



04/2023

EDUCATION: THE GENDER-BASED CHALLENGES FACED BY GIRLS IN VIETNAM

KEY INSIGHTS





ABOUT US

Saigon Children's Charity CIO (saigonchildren) was founded in 1992 to help disadvantaged children get an education and a fairer start in life. Saigonchildren works exclusively across the whole of Vietnam to overcome barriers to education for children, including poverty, geography, knowledge and disability.

In late 2018 we received The Certificate of Merit from the Prime Minister of Vietnam in recognition of our work improving access to education and contributing to Vietnam's economic development.

PowHERful is a campaign by Saigon Children's Charity and MSD Vietnam to empower underprivileged girls in Vietnam through education. We believe that education is the key to unlocking a brighter future for girls, their families, and their communities. Join us in our mission to empower girls and transform their futures.



<https://powerful.saigonchildren.com/>



SAIGON CHILDREN'S CHARITY CIO
59 TRAN QUOC THAO
DISTRICT 3, HO CHI MINH CITY
TEL: +84 28 3930 3502
WWW.SAIGONCHILDREN.COM

Table of Contents

03	Acknowledgment	20	Menstruation & related stereotypes
04	Introduction	24	Positive progress: insights from our research
06	Social norms & Stereotypes	27	Solutions
14	Unconscious biases	28	Conclusion



ACKNOWLEDGMENT



We would like to express our gratitude to all the contributors who have supported us in completing this report. Firstly, we would like to thank the Saigon Children's Charity CIO (sagionchildren) social workers for their valuable support and assistance during the research process. We also sincerely thank the MSD team for their continuous cooperation and encouragement throughout the project.

Furthermore, we would like to acknowledge the guidance and expertise provided by Cimigo in the data collection and analysis process. Their invaluable insights have been instrumental in the development of this report.

We also extend our gratitude to the saigonchildren's partners in Tra Vinh, Tien Giang, Dong Nai, Tay Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC); Thang Long English and Vocational School, HCMC; Van Noi High School, Hanoi; Cao Son Middle School, Hoa Binh province, and some schools in Thai Binh and Son La province for their participation in the survey.

We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to Minh Thu, our dedicated intern, who demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in driving this project forward.



Minh Thu played a vital role in framing the scope of the research, developing the survey framework and questionnaires, conducting a thorough analysis of all the data collected, and skilfully weaving together a comprehensive and insightful narrative report. Her hard work, diligence, and commitment to this project were truly commendable, and we thank her for her dedication to supporting girls' education.

Finally, we would like to thank all the individuals who have contributed their time and efforts to the completion of this report. Your invaluable contributions and support have made this research possible.



CONTEXT

Currently, state agencies and sectors have issued policies on gender equality; promulgate a national program on gender equality, as well as issue a communication program on gender equality; organizations are still making efforts to implement specific initiatives and action programs to gradually eliminate gender discrimination perceptions. Do social norms about gender, and gender stereotypes still affect girls, especially in the field of education? That question prompted Saigon Children's Charity and Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD) to conduct a survey to understand more about the gender-related challenges girls face that can make hinder their personal development and progress on their educational path.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, efforts in society have gradually closed the gap in gender inequality in education. According to the results of the Survey and Measurement of Vietnam's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators on Children and Women 2020-2021, carried out by the General Statistics Office in collaboration with relevant ministries and sectors with the support of the Government. UNICEF and UNFPA technical assistance and sponsorships,

98.3% of children completed primary school, 86.8% completed lower secondary school, 58.1% completed upper secondary school. In primary and lower secondary schools, there is almost no difference between girls and boys. Even so, girls are still facing gender-related challenges that prevent them from accessing and succeeding in education.

These challenges are often not easily recognized, so it is necessary to analyze and find solutions to help them be free to reach their full potential. Using the OECD analysis of Gender in Education and the analysis of UNESCO on the Right to Education of Girls, we have identified three areas of need for inquiry among Vietnamese schoolgirls, including standards and stereotypes, gender patterns, unconscious gender biases, and menstrual health.

Gender stereotypes, as research shows, can greatly influence children and adolescents' character formation as well as their educational and professional pursuits. Meanwhile, unconscious social prejudices reinforce these effects. In addition, the specific physiological characteristics of girls, such as menstrual health, can also be a factor that increases the pressure significantly in their educational participation.

To elucidate the influence of the above three factors on the educational participation of girls, especially girls from difficult circumstances, this survey has collected three data sets in March 2023, including quantitative and qualitative.



After reviewing previous research conducted by Hoang (2019), Ngan (2012) that identified the key gender stereotypes, we have utilised CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plots (SNAP) Framework in 2020 to quantify and rearticulate these concepts into appropriate statements that are relevant to Vietnamese society.

The first group is the general public, a representative sample selected, evenly distributed across regions, age groups, occupations and incomes to examine common gender stereotypes. The survey received responses from 398 people over the age of 15.

The second target group is disadvantaged students and students in the network that saigonchildren and MSD are providing educational support to to analyze the presence and influence of the above factors. The survey received 6,224 valid responses, of which 59% were from female students.

For qualitative research, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 people from 4 groups: Kinh students, parents, teachers and ethnic minority students. Each group answers different questions to explain in more detail the educational challenges facing girls.



2.SOCIAL NORMS & STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes have been reinforced by social, cultural, and economic factors such as the Confucian philosophy, which emphasises the importance of hierarchy, obedience, and filial piety, as well as the patriarchal structure of Vietnamese families, which has historically given men more power and authority than women.

They reflect traditional cultural norms and expectations deeply ingrained in Vietnamese society for centuries.

Gender segregation in educational and professional fields has also contributed to perpetuating these stereotypes (Hoang, 2019). In the past, women had limited opportunities to study or work in fields such as science and technology, so they were often directed towards fields such as social work, education, and caring professions. Conversely, men were encouraged to pursue careers in science, engineering, and politics, as these fields were considered to be more prestigious and higher paying (Nguyen et al., 2020).



Additionally, it is noticeable how children are exposed to and then influenced by stereotypes. According to Master (2021), children's beliefs and behavior are significantly influenced by their social groups. Common-heard stereotypes shape children's perceptions of what is anticipated of them based on their group membership. The agreement to the statements can be affected by how often children hear of them. In their turn, the endorsement of children to these stereotypes influences their self-conceptions, referring to how they view themselves. This study addresses this phenomenon.

2.1 PREVALENCE OF GENDER SOCIAL NORMS AND STEREOTYPES AMONG STUDENTS

The student dataset provides insights into how existing social norms and stereotypes affect this specific group (Figure 1 and 2). The presence of gender social norms and stereotypes is familiar to most students, 90% reported hearing statements bearing gender stereotypes, with 91% of female and 88% of male students.

This prevalence of gender stereotypes, especially among female students, can significantly impact their self-perception and career aspirations, as social norms may influence their beliefs about what is expected of them and limit their choices (Thomas et al., 2020).

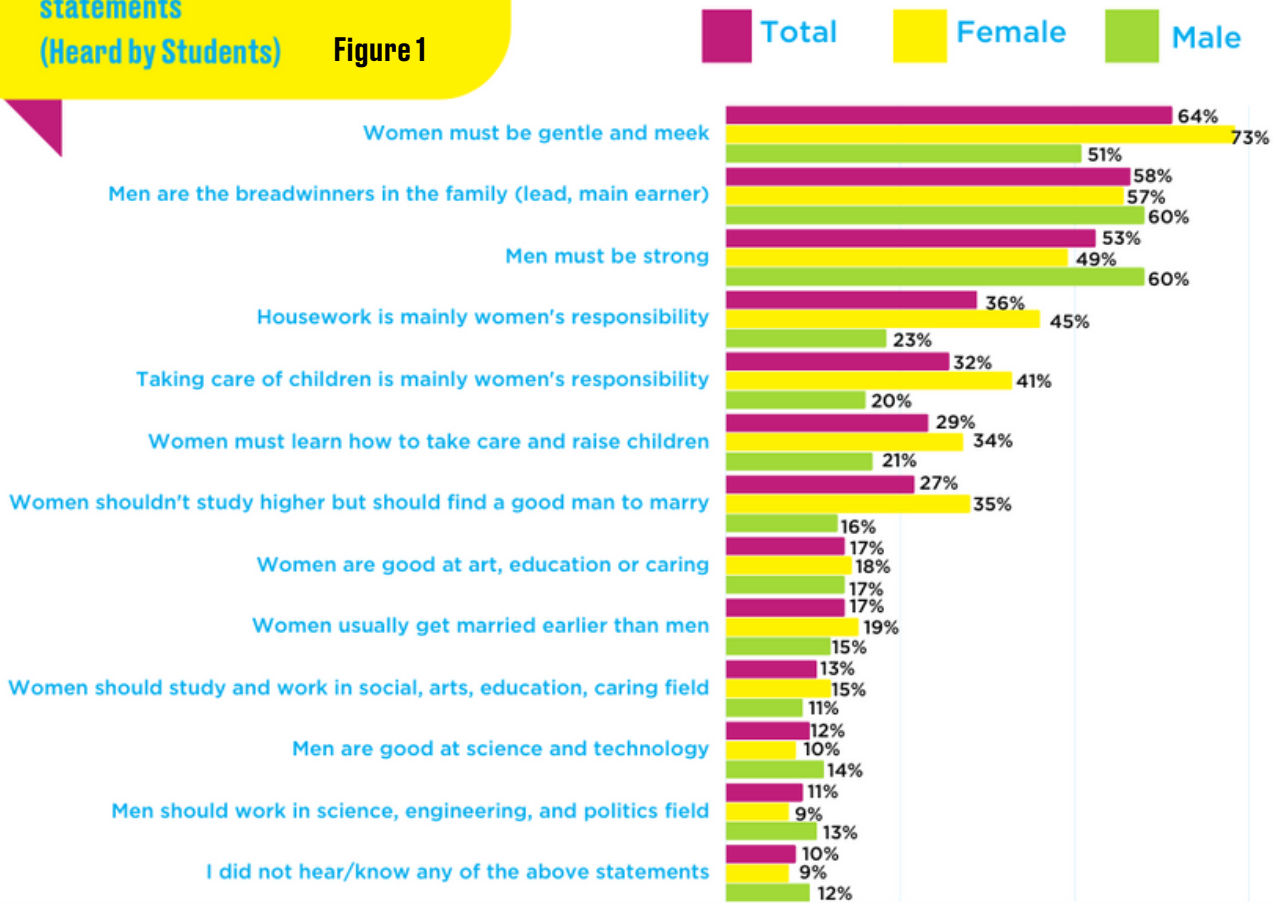
- Women must be gentle and meek: 64% of the students participating in the survey have heard of it, consisting of 51% of male students and 73% of female students.
- Men are the breadwinners: 58% of the students who participated in the survey have heard of it, 60% of males and 57% of females.
- Men must be strong: 53% of the students who participated in the survey had heard, consisting of 60% of males and 49% of females.

The statements prevalent among students can affect students' identity development, education and career prospects, as discussed above.



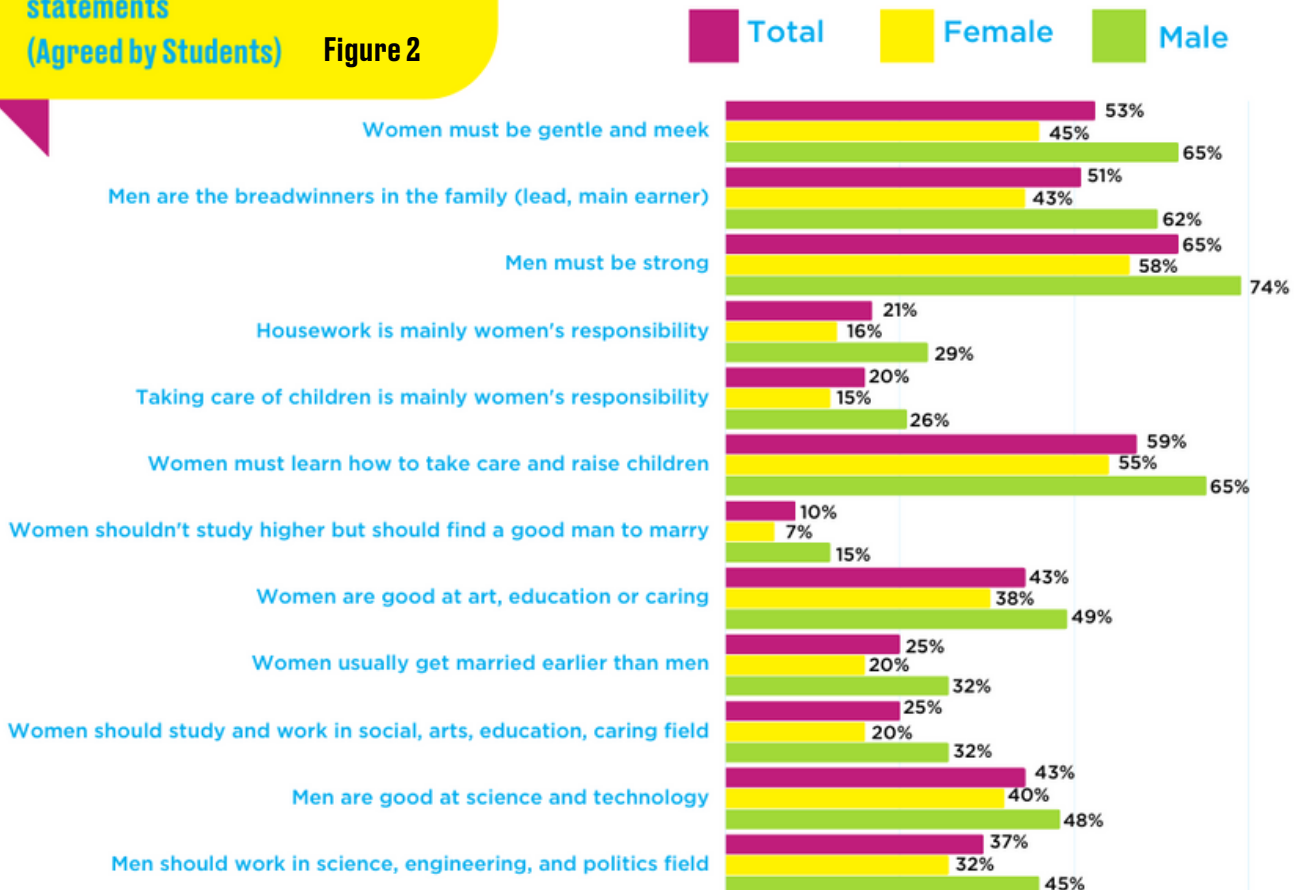
Most popular gender stereotypes statements

(Heard by Students) **Figure 1**



Most popular gender stereotypes statements

(Agreed by Students) **Figure 2**

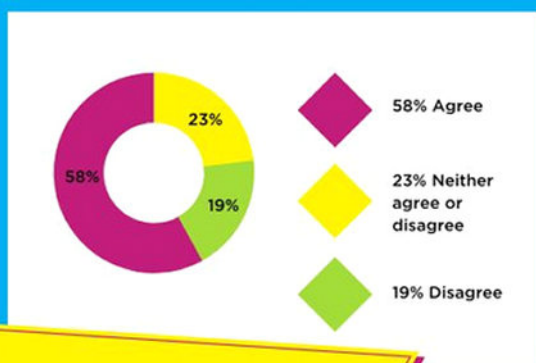


2.2 PREVALENCE OF GENDER SOCIAL NORMS AND STEREOTYPES AMONG GIRLS

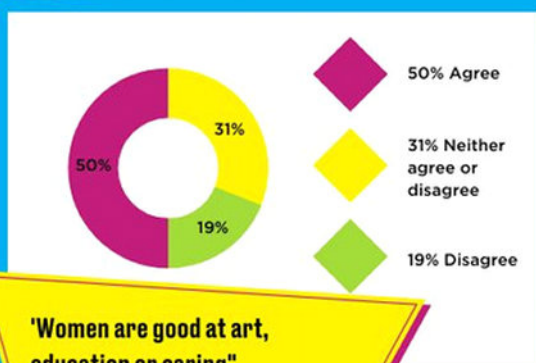
Considering, in particular, girls' perspectives of these gender stereotypes, the study found that girls have slightly different experiences than the total students. Their highest agreement rates are toward roles of both genders in the family and women's role in society.

The percentage of surveyed female students agreeing with the gender-stereotypes statements is still high. The three gender statements (Figure 3) that female students agreed with the most are:

- Men must be strong: 58% of female students agree.
- Women must learn how to take care and raise children: with 55% female students agree.
- Women are good at art, education or caring: 50% female students agree.

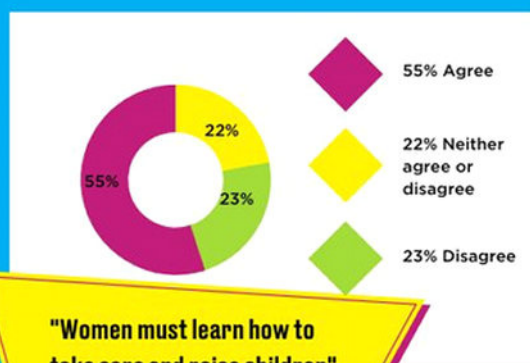


"Men must be strong"



"Women are good at art, education or caring"

Figure 3
Most popular gender stereotypes statements (Agreed by female students)



"Women must learn how to take care and raise children"

The qualitative data we collected through in-depth interviews endorse that. 4 out of 6 female students expressed their agreement to the gender statements related to men and women.

"In my opinion, girls will have to be weak and fragile." - (Female, Secondary School Student, In-depth Interview)

"In my opinion, girls have to be gentle and modest." - (Female, Secondary School Student, In-depth Interview)

"In my opinion, girls will be more meticulous, they will be more skillful and usually they will be better at things like teaching, and they will be able to cook better than boys for example. Interview)

Boys will be stronger, can study higher, do better in subjects like science and boys will be good at sports activities." - (Female, Secondary School Student, In-depth



A study by Wieselmann and colleagues (2020) found that girls who perceived themselves as more competent in math and Science were more likely to pursue careers in STEM fields and had higher academic achievement in these subjects. Similarly, a study by Zarrinabadi and Khodarahmi (2023) found that girls who perceived themselves as more capable and confident in their abilities were more likely to have positive academic outcomes and higher levels of well-being.

However, negative self-perceptions can also have a detrimental impact on girls' development. Girls who perceived themselves as less attractive had lower self-esteem and were more likely to experience depressive symptoms (Zarrinabadi and Khodarahmi, 2023).

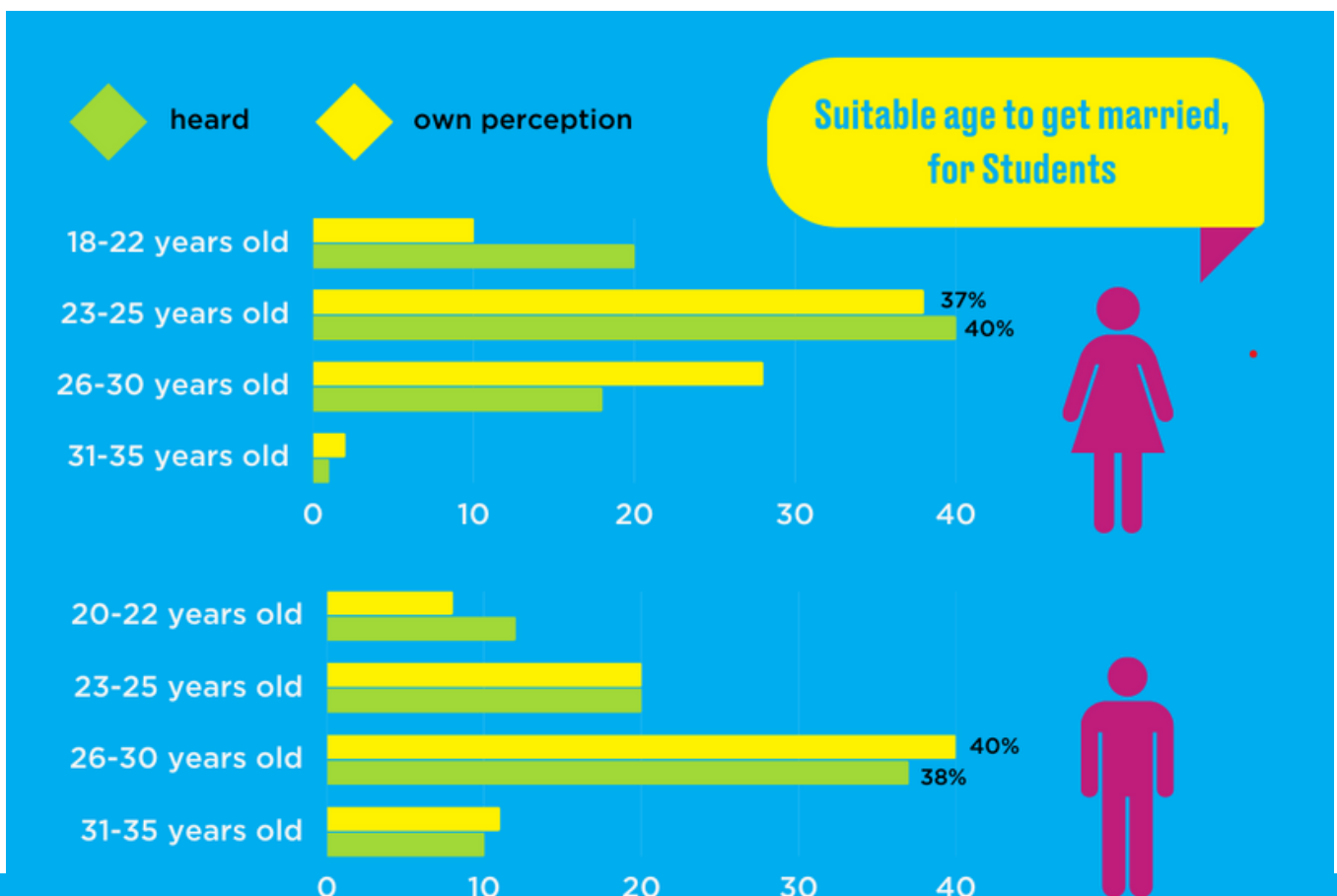


Moreover, social norms seem to reach more to girls and impact on girls. Females have heard of women-related norms significantly more than their male peers of men-related norms. The most heard of by student standard for women (“Women must be gentle and meek”) reaches 73% of females. Meanwhile, the standards for men heard of the most by students, “Men are the breadwinners in the family (lead, main earner” and “Men must be strong”) only reaches 60% of males.

Another social norm closely linked to girls and tending to have strong pressure on them is getting married at an early age.

Our students’ survey shows that this expectation still holds up in the society of less privileged students (Figure 4). 52% of students have heard of a case of leaving school to get married. The percentage of female students who know about leaving school to get married is higher than that of male students, 60% and 42% respectively. Moreover, the gender that is more likely to drop out of school to get married is, according to students, female (42%) compared to male (7%).

Figure 4: Students having ‘heard of suitable age to get married’



In Vietnam, it is not uncommon for girls to drop out of school after getting married, while boys are more likely to continue their education even after marriage. According to a study by Vu (2022), the main reasons for this gender disparity in educational attainment after marriage include the traditional expectation that women should prioritise their domestic responsibilities over their education, as well as the belief that men are the primary breadwinners in the family. This can result in limited opportunities for women to pursue further education or career advancement, ultimately perpetuating gender inequality in society. Also, A study conducted by the World Bank in Vietnam found that when female students know of someone who quit school to get married, they are more likely to be friends or acquaintances from the same or neighbouring communities, who have also experienced similar socio-economic conditions (World Bank, 2015).

40% of students participating in the survey have heard that the suitable age for women to get married is 20 to 23, while 37% of students participating in the survey have heard that the suitable age for men to get married is 26 to 30. In Vietnam, there are various reasons for girls getting married earlier than men, including cultural and socioeconomic factors (Tran, 2019). One of the main reasons is the belief that girls are responsible for taking care of the family and that their main purpose is to become a wife and mother (Tran, 2019). In addition, poverty and the need for financial support can also lead to early marriage, particularly in rural areas (Tran, 2019). Although the age at marriage for girls that was most often heard by students in our survey is not considered as early marriage, girls are nonetheless commonly advised to prioritise having a family and taking care of their family over their career development or personal interest (Chowdhury, 2018).



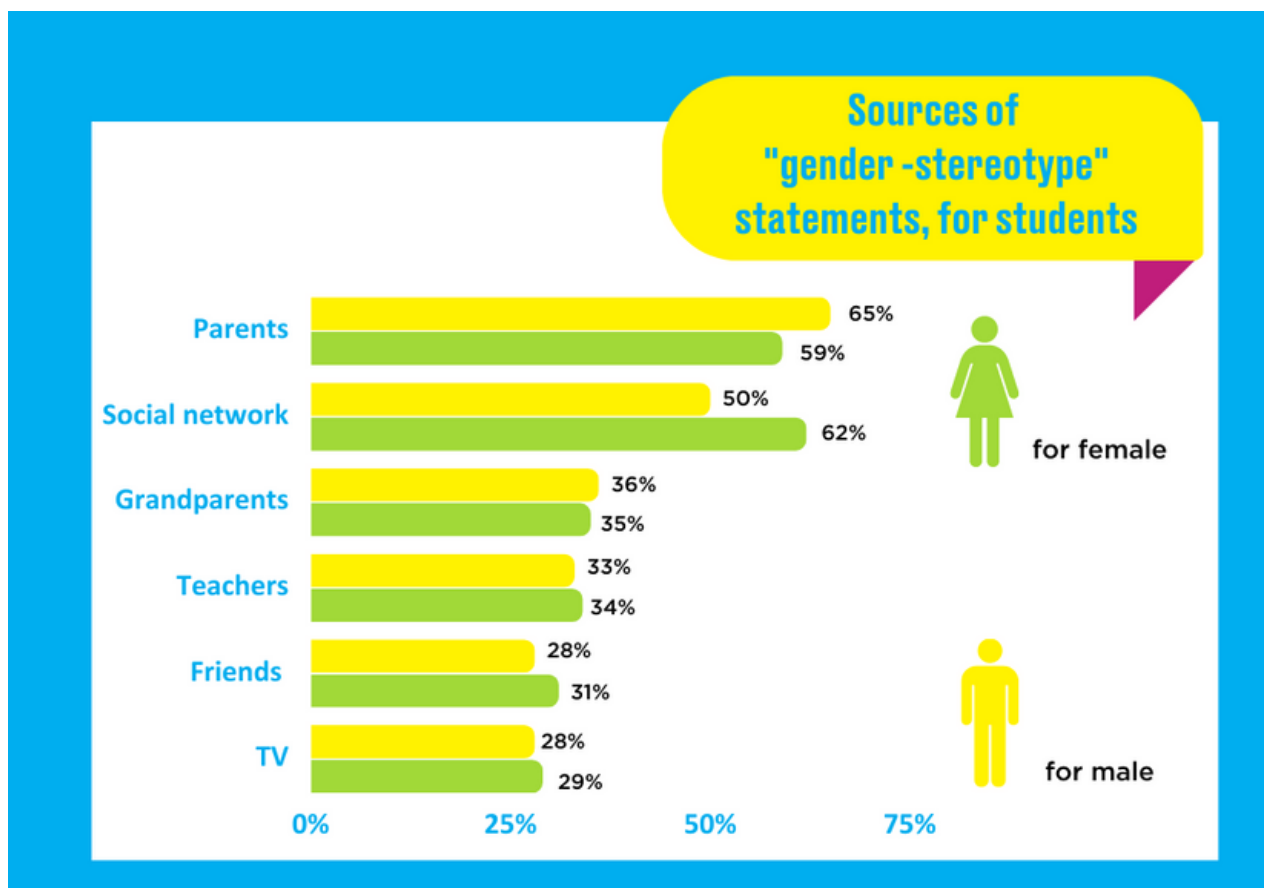
2.3 SOURCES OF GENDER STATEMENTS

According to our survey findings (Figure 5), social media is the main source from which female students hear such statements (62%) while parents are ranked as the second most common source, with 59%.

For men, social networks ranked second (50%) while parents are ranked first with 65% of male students agreeing.

A literature review by Nguyen et al., (2020) examined the impact of social media on gender stereotypes and found that social media can perpetuate gender stereotypes and contribute to their reinforcement. This is because social media is a powerful tool for the transmission and sharing of information and ideas, including stereotypes, which can spread rapidly and have a significant impact on people's attitudes and beliefs. Since social media is engaged with more by the new generation, the gender-stereotyped content can increase and intensify pressure on girls.

Figure 5: Sources of gender-stereotype statements heard by students



3. UNCONSCIOUS BIASES



3.1 SOCIAL NORMS ARE PASSED DOWN

According to findings from both student and public datasets, gender stereotypes such as the notion that women must be gentle and meek, and men are the breadwinners in the family, remain prevalent in society.

We presented a series of statements to the survey participants to assess which ones were commonly heard. The three most common statements heard by our participants are:

- Women must be gentle & meek, heard by 70% of the participants
- Men are the breadwinner in the family, heard by 70% of the participants
- Men must be strong, heard by 63% of the participants.



We then asked participants if they agreed or not with each statement. The statements most supported by our participants are

- Men must be strong, supported by 79% of the participants
- Women must be gentle & meek, supported by 63% of the participants
- Women must learn how to take care and raise children (64%)
- Men are the breadwinner in the family, supported by 63% of the participants.
- Women are good at art, education or caring supported by 55% of the participants
- Men are good at science and technology, supported by 52% of the participants

The most heard statements are similar to those that are the most supported by our participants. This confirms the study by Jadranka & Maes published in 2018 that found that exposure to gender-stereotypical roles (e.g., male engineers and female nurses) led to an implicit bias.

Participants in the survey agree with the statements to which they have been most exposed, which are gender-stereotypical, confirming an implicit bias.

Moreover, research has shown that implicit biases can be resistant to change, even in the face of contradictory information or conscious efforts to overcome them (Jadranka & Maes, 2018).

These biases can manifest in many ways, such as assuming that girls are less interested in or less capable of certain subjects or activities, or assuming that girls should prioritize domestic duties over their education (Avitzour, Choen, Joel, & Lavy, 2020).

One consequence is that girls may be discouraged from pursuing certain fields of study or extracurricular activities, leading to a lack of representation of women in these areas. This lack of representation can further perpetuate stereotypes and biases, leading to a cycle of discrimination (Avitzour, Choen, Joel, & Lavy, 2020).



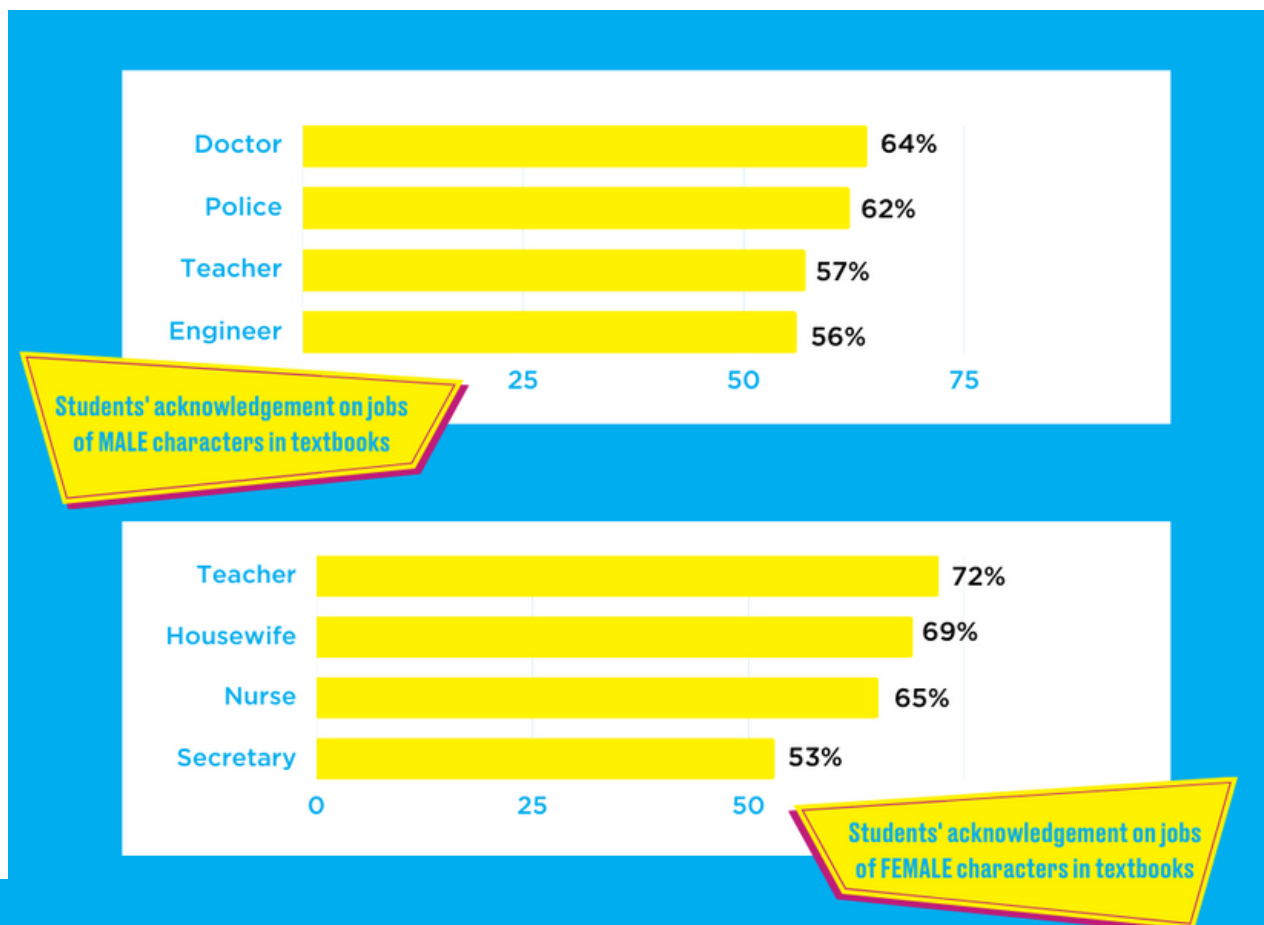
3.2 TEXTBOOK AND SOCIAL NORMS

When we surveyed students on gender representation at schools (Figure 6), they revealed that textbooks frequently associate male characters with jobs requiring strength or high technical skills, such as doctors (64% students acknowledge), police officers (62% students acknowledge), teachers (57% students acknowledge), and engineers (56% students acknowledge).

Conversely, female characters are typically associated with caring professions such as teaching (72% students acknowledge), housekeeping (69% acknowledge), or nursery (65% students acknowledge).

The representation of occupations appears significantly gender-biased, with the majority of occupations represented by males in higher status positions, such as doctors and engineers, while female-dominated occupations, such as nursing and teaching, were portrayed in lower status positions.

FIGURE 6: STUDENTS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JOBS OF CHARACTERS IN THE TEXTBOOKS



A study conducted by Vu (2022) shows that the representation of different occupations in textbooks can significantly affect the career choices and social status of students.

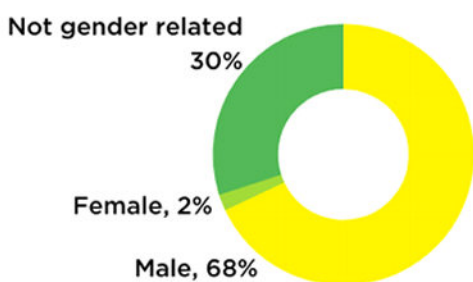
A gender-biased representation can impact students' aspirations and career choices, as they may internalise gendered expectations and perceive certain occupations as more suitable or attainable based on their gender (Le et al. 2019).

Master (2021) found that when textbooks do not provide diverse and positive examples of women in various fields, such as science technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), it can lead to a lack of interest in these fields among girls.

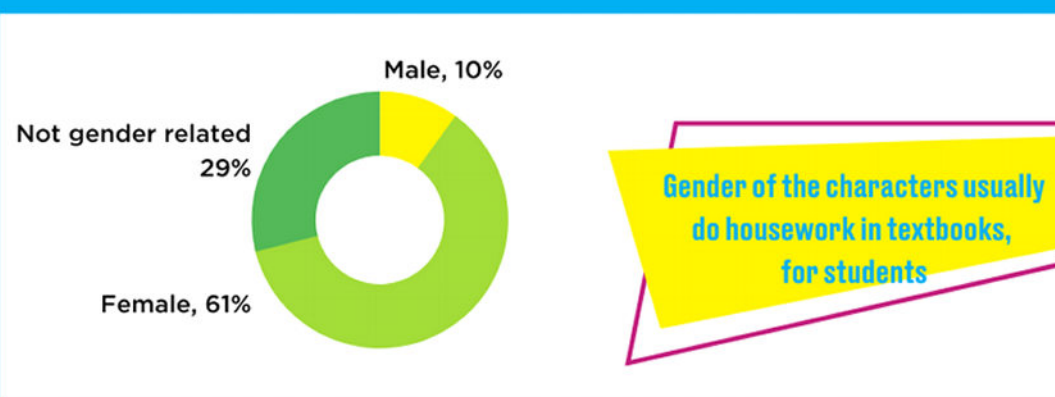
According to surveyed students' perspectives (Figure 7), male characters in textbooks are also shown in sports activities 68% of the time, while female characters are portrayed doing housework 61% of the time. 65% of female respondents said that women characters usually do more housework, according to textbooks; 55% of male respondents confirmed the same.

When male characters are presented as playing sports in textbooks, it can reinforce the stereotype that physical activity is a masculine pursuit, while female characters are often portrayed as passive and limited to domestic tasks which may reinforce the idea that women are not suited for physically demanding careers or activities (Phan & Pham, 2021).

FIGURE 7 : STUDENTS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES OF CHARACTERS IN THE TEXTBOOKS



Gender of the characters usually play sport in textbooks, for students



Gender of the characters usually do housework in textbooks, for students

3.3 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

According to our qualitative data, teachers' perception of interest and academic performance of students based on their gender are clear.

9 out of 9 teachers that we have interviewed in-depth mentioned that male students are often considered to excel in "thinking" and "calculation" subjects, such as natural sciences, while female students are expected to excel in subjects that require "diligence" and "memorisation", such as social studies. Most of the students that we interviewed in-depth (10/12) agreed that teachers at school tend to favour male students in Math, Physics, and Chemistry, while favouring female students in Literature, English, Fine Arts, Painting, History, and Geography.

The students also pointed out that teachers unconsciously assume that boys are naturally better at maths and science; therefore, gave them more attention and resources, which can lead to girls feeling discouraged and less confident in these subjects (Brundrett & Thuy Dung, 2018).

Teachers unconsciously attribute boys' successes to innate ability and girls' successes to hard work or luck, which can perpetuate the stereotype that boys are naturally smarter and more talented than girls (Vu & Pham, 2020). Some of the responses from the interviewed teachers and students:

"I see that male students are often good at subjects such as maths or subjects that need them to think fast, they will be better than girls, girls are usually better at learning subjects by heart. So in maths, physics, chemistry, the boys will be more attentive." - (Female, Teacher, In-depth Interview)

"Male students are usually good at natural subjects, subjects that apply and learn less, they do not need to memorise in a theoretical way, male students tend to do that better. As for girls, they tend to be good at subjects in languages, literature subjects, girls tend to be better at subjects that require perseverance, girls seem to do better."- (Male, Teacher, In-depth Interview)

"Boys will have an advantage in subjects such as maths" - (Male, Teacher, In-depth Interview)

These stereotypes can lead to unconscious biases, which are observed by students as below:

"Even when the teacher encourages boys to study (the subjects that require learning by heart), they will give boys extra 1 or 2 points. I think it's gender bias but I personally think yeah ok, cannot do anything about it anyway." - (Female, University Student, In Depth Interview)

"Some of us will learn more slowly than others (regarding Math), so even though we want to follow the lessons, sometimes we don't understand as fast as others but the teacher does not help us. They favour others (the boys) more than us." - (Female, Highschool Student, In Depth Interview)

The belief that males excel in "thinking" and "calculation" subjects while females excel in subjects that require "diligence" and "memorisation" can have significant negative impacts on girls' academic and career trajectories.



Recent research has highlighted how gender stereotypes can influence teachers' beliefs about their students' abilities and contribute to the underrepresentation of girls in STEM fields (Cheryan et al., 2017; Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

One study conducted in Vietnam found that female high school students tended to have lower academic self-concept and less interest in STEM fields than male students (Tran et al., 2018). Despite having higher rates of female participation in education than many other countries in the region, Vietnam still faces gender disparities in educational outcomes and career opportunities (UNESCO, 2018). Therefore, unconscious biases in teaching are likely to deepen these effects on girls.

4. MENSTRUATION & RELATED STEREOTYPES



4.1 THE IMPACT OF TABOOS SURROUNDING MENSTRUATION

In our survey (Figure 7), 54% of female respondents reported feeling embarrassed and hiding their menstrual products.

Through qualitative research, we discovered this was mainly due to messages from their mothers and fear of being teased by male classmates.

“My mom says the products are private to girls only, so I keep it hidden so I don’t show it to a man in class or in school.” - (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

“I will hide all the menstruation products, I won’t let any boys see.” (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

“Sometimes, the boys will make fun of the girls when it comes to period time and the pad was spilled. I think that action is very stupid.” - (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

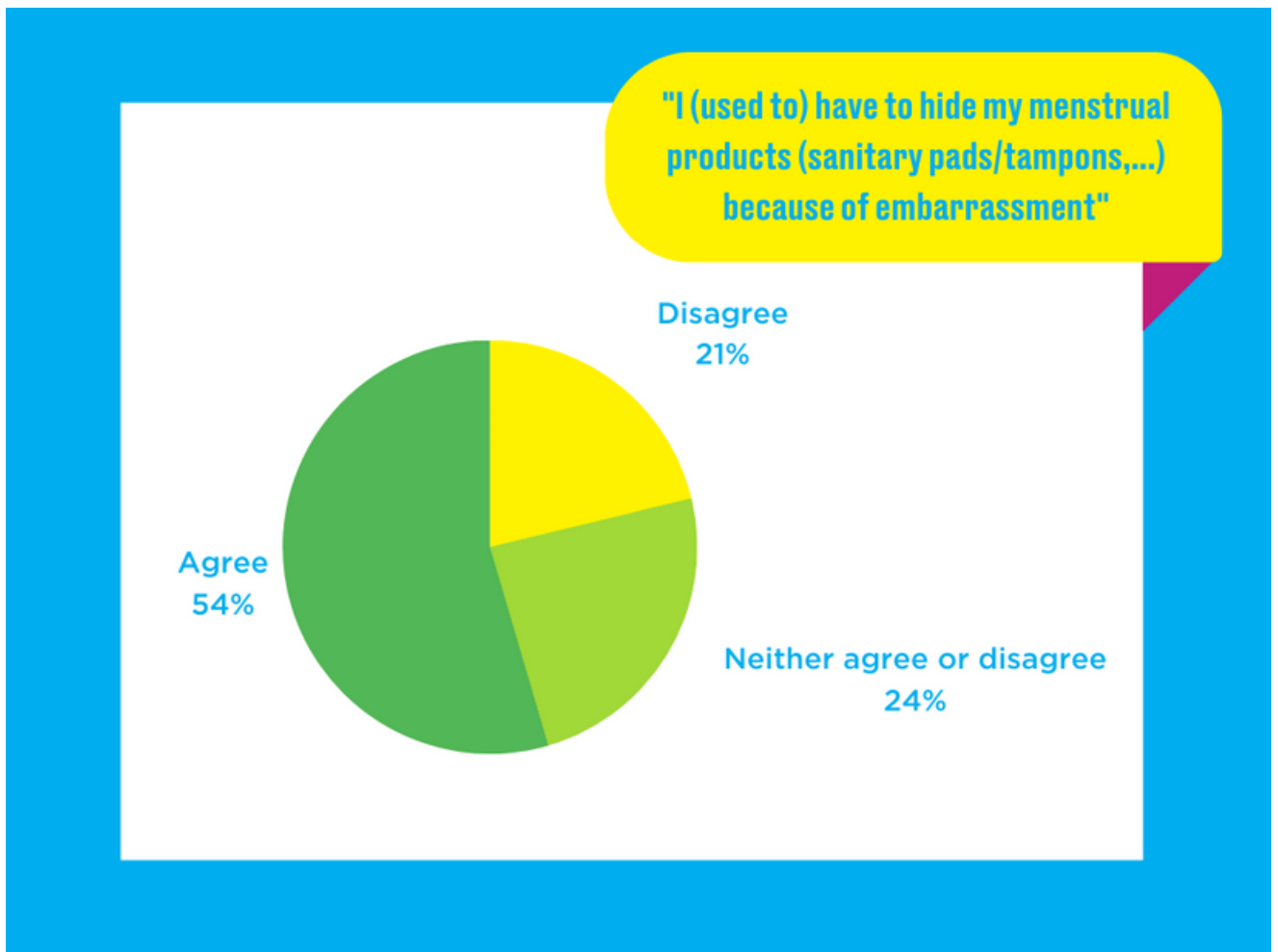


FIGURE 8 : PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE STUDENTS AGREEING WITH THE FACT THAT 'THEY HAVE TO HIDE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS'

Messages encouraging girls to manage their periods privately and a lack of attention given to their menstrual-related needs may contribute to gendered socialization that devalues females and adds to the taboo surrounding menstruation.

According to a study by Wilson et al. (2018), breaking down these taboos is critical for ensuring secure access to menstruation information,

and eliminating the secrecy surrounding menstruation may help boost girls' self-esteem and provide a more supportive environment for their autonomy.

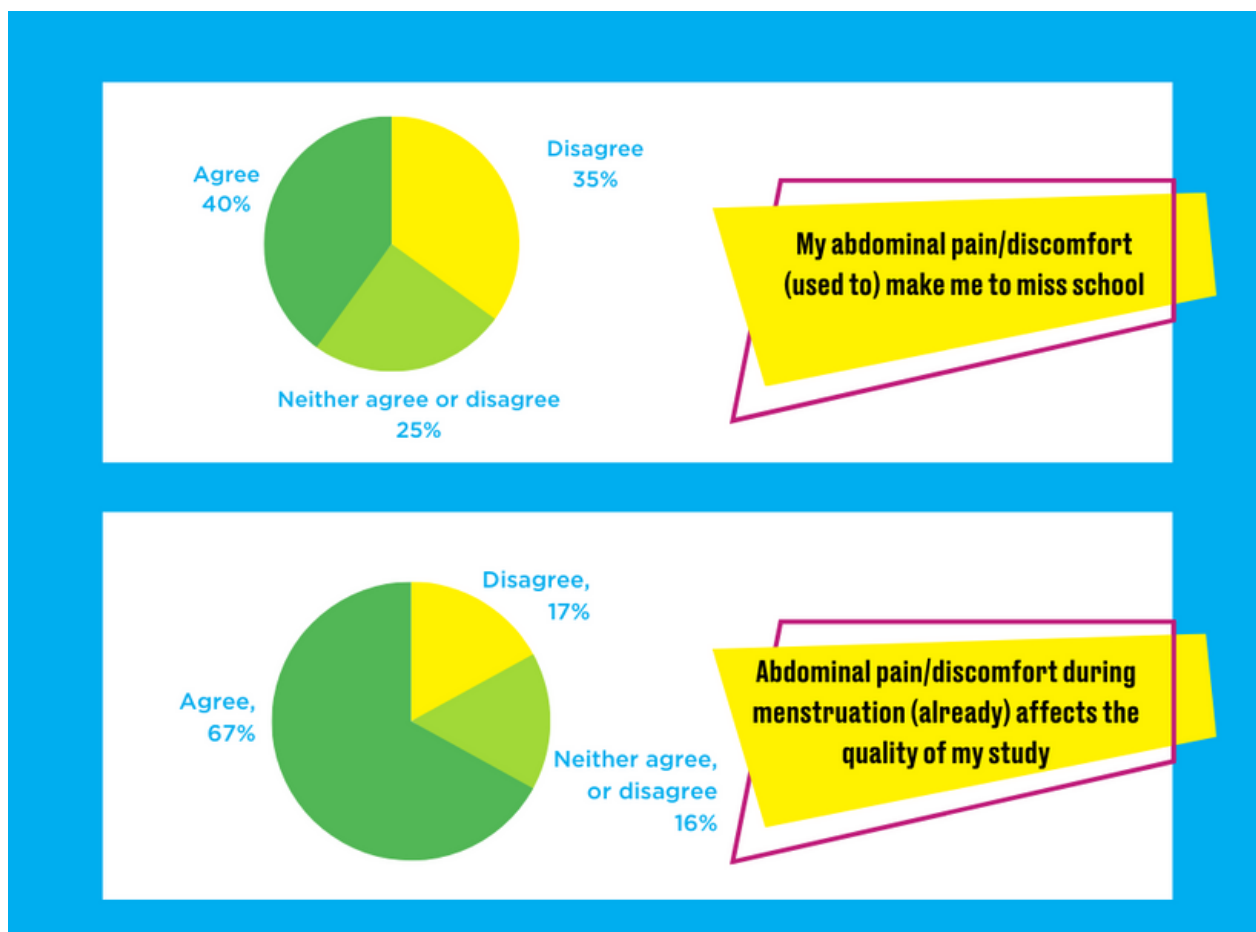
4.2 PERIOD PAIN AFFECTS EDUCATION OF GIRLS

Our survey included questions about female students' experiences at school during their periods, in order to understand the difficulties they face related to physical health and menstruation.

As per the results (Figure 8), 40% of female respondents reported having missed school due to period discomfort, while 67% said that feeling uncomfortable during menstruation affects the quality of their studies.

During in-depth interviews with six female students, all agreed that periods affected their concentration at school, making it harder to focus on their studies.

FIGURE 9: PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE STUDENTS AGREEING WITH THE DISCOMFORT DURING MENSTRUATION AFFECTS THEIR STUDY.



"When I don't get enough sleep, going to school is very tiring and it's much more uncomfortable when I have periods. I saw my friend got pain and could not even go to school. It also affects my concentration." (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

"When having periods, it's very tiring. It drains my energy when I study. Although it's annoying, I can't miss school, I don't want to miss any class." (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

"I have abdominal pain, back pain, etc. It's hard to concentrate on my studies." (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

Research by Sommer et al. (2020) has shown that menstrual symptoms such as pain, fatigue, and anxiety can significantly impair girls' academic performance. Girls who reported experiencing more severe symptoms were more likely to miss school and have lower grades.

Additionally, a study by Tamiru et al. (2021) revealed that menstrual hygiene management is an important factor in girls' academic performance. Girls who reported better menstrual hygiene practices, such as using clean and private facilities and having access to menstrual products, had higher attendance rates and better academic performance.

4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN AND PRIVATE TOILETS

Access to clean and private toilets can play a crucial factor in ensuring the health and well-being of girls during their periods. Tham and colleagues (2020) highlight the significance of effective support for girls' health at school, as it can affect their academic performance.

However, according to our survey results (Figure 8), only 23% of female students felt that their school's toilets were comfortable enough, while 46% reported feeling unsafe when using them. Moreover, in the in-depth interviews conducted with six female students, four of them mentioned that the school toilets did not support their needs during their periods.

"The toilet' doors are completely broken. Sometimes they are clean, sometimes they are dirty. I do not want to use the school's toilet to change my menstruation products." - (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

"I have never gone to the school toilets. I do not use the toilets during my periods." - (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

"Even if it's not dirty, I don't go often because I'm not used to going to the school restroom."- (Female, Highschool Student, In-depth Interview)

"I do use the school restroom but I need to find the cleanest place for me to use." (Female, Secondary School Student, In-depth Interview)

According to UNICEF (2017), female students are more impacted by the sanitation of school toilets than their male counterparts, experiencing more frequent urinary tract infections, menstrual pain, and absenteeism due to inadequate sanitation facilities. Ensuring that girls have access to clean and private toilets is crucial in promoting their health and wellbeing at school, and ultimately their academic success.

According to our survey results 33% of female students reported that the cleanliness, comfort, and privacy of their school toilets have made them not want to attend school. This can create a significant challenge for girls' education, as they may miss out on valuable learning opportunities.



These findings highlight the need for greater attention to be given to menstrual health education and the provision of safe and adequate menstrual hygiene facilities in schools to ensure girls to fully engage in their education.

5. POSITIVE PROGRESS: INSIGHTS FROM OUR RESEARCH

Our research revealed several positive signs of progress in gender-based norms and their connection to education.

An overwhelming majority of surveyed students (97%) reported that they have never considered leaving school to get married, indicating a continuing shift away from early marriage practices.

Additionally, a high percentage (80%) of students reported being encouraged to pursue higher education, including university, master's, and PhD degrees.

Moreover, there is an increase in the suitable age for marriage for both men and women, previously 18 - 22 years old for girls, and 22-25 years old for boys, as recorded by Briones, K., & Porter, C. (2019).

FIGURE 10: POSITIVE PROGRESS REGARDING HIGHER EDUCATION

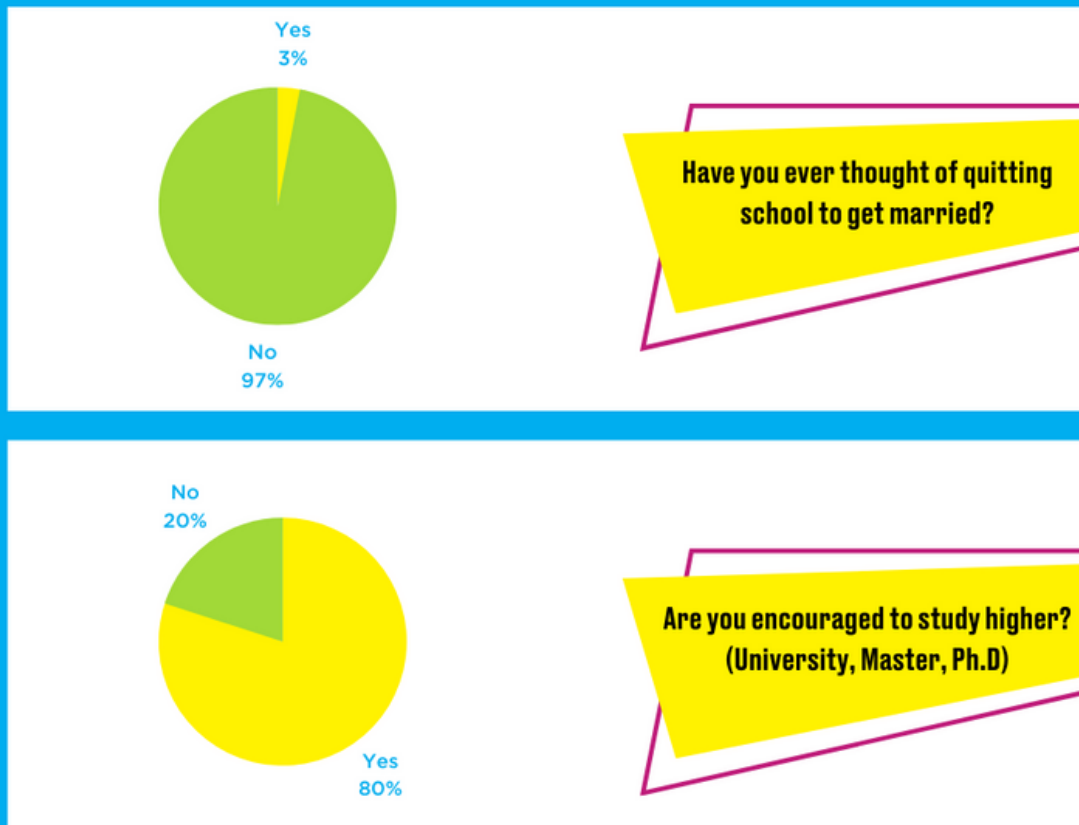
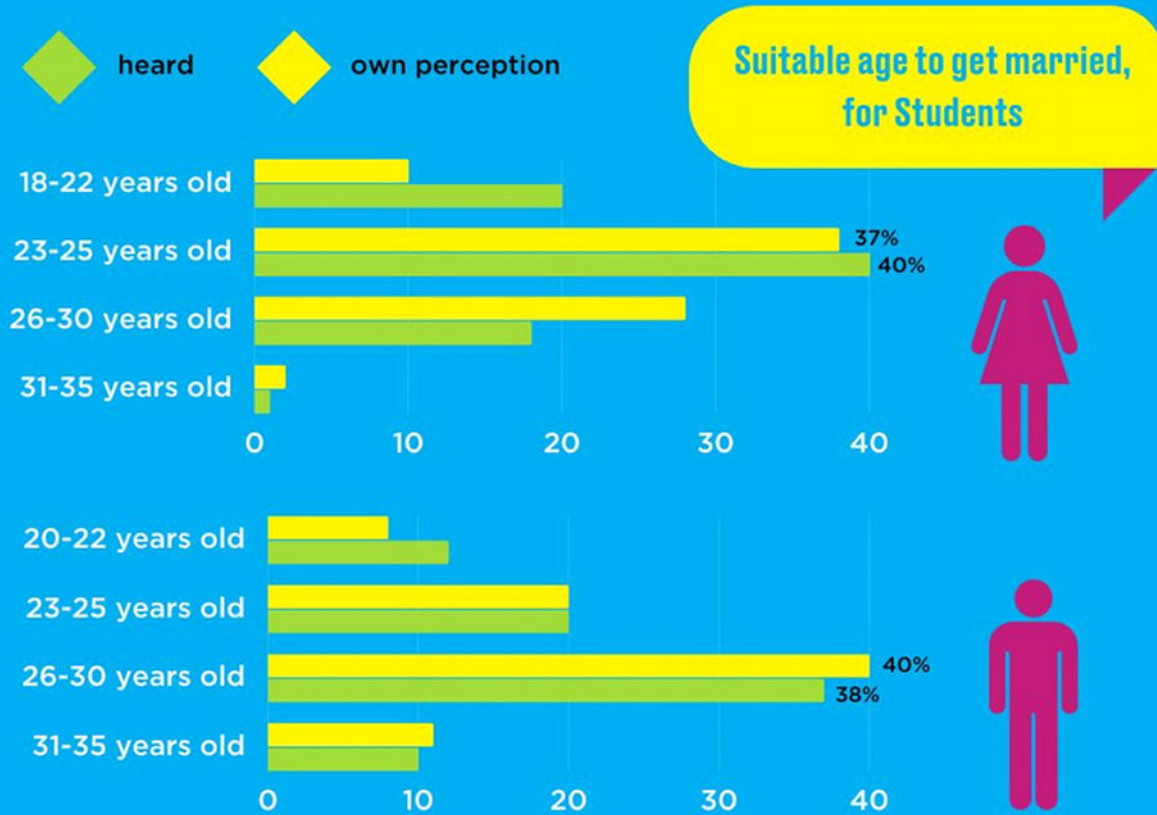


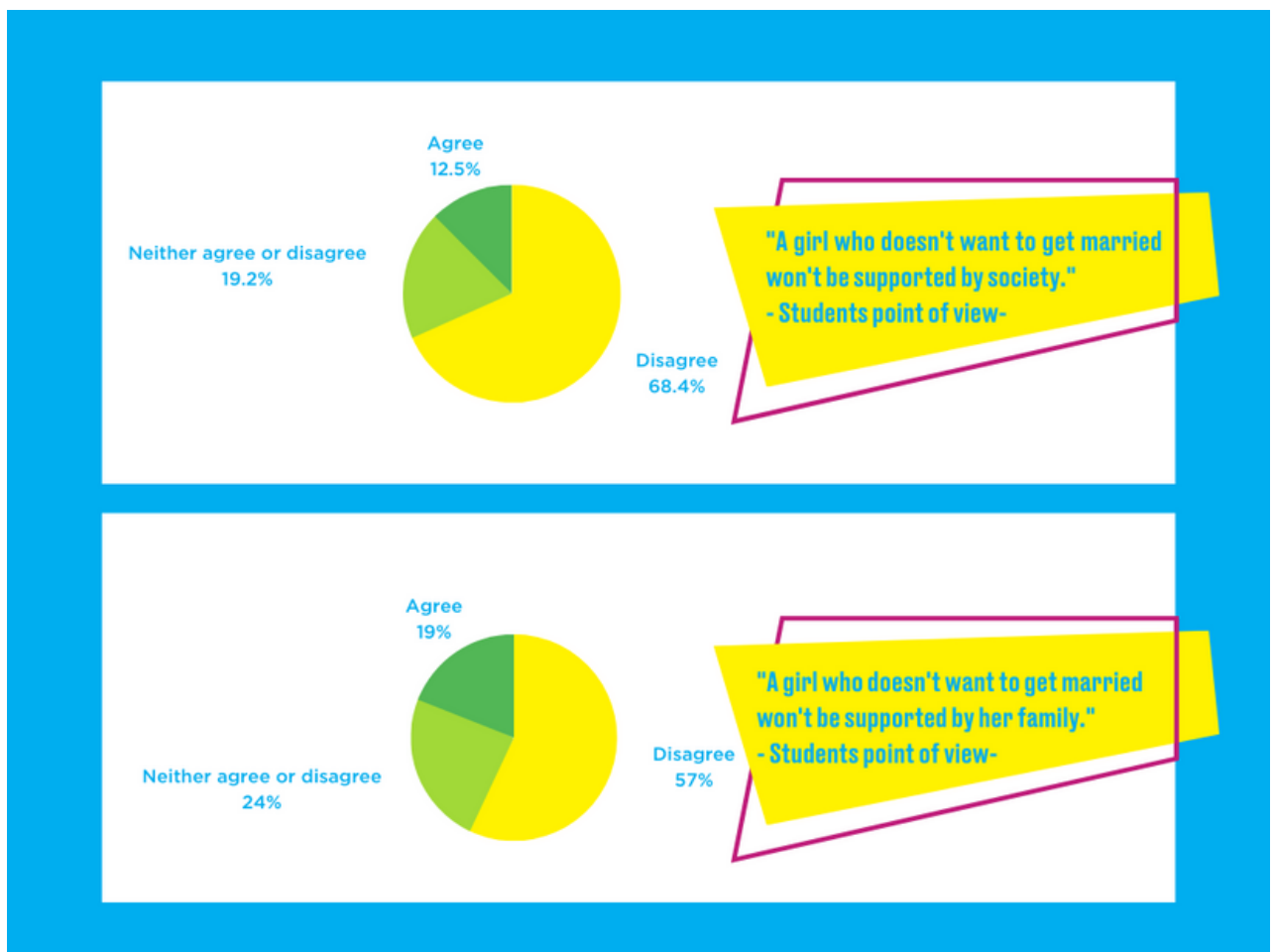
FIGURE 11: POSITIVE PROGRESS REGARDING SUITABLE AGE TO GET MARRIED



Furthermore, the majority of students (69%) agreed that it is normal for women not to get married, with female students showing a higher agreement percentage (74.5%) compared to male students (60.9%).

Finally, a low percentage of students (12.5%) agreed that unmarried women would not be supported by society, and only 19% agreed that unmarried women would not receive support from their families, indicating a more open perspective towards a woman's choice not to marry.

FIGURE 12: POSITIVE PROGRESS REGARDING OPINIONS ON GIRLS NOT WANTING TO GET MARRIED



6. SOLUTIONS

The survey results have identified a number of challenges related to gender factors that cause difficulties and obstacles to girls' education, including gender stereotypes, social norms about gender and menstrual health. In order to contribute to reducing and gradually eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, we propose some solutions as follows:

- Continue to create opportunities for girls to go to school through scholarship support, psycho-social counseling, and soft skills training.
- Implement online communication campaigns or print media materials about the potential of women to help girls strengthen their belief in their own abilities; and facilitate community discussion about the role of women and girls.
- Creating conditions for girls to approach, listen to, exchange and learn from female leaders in various fields to help inspire, unleash their potential and increase their confidence .
- Enabling girls to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs to build their confidence and leadership skills.
- Improve school sanitation facilities to ensure that children can use safe, clean and healthy toilets, especially during their menstrual periods.
- Communication to raise awareness about reproductive health; provide knowledge to minimize difficult symptoms during menstruation; enabling girls to access safe and suitable products during menstruation.



7. CONCLUSION

Social and cultural expectations regarding gender roles in family and society can create gender-based challenges to education for girls in Vietnam.

The data collected in this study shows that there is an increasing awareness and questioning of traditional gender roles and expectations, especially among younger generations.

There are promising examples of successful interventions that are breaking down barriers and increasing access to education for girls, such as scholarships, mentoring programs, and community-based initiatives.

Moving forward, it is crucial to continue challenging gender-based norms through and within education, community engagement, and diverse representation of women.

By addressing the underlying challenges to education for girls in Vietnam we can ensure that every girl has the opportunity to reach her full potential, and contribute to the betterment of her family, community, and country.

Educated girls are valuable contributors to the labour force, generating income for themselves and their families, and thereby helping to lift their communities out of poverty.

Women's empowerment could add an additional \$80 billion to Vietnam's GDP by 2030 (McKinsey & Company, 2018), so reducing the gender-based challenges to education for girls in Vietnam is an investment in the country's economic future and will create a brighter future for all.



REFERENCES

Breda, T., Jouini, E., Napp, C., & Thebault, G. (2020). Gender stereotypes can explain the gender-equality paradox. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 202008704.

doi:10.1073/pnas.2008704117

Briones, K., & Porter, C. (2019). How does teenage marriage and motherhood affect the lives of young women in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam? *Young Lives*.

Brundrett, M. and Thuy Dung, M.T. (2018), "The challenge of ensuring gender equality in Vietnamese and English high schools: Espoused and real commitments", *International Journal of Comparative Education and Development*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 2-15. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCED-09-2017-0025>.

Brussino, O. and J. McBrien (2022), "Gender stereotypes in education: Policies and practices to address gender stereotyping across OECD education systems", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 271, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/a46ae056-en>.

CARE. (2020). Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) Framework. Retrieved from

<https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/SNAP%20Framework%20Guide%202020.pdf>

Charlesworth, T. E. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2019). Gender in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: Issues, Causes, Solutions. *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 0475-18. doi:10.1523/jneurosci.0475-18.2019

Cheryan, S., Master, A., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2017). Cultural stereotypes as gatekeepers: Increasing girls' interest in computer science and engineering by diversifying stereotypes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 10.

Chowdhury, Iffat and Perova, Elizaveta and Mannava, Aneesh and Johnson, Hillary C., *Gender Gap in Earnings in Vietnam: Why Do Vietnamese Women Work in Lower Paid Occupations?* (May 9, 2018). *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 8433*, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3176321>

REFERENCES

Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative in Viet Nam: Empowering girls and women for a more equal society (2018) Unesdoc.unesco.org. UNESCO. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000367489> (Accessed: January 4, 2023).

Ho, M.-T., La, V.-P., Nguyen, M.-H., Pham, T.-H., Vuong, T.-T., Vuong, H.-M., ... Vuong, Q.-H. (2020). An analytical view on STEM education and outcomes: Examples of the social gap and gender disparity in Vietnam. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 105650. doi:10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105

Hoang, L. A. (2019). The Vietnam Women's Union and the Contradictions of a Socialist Gender Regime. *Asian Studies Review*, 1-18. doi:10.1080/10357823.2019.1699023

Le, T.-T.-H., Tran, T., Trinh, T.-P.-T., Nguyen, C.-T., Nguyen, T.-P.-T., Vuong, T.-T., Vu, T.-H., et al. (2019). Reading Habits, Socioeconomic Conditions, Occupational Aspiration and Academic Achievement in Vietnamese Junior High School Students. *Sustainability*, 11(18), 5113. MDPI AG. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su11185113>

Maheshwari, G., & Nayak, R. (2022). Women leadership in Vietnamese higher education institutions: An exploratory study on barriers and enablers for career enhancement. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50(5), 758-775. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220945700>

Master, A. (2021). Gender Stereotypes Influence Children's STEM Motivation. *Child Development Perspectives*, 15(3), 203-210. doi:10.1111/cdep.12424

Moss-Racusin, C. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Graham, M. J., & Handelsman, J. (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(41), 16474-16479.

Ngan, N.T.K. (2012) Life binding : Confucianism-inspired gender stereotypes for women in Vietnam media: The analysis on entertainment feature interviews a the connection to global journalism theory, Semantic Scholar.

REFERENCES

Nguyen, T.-N., McDonald, M., Nguyen, T. H. T., & McCauley, B. (2020). Gender relations and social media: a grounded theory inquiry of young Vietnamese women's self-presentations on Facebook. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 1-20. doi:10.1080/09718524.2020.1719598

Nguyen, M. L., Le, T. H. G., Ngo, T. T. H., Tran, H. L. and Mundkur, A. (2020) Investing gendered social norms affecting women's economic participation related to recruitment and promotion in Vietnam. *Vietnam: Investing in Women and CARE International in Vietnam*.

Phan, A., & Pham, T. X. (2021). Gender stereotypes as hidden curriculum: A case of Vietnamese English textbooks. *International Journal of Education*, 14(1), 30-38. doi: 10.17509/ije.v14i1.30553

Tran, T.T. (2019). Access and Equity in Vietnamese Higher Education. In: Nguyen, C., Shah, M. (eds) *Quality Assurance in Vietnamese Higher Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26859-6_8

UNICEF. (2017). Viet Nam Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sectoral and or+ (thematic) report. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/media/1526/file/Viet%20Nam%20WASH%20Sectoral%20and%20OR%20The%20matic%20Report.pdf>

Van Vo, D., Csapó, B. Exploring students' science motivation across grade levels and the role of inductive reasoning in science motivation. *Eur J Psychol Educ* 37, 807-829 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-021-00568-8>

Vo DH, Ho CM. Does educational attainment and gender inequalities affect wealth accumulation? Evidence from Vietnam. *Heliyon*. 2022 Dec 21;8(12):e12502. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e12502. PMID: 36590543; PMCID: PMC9800187.

Vu, Hong. (2019). Female leadership in Vietnam. 10.4324/9780429025815-8.

REFERENCES

Vu, M. T., & Pham, T. T. T. (2020). Gender bias in English textbooks in Vietnam : Textbook representations, teacher perspectives, and classroom practices. Retrieved from Umeå universitet website: <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:umu:diva-176400>

Vu, M. T., & Pham, T. T. T. (2022). Gender, critical pedagogy, and textbooks: Understanding teachers' (lack of) mediation of the hidden curriculum in the EFL classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221136937>

Wieselmann, J. R., Roehrig, G. H., & Kim, J. N. (2020). Who succeeds in STEM? Elementary girls' attitudes and beliefs about self and STEM. *School Science and Mathematics*, 120(5), 233-244. doi:10.1111/ssm.12407

Wilson, E., Haver, J., Torondel, B., Rubli, J., & Caruso, B. A. (2018). Dismantling menstrual taboos to overcome gender inequality. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 2(8), e17. doi:10.1016/s2352-4642(18)30209-8

World Bank. (2015). Vietnam: Gender Assessment. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Zarrinabadi, Nourollah & Khodarahmi, Ensieh. (2023). Investigating the consequences of experiencing directed motivational currents for learners' beliefs and self-perceptions. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 1-15. 10.1080/01434632.2023.2197422.

DATA SET

