

Gender Stereotypes in Vietnamese Education: The Influence of Cultural Norms on Subject Choices and Career Aspirations

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ABSTRACT

Gender stereotypes significantly influence students' academic choices and career aspirations in Vietnam, reflecting deep-rooted cultural norms. These biases often steer male students toward STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines, while female students are encouraged to pursue humanities, social sciences, and caregiving professions. This study examines how societal expectations, parental influence, teacher guidance, and media shape gendered subject selection and career decisions. Using a survey-based quantitative research design, data is collected from 200 high school and university students in Ho Chi Minh City to assess their perspectives on gender and education. Preliminary findings indicate that while gender stereotypes persist, younger generations, particularly in urban areas, increasingly challenge traditional expectations. However, institutional and cultural barriers still limit students' freedom to pursue careers based on personal interest rather than societal norms. This study contributes to the growing research on gender and education in Vietnam by providing empirical insights into how gender stereotypes shape academic and professional pathways. The findings offer significant implications for educational policy, curriculum development, and career counseling, emphasising the urgent need for interventions by educators and policymakers to foster a more gender-inclusive educational environment.

Keywords: career counseling, curriculum development, gender bias, parental influence, societal norms