' notion places negative results on girls (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010: 191) and girls still need to be concerned with more feminist accounts (Reed, 1999). The increasing concerns on masculinities have been the case of research on gender identities, which should be presented in the next section: *Gender identities in education.*

2.2.2 Gender identities in education

In education, the construction of feminine and masculine among students is important (Paechter, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). Research has focused on the way students build their gender identities both in boys and girls. In the last century, researchers on intelligence did conclude that: 'there are no sex differences on measures of general intelligence' (Maltby, Day and Macaskill, 2010: 376), yet in the past, both teachers and students had a tendency to believe that boys were brighter and girls should be neat, tidy and passive (Spender, 1982: 77-78). Moreover, girls tried to avoid showing their cleverness because they thought boys would not expect a clever girl to be attractive (Spender, 1982). However, this situation has changed, especially in developed countries. So what is the model of typical ideal girl? Girls learn how to construct the ideal girls in school, through their peer group, from their mothers, teachers and the media (Paechter, 2006a: 375). Through negotiating with members in their group, girls establish their individual femininities to get on well with the groups and for themselves (Paechter, 2006a: 366). Generally, the femininity relates to the idea of 'niceness' which is, in the context of school, diligent, desirable, careful and attractive to boys (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010). Masculinity is oppositional to femininity (Paechter, 2006a: 373). Therefore, it is difficult for girls who are good at learning to be seen as entirely feminine for they have to negotiate themselves between being clever (masculine) and attractive to boys (feminine) (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010: 192). To girls who are interested in sports or physical education, the muscular body is apparently unfeminine (Paechter, 2006a: 369). In her research, Paechter also points out that as girls grow older, the increasing feminine construction makes them become more 'physically passive and uninvolved in team sports' (Paechter, 2006a: 369). Not only in sports, femininity is also labelled in the curriculum,

especially in subjects which are 'masculine' for example mathematics or physics (Paechter, 2006a: 369). High achieving girls are said to fail in getting the attention of teachers (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010: 192) and their achievements are labelled as hard work rather than ability (Epstein, 1998: 106) and as a consequence of this, they disguise their success (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010). This also happens to boys since a boy, who learns hard and has a good performance in school may be seen as 'not a real boy' (Epstein, 1998: 107) by both other boys and girls since boys are presumed to 'do little or no work, to be heavily competitive [not at school work], to be rough, tough and dangerous to know' (Epstein, 1998: 106). If boys enjoy success in learning, they are 'supposed to do so without the appearance of working and in contrast with girls, their achievement should be seen thanks to their ability' (Epstein, 1998: 106). Therefore, gender identities in schools are frequently explicit, either masculine or feminine, which may prevent students from achieving in subjects which are not supposed to be suitable for their genders.

Interestingly, the researcher notes the finding of Reay that: 'being a boy is still seen as best by all the boys and a significant number of the girls' (Reay, 2001: 164). The researcher sees both the advantages and disadvantages in the ways students construct their gender identities but through that finding, no one can deny the remained inferior position of girls in schools. In the context of Vietnam, girls are expected to be 'girlie'. From the researcher's own experience, she perceives that if girls do something to show that they are 'spice girls' they will not be interested by boys and their peer groups and in some cases, by their teachers. They may be marginalized or teased in the way that Epstein (1998), Paechter (2006a) and other researchers describe. At this point, we should notice the assertiveness of Paechter that: 'girls can behave in masculine and boys in feminine ways, rather than pigeonholing children into one or other grouping and failing to recognize and name the behaviour we actually see' (Paechter, 2006a: 365). We should also pay attention to the sexes of students in school since they have influence in constructing gender identities of students because clothing, hairstyles or other appearance of students' bodies are salient (Paechter, 2006b: 132). Being a high school teacher for several years, the researcher knows that in Vietnamese high schools, uniforms are regulated and students cannot make any other choice once they are students of that school. For example, some schools require girls to wear certain types of uniform that may affect the ways that students build their gender identities such as girls (or femininity) are in skirts and boys (or masculinity) are in trousers.

Gender identities have been investigated in the occupation choice of students. In the research conducted in 556 Year 11 students in Britain, researchers discovered that gender stereotypes affect students when they choose jobs (Osgood, Francis and Archer, 2006). The proofs are that girls choose jobs which relate to their femininity such as caring whilst boys are interested in scientific or business ones (Osgood, Francis and Archer, 2006: 306). Obviously, gender identities play a role in career choices of students. This study focuses on high school students in Vietnam, which is the oldest stage of schooling. High school students have to make decisions about their education and career before they take the graduating examinations. If chosen jobs and majors are stereotypically gendered, then schools and the government should do something more to help students have a wider and wiser choice for their careers. In their research, Osgood, Francis and Archer (2006: 316) also discovered that students choose the majors due to their peers' or family members' occupations. So, the peer group may affect students in their choice of occupation which makes the gender stereotyping more serious and spread further.

In addition, Arnot shows that women's oppression derives from their silencing under the voice of patriarchal domination (Arnot, 2006a: 408). In the case of schooling, voices of lower-achieving girls are seldom heard for they are afraid to make teachers angry, therefore only higher-achieving girls tend to become more nonchalant about their learning (Arnot, 2006a: 417). However, in Vietnam, the hierarchy in schools is very strict. Not all pupils are allowed to say what they think and partly because they are shy, they are not willing to say or ask for consultation. Therefore, teachers and educators should understand this issue to help girls more in learning. In addition to this, gender identities are affected by the education from families. In their research, Tran (2008a) shows that Vietnamese girls are educated towards female characteristics such as gentleness, diligence or conscientiousness and boys who are expected to be the heads of the families should be manly, responsible and independent. This may derive from the societal norms that women are in charge of the housework, taking care of children and men have responsibility in managing the family and making the big decisions. (Le, 2008b).

To sum up, gender identities are constructed in schools in different ways. However, we can summarise that femininity is viewed as being caring, nice, gentle, hardworking, and not learning very well, especially in what are viewed as boys' subjects (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010). Masculinity is seen as rough, tough, capable of advanced level of difficult

subjects and not hard working (Epstein, 1998). Masculinity and femininity affects students in the way they appear, learn, speak, or choose occupation and gender is taken into account whilst children build their identities. Thus, as Paechter (2006) advised, we should be more flexible in the way we evaluate students as feminine or masculine.

2.2.3 Educational sectors

In the process of formulating gender identities of students, schools are the places where students navigate their gender identities, especially secondary schools because students spend much time there (Davison and Frank, 2006: 152). It is also noted that students try to state their gender identities by regulating their behaviours to 'make sense' with the 'similarity and gendered performance' (Davison and Frank, 2006: 153). Therefore, it is high schools where students imitate or try to show that they are similar to their peers and different to another sex. Thus, if schools normalize the inequalities, then the gender identities formulated in students are affected. Sadly, Davison and Frank (2006:154) stated that: 'by not employing a critical gender analysis to the daily social educational interactions, schools assist in the "normalization" of inequitable gender relations'. By dealing with bullying, harassment or violence as the behaviours of individuals rather than the 'product of systematic gender inequity' (Davison and Frank, 2006: 155), it reveals that schools do not bear in mind gendered related issues. Educators and schools should be aware of the way hegemonic masculinity and femininity embedding in such behaviours and the low achievement of students, fortunately, this has not been taken into account in schools (Davison and Frank, 2006).

In debating educational sectors and attitudes to gender equality in education, research is conducted in all levels of education, from early-years to elementary to post-secondary or higher education. However, the researcher notes that perhaps the most typical debate is about the type of educational sectors for boys and girls, single-sex schools or co-educational schools.

Single-sex schools in England have a long history that starts in the 19th century and lasts to this day (Leonard, 2006: 190). In Vietnam single-sex schools for boys were first created in the feudal regime and continued for more than one thousand years until the year 1945 (Bui, 2008). During the time of French domination in the early twentieth century, there were some single-sex schools for girls but they did not last for long and currently all educational sectors

in Vietnam are co-educational. Nevertheless, there has not been much research about Vietnam educational sectors in the past. Here we have one thing in common which is that at first, single-sex schools were for boys, in both countries. But then with the feminism, single-sex schools in England have been in favour of educating girls 'where girls did not have to cope with boys' (Leonard, 2006: 193). And again, with the support of the women's movements, there are many evidences to show that single-sex education is indeed better for girls because they get higher achievement (Leonard, 2006: 13). Therefore, the main reason that feminists argue for single-sex schools is the ability of good performance at non-traditional subjects in the environment of girls only (Francis, et al., 2003). During the 1990s, a new debate on co-education appeared that was related to the underachievement of boys in comparison with girls: boys are sometimes seen as failing because of feminine teaching pedagogies and the imbalance of resources given to them in school (Leonard, 2006). Since then, the debate seems to have reversed with more priority given to single-sex teaching, this time for boys within mixed-sex schools (Leonard, 2006: 195). The fact is that the number of single-sex schools declined and by the year 2004, only 29% of independent schools and 12% of state secondary schools were single-sex (DfES, 2005 cited in Leonard, 2006: 191). In summary, in recent years there has been much research on the crisis of boys because of their perceived failure in terms of educational outcomes. Within this discussion, boys are often seen as vulnerable and at risk (Epstein, et al., 1998; Reed, 1999; Reay 2002); a situation often blamed on the feminization of teaching pedagogies, which is seen as giving advantages to girls and disadvantaging boys. However, feminists still plead that the increasing concerns of boys are disguising the problems in education that girls have been facing (Francis, 2006: 188) and we should query the reliability of statistics showing the poor performance of boys (Reed, 1999: 95). It is important to note that such issues have not appeared in Vietnam.

There is evidence that students perceive that boys should be tough, rough, lazy in learning and good at science and mathematics whilst girls should be nice, hardworking (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010) and poor at learning. Schools have responsibility for the formulation of such gender identities but fail to address gender issues appropriately or fully (Davison and Frank, 2006). Some researchers give more priority to single-sex schooling since this gives advantages to girls in learning since they do not have to 'cope with boys' (Leonard, 2006: 193) and have more chance to flourish in boys' subjects (Francis et al.,

2003). However, in Vietnam, all schools are co-educational and this approach is unlikely to be contested so solutions to the gendered nature of education must come from within that structural approach.

2.2.4 The influence of families in relation to gender equality in Vietnam

As the focus of the research is about gender equality in education in Vietnam, the researcher believes that the outlining of gender equality in the society would give a broader picture of gender equality that influences gender equality in education.

To continue the discussion about gender identities, in the research carried out in Vietnam, regardless of urban or rural areas, Vietnamese boys and girls are expected to obey their parents' advice in all their activities (Tran, 2008a). According to social learning theories, children learn from their parents, thus the influence of families on gender issues in Vietnam is huge, not only in formulating gender identities but also in everyday life in families.

In Vietnam, it is the tradition that married women move to their husband's families to live (Le, 2008a: 273). Sons are expected to take care of parents when they grow up, so when the son gets married, it is obvious that the daughter-in-law has to move to her husband's family to live. Depending on the region, parents live with their oldest or youngest sons but they do live with one of their sons. Thanks to the development of economy and the influence of modern life, many young couples can live separately from the husband's families after marriage yet according to research, more than 45% of couples in Vietnam still live with their husband's families (Le, 2008a: 274).

Worshipping rituals are important in the emotional life of Vietnamese people (Ha, 2008: 356). It is more important to worship ancestors, death parents and family members and the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law are in charge of all the worship rituals in their husband's family (Ha, 2008). With the concept that married women have to follow their husbands' families, they worship the husbands' ancestors (Ha, 2008: 356). It is clear that everybody has his or her own parents who cannot stay alive forever yet when they pass away if they do not have sons then they would likely not be worshipped because research shows that less than ten percent of people worship wives' ancestors in the country (Ha, 2008: 361). Another research points out that the son-preferred tendency is the result of the traditional culture that sons maintain fathers' surnames and are the ones to worship parents (Le, 2008b: 159). These could be the main reasons of the preference for sons in the Vietnamese society where men

are appreciated as the patriarchs in families and society (Tran, 2008a: 390). The researcher believes that the Confucianism from China is the main root of all the disadvantages of Vietnamese women in terms of gender equality.

One of the tenets of Confucianism is 'patriarchy', which was very popular in the feudal regimes and remains in Vietnam where husbands make decisions over wives in most cases, especially in rural areas (Le, 2008b: 163-165). The word 'patriarchy' (*gia truong*-in Vietnamese) implies the viewpoint and negative behaviours of men over women in the feudal regime; nowadays it is used in everyday life, especially in rural areas to show the oppression of men over women (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 64-65). To understand these traditions, we need to turn back to the introductory chapter that states that Vietnam was intensively affected by China for more than one thousand years. Literature about Confucianism in Chinese society reveals that even in contemporary China, Confucianism has a strong impact on gender issues (Liu, 2006; Sheng, 2011). There is no doubt of this since Confucianism is 'a state philosophy and orthodox ideology in patriarchal China for over two thousand years' (Jiang, 2009: 235), remarkably, half of that very long time, the Chinese ruled the Vietnamese people. In her research, Liu affirms that the strong gender-specific expectations of males and females are rooted in Confucianism (Liu, 2006: 494) such as the thought 'exalting males and demeaning females' (Sheng, 2011: 134). According to liberal feminism, individuals' positions should be based on 'their abilities and nothing else' (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 20); this viewpoint contrasts starkly with Confucianism. Moreover, Confucianism's main tenet focuses on the proper moral role of each person in society, which indicates that:

> *...the proper role that women should play is only that of mothers and wives who ought to stay at home and serve their husbands and their parents-in-law, and take care of children and housework.* (Jiang, 2009: 234)

Housework like shopping for food, washing clothes (washing machines are not very popular in rural Vietnam), taking care of the elderly, child-care etc. are considered women's work (Le, 2008b: 144). This situation is similar to China where research shows that the most common construction is that wives take care of families to facilitate husbands succeeding in their careers (Liu, 2006). Moreover, in Vietnam, despite being busy with housework,

women still try to contribute to the income of families, yet the ratio of women's earnings for families in rural areas is higher than this ratio in urban areas (Tran, 2008b: 95). This does not imply that gender equality is better in families in rural areas since rural women have to work more and the characteristic of flexible time of small-scale agriculture lets them at the same time do housework and cultivate around their houses. Notably, men have higher income than women in families (Tran, 2008b: 97).

In their research in Vietnam, Dang asserts that families have a very strong influence on their children's careers and the influence is greater in families where parents have higher education. Indeed, the higher the degree of education that parents hold, the more intensive influence they have on their children in career orientation (Dang, 2008: 202-203). In Vietnamese rural areas, girls have to complete all the housework before going to school or doing homework, which affects their concentration on learning and the gender discrimination is evident with more investment by parents for sons to find jobs (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 171). Moreover, most parents want their children to work for the government rather than private or foreign companies (Dang, 2008: 206). This could originate from the political line that there is only one party in Vietnam; therefore working for the government will bring pride to families (Dang, 2008). Especially, families also wish their sons to work in the military for the same reasons (Dang, 2008). For Chinese families, which are similarly influenced by Confucianism, parents orient their children in choosing careers and jobs that are considered as suitable for boys such as sciences, engineering, construction, politics and military (Liu, 2006: 496). Through the lens of liberal feminism, we may see this as definitely unequal in terms of gender.

2.2.5 Benefits of gaining gender equality

Gaining gender equality in society and in education can bring benefits that affect the growth of economy as well as the sustainable development of country.

In the nineteenth century, Harriet Martineau stated that the status of women and the development of society and economy have the tendency to go hand-in-hand (Martineau, 1837, cited in Dollar and Gatti, 1999: 2) which indicated the mutual reinforcement between gender equality and economic development and that if gender equality is secured, society and economy would have advantages to grow. Equally, Dollar and Gatti (1999:3) point out that 'societies have to pay a price for gender inequality in terms of slower growth'. This is

true since women make up half of the population and they take part in maintaining and developing the society as well as the economy but their roles have not been recognized and women are vulnerable in countries where gender inequality remains (Dollar and Gatti, 1999). Moreover, gender equality is smart economics because it enhances the efficiency of economy and improves other development outcomes (World Bank, 2011a). There is literature confirming the negative effects of gender inequalities to the development outcomes such as the work of Dollar and Gatti (1999) or Klasen and Lamanna (2009). Further, research has shown that gender inequality reduces not only the pool of talent by excluding highly qualified girls but also the amount of human capital (Dollar and Gatti, 1999: 93). Remarkably, 'if you educate a woman, you educate the nation' (Unterhalter, 2007: 45). Thus, promoting gender equality can bring not only a fairer society but also sustainable development of country.

Interestingly, there is also the mutual reinforcement between gender equality in education with the development of society and the growth of economy (Unterhalter, 2007: 39). This statement was proven to be accurate when research conducted in more than 100 countries over 30 years shows that the ratios of adult women having secondary education from the richest quartile of countries are much higher than that in the poorest quartile (Dollar and Gatti, 1999: 4-5). It can be explained that gender inequalities in education would lead to gender gaps in employment where employers give preference to educated workers-normally males, and less-educated or uneducated females are at a disadvantage (Klasen and Lamanna, 2009: 96). Conversely, if there is a preference for male educated workers, the demand for females' education will go down, which results in gender inequality in education (Klasen and Lamanna, 2009). This reveals that the status of women in society, especially in terms of education, parallels the advance of society and economy. Thus, promoting gender equality in education is very important and once it has been secured, the economy, society, health and sustainable development will benefit. According to research in Africa, Asia and the Middle East of Rihani (2006: 2-3), there are five main benefits of girls' secondary education:

- the higher quality education;
- the increase of economic opportunities and social benefits to the whole society;
- the multitude of health benefits;

- the mitigation of HIV and AIDS; and
- poverty alleviation.

The benefits are at the same time claimed in the research of Klasen and Lamanna (2009) with the emphasis that each factor in turn has a positive influence on economic growth which implies a long sustainable development. The role of girls' education in mitigating environmental degradation and climate change as well as sustainable development is appreciated in the large-scale evidence-based research of UNDP (UNDP, 2012: 12). Research affirms that educated mothers concentrate more on their children who will continue their concern to the next generation to develop sustainability with gender equality and academic standard (UNFPA, 2013). Moreover, educated women can have better awareness of either the number of children that they should have or their contribution to the labour force of the economy (UNFPA, 2013). Further, women can have better employment prospects with higher education, which results in better income to save or invest and once the family finance is improved, poverty is gradually demolished and the quality of life is improved because one of the main barrier for girls to access education is poverty (Unterhalter, 2007: 7).

From the feminist perspective, the researcher sees that at this moment, benefits from gender equality are mostly from the improvement of the status of women in society in order to be as equal as men. There are many benefits that securing gender equality can bring to the economy such as economic growth, a fairer society (Unterhalter, 2007) and sustainable development (UNFPA, 2013). Importantly, gender equality in education is stated to strengthen the development of high quality education, the increase of economic opportunities and social outcomes such as the health, the sustainable continuation of the next generation and the decrease of diseases and poverty (Unterhalter, 2007).

2.3 Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education
2.3.1 Government policy towards gender equality in society and education
The researcher would like to commence this topic by summarizing what legislation has been enacted in England to promote gender equality in education. The earliest legislation on which the researcher wishes to focus is the Education Act, 1944, which established free secondary education for all, including girls (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 8). After that point, running alongside the development of the feminist movement, a variety of other legislation

was enacted such as the Equal Pay Act in 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975, and the Human Rights Act in 1988 (Arnot and Phipps, 2003).

It has been argued that these policies were developed as a direct response to the second wave feminism (Maguire, 2006). In the year 1988 the National Curriculum was created making core subjects compulsory within which assessment was designed to address the gender differentiation in subject choice (Arnot and Phipps, 2003; Maguire, 2006). Since then, more students have taken part in the curriculum at school level but sex-stereotyping has continued to emerge in the post-compulsory level (David, Weiner and Arnot, 2000: 33). Although it can be seen that the National Curriculum aims to offer compulsory subjects to all boys and girls, the influence of feminist educational legislation was to 'fix the girls' (Maguire, 2006: 118) rather than offer true equality. We may note that thanks to the Equal Opportunities Commission educational achievement of boys and girls, especially girls, have been improved (David, Weiner and Arnot, 2000: 32), which led to the notion that girls' problems have been 'fixed' (Maguire, 2006: 118). However, some feminists doubt the success of such legislations and indicate the evidence about the continued and obvious sex-stereotyping in the performance of girls as well as their subject choice and in fact, girls do not have better achievement in education than boys overall (David, Weiner and Arnot, 2000: 32).

Whilst feminists have debated the effectiveness of legislation for gender parity in education, the crisis of boys appeared and gradually became more central to the concerns of policy makers (Maguire, 2006: 118). From the mid-1990s, government policies have concentrated on ways to raise the achievement of boys when compared with girls by lots of guidelines for schools to identify approaches to favour boys in education (Skelton, 2010; Moreau, 2011). Maguire (2006: 118-119) sees such actions are more profound than the strategies that had been adopted for girls. Nevertheless, the models used in addressing the inequalities for girls are suggested to be applicable to boys' education (Skelton, 2010: 138). Despite the fact that the 2010 Equality Act and the 2007 Gender Equality Duty offer guidance to 'implement the gender equality duty' (EOC, 2007: 3) those intervention and resources investigated to raise the achievement of boys have been misleading (DCSF, 2009) and the strategies of recruiting men teachers into primary schools is a failure (Skelton, 2009). Further, it is obvious that there is little evidence about the recognition of boys to their male teachers as role models (Hutchings et al., 2008: 153). With all such efforts to raise girls and

then boys in education, the debates about gender equality in education still remain and seem to be more complex with the increasing research about the continued disadvantages of girls and failing boys.

The researcher notes that the UK government has made great efforts to gain gender equality in education and there has been evidence that England has had more success in gaining gender equality in comparison with many other countries (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi, 2011: 16). However, the New Labour's administration's gender policy has been critiqued by feminists such as Arnot and Miles who suggest that they: 'paradoxically promoted both an increased feminisation of schooling and the (re)masculinisation of schooling' and for side-lining feminists out of policy-making in education (Arnot and Miles, 2005: 174). They feel that girls are excluded by the hierarchy of masculinities in schools and the concerns about boys have been masking girls' disadvantages in education, especially girls from working-class (Arnot and Miles, 2005: 173). Feminists criticize the neo-liberal policy of the government in pushing the masculinisation in education, too (Arnot and Miles, 2005: 181). The researcher thinks the critiques of feminists about the liberal ideologies or the ways the government policy works is something normal. The important thing is to recognise what benefits have been gained for the community and the education of the majority of population since no one can deny the progress of girls in education in England.

The evidence that the UK has gained 'formal gender parity' in education for a number of years (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 7) is the result of the government policy in improving the education of girls (Arnot and Phipps, 2003) but it cannot be successful without the changes in the wider context in the society and the economy of the country. For this reason, it is important to note that the New Labour administration of the late 1990s and early 2000s focused on the participation of women in the labour market (Department for Trade and Industry, 2000 cited in Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 4). Moreover, the positions of women in the family as well as in the society have been improved such that women are almost half of the labour force (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 4) and have gained a much greater foothold on higher professional jobs and increasing numbers of women continue to work after getting married or having children (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 5). All these achievements suggest that gender equality in education can only be achieved together with other gendered improvements in the historical social and economic context. This is very difficult since

balancing different factors to gain gender equality but still pushing the economy and maintain the stable of the society is so challenging.

It is with some irony that at the time women were about to gain gender equality that the debate about boys education emerged (Arnot and Miles, 2005) albeit the truth is that some groups of boys perform well at schools and some girls do not (DCSF, 2009). Therefore, although being considered to gain gender parity, the dominance of the male in education is intact (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 19), hiding the disadvantages of some girls and masking the success of some boys. Thus, different factors to sustain gender inequality remain (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 19). The lesson that the researcher has noted about the impact of government policy in promoting gender equality in education in England is that establishing legislation to give the equality in gender relates to a wide range of issues in education, from the macro to the micro level. Gender equality, which is for both boys and girls, should be viewed in relation to the wider historical, social context and the goals of the economy as the feminist reproduction theory has confirmed.

Vietnam is a one party country where the Communist Party develops and enacts all of the policy. As noted in the introductory chapter, the country endured a long period strongly affected by wars and the Confucianism of Chinese people. In the 1960s, the government promoted gender equality, which brought the advantages for women to learn and seek for jobs (Vu and Ageraard, 2012: 105). The number of women going out to work increased, however, they were still in charge of domestic responsibilities (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 156) and it was said that housework was for women and more suitable for women (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 161). This revealed that though the government encouraged women to public sphere, women were still responsible for housework. In the late 1980s, the Doi Moi-renovation-reformed the economic and structure to become market-oriented. The renovation brought about the economic growth and the need for more labour. As the result of this, women had more economic opportunities but research carried out in the year 2012 showed that after many years modifying, the 'patriarchal family ideals and practices' remained (Vu and Ageraard, 2012: 105). In 2006, the Gender Equity Law and Education Law asserted the equity in opportunities for education for female and male learners to ensure the social status of females (Pham, 2007). However, rules relating to gender equality in official law are the general rules about citizens' rights (Pham, 2007: 94). In 2007, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control was passed to protect women from violence

in families, which mostly came from their husbands yet this law was not practiced very well when more than half of married women in a study reported that they experienced violence in families (GSO, 2010 cited in Hoang, Quach and Tran, 2013: 83). In the whole country, women are in lower positions than men (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 15).

In the struggle for women's emancipation, the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) plays the biggest role with membership base of more than half of eligible women (Waibel and Gluck, 2013: 345). It was founded 80 years ago and is structured from the national to the community level (Waibel and Gluck, 2013: 344) and is in charge of all issues relating to women, acting on government policies and representing the government in international activities relating to genders (Waibel and Gluck, 2013: 344). Nonetheless, in their research, Waibel and Gluck (2013: 343) point out that VWU's main weakness is at its hierarchical structure and the top-down policies. Consequently, VWU cannot change the situation greatly and its activities remain women-focused rather than improving the gender relation and unequal power.

In relation to government policy on gender equality in education, the researcher has examined Education Law, which has been enacted and it is to be noted that there are regulations to ensure the equal opportunities for all learners yet there are no terms relating to genders or specifically targeting on gender issues. On the book 'Interpretations of Gender Equity Law', it is interpreted that one of two solutions to promote gender equality in education and training is to fix the ratio of men and women taking part in learning and training but it does not point out how much percentage is for men and how much percentage for women, '50% for men, 50% for women is the best' (RCGAD, 2007: 20). Relating to the fixed ratios of women, some European countries have introduced quotas with the target of 30% women board members by 2015 and 40% by 2020 (Filsinger and Worth, 2012: 112). Nonetheless, it should be note that 'Vietnamese women have less potential to be promoted than men in most of the jobs' (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 179). So, both Vietnam and some Western countries fix the ratios of women yet in Western countries this policy is more concrete with a rapidly increasing number of women in management and clear policies to monitor the number of women gaining such roles. In Vietnam, this is mentioned without any percentage of women in education indicated to be achieved.

To sum up, the Vietnamese government has policies and the organisation to act upon gender issues yet the effectiveness of such policies remains low. There have not been any

campaigns like those outlined above in England and the wider UK. For this reason, the process in promoting gender equality in Vietnam should start from the circumstances of the country to build legislation as England has done. However, the nature of the argument outlined so far emphasizes that any such legislation should be nuanced to address the wider historical, social and cultural needs of Vietnam.

2.3.2 Curriculum towards gender equality in education

Paechter (2000) investigates the gendered nature of the curriculum and she discovered the relationship between gender and curriculum. She points out that some particular knowledge are labelled by gender and among these, knowledge which is signified as masculine has more power. If we are not aware of this issue in building curriculum, the strategies for gender equality cannot be gained. We know that curriculum in school is fundamental to not only our lives but also our next generation because schools educate us through curriculum (Paechter, 2000: 3). This includes the curriculum itself and the hidden curriculum where students learn from activities and interactions in schools. Equal opportunity and anti-sexist initiatives of the hidden curriculum alert us to the role of teacher in the gender socialization in schools through their attitudes and behaviours (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 137); besides, David, Weiner and Arnot (2000: 20) show the pressure of students to wear uniform for their sexes and different disciplines. Certainly, these factors have an affect on formulating the gender identities and gender stereotypes in schools. However, it is just relating to the hidden curriculum; the written curriculum reveals many things to discuss in relation to gender equality. In this study, more concern is given to the written curriculum although the hidden curriculum is important.

England has been assessed as achieving gender parity in education but in fact, subject choices are still affected by gender stereotypes, especially in post-16 education (Arnot and Phipps, 2003). The National Curriculum has resulted in the improvements of both boys and girls in all levels of schooling; girls especially have made such a considerable progress in achievement in compulsory and post-compulsory education (David, Weiner and Arnot, 2000: 25-26). Protests about failing boys have emerged as analysed above and what is sometimes termed a boy-friendly curriculum has been conducted by some schools but there is an argument to suggest that this has actually brought about an exacerbation of gender stereotypes (DCSF, 2009). Looking more closely into the current curriculum, feminists find

many problems in terms of gender equality. Firstly, boys still dominate (Paechter, 2000) and consequently, girls remain marginalized and tend to opt for arts subjects (David, Weiner and Arnot, 2000: 20). Secondly, sex differences in subject choice for 16 post vocational and academic course remains (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 11). Manthorpe, (1989: 129) thinks the gender problem in knowledge makes girls suffer while studying masculine subjects and boys suffer while studying feminine ones. From that acknowledgement, they come to a very interesting critique of curriculum in terms of science subjects by addressing the relationship between science subjects to the total curriculum of school and argue that science subjects in schools are to train future scientists rather than equipping the specific knowledge of science for all students (Manthorpe, 1989: 128).

From the issues above we may ask what the ideal curriculum might be for both sexes. No one gives the ideal model for the curriculum to assure the gender equality in education, but there have been some suggestions, which the researcher finds useful. From the function of the curriculum that is to make sure that all aspects of the 'humanness' of students are developed (Manthorpe, 1989: 129) we can see that if the curriculum makes any of students feel he or she is marginalized, it is a failure. Moreover, there should be a compulsory core curriculum so that no student can opt out of some subjects (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 76; Tatar and Emmanuel, 2001: 215). Whilst the researcher sees the logic of this opinion one must ask if it is helpful if a student has to learn those subjects unwillingly. Paechter (2003) implies to change the amount of time and the specific rooms of some subjects in order to be equal among subjects. Measor and Sikes (1992) drop a hint about the gender equality in content of textbook, language or even the storybooks to ensure equity. Therefore, what we should do perhaps is to create a curriculum attracting both sexes and applying a compulsory core curriculum as Measor and Sikes (1992) suggest. That curriculum should be gender equal in content as well as the picture and any metaphors inside.

It is notable that Vietnam suffers from some of the same issues found in the literature as England and gender bias is to be found in many school textbooks (Ngo, 2007). In Vietnam, the curriculum is written and released by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2009). Every school has to use this compulsory curriculum without any changes in the time or the amount of knowledge. If they wish to adjust something in the curriculum to be suitable with the school context, they have to ask for the permission from the local educational authorities (MOET, 2009). Schools have their rights in choice of advanced or basic school

textbooks written by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2009). Students can choose subjects for vocational subjects taught in schools whilst learning other subjects in the compulsory curriculum (MOET, 2009).

The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has been amending school textbooks and teaching material for many years with one of the targets to change or improve the gender stereotyping. Nevertheless, in her research, Ngo points out the continuing gender bias in the textbooks for high school students (Ngo, 2007). For example, in twelfth-grade literature textbooks, images of males show boys as open, positive and highly intellectual. In contrast, the few women who are represented are shown as having a low position or being dependant and being oppressed (Ngo, 2007: 199). This is also observable in other subjects such as biology, geography and civics (Ngo, 2007: 201). They reflect the stereotyped metaphor of girls to become wives, mothers and housewives. She then concludes that most of the knowledge has been filtered, edited and written through the lens of males or have been based on the 'respect males' standard and somehow that diminishes the role of females in the contribution for knowledge. Even people who write the school textbooks are affected by gender stereotypes and the socialization and the result is that many aspects of education are embedded in the gendered orientation of students and the expectation about the behaviours of each sex (Ngo, 2007: 203).

Explaining this situation, Ngo (2007) asserts that it is the influence of history and culture, which means that school textbooks have been written without awareness of gender or positive language to solve the gender problem, especially its roots or the way gender inequality forms, circulates, is popularised and remains through schools and the media. From that point, she suggests that the ways to counteract these problems are to provide handbooks for educational managers, editors, and teachers so they can discover the gender bias embedded in school textbooks, which are perceived as normal. The researcher believes that this suggestion can partly solve the problem of gender stereotyping in the curriculum of Vietnam because the main root lies in the society and the viewpoint of individuals. If such approaches can be incorporated with attempt to address other factors in the society through revised government policy, a revision of media approaches, and a new gender-neutral curriculum the results should be much better.

Therefore, curriculum policy is fundamental to life chances and the fulfilment of individual aspirations and we must applaud the developments in England, the UK and other Western

nations in addressing equality issues. However, despite gaining some significant improvements, the curriculum in England is still problematic and we must note that gender and curriculum has a fundamental set of interconnections (Paechter, 2003) within which some subjects in the curriculum are labelled as masculine, whilst others continue to be perceived as feminine in orientation (Paechter, 2000: 30).

2.3.3 Differences in subject choice of boys and girls

Although the government has released legislation to promote gender equality in education, the difference in subject choice between boys and girls that was found in England before the 1970s continues today (Ma, 2008; Dhesi, 2011). This phenomenon is also observable in many other countries (Ma, 2008). Among school subjects, the sciences, which include mathematics, science and information technology, are seen as masculine; whilst the arts, which include language, art and humanities, are perceived as feminine (Paechter, 2000: 3). Therefore, girls prefer feminine subjects and boys prefer masculine subjects (Francis, 2000: 36). It is notable that masculine subjects are seen as high status (Francis, 2000: 35). With the application of the National Curriculum, girls and boys are required to learn the same curriculum so the divergence in subject choice reduces (Francis, 2000: 36). We should note, however, that even when they gain the similar or higher grades in masculine subjects, girls tend to report less enjoyment but greater levels of anxiety and shame (Frenzel, Pekrun and Goetz, 2007: 497). This situation has led to a number of negative results and raises the very interesting question: 'what effect will it have on relations between the sexes if one half of the population develops in one direction and one half in the other?' (Manthorpe, 1989: 129). We do need scientists but if girls do not learn science then we do not have a literate population who understands the knowledge of science and technology, which is necessary in daily life (Manthorpe, 1989: 128). Thus, the point is the high status of boys' subjects and lower position of girls' subjects in schools tends to lead them to different occupations in future (Francis et al., 2003: 438). The statistics in 2007 in England show that there are still large gender differences in GCSE subjects, for example, girls achieve better than boys in the humanities, the arts and languages as well as in subject choice at A level when girls choose English, art and social sciences whilst boys choose technology, mathematics, physics and IT (DfES, 2007: 2-3). We must ask why such disparities remain despite the many years of legislation to counteract such incongruities.

According to Dhesi (2011: 262), the gender stereotyping of subjects is one of the main reasons why such problems remain but we may note other factors. Equally, Paechter (2000: 38) states that 'girls become socially constructed as less able to succeed at the more rationalist modes of learning, such as Mathematics and Science'. Further, in Ma's research, girls report that they do not believe themselves capable of performing well in mathematics or science (Ma, 2008: 440). It is also one of three reasons that girls state why they do not choose science, alongside the notions that science is more difficult than other subjects and they think they cannot be scientists (Mitrevski and Treagust, 2011). However, Francis shows a converse opinion in that 66% of girls and 84% of boys in her research state that boys and girls have the same ability in learning all subjects (Francis, 2000: 41). This leads to the vexed question of whether there is a difference in the learning ability of each sex. Cognitive science has tried to give the evidence about the different ability between boys and girls in cognitive function by explaining the difference achievement in mathematics and reading because of the different requirement of cognitive process (Ma, 2008: 454). This conclusion is contested by the obvious evidence that there are countries that do not have a gender gap in mathematics and science achievements (Ma, 2008: 454). Moreover, researchers on intelligence conclude that: 'there are no sex differences on measures of general intelligence' (Maltby, Day and Macaskill, 2010: 376). It thus seems clear that the crucial factors are the differences in cultures and ideologies between nations and if this is true, then the gender gap can be in any subject depending on the cultural dispositions of the particular society (Ma, 2008: 455). This belief is reinforced by statement that there is a failure in the 'interplay of masculinities with literature identities' (Skelton and Francis, 2011: 473) whilst in another article, Francis points out that: 'it is possible that cultures fostered within particular ability bands/sets have negative implications for girls' subject preferences and experiences' (Francis et al., 2003: 433).

As noted in the analysis above, gender identities are formulated by a number of elements, including the culture. To prove their identities are completely feminine or masculine, girls and boys have to consider their subject choices. Girls who have good grades at mathematics 'single themselves out as different' (Paechter, 2006a: 370). Therefore, to be similar to their peers, girls are entrenched in girls' subjects. Moreover, culture plays a major role in the viewpoint of parents about their daughters, too since parents give more priority to sons in education because they believe that daughters cannot get the economic returns which may

help to sustain the family unit in the long term; this is especially true in developing countries (Ma, 2008: 440). In Vietnam, gender discrimination happens more seriously in rural areas where poor families are not willing to invest for daughters in education (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 170). In case that girls have opportunities to pursue higher education, the gender disparities are obvious because research show that in that country, 29% males in comparison to 11% females enrol in engineering, manufacturing and construction, whilst 41% females in comparison to 26% males enrol in social sciences, business and law (World Bank, 2011b: 29). So, girls do not get the same resources as boys and when added to their low self-confidence in their ability in learning male subjects, they cannot achieve results equivalent to boys, which reinforces their parents low expectations about daughters and creates the 'cycle of negative expectations and inadequate achievement' (Ma, 2008: 440) which includes a nexus of relationships around students as individuals, culture and parenting.

Measor and Sikes (1992: 76) assert that schools have to provide all students equal opportunities to access all subjects and the nature of subject choice means that students cannot choose to quit some subjects very easily. In effect, this means that many subjects are compulsory for girls, especially when girls do not see themselves as having the ability to do well some subjects. The main issue is the role of the school in stimulating girls and boys to engage with a wide range of subjects so they can have a full knowledge of different areas of learning which are necessary for life. Schools can help in this by dealing with gender stereotypes and by providing children of both genders with gender education and pedagogy and by challenging the language in schools which tends to reinforce gender stereotypes (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup, 2008: 212-213). But here again, the role of media and social context should be taken into account (Apple, 1982a: 4) as feminist reproduction theorists suggest.

The researcher attempts to look for literature about differences in subject choice in Vietnam but there is no empirical research about this. However, as an experienced high school teacher for several years, she strongly believes that subject choice in high schools is affected by gender stereotypes. She was a high school student of a specialist school and then worked in a mixed school which had both ordinary classes and specialist classes and she witnessed that in natural science subject specialist classes, boys always outnumbered girls and vice versa.

To sum up, there has been a gender difference in subject choice in England based on cultural norms, which existed up to the last generation of educators and children. This has meant that boys have had a tendency to choose sciences and girls to choose arts (Francis, 2000: 36). This has affected the occupations taken up by girls since females are likely to do things relating to gender stereotypes such as arts, language or science and boys choose to the contrary (Francis et al., 2003). It could have also resulted in a lack of knowledge about science for girls (Manthorpe, 1989). Researchers have pointed out some major reasons for these anomalies, amongst which are cognitive issues, cultural issues, gender identities, the low self-confidence of girls themselves and low expectation of their parents. However, the researcher believes that culture is the biggest factor in the subject choice of students and that in order to help girls achieve well in male subjects, we need to address the role of the culture, schools, curriculum and teaching pedagogy (Colley, Comber and Hargreaves, 1994: 17).

2.4 The impact of teaching pedagogies on gender equality in education
2.4.1 Issues of current teaching pedagogies
There has been a great deal of research on the ways in which teaching pedagogies affect gender equality in education and it is said that teachers have a role in students' achievement (Seidel and Shavelson, 2007) and the current teaching pedagogy is still in debate with different viewpoints (Myhill and Jones, 2006).
Teachers' attention to boys and girls in classroom has been of concern for 30 years, as Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp claim:

> *...the issue of who gets the teacher's attention and who dominates classroom interactions prompts questions about equity of educational opportunity for students sharing the same classroom environment.* (Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp, 2006: 339)

The researcher tried to look for the literature on teaching pedagogies in terms of gender equality in Vietnam but up till now she cannot find any empirical research about it. Thus, in this section, she will outline the journey of pedagogy for gender equality in education mostly in western countries, which is under debate. The concern is the teaching pedagogies

which can help boys or girls with their academic failure. At different times and in different contexts, the debates focus on either boys or girls who are disadvantaged in schooling (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 101).

2.4.1.1 Teachers' roles and gender equality journey in England

Different people have different thoughts about the term 'pedagogy'. To Mlama et al., pedagogy includes 'what is taught, how teaching takes place and how what is taught is learnt' (Mlama et al., 2005: 7) whilst to other people, it is used as 'the interactions between the teachers, pupils, the learning environment and tasks' (Gipps, 1996a: 2). It can be seen as the teaching and learning process of both teachers and learners with activities happening in the classroom. In that process, teachers' activities and behaviours have an influence on students' achievement (Seidel and Shavelson, 2007). In research on the teaching of physics to girls at upper schools in the United Kingdom, researchers claim that good teachers can make the physics subject interesting and help students to understand it more clearly (Mitrevski and Treagust, 2011: 39). Moreover, the different expectations of teachers for boys and girls has a negative effect on both sexes (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 111). Thus, teachers and their teaching pedagogies play a role in students' performance. However, there has been lack of research about teaching pedagogies that influence genders in school. Murphy and Whitelegg explain that 'perhaps a more fundamental reason for the absence of research, particularly in England, into gender-inclusive pedagogy is that interventions that challenge the gender dualisms mapped onto science knowledge representations are non-existent' (Murphy and Whitelegg, 2006: 296).

The researcher outlines some of the journey of gender equality pedagogy in England in the last 30 years by reviewing the work of Arnot (2006b). In the ten years from 1970, England enacted policies about equal opportunities with the concentration on pedagogic projects to gain the friendly school environment for girls (Arnot, 2006b: 136). Since then, the needs of girls have been addressed through single-sex classes or action programmes for girls (Arnot, 2006b). Girls' achievements were appreciated by staff and teachers oriented girls to think critically about the identity of women and 'new ways of being feminine' (Arnot, 2006b: 137). Moreover, teachers were encouraged to recount the experiences of females, which led ultimately to higher achievement in some subjects and outstripped boys by girls at 16 - 18 in education (Arnot, 2006b: 137). Since the 1990s, debates about the underachieving boys

have emerged (Davison and Frank, 2006: 157). They applied role modelling and some other strategies to struggle with the boys' failure in education (Arnot, 2006b). The 'masculinizing' approaches were perceived as having an impact on 'boys whose masculinity is policed by other boys' and negative effects on girls since they were 'used as counter-points in the construction of aggressive masculinities' (Arnot, 2006b: 143). Several critical pedagogies of difference such as teacher enacted through workshops about gender, discussions about masculinity or story telling have been carried out (Arnot, 2006b). Nonetheless, the relationship between gender and pedagogy (and citizenship), as Arnot (2006b) analysed, needs to be debated more thoroughly.

2.4.1.2 Debates on teaching pedagogies with attention to gender issues

In the debate about underachieving boys at schools in the UK, researchers warn that students perceive that teachers give more learning support for girls than boys (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 111) and that the influence of the feminization of teaching on boys is getting worse (Griffiths, 2006: 398). Though not many teachers admit that they treat boys and girls differently, research shows that teachers see boys as problematic and girls as ideal (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 111). They also perceive that teachers give girls more positive attention whilst giving boys more negative attention and greater monitoring (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 100). Furthermore, recent research concerning the relative underachievement of boys suggests that this relative decline is the result of differential teacher attention to boys and girls; in this case it is a disadvantage to boys (Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp, 2006: 339). More importantly, Myhill and Jones (2006: 101) declare that boys feel themselves to be undervalued by teachers. From such issues, it can be said that boys are put at a disadvantage in learning by the teaching pedagogies. This crisis influences the policy more greatly than any concerns about girls before (Maguire, 2006: 118).

Nonetheless, research shows that girls feel that they are less important because teachers give more time and attention to boys in classrooms and that the diligent approach of girls in learning is disliked by teachers (Stanworth, 1983). Likewise, research shows that girls' achievements are thought to be through hard work and boys' as being clever (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 96). As the result of this, teachers give different feedback and attention to boys and girls and the marginalization makes girls feel less interested and less involved in boys' subjects (Gray and Leith, 2004: 14). Obviously, it is not equal when teachers give

different feedback and attention for different sexes and girls are at disadvantage compared with boys. From her standpoint as a feminist, the researcher sees that this is unequal in terms of gender.

Moreover, Renold points out that even when girls have good performance, teachers still think that they are 'bossy', 'overconfident' and 'not as clever as she is' (Renold, 2001: 584). From this research, we can see that teachers have deep gender stereotypes about the ability of girls in learning. In the cases where girls have a good achievement, teachers think that it rather thanks to hard work than their mentality (Epstein, 1998:106). This thought is reinforced with the low expectation for girls that: 'teachers commonly have low expectations of the intellectual abilities of girls, and girls have correspondingly low expectations of themselves' (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). Stanworth (1983), who is a radical feminist, writes a very interesting book about sexual divisions in the classroom, which reveals the scene of gender issue in classroom and between teachers and students. She points out that most of teachers in secondary school prefer to work with boys to girls and they hold the more positive involvement with boys than girls even when girls have better academic results and direct more comments to boys (Stanworth, 1983). Therefore, the gender stereotypes of teacher influence not only the way they treat girls but also affect girls in estimating their own abilities and the expectation for themselves (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005). Furthermore, it is not equal when teachers give boys more instructions in their feedback so they can improve their forthcoming performance and give girls just 'correct' or 'incorrect' feedback. The unequal acknowledgement of the ability, performance and feedback of teachers make girls have more disadvantages in learning than boys. In addition, in the classroom, girls are seen as note takers or observers and boys dominate activities (Gray and Leith, 2004: 10). This statement reveals the clear inferior roles of girls in classrooms.

2.4.1.3 The influence of teaching pedagogies of natural science teachers on gender issues

The researcher notes that there has been some research about the teaching pedagogies of mathematics teachers and teachers of natural science subjects which have influence on students. The first issue about 'masculine subjects' is the lack of women teachers in Mozambique (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). Although females outnumber in the total number of teachers in schools, there are few female teachers in 'high

status subjects' (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). And there are teachers who believe that girls are not suitable with mathematics (Frenzel, Pekrun and Goetz, 2007: 497). Teachers of masculine subjects have low acknowledgement, low attention and low expectation of girls in their subjects (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). In the UK, the good performance of girls in mathematics is seen as 'rote memorization' rather than 'real understanding' (Walden and Walkerdine, 1985: 104). Paechter claims that this is extremely important in terms of life chances of students (Paechter, 1998: 61). Furthermore, research has shown that teachers believe that boys are naturally more logical in learning mathematics than girls (Ma, 2008: 441). This is a gender stereotype, which can prevent teachers from giving equal attention and expectation to boys and girls in mathematics. This could also discourage girls from learning 'boys' subjects' and it is evident that the different expectation towards the learning ability of boys and girls in terms of gender does have influence on differential outcomes for students (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 101).

The expectation of teachers could be a great encouragement to stimulate girls to succeed (Harding, 1996: 112). Ironically, the low expectation of teachers to girls in natural science subjects is apparent in the study of Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005), Murphy and Whitelegg (2006) and Ma (2008). They discover that in spite of the fact that there are some countries which have no gender difference in the mathematics and science scores (Ma, 2008: 454), teachers still think that boys are much more able than girls and they hold higher expectation of boys to be successful in science (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). They encourage boys more intellectually and demand more from boys in their subjects (Wilder and Powell, 1989 cited in Murphy and Whitelegg, 2006: 296).

 The situation does not appear to be better in all female environments where girls do not have to share the attention of teachers with boys, for instance, in the UK, in physics classes, girls tell that they do not have enough opportunity to discuss issues that they find important and they are not sure of the value of physics subjects, they do not know what relevance it has to their careers in the future (Mitrevski and Treagust, 2011: 39). The researcher perceives that most of the research reviewed above about the attention of teachers to boys and girls are from radical feminists, yet their findings imply the lack of equality of opportunity, which is the main focus of liberal feminism. It also reflects that there needs to be strategies to encourage more girls and women teachers into natural science subjects as liberal feminism's main aim has pointed out.

2.4.1.4 An examination of teaching pedagogies that pay attention to gender

It is clear that current teaching pedagogies does not ensure gender equality for boys and girls in education and this has an influence on students. Some teaching pedagogies which are hoped to bring fairness to either boys or girls or both sexes have been recommended such as gender responsive pedagogy (Mlama et al., 2005), productive pedagogy (Keddie and Mills, 2007), boy-friendly teaching pedagogy or critical pedagogy (Morgan, 2000). The researcher would like to posit that gender responsive pedagogy is the most appropriate term for the teaching pedagogy framework, which treats girls and boys equally based on the difference of sexes. Work based in 33 countries in Africa carried out by the Forum for African Women Educationalists state that:

> *Gender responsive pedagogy refers to teaching and learning processes that pay attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys. Gender responsive pedagogy calls for teachers to take an all-encompassing gender approach in the processes of lesson planning, teaching, classroom management and performance evaluation.* (Mlama et al., 2005: 7)

This pedagogy gives the attention to both girls and boys while some other pedagogies have more focus on the current debate, for instance, for the advantages of boys in learning when the underachieving boys are in focus. In Australia, Keddie and Mills (2007) analyse the productive pedagogy with the aim of giving supportiveness to boys who are struggling in learning and providing the free gender environment in schools for girls and boys who have engaged with the learning process. Likewise, criticizing the excessive feminization of teaching and learning, boy-friendly pedagogy is recommended to help boys cope with academic score but finally Keddie and Mills (2009: 29) state that: 'a boy-friendly pedagogy here would be highly inappropriate in terms of promoting gender justice'.

The debate about different levels of attention by teachers to girls and boys has continued. As analysed above, girls seem to have more disadvantages in the teaching pedagogies in many subjects, so a pedagogy which is in favour of boys, may not be the best solution. The third scenario of the millennium development goals is gender-equal pedagogies based on

societal change and has the aim of creating the sustainability of practice (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 51). This pedagogy has some things in common with a *gender responsive pedagogy* in that it pays attention to both sexes but the first one gives more concern about the specific needs of different sexes rather than the inclusive activities of girls and boys in the classroom. The researcher appreciates the gender-equal pedagogy with its aim of the enhancement and participation of students but still has more support for the gender responsive pedagogy for it respects the difference of genders.

Another pedagogy, which has been recommended in the UK for some years, is critical pedagogy (Morgan, 2000). It is said that schooling has the 'power relationships and the privileging of certain forms of knowledge' which serve to reproduce not only the gender inequality but also other forms of social inequalities (Morgan, 2000: 274). This pedagogy suggests that recognising how the curriculum and teaching pedagogy offer boys and girls a perspective that: 'serves to marginalise certain voices and ways of life' and with such awareness, it is hoped that both teachers and students can challenge gender inequalities (Morgan, 2000: 274). However, it has been subject to criticism for synthesising 'a whole range of diverse political projects into one overarching master discourse' and its failure in dealing with questions of power (Morgan, 2000: 275). There are many more pedagogies recommended in the debate about the teaching pedagogies toward girls or boys or both. For example, Keddie and Mills (2009) have confirmed a teaching pedagogy for boys such as boy-friendly as inappropriate and a girl-friendly pedagogy seems to be ineffective or not exist. In the UK, Gipps (1996b: 270) admits that girls differ from boys and differ from each other in the same sex as well and different school subjects have different messages on individual students. Consequently, 'the simple answer to the question "Is there a pedagogy for girls?" is 'No' (Gipps, 1996b: 270).

2.4.1.5 Summary of issues of current teaching pedagogies

Pedagogy can be seen as the teaching and learning activities that happen in the classroom. Teachers play a role in the achievements of students, yet the teaching pedagogies have some issues that need to be improved. England has more than 30 years applying pedagogy for gender equality in education. In the 1970s, girl friendly schooling was carried out to promote girls' performance at schools (Arnot, 2006b). Teachers recounted the experiences of girls and they encouraged girls to think critically about women's identities (Arnot, 2006b).

Consequently, girls had better academic achievements than boys at 16 and 18 (Arnot, 2006b: 137). Then the debate about underachieving for boys commenced (Davison and Frank, 2006: 157). Nonetheless, there has been research showing that teachers pay more attention to boys and boys dominate the classroom (Stanworth, 1983; Skelton, 2010) or they give more feedback to boys while giving girls low expectation in their subjects (Gray and Leith, 2004). In addition, teachers tend to approve of the diligent approach of girls and see their attainments in learning as relating to hard work rather than understanding (Walden and Walkerdine, 1985; Epstein, 1998).

In mathematics as well as natural science subjects, which are perceived as masculine subjects, there is a lack of female teachers (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). Moreover, teachers of these subjects often have low acknowledgement and low expectation of girls (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). Research points out that this stereotype is greatly important in the life chances of students (Paechter, 1998: 61). Furthermore, by giving more time and attention to boys, teachers tend to marginalize girls as they do not participate much on the classroom activities and they have negative attitudes toward natural science subjects (Lisa Leach, 1994 cited in Ma, 2008: 441). The problematic pedagogy of natural science subject teachers is revealed through their beliefs that boys are more able than girls and they make higher demands on boys than girls (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). Teachers evaluate the good performance of girls in mathematics as the result of their hard work rather than their understanding (Walden and Walkerdine, 1985).

There have been many teaching pedagogies recommended for boys, such as boy-friendly pedagogy or productive pedagogy, or for girls, such as girl-friendly pedagogy, yet they are all inappropriate in a variety of ways. This has been confirmed by research of Morgan (2000), Mlama et al. (2005), Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005) and Keddie and Mills (2009) and it seems clear that the most suitable teaching pedagogy should be the one that respects the difference of both sexes in learning. Up till now there are two pedagogies that promote equality: gender-equal pedagogy (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005) and gender responsive pedagogy (Mlama et al., 2005) but the latter is more radical since it requires teachers to be attentive in all the processes of educating students. The researcher thinks that the gender responsive approach could be the most suitable among existing

teaching pedagogies but it certainly cannot be the only one since the debate remains and needs to be discussed continually.

The next section will outline some basic recommendations to contribute a teaching pedagogy that benefits both boys and girls in education.

2.4.2 Improvement strategies of teaching pedagogies towards gender equality in education

Recommendations have been made to gain gender equal teaching pedagogies including actions and awareness from the time teachers plan the lesson to activities in classroom and give feedback as well as assessment to students (Mlama et al., 2005). Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup (2008) and Mlama et al. (2005) suggest teachers to review the textbooks and learning materials to make sure that they show the honest view of the options for men and women and the technique to overcome any gender stereotypes containing in the materials. The researcher thinks this is a very useful recommendation for teachers before they come in the class since gender issue needs to be addressed in the whole process of teaching and if teachers are active in addressing gender stereotypes before coming to class, they will be more confident with the well-prepared lesson. The recommendation of strategies to improve the teaching pedagogies toward gender equality in the classroom are presented below.

2.4.2.1 Activities in the classrooms

There are several recommendations for teachers when in classrooms. For instance, it is suggested that, at first, they should watch the language they use so it can be gender-free (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup, 2008: 212-213). Research in Africa has found out that language can reinforce gender inequalities in the class and teachers should re-examine their language to ensure that it is gender inclusive or gender responsive (Mlama et al., 2005: 14). For example, they should not judge an assertive girl in learning that she is behaving like a boy or should not discourage girls from adopting natural science subjects because they are difficult for girls (Mlama et al., 2005: 14). In the UK, psychoanalytic feminist researchers also give some examples such as instead of saying 'policeman', teachers should say 'police officer' (Woolfolk, Hughes, and Walkup, 2008: 212). Interestingly, this situation is unlikely to happen in Vietnam since the 'man' in 'policeman' does not mean a 'male police officer' in Vietnamese language. However, the recommendation about the gender responsive

language is very useful to alert high school teachers about the gender-neutral language that they should use in schools.

Secondly, as girls and boys may prefer different learning styles, teachers should apply flexible teaching methodologies (Gipps, 1996a: 6). To help girls, teachers can slow the pace of lesson so girls can prepare and respond or teachers should give time to ensure that both boys and girls answer (Gipps, 1996b: 265), not to interrupt them mid-way (Mlama et al., 2005: 19). Some people perceive that boys make more demands on teachers and suggest that, in such cases, teachers should channel more attention to girls who are quieters (Stanworth, 1983: 54). This has a relation to the recommendation about the collaborative ways of learning when they suggest that teachers should use 'more cooperative and interactive modes of learning' as well as 'emphasizing discussion and collaboration' (Gipps, 1996b: 265).

Discussion and collaboration are good ways to give all students the opportunity to speak out and participate in classroom activities since teaching is not the 'text-lecture-test' process but the collective knowledge building as research in the US has pointed out (Johnson and Weber, 2011: 153). To have effective collaboration, the rapport between teachers and learners should be built (Mlama et al., 2005: 20; Mitrevski and Treagust, 2011: 39). The researcher totally agrees with this recommendation because teaching and learning is not a one-way activity, if teachers and students do not have a friendly relationship, it is difficult to work together in finding knowledge. There has been research showing that teachers are often 'authoritarian, unapproachable and distant' which makes it difficult for students to seek instructions and assistance for their learning (Mlama et al., 2005: 8). It also makes it difficult for teachers to acknowledge and respond to students' problems (Mlama et al., 2005: 19). Thus, if teachers do not build a rapport with students, both teachers and students may encounter difficulties in their work. In order to have that rapport, teachers should give all students as individuals the same respect and the educational opportunities that they deserve (Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp, 2006: 358). This recommendation fits with the focus of liberal feminist theory, the main theory employed in this study since its aim is to give equal opportunities to girls in the presumption that they will make efforts to achieve with their own abilities. Giving the same opportunities does not mean seeing girls and boys the same; teachers are suggested to respect the difference between students, as Johnson and Weber perceive: 'perhaps the most important element of a genderful pedagogy is respect for

difference' (Johnson and Weber, 2011: 153). This recommendation fits with the specific needs of boys and girls stated in the gender responsive pedagogy above.

Furthermore, in the UK teachers are advised not to overcome potential gender issues by giving more attention to boys who are said to be unruly (Stanworth, 1983). Stanworth cites that if teachers criticise boys frequently, students may find that boys' naughtiness is more deserving of attention (Stanworth, 1983: 233). If this suggestion is valued, it can ameliorate one of the foibles of current teaching pedagogies analysed above - that is the unequal attention of teachers to boys and girls.

In the previous section, we have observed that there are some subjects to be seen as high status such as mathematics and natural science subjects or masculine subjects. In a research at a single-sex school in the UK, researchers recommend that teachers should help students know the value of school subjects or the purpose of learning it, 'fundamental reconsideration of the contribution of physics to students' future lives is needed' (Murphy and Whitelegg, 2006: 300). The researcher believes this is a very good recommendation since from her own teaching experience, she has found out that many students learn school subjects but do not know their value to their lives or any connection of academic knowledge to daily lives or their future careers. They just learn to pass the examinations. She believes that if students understand the purpose of learning school subjects, even when those subjects are not their favour they can have more motivation to learn.

2.4.2.2 Giving feedback, assessment and classroom arrangement

Giving feedback and assessment to students are recommended strategies for high quality learning and teaching which are analysed widely, including those in relation to gender issues. Mlama et al. (2005: 10) advise teachers to make time for the feedback from students to make sure that they all have understood the lesson. As noted above, teaching and learning is an interactive process, if teachers just lecture and give no time to listen to the voice of students about the reflection of their works, they cannot improve their teaching pedagogies and education goals cannot be achieved. That is the feedback of students to teachers. In their turn, teachers should give 'feedback with challenges and gives precise guidance to students' (Gipps, 1996b: 265). This recommendation addresses the view that the feedback of teachers to boys and girls is not equal as reviewed in the previous section. In assessment, teachers are advised to use 'multisensory teaching strategies and multi-sensory assessment tools'

(Bancroft, 2002 cited in Chetcuti, 2009: 93). This suggestion is similar to the opinion of Gipps (1996b: 268) that various strategies of pedagogies should meet the needs of various students. Gipps also recommends that teachers have adequate expectation about girls' and boys' abilities in learning (Gipps, 1996b: 264). We have reviewed that some teachers have a low expectation of girls in learning even when they have good academic performances. This does not mean to change only the low expectation for girls but also the expectation for boys. For instance, in her research, Janet White has pointed out that teachers need to change their expectations for boys and girls in English subject since there are stereotypes that: 'English does not matter for boys' and girls are good at language naturally (Janet White, 1996 cited in Gipps, 1996b: 264).

Another recommendation in teaching pedagogies to promote gender equality in school from research in Africa is 'gender responsive classroom set ups' (Mlama et al., 2005: 16). Teachers are advised to arrange the classroom in a way that they can interact with all students and all students can participate in the lessons (Mlama et al., 2005: 7). Furthermore, teachers should not let girls sit at the back or in the corners as this can prevent them from speaking out (Mlama et al., 2005: 7). It is noted that the classroom arrangement or group should mix girls and boys and small groups can encourage girls to take part better (Mlama et al., 2005: 7).

2.4.2.3 Summary of improvement strategies of teaching pedagogies towards gender equality in education

Researchers have made recommendations in relation to teaching pedagogies to promote gender equality in education. Teachers should be aware of gender stereotypes in learning materials right at the time of lesson planning (Mlama et al., 2005). Whilst teaching, they should watch their language to ensure that they contain no gender bias (Mlama et al., 2005). Moreover, the teaching methods employed should be flexible due to different learning styles of different sexes (Gipps, 1996a). Giving girls more time to compose responses or making sure both girls and boys answer the questions without mid-way interruption is a solution to help all students participate in learning (Gipps, 1996b; Mlama et al., 2005). Likewise, discussion and collaboration can give students opportunity to speak out yet in order to do that teachers should know how to build the good teacher-student relationships (Mlama et al., 2005; Johnson and Weber, 2011; Mitrevski and Treagust, 2011). Being authorial or

unapproachable to students not only makes it difficult for teachers to recognise and respond to students but also prevent students from seeking for guidance and assistance (Mlama et al., 2005). Teachers should give all students equal respect and opportunities (Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp, 2006). This fits with the main point of liberal theory, which is applied in this research. Besides, teachers should give equal attention to girls and boys as research about teaching pedagogies reveals that teachers paying more attention to boys could marginalize girls (Stanworth, 1983). Furthermore, teachers should encourage students to give feedback and they themselves should be equal in assessing and giving feedback to boys and girls (Gipps, 1996b). Another recommendation is to have adequate expectations about the abilities of girls and boys in learning (Gipps, 1996b). Lastly, the arrangement of the classroom ensuring the participation of all students is advised to promote gender equality in education through teaching pedagogies as well (Mlama et al., 2005).

In this section, the researcher has reviewed the literature on the impact of teaching pedagogies in relation to gender equality in education. The definition of pedagogy and the role of teachers in the achievements of students have been analysed. The history of gender equal teaching pedagogy in England covers more than 30 years. In the first phase, they encouraged teachers to give more attention to girls but when girls' achievements were better than boys at 16 and 18 (Arnot, 2006b), research about teaching pedagogies reveals two main tendencies about the teaching pedagogies towards gender equality in education. Depending on the time and context, the debates focus on either boys or girls who are disadvantaged (Myhill and Jones, 2006). One group is to defend failing boys in education (Myhill and Jones, 2006; Beaman, Weldall and Kemp, 2006). Nevertheless, the fact is that girls still have more disadvantages in schooling and there has been much research focusing on girls' education (Stanworth, 1983; Skelton, 2010). In addition, teachers have been reported to have higher expectation of boys or to treat boys more favourably (Delamont, 1990 cited in Murphy and Whitelegg, 2006: 296). They prefer to work with boys rather than girls and when girls have good academic performances, they still think that it is thanks to their hard working approach (Walden and Walkerdine, 1985; Epstein, 1998). Those gender stereotypes are said to have a negative influence on girls in learning and with their future career (Lisa Leach, 1994 cited in Ma, 2008: 441). In mathematics and natural science subjects, teachers have low expectation, low acknowledgement and low attention to girls (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47).

There is teaching pedagogy, which is suggested to favour boys such as productive pedagogy, boy-friendly pedagogy or to favour girls such as girl-friendly pedagogy yet researchers claim that they are not appropriate in terms of promoting gender equality. Suitable teaching pedagogy toward gender equality in education should pay attention to the specific needs of girls and boys in education and the researcher thinks that it is the gender responsive pedagogy.

2.5 Curriculum for ITT about gender equality

In this section of the study, the researcher will review the literature on the need to provide gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers on ITT programmes in several countries. Most attention is paid to gender equality in England and strategies developed in that nation to improve the issues associated with this concept.

In England, it is said that teachers play an important role in students' understanding about gender equality (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 431) and that what happens in the classroom determines how girls and boys take part in learning in schools and influences their future in later life (Mlama et al., 2005: v). Likewise, teachers' perceptions and attitudes to gender equality are central to the efficient participation of students (Mlama et al., 2005: v). In explaining the failure of some girls in education, in the 1980s liberal feminism theories have indicated that unselfconfident girls are the results of the absence of positive role models of women in texts and the wider media as well as the limited expectation of teachers in relation to girls' achievement (Measor and Sikes, 1992 cited in Skelton, 2010: 139). Murphy (1996: 20) posits the same idea when indicating that: 'the pedagogy of teacher education is reflected in the teaching pedagogy in schools'. Thus, teachers', and especially trainee teachers' awareness about gender equality in education is crucially important.

A range of research has taken place in different countries about the necessity of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers. For instance, in Mozambique, researchers state that it is fundamental to support teachers in promoting gender equality (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 49). In Malaysia, it is argued that the study of gender is crucial for student teachers' programmes because it will be helpful in developing their knowledge and skills in teaching (Sultana and Sohaimi bin Lazim, 2011: 168). Examining the change of trainee teachers' attitudes towards inclusion over four year undergraduate ITT programmes in Scotland, Sosu, Mtika and Colucci-Gray (2010: 398) confirm that there are

significant changes in trainee teachers' attitudes to educational inclusion and expectation which may affect their teaching practice in the future. Thus, providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers can help them to improve their attitudes to gender issues, which then may be helpful in teaching practice. The next section will examine this issue in relation to the operant ITT programmes in England and Vietnam.

2.5.1 Gender and ITT programmes in England and Vietnam

For a number of years there were two main routes to become teachers in the UK, which were to gain the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) in one year, or to pursue a four-year undergraduate programme such as the Bachelor of Education degree (Coffey and Delamont, 2000: 78). However, recent years have witnessed a severe decline in the number of undergraduate programmes being offered and an increasing transfer to school based programmes of training. Whatever programmes are chosen, ITT includes some basic areas of knowledge such as attention to the requirements of the national curriculum and promoting good behaviour of students which are linked to the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (Department for Education, 2013).

In England, from the 1980s into the 1990s, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) validated ITT courses, after which time the management of programmes passed to a number of government agencies including the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), and the Training and Development Agency (TDA) (Skelton, 2007: 678-679). More recently further reorganization has devolved authority for ITT to the Training Agency and the National College for Teaching and Leadership. In some ITT programmes 'mainly at the initiation of feminist educators' and in some areas of Left Wing local authorities, trainee teachers were provided with knowledge on gender to raise their awareness about gender and race (Jayne, 1987 and Leonard, 1989 cited in Skelton, 2007: 678). Yet, some researchers note that gender equality was not given priority in such programmes (Skelton, 2007: 679; Younger and Warrington, 2008: 432). CATE referred to gender issues 'only under more general guises of equal opportunities, personal and social education and so forth-to be permeated rather than prioritized in the teaching curriculum' (Coffey and Delamont, 2000: 80). So, although there might have been some more reference to gender, it was rather low as a priority or was at a marginal position in the curriculum of ITT (Coffey and Delamont,

2000) and in general, the disinterest of the UK government to give more priority to gender issues in ITT has continued (Skelton, 2007: 679).

Since the establishment of the TTA in 1994, policy on gender has been emphasized in the programmes for ITT (Skelton, 2007: 679) and social justice issues became more central for the curriculum for ITT providers (Skelton, 2007). Skelton paraphrases the Standards for ITT in the book *Qualifying to Teach, Handbook of Guidance (TTA, 2004)* that: 'gender, together with other sources of inequity in education, are now given a higher profile in ITE documents than at any other time in recent history' (Skelton, 2007: 679). After more than 20 years improving ITT, the quality of Newly Qualified Teachers was recognized (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 431). However, there is still a necessity to re-activate debates about gender issues within ITT programmes in the UK (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 429) for several reasons. Firstly, gender is subsumed in the term 'diversity', as Skelton argues, the 'diversity' just represents the soft version of equality viewpoint 'in contrast to those politicised perspectives directly engaging with gender' (Skelton, 2007: 680). Secondly, gender was not taken into account among some prioritised in-service topics set by the government (Coffey and Acker, 1991: 27). Moreover, a set of teachers' standards replacing the existed QTS has just been released (Department for Education, 2012) but the researcher finds no gender issues in it. Perhaps, a closer relationship between research and teaching is needed (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 441).

In Vietnam, universities of pedagogy are the places to train students to become high school teachers (HCMUP, 2013). Another way to become a teacher is to attend a course for graduates who have held a bachelor's degree in one or some of the subjects taught at high school. There is a set of standard qualifications for Vietnamese high school teachers (MOET, 2013a) but the researcher does not find any attention to gender equality in education within it. The word 'equally' is repeated five times but it does not give the emphasis of gender equality among genders and we should note that there is no in-service teacher training in Vietnam.

The next section will outline the debates and the reality of ITT programmes about gender equality in recent years in England and Vietnam.

2.5.2 The reality of ITT programmes in relation to gender equality

There is a clear relationship between governments' policies and ITT programmes. In England, Davies, Mountford and Gannon (2009: 384) state that in many countries, ITT programmes are one of the ways for the governments to put reform into effect. Equally, in a study in Mozambique, researchers have found that governments have the main responsibility in developing gender equal pedagogy for trainee teachers (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 53). In England, an inspection of ITT shows that it is necessary to spend more time on social justice (Skelton, 2007: 679). Further, in the 1990s, Coffey and Acker (1991: 27) pointed out the fact that when there was a demand from local authorities, the government gave more funding and set national in-service priorities on gender equality that led to an increased incentive for universities to invest in courses on gender issues although the increase was little. However, five years later, higher education institutions were reported to lag behind schools in commitment to gender equality (Murphy, 1996: 20). Indeed, by 2005, some optional modules about gender were withdrawn due to the pressure of time and the demands of some elements, which had more emphasis in the government policy such as behaviour management (Skelton, 2007: 670). Two sides of TTA in dealing with gender issues in the curriculum for ITT are that on one hand, TTA lets ITT institutions devise their curriculum for ITT, on the other hand, it is an 'authoritarian patriarch' 'who dispenses punishment and rewards through a system of regular and scrutinising inspection procedures' (Mahony and Hextall, 2000 cited in Skelton, 2007: 680). To pass the inspection, institutions have to give more focus on what the government regards as important (Skelton, 2007). Thus, the government has power to make ITT programmes put gender issues at the centre of their curriculum.

Younger and Warrington (2008: 431) recognise that after 20 years of restructuring ITT in England, the government is giving 'due recognition' to the quality of newly qualified teachers. However, the curriculum for ITT about gender equality is still in debate with lots of critiques about what has been done on gender issues in ITT or about the lack of theories as well as issues relating to lecturers and students in inducting gender into the curriculum. They affirm that re-activating the debates on gender equality in ITT is necessary (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 429) because the reports of the OFSTED, which carries out inspections and regulates procedures throughout England and reports to the Parliament (OFSTED, 2013), and the TDA, 'the national agency and recognised sector body

responsible for the training and development of the school workforce' (TDA, 2012), reveal only silence on gender (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 432). They argue that among 24 questions in TDA survey, there is no question relating to gender issues in schools. In the handbook Qualifying to Teach which interprets the criteria for ITT in the year 2007, there is 'no explicit reference whatsoever to gender issues, not even in the context of achievement and diversity or in the terms of the promotion of equality and inclusion in teaching' (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 432). Or by examining the statutory duty of public services to deal with gender issues released by government's gender duty code of practice in the year 2007 and even the guidance for schools to tackle gender stereotypes and other issues relating to gender, it can be said that gender equality in ITT curriculum in England is invisible (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 433). On the website of TDA-it has been closed but main work and publications have been transferred to the Teaching Agency, there is the commitment to improve the quality of ITT in England, but among 33 listed, no point focuses on gender issues (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 439).

Together with the analysis of Skelton about the subsumption of gender issues into the list of 'diversities' (ethnic minorities, disabilities, sexualities, gender identities) (Skelton, 2007: 682) as mentioned above, it can be concluded that gender equality has been put into practice of the curriculum for ITT in England but due to the political and local demands, it has not worked effectively and as Skelton claims, the significance of gender's knowledge to both teachers' and students' opportunities and educational experience have been 'marginalized and downplayed' (Skelton, 2007: 687). Gender equity is subsumed in the larger term as 'diversities' (Skelton, 2007) and it exists in the curriculum for ITT but the absence of gender issues in national reports (Younger and Warrington, 2008) reveals that it does not play a major role in the qualification of trainee teachers in England nor in the aim of the process of promoting equality and inclusivity in teaching.

In Vietnam, the curriculum for ITT is set out by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2013b) and it is they who decide the core curriculum with compulsory subjects and soft curriculum with main subjects, which vary due to different departments of ITT (MOET, 2013b). The researcher has examined both the core and peripheral curriculum of all ITT subjects on the website of MOET but there are no words relating to gender or girls or boys. From her own experience as a trainee teacher and then a high school teacher in a university of pedagogy, she perceives that there is very little content relating to psychology

as a subject in the curriculum of ITT that mentions the psychology of girls and boys and there is no explicit content relating to gender equality. Indeed, she cannot find any literature about the curriculum for ITT relating to gender issues.

To sum up, in England, developing gender issues more fully in teacher education is considered crucial and there is a need to connect or reconnect between research and practice of gender issues in ITT (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 441). In Vietnam, gender issues have not been the focus in the curriculum for ITT. The next section will outline the lack of theories on gender issues for ITT as well as the difficulties that lecturers and trainee teachers encounter when teaching and learning gender equality in ITT programmes in England and some developed countries.

2.5.3 Challenges to gender issues in ITT: theories, time and modules

In England, Younger and Warrington (2008: 441) state that there is an outpouring of research on gender in many Education faculties yet there is also dislocation between such high quality research with the teaching practice in the same institutions and they call for the determination within universities to make the relationship between research and teaching. This is a useful recommendation for the ITT curriculum in providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers. Two researchers from Australian universities, Poole and Isaacs (1993: 279) point out that there may have been only one theory about gender issue that is liberal or liberal feminist in gender relationship. However, perhaps such theory has not been applied to the ITT because they confirm that in most of the cases, theory 'appeared to be marginalized and gender issues oversimplified' (Poole and Isaacs, 1993: 279).

As the result of the lack of theory, ITT programmes do not provide student teachers with the basic skills to tackle the educational discourse and thus, trainee teachers are not taught to draw upon theories of gender in their teaching practice which could lead to 'pose major problems to progressive goals of education' (Poole and Isaacs, 1993: 279). What happens in teaching practice is treated with anecdotal approach although staff insist that they give the priority to gender in their teaching (Poole and Isaacs, 1993: 278). The situation is similar in the US when a study about ITT reveals that there is not much work being done on the theory of gender in ITT with the statement that there is very little work that could help teacher educators in understanding the diversity in education (Bell, Horn and Roxas, 2007: 123). They emphasize the finding that trainee teachers, in fact, do depend on the

opportunities given by the institutions to learn (Bell, Horn and Roxas, 2007: 123). With such emphasis on opportunities, the researcher thinks that liberal theory might have worked in ITT in the USA but somehow it has not been applied officially into ITT programmes. In some developed countries, ITT seems to have been in the same situation since Poole and Isaacs (1993: 275)-from Australian universities, affirm that there is an absence of theoretical structure in ITT programmes or trainee teachers in Canada receive mixed and even inconsistent content about inclusivity (DeLuca, 2012: 560). Therefore, in England and some other developed countries, there has been a dislocation between research and practice and the lack of theories leading to teaching practice in ITT is revealed. This absence of theories in ITT curriculum about gender reinforces the unstable equipment of gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers, which relies on other influences from outside such as the government policy or local needs of higher education institutions. Besides the lack of theories, ITT has other obstacles such as staff and student barriers in promoting gender equality in the institutions.

It has been noted that lecturers and students have difficulties in teaching and learning gender issues in ITT programmes. In her research, Skelton (2007: 679) points out some anecdotal evidence from her colleagues in England about the limited time and the optional of courses or modules on gender equality in ITT programmes. For example, in the mid-1990s, staff received a one-hour talk which was followed by a discussion on gender but today this has been collapsed into one hour on 'social justice' (Skelton, 2007: 679). In Canada, gender is subsumed into 'social justice' and lecturers and students critique that they do not have enough time to absorb issues and that the learning could be lost amongst more practically based ITT experiences (DeLuca, 2012: 561). In Australia, research points out that lecturers do not see their students' interest in gender issues and students claim that they do not have time to reflect critically upon what they have learned (Poole and Isaacs, 1993: 282).

So, overall, there is a lack of linkage between research and practice on gender issues in England (Younger and Warrington, 2008). There is also a lack of theory in teaching in terms of gender equality at higher education institution in Australia (Poole and Isaacs, 1993). Both lecturers and students in some developed countries, including England, have some difficulties in teaching and learning gender equality in ITT programmes due to the short duration of the module relating to gender and the subsumption of gender into broader

subjects (Poole and Isaacs, 1993; Skelton, 2007; DeLuca, 2012). Consequently, strategies to improve knowledge of gender equality for trainee teachers are necessary.

2.5.4 Strategies to improve gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers

There are several pieces of research from developed countries like England, Australia or Canada and some developing countries, which recommend strategies to gain improvements in providing gender issues knowledge for students in ITT. Recommendations can be reviewed in three themes; they are the modules of gender equality in ITT, the content and knowledge about gender equality and the pedagogy in ITT environment.

2.5.4.1 Modules of gender equality in ITT

From the study in Mozambique, researchers suggest having modules that focus on gender equality for ITT programmes (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 53). The researcher agrees with this recommendation to give more concentration on modules of gender equality because from the review above we can see that the time and content of subjects for gender issues are not enough to give students the insightful awareness and knowledge of gender equality, which are very essential for them when teaching. A work based on Israeli ITT provision shows that the modules or courses in gender issues should be compulsory for all teacher students so that they can attain more in-depth knowledge (Tatar and Emmanuel, 2001: 223) rather than making them optional since it could lead to fewer choices on modules about gender equality. DeLuca analyses the process of ITT in Canada, the USA and the UK, which reveals that ITT programmes involves on-campus work and field-based experiences and ways to improve the inclusivity through ITT structures such as coursework, field-based experience and pedagogies (Hollins and Guzman, 2005 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553). Through coursework, the concepts of inclusivity can be addressed both by embedding such notions across all ITT courses (Darling-Hammond, 2002 and Irvine, 2003 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553) and creating explicit courses besides the core courses (Little and Barlett, 2010 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553). The solution of embedding gender into the curriculum has similar implication to the recommendation of Tatar and Emmanuel (2001) at providing gender equality knowledge for all trainee teachers regardless of what majors they are pursuing. Nevertheless, it can encounter the obstacle that Skelton (2007) has pointed out previously that due to the short

duration and lack of concentration, trainee teachers may not have in-depth knowledge on gender issues.

Separating gender equality is a practical method to help students concentrate on the subjects but if it is elective, students may not choose it. Therefore, a combination between the infused and separated approach would ensure that all trainee teachers are provided with inclusive issues and could enable those who are interested in the issues to have more specialised study (Kosnik and Beck, 2009 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553). In DeLuca's research (2012: 561), it shows that the coursework on gender equality has more advocates, particularly in the compulsory critical issues in education (seven hours) and social justice module (21 hours). They consist of lectures and seminars; however, they still get the critiques of short duration (DeLuca, 2012: 561). Thus, even in what appears to be best practice in relation to gender equality, the time constraints seem severe.

To sum up, there seems to be no doubt that there should be modules or courses about gender equality in ITT programmes (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 53). The researcher posits that a good solution would be to embed gender issues across the curriculum for ITT and there should be one or more explicit modules on gender equality which are compulsory for trainee teachers.

2.5.4.2 Knowledge and pedagogies in providing gender equality for trainee teachers

In their research in Mozambique, Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005: 47) show that the historical and geographical contexts have the major influence on gender issues in assisting or preventing the agenda for gender equality to develop. So, one of the attentions in the knowledge for ITT about gender issues should be the proper awareness about gender in the context of the country. It could be useful to have this attention because due to the different social-historical and geographical contexts, gender issues can be very different between countries. It is also suggested to accumulate the knowledge about gender-equitable pedagogies in schools and ITT programmes so that trainee teachers and lecturers can learn from the knowledge that they have been provided as well as the experience that they have had from their own teaching practice (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 50).

Turning back to the work of DeLuca (2012), it shows that there are five approaches to pedagogies, which could enhance the inclusivity in ITT. Pedagogies are important in ITT because 'in teacher education, the way you teach is the message' (Russell, 1997 cited in

DeLuca, 2012: 566), thus revealing the importance that modelling inclusivity should be reflected through the interactions and teaching (DeLuca, 2012).

We may see this as a crucial element in reflection on teaching because if lecturers do not practice what they teach trainee students, the knowledge that she or he has transferred can become worthless. Another pedagogical approach, which the researcher finds very valuable, is to learn through the environment (DeLuca, 2012: 562) within which staff should actively create inclusive learning environment and reflect it in all activities. This supports the work of Poole and Isaacs (1993: 275) in Australia that trainee teachers cannot be expected to stop reproducing patriarchal beliefs if they are taught in an environment that reproduces patriarchy. The third approach is critical self-reflection and class dialogue (DeLuca, 2012: 563). Critical self-reflection is said to be 'an initial strategy to begin group discussions linked to inclusivity', so is the class dialogue (DeLuca, 2012: 563). In the previous section about teaching pedagogies at schools, which strives to ensure gender equality in education group work was seen as important and here it is the connection between the self-reflection with such pedagogy that becomes the key to success. Nonetheless, we must note that there would be challenges in engaging in sensitive or difficult conversations because students may have different compassion and viewpoints (DeLuca, 2012). These approaches are applauded by the researcher since she shares an appreciation about focusing on reflection during teaching and classroom interactions. There are two other approaches recommended in the research, such as to increase diversity within the learning context and to learn through art (DeLuca, 2012) but this is not practical in the context of Vietnam since the learning context and art are not addressed in Vietnamese high schools (indeed art is not a subject) and thus there is no department or modules relating to art in universities of pedagogies in Vietnam.

2.5.5 Summary of curriculum for ITT about gender equality

Teachers play a key role in the understanding of students about gender equality (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 431), also, the awareness of teachers about gender equality is very important because it influences the participation of students in learning (Mlama et al., 2005: v) yet up till now trainee teachers are not well-equipped with knowledge of gender equality in ITT in England and some other countries. The curriculum for ITT in England is set out by ITT institutions individually to meet the national curriculum and QTS (Department for

Education, 2012). However, the reports of OFSTED and TDA in England are silent on gender issues in ITT programmes (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 432). Due to the subsumption of gender into the broader term as 'diversities' and the limited attention in the curriculum, it is suggested to re-activate the debates on gender equality in the curriculum of ITT in England (Younger and Warrington, 2008: 429). The situations are similar to developed countries such as Canada, Australia or developing countries such as Mozambique or Malaysia.

In Vietnam, the core curriculum of ITT is released by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET, 2013b) but the researcher finds no terms relating to 'genders' or 'gender equality' in it. Researchers try to explain the situation of gender issues in the ITT curriculum by pointing out the difficulties that ITT institutions as well as staff and students in England and some other countries encounter when teaching and learning (and practicing) gender equality. They are the lack of theories on gender issues in the curriculum for ITT (Poole and Isaacs, 1993), the limited time and the lack of modules or courses on gender equality (Skelton, 2007). From then, strategies to improve trainee teachers' knowledge on gender equality through ITT curriculum are recommended. They call for more attention to gender issue in the ITT curriculum to help students have a more in-depth knowledge on gender equality by embedding gender issues across the curriculum (Darling-Hammond 2002 and Irvine 2003 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553) and make some explicit modules on gender equality (Little and Barlett, 2010 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553). They also suggest that among the knowledge in the modules of gender issues, ITT institutions should notice the historical-geographical context of countries, which definitely has an impact on gender issues (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47). DeLuca (2012) recommends pedagogies such as the reflection of inclusive models, interactions and learning environments that might be very helpful in providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers.

Chapter 3
Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher will outline the nature of the research methodology and the research design for the study. She commences by discussing the main philosophical and theoretical principals that underpin her decisions about the research approach employed which are important as: 'research is a fluid construct that potential researchers need to grapple with' (O'Leary, 2010: 4). She then presents her research design including details about the procedures and strategies that were employed to carry out the study. Finally, she presents her research tools and discusses fundamental issues in relation to the research such as data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness and the potential problems arising from being an insider researcher.

3.1 Philosophical and theoretical principals

Firstly, the researcher wishes to offer a definition of social science and educational research. The term *'social science':*

> *...refers to the scientific study of human behaviour...If the aim of science is to build explanatory theory about its data, the aim of social science is to build explanatory theory about people and their behaviour.* (Punch, 2009: 9)

Throughout the study, the researcher was aware that she was conducting educational research, which was 'the collection and analysis of information on the world of education so as to understand and explain it better' (Opie, 2004a: 3). She was also aware that: 'we make sense of the world through the rules we are given to interpret it but because we are immersed in these rules and surrounded by them, they can be very hard to see' (O'Leary, 2010: 30). Thus, in order to avoid: 'the trap of judging the reality of others' in relation to her own perspective, she took the subjectivities involved in the research process into account and tried to work actively 'towards the criteria of neutrality' (O'Leary, 2010: 31).

Moreover, the researcher was aware that she came from an Oriental/ East Asian country with her own experience as a high school teacher trying to do research on promoting gender

equality in education. She also understood that what she was seeking came from the broader social context of Vietnam and that it was certainly affected by the 'politics and power relations' within that country (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001: 15).

Secondly, the researcher considered the epistemology for her study since everybody who did research bore in mind the importance of epistemology because it influenced the choice of research methodology (Gray, 2009). Bryman thinks that: 'an epistemology issue concerns the question of what is regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline' (Bryman, 2012: 27). Therefore, epistemology provides 'the philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate' (Gray, 2009: 17). More specifically, Easterby-Smith et al. claim that with the right awareness about research philosophy, researchers can see what design is most suitable with their research topics (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002 cited in Gray, 2009: 18). The philosophical underpinnings of this study were based on assumptions about the gendered nature of education in Vietnam which gave rise to considerations about how to analyse such an issue in order to give the recommendations to the government of that country in order to promote greater gender equality. The epistemology of this study was therefore based on a form of constructivism, which sees that:

> *…truth and meaning do not exist in some external world, but are created by the subject's interaction with the world…so subjects construct their own meaning in different ways.* (Gray, 2009: 18)

Two further major theoretical perspectives that drove research were positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2012). They: 'represent opposing worldviews with regard to the way in which reality is understood (ontology) and the production of knowledge (epistemology) is perceived' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 60). According to Gray, positivism:

> *…is a philosophical assumption that the purpose of theory is application and that the truth can be distinguished from untruth, and that the truth can be determined by either deduction or by empirical support.* (2009: 579)

Interpretivism seeks for 'culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world' (Crotty, 1998 cited in Gray, 2009: 21). In addition, interpretivism is a theoretical perspective that is linked to constructivism (Gray, 2009: 21). From such considerations, the researcher decided that her research paradigm was interpretive or, put simply, that was to explain and interpret (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008). In order to carry out such interpretation the research approach was qualitative which, the researcher notes, 'is empirical research where the data is not in the form of numbers' Punch (2009: 3) or, put in another way:

> ...the word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 14)

Thus, 'qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data' (Bryman, 2012: 380). Based on the topic, purpose and research questions (Silverman, 2006), the researcher asserted that her research approach was appropriate for the study she had undertaken in that a qualitative approach provided the necessary depth of analysis of social context to address the issues under scrutiny. She also indicated her standpoint as a feminist who sought for 'collaborative and non-exploitative relationships, to place the researcher within the study…' (Creswell, 2013: 29).

In order to investigate the issue of gender equality in high schools in Vietnam and then to make recommendations for the Vietnamese government to promote gender equality in education, the researcher initially identified five themes within the topic based on her main interest in the topic, previous research and the literature. From such themes, she continued to set up five research questions and we should note that: 'The way a question is asked has implications for what needs to be done, in research, to answer it' (Punch, 2009: 25). Punch also gives a hint to fit the questions with the methods in order to:

...ensure that the methods we use follow from the questions we seek to answer. In other words, the content of the research questions has a logical priority over the method of the research. (Punch, 2009: 927)

In this way, the research questions were useful in structuring both the literature review and the discussion of the findings. The five research questions have been presented in the introductory chapter but the main purposes of these questions are outlined below:

- To explore the main theories about gender equality in education in two countries
- To identify the main attitudes to gender equality among educators in two countries
- To investigate the influence of government policy and curriculum in increasing the gender equality in Vietnamese high schools
- To point out changes that are necessary to promote gender equality in education in Vietnam
- To set out strategies to improve the knowledge of ITT about gender equality in high schools in Vietnam.

In order to address these questions, the researcher followed the process as shown in the figure below.

Figure 3.1 Process of constructing the research (adapted from Gray, 2009: 17)

Epistemology: *Constructivism*

Theoretical perspective: *Interpretivism*

Research approach: *Qualitative*

(grounded theory, cross-cultural study, narrative)

Data collection method: *qualitative interviews*
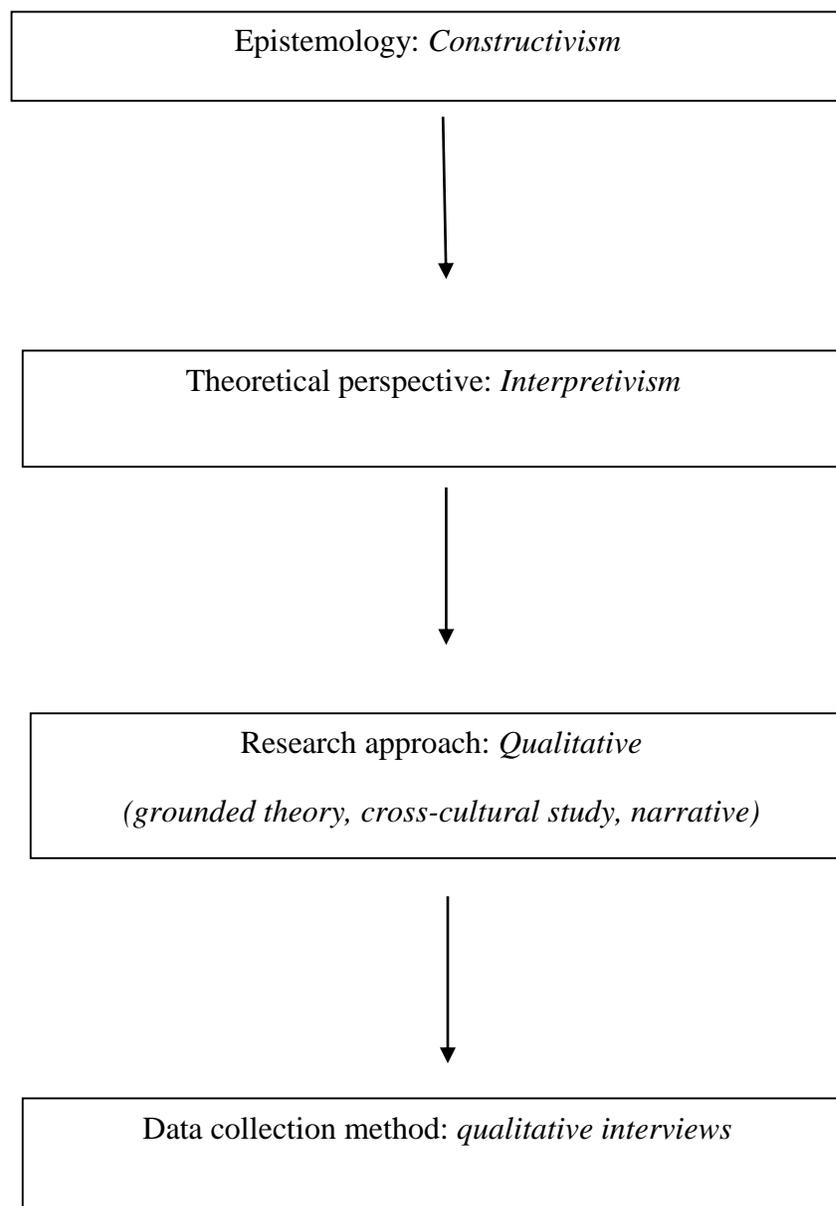
3.2 Methods

As noted earlier, the qualitative approach was chosen for this study. In adopting a qualitative approach for her research the researcher understood that:

> *...we should never assume that qualitative methods are intrinsically superior. Indeed, a quantitative approach may sometimes be more appropriate to the research problem in which we are interested. So, in choosing a method, everything depends upon what we are trying to find out.* (Silverman, 2005: 6)

The reason for the choice of this approach was that it was useful in analysing complex 'phenomena such as feelings, thought process and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn through more conventional research method' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 11). The research is social research, and this approach can provide rich data based on human interaction, and the researcher wanted to ask complex questions about gender. Moreover, the qualitative approach pursues the 'answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 14). Theories, which came from the data, 'are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 12). In addition to this, the application of a qualitative approach can be a great strength of the research because of 'its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere' (Silverman, 2006: 43). The purpose and characteristics of qualitative approach were thus deemed a good fit with the title and purpose of this study.

3.2.1 Grounded theory

The researcher noted that grounded theory has been used very widely, it was also said to be 'the most widely used' in qualitative research (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007a:1). This included the use of it in feminist research (Olesen, 2007:422) and educational research (Creswell, 2012). The extensive application of grounded theory in feminist research came from the ability to scrutinise social issues effectively (Olesen, 2007:429).

There are different types of designs in grounded theory including the systematic procedure raised by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the emergence of data on which Glasser focused (1992)

and the 'subjective meanings by participants, explicit researcher values and beliefs, and suggestive or tentative conclusions' on which Charmaz relied in her research in 2000 (Creswell, 2012:443). But in general, grounded theory is a 'theory that resulted from the use of GTM (grounded theory method)' (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007a:3)

This method flourished because it was useful in many ways. For example, it helped researchers to construct the theory which was 'grounded in the data themselves' (Charmaz, 2006:2) by providing flexible guidelines during gathering and analysing data (Charmaz, 2006). Data gathering and analysis were gathered simultaneously, therefore researchers could interact with their data consistently but at the same time kept 'involved with their emerging analyses' (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007a:1). When gathering data, Charmaz (2006:72) advises grounded theorists to take notes, because 'memos catch your thought, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue'. Bearing this in mind, the researcher wrote memos as soon as she finished each interview as well as during the time she transcribed them. She came back to her memo writing when she coded, categorised and analysed data.

The research used grounded theory for this study for several reasons. Firstly, it was because of the flexibility of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006:178). This study did not use grounded theory fully, rather, it used only one element of grounded theory that was to allow themes to emerge and the theory to develop. Furthermore, the researcher was aware that Charmaz (2006:2) once suggested the constructivist grounded theorist to 'locate themselves within the inquiry' rather than remaining neutral and considered the use of the first person, however, as she came from the Southeast Asia country, she found more confidence in presenting the research as the third person. Consequently, 'the researcher' was used in this thesis instead of 'I'. Secondly, the congeniality of constructivist grounded theory allowed the researcher to combine one element of grounded theory with narrative analysis (Charmaz, 2006) which she 'restoried' (Mertler and Charles, 2011:216) later. Lastly, as Bryant and Charmaz (2007b:49) stated, one of the benefits of grounded theory method was that it fulfilled 'a need to justify qualitative approaches'. Obviously, this study is a qualitative research.

3.2.2 Cross-cultural study

The research involved in this study was cross-cultural in nature which is an approach that has been used widely in investigating gender issues as evidenced by the edited text produced by Williams and Best (1990), Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Multination Study. Such research 'entails the collection and/or analysis data from two or more nations' (Bryman, 2012:73) and, in this case, the researcher collected data in both Vietnam and England. In carrying out the work the researcher was aware that cross-cultural research contains challenges relating to ethical issues (Ryen, 2011:428-442), translation (Choi et al., 2012:652), and respect for cultural sensitivities (Liamputtong, 2008:5).

According to Liamputtong (2008:5), when one is conducting this type of research, the researcher should have some understanding about the cultural practices of participants. For example, in Vietnam, people rarely use the word 'please' with younger ones since this would be considered too formal and inappropriate. However, in England, 'please' is used very commonly regardless of the age of the speaker. To minimise these disparities and to ensure the use of ethical processes, the interview schedules were checked carefully by the project supervisors, both of whom were English, and scrutinised by the Research Ethics Committee of Liverpool John Moores University before being used in fieldwork. Moreover, Liamputtong (2008:5) also warned that conducting cross-cultural research may take longer because of the difficulties that are often experienced in approaching participants in order to gain an appropriate sample. This was the case with the research project reported since accessing participants in Vietnam proved to be comparatively easy and swift, getting the consent of gatekeepers in England took much more time. Indeed, it is notable that the researcher waited for three months from her first visit before receiving consent from the gatekeeper of the high school in England which took part in the study and it took yet another three months to accomplish the first interview.

Another thing that the researcher had to bear in mind was the issue of translation since theorists such as Choi et al (2012) warn that this can be a challenge. For example, some words and types of question employed by the researcher worked well in English but they did not make sense in Vietnamese language. Similarly, this cross-cultural research brought the researcher difficulties when transcribing English interviews and in understanding the meaning of expressions and words which might hold embedded layers of meaning. Equally,

there were some sayings in the Vietnamese language which could not be translated word by word into English and they were translated in a way that they had been implied.

However, cross-culture can bring research interesting findings. As Bryman demonstrated, 'cross-cultural research helps to reduce the risk of failing to appreciate that social science findings are often, if not invariably, culturally specific' (Bryman, 2012:74). For instance, this research found that despite the more advanced policies operant in England, there is still a need to develop gender equality further.

3.2.3. Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry has been used quite widely in social research, including feminist research (Chase, 2008:57). In short, 'narrative inquiry is stories lived and told' (Clandinin and Connelly, 200:20). It was noted that one of the main aims of the study was to find out and understand the attitudes and experience of participants relating to gender issues in education, thus, narrative is an appropriate approach. It is also useful to 'express emotions, thoughts, and interpretations' (Chase, 2008:65) because the main aim of narrative research was to 'explain the multiple layers of context and experience that define us as human beings' (Mertler and Charles, 2011:217). Furthermore, for educational researchers, 'experience is a key term. Education and educational studies are a form of experience. For us, narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:18).

This research employed narrative analysis. According to Gill and Goodson (2011:18), 'the purpose of narrative analysis is to unfold the ways individuals make sense of their lived experience and how its' telling enables them to interpret the social world and their agency with it'. The research organised the data for thematic patterns and re-wrote the 'stories' (Mertler and Charles, 2011:216). However, we should note that, narrative analysis did not cover all the events, rather, it focused on selective themes which the researcher wishes to use (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011:553). The researcher chose themes which fit well with the research questions and interesting themes which emerged from data to analyse. She tried to interpret the meaning or any metaphor of data using her voice as a Southeast Asia woman teacher doing a research in education in the context of Vietnam and England. She felt it good to use the third person although 'narrative researchers are likely to use the third

person in presenting their work, thereby emphasizing their own narrative action' (Chase, 2008:66).

3.3 Tools

As the researcher wished to examine the attitudes of staff about gender issues, she chose semi-structured interviews for data collection. Silverman noted that interviews were used widely in published qualitative research articles (Silverman, 2005: 238-239). Moreover, Gray (2004: 214) stated that interviews might be the best approach for the investigation of attitudes and the exploratory research. Specifically, the researcher was able to 'press not only for complex answers but for responses about complex and deep issues' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011: 409). Interviews were suitable for this study for another reason that was the small population, not like a questionnaire:

> *...questionnaires are more suitable for larger population, which are being asked to respond in short and simplified ways. Whereas, interviews, due to the logistical constraints, are really only appropriate for small populations but do, given the interactive nature, allow for a richer and more probing question format.* (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 80)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted thanks to the flexibility and opportunities for respondents to expand on their answers (Opie, 2004b: 118). The researcher desired to interact with respondents in order to encourage them to deepen their attitudes and oriented the interview to the purpose of her study. In this case, semi-structured interviews gave her chance to probe respondents further about their views and, if the interviewees stated something new, the researcher asked additional questions (Gray, 2004). The researcher carefully identified main questions focusing on themes of her study (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008). She then set out the interview schedules for staff in Vietnam and in England and students in Vietnam. The same issues were addressed in the semi-structured interview schedules in the two countries but the two schedules contained some differences in detail because of the difference in school systems and stage of gender equality development between England and Vietnam. In each country, the interview schedules were designed with slight differences for students (in Vietnam) and staff in schools and those in the university.

In addition, questions were slightly different for different people because of the need to take account of the roles of respondents in the institutions where they worked. However, such differences were quite small.

3.4 Sample

A sample is 'a set of objects, occurrences or individuals selected from a parent population for a research study' (Gray, 2009: 581). A carefully selected sample was constructed according to key criteria so that the sample represented a cross-section of teachers in the schools under scrutiny. Purposive sampling was employed since the focus was on only two schools, as Silverman states: 'Many qualitative researchers use purposive sampling to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which they are interested' (Silverman, 2010: 193).

Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008: 47) suggest that: 'the researcher uses her own judgement in the selection of participants in relation to certain characteristics or traits'. In response to this exhortation, the researcher used her knowledge and experience as a high school teacher in Vietnam to choose respondents to 'sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed' (Bryman, 2012: 418). Interviewees were people who related closely to the topic of the research and they were chosen carefully in the population and thus, '…informants are therefore identified because they were known to enable the exploration of a particular behaviour or characteristic relevant to the research' (Gray, 2009: 180).

As noted earlier, in Vietnam, staff in two high schools and one university were interviewed. These two high schools were in different locations, and were of different sizes and characteristics (Silverman, 2006). The main sample consisted of:

- Two Head teachers and two Deputy Head teachers of two high schools in Vietnam.
- Eight teachers from each school drawn from different subject areas. Ten of them were men and six were women. Among them, six teachers had more than fifteen years experience of teaching, six teachers had six to fourteen years experience of teaching, and four had less than five years experience as teachers.
- The vice principal who was in charge of curriculum, the course leader for high school teachers, and two lecturers at a university of pedagogy.

Vietnamese high schools are for students from grade 10, 11 and 12 (sixteen, seventeen and eighteen years old). Students study the curriculum released by the Ministry of Education and Training, and all 13 subjects on that curriculum are compulsory (MOET, 2009). After graduating from high schools, students take the university or college entrance examination which includes different categories such as A (mathematics, physics, chemistry), B (mathematics, chemistry and biology), C (literature, history and geography), H, M, etc. (MOET, 2012).

Although the focus for the study was in Vietnam, the author wished to include a comparative element with England. However, she chose not to replicate fully what she did in Vietnam but rather adopted some elements of the approach used in Vietnam. In total, she interviewed four teachers in a secondary school in the North West of England, which was a smaller number than the number of teachers whom she interviewed in each high school in Vietnam. There were some elements of replication since the respondents included a Head teacher assistant, Deputy Head teacher, one teacher who had more than six to fourteen years experience and one teacher who had one year of experience of teaching. At a university in England, the researcher interviewed a lecturer and a course leader who were in charge of teacher training and therefore held equivalent roles to the respondents in the university of pedagogy in Vietnam.

The total number of people interviewed in the sample was thirty, the detail of which is shown in the figure below.

Figure 3.4 Matrix of sample

Issues	First high school in Vietnam	Second high school in Vietnam	High school in England
Head teacher	1	1	1
Deputy Head teacher	1	1	1
15^+ year experience teacher	2 males	2 males	
	1 female	1 female	
6-14 year experience teacher	2 males	2 males	
	1 female	1 female	1
1-5 year experience class teacher	1 male	1 male	
	1 female	1 female	1 female
Total	**10**	**10**	**4**

Issues	University of Pedagogy in Vietnam	University in England
Vice principal	1	
Course leader	1	1
Lecturer	2	1
Total	**4**	**2**

In addition, the researcher carried out four group interviews with Vietnamese students including:

- one all-boys group (eight boys) and one all-girls group (three girls) at the first high school;
- one larger group of mixed-students (four boys and three girls); and,
- one smaller group of mixed-students (one boy and two girls) at the second high school in Vietnam.

These groups were deliberately designed to comprise different numbers of respondents. In the first high school, she interviewed two groups of students whom she had taught before she moved to England so they knew each other. By the time of the interviews these respondents were in their last grade of high school system. The researcher asked specifically if any boys would like to take part and eight boys volunteered for the discussion. By contrast, in recruiting girls from the same class, the researcher stated that she would like to interview a small group of girls because she understood that girls might be shy to speak out in big group. Students then discussed with their friends and informed her the date, time and name of participants. The girls' group included three girls who were friends with each other. The interviews were highly productive and it was evident that all students were happy to take part.

It was notable that the researcher did not obtain the informed consent from students and parents that took part in the group interviews. In fact, she received the permission from the head teachers to approach his colleagues and students. In Vietnam, this was considered sufficient. The action of contacting parents about the research might actually considered not only unnecessary but might be seen as inappropriate by the head.

In the second high school, the researcher interviewed two groups of students. Since she graduated from this school long before the research took place, she did not know any of the students. However, she had a chance to become somewhat familiar with some of the students whilst observing them a couple of days before the interviews commenced. These students agreed to ask their close friends with whom they felt comfortable to discuss the research topic. This group included one boy and two girls from two different classes. A further group was a mixed group, which included four boys and four girls. On the occasion of this round of data gathering the researcher waited in the school without contact with the students since they were subject to tests on that day. Those students who completed their tests early were allowed to proceed to the lounge to wait for their parents, at which point the researcher approached them and asked if they would agree to take part in the research

and they readily agreed to do so. This is another example of cultural differences that had to be respected in order to carry out the research. This interview thus took place in the school lounge and lasted for approximately half an hour without any disruptions. This group interview included boys and girls who were from different classes but who knew each other. On this occasion the researcher did not ask for their names because in the Vietnamese culture of schooling, students of this age are referred to according to the hierarchy of their ages. Thus, the students referred to the researcher as 'miss', whilst she called them 'students', which, in the Vietnamese language, is translated as 'co' and 'em'. Once again, these respondents shared their opinions very openly.

3.5 Trustworthiness

As noted earlier in this chapter, the work undertaken was qualitative and it is therefore the case that 'generalizability' is 'the wrong word to describe' what was attempted since this is not what we set out to achieve in qualitative research (Alasuutari, 1995 cited in Silverman, 2010: 150). However, the researcher wishes to argue that the study explored something interesting surrounding the topic of gender and the researcher produced recommendations which might be helpful to Vietnamese high schools, Vietnamese government and to the wider academic community and which will be discussed in the final chapter of this document.

Validity and reliability are terms relating to the quality or the 'goodness' of the research (Scaife, 2004: 58). Gray notes that: 'Validity means that an instrument must measure what it was intended to measure' (Gray, 2004: 219), whilst Silverman thought: 'Validity is another word for truth' (Silverman, 2010: 275). Meanwhile, Scaife uses the word 'reliability' to describe the extent to which a data-gathering process produced similar results in similar conditions (Scaife, 2004: 68). However, 'reliability is particularly at issues in connection with quantitative research' (Bryman, 2012: 46). Thus, these terms are most commonly employed in quantitative research but they have some relevance to qualitative research in that we still need to ensure the quality of the approach used.

An alternative approach, perhaps better suited to qualitative research, is trustworthiness, which reflects the honesty of the research process (Shenton, 2004). Four criteria that might address trustworthiness are 'credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability' (Guba, 1981 cited in Shenton 2004: 73). In order to meet these requirements, the work tried

to employ the appropriate research method, along with an element of triangulation, to ensure authenticity: 'Triangulation refers to attempt to get a true fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings' (Silverman, 2010: 277)

The researcher applied an element of triangulation to enhance the validity of the data by conducting interviews with various respondents at various levels of the education system. In Vietnam, she interviewed class teachers, head teachers, deputy-head teachers and students at high schools and staff at managerial positions and lecturers at one university of pedagogy. Responses collected revealed interesting reflections on the same issues. For instance, in discussing the teaching pedagogies of teachers in terms of gender, managers in schools and teachers stated that teachers treated boys and girls in an equal way, however, responses from students revealed that teachers gave more attention to boys in natural science subjects and to girls in social science subjects. More interestingly, staff in managerial positions espoused the national policy regarding gender equality in education whilst teachers did not acknowledge any such focus in practice.

The researcher also believed that she would have better triangulation if some observations were made but since she was an insider-researcher, this procedure did not work effectively. This was because it was incompatible with the professional culture in the two schools where the research took place. As she was an insider, she understood this very well. The situation was different in England since the researcher was an outsider to the institution, but unfortunately, because of limited availability and accessibility, she could not carry out this approach, and instead she interviewed teachers and managers in a high school and a course leader and a lecturer at a university. Data was then compared and contrasted with the literature review (Miles and Huberman, 1994) to enable the final findings. In the semi-structured interviews, the contents of questions concentrated on the research questions; the sample was chosen purposively; and the length of interviews were designed to be sufficient to gain in-depth data and to make the interviewees feel free to express their views. The researcher interviewed different people at different positions of schools and universities. The results provided a richness of detail which subsequent work could then use to compare or to repeat.

3.6 Ethics

Ethics are 'the principles and guidelines that help us uphold the things we value' (Johnson and Christensen, 2012: 99). The researcher understood that her study gathered data from people (Punch, 2009: 49) and she noted that Cohen, Manion and Morrison wrote:

> *Whatever the specific nature of their work, social researchers must take into account effects of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings: this is their responsibility to participants. Such is ethical behaviour.* (2011: 84)

In order to address this responsibility, the researcher followed the Liverpool John Moores University process of ethics. All the research tools were submitted to the Research Committee and the researcher gained Ethical Approval in April 2012. All the participants had a 'full understanding of the research purpose, the activities in which they involve, any potential risk involved and what will happen to the data in terms with regard to publication' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 52). Before interviewing, the researcher had sent out gatekeeper consent forms, participant information sheets and the consent form to schools so that all the participants were aware of their rights and they entirely volunteered for participation (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 52). The names of respondents were anonymised and data was stored in a computer at Liverpool John Moores University and only the researcher and her two supervisors could access the data.

Moreover, since 'ethical issues are involved in academic writing, and acknowledging the work of others is part of academic honesty and integrity' (Punch, 2006: 57), the researcher followed the Harvard referencing and did her work with ethical awareness in mind.

3.7 Pilot study and main study

The pilot study aimed to try out the research tools and develop initial findings that would inform the design of the final study. Silverman (2010: 197) advised that: '...it is often sensible to try out different styles of questioning prior to your main study. This kind of piloting is a feature of most kinds of good research'. The pilot study was carried out in Vietnam in summer 2012. It was useful for the main study in developing the interview schedules, language translation, participants and literature review.

The pilot study was very useful for the main study in terms of developing the questions in the interview schedules for Vietnamese participants. The most important thing noted was the recognition of the disparities in the way Vietnamese respondents understood the questions, which were originally devised in the English language. All the questions were translated into the Vietnamese language; however, some of them were ambiguous when used with Vietnamese people. For instance, questions starting by 'to what extent' were not used in Vietnamese language and participants in the pilot study did not understand. Such questions were never asked in the Vietnam context because they did not generate a clear Yes or No answer. This revealed a challenge in cross-cultural research but at the same time, it showed how useful the pilot study was in informing the researcher about language disparities for the main study. One more useful hint learned from the pilot study was the technique to enhance the reliability of the data collected. The researcher encouraged the interviewees to tell their stories in an honest way but from the responses of the pilot study, she perceived that some interviewees tried to give 'good answers' which they thought that the research might expect to receive, rather than what they might really believe. As a consequence of this, in the later interviews, she emphasized the importance of the contribution of 'true stories' to her research as well as the guarantee of confidentiality (Bell, 2010). From the pilot study, the researcher developed her skills to build a rapport with participants more quickly and to re-arrange the questions in order to make the interviews run smoothly.

The pilot study revealed that it would give a better picture of gender equality in education in Vietnam if the researcher explored the opinions of high school students about this topic. Hence, in the main study, she carried out group interviews with Vietnamese students which provided very interesting responses and they proved a valuable contribution to the study.

The issues that emerged from pilot study also informed the researcher about one theme which she felt should be reviewed in the literature, which was the influence of families on gender equality in Vietnam. This literature theme was then found to be especially appropriate and relevant to the responses of the Vietnamese participants.

The main study was carried out after Research Degrees Committee of Liverpool John Moores University had approved the researcher for the transfer of registration to PhD. The researcher developed her study based on the rest of the sample and literature review.

3.8 Collection of data

Data collected for the study was divided into two phases including a pilot phase and a phase which comprised the main data collection. These two phases are outlined below.

The first phase was the pilot study which took place during the MPhil phase of the degree programme. The pilot study was designed to try out the research tools and to develop initial findings that would inform the design of the final study since, as Silverman (2010: 197) advised: '...it is often sensible to try out different style of questioning prior to your main study. This kind of piloting is a feature of most kinds of good research'.

The researcher developed a sub-sample that was representative of the different groups involved in the study which consisted of:

- a male lecturer in a university of pedagogy in Vietnam;
- a female deputy head teacher, a highly experienced male teacher; and,
- a male middle leader and a female newly qualified teacher in a high school in Vietnam.

Interviews were carried out in the offices of the respondents in Vietnam in June 2012 after the researcher completed the registration procedures at Liverpool John Moores University and had received Ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee. Each interview lasted for approximately an hour. The researcher recorded the interviews and then transcribed them prior to sending them back to the respondents for comment.

The second phase comprised the main study and was carried out after the researcher had gained approval for the transfer of registration to PhD by the Research Degrees Committee of Liverpool John Moores University. The researcher developed her study based on the literature review and the findings from the initial phase of the work. Data was gathered in Vietnam and England and each interview lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. All individual recording interviews were transcribed and checked by participants before being analysed in England.

Data was gathered in Vietnam in three months, from December 2012 till March 2013. Interview schedules were amended slightly to fit with the language and culture of Vietnamese people. During this time, the researcher carried out interviews with participants in two different cities in Vietnam. The sample consisted of:

- a vice principal, a course leader and a lecturer at a university;

- two head teachers, one deputy head teacher; and
- 13 teachers at different years of experience in teaching;
- four groups of high school students.

It should be noted that it was comparatively easy to gain access to respondents in Vietnam in order to collect data. Indeed, after discussing and providing the consent form, a recruitment letter and participant information sheet for managers and participants, the researcher commenced carrying out interviews in the same week. She also received welcome and significant support in terms of being provided with venues and time to undertake the interviews by schools and the university.

Data was gathered in England in April and May 2013. The researcher's second supervisor assisted by taking her to a girls' high school but it was subsequently decided to collect data in a mixed-sex high school in order to have a greater relevance and comparability to the sample in Vietnam. Thus, the researcher visited a mixed high school in the local area. The request for the visit was submitted very well in advance because the researcher was warned that it would take time to gain access to schools in England. In fact, this process took six months from the researcher's first visit to the high school in England until she interviewed the first teacher in the school. One of the reasons given for the postponement was an OFSTED inspection in the school in April and the subsequent school development that was required after such a visit. Indeed, the researcher could not interview the head teacher of the school since she was initially unavailable and the assistant head teacher subsequently replaced her. By contrast, the interviews with staff at the university in England were carried out without any delays.

The reason of dividing the collection of data into two phases was because the pilot study aimed to test out the research tools and the initial findings informed the development of the main study. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted thanks to the flexibility and opportunities to expand the opinions of participants (Opie, 2004b:118). Furthermore, the researcher desired to interact with participants in order to encourage them to deepen their attitudes and orient the interviews to the purpose of her study. In this case, semi-structured interviews gave her chance to probe participants further about their views and, if they stated something new, the researcher asked additional questions (Gray, 2004).

3.9 Data analysis

The researcher used the 'atomistic' approach which meant 'data presentation and analysis are separated' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 144). The researcher admitted that: 'there is no single right way to do qualitative data analysis-no single methodological framework. Much depends on the purposes of the research…' (Punch, 2009: 176). As noted earlier, she adopted elements of several different approaches to this research, they were elements of grounded theory, cross-cultural study and she applied a mixed method of data analysis. She outlines the data analysis and data representation process in the figure below.

Figure 3.9 Data representation and data analysis process (adapted from Creswell, 2013: 190-191)

Data organization

- Create and organize files for data

↓

Reading and Memoing

- Read through the text, make margin notes, form initial codes

↓

Describing the data into codes and themes

- Describe the case and its context
- Describe and open coding categories

↓

Clarifying the data into codes and themes

- Use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns

↓

Interpreting data

- Interpret the larger meaning of the 'story'
- Engage in selective coding and interrelate the categories to develop a 'story' or proposition

↓

Presenting data

- Present a theory
- Present narration focusing on theories and unique and general features of the life
- Present in-depth picture of the case using narrative

The interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the interviewees and subsequently transcribed (Opie, 2004b: 120). The researcher gave the transcripts back for the interviewees to check and made any changes according to the interviewees' feedback. In the next stage, the researcher organised the data by 'looking for key, essential, striking, odd, interesting things people say or repeat' (Silverman, 2010: 277). She made notes, coded and put them in different files (Creswell, 2013). Coding was 'the process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of data…The point of assigning labels is to attach meaning to the pieces of data which can be stored or retrieved' (Punch, 2009: 176). It was also used 'as a shorthand to identify the data and allocate them to a system of categories and sub-categories' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 164). After that, the researcher read the whole of the data to check the codes to see if the process had been carried out systematically (Silverman, 2010). Her next step was to 'assign codes to the main themes' (Kumar, 2011: 278). She put the codes into a matrix, which was 'a chart used to condense qualitative data into simple categories and provide a multidimensional summary that will facilitate subsequence, more intensive analysis' (Check and Schutt, 2012: 304). During that process, she tried to reflect on what she had done and checked if ideas which she collected for each theme were coherent and 'try to look for links, patterns, associations, arrangements, relationships, sequences, et cetera' (Silverman, 2010: 278). Whilst doing this, the researcher focused on 'specific issues and to discard some ideas as no longer central' to her argument. (Silverman, 2010: 284). The researcher also developed main themes and sub-themes as well as their interrelations and consequences. From the main themes, she identified theme that was the 'central phenomenon' (Creswell, 2013: 196) and went back to the sub-themes which related or explained the central phenomenon. 'Information from this coding phase are then organized into a figure, a coding paradigm that presents a theoretical model of the process under study. In this way, the theory is built or generated' (Creswell, 2013: 196). Strauss and Corbin (1998) call these steps as open coding, axial coding and selective coding. As such, the researcher interpreted the data in the context of the participants and developed a story. The researcher clustered ideas before comparing and contrasting (Miles and Huberman, 1994) with those found in the literature. Silverman saw that: 'analysis, in some ways, about enacting a professional vision that focuses on 'similarity and difference'' (Silverman, 2010: 287). Finally, she integrated them into her text with interpretations adopted from of narrative and grounded theory basic (Kumar, 2011).

3.10 The researcher as insider researcher

The researcher was an insider researcher and she was aware of the advantages and disadvantages that the insider researcher worked under, and she sought to ameliorate some of the problems that could be associated with this situation.

Insider research is viewed 'as any research undertaken with research 'subjects' with whom the researcher has a pre-existing or ongoing professional or personal relationship' (IASREC, 2009: 1). The insider is 'someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives her a lived familiarity with the group being researched' (Griffith, 1998 cited in Mercer, 2007: 3).

The researcher had been the subject leader for geography at the first high school in Vietnam before she came to England for her study. In addition, she was a high school student at the second high school. Therefore, she was the insider researcher in the case of the two high schools and the university in Vietnam.

Bell (2010) reveals some advantages of the insider researcher and the researcher realized that she should have an 'intimate knowledge of the context of the research' (p.55). For instance, the researcher knew what approach was best for each participant. Moreover, some participants were colleagues of the researcher and thus they knew that she understood their circumstances so they welcomed her analysis of their situations. In addition, she could 'enable them to engage in critical reflection about issues related to their own…' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 126). However, we must note that some commentators suggest that researchers in these circumstances may find it difficult to maintain objectivity since there is a close relationship with the institutions involved (Bell, 2010). Notably, the researcher discovered in the pilot study that, in some cases, the participants tried to give answers that they believed the researcher needed instead of saying what they might actually have thought. There is also the danger that the researcher and the participants may feel uncomfortable during the interviews (Bell, 2010) but this was not found to be the case in the study reported here.

Finally, such research could be 'problematic and raise issues of the balance of power, ownership and voice, anonymity and confidentiality and informed consent' (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2008: 52). To ameliorate such a disadvantageous situation, the researcher followed the consent procedure of Liverpool John Moores University and she

sent a participant information sheet and consent form to the institutions and participants in advance. Before interviewing, she reassured participants about confidentiality (Bell, 2010), emphasized the importance of their contributions to her study by being truthful, she promised to give respondents the transcripts to check before she used them for her study, and informed them about the potential benefit of their participation to the institution as well as to the researcher (Bell, 2010). With such actions, the researcher believed she minimized the drawbacks and maximized the advantages of being an insider researcher.

At the same time, she was an outsider to the high school in England. This prevented her from suffering the disadvantages of an insider researcher but it raised some difficulties during the gathering of data. The first issue was the length of time (six months) which she had to wait for an email from the school to confirm the dates when she could revisit to interview staff. The second was the way in which participants responded to her questions during the interviews since some responses were rather short and uninformative. For instance, one of the teachers kept saying 'I don't know' rather expressing her opinions. This revealed that that participant was not very open to discussing her views and it was necessary to probe further if the researcher was to gain usable data, which only came once she had been able to build a rapport among them.

3.11 Conclusion

As her study was a social educational research, which related to the human interaction about gender, the researcher applied the qualitative approach with the combination of grounded theory, cross-cultural study and narrative analysis and the main research tool was semi-structured interviews. In this way, the researcher adopted the most suitable research method, tools, sample, data collecting and analysing method for her study. As she wished to build a theory of gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools, she needed to adopt an element of grounded theory. To support this grounded theory approach in data analysis, she also employed some elements of narrative analysis. In addition, as this research was carried out in two nations, it was a cross-cultural study in nature.

Interviews were the main research tools used to collect data and 'one major advantage of the interview is its adaptability' (Bell, 2010: 161). The researcher chose semi-structured interview since it was flexible, it gave her have opportunity to probe and explore in-depth data (Opie, 2004b: 118) from participants and the sample was selected to offer a cross-

section of the population. Interviewees were people who related closely to the research topic.

Ethical approval for research was gained from Liverpool John Moores University and the researcher followed the university's process of ethics carefully. She also carried out the pilot study to try out the research tools before conducting the main study. In each interview, she recorded the respondents' words digitally with the permission of participants (Opie, 2004b: 116) and then gave them back the transcripts to check before coding, comparing, contrasting (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and analysing them in an appropriate process. At last, she integrated them into her text (Kumar, 2011).

The researcher was aware of the trustworthiness of her study, which reflected the honesty of the research process. In addition, she was aware that she was an insider researcher and that this brought both the advantages and disadvantages. In order to address these challenges she set out ways to use the advantages and minimize the drawbacks of being an insider researcher.

To conclude, it was felt that research on gender in education was best explored using the qualitative research approach and the main research tools were semi-structured interviews. The researcher chose the sample purposively to be representative of a cross-section of the population under scrutiny. The sample, and data collection and analysis processes were considered carefully to ensure the quality and rigour of the study and actions were taken to address the issue of insider research.

Chapter 4

Data presentation

In this chapter, the researcher presents data which was collected for the PhD thesis in Vietnam and in England in 2013. The section is divided into two parts, according to different respondents and locations. The first part is data collected from interviews with staff in two high schools and three respondents in a university of pedagogy and students from two high schools above in Vietnam. Data from staff was collected by individual interviews. Data from students was collected by group interviews including the big mixed group, small mixed group, big male group and small female group. The second part is data which the researcher collected from individual interviews from staff in a high school and staff in a university in England. The identities of respondents have been kept anonymous and a code has been used to indicate their roles, which can be cross-checked against the table in the appendix.

4.1 Data from respondents in Vietnam

Data collected from staff in Vietnam are outlined according to seven main themes, which relate closely to the research questions.

- Theories of gender and education
- Gender issues in the society
- The influence of families on gender equality
- The influence of the government policy and curriculum on promoting gender equality
- The influence of teachers on gender equality
- Improvement strategies to promote gender equality
- Benefits of having gender equality

Six themes are emerged from the questions in the interview schedules. The third theme 'The influence of families on gender equality' emerged from the data.

4.1.1 Theories of gender and education

Three sub-themes emerged from the responses of interviewees when they were asked questions relating to theories of gender and education.

4.1.1.1 Learning ability

The first sub-theme was about learning ability of boys and girls. Five male respondents of staff said that boys were cleverer than girls, such as the highly experienced teacher who claimed: '*if we say in general, we have so say that boys have better mentality than girls'* (HE 1/M). Only two teachers said that boys and girls had the same learning ability. Half of the respondents admitted that boys learned natural science subjects better than girls while girls learned social science subjects better than boys, including the vice principal, a Head teacher and teachers having different teaching experience. A woman middle leader teacher stated:

> *..There are some subjects that girls learn better but boys learn natural science subjects better, girls learn social subjects better. Natural science requires higher mentality while boys have better mentality. Social subjects ask for hard working, girls work hard...* (ML 2/F)

Many other respondents held the same viewpoint about 'hard working' subjects including recently qualified teachers to highly experienced teachers or even the Head teacher of the second high school who thought that the higher marks that girls gained at social subjects were thanks to their carefulness while doing tests or because they were hard working. For example, *'most boys are good at natural science. But girls work hard. They work hard so they learn social science better than boys'* (HE 1/F).

Six respondents believed that girls had better overall learning results than boys, including the Head teacher of the first high school.

Respondents who were staff also referred to the development process of boys and girls in learning. Four teachers and one Head teacher perceived that boys learned better when they grew up. The recently qualified teacher felt that from his own experience:

> *Girls grow faster than boys, so in lower classes, boys are less clever than girls but they are cleverer when they grow up. The proof is that in primary and secondary schools, girls learn better than boys but in high schools, boys dominate. I see it myself.* (RQ 1/M)

10 students including four boys and five girls at the second high school and a girl at the first high school admitted that boys were better, cleverer than girls. The girl at the second high school said that girls were just diligent, not smart; boys often had better mentality. Two boys at the first high school and two girls at the second high school perceived that boys learned natural science subjects better than girls while girls learned social science subjects better than boys. The boy at the first high school expressed that: '*Perhaps, boys are better at natural science subjects, which require higher mentality; also, social subjects are to learn by heart while boys are lazy'* (2/M1).

Though they said that boys and girls had advantages at some particular subjects, there were two girls at the first high school confirming that boys learned well regardless of subjects. One girl claimed that:

> *I perceive that boys in class A, though it is said that they focus on mathematics, physics, chemistry but they are good at literature and English, too... There are sometimes, they do not review or even take notes but they still get 6-7 marks in tests. They do not do homework, they do not listen to the lecture but they still get such marks, it means they are good, they are lazy though.* (1/F1)

One boy at the first high school supposed that *'girls do not need to learn well, just need to be beautiful'* (1/M3).

In general, the overall viewpoints from staff expressed were that boys and girls had different learning abilities in some natural science and social subjects. This was similar to the responses from students that boys learned natural science subjects better while girls were better at social subjects. However, there were two girls at the first high school who described that boys learned well, even at social subjects.

More respondents thought that boys were cleverer than girls although girls had better performance at schools. The higher marks that girls had at social science subjects were due to their hard work. Ten students including boys and girls had that same assertion with staff. There was one girl declaring that girls were not smart, they were just diligent while boys had better mentality. One boy thought that girls did not need to learn well, they just needed to be beautiful. Staff also pointed out the progress of boys in learning when they grew up.

4.1.1.2 Gender identity

Respondents who were staff revealed their observations about masculinity and femininity with more feminine characters for girls than masculine characters for boys. Boys were seen as active, careless, strong and lazy. Girls were seen as gentle, emotional, careful, neat and hard working. For example:

> *Boys are more active so all their activities need to 'touch legs or arms', boys are 'eat big, speak loud', Vietnamese girls are always shy and timid, their actions are more emotional, well-mannered, such characters are typical characters of Vietnamese people.* (Head 1/M)

> *Girls are educated to be gentle, subtle and not to laugh out loud…I prefer dynamic, naughty boys, of course in some accepted limits.* (ML 1/F)

It is of interest that gender identity was perceived by a newly qualified teacher like this:

> *Boys give themselves rights to judge girls. For example, if good learning girls are earnest, they will be judged as arrogant, but if girls are easy to communicate, they will not be respected and will be teased.* (RQ 2/F)

When discussing gender identities, four girls at two high schools thought that girls were diligent, for example, a girl at the first high school who responded that: '..*because we are females, we have to work hard. I think. We have to work hard, we are not like boys'* (1/F3). One boy and one girl at the first high school expected girls to be thoughtful when another boy saw girls gentle. A girl at the second high school said that girls were emotional. Two

boys at the second high school and one girl, one boy at the first high school stated that boys were lazy, decisive and fast; faster than girls.

Generally, from the lens of staff, boys were seen to be active, careless and strong. There were two respondents who thought that boys were lazy, one of them thought boys were brave and decisive as well. Students saw boys lazy and decisive, too. Also, they thought that boys were faster than girls. Girls were seen as diligent and gentle by both staff and students. Some other descriptions were given for girls such as thoughtful, careful, neat and secretive.

4.1.1.3 Role of education

Several teachers appreciated the role of education in promoting gender equality. Five teachers believed that education had an important role, such as: '*In gaining gender equality, I think there is no way better than to educate students'* (RQ 2/F). Some others thought that schools could have a role in such promotion, as a recently qualified teacher said:

> *Schools lead students to a life where men and women are equal but it can do*
> *it partly since the time they spend at schools are less than the time they are*
> *at home, with family.* (RQ 2/M)

Moreover, although it is clear that education could contribute to gender equality; either this was not taken into account by respondents or it was felt that it was impossible to act on the topic unless there were specific directives to do so. A teacher claimed that *'I do not see anything. Nothing. We do not do it unless there is policy asking teachers to do. How can we do?'* (HE 1/F). The course leader of the university of pedagogy, the Head teacher and one teacher of the high school stated similar ideas. Nevertheless, the vice principal thought gender equality was not taken into account because equality has already been achieved:

> *We do not take gender into account. We have the same university entrance*
> *exam, same outputs. Same training process. The same. No differentiation.*
> *I do not see any differentiation.* (VP HUP/M)

Two female students at the first high school spoke about the role of education in promoting gender equality. A girl hoped that students could have gender equality awareness if they

were treated equally by teachers. She said that: *'If teachers behave equally among students, students will model on them, they will gradually have the gender equality awareness for themselves'* (1/F2). Another girl imagined the scenario if school did not educate students about gender equality that the next generation would be negatively affected. She warned that:

> *If schools do not educate the awareness for students when they are young, if now they do not have gender equality whilst schools do nothing to help them, in the later on, they are not be able to be aware of it, they will teach their children as they think, continuously, so do the next generations...* (1/F3)

Many respondents noted the existence of gender equality in their schools, notably including two Head teachers. One of them outlined what his school had done in addressing the issue of gender such as creating activities or applying same assessing process for both sexes. However, two respondents in two high schools discovered that there were still some signs of gender inequality, for instance:

> *Schools have an important role but they haven't done much. For example, why the student in charge of art is always girl, or hardly do I see a female monitor…I do not think it's equal. Why girls must wear dresses? Dresses or trousers should be their choices. You force them to wear dresses making them feel uncomfortable to straighten their legs when their seats are on the first row.* (HE 1/M)

At the first high school, three students perceived that gender was not guaranteed in their school. Two boys expressed that boys had to do some things for girls to be gallant boys and girls had more priorities in marking. A boy stated that: *'We do it at the same quality but girls always have higher marks, teachers give the priority for girls'* (1/M5). A boy thought that the uniforms were not suitable since girls had to wear dresses and they could not play kicking a shuttlecock. A girl shared the similar opinion, but she thought in general, it was gender equality in her school.

I think I liked skipping and kicking a shuttle cock when I was at primary and secondary schools, but now I am high school girl, I am mature and I wear dresses. Skipping or doing what I want is weird. (1/F3)

The rest of the students affirmed the gender equality in their schools.

In relation to educating for gender equality for high school students, four respondents, who were the Deputy Head teacher and three teachers, seemed to have differing experiences since they noted that gender equality could only be addressed in some subjects at high schools. The Deputy Head teacher declared that:

It hasn't been done synchronously. Just biology teachers do it when the lesson relates to it. Or they teach it in civics subjects. How can other subjects educate gender equality? It is so grudging. (Deputy Head 2/M)

In his subject, the highly experienced teacher at the second high school asked the researcher: *'It depends. For what should maths teachers educate about gender equality?'* (HE 2/s-M). Thus, teachers and managers believed that the method of promoting gender equality in schools was to lecture students in lessons or by relating information about gender issues in some particular subjects and some particular lessons, the content of which related to gender issues. Thus they believed that only biology, civics, literature and history teachers could integrate gender issues into their teaching in some lessons in order to educate students about gender equality. The recently qualified teacher at the second high school had been chosen to take part in a training workshop of the Ministry of Education and Training about gender equality, she stated that:

For example, when training teachers about integrating teaching, they chose teachers of literature, history and civics basing on scientific proof. Because they could not require a maths teacher to integrate gender equality into their teaching, because of the specific characteristics of each subjects. (RQ 2/F)

The researcher noted that seven staff respondents emphasized equal opportunities in gender equality. A teacher told her about the benefit of gaining gender equality: *'First, there should*

be the same opportunities for everybody. If there is an opportunity, it should be for both males and females' (HE 1/M).

The highly experienced teacher shifted the equal opportunity in learning in the society by saying that everybody knew that they had opportunity to show their talent and ability. Having the same viewpoint, the new qualified teacher in the same high school insisted on the opportunity:

> *I think one of the main benefits of strengthening gender equality is that all students, both boys and girls have opportunity to develop, all students have opportunity to push their ability. Equality in behaviours. Equality in opportunity, even when that is not the opportunity given to them but the opportunity that they actively get it.* (RQ 2/F)

In brief, respondents saw that education could contribute to promoting gender equality, yet it seemed that not much had been done in schools and in the university to address the issue. Some teachers believed that gender equality already existed so they did not need to do anything but some others pointed out the gender inequalities in their schools such as girls being required to wear dresses. The Deputy Head teacher and three class teachers supposed that promoting gender equality in high school, besides collective activities for both sexes as the Head teachers said, was to teach students some content in particular lessons by integrating them into issues related specifically with gender. They did not believe that all teachers should, or could, do this since in their view there were only some particular subjects that related to gender issues, such as biology, civics, literature and history. Nonetheless, two students gave some examples revealing that it was not equal in their schools because girls had more priorities in marking or boys had to do things to prove that they were gallant to girls. One opinion about gender inequality at schools posited by a student that coincided with a teacher was that it was inappropriate that girls had to wear dresses whether they wished to or not. Further, students asserted the role of schools in promoting gender equality as staff did. Two girls confirmed that if students did not have the proper awareness about gender equality when they were at high schools, it could affect the next generation. However, most of the staff and students interviewed affirmed that there was gender equality in their schools.

The number of respondents emphasizing equal opportunities in education as well as in learning ability revealed a viewpoint among staff that equality should involve equal opportunities for everybody.

4.1.1.4 Summary

Boys and girls were seen as having different learning abilities revealed in mentality, achievement and development. Five teachers and 10 students believed that girls were less clever than boys, one student claimed that girls were not smart, they were just diligent. Many teachers perceived that girls had better overall learning results thanks to hard working. Half of respondents of staff and four students said that girls learned social science subjects better than boys while boys learned natural science subjects better than girls. Moreover, boys were viewed as making greater learning progress as they grew up. A boy said that girls just needed to be beautiful; they did not need to learn well. A teacher pointed out that some boys judged girls.

Some teachers thought that boys were seen as active, careless and strong. Both staff and students assented that boys were lazy and decisive while girls were gentle and diligent. Girls were also thoughtful, careful, tidy and secretive.

Many respondents of staff admitted the certain role of education in promoting gender equality yet educational institutions had not paid much attention to it. Two Head teachers claimed that there was gender equality in their schools. The vice principal of the university and a high school teacher thought that there was no need to do anything on gender in schools for it existed already, yet two teachers and two students pointed out that gender equality was not secured in their schools since girls had to wear dresses or students saw some girls were given more priority in marking or boys had to be gallant to girls. Four respondents, noticeably including the Deputy Head teacher who was in charge of curriculum at the second high school insisted on promoting gender equality in education by teaching students concrete lessons or relating content in some particular subjects, so it could be done by some teachers at schools, not all teachers. Subjects that could integrate gender equality to teach for students were biology, civics, literature and history. Most of the respondents including staff and students claimed gender equality in their schools. Almost half of the respondents of staff emphasized equal opportunities for students in learning and for everybody in the

society while mentioning gender equality in general. There was a viewpoint that equality should involve the equal opportunities for people.

4.1.2 Gender issues in the society
4.1.2.1 Gender issues in the society

Six respondents including staff and a student believed that in the society, gender equality had made some progress. One such example was a vice principal who told the researcher that:

> *Gender equality has made progress. Lots of improvement. In your case, at one time you would not have graduated high school or even worse than that. But you were allowed to graduate high school then go to university and now you are doing a PhD.* (VP HUP/M)

However, nine respondents including two Head teachers, the course leader, five teachers and three students noted the continued existence of gender inequality. A Head teacher said that:

> *It is apparent that gender is still unequal. It is obvious gender inequality. Even female teachers, they prefer to have sons, how can it be equal.* (Head 1/M)

Two boys at two high schools confirmed that gender stereotypes existed in the society because there was the viewpoint that women were in charge of housework and 'respect for men, scorn for women'.

Six respondents of staff perceived there were jobs that had more men and jobs that had more women. It seemed to be a tendency in choosing career that some jobs were more suitable for males or females, as a Head teacher said that:

> *There are job specifics; there are jobs that definitely have more men than women, and jobs that have more women than men. It is evident. Simplistically, there are many more male students than female students at*

the University of Technique, but there are more females than males at the
University of Pedagogy. It is the specifics. It is to adapt with career. (Head
1/M)

The lecturer explained that the disparities between the number of males in females in jobs were created by gender stereotypes. It could be the gender stereotypes that men had more advantages at work. Six teachers pointed out gender inequalities with examples showing that men had more advantages in recruitment processes and in managerial positions. For instance:

Even at work, they prefer recruiting men, they say that women will...For
example, accrediting somebody, they will notice if this woman is married or
not, if she has children or not and how many years she can be at that position.
(ML 1/F)

I think they still think that men have more advantages so, in some promotions,
men have more priority. For example, women and men are in the same group
to be considered, the advantages are always given to men. (HE 2/F)

A male student declared that he believed that there were jobs for men and jobs for women. He said that:

Jobs that need carefulness or communication have more priority for women.
Men are for jobs, which need the strength or good intelligence such as
mechanics or science, research. (1/M1)

However, even in so-called 'female' jobs, there were more men than women as two boys in the first high school perceived. Moreover, to one girl and one boy at the first high school, in most jobs, men did better than women. Two boys at the first high school saw that men were better at managerial positions. A boy pointed out that: *'It is said that girls can do all that men do but I see men do better in most of the managerial positions'* (1/M2).
It is notable that one boy even claimed that the best people in *all* jobs were men.

Some respondents had admitted that there had been improvements in gender issues. However, five respondents stated that gender inequality remained and it was more serious in rural areas because of the 'son preferred' thoughts, patriarchy and lower education for women. The highly experienced teacher asserted that: *'You are in the city, you may have gender equality but in rural areas, I see it is not equal: sons are preferred. Men are patriarchal. Very patriarchal'* (HE 1/F).

The middle leader teacher at the second high school thought it was because women did not learn much and the Head teacher at the same school said it might be because women at rural areas spent most of the time working on the fields and they did not know what rights they had.

Thus, respondents saw that though gender equality was getting better in the society, it had not been done entirely. Nearly half of the respondents asserted that gender inequality remained, even in the thoughts of well-educated people like teachers. About gender equality at work, both staff and students thought that there were jobs that were more suitable for a certain sex in the society. Six respondents of staff said that there were jobs that had more men and jobs that had more women, yet one boy confirmed that there were more men in all jobs. Staff perceived that in general, in all jobs, men had more advantages than women while students believed that men did better than women, especially in managerial positions and in all jobs, there were more men, the best were men. Some of the staff claimed that gender inequality was more serious in the rural areas because of the 'son preferred' thoughts, the patriarchy and lower education for women.

4.1.2.2 Viewpoint of respondents about gender equality

Respondents believed that gender equality was important but it was difficult to gain. Some respondents talked about their viewpoint on gender equality and the main barriers that they thought we should overcome to have gender equality.

More than half of the staff including the vice principal, the course leader, the Deputy Head teacher and seven teachers and eight students believed that it was important to have gender equality. The Deputy Head teacher appreciated gender equality like this: *'Gender equality is very important. It affects the development of human being'* (Deputy Head 2/M).

Nonetheless, four of them affirmed the difficulty in gaining gender equality. A middle leader teacher confirmed: *'It is difficult to have gender equality. The feudal thought has dominated deeply. I myself have daughters but I always like to have a son'* (ML 2/s-M). The highly experienced teacher declared that:

> *It's very difficult to be equal. The government says 'gender equality' all the time, but even intellectual people, they always have more respect to men, they see women as a minority.* (HE 2/s-M)

Then respondents exposed their viewpoint of gender equality. The Deputy Head teacher emphasized that equality did not mean the same but it was to be respected. A class teacher shared the same idea that:

> *Equality does not mean the same. But equality means everybody is given the equal and same opportunity in the society and in the law to develop their ability.* (RQ 2/F)

At the first high school, the middle leader teacher said that:

> *In my opinion, struggling for equal right is not to make men and women the same but is to make women live more closely to their nature and so do men. It means at this time we are asking for equal rights in the society and managerial positions which make women more tired because they have to do more works. I mean we should let women live more gently and more closely to their nature.* (ML 1/M)

The vice principal stated that:

> *Gender equality does not mean that we treat in the same way but we treat in a way that suits the gender characteristics so they can develop their gender advantages, I mean we do not ask men do what women do or vice versa. I*

have same concern, but we have different assessment fitting with each gender. (VP HUP/M)

The researcher tried to look for the main barriers to gender equality and there were 10 varying answers from staff that had the same implication that the awareness and the viewpoint of the society relating to the idea that the 'son is preferred' and that girls did not need to learn much were main barriers to gain gender equality. For instance, the highly experienced teacher claimed that equal or unequal it depended upon our awareness, or the two younger teachers expressed that:

> *It is the viewpoint of the society. The old thought 'respect for men, scorn for women' from the feudal regime has influenced not only on individuals but also on the whole society.* (RQ 2/F)

> *(Gender inequality) is from the thoughts, the viewpoint of not only men but also women. Women agree to suffer.* (ML 1/M)

It could be summarised that both staff and students understood the importance of gender equality but four respondents of staff estimated that it would be difficult to gain. Some respondents thought that gender equality was not to make men and women the same but to give both sexes the same opportunities but different assessments as long as it fitted with their gender nature. The awareness and the viewpoint relating to 'son preferred' thoughts and girls need not to learn much were emphasized as the main barriers in gaining gender equality. The course leader said that it could originate from families; this will be presented in the coming sections about the influence of families on gender.

4.1.2.3 Summary
Though claiming some progress in gender equality, 11 respondents including staff and students, asserted that gender inequality still exists in Vietnamese society. They suggested that, at work, there were jobs that would be more suitable for a certain sex, and that in all jobs there were more men than women. Further, students thought that men were better than women, especially in management positions. Meanwhile, staff thought that men had more

advantages in recruitment and accreditation. In rural areas, gender inequality seemed to be more serious due to the 'son preferred' thoughts, the long life patriarchy and the superficial learning of women.

More than half of the staff and eight students said that gender equality was very important to the development of the country but it was believed to be difficult to achieve, even with a well-educated society. Respondents also expressed their viewpoints about gender equality, that gender equality did not mean treating men and women the same but to give them same opportunity to do things more associated with their gender nature and to give them different assessment fitting their genders. In promoting gender equality, respondents thought we should overcome some main barriers, which were the awareness and the viewpoint of the society relating to gender issues such as 'son preferred' thoughts or the thought that girls did not need to learn much.

The researcher noted that there were many respondents emphasizing the influence of families to gender equality. The male teacher at the second high school claimed that:

> *As I said, Orient people have tradition to rely on families, and families have big affection to their lives. So, if families still affect, gender inequality remains...* (RQ 2/M)

Such influence on high school students was the time when they chose their career or the investment of families for schooling. Families also had the 'son preferred' thoughts. Moreover, the relationships in families could make gender equality more difficult to be secured. Lastly, the gender stereotypes that women did housework had an affect on women's life and work. All these sub-categories will be presented in the next section.

4.1.3 The influence of families on gender equality
4.1.3.1 The influence of families on career choice and schooling

Seven respondents of staff said that they themselves or high school students were influenced by the advice or suggestions from families when making career choice at high school stage. The middle leader teacher at the second high school affirmed that:

Parents always suggest daughters to do something gentle and have free time in the later on. Even now, they suggest their daughters to do gentle jobs so they have time to take care of family. (ML 2/s-M)

Among opinions about the influence of families on students in choosing career, three respondents gave examples explaining why more females were in teaching careers, including the vice principal, a Deputy Head teacher and a highly experienced teacher. The Deputy Head teacher explained:

At first, working time is flexible. We have to work eight hours a day but teachers follow another time scale. For instance, teachers have to teach 17 teaching-hours a week, there are days that they have 1-2 teaching hours. So it is suitable with women to be maternity or to take care of children. Very convenient. (Deputy Head 2/M)

Respondents of staff said that girls were often oriented by parents to be teachers thanks to what was perceived as the 'gentle' nature of the work and the flexible time available to take care of a family. This was shared by two students. One boy and one girl at the second high school talked about their career choices, which revealed the influence of their families. The girl expressed that she wished to do event planning but her parents suggested her to choose law. She said that: *'I want to do something like operating events. But my mum and dad said such jobs are strenuous so they orient me to law career...'* (2/F-G).

The boy said that he wished to do politics but his parents wanted him to do economy so he would take the university entrance examination of the University of Economy. A boy at the first high school saw that girls chose jobs to have time to take care of families.

In investment for schooling, families had an influence. For example, the Head teacher at the first high school said that: *'If girls do not have chance to go to schools, it is the influence of families'* (Head 1/M). Four respondents shared their observations that if families had difficulty in finance, then sons would have the priority to go to school than daughters. The recently qualified teacher asserted:

If they are not in financial difficulty, they will let both son and daughter go to school. But if they are in difficulty, I am sure that they will think of letting son to go to school. (RQ 1/M)

However, in most cases, respondents believed that investment for sons and daughters to schooling had been improved and both sexes had the same investment for schooling. Seven respondents expressed their thoughts about such same investment from their observations or from their own experience. The Deputy Head teacher at the second high school said that: *'I think they have same investment for sons and daughters; they even do more shopping for daughters...'* (Deputy Head 2/M).

Three girls at the first high school had the same feeling. Nonetheless, two teachers at the first high school perceived it was the same investment in the urban areas only, in rural areas daughters had more disadvantages, as the highly experienced teacher said: *'I think it is equal, but just in urban areas. It is not like that in rural areas'* (HE 1/F).

This statement had the connection with gender issue in rural areas, which had been presented in previous section.

Some staff respondents perceived that when students chose the universities or vocational colleges at grade 12 of high schools, they were influenced by the orientation from families, which were embedded with the stereotypes such as girls should do jobs that gave them flexible time to take care of family. This statement coincided with sharing of two 12th grade students about their own cases. Two students at the second high school outlined their own stories, which revealed that they were influenced by their parents in choosing careers. In the case of the girl, her parents oriented her to the job that they thought would not be strenuous. One student at the first high school perceived that girls chose jobs which were convenient to take care of families.

Investment for sons and daughters had improved somewhat. Seven respondents of staff and three girls stated that in urban areas, children had the same investment for schooling regardless of their sexes. Yet daughters would be put at disadvantages for schooling if families were in financial difficulties or they were located in rural areas.

4.1.3.2 The influence of 'son preferred' thoughts to gender equality

According to some respondents, although in many families, the investment for daughters and sons were similar parents still preferred sons to daughters. Nine respondents of staff, noticeably including the vice principal, course leader, two Head teachers and four teachers pointed out that the preference for sons still existed in families, such as the Head teacher at the second high school stated:

> *Although it is not as serious as before, people think that having a son can circulate the family's tradition, women after getting married just focus on their husbands' families so they will lose their family's tradition.* (Head 2/M)

The middle leader at the same school explained what had happened around her:

> *Recently, a female teacher at (...) school, her husband was a taxman, she was pregnant. They had had the first child daughter. When she was given an ultrasound scan, at first, they said it was a baby boy, her husband was happy, he flaunted that he was having a son everywhere he went, but then she gave birth a baby girl. When it was obviously a daughter, he insisted on saying she was a baby boy, he said it was a baby boy when he went to work. He adored to son like that.* (ML 2/F)

The highly experienced teacher at the first high school had an explanation why they preferred sons to daughters: *'It is so feudal. So, having son is to guarantee that having the family continued. It is feudal. It is happier to have son. More confident'* (HE 1/F). Or the vice principal explained it like this:

> *My father had said and I said, too: having a son is to have a man to 'lean on a stick', it means when we die, he sees us off, he should be officially our son. Moreover, I ask you, your surname is your father's or mother's? You're Vietnamese, you have your father's surname on your name, that is*

important...if we have a first child son, we will have a feeling that our family race will be passed on, but if we have daughters, we hardly have anything. Firstly, we lose our surname. Secondly, we lose our death anniversaries. Women are not allowed to worship their own parents at their husband's house...so they are afraid of having daughters... (VP HUP/M)

One boy and one girl at the first high school and two girls at the second high school proved that son preferred thoughts remained in their families. The girl at the first high school asserted that sons were loved more than daughters were. One girl at the second high school told an interesting story from her experience that when she visited her hometown, her grandmother talked about sons only. She told that:

Most people are gendered equal but some are still feudal, they prefer sons. Such as when I came to the North, my grandmother talked about sons all the time, I was annoyed. (2/F-S)

The girl at the same school stated that pregnant women preferred baby boys to baby girls. She claimed that: *'We haven't had gender equality yet. Pregnant women hope to have son. If they have daughter, they are disappointed, upset...'* (2/F-G).

Both staff and students confirmed about the existence of 'son preferred' thoughts. The explanation about such gender stereotypes might be slightly different but they have the same root, it was the feudal thought.

The explanation is related to the next paragraph 'The influence of relationships in families to gender equality' sub theme that married women have to move to their husband's house to live with their in laws and they were not allowed to worship their own parents there. Therefore, parents wanted to have sons to worship them when they passed away.

4.1.3.3 The influence of relationships in families on gender equality

Some staff respondents thought that the tradition of Vietnamese families whereby women moved to their husbands' families to live when they got married led to the in-law relationships, which had some influence on genders. Four respondents at the second high school confirmed it, as the middle leader teacher talked about his family: *'It is the feudal*

tradition. For example, what my mother has done will be continued by my wife. Daughter in law has to live with parents in law' (ML 2/s-M).

In the in law families, the influence of 'son preferred' thoughts put the daughter-in-law under pressure to give birth a baby boy. The woman teacher told about her situation like this:

> *..They like to have men worship them in the later on…My mother-in-law told me that she liked grandson. Even when I had a son, she still wants to have one more grandson...* (ML 2/F)

Respondents who were staff said that the stereotypes and the fact that women had responsibility for housework influenced a woman's position in the family and at work. Eight respondents acknowledged the same idea that the stereotypes 'women do housework' still stood, even in well-educated people, like the lecturer:

> *When I got married I was ashamed to do housework, I felt it weird because my father did nothing. In my family, my mother does all things round the house, my father just wanders.* (L HUP/M)

This experience was described by a woman teacher too, who stated: *'For example, men are looked with different eyes if preparing the meals or going shopping. Men will be shy and ashamed…'* (ML 1/F).

The Deputy Head teacher at the second high school said women took care of family in every way including going to the market, doing the cooking, etc. Doing all the housework influenced women's position not only at home but even at work. The vice principal said that:

> *…Women do not want to do the management. They hesitate because doing management takes time so there are quite a few female managers, even in the world. Women have to take care of family. Psychologically, they do not want to argue or communicate or setting up plans. Women are not bad but*

because of the families, they do not want to be in managerial positions. (VP HUP/M)

Or it affected the opportunity of higher education because, as one respondent pointed out: *'It is said that women should only learn to some certain levels, they should concentrate on their roles as wives and mothers'* (Head 2/M).

Another girl student estimated that gender inequality in families was created by the stereotypes that 'women do housework'. She pointed out that:

> *Men and women both go to work but women have to do housework and take care of children. Men are tired of working, too but they can lie to read newspapers or watch TV, they do not help their women. Though both men and women are tired from working but I truly see it is male-female inequality in families.* (1/F2)

Two boys at the first high school and one girl at the second high school claimed that in their families fathers had more power than mothers did. A boy asserted that: *'...Dad imposes everything, mum has no ideas. What is said by dad is the truth in my family'* (1/M5).

The researcher looked for the model of husbands in the future through the lens of high school girls. Two girls at the second high school expected to have husbands who were better than them. A girl hoped that: *'At least, he (husband in the future) has a better education qualification than me, better position in the society and will be my best mainstay'* (2/F-G).

Therefore, two students hoped to have husbands who would be better and have higher positions in the society than them. The second middle leader male teacher at the second high school talked about similar issues at his school that husbands were teased when their wives had a higher position at work than them:

> *..they are often slighted or insinuated. Absolutely. Even in the teaching staff, when the wife is the head of subject and the husband is the class teacher, he will be alluded. I have just met some guys being teased like that.* (ML 2/s-M)

According to respondents who were staff, the family relationships had some influence upon gender issue such as daughters-in-law had to live in their husband's house, or parents-in-law had expectations that they would have grandsons to continue their traditions, as the previous section has discussed. Moreover, in families, women were expected to do the housework. Respondents who were staff said that the stereotypes that women did housework influenced their positions in families and at work. The vice principal said that because women had to do housework, they did not want to go into management and girls' opportunities for higher education were affected by the stereotypes that women should focus on the roles of wives and mothers. Students perceived the same situation in their own families. One student said that the inequality was because both men and women went to work but women had to do all housework when coming home. Three students asserted that in their families, fathers had more power than mothers. Two girls expected to have husbands who would be better than them in the future while one teacher proved that a man having a lower position at work than his wife would be teased. Seven boys confirmed gender equality in their families when two girls saw that it was not equal.

4.1.3.4 Summary

Both staff and students affirmed that families had influence upon both genders in making career choices of high school students. For instance, parents oriented their high school daughters to careers which they thought would be suitable for them to take care of families or to fit with gentle characteristics of women. Boys were influenced by their families in choosing careers, too. Two students talked about their experience in that they wanted to do other jobs but their parents oriented them to the jobs that the parents thought would be suitable for them, in the case of the girl it was not to do event planning because it was strenuous.

Staff also found that in most cases, families invested equally in boys and girls' education. Three students agreed with this. However, that was in the urban areas. In rural areas, if families had financial difficulties, girls would be disadvantaged in going to school. Some respondents of staff and students thought that this derived from the preference for sons. Many couples anticipated having sons rather than daughters, as a student and a woman teacher said. Pregnant women and their husbands expected to have a baby boy. The vice principal explained that having a son could pass on the tradition of families such as

preserving the surname or worshipping parents when they passed away. Besides, the relationships in families had some influence on gender equality. Four respondents of staff pointed out that in-law relationships affected gender equality, as daughters-in-law had to live in their husbands' families and in-laws expected to have grandsons. Eight respondents and two students said that the stereotype that 'women do housework' remained, even in well-educated people. This affected them not only at home but also at work, it even prevented them from taking up managerial positions or approaching high education. A girl student perceived it was unequal when women had to do housework after coming back from work like men. Two students said that their fathers had more power than mothers did in their families. Two girls expected to have husbands who would be better than them and had better positions in the society than them. A teacher told a story that had the connection to the opinion of two girls that his colleague was teased because his wife had a higher position at work than him. Seven boy students affirmed that there was gender equality in their families while two girls saw that it was not equal.

4.1.4 The influence of the government policy and the curriculum on promoting gender equality

4.1.4.1 The role of the government policy and the curriculum in promoting gender equality

Four respondents of staff supposed that the policy had an important role in promoting gender equality. The course leader said that: *'Of course it is important. All should start from policy. Policy is the lodestar for all actions...'* (CL HUP/M). To the highly experienced teacher at the first high school, policy was most important, since it could even construct the viewpoint that was taken: *'Policy is important most. From policy, it forms the viewpoint that people have to follow'* (HE 1/M).

The vice principal, the highly experienced female teacher, and the second high school had the same idea. Seven respondents asserted that though the policy had noted gender equality, yet it had not been carried out well in practice or it was just a formality. For instance, the middle leader teacher at the second high school expressed: *'There is nothing concrete. No concrete. Policy is so far away, not practical...Policy is still so common'* (ML 2/F).

There were some opinions about the attention of the government policy and the curriculum to gender equality. Seven staff respondents, including the vice principal and two Head

teachers, claimed that policy had paid attention to gender equality. The Head teacher at the second high school emphasized that:

> *Communist Party and the government pay attention to gender equality, they give advantages for girls as well as women to develop them as well as to contribute for the society.* (Head 2/M)

In spite of respondents and specially managers insisting that the policy had paid attention to gender equality, there were four teachers at two high schools who declared that they did not see any policy giving attention to gender equality in education or any policy that could help girls in approaching education. The middle leader male teacher at the first high school asserted that he did not see anything.

There were five respondents talking about the fixed ratios of women in school, companies or managements. Yet, there were two opposite tendencies in acknowledging such ratios. The vice principal and the Head teacher of the second high school considered it as a positive attention to gender equality, they said that:

> *In education, the province has laid down developing female leaders as a policy. So, in scheduling the managerial teams, there is sensible ratios of women.* (Head 2/M)

> *The policy of Party and government is definitely equal…The policy does not differentiate. They even require a ratio of women in the congress.* (VP HUP/M)

Nonetheless, three teachers affirmed that fixing the ratios of women was a clear sign of the existence gender inequality for if it had been equal, they then would not have to assign the ratios for women. Two highly experienced teachers at two high schools expressed this as follows:

However, there has not been gender equality in the society. It manifests right from the policy: structuring the ratios of women. Therefore, it is obvious that you do not see them as equal as you. (HE 1/M)

…They fix the ratios. Fixing the ratios. It is the tendency of our government. It can be equal only when they do not fix the ratios, when everyone who has the ability is treated equally. Now they require each group of communist must have at least one woman. It is unequal right at the requirement. (HE 2/s-M)

The curriculum had affects on students when choosing a university to take the entrance examination, said the lecturer. To the highly experienced female teacher at the second high school, the policy gave advantages for women, it was the motive to make an effort in society, so was the curriculum; if it was suitable, and had clear aims, students would have different viewpoint and then different activities.

Vietnam had used one curriculum for both sexes for a long time. Three respondents believed that it gave *'the same opportunity'* for boys and girls: *'Our curriculum is common. And the opportunity to approach is equal. Let's see it as equal opportunity...'* (HE 2/f-M). The Deputy Head teacher, who was in charge of the curriculum at the second high school, noticed that the current curriculum fit girls better than boys since girls had better learning result:

Perhaps, the high school curriculum was built to be suitable with ages and sexes. Of course, it needs to improve something but it is about content rather than gender-relating issues…because the fact is that learning this curriculum, girls have better results than boys. So, it fits girls, especially in social science subjects, girls always get high marks. Just boys, they learn worse than girls in literature, history and geography. Thus, it is more suitable with girls than boys. (Deputy Head 2/M)

The fact that girls had better overall results in learning at high school had been stated in the previous section. However, as the researcher presented above, some teachers thought that such higher results were due to their hard work, in fact, some teachers believed that boys

were cleverer. Moreover, the recently qualified teacher at the second high school told that learning the same curriculum but for girls did not have as good health as boys', girls found themselves exhausted.

Responses from staff revealed that the policy was very important in promoting gender equality. The policy had paid attention to gender equality; however, it had not been put into practice very well so there were some comments that they did not see it work. There were two opposite viewpoints about the fixed ratios of women in the institutions. Two men at the managerial positions stated that it was the positive attention to gender equality whilst four teachers saw it as a sign of gender inequality.

Two respondents thought that the curriculum had influence upon students when making career choices or changing the viewpoint. Three respondents thought that the curriculum was equal. The Deputy Head teacher said that it fit girls better because they had better learning results.

4.1.4.2 Comments about the current curriculum and school subjects to gender equality

Commenting about the curriculum, seven teachers and a lecturer believed that it was not appropriate or fit for purpose. The middle leader teacher at the first high school saw that: *'Regardless of genders, all students find the curriculum is boring'* (ML 1/M) or *'too long and too difficult'* as the newly qualified female teacher at the second high school perceived. The highly experienced teacher at the second high school made his observation:

> *I think in general, girls are not able to follow the curriculum. If they do not have tutors, they cannot pass. In the past, you learned 9-10 subjects, now they have to learn quite a lot, they're exhaust, limited intelligence, they cannot learn on their own.* (HE 2/s-M)

As in the previous section about learning ability (see section 4.1.1.1), many respondents thought that boys learned natural science subjects better than girls. Three teachers stated that: *'To most of high school girls, most of natural science subjects are difficult'* (ML 2/s-M). Or from his mathematics teaching experience, the recently qualified teacher claimed that: *'It is true that girls find mathematics is more difficult than boys do'* (RQ 1/M). Again,

in the previous section about learning ability, some respondents asserted that girls learned social subjects better than boys; here the new qualified teacher told that:

> *Girls find mathematics and physics difficult. Boys find literature and English difficult because English does not require the intelligence but students must work hard to learn by heart words. One specific characteristic of girls is that they do not know what they are learning for: trigonometry formulation…They do not need it when they go shopping.* (RQ 2/F)

According to her, the curriculum was not only difficult or boring but also not practical because students did not understand the meaning of subjects in their real life. Nonetheless, the first highly experienced teacher at the second high school said that the curriculum was not difficult. In contrast, a girl at the first high school complained that the curriculum was too difficult which made her tired and did not go to the playground at break time. She said that:

> *I do not remember but when I was at primary and secondary schools, I was fond of skipping but now at high school, perhaps the curriculum is too difficult, tiring for me to...I have breakfast then have a short chat to relax then continue learning...* (1/F2)

A girl at the second high school thought that the curriculum was too much and quick-fire. She perceived that:

> *I think the curriculum is a bit too much and quick-fire. We have to learn too many lessons in a short time; sometimes we cannot absorb them all in such short time. Teachers often need more time to make us understand.* (2/F-S)

A boy at the first high school pointed out that the curriculum was impractical and two girls at two high schools affirmed the imbalance between theory and practice. The girl at the second high school said that: *'I see a differentiation between theory and practice, I am worried about theory because there are some abundant but there are some not enough'*

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(2/F-G). Students also said that there were some subjects that they found difficult. Four girls at two high schools asserted that mathematics and chemistry were difficult to learn. A girl at the first high school expressed that: *'I think they are mathematics and chemistry. They are utopian. In addition, they are too nonfigurative. I find them difficult'* (1/F2).

Two boys at two high schools found chemistry difficult, too. Three other boys did not like history; one boy at the first high school stated that: *'We have to learn by heart quite a lot...we win all the time, never see defeated. Failures are not mentioned. Real historical facts are hidden'* (1/M2).

Eight boys at two high schools confirmed that the subject of literature was difficult, such as: *'That writing is awful but we are not allowed to say that. I do not have any emotion with it'* (1/M5). Also, three boys at the second high school said that English was boring. About the school textbooks, there were two comments about their foibles. The lecturer noticed that gender stereotypes exist in the literature textbooks, he said that:

> *I see the textbooks describing women as working hard, doing the housework very well, men are just holding gun and being at construction site. Such descriptions deepen the gendered difference.* (L HUP/M)

The highly experienced teacher perceived that the textbooks were slow in comparison with the speedy development outside.

Seven teachers perceived that the current curriculum was not good since it was too difficult, boring and not very practical. They said that girls found natural science subjects like mathematics and physics difficult while boys found it hard to learn social science subjects like literature and English. This went well with the first section about the learning ability of boys and girls when respondents pointed out that boys learned natural science subjects better than girls and girls learned social science subjects better than boys. A teacher claimed that the curriculum was not difficult while a girl stated that the curriculum was too difficult. Another girl said that the curriculum was too much and quick-fire, two other girls thought of it as imbalance between theory and practice while a boy asserted that it was impractical. This coincided with above statement about the curriculum that it was difficult and impractical. Four girls thought that mathematics and chemistry were difficult which matched with the opinion of teachers that natural science subjects were difficult for girls to

learn. Eight boys affirmed that literature was difficult, besides, history and English were said to be difficult, too. There was a commonality between responses from staff and students about the curriculum and difficult subjects for certain sexes. Notably, the lecturer and a teacher saw that literature textbooks had gender stereotype descriptions and textbooks were gendered in nature.

4.1.4.3 Summary

Policy played an important role in the society; however, it had not been really put into practice. Two out of four people in the managerial positions in the whole sample of the research in Vietnam asserted that the policy had paid attention to gender equality. This opinion was shared by some of the other teacher respondents. Nonetheless, there were four teachers perceiving that they did not see it work at their schools. There were contradicting viewpoints about the activity of fixing the ratios of women in some institutions or managements. Respondents at managerial positions appreciated it as a positive consideration to gender equality while teachers thought it was a sign of gender inequality. Some respondents saw the curriculum as designed for both sexes and thus it was a common curriculum. There was one opinion from a Deputy Head teacher stating that the current curriculum was more suitable for girls since they had better learning results than boys, especially in social science subjects. However, seven teachers saw the curriculum difficult and boring for both sexes and each sex had their own difficulty in learning particular subjects. Boys found social science subjects such as literature and English difficult and girls found it hard to learn natural science subjects such as mathematics and physics. There were gender stereotypes descriptions in literature textbooks. The responses from students revealed that the comments of teachers about some school subjects coincided with what students perceived. Four girls found mathematics and chemistry difficult while eight boys found literature difficult. Chemistry, history and English each subject was perceived as difficult by three boys at the two high schools. Three students said that the curriculum was too much, difficult and impractical. So the opinions of students about the curriculum were similar to those of the teaching staff but was not similar to the respondents at managerial positions.

4.1.5 The influence of teachers on gender equality

4.1.5.1 The influence of teaching pedagogies on students' achievements and gender equality

More than half of the respondents said that the current teaching pedagogy at high schools was equal for both sexes, including the two Head teachers. The Head teacher at the second high school asserted that: *'The current teaching pedagogy guarantees equal opportunity in learning. Equal.'* (Head 2/M). Some respondents gave out examples showing that they had treated boys and girls equally, for instance: *'I myself am very equal in requesting as well as in assessing. Equally. There is no priority for boys or girls, monitors or anyone else'* (HE 2/F). Remarkably, five teachers admitted that although they treated students equally, they did it without being aware that they were promoting gender equality in education. At the first high school, the highly experienced female teacher said that they did not require teaching staff to pay attention to gender equality while teaching. The recently qualified teacher at that school said: *'I have never thought of the equality between boys and girls, I see them equal, same...I have never differentiated, I treat equally'* (RQ 1/M). Another new qualified teacher at the second high school presumed:

> *I do not think it is entirely that they are aware that they are doing (gender equality), but they do. When they teach that issue, they will talk about inequality but they do not think that they are doing so to abolish gender inequality, they do it as it is natural.* (RQ 2/F)

The highly experienced teacher at the second high school on one hand confirmed that most teachers did not think of gender equality while teaching, on the other hand, he himself perceived that there was no teaching pedagogy that could promote gender equality, he stated that:

> *I do not see any relation between teaching pedagogy and gender equality. I think most of teachers do not think of it and there is no teaching pedagogy promoting gender equality.* (HE 2/f-M)

The lecturer proved that he was aware of gender equality while teaching by giving an interesting example of his teaching pedagogy:

> *While teaching, at first, I call students equally. Secondly, when I say something relating to gender, I emphasize the balance role between men and women...For instance, I never criticize an enthusiastic girl tomboy; I mean I do not deepen the gender gap in activities and behaviours.* (L HUP/M)

The course leader told about his 'gendered approach' while teaching like this:

> *For example when I give a mathematics exercise, I think it is good if a male student goes to the board and expresses himself straight, but I am not surprised if a female student asks me around that exercise, for example what the purpose of doing this exercise is. I think it is normal. I respect such two ideas. I think it is gendered approach. We cannot have the same requirement for males and females.* (CL HUP/M)

Nevertheless, when asked if he paid attention to any gender equality policy, he admitted that he did not take any notice of such policy.

That was at the university. In the two high schools, there was one respondent claiming that he taught differently between the maths class-which had more boys-and the literature class-which had more girls. He said that: *'...Instead of lecturing straight away at maths class, if I want to lecture C, I need to lecture A then B first at literature class'* (HE 2/s-M). There were two respondents pointing out the drawback of current teaching pedagogy that was to ask students to learn by heart much. The middle leader teacher at the first high school described: *'The way we teach requiring students to learn by heart very much, literature, history, geography and biology'* (ML 1/M).

Even the highly experienced female teacher who taught geography admitted that their social science subjects just required students to learn by heart. These ideas are relevant to the first section about the learning abilities of boys and girls. Half of the respondents had said that girls learned social subjects such as literature, history and geography better than boys, their

high marks at social subjects were thanks to their carefulness and hard work. The recently qualified teacher who taught history at the second high school thought that:

> *About my subject, how many students remember the date of events? One of my friends asked me how I could remember all the events, because after graduating, he forgot them all, he did not remember anything. I said that if I did not teach history, I would be like him, was not able to remember all.* (RQ 2/F)

She had said that boys were lazy when learning by heart English words so they found English boring.

The lecturer perceived that the current pedagogy was not positive so it could not abolish gender stereotypes. He said that:

> *In my opinion, because it is not positive and modern, it cannot abolish the tradition which indirectly influences upon gender equality. For example, once a teacher does not notice on the positivity of students, of course he will not care about how students say, how to stimulate the personality of boys, he just focuses on lecturing. Such teaching cannot protest against gender stereotypes from the society, it will affect gender equality certainly.* (L HUP/M)

13 out of 19 respondents asserted a big influence of teaching pedagogy to students' achievements. Two highly experienced teachers at the second high school said that:

> *Of course it has a relationship. The achievements of students reflect the teachers, if not, everyone can teach…So, teaching pedagogy is very important.* (HE 2/f-M)

> *A suitable teaching pedagogy makes students interested in that subject, they like the subject and will be more successful at the subject. If not, they will get bored.* (HE 2/F)

One of many other respondents appreciating the role of teaching pedagogy to students' learning result was the middle leader teacher at the first high school, he said that: *'Teaching pedagogy definitely influences students' achievement...So, it depends very much on teachers but not many teachers can do it'* (ML 1/M).

Three boys at the first high school claimed that the current teaching pedagogy was equal between students but two other boys thought that teachers paid more attention to girls in social science subject classes and to boys in natural science subject classes. A girl at the first high school had such an opinion but she accepted it. She said that:

> *I think mathematics teachers behave boys better but I accept that because they are actually better than us. If it is not equal, I still agree because boys are better than us. Because teachers can joke with us so I see it is ok.* (1/F3)

At the first high school, two girls declared that teaching pedagogy was important to students' achievements. One of them said that: *'It is important if teachers impart well and their methods fit well with students. The way they teach is important'* (1/F2).

Many respondents supposed that the current teaching pedagogy ensured that students were treated equally in high schools. Nonetheless, there were five respondents admitting that though they were treated equally, they were not aware of gender equality in education. There was one highly experienced teacher at the second high school who proved that he had an awareness of different learning styles of sexes. The lecturer and course leader at the university believed that they had 'gendered approach'-as the course leader said- while teaching, but then he confirmed that he had not paid attention to any policy about gender equality. Three students asserted that they were treated equally while two students saw teachers pay more attention to girls in social science classes and to boys in natural science classes. In the previous section, they had stated that girls learned social science subjects better than boys did and boys learned natural science subjects better than girls. One girl stated that mathematics teachers behaved better towards boys than girls but she accepted it because boys were better than girls.

Two respondents of staff perceived that the current teaching pedagogy had some foibles such as it required students to learn by heart so much and it was not positive so it could not protect against gender stereotypes.

13 out of 19 respondents appreciated the influence of teaching pedagogy on the achievements of students. If the teaching pedagogy was good, it could help students to get interested in subjects and had good learning results. Two students had the same opinion about the important role of teaching pedagogy to students' achievements.

4.1.5.2 The influence of teachers' qualification on gender equality

Besides teaching pedagogy, six respondents of staff listed the qualification of teachers as an element, which influenced students. The Head teacher at the second high schools stated that it was for teachers to decide the quality of education and the middle leader teacher at the first high school claimed that:

> *It is not teaching pedagogy which is more important than the curriculum, but it is that the qualifications of teachers are more important than the curriculum.* (ML 1/M)

He supposed that the qualification of teachers was more important than the curriculum. This opinion supported the 'making decision' role of teachers in education stated by the Head teacher at the second high school. A recently qualified teacher shared this same assessment about the qualification of teachers: *'I think curriculum is in the textbooks, it is just words and students read those words. The thing is the teacher...'* (RQ 1/M).

The lecturer analysed that teachers were very important because they were the connectors between the curriculum and the facts and they could modify the curriculum. He said that:

> *I think teachers are extremely important. Even when the curriculum is not adequate, teachers should recognise it. If we do not train teachers...Because they are teachers who connect the curriculum with the fact, teachers will amend the curriculum rather than create the curriculum. To do so, teachers must be qualified. If teachers are not qualified, nothing can be done. Nothing.* (L HUP/M)

Qualifications also influenced the way teachers treated students, as the highly experienced male teacher at the second high school said that a real teacher would behave equally to all students, the 'real' adjective he used implied the qualification of teachers. Thus, teachers' qualifications were important, yet the Head teacher at the second high school worried that:

> *In my opinion, teachers are important most, the qualification of teachers decide…but nowadays the attraction of a teaching career to good students is very limited. It is very difficult to improve the quality if the input is limited and teachers are not good.* (Head 2/M)

Six respondents admitted that they did not have formal knowledge of gender equality in education or even did not understand it, including the course leader and five teachers from the two high schools. Having more than 30 years' experience of teaching, the female teacher at the first high school said that: *'I do not know what gender equality is. I just say from my experience, I do not know what gender equality is, I do not think of it either'* (HE 1/F). Having 13 years teaching experience, the female teacher at the second high school expressed: *'I watched then I thought of it, the society develops, I think of it myself. I wasn't learned, when I was at the university, there was nothing about it'* (ML 2/F). She stated that when she was a student at a university of pedagogy, she was not provided with it. The recently qualified teacher at the first high school, who graduated from a university of pedagogy last year, was not taught about it either. He affirmed that: *'Honestly, I do not have any conception of gender equality. I wasn't taught about it when I was at university of pedagogy'* (RQ 1/M).

Therefore, six respondents, from different schools and at different levels of teaching experience, admitted that there was a lack of formal knowledge of gender equality. As a consequence of this, providing knowledge for ITT was necessary.

16 out of 19 respondents believed that providing formal knowledge of gender equality in education for teachers and ITT was necessary. Noticeably, among them were two Head teachers and the course leader.

The Head teacher at the first high school affirmed that:

At first, if schools want to have gender equality, teachers should value gender equality. Besides, teachers should have knowledge about gender equality in order to approach students well. (Head 1/M)

The course leader, who was in charge of curriculum for ITT at the university of pedagogy, stated that:

The Psychology Department has some modules relating to this issue. It is mentioned in the 'Psychology of Ages' module, but I think we need to reinforce some more. Reinforce. We even need some special subjects to provide ITT fully. (CL HUP/M)

Nevertheless, there were two opinions saying that it was not necessary to provide ITT or teachers' knowledge of gender equality. The highly experienced teacher at the second high school confirmed that:

I think, in the educational environment, it is not necessary to have gender equality issue. Because, as I said, in schools, all activities are equal themselves, there is no activity reserving for boys only or for girls only. (HE 2/f-M)

The vice principal insisted that:

I do not take the 'gender equality education' into account in this university because it is certain. Certainly. Trainee teachers must be aware of it because it is embedded in the society and in the law... (VP HUP/M)

One respondent supported the development of gender equality knowledge for and in ITT but noted that this depended on the subjects in question. He stated that: *'...it depends. For instance, what would students in mathematics ITT learn gender equality for?'* (HE 2/s-M). It was obvious that the number of respondents supporting the provision of formal gender equality knowledge for ITT outnumbered the two respondents disagreeing with it.

Six respondents of staff shifted the influence of teachers' qualification to students. Two teachers thought that it was more important than the curriculum. Six respondents confirmed that they did not have formal knowledge of gender equality and 16 out of 19 respondents emphasised the necessity of providing gender equality knowledge for ITT. Yet the vice principal and a teacher thought there was no need because educational activities were themselves gendered equality. One respondent said that gender equality in education was necessary but he thought it would work in some particular subjects.

4.1.5.3 The influence of homeroom teachers and mathematics teachers on gender equality

Six respondents talked about the role of homeroom teachers in promoting gender equality in high schools. In the previous section, some respondents believed that educating gender equality could be done in some particular subjects, but they could not do it frequently due to the relationship between gender issues and the content of the lessons. They then talked about the necessity of providing gender equality knowledge for teachers and ITT. It would be useful when they were homeroom teachers. They recommended homeroom teachers to teach about gender equality during the time that homeroom teachers stayed with their classes.

The middle leader teacher at the second high school stated that:

> *How can we educate gender equality if we have to teach many things in a lesson? So, homeroom teachers should tell students about it. It is a way to educate in 'extra lessons educating'.* (ML 2/F)

Another reason for not teaching about gender equality that respondents pointed out was the fixed time for each period of teaching. Class teachers could not educate students about gender equality since they had to complete the academic lessons or the content of the lessons did not relate to gender issues. Yet homeroom teachers could do it anytime during the time for homeroom teachers at their classes. The recently qualified teacher at the second high school said that: *'It's not right that we can do it in any periods, it depends on the lesson and by using the class activities period, homeroom teachers can say about it'* (RQ 2/F). In the

recommendation of changing the teaching pedagogy, the middle leader teacher at the first high school emphasized that:

We need to change the teaching pedagogy, especially when we are homeroom teachers. It is very important to have knowledge of gender equality when we are homeroom teacher of a class having more boys or more girls. (ML 1/F)

It appeared to be a truism that more mathematics teachers were men in two high schools. Three respondents explained why more mathematics teachers were men. They themselves were mathematics teachers at the two high schools. According to them, a female mathematics teacher encountered more difficulties than a male mathematics teacher in their teaching career. The Head teacher at the first high school supposed that:

Vietnamese people have a viewpoint that a maths-teaching career is stressful and dry and women will find it difficult to be successful. Such a viewpoint disheartens women, no women dare to take the entrance examinations. (Head 1/M)

The highly experienced mathematics teachers at the second high school had the same idea that females were afraid of mathematics because it was dry and females would find it hard to learn mathematics, especially when doing examinations. That was the reason why in the Mathematics Department of the university of pedagogy there were more males than females. The middle leader mathematics teacher at the second high school believed that one of the reasons that more mathematics teachers were male was the influence of families when orienting their children, he stated that: *'It is the viewpoint of the society so parents orient their daughters due to such viewpoints rather than to orient them to maths- too dry.'* (ML 2/s-M). Explaining this, two girls at two high schools asserted that because mathematics required good intelligence, this was to men's advantage. The girl at the second high school explained that: *'...because it requires the good mentality while men are cleverer than women'* (2/F2). A boy at the first high school presumed that it was because mathematics

required lots of time but women needed to spend time for family. Another boy at the same high school had an interesting explanation that:

> *I think women do not choose to become mathematics teachers because just only men who can transfer the mathematical logic and interest of mathematics for students.* (1/M5)

Eight boys and five girls at high schools preferred learning mathematics and natural science subjects with men teachers to women teachers because it was easier to discuss or just because they felt more secure. A girl at the second high school said that: *'I prefer being taught mathematics by men to women because I feel more secured. I find it is fun, it is more stressful though'* (2/F-G). One boy declared that he could learn with either men or women mathematics teachers.

To six respondents of staff, homeroom teachers could do much more than class teachers in educating students about gender equality in high schools. Some class teachers could teach about gender equality in particular lessons but all homeroom teachers could do it whenever they were at their classes at the time for homeroom teachers.

Three male mathematics teachers explained why more mathematics teachers were male, it was because females found it difficult to succeed in mathematics and learning mathematics was hard. There was also an opinion that daughters were oriented not to choose mathematics as it was dry. Students explained why more mathematics teachers were men with different ideas such as that mathematics required good mentality whilst men were cleverer than women or because mathematics teachers needed to spend much time on it whilst women had to make time for family or just because men could transfer the logic and interests of mathematics to students. 13 students confirmed that they preferred learning mathematics with men teachers because men teachers were easier to talk to and students felt more secure. In the previous section, a girl had stated that mathematics teacher treated boys better. One student said that he was neutral on the issue.

4.1.5.4 Summary
More than half of the respondents drawn from staff believed that teachers treated boys and girls equally at high schools, yet five respondents claimed that though teaching equally, they

did not have the awareness of gender equality in education. One teacher, the lecturer and the course leader gave examples proving that they used it whilst teaching. Two respondents thought that the current teaching pedagogy contained foibles such as making students learn by heart too much and it did not protect against gender stereotypes. In contrast with the belief of teaching staff that they treated students equally, two boys perceived it was unequal since teachers paid more attention to girls in social science subjects and to boys in natural science subjects. A girl said that mathematics teachers behaved better towards boys but she accepted it because boys were better than girls. 13 out of 19 staff respondents claimed a big influence from teaching pedagogy upon students' achievements. Good teaching pedagogy could help a student find subjects interesting and achieving good learning results. Students had similar opinions about the role of teaching pedagogy on their achievements.

Respondents who were staff also emphasized the qualification of teachers as one of the important elements contributing to the quality of education. Students did not mention it. Six respondents asserted that they did not have formal knowledge of gender equality in education. Emphasizing the necessity of having gender equality knowledge, 16 respondents thought we should provide gender equality knowledge for ITT. Nonetheless, the vice principal and a teacher declared that it was not necessary since all educational activities were for both genders equally. One teacher supposed that we should provide such knowledge for ITT in some subjects, the content of which related to gender issues.

Six respondents of staff value the role of homeroom teachers in educating gender equality for high school students since they had the time for homeroom teachers at their classes and they could teach about it while class teachers could hardly do it in the limited time available. Three mathematics teachers explained why there were more men teaching mathematics. It was because a woman mathematics teacher would encounter more difficulties than a man mathematics teacher. One mathematics teacher thought that it was the influence of families on their daughters so that the girls did not choose mathematics. Moreover, mathematics was dry and it was hard to learn. Two students affirmed that mathematics required good intelligence and men were cleverer than women so there were more male mathematics teachers. Another boy perceived that mathematics required a lot of time and women had to make time for their families. Especially, there was a boy confirming that only men could transfer the logic and interests in mathematics to students. 13 students said that they preferred learning mathematics and natural science subjects with male teachers because of

two reasons: it was easier to discuss and they felt better. One student said that he could learn mathematics with either a woman or a man teacher.

4.1.6 Improvement strategies to promote gender equality
4.1.6.1 Strategies to promote gender equality in the society

In the previous section, respondents pointed out the main barriers to gaining gender equality in society. Seven respondents recommended strategies to gain gender equality in society. Firstly, it was to pay more attention to women so they could have better positions. For instance, better education was the first recommendation of the vice principal and the highly experienced male teacher at the first high school. The teacher said that when girls had better education, the gender stereotypes would be abolished. Secondly, according to the vice principal, we should improve education for not only women but also for all citizens to push up the intellectual standard of Vietnamese people. Together with cultural exchange and information campaigns, gender issues could be improved in time. 'Information campaigns' was an approach recommended by the highly experienced male teacher at the first high school and the Head teacher at the second high school. From having better education, women could have a position in society, as the vice principal, the lecturer and the first middle leader teacher at the second high school expected. There were four respondents who stated that in the process of promoting gender equality, women should make more effort themselves. For example, the first middle leader teacher at the second high school said: *'I think modern women should make effort themselves. If they are given some advantages but they do not make effort, it cannot be successful'* (ML 2/f-M). Lastly, the Head teacher and the highly experienced male teacher at the second high school recommended developing the economy. The Head teacher analysed that:

> *We need to have economy development policy to help women to escape from poverty because they have to work hard on the fields all the year, when they go home, they do not have any cultural activities or because their lives are too hard to get their rights.* (Head 2/M)

The highly experienced male teacher at the first high school advised a systematic change; he expressed that:

It needs to be changed systematically. With such current situation of society and family, schools are not able to do gender equality. Change systematically. (HE 1/M)

There were strategies to overcome gender inequality recommended by some respondents. These included that society should pay more attention to women, from giving advantages in education to jobs and positions in the society and that government agencies should seek to improve the intellectual level of the people as a whole and develop the economy.

4.1.6.2 Strategies to improve the policy and curriculum to promote gender equality

Respondents recommended amending the policy and curriculum. The vice principal stated that:

Perhaps, it is necessary. The reason is that the policy and psychology have their moving processes, so we need to have policy amended and supplement them suitably and in time. (VP HUP/M)

The lecturer and the middle leader teacher at the second high school supposed that it would be good if the policy could be more concrete. The lecturer recommended that:

Of course, we can, but the policy must be concrete. For instance, in order to carry out that policy, we should amend school subjects and vocational division by acting on the real teaching fact of teachers so they know that having such policy is having gender equality, if the policy influences directly on teachers, they will give boys and girls equal advantages. (L HUP/M)

The Head teacher at the second high school and the middle leader teacher at the first high school listed the advantages for women to develop, such as: *'... we should have assistance policy to assist students encountering difficulty, giving more priority for girls in such cases'* (ML 1/M). In addition, the lecturer and the middle leader teacher suggested to investing more on vocational training with attention to gender equality, the teacher said that:

I think the government should pay attention to do vocational training so as to be gender equality. They should check if women do not have jobs, they should create jobs for them. They should create more jobs. Feminine jobs, more translating jobs…Now all jobs are for men, what can women do after graduating? (ML 2/f-M)

The Head teacher advised to 'do it synchronously' which was similar to the opinion of the teacher concerning improvement strategies to promote gender equality in general.

Together with policy, the curriculum was recommended for change since in the previous section about curriculum, seven respondents perceived that it was not good in the area of gender equality. The Head teacher at the second high schools suggested changing the assessing process suitably. The highly experienced male teacher at the first high school and the newly qualified female teacher at the second high school recommended making the curriculum more practical. The woman said that:

At first, we need to help students understand the meanings of subjects. Secondly, we need to cut down the curriculum, just concentrate to the most basic knowledge... (RQ 2/F)

The recommendation of cutting down the curriculum was shared by the second middle leader in the same school and it related to the previous section highlighting that some teachers perceived that the current curriculum was too difficult. The highly experienced female teacher at the first high school advised amending the curriculum as it was very slow in comparison to the speedy development of science and society.

Some teachers suggested strongly that gender equality knowledge in the curriculum should be supplemented. The newly qualified male teacher at the second high school recommended creating a brief element in the curriculum about gender equality for high school students. At the same school, the middle leader teacher suggested scheduling one period/week or 3-4 classes/semester, it would work much better than educating whenever there was a related content. It should be scheduled as a module. The Deputy Head teacher and the course leader

thought that we should integrate gender equality in all school subjects. Another interesting suggestion was that:

> *We need to have the whole innovation of awareness. It means the editors of the curriculum are not only good at their profession but also have good understanding of education. Or after curriculum has been edited, it needs to be reviewed by educational specialists and we have to follow their advice.* (L HUP/M)

Respondents recommended that the policy should be amended to be more concrete, giving more advantages for women, more attention to gender equality in vocational training and we needed to do it synchronously. The assessing process should be changed and the curriculum should be more practical. This recommendation of staff related to the opinion of students that the curriculum was not practical. A teacher suggested that the curriculum should be amended to be more up-to-date. There were recommendations to cut down the curriculum and to educate high school students about gender equality by integrating gender equality in some or all school subjects. Turning back to previous section, students had said that the curriculum was too much and quick-fire. Students also perceived that if schools did not educate students about gender equality, it could have negative effects in the long run. Lastly, the lecturer recommended having the comments from educational specialist when editing the curriculum.

4.1.6.3 Strategies to improve teaching pedagogy to promote gender equality

Three respondents of staff expected to change the current teaching pedagogy to promote gender equality in education. The Head teacher, the Deputy Head teacher and a middle leader teacher at the second high school recommended the new teaching pedagogy. The Head teacher advised that teachers graduating from university of pedagogies should be able to approach new teaching pedagogy. The new teaching pedagogy as the Deputy Head teacher described was group discussion:

> *This new teaching pedagogy reveals the equality, leader and secretary are equal in a group, they conclude before discussing it in class. Thus, boys and*

girls have opportunity to discuss, speak out their own ideas or ideas of their group then conclude. (Deputy Head 2/M)

However, he himself saw that the facilities of schools were limited so it would be difficult to carry out frequently.

In promoting gender equality, respondents recommended some methods that teachers could apply, such as to act on what was close to their life-as the newly qualified female teacher at the second high school said-or we should let students speak out more and show the relation between academic knowledge and the fact, such as:

> *Firstly, we should bring new blood to teaching staff, secondly letting students saying out their opinions more...We need to connect lessons with real life, if we just concentrate on textbooks, students do not know how it is in practice...* (ML 1/F)

The vice principal gave an example of dealing with students who quit schools showing that we should give more consideration on gendered issues. The lecturer advised promotion of gender equality whilst teaching like this:

> *...I think promoting gender equality related to educational issue, it means when we teach about the tradition, it is not imperative as it is traditional, if we do that it will not be progressive. For example, when we teach about a traditional character, we need to modify so it fits the awareness of youth to move toward rather than take it back to the tradition as we used to do.* (L HUP/M)

We needed to change the teaching pedagogy by applying new teaching methods such as group discussions. Whilst teaching, teachers should let students speak out, connect the textbooks' information with real life, give more consideration to gender issues and modify suitably with as this develops.

4.1.6.4 Strategies to improve trainee teachers' knowledge about gender equality

There were two main recommendations about how to provide gender equality knowledge in education for ITT.

The first recommendation was to integrate it in some common compulsory subjects, which had been taught for ITT such as psychology, education or teaching pedagogy. Five respondents who suggested integrating gender equality in education were a Head teacher, the course leader and three high school teachers. The course leader, who was in charge of curriculum for ITT at the university of pedagogy asserted that:

> *It will definitely in the common subjects for all ITT, for example we can integrate it into psychology, education...Perhaps I will research to have more information about this issue then I will consulate the managers to make it a particular subject or to be integrated.* (CL HUP/M)

The second recommendation was to make gender equality become a subject for ITT. Six respondents including a Head teacher and five teachers thought that gender equality should be taught as an independent subject. The highly experienced teacher at the second high school said that:

> *Make it a concrete subject and make the statement that in the later on they will work with students who need gender equality. Make it a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the university of pedagogy.* (HE 2/F)

The vice principal believed that gender equality had already been embedded in the existed common curriculum such as the subject of 'Ho Chi Minh's thoughts'.

The researcher looked for what should be taught for ITT about gender equality, but as she wrote in previous chapters, teachers lacked knowledge about gender equality in education so some respondents stated that they had no ideas about how to promote it. Four respondents felt comfortable to presume that we should underpin ITT with knowledge about gender equality, such as:

...understandings about the law, the regulations about women's rights, opportunities...Moreover, special knowledge about gender equality, genders, maternity, health...They are important knowledge...psychology...to be the background for ITT... (Head /2M)

Such specific knowledge about gender was also the choice of the Deputy Head teacher and the newly qualified female teacher at the second high school to equip trainee teachers. Three respondents including the Head teacher and the newly qualified female teacher at the second high school and the middle leader teacher at the first high school suggested changes to the law as essential for gender equality. For example, one of them said that: *'We should review our law...I see women beaten by husbands but do not know to report to the police'* (ML 1/M). The Head teacher at the second high school and the highly experienced teacher at the first high school supposed that the knowledge of psychology of boys and girls needed to be taken into account. The teacher pointed out that:

From understanding the psycho-physiology of students, we will lead them to actions and showing by our action… I think we should teach trainee teachers about what a man should do, what a woman should do to fit with the role of a man and a woman in the society and in our circumstances, that is the custom. (HE 1/F)

The course leader emphasized that gender equality knowledge should be provided in ITT, especially for trainee teachers who would teach at nurseries. Seven respondents, including all three respondents at the university of pedagogy and the Deputy Head teacher and three teachers believed it was best to educate gender equality right from early years. The highly experienced teacher at the first high school emphasized that: *'It is very important that we should have the cooperation between families and schools to educate nursery children about gender equality'* (HE 1/F). Some of the respondents explained why gender equality should be taught to children from very young ages. It was because nursery age was the most suitable time to educate, stated the middle leader teacher at the first high school; or because children were easy to be influenced, as the course leader said: *'...because when children are young, their awareness are immature, are easy to be affected, if we do not have proper*

activities, they will be affected' (CL HUP/M). Furthermore, educating gender equality for children at nurseries could help them to build good habits, as the Deputy Head teacher described:

> *We need to have a plan to educate students about gender but we have to do it from early years. In nursery schools, children need to see and know that conception...Starting from the first schoolings, from childhood, children make it become a habit, a moral thought, it will be better…we need to do from the root to the top.* (Deputy Head 2/M)

There were two main recommended solutions to provide knowledge of gender equality in education for ITT. The first one was to integrate it into the common compulsory subjects like psychology, education or teaching pedagogy. This solution was recommended by five respondents, they were the course leader, a Head teacher and three teachers. The second one was to create a subject for gender equality knowledge, suggested by six respondents, including a Head teacher and five teachers. The vice principal did not think we should supplement knowledge about gender equality because it was embedded in some current common subjects at the university. Four respondents recommended providing ITT specific knowledge about gender equality, law, psychology and the role of men and women in the society.

All respondents at the university, a Deputy Head teacher and three teachers recommended educating children about gender equality from early years. It was supposed to be the best time for they were immature and could build positive habits as well as moral views about gender equality.

4.1.6.5 Summary

To have gender equality in the society, respondents supposed that we should pay more attention to females such as giving them more advantages in education or in work so they could have better positions. Likewise, respondents perceived that improving the intellectual standard of Vietnamese people and developing the economy would be helpful. Further, women should make the effort to have better positions. In addition, we should promote gender equality systematically.

There were opinions about the necessity of amending the policy to be more concrete, to give women more advantages and to pay more attention to gender equality in vocational training. We should do it synchronously. Respondents said that we should change the curriculum to be more practical and more up to date. There was one idea to change the assessing process. In addition, teachers thought that it would be good to cut down the curriculum and the Deputy Head teacher and the course leader wished to integrate gender equality in all school subjects to educate high school students. In addition, we needed to have consult with educational specialists when editing the curriculum.

Respondents showed the necessity of changing the teaching pedagogy so it could give students opportunities to speak out as well as to let them see the relationship between textbooks' knowledge and real life. Moreover, some respondents recommended teachers to give more consideration on gender issues as well as somehow modify the content to fit well with the development.

Besides changing the teaching pedagogy, 11 staff respondents recommended two strategies to provide ITT with knowledge about gender equality in education, one was to integrate gender equality knowledge into some current common subjects for all ITT such as psychology or education and one was to make it a subject in the curriculum for ITT. In such a subject, we needed to have specific knowledge of gender, gender equality, law and the roles of men and women in the society. The vice principal did not think we should do anything on providing gender equality knowledge for ITT since it was embedded in current common subjects.

Seven respondents asserted that it would be best to educate children from early years about gender equality because at that time they were immature, so they could then build up positive habits and proper thoughts about gender equality.

4.1.7 Benefits of having gender equality

Respondents supposed if gender equality was promoted, society and education would benefit from it.

4.1.7.1 Benefits of gender equality to the society

The responses from staff revealed that gender equality could benefit not only society and the economy but also families.

Two respondents of staff perceived that if we had gender equality, women would have better lives because they would be treated equally and their roles would be valued. The Head teacher at the second high school stated that:

> *...women will be treated equally in the society in opportunity of promotion, recruitment and when they are equal, the development of the community and the company where gender equality is respected will develop.* (Head 2/M)

At the same school, the highly experienced woman teacher shared that: *'I think the society will admit the role of women better. They will not have the viewpoint that men have more power'* (HE 2/F). This 'viewpoint' was one of the main barriers to gender equality in the society and it seemed clear that if it was changed, society would enjoy improvements in relation to gender issues.

In society, things would be better once gender equality was secured. We could have a more developed and more advanced society, as the middle leader teacher at the second high school presumed that:

> *..if we can do this (gender equality) well in education, we can have proper viewpoint of genders which impulses the development of the society sustainably.* (ML 2/f-M)

The Head teacher and the newly qualified male teacher at the second high school made similar statements about a more developed community with more respect between people. Four teachers supposed that the economy would benefit from gender equality. The newly qualified female teacher at the second high school said that:

> *When gender equality is popular, women will have important roles; they can develop their ability, which benefits the economy because we do not waste 50% of human resources any longer.* (RQ 2/F)

Therefore, if women and men had equal opportunity to develop, it would be beneficial to the economy by making more use of half of human resources. As the result of this, *'of course*

it impulses the economy to develop more' said the recently qualified teacher at the first high school. The highly experienced male teacher at the first high school and the middle leader teacher female teacher at the second high school shared a similar opinion about the benefits to the economy.

The lecturer, the Head teacher and two teachers at the second high school and three teachers at the first high school indicated that families would be benefit from gender equality. Most of them envisaged happier families. The middle leader teacher at the first high school supposed that the first benefit was to have a more interesting family life when students understood gender equality and practised it within their own family. The second middle leader teacher at the second high school stated that they would have happier families with more fun. The lecturer thought that the family would be more comfortable and the next generation would have a better viewpoint about gender. He said that:

> *…About family, the good awareness of gender equality helps men to respect women regardless of the difference relating to biology, psychology or manners. Men have to respect women; they do not impose women because they are male. Therefore, the family will be more opened, comfortable, multiple which make the younger generation have better viewpoint. Better.* (L HUP/M)

Staff perceived that if gender equality was guaranteed, women would be treated equally and their roles would be confirmed. Besides, we could have a more developed and advanced society with satisfactory behaviour and a clearer viewpoint. In addition, the economy would be developed by gender equality benefits when half of the human resources were better utilised. Seven respondents assumed that there would be happier families if gender equality was established. Younger generations would have a better understanding of gender equality.

4.1.7.2 Benefits of having gender equality to education

The vice principal, the course leader, the two Head teachers and eight teachers believed that education would be of benefit to gender equality.

The Head teacher and two teachers at the first high school and two teachers at the second high school had the same statements that students and teachers would have proper behaviours. The middle leader teacher at the first high school asserted that:

> *Teachers will perceive the equality. It may be the same issue but they will have the proper behaviours. Moreover, in education, students will promote it (gender equality) themselves.* (ML 1/M)

The Head teacher at the first high school and the Deputy Head teacher at the second high school expected that teachers and trainee teachers would promote gender equality actively if they were equipped with gender equality knowledge. The Deputy Head teacher pressed that:

> *If trainee teachers are provided with knowledge about gender equality, when they come to school, they know what their schools are lacking of. For example when students gather to salute the flag, both males and females, they can see the shortcomings, it should be different to be equal or when they see boys and girls playing in the playground, 'it is not equal', they can recognize it at once.* (Deputy Head 2/M)

Further, the vice principal and two highly experienced teachers at two high schools supposed that it would have positive influence on students and their parents afterwards. The vice principal maintained that:

> *If all the policy and education are given equally to boys and girls, their awareness as well as information and understanding will increase. They will have enough proper understanding about their genders and their opportunities.* (VP HUP/M)

About students, a Head teacher and two teachers presumed that they would have equal opportunity and would be more active in choosing their careers. The middle leader teacher said that:

> ..*Female students will know what rights they have, what rights they have in the society such as no one can force them to learn in class A or class D, there is no such rules. They have rights to choose what they like. Alternatively, in choosing career, no one can force them; they can choose the careers that they find suitable with their inclination, parents or consultants cannot force them.* (ML 1/F)

Furthermore, a Head teacher and three class teachers thought that their students would have a better educational environment, which was happy and 'friendly'-said the newly qualified female teacher at the second high school. The man teacher presumed that:

> *Gender equality in high school contributes a benefit: a class will have the solidarity and happy atmosphere if gender equality exists when a student comes in. Female students will manifest their ability. One more thing, gender equality helps students with their vocations.* (ML 2/f-M)

If gender equality was strengthened in education, it would give a positive influence back to education. 12 respondents talked about benefits that education would have such as: students and teachers would behave properly, teachers would actively promote gender equality in their schools or it would influence students and their parents afterwards. Students would have equal opportunities and be active in choosing careers or doing what they found interesting. Further, the educational atmosphere could be happier when gender equality existed in classes.

4.1.7.3 Summary

Society, the economy and families would benefit from gender equality generally and from enhanced gender equality in schools more specifically since the economy would grow

thanks to the better deployment of female human resources. Staff believed that once gender equality was strengthened, education would benefit. First would be the attitude of teachers and students toward gender equality. Secondly, teachers would actively promote gender equality in their schools even when the schools did not have a policy on it. Thirdly, gender equality would have a beneficial influence on students as well as their parents. Fourthly, students would benefit from equal opportunities and they would be active in choosing careers or doing things. Lastly, gender equality could and should create a happier and more productive atmosphere in classes.

4.2 Data from staff in England

Data collected from staff in England are outlined according to five main themes, which relate closely to the research questions.

- Theories of gender and education
- Gender issues in the society
- The influence of government policy and curriculum to gender equality
- The influence of teaching pedagogy on gender equality
- Strategies to improve the knowledge of gender equality for trainee teachers

Five themes emerged from the questions in the interview schedules and it is notable that they are similar to the themes derived from the data gathered in Vietnam. One sub-theme: 'The influence of families and jobs to gender issues' emerged from the data.

4.2.1 Theories of gender and education
4.2.1.1 Boys and girls had different learning styles

All respondents talked about the different learning styles of boys and girls. The Assistant Head teacher and the lecturer said that boys liked the challenges of examinations and head-to-head competition whilst girls did not. The lecturer expressed that:

> *Boys like the challenge of an examination, they like challenges of exams, they like final examinations, they like the sort of very quickly get to point of things and they like to do things, they are quite active. I think girls take longer*

sometimes and like to discuss and work around things. Girls tend to do multi task but boys do one task really good. (L/F)

Moreover, four people perceived that boys were active and they 'got to things' quickly and that they did each task very well. They thought that girls spent more time on revision. Also, girls had a tendency to like multi-tasking, creativity, language-based approaches and they were responsive to such approaches. In addition, they claimed that girls worked harder and put more effort to achieve. The middle leader teacher stated that:

> *... I think girls are more organised, they are more willing to learn, they are more willing to do homework, they are more willing to put extra effort in but that's not generalized and say all boys don't but on the majority or, yeah, say probably. Even my own children my daughters work much harder than my son.* (ML/F)

The recently qualified teacher believed that the better results in learning that girls gained were thanks to their hard work. She supposed that:

> *I think the girls do...maybe they try harder and then therefore they seem to achieve more because they put more effort in. The boys can be a bit, you know, I don't know, lazy sometimes.* (RQ/F)

The course leader touched on the 'laziness' of boys in learning as well, but she had an interesting explanation. She analysed that:

> *You know, for boys being studios is actually not seen as being cool. You know, it's not cool. So therefore, the other challenge I have certainly had as a teacher is boys are often, they rather be thought of as lazy rather than not bright. So they can often hide behind thinking that rather when their parents come to talk to you as a teacher, they rather be told 'your son is very bright but he's very lazy. If he just worked, he'd really do very well'. But actually*

he might find doing the work quite hard but he hides behind, pretending 'I don't really need to work, I don't want to work'. (CL/F)

As an experienced teacher and a course leader, she saw the gender identities of boys and girls as being important, so that boys were expected to behave in particular ways, for example, girls could be studious, quiet and they listened but boys were not expected to be like that. *'It was not cool'* (CL/F), she said. The recently qualified teacher saw that girls were neater than boys.

Respondents emphasized the difference in learning styles of boys and girls. They affirmed that boys were active, competitive and quickly got to things. Boys also like challenging exams and preferred one task whereas girls worked hard, made more effort and they needed longer times for discussion. Further, respondents perceived that girls preferred multi-tasking and assignments, which were creative and language based. Two respondents talked about the laziness of boys in different ways. The young teacher thought that boys were lazy but the experienced course leader explained that boys might find the work hard but because of the stereotypes, they had to pretend that they were lazy.

4.2.1.2 Strategies to promote gender equality in education
All respondents at the high school acknowledged that gender did influence their teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes. They declared that gender influenced the way they encouraged students in learning. The Assistant Head teacher supposed:

> *I think it does influence teachers in ... how they might encourage pupils, they might use different strategies with boys and girls because they react in different ways to different types of encouragement.* (AH/F)

Respondents described seven strategies, which had been carried out in their institutions to promote gender equality. At the university, they had a celebration of a worldwide event about encouraging more females into chemistry and they discussed about ways to promote science to girls. The lecturer said that she invited a male guest speaker to come in and speak to trainee teachers to avoid them from associating the subject with the sex of person who taught it. They also did a session relating to gender issues and they did group work and pair

work whilst teaching. At the high school, they encouraged more girls into engineering by taking girls on trips to car factories or bringing in successful women to talk to students. For instance, the Deputy Head teacher said that:

> *I mean we have done things like we brought in people who are successful in different spheres of life, women who have been politically successful in local education or individuals who have been sporting champions and women who have success in business and so on.* (DH/M)

They also encouraged students through doing things that they liked, for example, they encouraged underachieving boys in reading in English by providing activities and reading materials relating to football, which was their favourite topic. The recently qualified teacher said that:

> *... So we're trying to encourage achievement through things like…we're trying to encourage achievement through things they are interested in. I think that's the thing with boys. They have to be interested in it. So it's a football thing and things like that.* (RQ/F)

Furthermore, the course leader and the lecturer mentioned a strategy that some schools had operated in relation to gender that was to separate boys and girls in certain subjects like mathematics or English. The lecturer stated that:

> *... So what some schools have done is split them for certain subjects. So they're all in one school but separate in certain subjects like English so that they can have certain materials suited to the boys and certain materials suited to the girls.* (L/F)

The university and the high school staff had one thing in common in terms of gender awareness and that was to analyse the results of students. The course leader claimed: *'... So every year what we do is we look at each course and we would look at males and females and we say: Are they both achieving the same?'* (CL/F).

Responses from staff at the high school reflected that genders influenced their teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes. There were also examples of strategies, which had been applied at the university and high school to promote gender equality. At the university, they held events to encourage more females into science or they invited a guest speaker of the opposite sex to the teacher of a certain subject so students would not associate the sex of the teacher with the subject that she taught. They also held a session in relation to gender issues and they did group work, pair work. At the high school, they encouraged more girls into engineering by taking girls to car factories or bringing in successful women from different spheres to provide good role models for students. In addition, they paid attention to students' interests whilst encouraging them in learning. They split boys and girls in certain subjects to focus on the learning needs of boys and girls. Both the university and the high school analysed the learning results of students with attention to genders.

4.2.1.3 The role of education and benefits of promoting gender equality

Two respondents at the university and three out of four respondents at the high school insisted on gender equality among students in their institutions. The Assistant Head teacher stated that:

> *I think that the school promotes very much equality in students in gender... But I think the school really enforces that everybody should be equal and have the same opportunities. So we here try to tell pupils everything, you know, it doesn't matter you are a boy or a girl, everybody's the same.* (AH/F)

Not only affirming gender equality in their school, staff also emphasised that schools were the best or one of the best places to promote gender equality, as the Deputy Head teacher said. Most of them declared that universities and schools should be central to the drive for gender equality in education, for example, the lecturer stated that: *'I think university has a role in ensuring that people understand gender equality' (*L/F). She and the Deputy Head teacher confirmed that gender equality was an important issue and should be a focal point in education whereas four other respondents, though they admitted the importance of gender in education, believed that gender equality was less of an issue. The course leader stated:

I think that the gender issues are less of an issue, that makes sense, then actually where we are now it's about equality and diversity for young people with special education needs that's where now our focus is…..so I think here, in this country we probably move to thinking about other groups, characteristics of groups that need more inclusion. (CL/F)

Respondents pointed out various benefits if gender equality was underpinned in education. The course leader believed that it would raise the aspirations of young women and prevent them from becoming pregnant at teenage age; she expressed that:

… We do have in this country a much higher of teenage pregnancy between 16 and 17. If you look at this region report they would tell you that there were pregnancy per 100 girls between the age of 16 and 17 than there are in other areas of the country. I can send you that report…But because young people aren't staying in education. So it's about ensuring that everybody has equal education, we have high expectation and you give young people aspiration. Unfortunately, young women don't have that… unfortunately it's the girl that has pregnancy, it's the girl that has child that's why we really do need to tackle that. (CL/F)

The lecturer hoped to have better social awareness and a wider range of jobs. She said that:

…I think it's good for people have social awareness. I think they become better communication with each other, so they communicate better as adults and as young adults. I think that they… for a wider types of jobs, they don't restrict themselves to a certain job so that they see that they can go for any type for job so they don't restrict their own development really and their own career opportunities. So if they see that any job is open to them and they will try it so that's good. (L/F)

The Deputy Head teacher thought that there would be a fairer society with great improvement in gender relations. Three respondents shared the same idea that they would

have equal education for every student and their achievements in the whole school would be improved.

Three respondents emphasized equal opportunities when talking about gender equality. For instance, the Assistant Head teacher stated that:

> *... I think that everybody should have equal opportunities to do whatever they want to do in life and to be given the opportunities to realize that they can do that, but particularly with gender, I think it's very important that both genders have the opportunities and have realised that they can go in whatever directions they would like to do.* (AH/F)

Both staff at the university and the high school guaranteed gender equality in their institutions. They also confirmed the important role of the university and high school in promoting gender equality yet only two of them admitted that gender was an important issue and it should be a focus of education. Although four respondents indicated that gender equality was important, they believed that it was less of an issue than it used to be.

Respondents mentioned various benefits that gender equality in education could bring such as raising the aspirations of young people, having better social awareness and wider access to jobs or a fairer society. They also believed in equal education with improvement to students' achievements if gender equality was secured. Through their viewpoint, they revealed that equal opportunities were shifting when talking about gender equality.

4.2.1.4 Summary

Respondents shared their observations about different learning styles of boys and girls. They perceived that boys understood things quickly, they liked to have challenging exams and they were competitive, active and they preferred one task whereas girls liked multi task and needed longer time for discussion before doing things. When girls learned, they worked harder and made more efforts than boys did. Girls were interested in creativity and language based approaches. The young, recently qualified, teacher said that boys were lazy but the course leader explained that it might be the stereotypes that boys were thought to be lazy and thus they pretended that they were.

Respondents also talked about seven strategies which they had carried out in their institutions or they had seen in some schools. At the university, these were to create a worldwide event to encourage more girls into science or to invite a guest speaker who was the opposite sex to the teacher who taught that subject to prevent students from associating the sex of teacher with the subject that she taught. Lecturers did group work, pair work and there was a session relating to gender issues for trainee teachers as well. At the high school, staff encouraged more girls into engineering by taking girls to visit a car factory or bringing in successful women in different spheres to provide good role models for students. School also assisted underachieving boys through learning activities and learning materials, which were their favourites. Both university and school analysed their students' learning results with attention to gender as well as understanding the influence of gender on their teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes.

All respondents affirmed their commitment to gender equality in their university and school. They claimed that gender was important in education and two respondents shifted slightly and stated that it was an issue that needed to be in focus (rather than being central) whilst four respondents believed that gender was less of an issue. Most of them supposed that university and school should be central in the drive for gender equality.

They pointed out the benefits of gaining gender equality in education such as the improvement in social awareness and aspirations of young people, especially young women to avoid teenage pregnancy or a fairer society with wider types of jobs. Half of them stated there would be an equal learning environment when gender equality was gained. They also explained their viewpoint about gender equality when emphasizing equal opportunities for everybody.

4.2.2 Gender issues in the society
4.2.2.1 The influence of families and jobs on gender issues

Five out of six respondents said that families did influence students and people in gender issues. The Deputy Head teacher stated that:

> *To be fair in this country it is there are no impediments to women doing well in terms of the institutions. The impediments are themselves in terms of how*

they perceive themselves and that stems from how the families have treated them. (DH/M)

They believed that families affected boys' engagement with learning, especially in families where fathers did not have any qualifications, for example, the course leader stated that:

> *It may be the class thing, in the UK we have class system and often it's working-class boys were not seem to be cool to work hard because typically in their environment they have come from families where the role model father isn't in academia or in any such of work that requires any sort of qualification. They're often working in the car factories so their unskilled works…works where education doesn't play a part and so often again it's all about rode model. Boys will not engage with learning because they can't see that it's worth.* (CL/F)

The perceptions of students about genders, which were influenced by families, could make schools have challenges when promoting gender equality; as the lecturer said that:

> *I think one of the biggest problems in schools though is that students come with inequality perceptions from their background sometimes that school find it's difficult to overcome.* (L/F)

It seems clear that she believed the perceptions about jobs for women and jobs for men were influenced by families as well as schools.

All respondents talked about jobs or careers as one of the main factors influencing gender equality in society. They perceived that in high-ranking jobs, men dominated. The Assistant Head teacher declared that:

> *I think if you look at some of the most challenging jobs in society in the top levels of society, there is still imbalance between men and women, for example, politics, business, very high level managers...it tends to be male dominated.* (AH/F)

The middle leader teacher had the same thought about gender imbalance in higher jobs but she supposed that it was accepted. Two teachers saw that women's positions at work could be lost when they had children. One of them explained that:

> *I think women are afraid to have children sometimes because of the affect it can have on their career. You think you need to lose your position in school if you don't come back, you know, soon, or things like that, whereas men don't have that issue.* (RQ/F)

Most respondents perceived that families had a big influence on gender issues in education and in society. They were influenced by role models in families or the class that students came from which could then make gender issues in school difficult to overcome. The influence could also affect the perception about certain jobs for certain sexes. There remained the imbalance in gaining high-ranking jobs where men dominated and women might lose their positions at work when they had children.

4.2.2.2 The viewpoint about gender issues in society

All respondents confirmed that gender equality in society was better than in the past. The lecturer claimed: *'... I think we have become more, you know, open to the whole variety of different things and boys and girls do not have to conform to stereotypes'* (L/F). However, there were some things that needed to be addressed. For instance, the Deputy Head teacher pointed out that:

> *In the media, for instance, the imagery that the media uses to portray women as confectionary or as things are to be there for the gratification of people's less appealing appetites, that they're objects of ... of desire for men, I think that's something that needs to be addressed. I don't agree with the fact that the argument some women saying that 'that's my choice'. Sometimes those choices are not good for the development of society.*

> *... even now, in most houses, women do most the work. They look after the kids. When men and women divorced it's not the men to have children, it's the women. It's a man's world. This is the man's world.* (DH/M)

Five out of six respondents emphasized that gender equality was very important in society, as the course leader declared that:

> *...Striving for it. Very important. Very important indeed. For all the reasons I have said before until we have women with higher self-esteem then the society will have lots of problems. Women have a very strong role to play in terms of influencing their children because they often particularly in single parent or single mum that keeps the children and they influence on the children. We need to educate young women to provide the best part for their children.* (CL/F)

However, the Assistant Head teacher warned that it would be very difficult to gain such esteem and she thought it was something that took a long time to do. The Deputy Head teacher shared the same opinion that: *'In theory, everything is moving in the right direction, in practice the journey has a long way to go, you know…'* (DH/M). The middle leader teacher had a different viewpoint about gender equality in society when she said that:

> *I think… because… it's ok… it's pretty equal on the surface I think people don't see it as an issue because obviously there is equality of pay so you have to have the same pay for the same job.* (ML/F)

Three respondents pointed out barriers that they thought should be overcome to gain gender equality in society. To the course leader, it was to make sure that women had the same opportunities as men did, she said that: *'... we need to ensure women have all opportunities to pass all career path ways, they have the same that men have'* (CL/F). The lecturer supposed that it would be the role models whilst the Deputy Head teacher believed it was the *'psychological perceptions of different classes of people'* (DH/M).

All respondents admitted the improvement of gender equality in society was better. Nonetheless, there were still some issues, which were seen as unequal, such as the perception that women had to do more housework than men and took care of children more frequently than men.

Five out of six respondents stated that gender was very important. Among them, two respondents warned that it would be difficult and it would take time to gain gender equality in society. One teacher said that gender equality was not seen as an issue because the society had been equal. Some barriers were mentioned were the equal opportunities for women, the role models and the psychological perceptions of people from different classes.

4.2.2.3 Summary

Most respondents indicated the strong influence of families to gender equality. They saw that boys who did not engage in learning came from the working-class background or from families where there were not good role models in terms of qualifications. Negative perceptions of students about gender, which were affected by families' view of school, were difficult to overcome. Families also influenced the viewpoint about certain jobs for certain sexes. Jobs were influenced by gender equality when there was gender imbalance in high ranking jobs and men dominated in managerial positions or politics, but one teacher said that it was accepted. Moreover, women might lose their positions at work when they had children.

All respondents shared their viewpoint about gender issues that gender equality was better than it used to be. Five out of six respondents confirmed the importance of gender in society yet two of them believed that it would be difficult to gain gender equality and it would take a long time to achieve. Three respondents stated that barriers, which they needed to overcome, were: equal opportunities for women, role models and psychological perception of people about genders.

4.2.3 The influence of government policy and curriculum on gender equality
4.2.3.1 The influence of curriculum on girls in studying and choosing careers

All respondents acknowledged the role of the curriculum in helping girls' approach to education as well as stimulating girls to study. Noticeably, respondents thought that the

curriculum was open to all students regardless of their sexes. For example, the Deputy Head teacher expressed that:

There's no prohibition on girls being involved in those subject areas, wherever the subject areas are in the school. And by and large the teachers are conscious that it's a good thing to have girls on board on those subject areas. Some of the subjects possibly wouldn't survive without a good proportion of girls picking up on those subject areas. (DH/M)

The lecturer emphasized the role of the curriculum in motivating students by saying that:

The curriculum is vital to stimulation to motivation and it should motivate people because, you know, that's what you're going there to learn and study and be involved in. So, I think the curriculum is vital. (L/F)

Both university respondents and the Assistant Head teacher affirmed the influence of the curriculum at schools to students when they chose their careers. The course leader emphasized the effectiveness of the broad curriculum; she declared that:

I think the curriculum is essential because you've got to... before you get to that point where you make the choice. That's why it's important to have had a broad curriculum before you start making some choices that affect your career because you certainly decide you want to be a doctor and you have done science then you couldn't be a doctor. So that's why it's very important that everybody keeps their options you know, they have a broad and balanced curriculum before they go forward to make their choices. (CL/F)

The Assistant Head teacher believed that the current curriculum at her school encouraged girls into engineering. She described like this:

I think that having a wide range of subjects that appealing to girls and we challenge girls and also as I said before, encouraging girls to consider taking

options that they wouldn't usually consider is really important and by giving them experiences that they wouldn't normally have. So I've said before, we quite often take a group of girls to Jaguar Land Rover so they can have a good link with them with engineering. (AH/F)

All respondents admitted that the current curriculum, which was broad and balanced, had been open to all students and it stimulated girls to study. They said that it did influence students when they made the choice of careers and it encouraged girls into engineering.

4.2.3.2 The necessity of changing the government policy and curriculum

Four out of six respondents indicated that the curriculum ensured gender equality in education. The Deputy Head teacher did not say that it ensured equality but posited that it would encourage gender equality. The lecturer saw it as narrow; she told that:

... well, the current curriculum is becoming quite narrow at the moment so it doesn't see skills as very important. It's becoming very narrow and academic in this country again.. So that's a shame. So I think that the diversity issue could become worse than it is now with the new curriculum. (L/F)

About the government policy, four out of six respondents stated that there was no need to change the policy because it was good enough, said the middle leader teacher, or the Assistant Head teacher supported the current government and curriculum like this: '*...I think the policy on education and curriculum is very open and fair'* (AH/F). Moreover, the Deputy Head teacher believed that the government policy was *'clearly supportive of the rights of women'* (DH/M) and the course leader saw it as encouraging females into politics, science and engineering. She affirmed that:

I think the government had had policies in which to encourage more women to go into politics. They fund projects to encourage women to go into science and engineering. They definitely do that. (CL/F)

Yet she exposed her disagreement with the policy on withdrawing the career funding from schools:

> *... one thing that I know had a big impact to the last two years is the government have withdrawn career funding from school, quite significant to manage money coz they used to be to school career and I think that's been a huge mistake. Because I think without good career guidance, you're not going to… We operate it through a body connection and they stop the funding for connection. This current government did. So they couldn't afford to go forward. A big mistake, I think. Big, big mistake.* (CL/F)

Four respondents believed that the current curriculum ensured gender equality in education. However, there was one opinion that considered it was too narrow. Most respondents thought that the government policy needed not to be changed because it was good and supportive to women, it encouraged women in to politics, science and engineering.

4.2.3.3 Summary

Most respondents insisted that the current curriculum was open to all students and it stimulated girls to study. Half of them admitted that the curriculum influenced students on choosing their career. High school staff stated that the curriculum ensured gender equality in education. There was one opinion from the lecturer showing that the curriculum was very narrow.

Most respondents confirmed that there was no need to change the policy because it was good and supportive to women. The course leader perceived that the government policy encouraged women into certain spheres like politics or science but she thought it was a big mistake when they withdrew the career funding from schools.

4.2.4 The influence of teaching pedagogies on gender equality in education
4.2.4.1 The influence of teaching pedagogies on students' achievement

All respondents believed that teaching pedagogy influenced students' achievement in learning. Most of them also confirmed that the current teaching pedagogy guaranteed gender equality among students. For example, the Assistant Head teacher described that:

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You know, we explore different types of learning styles. We look at different ways to make sure that our teaching addresses all different groups of pupils so not just gender but, you know, lots of different issues that pupils might have so that we really vary our lessons in that something that the government has really promoted, you know, to be very flexible in teaching style and to ensure that all pupils are making progress and are engaged. (AH/F)

According to the recently qualified teacher and the middle leader teacher, gender was promoted naturally. One of them said that: *'... I couldn't think of any teachers that wouldn't promote gender equality in any fields when they were teaching. It's becoming naturally'* (ML/F). There was one respondent recommending that they needed to change the teaching pedagogy. She expressed that:

I do think we do need to change it. I don't know… teachers need to have a Duty of Care to act upon equality issues more than they do. I think they should have Duty of Care to do that. (L/F)

All respondents said that they paid attention equally to boys and girls whilst teaching and they tried to make all students engage in learning. They all confirmed that they treated students equally. The lecturer and the Assistant Head teacher described how they tried to keep a gender balance when they taught, for instance, the Assistant Head teacher stated that: *'... I challenge both groups, you know, so that I have activities that will be more appeal to boys and activities that will be more appeal to girls as well'* (AH/F).

Noticeably, the middle leader teacher and the recently qualified teacher stated that they treated students equally as individuals rather than they were girls or boys. The middle leader teacher indicated that:

... from personal point of view, it doesn't matter who's in the classroom. Child needs support to get more help, it doesn't matter if you're a boy or a girl. If you need the help, the help's there. I would like to think that I'm treating equally through my teaching. I'm sure it is. (L/F)

Most respondents believed that teaching pedagogy had an influence on students' achievement. They also affirmed that the current teaching pedagogy made sure that there was gender equality in education among students. One of them even stated that they promote gender equality naturally and she could not think of any teachers who did not do so whilst teaching. There was only one recommendation about changing the current teaching pedagogy and that was to act more upon a Duty of Care basis.

All respondents affirmed that they noticed and paid equal attention to boys and girls in learning and they included both sexes when they taught. They all believed that they treated students equally. Two teachers said that they treated girls and boys as they were individual learners regardless of sex.

4.2.4.2 Teaching pedagogies that promote gender equality

From their experience, respondents shared the teaching pedagogy that they supposed would be effective in promoting gender equality. This teaching pedagogy, together with the strategies that were presented in the previous section, was believed to promote gender equality in education.

The university staff emphasized group work and pair work as they believed that group work and pair work could encourage boys and girls to work together, as the lecturer said:

> *Group work can break down the barriers for young people so encouraging group work so genders have to work together in groups. So as soon as you start to do group work, you can start to get people to work together to understand to talk. So discussion groups. Encouraging discussion groups can be really useful. Group work.... I do do group work. I do pair work: putting males and females together.* (L/F)

Nevertheless, there were opposite opinions about how they grouped students. The lecturer had said that she grouped boys and girls together whereas the course leader saw that grouping boys together and girls separately would be good because one sex did not dominate the other. She stated that:

I would perhaps group girls together and boys together so that you would have a group of girls working on a project and a group of boys working on a project so that one doesn't dominate the other. (CL/F)

From analysing the different styles of girls and boys, the Assistant Head teacher recommended that a wide range of tasks could and should be used. She stated that: *'...I think having…a wide range of tasks and different types of tasks within the lesson that boys can address and girls can address'* (AH/F). The course leader and the middle leader teacher suggested one way forward was to analyse the learning results of students with attention to gender and to be aware of gender whilst questioning. The first suggestion was presented in the previous section about strategies that had been used in schools to promote gender equality. In the second suggestion, they noted that boys tried to dominate the classroom so she would ask the girls questions deliberately in order to solicit their views. The recently qualified teacher had the same observation; she indicated that: *'I'll give the girls a voice about it, or me, because I don't want because they're all boys together that they think they're like superior'* (RQ/F). She then talked about encouraging students' achievement through what they were interested in, for example, she saw that girls liked reading nice books whereas boys liked things relating to football.

Together with the previous sub-theme about strategies that had been carried out in school and university to promote gender equality, in this section, staff shared their experience of promoting gender equality through teaching pedagogy. There were five teaching pedagogies recommended. At the university, respondents appreciated group work and pair work but there was a difference in the way they grouped boys and girls. One opinion was to group boys with boys, girls with girls and one opinion was to group boys with girls. A wide range of tasks were recommended to meet the needs of students of all genders in their learning were revealed within the results and analysis. More specifically, targeting questioning with attention to genders was suggested by three respondents since they believed that boys tried to dominate the classroom. The last teaching pedagogy, which was seen to promote gender equality, was to focus on what students liked; for instance it was suggested that girls liked novels and other fiction books and boys liked things relating to football. However, one must be aware that this approach contained within it an element of stereotyping of its own.

4.2.4.3 Summary

All respondents indicated the influence of teaching pedagogy on students' achievement. They believed that the current teaching pedagogy ensured gender equality among students. Two teachers said that they promoted gender equality naturally. There was only one recommendation about teaching pedagogy and that was to have a Duty of Care for teachers to act more upon gender equality issues.

All respondents declared that they encouraged all students in learning activities and they all treated students equally. Two teachers said that they treated boys and girls as individuals rather than they were boys or girls.

All respondents also gave examples about teaching pedagogy that they thought would be good to promote gender equality in education. There were five examples:

- group work and pair work;
- wide range of tasks;
- learning result analysis;
- questioning technique; and
- students' interest focus.

4.2.5 Strategies to improve the knowledge of gender equality for trainee teachers

4.2.5.1 Providing trainee teachers with gender equality knowledge

At the high school, the Assistant Head teacher, the Deputy Head teacher and the recently qualified teacher said that they were not provided with information about gender equality. Their awareness of gender equality was from their own opinion and family discussion, as the Assistant Head teacher stated, and from what they had read. The Deputy Head teacher said that: *'Nobody provided me any knowledge. All my knowledge comes from what I've read and what I've thought about personally'* (DH/M). The middle leader teacher admitted that she learned about gender equality in her teacher training and such knowledge was useful for her teaching practice.

Five out of six respondents confirmed the necessity of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers in ITT programmes. One respondent thought that since gender equality was understood, universities needed not to address it. She explained that:

... I think that really, for most pupils it's common sense really...So I don't really think that universities really need to address as an issue because I would say that it's understood, if you like, you know. (AH/F)

In relation to the provision of gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers, the Deputy Head teacher and the recently qualified teacher thought that there should be a specific programme or course about gender equality for trainee teachers. However, the lecturer stated that because the ITT programme in their university was a one-year course, they did not have enough time to consider and reflect gender issues. She pointed out that:

I think one of the things is that this is one-year course. That doesn't give them enough time sometimes to really, you know, considerate and reflect upon gender equality issues which is a shame really, you know, the nature of the one year course means that everything else is important and there is so much to cover. (L/F)

The course leader believed that gender equality knowledge should be embedded rather than be taught in a specific course.

Among four respondents at the high school, three teachers said that they were not provided with gender equality knowledge in their training, all they had came from their own opinions or from the influence of their families. Only one teacher responded that she learned about gender equality in education in her training course and that knowledge was useful for her teaching. Five out of six respondents thought that trainee teachers should be equipped with gender equality knowledge in ITT programme. One respondent believed that that knowledge was understood and the university did not need to address it.

Two respondents supposed that there should be a specific course or courses for trainee teachers about gender equality, however, the lecturer explained that because it was a one-year course, it did not have time to consider and reflect gender issues. The course leader stated that it would be better to embed gender equality information than providing a specific course.

4.2.5.2 Knowledge of gender equality to provide for trainee teachers

All respondents shared their opinions about what they thought should be the most useful knowledge of gender equality in education to provide for trainee teachers. The recently qualified teacher supposed that it should be the definition of gender equality whereas the middle leader teacher presumed that it would be the inclusion of gender equality. In the previous section, the influence of jobs on gender issues was emphasized. Again, in this discussion, the Assistant Head teacher and the recently qualified teacher emphasized the jobs or careers knowledge that trainee teachers should understand. The Assistant Head teacher indicated that:

> *I think that it's really important for teachers to have good sort of general knowledge of things like careers because I think that...that would probably be one of the main things I see as gender imbalance in this country is what career people are going to.* (AH/F)

The course leader believed that knowledge about *'challenging with stereotypes and ensuring equal opportunity'* (CL/F) was important for trainee teachers to promote gender equality in education. The lecturer thought that trainee teachers should *'have understanding of gender equality themselves'* (L/F). The Deputy Head teacher wanted to provide student teachers with knowledge of the law, and the history of women's emancipation as well as how to educate men to acknowledge women's rights. He stated that:

> *I would say if you're asking me what could be put into that programme I would start with law, legal regulations, the history of female emancipation, the history of women in the West, the global history of women, our duty to our pupils, what we expect from our students at the end of the day, and, most importantly, how can we educate men to be able to acknowledge the rights of women, and that's what my programme would be.* (DH/M)

The lecturer and the recently qualified teacher supposed that students could be encouraged to achieve more and teachers would be more successful if trainee teachers were equipped with knowledge about gender equality in ITT programmes.

All respondents recommended the knowledge that they thought would be most useful for trainee teachers in ITT programmes to promote gender equality in education. They were the definition of gender equality, inclusion, the general knowledge of careers and the ways to challenge gender stereotypes and to ensure equal opportunity. The law, the history of women emancipation and the ways to educate men to admit women's rights were also cited as useful knowledge for trainee teachers. Two respondents believed that it would encourage students to achieve more and teachers would be more successful if trainee teachers were provided with gender equality knowledge in ITT programmes.

4.2.5.3 Summary

Only one respondent at the high school said that she was provided with gender equality knowledge in her training and she stated that that knowledge was useful for her teaching practice. Other respondents stated that they built up the viewpoint about gender equality through their experience and the influence of families.

The majority of respondents believed that ITT programmes should equip trainee teachers with knowledge of gender equality in education. Only one respondent supposed that it was understood and the university did not need to address it.

Two respondents felt that training programmes should have a specific course or courses about gender issues for trainee teachers but the lecturer said that the one-year course did not have time to consider and reflect it. The course leader thought they would rather embed gender equality knowledge in ITT programmes than make it a separate course.

Respondents shared their opinion about the information which they believed would be most useful to provide for trainee teachers. The recommendations could be presented in two themes. The first one was about gender equality knowledge directly which included the definition, inclusion and ways to challenge gender stereotypes and to ensure equal opportunity. The second theme was about the broader knowledge relating to gender issues in education such as careers, laws, women emancipation and how to educate men to acknowledge women's rights.

4.3 Summary of the chapter

Overall, the main themes of data gathered in Vietnam and data gathered in England were broadly similar. However, there were some issues revealing different opinions and nuances relating to the data collected in two countries.

Data in Vietnam and England revealed the same issues about the following topics: the emphasis of equal opportunity, the different learning styles and gender identities of boys and girls. All respondents admitted that gender equality was better yet there remained some inequalities in society, at home and in certain jobs. They all said that families influenced gender issues. They stated that government policy paid attention to gender and the curriculum was equal for both sexes. They also stated that teaching pedagogy had an influence on students' achievement and teachers treated their students equally. Respondents recommended the provision of knowledge about gender equality in education for trainee teachers in ITT programmes and admitted the benefits that gender equality could provide.

Nonetheless, data collected in Vietnam did raise some different issues when compared in detail to the data collected in England. Data from Vietnam showed the opinion that boys were cleverer than girls; also that girls learned social science subjects better than boys and vice versa whereas data from England did not touch on it. In addition, data gathered in Vietnam revealed that gender issues were more serious in rural areas whilst data gathered in England did not show that. Data from Vietnam revealed that parents oriented their children towards jobs which might be affected by gender bias whilst data gathered from England did not show the same influence of family on gender. In addition, there was the preference for sons in families in Vietnam, moreover, the relationship in families such as husband-wife and daughters in law-in laws reflected gender inequalities yet the issue in England was different. It was about working class or parents without qualifications or unemployment so students did not value either education or a career. Due to the different cultures, some of the benefits that gender equality could bring were said differently in the two countries.

In discussion about policy and curriculum, data from Vietnam raised the necessity of amending the policy and curriculum yet data collected in England did not show that. For example, in Vietnam, respondents criticized the curriculum as too difficult and containing gender bias, in contrast, respondents in England affirmed that the curriculum was good. Besides, the influence of homeroom teachers, mathematics teachers and the qualifications

of teachers to gender equality emerged from data gathered in Vietnam and did not exist in data gathered in England.

Chapter 5
Data analysis

In this chapter, the researcher makes judgments and provides analysis about the responses that have been presented in the data presentation chapter and then goes on to compare and contrast the data with previous research findings in the literature. Data is analysed according to five main themes, which are broadly relevant to the themes in the data presentation chapter and to the research questions. The sub-structure of this chapter addresses the following issues:

- Theories of gender and education
- Attitudes to gender equality
- The influence of government policy and curriculum on gender equality in education
- The influence of teaching pedagogy on gender equality in education
- Strategies to promote gender equality

A final summary is also provided that attempts to draw together some of these interconnected themes.

5.1 Theories of gender and education

Data collected in the two countries under scrutiny showed that boys and girls were considered to have different gender identities and different learning styles in both England and Vietnam. For example, respondents tended to think of boys as active and quick in their learning and it was reported that they did not spend much time on homework. In the obverse, it was suggested that girls worked hard, needed more time for discussion and that they were keen on revision. These findings supported the work of Skelton, Francis and Read (2010), Paechter (2006a) and Epstein (1998) already outlined in the literature review. They discovered that students actually had a tendency to conform to either feminine or masculine (Paechter, 2006a). Being feminine was to be diligent, careful and attractive to boys (Skelton, Francis and Read, 2010) whilst being masculine was to be lazy, tough and rough (Epstein, 1998: 106). The determination of gender identities related to their learning at school, which would be analysed in this section of this study.

Colleagues in the data gathered in England and Vietnam commented on the learning abilities of boys and girls very differently. For instance, in Vietnam, boys were said to be cleverer than girls. The researcher perceived that this was a biased viewpoint about the learning ability of boys and girls. It revealed that teachers in Vietnam had lower expectations of girls about their learning abilities compared to boys and this could affect the way they treated girls at school. In contrast to the data from Vietnam, research had shown that there were no gender differences in general intelligence (Maltby, Day and Macaskill, 2010: 376). Thus, this revealed the deep influence of gender bias about the mentality of boys and girls where girls were at a disadvantage. Gender bias was not only evident in the attitudes of mature people but also present in the entrenched views of teenagers in their limited ability in learning when a girl stated that boys were better than girls. According to psychoanalytic theory in education, it was the underlying psyche of girls to acknowledge that they were not as good as boys which needed to be emancipated by an interior revolution (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 30). Yet it would not be easy for Vietnamese girls to escape from such bias when teachers hold the belief that boys were cleverer and they themselves admitted their limited ability compared to boys. However, it was notable that this issue was not mentioned by any respondents in England. Furthermore, in Vietnam, respondents believed that boys learned natural science subjects better than girls and girls learned social science subjects better than boys. Comparing to the review, the work of Francis (2000: 41) stated that 66% of girls and 84% of boys claimed that girls and boys had the same learning ability in all subjects. This seemed to be an issue in education in Vietnam since in that country boys outnumbered girls in natural science subject specialist classes and girls outnumbered boys in social science subject specialist classes. Similarly, staff in England talked about fewer girls in engineering and science subjects. Nonetheless, data in Vietnam revealed that boys were considered to learn natural science subjects better than girls whilst data in England just stated that there were more boys in science subject. This could derive from the different curricula. In Vietnam, all subjects were compulsory except vocational subject (MOET, 2009). Overall, responses in the two countries showed similarity but differences when staff in England touched on the number of girls in so-called boys' subjects whilst staff in Vietnam emphasized the better ability of a particular sex in a particular division of knowledge.

This situation was consistent with the work of Measor and Sikes (1992), Francis (2000), Ma (2008) and Dhesi (2011) cited in the literature review. They pointed out that there were

differences in the subject choices of boys and girls and there were masculine subjects preferred by boys and feminine subjects preferred by girls (Francis, 2000: 36). Paechter demonstrated the relationship between gender identities and subject choice when they showed that boys and girls proved their gender identities as masculine or feminine through their choice of subjects, for instance girls who got good marks in mathematics 'single out themselves as different' (Paechter, 2006a: 370). This phenomenon could be explained by the theory posited by psychoanalytic feminists that girls attempt to differentiate themselves from boys by using a set of symbols of femininity (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 31) which might include not learning well in mathematics. However, in this way, the more girls defined their identities, the worse their mathematics became. In addition, Ma (2008: 440) believed that the differences between the subject choice of boys and girls were the influence of culture and low expectation of parents to girls in masculine subjects, especially in developing countries. With the same relation to gender identities, respondents in Vietnam believed that boys did not learn social science subjects well because they were lazy since social science subjects required students to learn by heart, which fitted the gender identities of girls who were diligent and hard working. This was detected by Francis (2000: 35) in the context of England who emphasized that science subjects were high status subjects. This work revealed that boys' subjects could be overestimated whilst girls' subjects were underestimated. Nevertheless, it was not just the estimation of subjects; rather, it indicated the domination not only of males but also male subjects over females. More importantly, the work of Francis claimed that the higher status of boys' subjects and the lower status of girls' subjects could lead them to different occupations later on (Francis et al., 2003: 438). Thus, the inferior position of girls from schools' subjects was caught in the vicious circle of the domination of men in society. Perhaps, from the perspective of radical feminism in education, in this case boys' subjects could be considered as a kind of patriarchy.

In the discussion about theories of gender and education, data in both countries revealed that most respondents held the liberal theories outlined in the literature review chapter when they emphasized the importance of equal opportunities for students in education and for people in society in terms of gender equality. Middleton (1989: 54-55) stated that liberal feminist encouraged females to use equal opportunities in all subjects regardless of those that were traditional male subjects. This coincided with the strategies that schools in England had been carrying out to encourage more girls into engineering and science with

the aim to ensure that students saw that equal opportunities in all jobs were available for all people. However, it could be that the tendency to promote gender equality was a result of educational policy and not a 'liberal feminist' position on behalf of the teachers since it may be that none of the respondents in England really held such liberal views.

Most respondents from the two countries confirmed that gender equality was guaranteed in their institution as well as the equality among boys and girls in education in general. Yet one must ask why respondents said that gender equality had been secured in education and the majority of people in Vietnam went to school but gender inequalities remained in the society. The researcher sought the opinions of Vietnamese staff about the role of education in promoting gender equality and the responses were that education played an important role and had a big influence on gender equality. Respondents showed their acknowledgement of the role of education in promoting gender equality in education. The attitudes of Vietnamese teachers coincided with a liberal feminist perspective in that the education system could help girls as individuals to fulfil their potential (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 21). This belief would be criticised from a radical feminist perspective for ignoring the operant social and political system (Measor and Sikes, 1992) but the role of education, as one of the places enacting the legislation of government, could never be denied. Nonetheless, this left the question that why gender inequalities remained tantalisingly unanswered and led to the further question whether this was because education had not played an important role or whether the influence of other factors was bigger than education. At this moment, by employing feminist reproduction theory, it could be explained partly that gender inequality must be understood within the context of society and cultural formations (Dillabough, 2003: 377). It was highly likely that gender inequality remained in schools and the masculine domination embedded in the hidden curriculum could have been naturalized so that they became unrecognisable, as the feminist reproduction theory pointed out (Dillabough, 2004: 495). Moreover, the influence of the media as well as the social relations within schools should be taken into account (Apple, 1982a: 4). Clearly, this topic needs to be researched further.

In England, respondents talked about the important role of education but most respondents believed that gender was less of an issue and they tended to emphasise the influence of families in the learning of students in terms of gender. This could be the positive result of legislation which had been in place for a long time in England since the Education Act

(1944), the Equal Pay Act (1970), the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Human Rights Act (1988) (Arnot and Phipps, 2003). The presentation section of data gathered in Vietnam also revealed the strong influence of families on many aspects of gender issue as well. This provoked the researcher into making the comparison about education and the family, which had more influence on gender equality and this issue will be analysed later in this section of the study.

Noticeably, respondents in Vietnam believed that promoting gender equality in school meant teaching students about gender equality through lessons in particular subjects. Notably, none touched on everyday behaviours, the language they used, or the importance of the lived reality of everyday interactions. This issue was alluded to the work of Mlama et al. (2005: 14) and Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup (2008: 212-213) when they indicated that teachers should watch their language to be gender-free, for instance. Responses from Vietnam revealed that the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training had workshops about gender equality but only teachers from biology, civics, literature and history were assigned to be attendees. This would suggest that at that time, the awareness of educators in promoting gender equality in Vietnam was merely about disseminating information about gender equality in education to some teachers rather than signalling that this is the responsibility of all teaching staff (DeLuca, 2012). The evidence based on the work of DeLuca (2012) confirmed the necessity of practising gender equality in all aspects of schools. DeLuca (2012), Poole and Isaacs (1993), in the research about gender equality for trainee teachers supported the case that gender equality must be reflected in the whole of the educational environment. If gender issues were just wrapped in particular knowledge and imparted in some part of the curriculum only, then the effectiveness could probably be short-term. Furthermore, the researcher surmised that providing the knowledge about gender equality in education for trainee teachers would be more effective than giving particular teachers supplementary knowledge. This would be discussed later.

5.2 Attitudes to gender equality

Respondents from the two countries suggested that gender equality was improving in each of the societies. This supported the work of Arnot and Phipps (2003: 7) that England gained gender parity in education and it could also be reflected in the growing influence internationally of the movement of feminism noted in the review. Nonetheless, in Vietnam,

respondents indicated that gender inequalities were more serious in rural areas whilst respondents in England did not touch on this. Reflecting back on the literature, we have already noted that the Vietnamese people had been dominated by Chinese culture for more than one thousand years and the thoughts of Confucianism deeply affected the way that people treated women (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 64-65). Vietnamese women were at a lower position than men were but it could have become a 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990b cited in Reay, 2004: 433) that no one recognised it as domination. Moreover, it could be the cultural reproduction that patriarchy was circulated from generations to generations. Vietnamese respondents claimed that it was particularly the patriarchal aspects of this cultural paradigm, which had the greatest influence on attitudes in this area. This related to the viewpoint of radical feminism that stated that women were oppressed by patriarchy (Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 28). However, there was one thing in common about attitudes to gender issues in the data gathered in the two countries, which was the acknowledgement of gender inequalities in society, at home and in certain jobs; although it was important to note that it was considered that the amplitude of this might be different in each country. Respondents pointed out that women had to do more housework as well as take care of children than men and high-ranking jobs were dominated by men. Noticeably, there was evidence that in Vietnam, people believed that there were jobs, which were more suitable for men, and jobs which were more suitable for women. This belief had a connection with the influence of parents on children when orienting careers for them or when having to choose in which child to invest more in terms of education. Looking back to the review, research showed that parents did not believe that economic return from daughters would be as great as from sons and so they gave more priority to the latter (King and Hill, 1993 cited in Ma, 2008: 440). It was remarkable for the researcher to note that no respondents in England mentioned this. It revealed a significant difference in comparing children in two countries as well as in the way parents treated their children in terms of gender. In addition, the viewpoint of Socialist feminism in the review concurred with responses about gender imbalance in high-ranking jobs when it showed that many women were at the low or lowest paid jobs (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 24). Socialist feminists called for better pay and working conditions for women (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 24) but at this point, the researcher posited that this phenomenon was more about equal opportunities for women (liberal feminist theories) rather than salaries and conditions. She believed that if

women had the same opportunities as men did in all jobs, especially in high-ranking posts, the situation would be changed and she will recommend how to achieve this in the next chapter.

A theme that emerged from both sets of data in England and Vietnam was the influence of families on gender issues at schools as well as their perception of appropriate careers and wider perception of genders. For example, data in England revealed that students coming from the working class where either one or both parents had no jobs would not believe that they could have a career. This was also considered to be the case for children who were brought up by lone mothers or whose father did not have academic qualifications in education since there would be a lack of role models in the household thus causing children to believe that education was not worth pursuing. Vietnam was considered to suffer from the same issue but the emphasis was completely different. Vietnamese respondents focused on the 'son-preferred' thought, which valued sons over daughters and boys over girls. The idea expressed by Tran, Hoang and Do (2006: 171) had a good deal in common with this preference for sons of Vietnamese people. In contrast with England, where the lack of appropriate role models seemed to be more important, in Vietnam parental attitudes to the children's genders were seen to be more significant. Further, Vietnamese respondents confirmed that families did influence children on choosing a career, which contained a gender bias when orienting the direction of career for children. Vietnamese parents believed that there were jobs which were suited to certain sexes and they oriented their children to adopt those gendered jobs as the researcher had touched about in the previous analysis. Thus, the issues were the same but differently nuanced in each culture. Nonetheless, data from the two countries shared one thing when comparing with the literature of gender equality. Social learning theories would indicate that children learned from their parents' attitude and behaviours (Sayers, 1987: 27). Interestingly, this presumption seemed to be evident by the fact that though society had been changing, the preference for sons remained in Vietnam. Equally, cultural capital had been reserved.

Data in Vietnam exposed strongly that the relationships in families could affect gender equality considerably because of the relations between daughters-in-law and the families into which they married. The researcher did not find this a feature of any responses of staff in England nor in the literature of Western and England about gender issues. It could derive from the tradition culture of Vietnam that women moved to their husband's families to live

when they got married (Le, 2008a: 273). This was reflected clearly in the data from Vietnam when respondents stated that husbands and in-laws always expected wives and daughters-in-law to have sons rather than daughters. They also talked about the fact that sons were required for the central role in the religious ceremony (worship) to show their respect and remembrance to ancestors or parents who passed away since it was the sons who kept their surnames. This was commensurate with the research carried out in Vietnam about the tradition of Vietnamese people that sons were in charge of worshipping and the continuity of their surnames (Le, 2008b: 159). The researcher found out that Vietnamese respondents had a tendency to think about and to prepare for their deaths afterwards and for the continuations of their surnames. This could be the Vietnamese people's belief of the continuation of life after death in their culture. In that country, when a person dies, his or her family members shall worship him or her. Normally, when elderly people die, their sons will worship them. It is for the son to worship his parents. His wife prepares food and other things for worshipping but the son will stand in front of the ancestral altar to do the ceremony. So if a couple has no son, it is likely that they will not be worshipped when they die because, as respondents and literature pointed out, married women rarely worship their parents in their husbands' places. As Vietnamese people believe in life after death, passed away people who are not worshipped will be miserable, hungry and lonely.

It must be noted that data from Vietnam reflected gender bias among staff. They were educated people working in the educational environment and their responses expressed that they supported gender equality in education. They also believed that they treated students equally and that it was education which was paramount in securing equality yet through their responses, the researcher found that these respondents still suffered from clear gender biases and gender stereotypes in their viewpoints. For instance, the Head teacher said that female teachers preferred to have sons to daughters and a male respondent stated that he had daughters but he always wished to have a son. Equally, a middle leader male teacher warned that struggling for gender equality would make women have more work to do. This implied that there were fixed work areas for women such as housework or taking care of children and the struggle for gender equality could bring women more outside work but at the same time, they were still in charge of all the housework that was why they had more things to do. Therefore, on the one hand, such respondents supported gender equality in education but on the other hand, their responses revealed significant personal predilection

against change in the status quo relating to gender issues. Indeed, it was notable that most respondents tended to be conservative in their personal attitudes in this area. Since this perspective was operant the researcher thought that the support for gender equality in Vietnam was espoused rather than the real determination of people, even if well-educated and with an important position in society. Such gender bias also existed in the viewpoint of Vietnamese students as evidenced when a boy believed that girls just needed to be beautiful or when talking about their future family, girls wanted to get married with men who were in a better social position than them. This was touched on by a teacher when he indicated that a husband would be teased if his wife had a higher position at work and he emphasized that this did happen in his workplace. Thus, it could be seen that the hidden curriculum deepened gender inequalities, which had been naturalized as reproduction feminists warned (Dillabough, 2004: 495). Consequently, schools were places to reproduce gender inequalities.

There were some benefits from the fact that respondents talked about what would happen if gender equality was gained in the society and in education. Respondents in Vietnam believed that if gender equality was secured in society, the role of women would be improved. More than that, the society and economy of the country would develop with appropriate behaviours and a better viewpoint about genders. They had touched on gender inequality before, here what they hoped to gain exposed what they were not having, and thus it again, confirmed the real fact of the society as the literature had pointed out that gender inequality remained in Vietnam (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 15). For example, when hoping that half of the human resource would be made use of when gender equality was secured, respondents showed that at that time, the human resource the resource that women contributed of was not being made use of. Besides, there was a general belief among staff in England and Vietnam that if gender equality in education was secured, it would have a positive influence on students themselves and their children later in life. Remarkably (from the perspective of the researcher), respondents in England believed that enhanced gender equality would help to reduce the number of pregnant teenagers, as the number of pregnant girls in England was high. This was not the case in Vietnam since it is the cultural norm that single people, especially teenagers, do not have sexual relationships prior to marriage. So due to the different cultural perspectives, the benefits that gender equality in education brought were perceived to be different. However, there was one thing in common, which

was the belief that a better society and economy could be created if gender equality was secured in the two countries.

5.3 The influence of government policy and curriculum on gender equality in education

In connection with the government policy and curriculum, three things in common were noted in the responses in England and Vietnam, which were: that the government policy espoused the importance of gender equality, the curriculum was equal for both sexes, and the influence of curriculum in the students' choice of career.

The confirmation of government policy regarding gender equality related to the claim of Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi (2011) that the government had made efforts to gain gender equality in education and England had been more successful in gaining such equality in education than many other countries; therefore, government policy for the education of girls had improved (Arnot and Phipps, 2003). This fortified the influence of government policy to gender issues. Similarly, in Vietnam, the Gender Equity Law and Education Law assert equity in opportunities for all people. However, rules relating to gender equality were said to be general about citizen's rights (Pham, 2007). This issue was supported by respondents in Vietnam, who believed that they did not see any policy giving attention to gender equality in education or because the policy was not implemented effectively in practice. Therefore, there was a gap between the policy and practice in Vietnam.

Vietnamese respondents also commented about the comparatively fixed number of women in the managerial positions - yet two opposing viewpoints were held. From the managerial positions, a vice principal and a Head teacher confirmed that it was the positive attention to gender equality but teachers perceived that it was the inequality because if it was equal, then no women's ratio should be set up like that. The issue of the limited number of women in senior posts was researched in the literature of the Western countries which indicated that there should be 30% of women board members in the coming years and this ratio should be increased to 40% by 2020 (Filsinger and Worth, 2012: 112). Likewise, in Vietnam, the research raised the necessity of targets for women's roles (RCGAD, 2007). The researcher agreed with the opinions of teachers that there should be no fixed ratio of women in managerial positions but if gender equality had not been secured and there was no such target for women then the ratio of women in managerial positions would be very small or

negligible. At this point, it was notable that the research showed that gender inequalities remained in Vietnamese society (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 15) and Vietnamese women have less potential in promoting in most areas of jobs than men (Tran, Hoang and Do, 2006: 179).

Respondents in England asserted that the current curriculum was equal for both sexes and it was guaranteed in terms of gender equality issues. This partly concurred with the work of Francis (2000: 36) that the National Curriculum resulted in the reduction of gendered subject choice among students. However, there was a big contrast between the assertions of English respondents with the work of Paechter (2000). Most respondents believed that there was no need to change the curriculum because it was good enough yet the work of Paechter (2000) discovered that boys still dominated and some particular subject knowledge was labelled by gender. This was in-line with the responses from Vietnam when staff stated that boys learned natural science subjects better than girls and vice versa and it was similar to the previous analysis about subject choices of boys and girls above. In addition, Vietnamese respondents perceived that though the curriculum was equal to both sexes, it was too difficult, boring and impractical. There is currently a dearth of research in this respect, identifying an area worthy of further research. Moreover, respondents in Vietnam raised the issue of the necessity of letting students know the outcomes of learning. Though no literature touched on this the researcher believed this was a very valuable recommendation when amending the curriculum since there was research showing that girls did not want to learn boys' subjects and the negative scenario when half of the population did not understand the daily life knowledge of science (Manthorpe, 1989: 129). Furthermore, one respondent even stated that there was gender bias in the literature textbooks. This was substantial evidence, which confirmed the work of Ngo (2007) that there were continuing gender biases in the textbooks for high school students in Vietnam, which represented that women had low positions, were dependent and oppressed. Besides, Vietnamese boys asserted that social subjects were difficult for them whilst girls claimed that natural subjects were difficult. This assertion revealed that the curriculum or the teaching pedagogies (or both) were problematic. Nonetheless, it could be that the gender stereotypes had made male students believe that 'girls' subjects' were not suitable or difficult for them so they found them hard. The gender stereotypes might have been so deeply embedded that it became naturalized as reproduction of the status quo (Dillabough, 2004: 495) in students' mind.

Equally, Vietnamese high school girls stated that they found natural science subjects difficult to learn. In addition, Vietnamese teaching staff also suggested amending the curriculum and government policy to be better in terms of gender equality and to be more practical. This reflected that teaching staff in Vietnam were not very satisfied with the current curriculum and the government policy though some of them asserted that the policy did pay attention to gender equality. Moreover, respondents in the two countries claimed that the curriculum had an influence on the career choice of students, which concurred with the work of Francis et al (2003) in the review.

5.4 The influence of teaching pedagogies on gender equality in education

Data from the two countries indicated that teaching pedagogies did have an influence on students' achievement. This perception was consonant with the works of Stanworth (1983), Seidel and Shavelson (2007) which revealed that teachers' activities and behaviour influenced the achievement of students. So, teaching pedagogies were considered to be very important to the performance of students at schools. Furthermore, staff in both Vietnam and England believed that teachers treated students equally. This statement was a notable feature in much of the debate about the attention of teachers to gender. Masculinists have warned that teachers gave more attention to girls than boys (Myhill and Jones, 2006: 111) whilst feminists' research showed that teachers gave more time and attention to boys than girls (Stanworth, 1983). Interestingly, whilst all teaching staff in Vietnam affirmed that they themselves and other teachers did treat students in an equal way responses from Vietnamese students made it clear that teachers gave more attention to girls in social science classes and to boys in natural science subject classes. Noticeably, a girl said that mathematics teacher behaved better towards boys than girls but that this was acceptable because she admitted that boys were better than girls. This affirmation exposed some interesting things. Firstly, data revealed that girls had a lower participation in learning in mathematics. It also showed that teachers treated students differently in terms of gender. The evidence based on the work of Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005: 47) confirmed this phenomenon when they stated that teachers paid more attention to boys in 'masculine subjects'; consequently it could discourage girls to participate in the subject. Therefore, it contradicted what the staff had claimed. Thirdly, it showed that the girl had low confidence in her learning ability and less attention by teachers to her could reinforce her belief (Aikman, Unterhalter and

Challender, 2005: 47). Lastly, from the liberal feminism perspective, it could be seen that teachers did not treat students equally nor give girls equal opportunities and they somehow pushed the girls back from pursuing natural science subjects. More interestingly, from the reproduction feminist perspective, it could be seen that teachers were naturally unequal in the ways they treated students, thus they presumed that they treated equally yet this was not right.

Mathematics teachers and homeroom teachers were considered to influence gender equality by Vietnamese respondents. It could be speculated that the different educational system in England caused both the English respondents in the study and the evidence in the Western literature to ignore these factors when discussing gender equality in schools but the exact nature of this cultural difference was difficult to define. However, the fact was that in Vietnam there were more male mathematics teachers than females and as indicated in the previous analysis, people had a tendency to believe that mathematics required a high mentality which was more suitable for males who were said to be cleverer than females. A research study in Mozambique shared the same conclusion (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challendar, 2005: 47) when they declared that although women outnumbered men in teaching staff, there were few women in high status subjects. In addition, respondents in Vietnam appreciated the role of homeroom teachers in educating gender equality for students as there was more time for homeroom teachers in the curriculum of all schools. This revealed that staff were not ready to promote gender equality among students in their schools. Rather, they wished to entrust it to homeroom teachers. Again, this showed that teachers were conservative.

There were highly questionable explanations from responses in Vietnam for this imbalance in terms of gender issues, such as the influence of families on children when orientating careers for them, the requirement for greater innate intelligence in learning mathematics and the time needed to understand key concepts, which might make women find mathematics difficult to pursue. Naturally, the researcher disagreed with these explanations in terms of the discriminatory aspersions on the intellectual ability of women in relation to mathematics but they were very revealing about prevailing attitudes. It could be seen that this had a connection to the previous analysis about subject choices of different genders and about the influence of families on career choices. In addition, the explanations showed the strong

gender stereotypes among Vietnamese teachers about mathematics when they misjudged the ability of females.

Moreover, although respondents said that they supported gender equality in education, they themselves held gender bias. For instance, a highly experienced teacher asserted that boys had a better mentality than girls or another male teacher who had many years' experience of teaching natural science subject declared that people perceived women as a minority regardless of the fact that they built up approximately half of the population. At the same time, respondents emphasized that the good learning results of girls were attributed to hard work rather than their cleverness. This statement confirmed the findings in the work of Walden and Walkerdine (1985) which indicated that in the UK, the achievements of girls in mathematics were said to be hard working rather than understanding and it was in line with the first part of the analysis above about theories of gender and education. This was an issue of low expectation by teachers of girls in mathematics which related to the work of Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005), Murphy and Whitelegg (2006) and Ma (2008). They discovered that despite the fact there was no difference in mathematical scores between boys and girls, teachers still thought that boys were much more able than girls and they held higher expectations of boys. So, both the data in Vietnam and the literature review indicated that there were gender bias issues in mathematical subjects.

One interesting theme that emerged from the data in Vietnam was of the relation of the qualification of teachers with gender issues in education, although neither the data in England nor any strand of the literature mentioned this issue. Vietnamese respondents emphasized the qualification of teachers as the important factor in the achievements of students. Some teachers even believed that it was more important than the curriculum because it was up to teachers to impart the knowledge. The researcher considered that this was a valuable reference especially in Vietnam, where the low salary of teachers was highly controversial and there were debates about the entry requirement of pedagogy universities for trainee teachers.

5.5 Strategies to promote gender equality

5.5.1 Strategies to promote gender equality in society and high schools

Vietnamese respondents believed that paying more attention to women, improving education and information campaigns were strategies that might be effective in promoting

gender equality in society. They perceived that when women had better positions, they would be more equal to men. Somewhat ironically, this revealed the fact that women currently held lower positions than men in society and that this could be one of the reasons for current gender inequalities. Respondents also suggested to improve the education not only for women but also of the whole people in the country. The researcher absolutely agreed with this recommendation since she believed that when the degree of understanding of people increased they would acknowledge that gender equality was crucial as a matter of social justice. Moreover, it was the role of education, which was confirmed by responses in the two countries, to increase the quality of life and gender equality.

Respondents in the two countries agreed with, and shared in, strategies being carried out at their institutions to promote gender equality. There were more strategies recommended by staff in England than staff in Vietnam, which showed that England had paid more attention to gender equality in education than Vietnam in terms of activities to promote gender equality among students. Staff in Vietnam listed physical activities including girls' football teams and musical events in which both boys and girl took part. The researcher thought that those were optional, extra-curricular activities and they did not impact much on the learning process in terms of gender as the English people did. Such minor improvements were overwhelmed by the fact that English schools separated boys and girls in certain subjects. This was new to the context of Vietnam and the literature and could be perceived as a good precedent for Vietnam. Further, English schools created events to encourage more women into science or they invited guest speakers who were of the opposite sex to the teacher teaching that subject. This could be a useful recommendation for Vietnam since respondents from Vietnam perceived that more mathematics teachers were male and there could have been a tendency of associating the sex of teacher with the subject that he taught. Moreover, educational institutions in England provided good role models for students by bringing in female speakers who were successful in different spheres or taking girls to car factories and they admitted that it worked well in encouraging more girls into engineering. These strategies supported the strategies of liberal feminists in encouraging girls to take up so-called boys' subjects and they went in line with national funding via the GIST initiative in the UK (Skelton and Francis, 2009: 15). The strategies that respondents mentioned were very interesting and they revealed that schools were trying to target girls in terms of gender equality because they invited women speakers and took girls to car factories. It could

originate from the fact that girls lacked role models and there were few girls in engineering. It was said to be effective in promoting gender equality in England but it might not work in Vietnam since the imbalance of genders in jobs were very clear. More interestingly, both the university and the school in England analysed their students' learning results with regard to gender at the faculty level and subject level. This was not mentioned in the review but the researcher believed this could be an important recommendation to assess the learning result in terms of gender in Vietnam.

Most of the strategies reviewed in the literature focused on teaching pedagogies to promote gender equality. There were some common links between the literature and the data. For instance, the suggestion of creating a wide range of tasks for boys and girls by a respondent in England was consonant with the work of Johnson and Weber (2011) in the US when they focused on respecting the difference and giving equal opportunities to all students. This was a helpful recommendation as its focus on a multiplicity of tasks could address the different needs and different abilities of both boys and girls and more importantly would provide equal opportunities to every student, thus being consonant with the main point of liberal feminist theories. Another recommendation from data in two countries was to give girls a voice when asking questions. This supported what Stanworth (1983) had discovered in that boys made more demands on teachers and she suggested that teachers should give more attention to quiet students. This suggestion could work well in Vietnam for this research has found that Vietnamese girls were said to be gentle and quiet. Respondents in the two countries also appreciated group work and pair work as good teaching pedagogies to promote gender equality. So did the literature. Researchers advised teachers to emphasize the 'discussion and collaboration' (Gipps, 1996b: 265). As a high school teacher, the researcher knew this pedagogy would give students a chance to work and speak out and it would encourage quiet students to become more involved in the learning activities in class. In addition, another recommendation from Vietnamese respondents was to let students speak more. It was the tradition of teaching pedagogy in Vietnam that teachers lectured and students listened. The work of Mlama et al. (2005) emphasized that teaching and learning were not one way activities and this recommendation linked back to gender identities of girls with the hope that it would help girls to have their voice.

One recommendation in England related to encouraging students in learning through teaching topics that they liked. This recommendation raised two issues. On the one hand, it

paid attention to different gender interests and it fitted within psychoanalytic theories in terms of gender identities in school, which stated that each individual used standards of his or her gender identity to differentiate themselves from students of another sex (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 31). On the other hand, it might contain a metaphor of gender stereotypes of teachers that girls liked 'nice' things whilst boys liked aggressive physical activities. By applying the reproduction theory (Dillabough, 2006), the researcher found it interesting that although respondents had confirmed that they wanted fairer gender attitudes and they even believed it, their actions might actually serve to reinforce gender stereotypes like the teacher who said that girls liked nice books and boys liked football. This could be explained that because their minds, their backgrounds and even their training might actually serve to make them unconsciously want to 'reproduce' society the way it was. So this recommendation might not be used to promote gender equality in Vietnam.

Some strategies which emerged from the data but were not found in the literature were to listen to the feedback of students and to modify the content when teaching about the tradition to make it fit in with the context of society. The literature contained research about the feedback but this tended to refer to the feedback that teachers gave to students to make sure that they understood the lesson (Mlama et al., 2005: 10). However, English respondents tended to talk not only about feedback *to* students but also about the feedback *from* students in relation to teaching pedagogy in order to discover whether the teaching approach had worked well or if it gave equal opportunity to both sexes. This was a very useful recommendation, which reflected the nature of teaching-learning activities and it supported the recommendation of Mlama et al. to promote gender equality in the context of 33 countries in Africa (Mlama et al., 2005: 10). It was truly a two-way activity and it should be reflected back to teachers about the way they taught and treated students. Another recommendation from Vietnam was to modify the content of lessons to make them fit with the current context of the development of the society. Vietnam is a developing country and assimilating external cultures that might affect the traditional culture. The researcher could not find reference to this topic in the literature; however, she believed it would be effective in teaching because Vietnam has a long history of war and under the strong influence of Confucianism, which indicated that the role of women was to stay at home and serve husbands and in-laws (Jiang, 2009: 234). So this suggestion was perceived as a potentially important method to preserve traditional values and practices but at the same time to

enhance progressive development in the context of a developing country which is attempting to adapt to modern societal moves within the background of tradition.

5.5.2 Providing gender equality knowledge in education for trainee teachers

In the chapter on data presentation, the researcher found that the responses of staff in England reflected many of the findings in the literature including the fact that in England there was a lack of interest from the government in terms of discussion about gender and sexism in ITT programmes (Skelton, 2007: 679). Moreover, there was no literature about curriculum for ITT relating to gender equality in Vietnam. It showed that in England there was, at least some, research about gender equality in education for ITT programmes, but in Vietnam research on concern about gender equality in education for trainee teachers were completely lacking. This was important since Younger and Warrington (2008: 431) stated that teachers played an important role in students' understanding about gender equality and Mlama et al. (2005: v) pointed out that the perceptions of teachers of gender equality was greatly influential to the participation of students. Remarkably, data from England revealed that most of teachers were not provided with such knowledge in their training. The necessity of equipping gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers was confirmed through the fact that the majority of respondents in both countries suggested the provision of such knowledge for trainee teachers. There were two approaches suggested to impart that knowledge in ITT programmes. The first one was to embed such knowledge across the curriculum, yet in England, in the case of the short route to become a teacher by gaining the PGCE in one year (Coffey and Delamont, 2000: 78) which had been increasingly chosen, students could not have enough time to consider gender issues, as the university staff warned. This supported the work of Poole and Isaacs (1993), Skelton (2007) and DeLuca (2012) that students could not absorb the knowledge in a short duration, moreover, embedding gender equality knowledge in the curriculum was what they were doing in the UK (Skelton, 2007). So this way did not seem to work effectively in providing trainee teachers with gender equality knowledge in England. In Vietnam, the main route to become teachers was to graduate a four-year course so there was more time and this recommendation could be applied. Another recommendation was to include a specific module about gender equality for ITT but opinion was divided on making it a compulsory or elective subject. More respondents supported making the subject compulsory which concurred with the work

of Tatar and Emmanuel (2001: 223) in Israel showing that it would work if it was compulsory, moreover, in England, Skelton (2007) stated that the current obstacle for ITT programmes in terms of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers was the lack of concentration. The researcher believed that embedding that knowledge across the curriculum for ITT and setting out a compulsory module on gender equality in education would make it effective. It should be compulsory so all trainee teachers would be equipped and at the same time it should be embedded to be reflected rather than merely learning it in one subject.

One interesting sub-theme that emerged from data in Vietnam was to embed gender equality in the education for children from the early years and respondents emphasized the necessity of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers who would teach at nurseries. This recommendation did not exist in the literature review but it was worth thinking about since respondents' explanations sounded convincing when they believed that the perceptions and viewpoint about gender equality formed from very young ages. Moreover, social learning theorists warned that children learned from teachers and peers in schools (Sayers, 1987: 27) thus, equipping gender equality knowledge for nursery trainee teachers would be a valuable recommendation.

In the discussion about the gender equality knowledge that respondents thought would be most useful for trainee teachers, there were two main categories suggested. The first category was about specific knowledge such as definition, inclusion and ways to challenge stereotypes and to ensure equal opportunity. A part of this category concurred with the work of DeLuca, which stated that the concepts of inclusivity could be addressed by embedding across all ITT courses (Darling-Hammond, 2002 and Irvine, 2003 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553). Besides, the researcher perceived that the suggestion of providing ways to challenge gender stereotypes in educational contexts was very practical and it related to the teaching pedagogies, which were said to promote gender equality in education. Equal opportunity, again, was raised as a crucial strategy in education and it fitted really well with the main liberal feminist theory of this study. The second category was about the broader knowledge that was supportive to gender equality knowledge and was useful to promote gender equality in education, such as knowledge about jobs and careers, the history of women's emancipation and the acknowledgement of women's rights. It related closely to the law, which was recommended by both staff in England and Vietnam. Furthermore, the

understanding of the psychology of boys and girls was said to be important as well. The researcher perceived that this was a good category since teachers needed to know the psychology of boys and girls to understand their students in order to teach and behave more properly. Comparing those recommendations to the literature, there was no coincidence when the literature was about social, historical context, the reflection and gender-equitable pedagogies. Nonetheless, the researcher believed that the combination between the literature and the findings of this research might provide a good source of knowledge and teaching pedagogies for trainee teachers about gender equality in education. Yet the ability to put it into practice was still questioned due to the limits of time and the focus of government policy in the two countries.

5.6 Summary of the chapter

Data revealed some similarities about the theories of gender and education in the two countries yet it showed the differences of educational development and culture. Respondents in England and Vietnam stated that boys and girls had different learning styles as well as gender identities and subject choices. Besides, they had the same theories about gender issue that was liberal feminism when they emphasized the equal opportunity in learning for students and encouraged girls into so-called boys' subjects. It was also clear that gender equality was seen as important in education in the two countries but such assertions seemed problematic and more espoused than real because of the disparity between gender equality in education and what could be perceived as the lived reality in society. According to Bourdieu's theories, it could be that gender inequalities remained in education but it was naturalised and unrecognisable (Dillabough, 2004: 495). This issue was evident in both countries but highly nuanced in each culture. Gender issues seemed to be more problematic in Vietnamese education since responses unconsciously exposed their gender stereotypes that boys were cleverer than girls whilst English staff did not touch on it. In addition, about the difference of subject choice, respondents in Vietnam confirmed the better ability of each sex in particular subjects whilst respondents in England just talked about the number of girls in science and engineering. Moreover, Vietnamese staff might be conservative and have limited awareness about gender equality in education when believing that promoting gender equality in education was to teach specific subject about gender

issues whilst respondents in England stated that gender was less of an issue in their schools. The role of education in promoting gender equality was appreciated in the two countries.

Equally, the same issues about attitudes to gender equality were raised but were very different in amplitude. Both data admitted the improvement of gender equality in societies though inequalities remained. They also emphasized the influence of families on gender issues and the positive benefits that gender equality could bring to society and the economy. However, due to the different stage of societal and economic development, data in Vietnam was exposed as backward in terms of gender. For example, with the same emphasis about the influence of families to gender issues, Vietnamese data exposed the negative influence of in-law relationship to gender equality such as the preference for sons over daughters or the responsibility of reserving the surnames that no English respondents mentioned. Or due to the social historical context, Vietnamese society was strongly affected by the patriarchy of Confucianism which looked down on women. Thus, data in Vietnam showed the gender bias among educated people who said that they supported gender equality but their responses exposed their conservatism and disregard for females.

Government policy was said to promote gender equality in education in England as evidenced in both data and literature. Vietnamese government policy paid attention to genders but at a lower level and its effectiveness was doubted. This revealed the advanced level of development in terms of gender issues of England compared to Vietnam. The curriculum was commented upon being equal for both sexes and it influenced students in making career choices in the two countries. There were some issues that data in Vietnam raised but data in England did not touch on them. For instance, respondents in Vietnam debated about the ratios of women in two opposite opinions. Moreover, the curriculum in Vietnam was considered to be problematic not only in terms of gender but also in terms of requirement and practice. Vietnamese teachers and students held a very strong gender stereotypes when emphasizing that boys found social science subjects difficult and vice versa for girls albeit research proved that boys and girls had the same learning ability and were not different in general mentality (Maltby, Day and Macaskill, 2010: 376).

Teaching pedagogies were perceived to have an influence on the achievement of students at schools. Although both staff in the two countries stated that they treated students equally the triangulation made it clear that teachers in Vietnam did not treat boys and girls in an equal way and they did not give equal opportunities to girls. It could be that the inequalities

were naturalized so that they were not recognisable, as feminist reproduction theories pointed out (Dillabough, 2004). The debate in England was different with the argument of masculinists and feminists in terms of the attention of teachers to boys and girls but again, it showed that England was more developed in education and educational research in terms of gender issues. The gender inequalities in teaching pedagogies of teachers were more apparent in Vietnam, especially in mathematics-the subject that was believed to show males' higher mentality. Mathematics teachers held the gender stereotypes unconsciously and 'reproduced' the inequality by giving more attention to boys and having low expectation of girls. Interestingly, no responses in England mentioned this phenomena or even the word 'mathematics'. Likewise, Vietnamese data revealed the doubt of the qualification of teachers in terms of gender whilst it was not the case in England.

The strategies to promote gender equality in society and in high schools supported the feminist reproduction theory at the requirement to put gender in the social and cultural context and media. English society was more advanced than that of Vietnam when conducting strategies to promote gender equality in education. The main aims of strategies carried out in England revealed the feminist liberal theory yet the way they assessed the phenomenon showed the perspectives of psychoanalytic theories. However, data suggested that some gender stereotyping remained among English teachers but there was only one individual who displayed such traits amongst those interviewed in England, whereas this has been a more common feature of attitudes with Vietnamese respondents. There were very valuable recommendations about strategies to promote gender equality such as listening to the feedback of students about teaching pedagogies in England or modifying the content in Vietnam. Data also implied the lack of interest from the English government to provide gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers and the ineffectiveness of some ITT programmes in terms of gender due to the limited time. In Vietnam, thanks to the longer route to become teachers, ITT programmes had more time yet there was no mention of gender equality in ITT curriculum. The recommendation was to make this a compulsory subject and embed gender equality across the curriculum. It should be noted that many of these recommendations were also raised by researchers in the literature discussed earlier in this thesis. In Vietnam, responses identified the necessity of promoting gender equality from the early years; a topic, which is clearly worthy of further exploration.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The research set out in this thesis sought to examine both policy and practice in relation to gender equality in secondary schools in England and Vietnam. However, the original genesis of the project lay in a desire to promote fairness among and between boys and girls in education in Vietnamese high schools. This chapter presents the conclusion and the recommendations for the Vietnamese government, Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, school leaders, teachers and ITT programmes in the light of the study's findings. Some important messages are included which, it is hoped, will improve attitudes towards gender equality in families and the wider society. Finally, recommendations for further research on this important topic are offered.

6.1 Comparing findings in each country

Key findings from the research were:

- The dichotomies between Vietnamese policy and practice

- The perceptions of Vietnamese teachers' about the learner ability and learners preferred styles

- The problematic curriculum and teaching pedagogies in Vietnam

- The significance of absence of role models in the two countries

- The influence of in-law relationships to gender issues in Vietnam

The data revealed that respondents in the two countries under scrutiny held many similar beliefs and ideas about theories of gender and education. This commonality of perspective included such areas as:

- An acknowledgement of the role of education in promoting gender equality
- A belief that their schools were striving to guarantee gender equality for the students in their care

- A shared commitment to what may broadly be described as liberal feminist viewpoints in relation to gender equality issues
- An awareness of what were perceived to be the different learning styles associated with gender identities between boys and girls

However, notable differences were also evident, the most important of which was the fact that Vietnamese respondents had a strong gender bias about the learning ability of boys over girls and less understanding about promoting gender equality in education than English respondents.

Respondents in the two countries perceived that gender equality was getting better in each society yet there were still gender inequalities at home and in certain jobs. Even in the UK, although some improvement regarding gender equality has been achieved, further development is required. In addition, the responses from the two countries revealed that children learned attitudes to gender equality from their parents. Although all respondents emphasized the influence of families on gender issues the perceived amplitude of them was very different in each country. For English respondents, it was the lack of role models that concerned respondents most whilst for Vietnamese respondents it was the preference for sons over daughters and the in-law relationships, which were considered to affect gender issues most. Moreover, there were some notable points that Vietnamese respondents raised, such as their opinions that gender issues were more serious in rural areas or the greater influence of patriarchy on the attitudes toward gender issues that was not mentioned by any respondents in England. Due to the cultural differences, the emphasis on the same issues was different but many interesting perspectives seemed embedded in the discourse. Although respondents in both England and Vietnam stated that a better society and economy in each country could be created if greater gender equality was achieved, desired approaches and outcomes were different. For example, English respondents felt that securing gender equality would come through strategies such as a reduction of teenage pregnancy but this was not the case in Vietnam. Thus, we can see the same social concerns but the prevailing culture and the moral culture have influenced the way people perceive the issues.

In both countries, government policy has espoused the importance of gender equality but it was clear that England had been more successful in implementing gender equality legislation than Vietnam, which has suffered from divergence in conducting gender equality policy in the sense that many espoused the policy without enacting it. Thus, in that country,

there has been government policy regarding to gender equality but it has not been carried out thoroughly in practice.

The curriculum was considered to be equal for boys and girls and was noted to have a strong influence on students' choice of careers in both countries. However, in England, there was a big contrast between the theory and reality embodied in practice in that the research carried out in England pointed out that some subjects were labelled by gender whereas English teaching staff determined that the curriculum was equal in terms of gender. In Vietnam, the curriculum was evaluated as too difficult, too boring and impractical. Furthermore, in literary subjects, textbooks were seen as having gender biases that concurred with research about the curriculum in Vietnam regarding gender. Moreover, the curriculum in Vietnam seemed to be problematic in that natural science subjects were considered difficult for girls and social science subjects were considered difficult for boys. Thus, Vietnamese teachers believed that boys were better than girls in natural science subjects. However, it could also be that the gender stereotypes of Vietnamese were so strong that they affected the way teachers and students evaluated students' ability in learning some subjects which were not seen as the forte of their genders. An alternative interpretation is, of course, that the curriculum that was not actually equal.

Teaching pedagogies were stated to have an influence on students' achievement in the two countries and all the teaching staff and respondents in managerial positions confirmed that they themselves and other teachers treated students equally. However, through triangulation, it was revealed that Vietnamese teachers did not treat boys and girls in an equal way. By applying the theories of social reproduction and feminism, it was obvious that in Vietnam, gender inequality was inherent but that both teachers and students did not recognise this to be the case. This happened in the context of England as well yet the manifestation was not as clear and intensive as it was in Vietnam. Respondents in Vietnam also made it clear that gender stereotypes affected the way people see mathematics as a more suitable science subject for men than women. In addition, Vietnamese respondents showed their concern about the qualification of teachers which was not touched by any respondents in England nor the literature.

Respondents in the two countries appreciated the importance of group work and pair work as good teaching pedagogies that enabled students to speak more and to promote gender equality in education. Furthermore, most respondents in both countries believed that

providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers was necessary and that it should be embedded across the curriculum or to make it a module in ITT. Knowledge about gender equality, with which trainee teachers should be equipped, was specific knowledge about gender issues and psychology of high school boys and girls. Interestingly, there were more experiences and strategies recommended by English respondents than Vietnamese respondents in terms of promoting gender equality in education. One thing in common about gender issues in ITT in the two countries was the lack of interest from government as well as the curriculum for trainee teachers.

Overall, we can posit that the differences in cultural perspectives have led to the differences of perception in relation to gender issues and to contrasting ways in which people deal with them in the two countries. Those differences are presented in the table below:

Figure 6.1 Differences between England and Vietnam in terms of gender

Themes	Perceptions in Vietnam	Perceptions in England
6.1.1 Theories of gender and education	• Boys were cleverer than girls • Boys learned natural science subjects better than girls whilst girls learned social science subjects better than boys • Social science subjects ('girls' subjects') required to learn by heart • Gender equality was an important issue • Promoting gender equality in education was to teach students about gender equality knowledge	• Not mentioned • More boys in science and engineering subjects • Not mentioned • Gender equality was less of an issue • Promoting gender equality in education through wide range of tasks, encouraging more girls into science
6.1.2 Attitudes to gender equality	• Gender inequality was more serious in rural areas • Patriarchal aspects of cultural paradigm had the greatest influence on attitudes toward gender issues • Son preference • In-law relationship affected gender equality	• Not mentioned • Not mentioned • Lack of role models • Not mentioned
6.1.3 Government policy and curriculum in promoting	• There was a gap between policy and practice • Research and response went in line	• Was more successful in implementing gender equality by policy • Big contrast between research and responses of teachers about curriculum

gender equality in education	• Curriculum was too difficult, boring and impractical • Boys found social science subjects difficult whilst girls found natural science subjects difficult	• Curriculum was good enough • Not applicable
6.1.4 The influence of teaching pedagogies on gender equality in education	• Students perceived that teachers gave more attention to girls in social science classes and to boys in natural science subject classes • Mathematics teachers and homeroom teachers had a role in promoting gender equality • Questioning the qualification of teachers	• Not applicable • Not mentioned • Not mentioned
6.1.5 Strategies to improve gender equality	• Experience: extra-curricular activities • Modifying the content • Educating gender equality for children from early years	• Experience: creating a wide range of tasks; separating boys and girls in some subjects; inviting guest speakers; encouraging more girls into science; analysing learning result regarding to genders • Strategies for high schools: feedback to and from students. • Not mentioned

To conclude, there are similarities in the issues associated with gender equality in education in each country but because of cultural differences, the amplitude and nuances of these

issues are very different. Vietnamese society has a strong gender bias against the role of women compared to England. Vietnamese women have been trapped in the gender stereotypes of the Confucian approach and prevailing culture that put them in a disadvantage compared to men. There, women are expected to have sons and tolerate the patriarchy whereas it is not the case of England. In addition, Vietnam is at a less advanced stage of development in relation to gender equality in education than in England as evidenced by: the lower recognition of teachers about the learning ability of girls; the notion that there are girls' and boys' subjects; and the general lack of development in promoting gender equality in schools. We may also note other evidence of the underdeveloped education in Vietnam in terms of gender such as the lack of clear government policy, the teaching pedagogies or strategies to promote the fairness compared to England where gender has been less of an issue. This has a good deal in common with the 2013 Global Gender Gap Report which indicates the ranking of the UK is 18 (WEF, 2013: 8) and Vietnam is 73 (WEF, 2013: 10). Furthermore, Vietnam is slower than England in the development of the curriculum with evidence of the gender bias in school textbooks (Ngo, 2007) and the irrelevance and impracticality. For all of the above reasons, the recommendations for promoting gender equality in Vietnamese high schools are presented in the next section.

6.2 Recommendations

In this section, the researcher will make recommendations for Vietnamese government to promote gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools from the findings of this study and the literature of gender equality in education. Though the researcher is aware that there is a long way to go because of the strong influence of gender stereotypes and gender bias of Confucianism and feudal thoughts, she believes that these recommendations would help to promoting gender equality in education in high schools in Vietnam.

6.2.1 Recommendations to change the attitudes toward gender issues

The data revealed that attitudes to gender were one of the key problematic areas in Vietnamese schools and in society more widely. The following recommendations are made for changes in practice in relation to this area:

- It is necessary to improve the attitudes of Vietnamese people toward gender issues. Previous research findings and the data from this study reveal that the attitudes of

Vietnamese people towards gender equality contain gender bias, a finding that raises the need to improve not only teacher attitudes but overall societal perspectives on gender issues. Moreover, feminist reproduction theory suggests that gender equality in education should be understood in the social cultural context (Dillabough, 2003: 377). Thus, the improvement of the attitudes of the society is necessary and it could be carried out by the simultaneous betterment of education, urbanisation, media and jobs for women. Education is considered to be very important to promote gender equality not only at school but also in society because there is interconnection between students (at families) with schools and society. The improvement of the educational level of citizens could bring changes in viewpoint about gender equality and the role of women in society.

- Urbanisation and modernisation could be an effective way to improve gender equality. As gender issues are more problematic and intransigent in the rural areas, urbanisation or modernisation, together with the progress of other elements of the economy, could stimulate the rural population to have a more appropriate viewpoint about gender issues. In addition, Apple (1982a) points out the role of media in the complex interconnections regarding to gender and thus the media should support gender equality by giving more gender-neutral messages and appealing for the equality between men and women in the aim for gender equality.

- Establishing positive role models and promoting expanded career pathways that challenge gender stereotypes. In this way, improvements could be made in the recognition of society to the role of women. However, as noted above, as society, schools and families have the interconnections, the improvements should be made systematically and at the same time among the three elements. Together with the progress in society, the rule of primogeniture in families should be changed.

- Challenging the division of domestic labour in the home to make it possible for women to pursue a wider range of career paths. More importantly, people should be encouraged to be more open in their perceptions of being feminine or masculine. This would help women to take part in productive economic activities including labour that has heretofore been said to be unsuitable for the 'weaker gender'. In education, this could stimulate students to escape from gender stereotypes by encouraging girls to take up what are perceived to be boys' subjects. Correlatively,

boys to undertake girls' subjects since Esptein et al. (1998) shows that such changes in perception and practice have taken place in the West and the work of Paechter (2006a) exposes that girls who are encouraged and enabled to do well in subjects as mathematics currently consider themselves as different but changes in such views are possible over time.

- Women should change their attitudes about the roles of women because there are women who are open to take opportunities but equally, there are women who maintain the traditional gender stereotypes. They should be convincing. In addition, more opportunities should be created for men to take up so-called 'women's jobs' if they wish to do so.

6.2.2 Recommendations for the Vietnamese government and Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training

The findings of this study support much of the previous research outlined earlier in this submission and have shown that England has had some success in promoting gender equality in education (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 7) but this could not have been carried out without changes in the wider context of society and economy. Promoting gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools should not only focus on legislation on gender equality in education but also consider other legislations running alongside regarding to genders. The experience of England makes it clear that it takes a long time to bring a big change in the society in terms of gender equality. For example, the Education Act which emphasizes the inclusion of girls in secondary education, has been enacted from 1944 or the Equal Pay Act from 1970, the Sex Discrimination from 1975 (Arnot and Phipps, 2003). It is important that Vietnam does not attempt to import wholesale the approaches employed in England since Vietnam has its own cultural approaches and attitudes which should be respected and built on, where appropriate. However, some helpful insights may be gained from Western experiences and the following list of recommendations is derived from the analysis of the literature, policy documents and the analysis of data:

- The Vietnamese government should introduce more intensive and concrete legislation regarding gender equality as well as the rights of girls and women in education and other fields of works since it is evident that England's 'formal gender parity' in education is the result of educational government policy to

improve girls' education (Arnot and Phipps, 2003: 7). It is worthy of note that England has had a debate about 'failing boys', 'poor boys' in education due to the 'feminization of schooling' (Arnot and Miles, 2005: 174), thus the Vietnamese government policy should be careful to manage the emancipation of girls whilst minimizing any detrimental impact on the opportunities for boys.

- The Vietnamese government should introduce a target ratio for the number of women in managerial positions. The exact number relies on human resources and the level of gender balance for each place. At this moment, there have been such targets in the policy yet the findings of this study show that it is a formality.

- It is important to shorten the gap between policy and practice, especially in education since the teaching staff confirmed that they did not know any policy regarding to gender equality in education. Relating to education, the work of Coffey and Acker (1991: 27) proves that the more funding and more attention of the government in England has led to the increased incentive for universities to invest more on gender issues courses. Therefore, it would be effective if the Vietnamese government policy give more consideration to the gender equality in ITT programmes.

- The high school curriculum of Vietnamese schools should be amended to be more gender-neutral, less difficult, less boring and more practical. Ngo (2007) points out that there are gender biases in Vietnamese high school textbooks and this was confirmed by the views of the respondents. A gender-neutral curriculum should not contain any images, language, content or metaphor to women's disadvantage. In addition, as both teachers and students complained about the 'too difficult' curriculum, there should be review of the curriculum to make it more approachable, as Manthorpe (1989: 128) states, that we need scientists but we do need a literate population who understands the knowledge of science for daily life. If the curriculum is too difficult, students are not willing to pursue it, especially high status subjects.

- The work of Paechter (2003) implies the need to change the amount of time for some subjects in order ensure equality. The issue of re-scheduling the time of some subjects in the curriculum to reduce the level of challenge and create a more equal

curriculum amongst different subjects should be explored at the policy and institutional level.

- The last point above relates to the further issue of the practicality and relevance of the curriculum. Respondents wished to have a more vocational curriculum and it seems that this would also have appeal to students and employers. If such an approach were to be introduced in a gender-neutral way this could have a dynamic impact on enabling female students to gain access to posts in industry and commerce that have previously been denied to them with the concomitant long-term benefit that female role models would begin to emerge in key industries.

- There arose a very interesting recommendation in the data that it would be beneficial for students to receive regular feedback on their progress on every subject. Moreover, students may be more motivated when they know what they are learning for and how necessary each subject is to their everyday life and their later careers. However, this would work best only when the curriculum is vocational, as recommended above.

- In amending the curriculum, it is necessary to have the curriculum reviewed by educators who are specialists in different spheres, especially in gender equality in education. Review by educational specialists is very important to make sure that the curriculum is appropriate in terms of gender justice as well as in relation to other requirements about the academic knowledge and practicality.

- Targeting gender inequality in the 'hidden curriculum' is challenging but this should be a key priority since much of the prejudice against female students is hidden and subsumed within prevailing attitudes and the ways in which girls are presented in school materials and the wider press and media. Such an approach should be reflected in the educational environment, which will be analysed in the next section.

6.2.3 Recommendations for school leaders and teachers

There are many recommendations for school leaders and teachers regarding gender equality in high schools and those recommendations confirm much of what has been known in the past but the researcher selected and adapted the relevant findings to fit with the context of

Vietnam. There are also some very valuable, accessible and original recommendations from this study. Two main categories of change that the researcher would like to recommend to school leaders and teachers are: to change the attitudes of educators and pay more attention to gender equality in classroom activities.

In changing the attitudes of educators, school leaders and teachers are recommended to consider these points:

- Changing their attitudes toward boys' and girls' ability in learning some subjects. Teachers should be encouraged and enabled to have appropriate expectations and recognition of the learning ability of students. From there, they should encourage girls into 'boys' subjects' and vice versa. This study has discovered that Vietnamese educators held the strong gender stereotypical views about the better learning ability of boys in natural science subjects and the better learning ability of girls in social science subjects. According to Ma (2008: 454), teachers in many countries think that boys are more able than girls but we should note that there are countries that do not have a gender gap in mathematics and science subjects scores. Expectations that are more appropriate could lead to the increased participation of girls since girls will no longer feel they are less important when teachers give equal attention to both genders (Stanworth, 1983). Teachers should also encourage girls to have a voice for they are often regarded as note takers rather than articulate beings (Gray and Leith, 2004: 10). Learning processes would benefit from the participations of all students. Teachers should bear in mind inclusion issues in all elements of their work and, in particular, they should give all students opportunities to get involved in lessons and encourage students to speak out.

- It is necessary that teachers should develop strong and appropriate professional relationships with students since such a rapport would help students in seeking in assistance for their learning (Mlama et al., 2005: 20; Mitrevski and Treagust, 2011: 39). Approachable teachers would help students a great deal in their learning, especially those who have difficulties in understanding the lessons or clarifying any ambiguities. Equally, it would help teachers to have more understanding about their students' needs and break with the hierarchies, which might exclude students and girls. In this way, teachers could raise the aspirations of all students.

- Teachers and school leaders should respect the differences between students (Johnson and Weber, 2011: 153) because giving the same opportunities for students does not always mean seeing boys and girls as the same. When a diversity of styles of learning is incorporated in schools, all boys and girls should be enabled to excel. In order to do this, teachers should be aware of the differences of students.

In improving the classroom activities in terms of gender equality, teachers should consider these recommendations:

- Collaboration and discussion to promote gender equality among students (Gipps, 1996b: 265) such as group work, pair work or debates. These activities are suggested by not only the work of Gipps (1996b), Mlama et al. (2005: 9), Mitrevski and Treagust (2011: 39) but also by the respondents who experience them.

- Arranging the classroom so that all students can take part in learning activities is very important (Mlama et al., 2005: 7). Teachers should have flexible teaching pedagogies and give a wide range of tasks to students since boys and girls may prefer different learning styles (Gipps, 1996: 6a). The satisfaction of students in learning activities would lead to better performance by all students.

- Ensuring that the teacher's language is gender-neutral whilst teaching and interacting with students is important (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup, 2008: 212-213, Mlama et al., 2005: 14). This gender equality should be reflected in the way teachers give feedback to students and listen to the feedback from students about the activities, lessons and teaching pedagogies that take place in classrooms. It is also recommended that teachers should encourage critical questions from students about the curriculum and knowledge at schools (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47)

- Lessons should be modified to fit in with the circumstances of country. In the context of Vietnam, the gender stereotypes are fairly strong and as noted above, the curriculum contained some issues in terms of gender. In order to accomplish this, teachers need to have a good awareness of gender equality in education and it is important to examine the learning materials beforehand.

- Paying attention to extra-curricular activities such as inviting guest speakers to speak to students, being aware of gender equality whilst making the lesson plans

and analysing the learning results in each subject and the overall achievement. Moreover, since at the high school stage, students have to make a choice of careers, the vocational orientation in schools should be improved with the attention to gender equality in the workplace and let students know that whichever career direction they choose, there are always equal opportunities for men and women.

6.2.4 Recommendations for ITT programmes

Since ITT programmes in Vietnam currently lack content on gender issues and based on the suggestions of researchers like Mlama et al. (2005), Skelton and Francis (2005), Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender (2005), Skelton (2007), as well as the messages from respondents in the study, it is necessary to provide knowledge of gender equality in education for Vietnamese trainee teachers. The universities of pedagogy should consider these recommendations:

- Creating a mandatory module or course about gender equality in education for trainee teachers so that they can have more in-depth knowledge (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 76, Tatar and Emmanuel, 2001: 215; Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 53). Since it is essential that all teachers should have the appropriate awareness about gender equality, the module or course focusing on such knowledge should be compulsory (Tatar and Emmanuel, 2001) to make sure that all trainee teachers will have been equipped with such knowledge before they graduate. With this, teachers of all subjects could address and overcome any gender inequalities that might exist in their schools.

- Embedding gender equality knowledge across the curriculum of ITT (Darling-Hammond, 2002 and Irvine, 2003 cited in DeLuca, 2012: 553). Besides the compulsory module or course about gender equality, the embedding of such knowledge throughout the curriculum shows that the issues of gender equality in education is reflected in the entire syllabus and educational environment regardless of subjects that students pursue. Embedding gender issues in the pedagogy for trainee teachers is especially important.

- Teachers should be provided with a handbook of approaches to gender equality through workshops and should be enabled to recognise gender inequalities and reflect best practice in their teaching. This is the shortest way to support teachers

who have not been provided with gender equality in education knowledge in their previous training. ITT can help schools in operating workshops or networks where teachers can share their experience to implement ideas about gender issues and pedagogies (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 53). These workshops would be useful not only for teachers but also school managers in terms of promoting gender equality in education in high schools.

- Core knowledge should be built in for gender justice in the form of a module on the topic. This should include the specific knowledge of gender equality in education such as the definition, inclusion, women's emancipation and the broader knowledge relating to it such as: the right of women in law, the psychology of high school boys and girls and the proper awareness of gender issues in the context of Vietnam because the historical and geographical contexts have a big influence on gender issues (Aikman, Unterhalter and Challender, 2005: 47).

6.3 Recommendations for further research

6.3.1 Recommendations to develop the theory of gender and education

There are some recommendations that the researcher would like to offer for further research relating to the topic of this study. These include:

- To extend the topic to all levels of education, especially to early years. Cognitive development theories and social learning theories state that children learn from what they see or what they are taught (Sayers, 1987: 2; Measor and Sikes, 1992: 9) so the perceptions of gender equality of children are very important. This could include the gender equality among children in early years and gender equality in the teaching career at the early phase of education in schools where women teachers are preponderant (MOET, 2011b). Moreover, if the research of gender equality could be done in all stages of education, it would help to promote gender equality in education systematically.

- Further research about gender equality in Vietnamese educational leadership is essential. Research about the Vietnamese educational leadership in high schools in terms of gender equality is necessary because of the top-down management of education in Vietnam. Besides, though women teachers outnumber men teachers in Vietnam, the majority of head teachers are men (Kabeer, Tran and Vu, 2005: 5).

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More importantly, together with the first recommendation, it would be very effective and comprehensive if gender equality in educational leadership is researched in all levels of the educational system of the country.

- The difference between categories of the university or college entrance examination in Vietnam leads students to choose which three subjects to focus on from high school level and research points towards most Vietnamese female students concentrating on social sciences (Kabeer, Tran and Vu, 2005: 5). Thus research is needed about the impact of university entrance examinations upon the subject choices of boys and girls in Vietnamese high schools.

- Investigation should take place concerning the influence of the tradition of Vietnamese families in relation to gender equality. This study has made some interesting findings about this issue but since the focus is gender equality in education, it did not examine the topic as extensively as might be the case with a wider study. Further research about family traditions such as modes of worship or parental attitudes would contribute to the improvement of gender equality in society and indirectly influence gender equality in education.

6.3.2 Research limitations

During the time the researcher undertook this study, she encountered many difficulties that she would like to present and acknowledge in this section. Moreover, she wishes to acknowledge the limitations of her methods and gives recommendations about methods for further research to avoid those pitfalls.

The first and biggest difficulty that the researcher faced was the requirement of needing to be proficient in English. As a Vietnamese researcher English had not been used in her previous degrees and she found it hard to understand professional academic English in reading, writing and then listening and speaking when she did the fieldwork. Therefore, her recommendation for the researchers who conduct their comparative study in England and Vietnam, or any other foreign countries, is to be fluent and conversant with English, especially when their research tools include interviews. In addition, they should give some more time when scheduling time for transcribing. It took the researcher about five hours to transcribe a one hour interview in Vietnamese-her mother tongue-but it took her three to ten days to transcribe verbatim a 45 minute interview with English respondents. Furthermore,

there are some disparities in the way people understand the questions. For example, there were some questions starting with 'To what extent do you think...?' that Vietnamese people did not understand, even an English teacher. The researcher had to amend it to a 'Yes/No' question, then depending on the responses, she moved on to ask 'why?' to get the ideas of respondents. It was because there were no 'to what extent' questions in the Vietnamese language but since she was trying to think in English and conducting the interview schedule in English, she encountered such difficulties.

In addition, the researcher believed that future research would have a better triangulation among respondents in England if interviews are carried out with English students. Focus groups' interviews with Vietnamese students gave very interesting and reflective responses but due to the constraints of time, the ethics process and the ability to approach students in England, she could not do it. The future research can use semi-structured interviews with boys/girls in small group discussions or groups of mixed students in a similar time.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of observation as a tool to gather data. The researcher did carry out some observations at a high school in Vietnam but as she had been a teacher in that school, she was aware that her role as an insider observer was influencing the activities that took place. However, the researcher believes that observation in the two countries could bring a more persuasive triangulation. This includes observation of the teaching hours, break time and extra-curriculum activities and assemblies. Observation is used widely to collect information; as Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008: 97) point out, it enables the researcher to immerse in the research environment and it is associated with a grounded theory approach. In addition, observation can provide even greater insights into educational research because the researcher can observe 'what is actually happening which might result from, say, interviewing' (Opie, 2004b: 121).

Furthermore, the main limitation of this research is the small sample. It would clearly give a broader picture of gender equality in high schools if a larger sample was investigated in the future and included a wider range of type of schools such as single-sex schools in England and some more high schools in Vietnam. Although Vietnam no longer has single-sex high schools, the investigation of gender issues in girls' schools and boys' schools could give many ideas about separating girls and boys in particular subjects in co-educational schools as English respondents of this study suggested. Moreover, data collected in some

more high schools in Vietnam could reflect more clearly gender issues in Vietnamese high schools.

6.4 Final reflections

The main purpose of this study was to contribute to the improvement of gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools with the hope that it then pushes the quality of education and economy of Vietnam to a faster and more sustainable level. To reach that aim, the study has investigated gender equality in two high schools in Vietnam by exploring the attitudes to gender equality in education of school leaders, teachers, students and staff at a university of pedagogy in that country. It also examined the influence of Vietnamese government policy, curriculum and teaching pedagogies upon gender equality in Vietnamese high schools. It then compared the situation in Vietnam with the measures taken to ensure gender equality in education in England by exploring the viewpoints of staff in one secondary co-educational school and a faculty of education at a university in England. It has been noted that this research employed a comparatively small sample. To ensure that complex perspectives were explored in depth, it used the qualitative approach with purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews and careful analysis of data. As such, fruitful findings have been discovered which have been outlined in previous sections of the document and summarised earlier in this chapter. Overall, we should note that the Vietnamese government appreciates gender equality and has already made great strides in that area but there remains a divergence between the policy and the lived reality. Therefore, the Vietnamese government needs to take some more significant steps to target gender issues in education, in families, society and the varying geographical contexts of the country. The comparative element of the research exposed interesting findings about the differences of culture between England and Vietnam in terms of gender issues and it was notable how different cultures influence the ways people in the two countries deal with gender issues such as the impact of families or role models or the ways they see the benefits of gaining gender equality.

In addition, there were dichotomies in the data from Vietnam since the teaching staff stated that they supported gender equality in education and that they held what may described broadly as liberal feminist viewpoint; however, the examples and statements that they gave revealed that they had strong gender stereotypes and gender bias about the learning abilities

and roles of girls and boys. Moreover, a further irony has been pointed out in relation to the Vietnamese curriculum since educators confirmed that the curriculum was equal for both sexes but the research revealed that respondents stated that it contained gender stereotypes. A further significant finding was the disjunction that emerged from Vietnam where teaching staff and respondents in the managerial positions consistently affirmed that both groups of students were treated equally whilst students stated that teachers treated boys and girls differently. This disjunction needs to be examined further to find out more about the nature of the issue and ways that it can be addressed.

Since this research was cross-cultural research, it produced challenges regarding the different cultural contexts within which the research was located, especially the translation of language and the difficulties of the associated concepts. As Choi et al (2012) demonstrated, translation was a challenge in cross-cultural research. For example, in the Vietnamese language, there is no type of question which starts: 'to what extent…', and this emerged as a problem during the pilot study. Thus, the researcher converted such questions to 'Yes/No' questions and proceeded to ask 'why?' in order to explore the viewpoint of interviewees.

The researcher originated from Vietnam and conducted interviews in that country in her native language whilst she conducted interviews in England in English. All the recorded interviews in Vietnam were transcribed verbatim in Vietnamese before being translated into English. This process was hard because the researcher was 'confronted with the challenge of producing meaning-based translations rather than word-for-word translation' (Choi et al., 2012:654). This was because the 'translation process is not just about the direct translation of words; it also involves portraying as many layers of meaning as possible' (Choi et al, 2012:656). In fact, there were some popular sayings in Vietnamese which could not be translated exactly word for word into English, rather, the researcher used other words which had the closest meaning to them or had to insert them. For example, when a participant talked about the importance of sons in a family, he used phrase 'chong gay' which meant 'lean on a stick' in English but in fact, it was the metaphor of a son putting his hands on a stick at the funeral of his father or mother which was a tradition rather than the need to lean on a stick to stand still. Therefore, the researcher put the phrase into quotation marks. Choi et al. (2012:654) also recommend that a good translator will 'reduce potential threats to the

validity of data' but, in this case, the researcher translated from Vietnamese into English herself as she trusted her understanding of Vietnamese culture and tried to translate and reflect it in the best way possible.

Further research is needed on this topic, which could be qualitative or quantitative or mixed methods in nature. However, even before that further research takes place, it is important for agencies at both government and institutional levels to know and understand the differences between what is stated about gender equality in schools and what is enacted in classrooms and in the curriculum in order that senior leaders can make decisions about whether government policies have been effective. The researcher has no doubt that all relevant agencies will need to consider whether further training and legislation is needed to address the prejudicial treatment of students of different genders.

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Appendices

Appendix 1-Interview schedule for ITT course leader in England

Interviewer: .... Interviewee: ....

Place of interview:..

Date of interview:.. Time of interview:...........................

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. I was a high school teacher in Vietnam for seven years before I came to England. Now I am doing my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. I believe that you may have experience in promoting gender equality in education and today I would like to ask you some questions about this issue. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.1 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me whether you think gender is an important issue in education and, if so, why?

1.2 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in our university at this moment? For instance, to what extent do you think gender influences teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes?

1.3 Prompt 1: Do you know what strategies have been used in schools in England to help girls achieve the best they can?

1.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What is your own current attitude to gender equality in education in your country? For instance, do you think it should be a focus in education now or do you think it is less of an issue? If not, why not?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in the society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in your country?

2.4 Prompt 2: To what extent do you think the university should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3. Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: To what extent do you think the government policy and the curriculum help girls in approaching education?

3.2 Probe: How important do you think the curriculum is in stimulating girls to study?

3.3 Prompt 1: To what extend do you think the government policy and the curriculum at secondary schools influence students in choosing their future career?

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy and curriculum to gain gender equality? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: To what extent do you think that teaching pedagogy influences male and female students' achievement in university and boys' and girls' achievement in schools?

4.2 Probe: What strategies do you employ to the university so that your students can have a suitable teaching pedagogy which is helpful to promote gender equality in education?

4.3 Prompt 1: Could you tell me some benefits of providing teaching pedagogy which can help teachers to promote gender equality in high schools?

4.4Prompt 2: How could we change the teaching pedagogy for gender equality in schools and in teacher training further?

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: Do you think we should provide trainee teachers with specific knowledge on gender equality in education while they are in the university? For instance do you think there should be specific programmes and courses in ITT about gender equality? If so, what should these courses contain? If not, then how do you think gender issues should be addressed in ITT programmes?

5.2 Probe: What knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt 1: As course leader, what have you done so far to provide students with knowledge of gender equality issues?

5.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Appendix 2-Interview schedule for ITT lecturer in England

Interviewer: .... Interviewee: ....

Place of interview: ....

Date of interview: .... Time of interview: ....

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. I was a high school teacher in Vietnam for seven years before I came to England. Now I am doing my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. I believe that you may have experience in promoting gender equality in education and today I would like to ask you some questions about this issue. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.1 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me whether you think gender is an important issue in education and, if so, why?

1.2 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in our university at this moment? For instance, to what extent do you think gender influences teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes?

1.3 Prompt 1: Do you know what strategies have been used in schools in England to help girls achieve the best they can?

1.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What is your own current attitude to gender equality in education in your country? For instance do you think it should be a focus in education now or do you think the issue is redundant? If not, why not?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in the society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in England?

2.4 Prompt 2: To what extent do you think the university should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3. Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: To what extent do you think the government policy and the curriculum help girls in approaching education?

3.2 Probe: How important do you think the curriculum is in stimulating girls to study?

3.3 Prompt 1: To what extend do you think the government policy and the curriculum at secondary/high schools affect students in choosing their future career?

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy and curriculum to gain gender equality? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: To what extent do you think that teaching pedagogy influences male and female students' achievement in university and boys and girls achievement in schools?

4.2 Probe: What strategies do you employ to the university so that your students can have a suitable teaching pedagogy which is helpful to promote gender equality in education?

4.3 Prompt 1: Have you done anything to promote gender equality in your own teaching? If yes, could you tell me an example of what you have done so far?

4.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some benefits of providing teaching pedagogy which can help teachers to promote gender equality in secondary/high schools?

4.5 Prompt 3: How could we change the teaching pedagogy for gender equality in schools and in teacher training further?

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: Do you think we should provide trainee teachers with specific knowledge on gender equality in education while they are in the university? For instance, do you think there should be specific programmes and courses in ITT about gender equality? If so, what should these courses contain? If not, then how do you think gender issues should be addressed in ITT programmes?

5.2 Probe: What knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Appendix 3- Interview schedule for Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher in England

Interviewer: .... Interviewee:.......................................

Place of interview:..

Date of interview:.. Time of interview:.............................

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. I was a high school teacher in Vietnam for seven years before I came to England. Now I am doing my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. I believe that you may have experience in promoting gender equality in education and today I would like to ask you some questions about this issue. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.1 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me whether you think gender is an important issue in education and, if so, why?

1.2 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in your school at this moment? For instance, to what extent do you think gender influences teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes?

1.3 Prompt 1: What strategies do you use in this school to help girls achieve the best they can? What other strategies do you think we need to employ in schools to promote gender equality in education?

1.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What is your own current attitude to gender equality in education in your country? For instance, do you think it should be a focus in education now or do you think the issue is redundant? If not, why not?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in your society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in your country?

2.4 Prompt 2: Do you think schools should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3. Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: To what extent do you think the government policy and the curriculum help girls in approaching education?

3.2 Probe: How important do you think the curriculum is in stimulating girls to study?

3.3 Prompt 1: Do you think the current curriculum ensure gender equality in education for boys and girls?

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy to gain gender equality? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: To what extent do you think the teaching pedagogy influences boys' and girls' achievement in school?

4.2 Probe: Do you think the existing pedagogy of teachers in England has promoted gender equality in education?

4.4 Prompt: How could we change the teaching pedagogy for gender equality in schools further?

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: Do you think we should provide trainee teachers with specific knowledge on gender equality in education while they are in the university? For

instance do you think there should be specific programmes and courses in ITT about gender equality? If so, what should these courses contain? If not, then how do you think gender issues should be addressed in ITT programmes.

5.2 Probe: What knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt1: Teachers have several ways of obtaining knowledge on gender equality. In case of you, how have you gained the knowledge of gender equality in education? Were you provided with knowledge of gender equality when you were at the ITT programmes? If yes, do you think such knowledge is helpful for you to promote gender equality in education?

5.3 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Interviewer: .... Interviewee: ....

Place of interview:...

Date of interview:.. Time of interview:.............................

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. I was a high school teacher in Vietnam for seven years before I came to England. Now I am doing my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. I believe that you may have experience in promoting gender equality in education and today I would like to ask you some questions about this issue. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.1 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me whether you think gender is an important issue in education and, if so, why?

1.2 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in our school at this moment? For instance, to what extent do you think gender influences teaching and learning strategies and learning outcomes?

1.3 Prompt 1: What strategies do you use in this school to help girls achieve the best they can? What other strategies do you think we need to employ in schools to promote gender equality in education?

1.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What is your own current attitude to gender equality in education in your country? For instance do you think it should be a focus in education now or do you think the issue is redundant? If not, why not?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in your society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in your country?

2.4 Prompt 2: Do you think schools should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3.Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: To what extent do you think the government policy and the curriculum help girls in approaching education?

3.2 Probe: How important do you think the curriculum is in stimulating girls to study?

3.3 Prompt 1: Do you think the current curriculum ensure gender equality in education for boys and girls?

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy to gain gender equality? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: To what extent do you think the teaching pedagogy affects boys' and girls' achievement in schools?

4.2 Probe: Do you think the existing pedagogy of teachers in England has promoted gender equality in education?

4.3 Prompt 1: Have you done anything to promote gender equality in your own teaching? If yes, could you tell me an example of what you have done so far?

4.4 Prompt 2: How could we change the teaching pedagogy for gender equality in schools further?

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: Do you think we should provide trainee teachers with specific knowledge on gender equality in education while they are in the university? For instance do you think there should be specific programmes and courses in ITT about gender

equality? If so, what should these courses contain? If not, then how do you think gender issues should be addressed in ITT programmes.

5.2 Probe: What knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt 1: Teachers have several ways of obtaining knowledge on gender equality. In case of you, how have you gained the knowledge of gender equality in education? Were you provided with knowledge of gender equality when you were at the ITT programmes? If yes, do you think such knowledge is helpful enough for you to promote gender equality in education?

5.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Appendix 5-Interview schedule for vice principal and course leader in Vietnam

Interviewer: .... Interviewee: ....

Place of interview: ....

Date of interview: .... Time of interview: ....

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. I was a high school teacher in this university for seven years before I came to England. Now I am doing my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. I believe that you may have experience in promoting gender equality in education and today I would like to ask you some questions about this issue. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.5 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me what do you think about gender equality in education?

1.6 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in our university at this moment?

1.7 Prompt 1: What should we do to promote gender equality in education?

1.8 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What are the main barriers to secure gender equality in education in Vietnam? Why?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in your society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in your country?

2.4 Prompt 2: Do you think the educational institutions should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3. Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: Do you think the government policy and the curriculum can help girls in approaching education more easily? Why?

3.2 Probe: In your experience, are girls less concerned in education than boys? Why?

3.3 Prompt 1: Do you think the government policy and the high school curriculum have influences on the orientation of career choice of students? If yes, please give me some examples.

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy and curriculum to gain gender equality? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: Do you think that teaching pedagogy affects male and female students' achievement in university and boys and girls achievement in schools?

4.2 Probe: What strategies do you employ to this university so that your students can have a suitable teaching pedagogy which is helpful to promote gender equality in education?

4.3 Prompt 1: Could you tell me some benefits of providing teaching pedagogy which can help teachers to promote gender equality in high schools?

4.4 Prompt 2: Have you done anything to promote gender equality on the programmes that you manage? If yes, could you tell me an example of what you have done so far.

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: What should we do to help trainee teachers to have knowledge about gender equality in education?

5.2 Probe: Do you think trainee teachers should have some specific knowledge about gender equality in education? If yes, what knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt 1: As a vice principal/ a course leader, what have you done so far to provide students with knowledge of gender equality issues?

5.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality

knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

<p align="center">**Appendix 6-Interview schedule for lecturers in Vietnam**</p>

Interviewer: .... Interviewee:......................................

Place of interview:..

Date of interview:... Time of interview:............................

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. As you know, I am studying for a PhD at Liverpool John Moores University in the UK and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.1 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me what do you think about gender equality in education?

1.2 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in our university at this moment?

1.3 Prompt 1: What strategies should we do to promote gender equality in education in Vietnam?

1.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What are the main barriers to secure gender equality in education in our country? Why?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in your society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in our country?

2.4 Prompt 2: Do you think schools should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3. Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: Do you think the government policy and the curriculum can help girls in approaching education more easily? Why?

3.2 Probe: In your experience, are girls less concerned in education than boys? Why?

3.3 Prompt 1: Do you think the government policy and the high school curriculum have influences on the orientation of career choice of students? If yes, please give me some examples.

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy to gain gender equality in education? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: Do you think the teaching pedagogy affects female and male students' achievement in university and boys' and girls' achievement in schools? How does it influence?

4.2 Probe: Does the university provide trainee teachers with teaching methods which could help to promote gender equality when they become teachers?

4.3 Prompt 1: Could you tell me some benefits of providing teaching pedagogies which can help teachers to promote gender equality in high schools?

4.4 Prompt 2: Have you done anything to promote gender equality in your own teaching? If yes, could you tell me an example of what you have done so far?

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: Do you think we should provide students with specific knowledge on gender equality in education while they are in the university?

5.2 Probe: What knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt 1: What should we do to provide trainee teachers with knowledge on gender equality in education?

5.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Appendix 7-Interview schedule for Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers in Vietnam

Interviewer: .... Interviewee:.......................................

Place of interview:..

Date of interview:... Time of interview:............................

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to the interview today. I was a high school teacher in this university for seven years before I came to England. Now I am doing my PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and I am interested in the issue of gender equality in schools in England and in Vietnam. I believe that you may have experience in promoting gender equality in education and today I would like to ask you some questions about this issue. Let me assure you that everything you tell me today is completely in confidence.

Section 1. Theories of gender equality in education

1.1 Main question: First of all, please could you tell me what do you think about gender equality in education?

1.2 Probe: What do you think about gender equality among students in your school at this moment?

1.3 Prompt 1: What should we do to promote gender equality in education?

1.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some examples of the benefits of promoting gender equality in education?

Section 2. Attitudes to gender equality

2.1 Main question: What are the main barriers to secure gender equality in Vietnam? Why?

2.2 Probe: What do you think about the difference between boys and girls, men and women in your society at this moment? How can we make it better?

2.3 Prompt 1: How important do you think gender equality is in your country?

2.4 Prompt 2: Do you think schools should be central to this drive for equality and what specific contribution can they make?

Section 3.Government policy and curriculum in promoting gender equality in education

3.1 Main question: Do you think the government policy and the curriculum can help girls in approaching education more easily? Why?

3.2 Probe: In your experience, are girls less concerned in education than boys? Why?

3.3 Prompt 1: 1: How important do you think the curriculum is important in stimulating girls to study? Do you think the current curriculum have some issues which could make students find it difficult or make girls get bored with learning? If yes, how could we amend the curriculum to make it more suitable?

3.4 Prompt 2: Do you think we should change something in the government policy and curriculum to gain gender equality? If so, what?

Section 4. Teaching pedagogy affects gender equality in education

4.1 Main question: Do you think the teaching pedagogy affects boys' and girls' achievement in schools?

4.2 Probe: Do you think the existing pedagogy of teachers in Vietnam has promoted gender equality in education?

4.3 Prompt 1: As a Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher, have you done anything to promote gender equality on your management? If yes, could you tell me an example of what you have done so far?

4.4 Prompt 2: How could we change the teaching pedagogies for gender equality in schools further?

Section 5. Improvement of the knowledge of trainee teachers about gender equality in education

5.1 Main question: What should we do to help trainee teachers to have knowledge about gender equality in education?

5.2 Probe: Do you think trainee teachers should have some specific knowledge about gender equality in education? If yes, what knowledge do you think would be most useful for teachers to promote gender equality in schools?

5.3 Prompt 1: As a vice principal/ a course leader, what have you done so far to provide students with knowledge of gender equality issues?

5.4 Prompt 2: Could you tell me some of the benefits of providing gender equality knowledge for trainee teachers that you think might exist?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Dear Sir or Madam,

By way of introduction, I am a full-time MPhil/PhD student based in the (…). I am carrying out a research which aims to promote gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools.The study takes the qualitative approach and involves semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants. This will only take place with the complete consent of the participant and all information collected will remain confidential. There are no risks associated with the study and ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee at Liverpool John Moore University has been granted.

I am writing to you to see if you might be interested in referring suitable teachers to the study; I am seeking to recruit in:

- Two high schools in Vietnam and one secondary school in England: head teachers, deputy head teachers, eight teachers drawn from different subject areas. Five of them are men and three are women. Among them, three teachers who have more than fifteen year experience of teaching, three teachers who have six to fourteen years teaching, and two less than five year experienced teachers.
- One university of pedagogy in Vietnam: The vice principal who is in charge of curriculum, the course leader for high school teachers and two lecturers
- One university in England: a lecturer and a course leader who is in charge of teacher training

I would appreciate if you could approach them to see if they may be interested in participating in the study. I have attached a Participant Information Sheet, which you could pass on to them. It gives the background and aim of the study and details what their

participation would entail. I also attached the Consent Form for each participant, if they would like to take part in the study; they should tick in the boxes and sign. Alternatively, you could ask them if they would be willing for their contact details to be passed to me so that I could take the initiative in making contact with them.

If you would wish to have further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address, which is given below, is the more expedient way of contacting me.

I believe the experiences potential interviewees have are important and are therefore a key part of the study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project

Promoting gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools

Name of Researcher and School/Faculty

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you want to take part or not.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

Gender equality in Vietnam has been improved but in some areas and some aspects, girls are treated as inferior to boys, including in education. England has experience in applying gender equality duty into schools. The proposed research will investigate the main theories and attitudes among vice principal, course leaders, lecturers in universities and head teachers, deputy head teachers and teachers in high schools of gender equality in education in England and Vietnam. From that the research will make some comparison between England and Vietnam in gaining gender equality in high schools. Finally, this research will produce recommendations which might be helpful to schools and to government of Vietnam and to the wider academic community.

This research aims to make contributions to gaining the gender equality in high schools which cater for the oldest children in the

school system in Vietnam and the researcher asserts that if the gender equality in high schools is strengthened, each student will gain more opportunities to achieve the most in their education and their career. This will push both the academy and the economy of country to grow faster and more sustainably.

2. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do you will be given this information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw will not affect your any future treatment you receive.

3. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part, the researcher will discuss with you about the date and time to be interviewed, which should be most suitable for you and the interview. Interviews will take place at the universities or schools where you work. The proposed date of interview will be in June, July and August 2012 in Vietnam and from January to April 2013 in both countries.

The researcher will interview one person per participant. Each interview will last for about 1 hour. There will not be any pressure on you, the researcher will try to establish a rapport between you and her and you will feel free.

Before the interview, the researcher will introduce herself and briefly talk about the interview. She will also check information about your name, role, work place and years of teaching experience. The researcher will ask you for the permission to voice record the interview. You will be assured that everything you tell her in the interview will be completely confidential.

During the interview, she will ask you and take notes. She may ask you some questions to clarify your opinion. She will not ask you difficult or sensitive questions. She will ask you about your attitude of gender equality and your experience relating to gender issues in schools or universities. If you don't want to answer any questions, you can refuse. The researcher will not force you to answer any questions that you do not want to.

At the end of the interview, you can read what the researcher has taken notes to make sure she notes honestly what you mean. She will conclude the interview with thanks, details of her contact and how you will feedback if you want.

4. Are there any risks / benefits involved?

There are not any risks for the participants. It may take time of them only, about one hour.

5. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, it will. I assure you that everything you tell me in the interview will be completely in confidence.

The record will be transcribed and kept in a safe place.

The data storage will no longer be kept as soon as the study ends.

Contact Details of Researcher

Note: A copy of the participant information sheet should be retained by the participant with a copy of the signed consent form.

Appendix 10-Consent form

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project

Promoting Gender Equality in Education in Vietnamese High Schools

Name of Researcher and School/Faculty

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights ☐

3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential ☐

4. I agree to take part in the above interview ☐

5. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed ☐

6. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised. ☐

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature

(if different from researcher)

Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

GATEKEEPER CONSENT FORM

Title of Project

Promoting gender equality in education in Vietnamese high schools

Name of Researcher and School/Faculty

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily ☐

2. I agree the researcher to access the staff to recruit participants and interview ☐

Name of Gatekeeper   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature

(if different from researcher)

Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher.

Appendix 12-The context of three schools in which samples were located

In addition to gathering data in universities in the two countries, the researcher collected data in two high schools in Vietnam and one high school in England. The two high schools in Vietnam had some similarities such as having more girls than boys and both offered specialist classes and ordinary classes.

The first high school involved in the study was the school in which the researcher had worked before she came to England for her PhD study in 2011. It is located in a large and developed city. It is managed by the local pedagogic university and is thus where lecturers carry out their experiments in teaching methods and educational research (THTH, 2010). It is also the high school where trainee teachers practise teaching to gain their teaching qualification before graduating (THTH, 2010). In this school year (2013-2014), it had 743 students, including 292 boys and 451 girls. In some years, it has three or four specialist classes and in those classes, the curriculum gives priority to the subjects that the students are focusing on. For example, students in the mathematics specialist classes have more hours for mathematics and fewer hours for social subjects. In such a class, students learn mathematics (physics and chemistry) from advanced textbooks and learn other subjects in the ordinary, or lower grade, textbooks. Specialist subjects are mathematics, English and literature. The numbers of specialist classes are much fewer than ordinary classes. In ordinary classes, students learn most subjects from ordinary textbooks. Depending on which categories of university/college entrance examination that students choose to take after graduating high schools, students are placed into A or D classes. A classes are for students who would be about to take the A category for university entrance examination and the curriculum allocates more hours on A category subjects and students learn them from advanced textbooks. D classes are for students taking the D category for university entrance examination and they have more time to learn D category subjects in advanced textbooks.

The second high school is located in a province of the central highland of country, which is the homeland of minority peoples. The economy of this province is less developed than the city of the first high school, but the quality of this school is highly respected. Notably, it is among the 200 best high schools in Vietnam and it is bigger than the first high school. In this school year (2013-2014), it has 1016 students, including 369 boys and 647 girls. It is a specialist school and specialist classes greatly outnumber ordinary classes. Specialist

subjects include mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, computing, English, French, literature and history-geography. If the specialist subjects are natural sciences, pupils in these classes learn mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology from the advanced textbooks and learn other subjects from the ordinary textbooks. However, if the specialist subjects are social sciences, they use advanced textbooks for literature, history and geography whilst rest use ordinary textbooks. However, English and French specialist classes use advanced textbooks in their specialist subjects and maths, physics and chemistry. In comparison with the first high school, this school had more specialist classes and less ordinary classes.

The researcher also interviewed staff located at a higher education institution to which the first high school belongs. It is one of the biggest universities of pedagogy in Vietnam (HCMUP, 2013) and interviewees included four staff at various levels including the vice principal, a course leader and lecturers.

The high school visited as part of the study in England is located in the North West region. According to the report of OFSTED, it was considered a good school (OFSTED, 2014) at the time the research was being carried out. It should be noted that in England, OFSTED plays an important role in the development of education. As a national school inspection body, every week, OFSTED carry out inspections and regular visits to educational institutions throughout England then report to Parliament directly (OFSTED, 2013). They also help the educational providers in improving the quality, monitoring their progress an sharing experience to improve (OFSTED, 2013). Their reports, which are published online, are not only informative for parents but also useful for providers in England (OFSTED, 2013). The school in which this research took place is smaller than the average size of a secondary school with sixth form (OFSTED, 2014) and is a mixed gender school. Students in Key Stage 3 learn English, Mathematics, and Science and a broad curriculum as the foundation to the English Baccalaureate. In Key Stage 4, the curriculum focuses on the English Baccalaureate and students undertake GCSE courses and examinations and vocational subjects at the same time. Key Stage 5 offers various courses such as Level 2 Vocational courses and Level 3 advanced courses to prepare for the student's future careers.

Appendix 13-Codes of respondents in the main study

Codes of staff in England	
Codes	**Explanations**
AH/F	Assistant Head teacher-female
DH/M	Deputy Head teacher-male
ML/F	Middle leader teacher who has 6-14 year experience-male
RQ/F	Recently qualified teacher who is in her first year of teaching-female
CL/F	Course leader of ITT
L/F	Lecturer of ITT
Codes of respondents in Vietnam	
Codes	**Explanations**
Head 1/M	Head teacher of the first high school-male
HE 1/M	Highly experienced teacher who has more than 15 year experience of the first high school-male
HE 1/F	Highly experienced teacher who has more than 15 year experience of the first high school-female
ML 1/M	Middle leader teacher who has 6-14 year experience of the first high school-male
ML 1/F	Middle leader teacher who has 6-14 year experience of the first high school-female
RQ 1/M	Recently qualified teacher who has 1-5 year experience-male
Head 2/M	Head teacher of the second high school-male
Deputy Head 2/M	Deputy Head teacher of the second high school-male
HE 2/f-M	The first male highly experienced teacher who has more than 15 year experience in the second high school

HE 2/s-M	The second male highly experienced teacher who has more than 15 year experience in the second high school
HE 2/F	The female highly experienced teacher who has more than 15 year experience in the second high school
ML 2/f-M	The first male middle leader teacher who has 6-14 year experience in the second high school
ML 2/s-M	The second male middle leader teacher who has 6-14 year experience in the second high school
ML 2/F	The female middle leader teacher who has 6-14 year experience in the second high school
RQ 2/M	The male recently qualified teacher who has 1-5 year experience in the second high school
RQ 2/F	The female recently qualified teacher who has 1-5 year experience in the second high school
VP HUP/M	Vice principal of a university of pedagogy-male
CL HUP/M	Course leader of a university of pedagogy-male
L HUP/M	Lecturer of a university of pedagogy-male
1/F1	The first female student in all-girls group interview in the first high school
1/F2	The second female student in all-girls group interview in the first high school
1/F3	The third female student in all-girls group interview in the first high school
1/M1	The first male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
1/M2	The second male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
1/M3	The third male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school

1/M4	The fourth male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
1/M5	The fifth male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
1/M6	The sixth male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
1/M7	The seventh male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
1/M8	The eighth male student in all-boys group interview in the first high school
2/M1	The male student in small mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/F-S	The first female student in small mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/F-G	The second female student in small mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/M2	The first male student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/M3	The second male student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/M4	The third male student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/M5	The fourth male student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/F1	The first female student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/F2	The second female student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school
2/F3	The third female student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school

2/F4	The fourth female student in big mixed-students group interview in the second high school