

Addressing Gender Issues in Education, Training for Vietnam's Ethnic Minorities

Tran Minh Duc¹

Article history: Received: 25 March 2025, Accepted: 20 July 2025
Published: 31 July 2025

Abstract: Gender equality in education is a crucial factor in achieving sustainable development. Although Vietnam has actively participated in international agreements on gender equality and education, disparities persist, particularly among ethnic minority communities. Ethnic minority women face greater obstacles than men due to cultural norms, economic constraints, and policy limitations. These barriers result in lower participation rates and higher dropout rates among female students, especially at the secondary and higher education levels. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policies that are both gender-sensitive and culturally inclusive.

Purpose: This study aims to examine the factors contributing to gender inequality in education among ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. It identifies cultural, economic, and policy-related barriers that hinder female students' educational opportunities and explores potential solutions to enhance gender equality in education.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Primary data were gathered through interviews and surveys with students, educators, and policymakers in ethnic minority regions. Secondary data from government reports and international organizations provided additional insights into the systemic challenges affecting gender equality in education.

¹ Thu Dau Mot University, Vietnam | ductm@tdmu.edu.vn

Findings: The study reveals that approximately 45% of ethnic minority female students drop out before completing lower secondary education, primarily due to early marriage customs, household responsibilities, and traditional gender roles. Economic hardships, geographical distance, and inadequate educational infrastructure further exacerbate the issue. Although government policies provide financial aid and scholarships, they lack gender-sensitive provisions addressing the specific needs of ethnic minority women. Initiatives by organizations such as Irish Aid, UNDP, and UNICEF have contributed to improving educational access, but their effectiveness depends on stronger coordination with local authorities.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the discourse on gender equality in education by highlighting the unique challenges faced by ethnic minority women in Vietnam. It emphasizes the need for gender-responsive education policies, community awareness programs, and flexible vocational training initiatives to promote inclusive and sustainable educational opportunities. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and international organizations working toward gender equality in education.

Keywords: cultural barriers; education policy; ethnic minorities; gender equality; sustainable development

Paper Type: Research-Article

Introduction

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic nation with 54 ethnic groups, of which 53 are ethnic minorities, accounting for about 14.6% of the country's population (General Statistics Office 2024). These ethnic minorities primarily reside in mountainous and remote areas, where economic and social conditions are more challenging compared to urban and lowland areas, which are predominantly inhabited by the Kinh majority. The education system in these regions faces numerous challenges, including a lack of infrastructure, a shortage of teachers, and low education quality. Additionally, access to education is hindered by geographical

distance, language barriers, and economic conditions. Over the past few decades, the Vietnamese government has implemented various policies to enhance educational opportunities for ethnic minorities. These policies include the establishment of boarding and semi-boarding schools for ethnic minorities, financial subsidies for students, and facilitating access to education for ethnic minority children from preschool to university levels (Ministry of Education and Training 2020). However, despite these policies contributing to improving educational access for ethnic minorities, disparities in education quality and opportunities remain, particularly in gender access to education. Gender discrimination in education for ethnic minorities remains a pressing issue. Studies have shown that ethnic minority women often face more barriers than men in accessing education. In many ethnic minority regions, traditional customs and practices are deeply ingrained, with women often being considered less important than men in participating in the education system (Irish Aid and UNDP, Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs 2019). This results in lower participation rates for ethnic minority female students compared to male students, especially at higher levels such as secondary, college, and university. Moreover, the family burden and early marriage expectations for women in ethnic minority communities further reduce their educational opportunities. Girls are often expected to stay at home to help with household chores or engage in labor from a young age, preventing them from continuing their education. According to the General Statistics Office (2024), literacy rates among ethnic minority women remain significantly lower than those of men, especially among groups like the H'Mong, Dao, and Thai. Language barriers also pose a significant challenge, as many ethnic minority children are not fluent in Vietnamese – the main language of instruction.

Gender equality in education and training in ethnic minority regions not only affects individual development but also has a

broader impact on the economic and social development of these areas. In the current context of sustainable development, promoting gender equality in education is a critical requirement. Gender equality is viewed as a key factor in helping ethnic minority communities escape poverty, increasing access to economic opportunities, and improving the quality of life. According to the World Bank (2020), investing in the education of ethnic minority women not only benefits them individually but also elevates the status of the entire community. While Vietnam's education policies have made progress in facilitating ethnic minority students' access to education, gender issues have not been adequately addressed. Most current education policies are "gender-neutral," meaning they do not explicitly distinguish between the needs of males and females in accessing education (Le 2004). However, these neutral policies are often ineffective in addressing existing gender inequalities. In this context, studying and evaluating gender barriers in education is crucial to proposing specific policies aimed at promoting gender equality in education for ethnic minorities. Gender equality is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Vietnam has committed to achieving these goals. Sustainable development cannot be achieved if marginalized groups, including ethnic minority women, are not ensured equal access to educational resources. Gender inequality in education also contributes to the persistence of poverty and underdevelopment in ethnic minority regions. Therefore, this research contributes to a better understanding of the role of education in improving sustainable development opportunities for ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

This study will focus on ethnic minority communities in Vietnam, particularly in areas with high ethnic minority populations, such as the northern mountainous provinces (Lai Chau, Ha Giang, Lao Cai) and the Central Highlands (Dak Lak,

Gia Lai, Lam Dong). These regions face challenging socio-economic conditions, with underdeveloped educational infrastructure and deeply rooted traditional customs and practices. These areas also have high dropout rates and significant gender disparities in access to education (General Statistics Office 2024).

The research scope will include students from preschool to secondary school and vocational training programs for ethnic minority youth. The study will also examine the roles of families, communities, and education policies in influencing the participation of both males and females in the education system. Additionally, the research will analyze cultural factors such as customs, gender roles in families and society, as well as economic factors like poverty and living conditions, to better understand the barriers and opportunities ethnic minorities, particularly women, face in accessing education.

Furthermore, the study will assess the impact of educational support programs provided by the state and international organizations to evaluate their effectiveness in improving gender equality in education. For specific educational programs like boarding and semi-boarding schools for ethnic minorities, the research will consider whether these programs create favorable conditions for increasing female student participation, while also offering suggestions for improvement.

Despite numerous studies on ethnic minority education in Vietnam and international research on gender equality in education, significant gaps still need to be addressed and clarified:

Lack of in-depth research on gender in ethnic minority education: Previous studies have primarily focused on improving educational infrastructure, financial support, and facilitating access to education for ethnic minority students. However, few studies delve deeply into gender disparities in education within ethnic minority communities and the impact of gender on

educational opportunities and development for women. Most research treats gender as a secondary issue within the overall education system, without clear and specific analysis of the gender barriers faced by ethnic minority women (Chu 2000; Nguyen 2000).

Cultural impact on gender in education: Many studies have identified economic factors and material conditions as the primary barriers to education for ethnic minorities (Ministry of Education and Training 2020), but there is a lack of extensive research on how traditional culture and customs affect women's access to education. In ethnic minority communities, culture plays a crucial role and significantly influences family decisions about whether to send children, especially girls, to school. Traditional views on gender roles, such as prioritizing boys in education and expecting girls to take on household duties and marry early, remain strong in many ethnic communities. This is an area that current research has yet to explore fully.

Lack of gender-disaggregated data: Most current studies use aggregate data for both men and women when analyzing ethnic minority education. This obscures gender inequalities within the education system and does not provide a clear understanding of the challenges faced by ethnic minority women. For example, data on dropout rates, access to higher levels of education, and participation in vocational education are not adequately broken down by gender. This makes it difficult to assess whether current education policies are effectively promoting gender equality.

Impact of gender-neutral policies: Existing research has not fully assessed the impact of gender-neutral education policies on gender inequality in ethnic minority communities. Current policies are primarily designed to address general barriers faced by ethnic minorities, with little attention given to the differing needs and challenges between men and women. Gender-neutral policies may not reduce gender inequality and could potentially

exacerbate existing disparities. It is essential to carefully study the impact of these policies to ensure that they not only enhance educational opportunities for ethnic minorities but also promote gender equality.

Lack of clear connection between gender and sustainable development: Gender equality in education is one of the sustainable development goals, but current research has yet to establish a strong link between gender equality in education and sustainable development in ethnic minority areas. Further studies are needed to clarify the role of education in enhancing the status and economic development opportunities for ethnic minority women and to identify how education can contribute to improving quality of life and promoting sustainable development for entire communities.

Lack of intervention studies and policy evaluations: Current studies mainly focus on describing the reality of education and gender equality without adequately evaluating the policies and interventions implemented to promote gender equality in education for ethnic minorities. More experimental intervention studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of specific policies, such as scholarships for ethnic minority girls, community awareness campaigns on gender equality, or support measures for ethnic minority women in accessing vocational education.

The literature review shows that while there has been extensive research on education and ethnic minorities, the issue of gender equality in education remains a significant gap that needs further in-depth study. Gender barriers faced by ethnic minority women, particularly the effects of traditional culture, have not been adequately addressed in current research. Additionally, the lack of gender-disaggregated data and the absence of intervention studies are major limitations in this field. This research, which aims to analyze gender disparities in education and training for ethnic minorities, will contribute to filling these research gaps and

propose specific policies to improve gender equality in education in Vietnam.

Methods

In this study, the author will adopt a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing gender inequality in education and training among ethnic minorities in Vietnam. This mixed-methods approach allows for an in-depth analysis of statistical data combined with interviews to better understand the social and cultural dimensions that affect gender issues in ethnic minority regions.

Quantitative methods will be used to analyze survey data related to educational access for ethnic minority students, gender participation in education, dropout rates, and factors affecting educational opportunities. The study will utilize data from the General Statistics Office (2024), the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (2019), and other surveys to provide a comprehensive overview of the current situation.

Qualitative methods will focus on in-depth interviews with key subjects, including students, teachers, parents, and local officials in ethnic minority areas. The purpose is to gain deeper insights into the cultural and social factors affecting the participation of ethnic minority women in education and how existing educational policies impact gender equality. This approach helps to highlight aspects that are difficult to measure with quantitative data, such as traditional gender roles, the division of family labor, and the impact of early marriage on girls' continued education.

The research sample will focus on several major ethnic groups in Vietnam, including the H'Mong, Thai, Dao, EDe, Ba Na, and Gia Rai. These groups are widely distributed in the northern mountainous areas and the Central Highlands, where socio-economic conditions are still challenging, and the educational

participation rate of ethnic minority women is low. The study will select representative areas such as Lao Cai, Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Dak Lak, and Gia Lai, where ethnic minorities are heavily concentrated, and traditional cultural customs strongly influence gender roles. The research sample will consist of approximately 200-300 individuals, including 50-100 female students, 50-100 parents, 30-50 teachers, and 20-30 local officials. The sampling will be done using purposive sampling to ensure representation from ethnic minority groups with different economic and cultural conditions. Each participant will be selected based on age, gender, societal role, and their level of engagement in the education system. Specifically, for students, the author will categorize them by education level (preschool, elementary, middle, and high school) to examine differences in educational access between male and female students at each level. In addition, this study will consult educational, ethnological, and cultural researchers to gather their assessments of gender issues in education and training in the past and future expectations.

Data collection methods will include three main forms: i) In-depth interviews to explore cultural, social, and psychological factors influencing gender equality in education. In-depth interviews will be conducted with female students, parents, teachers, and local officials. The interview questions will focus on topics such as the role of women in the family and society, perceptions of the importance of education for girls, and specific barriers women face when participating in education. For example, female students will be asked about the difficulties they encounter in attending school, how family responsibilities affect their studies, and their views on the future. Parents will be asked about their perceptions of gender roles, their priorities in sending children to school, and the factors influencing their decisions. ii) Surveys will be conducted to collect quantitative data from students, parents, and teachers. The survey will include questions

related to economic, social, cultural, and educational factors affecting the participation of women in the education system. Questions will also address the evaluation of educational support policies for ethnic minorities. iii) Secondary data analysis from official reports and documents, such as the Socio-economic Survey Report on 53 Ethnic Minorities (General Statistics Office 2024), the Ministry of Education and Training Report (2020), and previous studies. This secondary data will provide a general overview of the educational context and gender issues in ethnic minority areas.

Quantitative analysis: Data from the survey will be entered and analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS or Stata. Basic statistical analyses such as frequency, mean, and correlation analysis will be applied to identify trends and relationships between socio-economic factors and ethnic minority women's access to education. These analyses will help clarify the extent of gender disparities in education, dropout rates, and factors influencing educational access for both men and women. More advanced analyses, such as regression analysis, will be used to evaluate the impact of various factors (e.g., household income level, distance to school, gender perceptions) on women's educational access.

Qualitative analysis: Data from in-depth interviews will be analyzed using content analysis to identify key themes related to gender and education. The information collected from interviews will be coded under themes such as gender role perceptions, cultural barriers, family responsibilities, and the impact of educational support policies. The author will then conclude how these factors influence ethnic minority women's participation in education.

Discussion and Findings

Gender Inequality in Access to Education

Data from interviews and surveys reveal that the participation rate of female students in higher levels of education,

such as high school and university, is significantly lower than that of males. While at the primary level, the proportion of male and female students is relatively balanced, the disparity becomes more pronounced as students advance to higher levels of education. This presents a major challenge to promoting gender equality and sustainable development in education in ethnic minority areas. For example, the dropout rate of H'Mong and Dao ethnic minority girls before completing lower secondary education is particularly high, at around 65%. This indicates that there are specific factors affecting female students in these communities that prevent them from continuing their education.

Table 1: Dropout Rates by Gender and Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Male Dropout Rate (%)	Female Dropout Rate (%)	Main Causes
H'Mong	35	65	Early marriage, family burdens
Dao	30	60	Traditional beliefs about women's roles
EDe	28	55	Lack of educational infrastructure
Ba Na	25	50	Geographic distance, dangerous roads

Interviews with parents and teachers highlight early marriage customs as one of the main reasons for this situation. Many ethnic minority families still hold traditional views that girls should marry early to secure family life, and thus education is not prioritized. One H'Mong girl shared, "I had to quit school to prepare for marriage; my family believes that it is more important than education."

Besides the pressure of early marriage, ethnic minority women also face the burden of family labor. They are often expected to take on key roles in childcare, household chores, and

helping their parents with agricultural work. These responsibilities leave female students with insufficient time and resources to pursue education, leading to high dropout rates. For instance, a Dao parent stated, "My daughter has to help with family work, so she cannot continue her education."

Furthermore, the preference for educating sons is a significant contributing factor. Many families, especially in remote areas, prioritize investing in their sons' education because they believe boys have the potential to bring income to the family in the future. Meanwhile, girls are expected to marry and take care of the household, making higher education seem unnecessary. One parent remarked, "Girls don't need much education because they will just become wives and mothers." This mindset directly influences many families' decisions about whether to send their daughters to school and keep them there. Cultural barriers and family responsibilities have created gender inequality in educational access, posing a major challenge to improving educational opportunities for ethnic minority girls in Vietnam.

The Impact of Cultural and Social Barriers on Women's Access to Education

The analysis shows that cultural and social barriers are key factors significantly affecting the ability of ethnic minority women in Vietnam to access education. One of the most prominent cultural barriers is the tradition of early marriage, which remains common in many ethnic minority communities, especially in the Northwest and Central Highlands regions. In these communities, many girls leave school at an early age to assume their roles as wives and mothers according to traditional customs. Survey data indicates that 45% of ethnic minority girls drop out of school before completing lower secondary education due to the pressure to marry or care for their families.

In addition to early marriage, family responsibilities play a major role in limiting girls' educational opportunities. In ethnic

minority regions, women are often expected to take on household duties such as caring for younger siblings, doing housework, and participating in agricultural activities. These responsibilities significantly reduce the time and energy girls can dedicate to their studies. According to interview results, 50% of female students reported that they had to frequently miss school to help with family work, especially during farming seasons or when caring for younger family members. A Thai ethnic minority girl shared in an interview, "I often had to miss school during the harvest season to help my parents. When I returned to school, I couldn't keep up with the lessons and eventually had to drop out."

Table 2: Cultural and Social Barriers for Female Students

Barrier	Impact Description	Level of Impact
Early Marriage	Female students leave school to get married	High
Family Burdens	Responsible for childcare, household chores	High
Gender Preference	Boys prioritized for education, girls stay home	High
Distance to School	Schools are far away, roads are dangerous	Medium
Lack of Educational Infrastructure	Insufficient boarding schools, poor study conditions	Medium

This story is not an isolated case but reflects a common situation in many ethnic minority communities. Girls face pressure from their families and communities to assume household responsibilities from a young age, which limits their ability to continue their education. Moreover, traditional societal beliefs about gender roles exacerbate this situation. Women in ethnic minority communities are often seen as bearers of household duties and are less invested in education compared to men. These views reinforce the perception that education for

women is unnecessary since they will ultimately return to their roles as wives and mothers.

Another factor is the different expectations families have for boys and girls. Boys are often seen as the heirs and the future breadwinners of the family, so parents tend to prioritize their education over that of girls. Meanwhile, girls are tied to domestic roles and are rarely encouraged to pursue higher education. These cultural and social factors contribute to creating an environment where ethnic minority women are restricted in their educational opportunities, which reduces their ability to develop personally and improve their socio-economic standing in the future.

Lack of Infrastructure and Geographic Distance

In addition to cultural factors, educational infrastructure and geographic distance are significant barriers that greatly affect the ability of ethnic minority women to access education. Many ethnic minority areas, particularly in the northern mountainous provinces and the Central Highlands, still face a severe shortage of basic educational infrastructure. Schools in these areas often lack the necessary conditions compared to those in urban regions. In some cases, schools are makeshift classrooms with inadequate teaching equipment, unsafe restrooms, and limited access to clean water. This lack of infrastructure diminishes the appeal of the learning environment for both students and parents.

Attending school becomes a major challenge, especially for female students. Many girls have to travel through treacherous, mountainous paths to get to school, which not only impacts their health but also raises serious concerns about safety. Surveys show that approximately 35% of parents feel uneasy about sending their daughters to schools far from home, fearing potential dangers along the way, such as traffic accidents or attacks. This situation is even more difficult for girls, who are also burdened with family responsibilities, further reducing their ability to continue their education.

Geographic distance affects not only the ability to reach school but also the quality of learning. Many families cannot afford to send their children to boarding or semi-boarding schools, which provide better learning conditions. As a result, many students, particularly girls, are forced to attend schools near their homes, where the infrastructure is poor and inadequate. This leads to a decrease in motivation to study, making it easier for them to drop out when faced with the challenge of distance. A Dao parent shared, "It's dangerous for girls to go to school far away, while boys can protect themselves better." This belief reflects the gender bias in how sons and daughters are treated, with parents believing that boys are more capable of protecting themselves, whereas girls are more vulnerable to risks when attending distant schools. Consequently, many families decide to keep their daughters at home to help with family care instead of allowing them to continue their education, creating a vicious cycle that limits educational opportunities for women.

The challenges related to infrastructure and geographic distance not only affect ethnic minority women but also reduce opportunities for individual and community development. Without greater investment in educational infrastructure, especially in disadvantaged areas, these barriers will continue to limit women's access to education, increasing the gender gap within the educational system in ethnic minority regions.

Cultural Barriers and Gender Roles in Education

The analysis of data collected from interviews and surveys indicates that cultural factors play a significant role in maintaining gender inequality in education within ethnic minority communities. The belief that women's primary role is within the household and that they do not need higher education remains prevalent in many ethnic minority communities. This leads to parents investing less in their daughters' education compared to

their sons, and in cases where they must choose between sending their son or daughter to school, they often prioritize their son.

This belief not only influences parents' decisions but also creates pressure on the girls themselves. Many girls expressed that they felt their education was not important and that they did not need to strive for higher learning. A H'Mong girl shared, "I don't know why I need to study, because in the future, I will just get married and take care of my children like my mother." This demonstrates how deeply traditional values and gender roles are ingrained in the minds of younger generations, further hindering the development opportunities for women.

Economic Barriers and Family Responsibilities

In addition to cultural factors, economic barriers are a significant reason why many ethnic minority girls drop out of school early. Many ethnic minority families live in difficult economic conditions, relying primarily on subsistence farming and lacking the means to afford their children's education. Survey results indicate that 65% of the families interviewed struggle financially and cannot fully cover the educational expenses for their daughters.

Moreover, girls often bear family responsibilities such as taking care of younger siblings, doing household chores, and working in agriculture. These responsibilities limit the time and ability for girls to focus on their studies. When asked about the reasons for dropping out, many girls stated that they could not balance school and family work. A Ba Na student shared, "I have to take care of my younger siblings when my parents go to work on the farm, so I can't attend school regularly and eventually had to drop out."

A parent from Gia Lai said, "We've heard about scholarships, but we don't know how to access them, and many people in the village don't understand these support programs either." This reflects a lack of information and transparency in the

implementation of educational policies for ethnic minority areas, especially regarding female students.

Although the government's Decree No. 57/2017/ND-CP, which promotes preferential recruitment and support for ethnic minority students, has made some positive contributions, it has not effectively closed the gender gap in education. Research shows that only 20% of the parents of female students interviewed were fully aware of these policies, and the actual access rate for women to support programs remains low. These findings raise questions about the feasibility of educational policies in addressing gender inequality, particularly in remote areas where information is difficult to access and social and cultural barriers are stronger.

Positive but Limited Impact of Specialized Educational Programs

Ethnic minority boarding and semi-boarding schools were established to provide better learning conditions for ethnic minority students, and the results show that this system has had many positive impacts on both male and female students. However, the proportion of female students attending these schools remains lower than that of males. The main reason, according to interview results, is that families still prioritize boys when deciding which child should attend boarding schools, which often have better educational conditions.

Many female students and parents expressed that they did not want girls to be away from home for extended periods due to concerns about safety and the need for help with daily family chores. A Dao girl shared in an interview, "My parents didn't want me to go to school far away because they were worried about my safety, but my brother was encouraged to attend boarding school." This shows that educational policies have not yet overcome cultural barriers, and girls still face greater difficulties than boys in accessing learning opportunities at boarding or semi-boarding schools.

Table 3: Educational Support Programs for Ethnic Minority Female Students

Program Name	Objective	Implementing Organization	Outcome
Scholarships for Ethnic Minority Girls	Financial support for disadvantaged female students	UNDP, Irish Aid	Increased enrollment rate
Life Skills Education for Female Students	Raising awareness about women's rights	UNICEF	Reduced dropout rates
Construction of Boarding Schools for Girls	Improving study and living conditions	Government of Vietnam	Reduced geographic barriers

Limited Participation of Women in Vocational Education

An analysis of vocational education data shows that the participation of ethnic minority women in vocational training programs remains very low. Despite some policies supporting vocational training for ethnic minorities, only 25% of the women surveyed reported having the opportunity to participate in vocational training programs. The main reasons are the lack of flexibility in the scheduling of these programs and the families' preference for their daughters to stay home and help with household chores rather than participating in vocational training.

Another issue is that many vocational training programs lack gender sensitivity and are not suited to the needs and living conditions of ethnic minority women. Many young ethnic minority women expressed a desire to learn skills that align with their living conditions, but the current programs often do not meet these needs. As a result, the participation rate of women in

vocational education remains very low, and they cannot fully benefit from the economic opportunities that vocational education could provide.

Social Attitudes Toward the Role of Women in Education

In addition to cultural and economic barriers, social attitudes play an important role in influencing the educational decisions of ethnic minority families. The belief that a woman's primary role is within the family and community remains strong in many ethnic minority communities. Parents, especially from older generations, often place greater importance on preserving traditions and customs than on encouraging women to pursue education or careers outside the home.

A teacher at an ethnic minority boarding school in the Central Highlands shared, "Many parents don't want their daughters to pursue higher education because they believe that education is unnecessary for their daughter's role in the family. There have even been cases where parents forced their daughters to quit school to get married early." This shows that social attitudes and traditional gender roles remain major barriers to promoting gender equality in education.

Traditional Cultural Barriers

As discussed earlier, traditional customs and values are major factors limiting educational opportunities for ethnic minority women. Local cultures often assign women the role of homemakers, caregivers for the family, and dependent on men for making important decisions. These beliefs create pressure on both parents and female students, leading them to undervalue education and easily abandon educational opportunities.

Gender discrimination in access to education is most evident through early marriage customs, where women in many ethnic minority communities are expected to marry early to secure family stability. Interview results revealed that many female students drop out of school to marry as early as after completing

primary school, or even earlier. This not only disrupts their education but also limits their future career opportunities and ability to achieve independence.

Economic Barriers

Poverty in ethnic minority regions is a major economic barrier that hinders women's participation in education. Poor families often lack the financial capacity to send their children to school and are forced to make difficult decisions about whether to educate their sons or daughters. In most cases, boys are prioritized because they are expected to become the primary breadwinners for the family.

Interviews with parents show that 70% of the families interviewed must carefully weigh their decisions regarding their children's education, and most choose to send their sons to school to ensure future financial stability for the family. They believe that investing in their sons' education will yield greater returns for the family, whereas daughters are expected to marry and leave the family to care for their husband's household.

Lack of Gender-Sensitive Educational Policies

Although the Vietnamese government has made significant efforts to support education for ethnic minorities, current educational policies still lack gender sensitivity. These policies are not specifically designed to address gender barriers and, in many cases, exacerbate existing inequalities.

Access to current scholarship programs and financial support remains limited for women, and in many instances, the policies are not persuasive enough to change traditional views about gender roles in the family. This situation calls for stronger intervention from the state and social organizations to ensure that ethnic minority women can access education on an equal and fair basis.

Comparison with Previous Studies

When comparing the findings of this study with previous research, it is clear that gender challenges in ethnic minority education in Vietnam have been identified in various studies, but the complexity and impact of these challenges on women have not been fully explored. For example, Chu (2000) and Hung (2015) study on planning education for ethnic minority regions highlighted weaknesses in educational infrastructure and a lack of resources in these areas. This study finds similar results, indicating that poor infrastructure, particularly a lack of safety in educational facilities, is a major factor preventing female students from continuing their education at higher levels.

However, this study goes further in emphasizing the specific impact of gender on access to education. For instance, Pao (2010) and Dao (2020) study on improving the capacity of ethnic minority personnel focused on solutions for vocational training and workforce development but did not address the differences in access to education between men and women in detail. Our research highlights this issue by showing that while both men and women face barriers related to infrastructure and finances, women are more severely impacted by cultural barriers, such as gender roles and early marriage customs.

Phu (2013) and the General Statistics Office's (2024) research also mentioned the gap in the participation of female ethnic minority students in higher education, but it did not focus on the deep-rooted cultural and social causes of this disparity. Our study provides clearer insights into these factors through in-depth interviews, showing that, besides economic and geographic challenges, traditional beliefs about women's roles in the family play a major role in determining their educational opportunities.

Furthermore, international studies, such as Herskovits (1938) and Hooks (1984), work on cultural diffusion, also emphasize the impact of traditional culture on women's roles in

society. These findings align with our research, which underscores that in the unique cultural context of ethnic minorities, women are often tied to family roles, limiting their opportunities to engage in formal education. Butler (1990) and Giddens (1990) study on modernization also suggests that the transition from traditional values to modernization often faces significant resistance, particularly for women in societies with strong family structures, such as ethnic minority communities.

Compared to previous studies, this research delves deeper into gender issues in education through a multidimensional approach, looking not only at infrastructure and financial factors but also at the deeper cultural and social elements. It clarifies the different educational experiences of women and men in ethnic minority regions, shedding light on the complexities of gender inequality in education.

Vietnam has implemented numerous policies to promote gender equality and support education for ethnic minorities, such as Decree No. 57/2017/ND-CP, which outlines priority enrollment policies and learning support for preschool children, students, and ethnic minority students with very small populations. However, our research shows that the impact of these policies on narrowing the gender gap remains limited. The Ministry of Education and Training (2020) and Baulch & Masset (2003) also identified this issue, stating that while current educational policies have improved infrastructure and provided financial support, they have not fully addressed the social and cultural factors that affect ethnic minority women's access to education.

Some current educational policies lack gender sensitivity. For instance, scholarship and financial aid programs are primarily based on economic conditions, but they do not take into account cultural and familial factors, which are significant barriers for women. Our research findings show that, in many cases,

providing financial support or scholarships is insufficient to help female students continue their education if traditional beliefs about women's roles in the family remain unchanged.

For example, Nguyen (2000) and Phu (2016) research on personnel planning in ethnic minority regions emphasized the need for ethnic minority personnel training but did not account for the differences between men and women in accessing these training programs. Similarly, Thang (2005); Thanh (2014) and Dao (2023) discussed the quality of ethnic minority personnel but did not mention how to encourage women to participate in these training programs.

This study highlights the need for more specific policies to promote female participation in the education system, especially in vocational education programs. For example, designing flexible vocational training courses that align with the living conditions of ethnic minority women could increase their participation in these programs. Additionally, more widespread initiatives to encourage ethnic minority girls to pursue education, such as awareness campaigns about gender equality and the role of education in personal and community development, are necessary.

Aside from cultural and social barriers, this research also points out that economic factors play a crucial role in determining ethnic minority women's access to education. Research by the Institute for Ethnic Policy and Mountainous Region Studies (2002) and Baulch (2010) demonstrated that poor economic conditions force families to make difficult decisions about investing in education, particularly when choosing between sending their sons or daughters to school. The survey results in this study confirm that most families prioritize sons for continued education because they believe that sons will have better opportunities to earn money and support the family in the future.

Geographic distance is another significant barrier to education in ethnic minority regions, many of which are located

in remote, hard-to-reach areas. Limited access to schools is particularly challenging for girls, as interview results reveal that many parents hesitate to send their daughters far from home due to safety concerns and the risks associated with navigating treacherous mountainous roads. This concern is consistent with Nussbaum (2011) and the General Department of Vocational Education (2017), both of which emphasize the importance of improving educational infrastructure in ethnic minority areas to enhance access to learning opportunities, especially for girls.

Early marriage customs are another major cultural factor that affects ethnic minority women's access to education. In many ethnic minority communities, early marriage remains common, causing female students to leave school early to take on the roles of wife and mother. Nguyen (2002) and Donnelly (2003) emphasized that traditional beliefs about women's roles in the family significantly influence the educational decisions of ethnic minority families. Our research shows similar findings, revealing that female students are often pressured to leave school to marry, disrupting their education and hindering their personal development.

Lastly, social attitudes toward gender equality cannot be overlooked. This research demonstrates that traditional notions of gender roles, particularly the preference for males over females, remain prevalent in ethnic minority communities. This not only influences family decisions about investing in their children's education but also creates significant pressure on female students. They often face societal and familial expectations to marry early and care for the family, making continued education seem out of reach. Sen (1999; 2009); Pham (2015) addressed the importance of changing social attitudes and the role of ethnic values in promoting gender equality, and our findings also emphasize that changing perceptions about women's roles in the family is crucial to improving access to education for girls.

Additionally, this research highlights some positive signs from educational support programs for ethnic minorities. Programs like scholarships and financial aid have increased enrollment rates at the primary level, as noted in the General Statistics Office's (2024) study. However, these programs need to be expanded and adjusted to address gender-specific issues, such as family and community discrimination and cultural barriers. For example, while the enrollment rate for female students at the primary level has increased, the gender gap becomes more pronounced at higher education levels, indicating the need for stronger and more targeted policy interventions to keep girls in school longer.

Local customs also significantly affect female students' educational opportunities. In many ethnic minority regions, strict adherence to social norms like early marriage and family labor contributions leads to women abandoning their educational paths from a young age. As Be (2001) pointed out in his research on ethnic affairs, the success of support policies in ethnic minority regions requires careful consideration of cultural factors. Efforts to improve education will not yield desired results if these social norms remain unchanged.

Finally, the challenge of cooperation between local government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is another factor affecting the effectiveness of educational support programs. Research findings indicate that collaboration between local authorities, schools, and NGOs plays a crucial role in bringing educational programs closer to ethnic minority girls. However, as highlighted in Dao (2020) research, the lack of coordination and support from relevant agencies reduces the effectiveness of these programs. Our study also points out that although many international organizations and NGOs provide support for education in ethnic minority areas, access to these

resources remains limited due to a lack of information and accessibility for ethnic minority families.

Developing Gender-Sensitive Education Policies

One of the most important recommendations is to create and implement gender-sensitive education policies that address the specific issues ethnic minority women face in accessing education. The National Assembly (2006), through the Gender Equality Law, emphasized the importance of ensuring equal rights between men and women in all fields, including education. However, this research shows that current educational policies are still "gender-neutral," lacking specific measures to support ethnic minority women, who are often heavily influenced by traditional beliefs and cultural barriers.

Therefore, the Vietnamese government needs to amend and supplement policies to encourage women to participate in the education system. Specifically, new policies should include priority enrollment and financial support for women, especially those from disadvantaged communities. Scholarship and financial aid programs should focus more on encouraging female students' participation, including scholarships specifically for female students in ethnic minority regions to alleviate financial pressure on families. Dao (2020) research pointed out that financial support is a decisive factor in maintaining education for ethnic minority children, especially girls.

Table 4: Comparison Between Current Education Policies and Proposed Improvements

Current Policy	Limitations	Proposed Improvement
Scholarships for ethnic minority students	Limited focus on female students	Increase scholarships specifically for female students
Boarding school policy	Insufficient number of schools	Build more boarding schools

		for female students
Financial support for disadvantaged families	No direct support programs for female students	Provide targeted financial support for families with girls in school
Gender integration in education	Unclear content regarding women's roles	Incorporate gender equality education into the curriculum

Vocational Education Support Policies for Ethnic Minority Women

Beyond general education, there should be policies to support vocational training specifically for ethnic minority women. Currently, vocational education policies do not clearly differentiate between men and women, resulting in low participation rates of ethnic minority women in vocational training programs. According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2020), women make up a very low percentage of vocational training programs, hindering their future economic development opportunities.

Gender-sensitive vocational training programs should be established, focusing on providing practical skills that match the conditions and circumstances of ethnic minority women, helping them to achieve economic independence and greater self-sufficiency. Additionally, these programs should offer flexible schedules to accommodate the working hours and family responsibilities of women.

Early Childhood Education Development Policies

One of the biggest barriers to education for ethnic minority women is the early responsibility they take on for caring for younger siblings and helping with family duties. In many families in ethnic minority areas, girls not only focus on studying but also shoulder responsibilities such as caring for siblings, cooking, and

participating in daily labor activities. This significantly reduces their time and opportunity to continue their education.

Therefore, strong policies are needed to develop high-quality early childhood education systems in ethnic minority areas. Developing early childhood education facilities not only creates opportunities for girls to study but also helps relieve them from family responsibilities, allowing them to focus more on their education.

According to the General Statistics Office (2024), the percentage of ethnic minority children accessing early childhood education remains very low, particularly in remote, mountainous areas where socioeconomic conditions are difficult, and educational infrastructure is lacking. Furthermore, geographical distance and a shortage of qualified teachers also limit access to early childhood education in these areas. To address this situation, policies must be implemented to invest in building and upgrading early childhood education infrastructure, ensuring these facilities are of high quality and suitable for local conditions. Additionally, efforts must be made to train early childhood teachers with the appropriate skills to serve ethnic minority areas.

By increasing the number of early childhood education facilities, girls will have better educational opportunities as they will no longer bear family responsibilities at such a young age. This will help reduce dropout rates among girls and enhance their ability to participate in education, contributing to sustainable development for ethnic minority communities.

Increasing Participation of Ethnic Minority Female Students

A specific solution to promote the participation of ethnic minority female students is the development of educational encouragement programs that encourage families to send their daughters to school. Be (2001) research highlighted that educational encouragement policies can strongly influence families' and communities' perceptions of the importance of

education for women. Programs should be created to focus on female students, including events to encourage education, scholarships, and discussions with families about the benefits of educating girls.

At the same time, distance education programs should be expanded through technology, such as online learning, to address the challenges of geographical distance and economic constraints. The government (2017) issued Decree No. 57/2017/ND-CP, which encourages the application of information technology in education, and this provides an opportunity to develop online learning programs specifically for ethnic minority women, allowing them to access education without leaving their families.

Developing Culturally and Gender-Sensitive Educational Programs

One of the key issues identified in the research is that current educational programs do not fully reflect the needs and cultural characteristics of ethnic minority communities, nor do they meet gender sensitivity requirements. This leads to difficulties for students, especially women, in accessing and applying the knowledge they learn in real life.

To address this, culturally and gender-sensitive educational programs need to be developed that respect cultural diversity and ensure gender sensitivity. Educational programs should be designed flexibly to match the cultural, linguistic, and traditional characteristics of each ethnic minority group, creating a friendly and effective learning environment for students. In addition, gender equality content should be integrated into the curriculum to raise awareness among students and the community about the role of women in society.

According to Dung (2024), developing an effective educational program must be based on a deep understanding of the traditional values and culture of each ethnic group, so students feel that the knowledge they acquire is not just distant theory but

closely related to their daily lives. These programs should also be combined with practical learning activities, closely related to labor and production, helping students, especially women, not only master theory but also apply what they learn in real life. This will not only improve educational quality but also enhance the role of women in economic and social development within ethnic minority communities.

Creating Safe Educational Environments for Female Students

Ensuring safety for female students during their educational journey is an important factor, especially in ethnic minority areas, where girls' education is often disrupted by social and family factors. Research shows that one of the main reasons many families do not want their daughters to continue their education is safety concerns, particularly when they have to travel far from home for school. In ethnic minority communities, where transportation infrastructure and security are underdeveloped, commuting between home and school can pose significant challenges for female students, increasing parents' anxiety.

Therefore, it is essential to build and upgrade boarding and semi-boarding schools in ethnic minority areas. These schools not only provide a safe learning environment but also offer the necessary amenities for female students to live and study far from home, reducing pressure and concern from families. Investing in infrastructure such as safe dormitories, clean toilets, clean water, and basic healthcare services are essential conditions for creating a safe and welcoming educational environment for female students.

According to Thu (2024), investing in boarding school systems in difficult areas is not only a necessary solution but also a crucial step toward increasing female student participation in higher education. For many girls, boarding school may be the only opportunity to continue their education after completing primary school. Thus, creating a safe and comfortable learning

environment for female students not only improves educational quality but also helps them overcome the cultural and social barriers they face. A safe educational environment will encourage female students to pursue longer educational paths, contributing to the enhancement of women's status in society and promoting sustainable economic and social development in ethnic minority communities.

Economic Support for Families with Female Students

One of the major barriers to education for ethnic minority women is the economic pressure on their families. According to Nguyen (2010), ethnic minority families often face economic difficulties, and women are more likely to drop out of school to help support their families. Therefore, policies providing financial assistance to families with female students, such as cash grants or tuition reductions, are needed. As noted by Ha (2024) and Hanh (2024), such support can reduce the financial burden and encourage families to invest in their daughters' education. Additionally, economic development programs for ethnic minority families, such as sustainable agriculture development projects, should be more widely implemented. Hoan (2024) emphasized the importance of creating economic opportunities for ethnic minority households to provide them with more resources to invest in their children's education.

In addition to direct educational support, there should be economic support policies for families to ease the financial pressure, enabling ethnic minority female students to continue their education. Pham and Thai (2012) indicated that family economic conditions play a significant role in children's educational decisions, especially for girls. Livelihood support programs, sustainable agricultural development, and direct financial aid for struggling families should be more robustly implemented. Specifically, the government should strengthen economic support programs for poor families in ethnic minority

areas, ensuring they have the financial means to send their children to school. These programs could include subsidized loans, agricultural training, and the development of sustainable economic models. Dao (2024) also pointed out that direct economic support can reduce pressure on women and girls, giving them more opportunities to access education and participate in social activities.

Changing Community Perceptions of the Role of Women in Education

Changing community perceptions of the role of women in education is crucial to encouraging female participation in schooling. Community awareness and education programs should be implemented, emphasizing the importance of gender equality and the necessity of educating women for the sustainable development of their communities. Nguyen (2002) pointed out that shifting perceptions of women's roles in family and society can help improve educational opportunities for ethnic minority women. Another critical factor is the need to strengthen community education programs on gender equality, helping to reshape views on the role of women and the importance of women's education for community development. Lieng (2024) stressed that changing traditional views on women's roles in the family is essential for achieving gender equality in education.

Gender equality and women's education campaigns should be more widely implemented in ethnic minority communities, using local media and ethnic languages for better outreach. Community workshops and forums should also be organized to discuss gender equality in education issues.

Support from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a crucial role in promoting gender equality and developing education for ethnic minority communities. Organizations such as Irish Aid and UNDP have implemented various support

programs, focusing on raising awareness of women's rights, gender equality, and providing scholarships for ethnic minority girls. These programs help alleviate financial burdens on struggling families and create educational opportunities for many girls in remote areas where national policies may not reach adequately.

An example is the collaboration between Irish Aid, UNDP, and the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (2019), which provides scholarships for ethnic minority female students and life skills training. This program has helped girls better understand their educational rights and raised community awareness of women's critical role in sustainable development. These programs need to be expanded and sustained in the long term to ensure that more girls benefit from education.

However, for these support programs to be more effective, collaboration between NGOs and local authorities needs to be strengthened. Bremer (2006) pointed out that a lack of coordination and consistency in implementing educational projects can reduce the effectiveness of policies and support programs. Therefore, according to An (2024), establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is necessary to ensure that support projects are implemented efficiently, particularly in remote areas.

Support from International Organizations

In addition to NGOs, international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and ADB have significantly contributed to promoting gender equality and supporting education in ethnic minority communities. These organizations have launched various educational support programs in Vietnam, emphasizing women's role in community and national development. ADB (2002) has conducted numerous studies and support programs on education and poverty reduction in ethnic minority areas in Vietnam, particularly scholarship programs and skills

development for ethnic minority women. UNICEF has also made crucial contributions in promoting education for ethnic minority girls through awareness campaigns on equal educational rights.

UNICEF's initiatives, such as the "Education for All" program, have increased female student enrollment rates in difficult areas. However, for these programs to be sustainable, close coordination between international organizations and local governments is necessary to ensure that these initiatives are integrated into national education policy.

A noteworthy point is that international organizations not only provide financial and technical support but also spread global values of women's rights and gender equality, helping to shift social perceptions in ethnic minority areas. Stiglitz (2002) emphasized that international organizations play an essential role in supporting developing countries in building a solid educational foundation, especially in promoting female participation in education.

To enhance the impact of education policies and programs, international cooperation between Vietnam and international organizations in the fields of education and gender equality should be expanded. This could include:

- i) Strengthening international project collaborations to build comprehensive educational programs for ethnic minority women. International organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP can provide technical and financial support to implement vocational training and general education programs for female students.
- ii) Cooperation in teacher training programs in ethnic minority areas, helping teachers understand the cultural and gender aspects needed to better support female students. Creswell (2014) and Dinh (2024) emphasized that thorough and in-depth teacher training on gender issues is critical to improving educational quality for women in difficult areas.

- iii) Promoting the sharing of international experiences in applying successful education and gender equality models from other countries to provide solutions that fit Vietnam's cultural and socioeconomic context.

Conclusion

This study has shed light on the barriers and challenges faced by ethnic minority women in Vietnam in accessing education. Through data analysis and comparison with previous research, it is clear that gender inequality in the education of ethnic minority communities remains widespread and complex, influenced by various factors, including cultural, social, and economic aspects. The key findings of the research include:

- i) Cultural barriers: Traditional customs, especially beliefs about gender roles, place significant pressure on ethnic minority women, leading them to leave school early or not be prioritized for educational investment by their families.
- ii) Economic barriers: Poor economic conditions and a preference for boys in accessing education are major economic factors contributing to gender inequality.
- iii) Limitations in educational policies: While current educational policies have made improvements in infrastructure and financial support, they are still not gender-sensitive enough to effectively address the cultural and social barriers faced by women.
- iv) The role of non-governmental and international organizations: NGOs and international organizations have played a crucial role in promoting gender equality in education through scholarship programs, life skills training, and raising awareness about women's rights. These findings indicate that despite some progress in

improving access to education for ethnic minority women, cultural, social, and economic challenges continue to hinder efforts to achieve comprehensive gender equality.

Research on gender issues in the education of ethnic minorities is crucial for sustainable and inclusive development in Vietnam. With 53 ethnic minority groups, the cultural and social diversity of the country is a valuable asset, but it also requires tailored educational and development policies to ensure that no individual, especially women, is left behind. The Gender Equality Law (2006) emphasizes the role of gender equality in national development, but in practice, many barriers still exist for ethnic minority women, severely affecting their ability to learn, develop, and access economic opportunities. This study highlights the need to develop and implement gender-sensitive educational policies that address the specific cultural, social, and economic factors of ethnic minority communities. Promoting gender equality is not only a social goal but also an essential factor for sustainable development. Education can serve as a vital tool to improve economic, social, and individual well-being, but only when gender barriers are removed can ethnic minority women truly benefit from these opportunities.

Moreover, educational policies and solutions aimed at promoting gender equality for ethnic minority women will not only contribute to the economic and social development of individuals but also have a positive impact on entire communities. Educated women will have a greater capacity to contribute to community development, improve family living standards, reduce poverty rates, and increase access to healthcare and social services.

The research results indicate that improving gender equality in education for ethnic minorities is a key factor in ensuring sustainable and inclusive development in Vietnam. Achieving this

goal requires close collaboration between state policies, the support of international organizations and NGOs, and a shift in community perceptions. Additionally, future research should continue to delve into unresolved issues to provide more specific solutions for promoting gender equality in ethnic minority education, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to develop and contribute to society.

Bibliography

- ADB. (2002). Indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities and poverty reduction: Vietnam. Asian Development Bank. <https://www.adb.org/publications/indigenous-peoples-ethnic-minorities-and-poverty-reduction-vietnam>
- An, P. (2024, May 11). Ethnology researcher, Southern Institute of Social Sciences. (Personal communication).
- Baulch, B. (2010). Poverty, inequality, and ethnic minorities in Vietnam. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/127428/WP169%20Baulch%20etal.pdf>
- Baulch, B., & Masset, E. (2003). Ethnic minority poverty in Vietnam. Asian Development Bank. <https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/495591468321292112/pdf/642720WP0P107600361533B0PUBLIC0-doc.pdf>
- Be, T. T. (2001). Ethnic affairs in the new period. National Political Publishing House.
- Bremer, R. (2006). Education and poverty reduction. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(3), 349-369.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge. <https://archive.org/details/gendertroublefem0000butl>
- Chu, T. T. (2000). Planning the training of ethnic minority officials. Education Publishing House.
- Committee for Ethnic Minorities. (2019). Decree No. 57/2017/ND-CP on priority education policies for ethnic minority children.

- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Dao, B. M. (2024, June 12). Central Highlands researcher, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. (Personal communication).
- Dao, T. A. T. (2020). *Enhancing the capacity of ethnic minority officials*. Education Publishing House.
- Dao, T. A. T. (2023). *The quality of ethnic minority officials and training programs*. Journal of Education.
- Department of Ethnic Education. (2020). *Report on the situation of boarding education in ethnic minority areas*. Ministry of Education and Training.
- Dinh, B. X. (2024, June 3). Village research expert, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. (Personal communication).
- Donnelly, J. (2003). *Universal human rights in theory and practice*. Cornell University Press.
<https://archive.org/details/universalhumanri0000donna>
- Dung, T. (2024, March 16). Lecturer, Faculty of Anthropology, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City. (Personal communication).
- General Department of Vocational Education. (2017). *Report on vocational education conditions in ethnic minority areas*. Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs.
- General Statistics Office. (2024). *Socio-economic survey report of 53 ethnic minorities*. General Statistics Office.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford University Press.
- Government. (2017). Decree No. 57/2017/ND-CP on priority enrollment and support for preschool children, students, and ethnic minority students.
- Ha, V. V. (2024, April 3). Reputable person in the ethnic minority community of Village 12, Ia Rve Commune, Ea Sup District, Dak Lak Province, Vietnam. (Personal communication).
- Hanh, T. T. (2024, April 11). Officer, Central Highlands Social Science Institute. (Personal communication).
- Herskovits, M. J. (1938). *Acculturation: The study of culture contact*. Augustin Publisher.

- Hoan, N. P. (2024, May 15). Ethnology researcher, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. (Personal communication).
- Hooks, B. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. South End Press.
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/51378.Feminist_Theory
- Hung, P. V. (2015). *Some new issues in ethnic relations in our country*. Publishing House of National Politics.
- Institute for Ethnic and Mountainous Policy Research. (2002). *Ethnic issues and orientation for building ethnic policies in the period of industrialization and modernization*. National Political Publishing House.
- Irish Aid, UNDP, & Committee for Ethnic Minorities. (2019). *Report on gender equality and sustainable development in ethnic minority areas of Vietnam*.
- Le, N. T. (2004). *Educational policies for ethnic minority and mountainous areas*. Education Publishing House.
- Liang, J. H. R. (2024, July 4). Chairman of Da Sar Commune People's Committee, Lac Duong District, Lam Dong Province. (Personal communication).
- Ministry of Education and Training. (2020). *Summary report on the education situation in ethnic minority areas*. Ministry of Education and Training.
- National Assembly. (2006). *Law on gender equality*. Vietnam.
- Nguyen, H. N. (2000). *Planning the training of ethnic minority officials in the period of industrialization and modernization*. Journal of Ethnology.
- Nguyen, H. S. (2010). *Combining the strength of the nation and the strength of the times in the new situation*. Journal of International Studies, (4), 83.
- Nguyen, L. T. (2002). *Gender equality in Vietnam's education system*. Education Publishing House.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press.
<https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/creating-capabilities-the-human-development-approach-2/>
- Pao, L. G. (2010). *Report on the results of research on the ministerial-level project: "Investigation and assessment of*

- the socio-economic development situation on the Vietnam-China border."
- Pham, M. H., & Thai, D. T. (2012). Economic conditions and their influence on educational decisions for female students. *Journal of Educational Science*.
- Phu, G. S. (2013). Ministerial-level research report: "Theoretical research, summarizing the practice of state management of ethnic affairs after the reform period, proposing perspectives, orientations, and solutions to improve the quality of state management on ethnic affairs in the coming time."
- Phu, G. S. (2016). Some theoretical and practical issues about ethnic affairs after 30 years of innovation. Publishing House of National Politics - Truth.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press. https://books.google.com.vn/books/about/Development_as_Freedom.html?id=NQs75PEa618C&redir_esc=y
- Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Harvard University Press. <https://dutraeconomicus.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/amartya-sen-the-idea-of-justice-2009.pdf>
- Stiglitz, J. (2002). *Globalization and its discontents*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Thu, H. N. (2024, March 11). History research expert, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. (Personal communication).
- World Bank. (2020). *Investing in women's education: A path to sustainable development*. World Bank.